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9 Divorce and recreation

Non-resident fathers' leisure during parenting time with their children

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Over the past 30 years, research examining divorce and the effects of divorce has increased substantially. The majority of this research has focused on children in conjunction with divorce or the new family unit following divorce (which typically includes the mother and child(ren)). This focus has resulted in a dearth of research on the father, who is traditionally the non-resident parent.

As divorce has become more common, family law courts have begun to allocate equal parenting time between spouses; this can be seen through increased joint custody agreements and joint residency agreements. Although fathers of divorced families have not received a lot of research attention, it is imperative that we understand their role, as the number of non-resident fathers facing the challenges of being well-integrated into the family unit post-divorce are increasing.

Recent literature suggests that non-resident fathers primarily engage in leisure activities with their children during parenting time. Little research from the leisure field has examined non-resident fathers and this interaction. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine non-resident fathers' leisure patterns with their children during parenting time and to better understand their satisfaction with these experiences. Attention to family leisure activities with associated benefits, such as increased cohesion or flexibility during parenting time, was given particular attention in this study. After first examining the family leisure patterns, a comparison with dual parent families was made to identify any differences in family leisure following divorce. The study lastly examined non-resident fathers' leisure satisfaction.

Research into fathers, divorce and leisure

Divorce and fathers

Over the past 50 years, divorce rates have generally increased across the world (US Census Bureau, 2002; Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2007; UK National Statistics, 2006) Consequently, the number of non-resident

fathers has also increased, as courts tend to favor the mother as the residential parent (De Vaus, 2004; Pasley and Braver, 2004).

The involvement of non-resident fathers with their children following divorce has been found to aid children academically, socially, and emotionally (Dunn, Cheng, O'Connor and Bridges, 2004; Menning, 2002). Although this involvement is important, very little is known regarding the context in which it occurs. Stewart (1999) determined that most non-resident parents engage in leisure activities with their child(ren) during parenting time. Nevertheless, non-resident fathers' leisure with their children has received very little attention in the research literature (Jenkins and Lyons, 2006; Menning, 2002; Pasley and Braver, 2004). Increased understanding about family leisure involvement among non-resident fathers and their children may provide insight into possible behavioral characteristics related to positive outcomes following divorce.

Today, non-resident fathers play a crucial role in the lives of their child(ren). Research has demonstrated that the absence of a father, due to divorce, is associated with child(ren) who experience juvenile delinquency, difficulty in the academic arena, and higher levels of social-emotional problems when compared to child(ren) who have a father in the home (Amato and Keith, 1991, 2001). Non-resident fathers' involvement in their child(ren)'s lives is often easiest during scheduled parenting time and this parenting time is typically established by the courts and/or by the parents (Smyth, 2005).

During parenting time, fathers have the opportunity to interact with their children. Research examining non-resident fathers' paternal involvement is typically conducted in social science fields such as family sciences, sociology and psychology. These fields have examined non-resident fathers' involvement in terms of quantity of time or frequency of visits, yet the experience of what occurs during these visits has not been fully explored. Recent literature suggests most interaction that takes place between non-resident fathers and their child(ren), occurs in a leisure setting (Jenkins and Lyons, 2006; Stewart, 1999). Therefore, by exploring the leisure patterns of non-resident fathers, a new perspective may aid researchers to better understand fathers' involvement with their child(ren) following divorce.

Non-resident father involvement

Research has seldom addressed what actually occurs during the parenting time of non-resident fathers with their child(ren). According to Menning (2002), most research has simply measured the amount of parent/child contact. He concluded,

parent/child contact does not by itself indicate that any activity takes place between the parents and child . . . it says nothing about the denseness of the activity within the block of time that contact occurs.

(Menning, 2002: 651)

One study that did examine what occurred during non-resident parenting time was conducted by Stewart (1999). She found that non-resident parents tended to engage in leisure activities with their child(ren) during parenting times. Stewart's examination of non-resident parents and their activity choices with their children is one of the few research articles examining the role of leisure and non-resident parental involvement. Stewart's classification of leisure activities, however, was limited to only a few choices (e.g., outings, play, and school-based activities).

Pasley and Braver (2004) examined instrumentation available to researchers to effectively measure fathering involvement. When examining non-resident fathers' involvement, Pasley and Braver suggested 'new measures must do more to tap the recreational dimension of divorced fathers who see their children' (2004: 236). Therefore, by examining leisure involvement between non-resident fathers and their child(ren), a better understanding of the 'recreational dimension' of parenting time patterns between non-resident fathers and their involvement may be achieved.

Family leisure patterns

The Core and Balance Model of family leisure functioning provides a framework for better understanding the leisure patterns of non-resident fathers. This model is grounded in family systems theory, particularly Olson's (2000) Circumplex Model of marital and family systems (Olson, 2000). Olson's model explains family functioning in terms of cohesion and flexibility. Because families are affected by their environments and by qualities within the family system itself, their cohesion and ability to adapt to new situations greatly affects their family dynamics. Olson's model has been used by family scholars for nearly 30 years and has become one of the more reliable models used to measure family functioning.

The Core and Balance Model of Family Leisure Functioning (Zabriskie, 2000) was informed by Olson's framework that indicates that both family cohesion and adaptability are necessary for healthy family functioning. This model indicates that there are two basic categories of family leisure activities (core and balance) directly related to the different aspects of family functioning. Core family leisure activities are primarily associated with family bonding or feelings of closeness, and usually take place at home. These activities are quite common, inexpensive, and often spontaneous, such as eating dinner together, playing games together, or having snowball fights. Balance activities are more associated with family adaptability because they enable family members to learn how to function in unusual circumstances and environments. These activities tend to be more novel and require more planning, time and money. Activities such as family vacations, camping trips, and visiting amusement parks are common balance family leisure activities (Zabriskie and McCormick, 2001). The model suggests that both categories are essential and that families who regularly participate in both core and

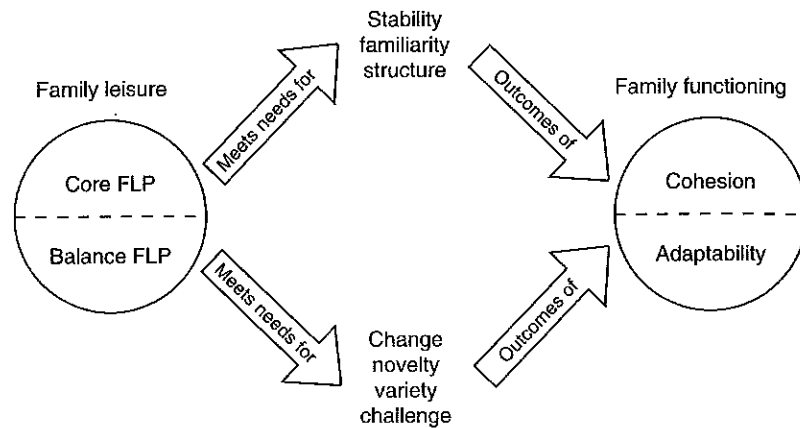


Figure 9.1 Core and Balance Model of Family Leisure Functioning

Note: FLP = Family Leisure Patterns

balance family leisure activities are likely to function higher and be more satisfied with family life than those who participate in extremely high or low amounts of either category (Figure 9.1).

It seems likely that both core and balance types of family activities are important for non-resident fathers to participate in with their child(ren) during visitation times. This leisure involvement may contribute to stronger relationships, increased feelings of closeness and bonding, and the ability to successfully adapt to challenges and changes. Such benefits are especially important within single-parent families who have likely experienced dysfunction related to divorce. Creating family leisure experiences may help ameliorate the effects of divorce in addition to creating healthier relationships between non-resident parents and their child(ren) (Smith, Taylor, Hill and Zabriskie, 2004). Satisfaction with leisure has been found to be associated with life satisfaction; therefore, the variable of leisure satisfaction during parenting time is important to consider.

Satisfaction with family leisure involvement

Satisfaction with leisure has been found to be highly indicative of life satisfaction (Russell, 1987, 1990). In 1990, Russell examined the interrelationships among leisure and other life circumstance variables, one of which was quality of life. She found that religiosity, sex, education, marital status and age were significantly related to income, health, leisure activity participation, and leisure satisfaction. These variables, however, were not found to influence quality of life directly. The only significant and direct predictor of quality of life was satisfaction with leisure involvement.

According to Zabriskie and McCormick (2003) '[if] leisure plays a substantial role in an individual's life satisfaction and quality of life . . . then it can be

hypothesized that family leisure may also be a primary contributor to family satisfaction and quality of family life' (2003: 164). In order to test this hypothesis, Zabriskie and McCormick collected data from individual family members. Study participants completed a family leisure activity profile and family satisfaction scale. Findings indicated that family leisure involvement was positively associated with family satisfaction (Zabriskie and McCormick, 2003). Furthermore, Zabriskie and McCormick determined there was a negative relationship between families who had a history of divorce and satisfaction with family life.

Both the youth and the parents reported having significantly lower levels of satisfaction with their family life if they had ever experienced divorce in their family, whether it was a current situation or if it had happened in the recent or even distant past.

(2003: 183)

These findings suggest that non-resident fathers may be more susceptible to lower levels of leisure satisfaction and satisfaction with family life, due to divorce and the subsequent limited access to leisure time with their child(ren).

The study

As divorce has increased over the last 50 years, more non-resident fathers are in a situation where parenting time with their child(ren) occurs through pre-planned visits. Such parenting time tends to occur almost entirely in a leisure setting (Stewart, 1999). Research examining non-resident fathers' parenting time with their children is needed in order to fully understand the breadth of a fathers' role in his family following divorce. This research is specifically needed from the leisure science perspective.

By using the core and balance model of family leisure functioning as a framework, non-resident fathers' leisure patterns may be better understood. The core and balance model enables researchers to better understand what activities non-resident fathers are engaging in during parenting times, the frequency and duration of each activity, and any associated benefits, such as increased cohesion or flexibility, from the leisure activities they chose to share with their children.

Because family leisure is associated with family satisfaction, it is important to examine family leisure activities and non-resident fathers' satisfaction with these activities during the non-resident fathers' parenting time. Additional benefits to leisure satisfaction also include higher life satisfaction. Because divorce is related to lower levels of life satisfaction, much can be learned from gaining a better understanding of the role of leisure satisfaction in the lives of non-resident fathers during parenting time with their children.

The study discussed in this chapter was carried out from 2005–2006. Its three objectives were first to examine and describe the family leisure of

non-resident fathers and their child(ren) during parenting time; second, to examine the differences between two parent families' and non-resident fathers' leisure patterns during parenting time; and third, to examine non-resident fathers' satisfaction with their family leisure involvement.

Methodology

Sample

The participants in this study were 170 non-resident fathers from 36 different states within the United States. Most fathers were Caucasian (81 percent) followed by Black (14 percent), Native American (3 percent), and Asian (2 percent). Their ages ranged from 23 to 64 years, with a mean of 43.7 ($SD = 8.6$) years. Seventy percent of the fathers were not remarried, and 28.8 percent were; 1.2 percent of the fathers did not answer the question. The length of divorce ranged from one month to 47 years, with an average divorce length of 3 years, not including the time separated prior to the divorce. Of the fathers who were separated, the length of separation ranged from three months to 14 years, with an average separation time of 4 years.

In order to participate in the study the men had to have at least one child between the ages of 5 and 18 years old with whom they spent parenting time (it was okay if the fathers had additional children who were younger or older). Children's ages ranged from less than 1 year to 32 with a mean of 11.68 ($SD = 5.38$) years. The number of children per father ranged from 1 to 5, with 38.8 percent of fathers having one child, 37.6 percent having two children, 15.3 percent having three children, 6.5 percent having four and 1.8 percent having five or more children. Household income ranged from less than \$10,000 to over \$150,000, the median income was \$60,000–69,000 with 64.7 percent of fathers earning less than \$80,000 per year. At about this same time in the United States (2005), the median quintile (middle fifth or 20 percent) household income was \$34,738 (US Census Bureau, 2005).

Procedures

Non-resident fathers were recruited through the National Fatherhood Initiative (NFI) affiliate organizations, the Children's Rights Council (CRC) and the National Center for Fathers (NCF). Non-resident fathers who were willing to participate were given the option of completing the questionnaire online or by a paper/pencil version. Distribution of the questionnaire occurred through email or by mailing the paper/pencil version to the respondents. Participants were not compensated for participating in this study. The study was non-random; consequently, the results of this study are limited to those who responded to the questionnaire. In addition, participants in this study may have been subject to self-selection bias.

Instrumentation

The research questionnaire was comprised of three sections. In the first section, non-resident fathers' involvement in family leisure during parenting times with their child(ren) was measured using Zabriskie's (2001) Family Leisure Activity Profile (FLAP). In the second, non-resident fathers' satisfaction with family leisure involvement was measured using Zabriskie's (2000) Family Leisure Satisfaction Scale (FLSS). Finally, a series of sociodemographic questions were included in order to effectively describe the sample.

The Family Leisure Activity Profile (FLAP) (Zabriskie, 2001) is a 16-item scale that measures the frequency and duration of participation in core and balance family activities. The first eight items measure involvement in core family leisure activities and the next eight measure involvement in balance family leisure activities (Table 9.1).

The fathers indicated their average or typical frequency of participation in the 16 activity categories with their child(ren) by marking if they participated in them with their child(ren) 'at least daily', 'at least weekly', 'at least monthly', 'at least annually' and 'never'. Duration measured how long they tended to do both core and balance activities when they did participate in

Table 9.1 Categories of core and balance family leisure activities

<i>Core family leisure activity categories</i>	<i>Balance family leisure activity categories</i>
Dinners at home	Community-based social activities (going to restaurants, parties, shopping, visiting friends/neighbors, picnics)
Home-based activities (TV, movies, reading, music)	Spectator activities (movies, sporting events, concerts, plays or theatrical performances)
Games (board games, billiards, cards, video games)	Community-based sporting activities (bowling, golf, swimming, skating)
Crafts, cooking, hobbies (drawing, painting, model building, baking)	Community-based special events (museums, zoos, theme parks, fairs)
Home-based outdoor activities (gardening, playing with pets, walks)	Outdoor activities (camping, hiking, hunting, fishing)
Home-based sport/games (playing catch, shooting baskets, bike rides, fitness activities)	Water-based activities (water skiing, jet skiing, boating sailing, canoeing)
Attend other family members' activities (watching or leading their sporting events, musical performances, scouts)	Outdoor adventure activities (rock climbing, river rafting, off-roading, scuba diving)
Religious/spiritual activities (going to church, worshiping, scripture reading, Sunday school)	Tourism activities (traveling, visiting historic sites, visiting state or national parks)

them. For core activities, there were 13 duration categories ranging from less than 1 hour to more than 10 hours and ending with 'less than one day'. For core activities, frequency categories were coded 0-4 and duration categories were coded 0-12. For balance activities, frequency was categorized and coded the same as for core frequency. Duration of balance activities ranged from less than 1 hour to 3 or more weeks, included 33 categories of duration, and was coded from 0-32. To calculate leisure involvement scores from the FLAP, the coded values for frequency and duration of participation in each activity category were multiplied, creating an ordinal index. (For this chapter, duration was only used to create core and balance involvement scores in order to compare non-resident fathers' involvement in family leisure with family leisure involvement scores from two-parent families. It was not used in any other analyses.)

The eight core items were then summed to produce a core family leisure index with a lower score meaning less involvement (a combination of low frequency and low duration) and a higher score indicating more involvement. A balance family leisure index was computed following the same process. Total family leisure involvement was then calculated by summing the core and balance index scores (Freeman and Zabriskie, 2003). The FLAP has demonstrated acceptable psychometric properties in terms of construct validity, content validity, inter-rater reliability, and test retest reliability for core ($r = .74$), balance ($r = .78$), and total family leisure involvement ($r = .78$) (Freeman and Zabriskie, 2003, Zabriskie, 2001).

The fathers' satisfaction with their family leisure involvement was measured using the Family Leisure Satisfaction Scale (FLSS) (Zabriskie 2000). Following each of the 16 FLAP questions, a follow-up question asked: 'How satisfied are you with your participation, or lack of participation, during parenting time with your non-resident children in these activities?' This was modified from the original FLSS question of, 'How satisfied are you with your participation with family members in these activities?' Participants were asked to identify their satisfaction using a Likert scale from 1 indicating 'very dissatisfied' to 5 indicating 'very satisfied'. Even if a father did not participate in the given activity this question was important because a father may have been 'very satisfied' with his non-participation. Scoring for the FLSS was calculated by summing responses to the first eight items to indicate satisfaction with core family leisure involvement and the next eight items to indicate satisfaction with involvement in balance family leisure activities, with the maximum possible score for each being 40. Total satisfaction with family leisure was computed by summing core and balance satisfaction. The FLSS had acceptable internal consistency as indicated by the coefficients of $\alpha = .934$ for satisfaction with the eight core activity categories and $\alpha = .928$ for satisfaction with the eight balance activity categories. The total satisfaction scale also had acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = .960$).

Demographic information collected included the age of the non-resident fathers and each of their child(ren), race of the non-resident fathers and each

of their child(ren), household income, marital history, duration of time since divorce, and zip code (residential area code) of the fathers.

Data analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to examine the fathers' demographic information and to portray how the fathers spent leisure time with their child(ren) during parenting times. In order to more fully understand the non-resident fathers' family leisure experience, the reported frequency of participation ('never' to 'daily') in each of the 16 activity categories on the FLAP were examined more closely in relation to the fathers' satisfaction with their family leisure involvement using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Tukey's *post hoc* tests. ANOVA determined if mean satisfaction with leisure involvement (core and balance) varied significantly by frequency of participation in family leisure activities. If there was a significant difference in level of satisfaction between frequency categories then the *post hoc* tests determined where the exact difference occurred.

A descriptive comparison of family leisure involvement between the non-resident father sample and traditional, two-parent family samples from four other studies was conducted to illustrate differences in family leisure patterns between the two types of family. Zero-order correlations were also computed to determine factors related to the fathers' satisfaction with family leisure. The correlation coefficient (r) was examined at an alpha level of .05.

Results

The first stage of the analysis was to identify non-resident fathers' broad levels of participation in leisure activities during parenting time with their children. First, non-resident fathers' participation in core leisure activities during parenting time was calculated from the responses recorded on the core family leisure index. Scores ranged from 0 to 132 with a mean score of 39.45 ($SD = 25.28$) (Table 9.2a). This score is slightly under the average score for the traditional, two-parent family leisure participation in core activities. In addition, the standard deviation (SD) is quite high, which means there is

Table 9.2a Family leisure involvement of non-resident father sample

Family leisure	Sample	N	Mean	SD
Core family leisure	Non-resident father families (2006)	170	39.45	25.28
Balance family leisure	Non-resident father families (2006)	170	38.61	26.51
Total family leisure	Non-resident father families (2006)	170	78.06	45.96

wide variation between one non-resident father's participation in core activities and another. Non-resident fathers' participation in balance family leisure involvement was then calculated in the same way, from data on the balance family leisure index. For balance family leisure, non-resident fathers' scores ranged from 0 to 122 with a mean score of 38.61 ($SD = 26.51$). Although this score was slightly lower than non-resident father's participation in core activities, the score was considerably less than those of traditional families. In addition, the standard deviation was again high, demonstrating a wide range of participation. Total family leisure ranged from 0 to 221 with a mean score of 78.06 ($SD = 45.96$), this score was also very low compared to non-divorced families. Obviously, the lower participation in balance activities by non-resident fathers impacted the total family leisure index score.

To put non-resident fathers' leisure involvement scores into perspective, comparison was made with equivalent data for two-parent families. To do this, family leisure involvement scores from four broad traditional, two-parent family samples, studied in 2000, 2005, 2006, and 2007, were set alongside the data obtained from the current non-resident fathers sample (Table 9.2b). The core family leisure index for traditional families ranged from 0 to 126 with mean scores for each study sample ranging from 42.21 to 43.2 (study $SDs = 13.22$ to 16.28). Traditional families, therefore, scored approximately 3 points higher than non-resident fathers on core leisure activities, and were more closely clustered around the mean. The differences were much greater

Table 9.2b Comparison of family leisure involvement of non-resident father sample (2006) and traditional family samples (2000, 2005, 2006, 2007)

Family leisure	Sample	N	Mean	SD
Core family leisure	Non-res. father families	170	39.45	25.28
	Traditional families (2000)	174	42.95	13.22
	Traditional families (2005)	898	44.21	15.90
	Traditional families (2006)	154	42.21	16.12
	Traditional families (2007)	495	43.26	16.28
Balance family leisure	Non-res. father families	170	38.61	26.51
	Traditional families (2000)	171	60.15	24.80
	Traditional families (2005)	898	51.30	25.68
	Traditional families (2006)	154	50.95	25.28
	Traditional families (2007)	495	49.30	24.01
Total family leisure	Non-res. father families	170	78.06	45.96
	Traditional families (2000)	167	102.51	33.37
	Traditional families (2005)	898	95.51	35.54
	Traditional families (2006)	154	93.17	36.91
	Traditional families (2007)	495	92.56	34.61

for balance activities: for traditional families, balance family leisure index scores ranged from 0 to 179 with mean scores from 49.30 to 60.15 ($SD = 24.01$ to 25.68). Traditional families, therefore, recorded much higher mean scores than the 38.61 recorded by the non-resident fathers' sample. This was also reflected in traditional families' scores for total family leisure which ranged from 0 to 252 with mean scores from 92.56 to 102.51 ($SD = 33.37$ to 36.91), all notably higher than the mean score of 78.06 for non-resident fathers.

The next stage in the analysis involved identifying non-resident fathers' frequency of participation in leisure activities during parenting time spent with their children. Analysis of the frequency of participation in the eight core family leisure activity categories (i.e. those that are primarily associated with family cohesion) indicated that the majority of non-resident fathers did participate in common, everyday, home-based core types of leisure with their children on a fairly regular basis (see Table 9.3). Fathers were sharing meals with their children, playing board games, or playing sports outside during their allocated parenting time. The frequency of participation in the eight balance family leisure activity categories (that are primarily associated with family flexibility) were much lower and indicated that many non-resident fathers did not participate in the less common, out of the ordinary, challenging or novel balance types of leisure activities with their children (see Table 9.4) such as camping trips, traveling/sightseeing, or participating in water-sports (waterskiing, surfing, kayaking etc. . .).

The analysis next focused on the issue of leisure satisfaction. Using the Likert-type scale as described previously, non-resident fathers' leisure satisfaction ranged from 8 to 40 ($M = 27.19$, $SD = 8.99$) for core leisure activities (Table 9.3) and between 8 and 40 ($M = 25.66$, $SD = 8.58$) for balance leisure activities (Table 9.4). These scores indicate the fathers experienced the full range of satisfaction for both core and balance leisure activities. Furthermore, these results indicate that the fathers were slightly more satisfied with their core family leisure participation than their balance family leisure participation but that the differences between the two were relatively small. Both mean scores lie below the midpoint on the scale, indicating a slightly negative level of satisfaction. The two scores were then summed to give a score for total leisure satisfaction that ranged from 16–80 ($M = 52.85$, $SD = 16.89$).

To more fully investigate the differences in fathers' satisfaction with participating in core and balance family leisure, 16 ANOVAs were computed. The ANOVAs were used to determine if there were significant differences between satisfaction with core and balance family leisure involvement and how frequently the fathers participated in each of the 16 activity categories with their child(ren). This was done to assess if higher frequency of participation corresponded with higher levels of satisfaction.

The results confirmed there was a difference in satisfaction with leisure involvement based on frequency of participation. For the eight core family

Table 9.3 Comparison of frequency of participation in each core family leisure activity category with satisfaction with core family leisure involvement

Core family leisure activity category	Frequency of participation	N	%	Mean satisfaction core family leisure involvement	SD
Dinners at home	At least daily	11	6	24.64	10.86
	At least weekly	31	18	29.35	6.89
	At least monthly	48	28	30.44	5.74
	At least annually	48	28	29.92	7.80
	Never	32	18	17.03	8.60
Home-based activities (TV, movies, reading, music)	At least daily	7	4	33.00	4.83
	At least weekly	29	17	28.41	6.48
	At least monthly	52	30	28.92	6.65
	At least annually	51	30	31.47	6.66
	Never	31	18	14.81	7.68
Games (board games, billiards, cards, video games)	At least daily	6	4	29.33	7.58
	At least weekly	37	22	29.29	5.98
	At least monthly	54	32	30.72	7.28
	At least annually	29	17	29.65	7.95
	Never	44	26	19.18	9.22
Crafts, cooking, hobbies (drawing, painting, baking, model building)	At least daily	11	6	31.90	5.68
	At least weekly	39	23	29.79	6.00
	At least monthly	41	24	29.17	8.59
	At least annually	19	11	31.15	7.15
	Never	60	35	22.03	9.69
Home-based outdoor activities (gardening, playing with pets, walks)	At least daily	12	7	30.75	7.60
	At least weekly	43	25	28.88	5.45
	At least monthly	48	28	30.97	7.04
	At least annually	28	16	30.82	7.26
	Never	39	23	16.97	8.32
Home-based sport/games (playing catch, shooting baskets, bike rides, fitness activities)	At least daily	9	5	30.44	6.94
	At least weekly	46	27	29.23	5.91
	At least monthly	42	25	31.19	7.01
	At least annually	25	15	30.72	6.53
	Never	48	28	19.29	9.68
Attend other family, members' activities (watching/leading sport events, musical performances, scouts)	At least daily	3	16	29.46	6.51
	At least weekly	37	34	29.38	6.39
	At least monthly	57	22	32.62	4.83
	At least annually	28	2	33.66	2.08
	Never	45	26	18.11	9.58
Religious/spiritual, activities (going to church, worshiping scripture reading, Sunday school)	At least daily	8	5	32.37	5.95
	At least weekly	33	19	30.12	6.42
	At least monthly	34	20	29.97	6.93
	At least annually	9	5	35.88	4.16
	Never	86	51	23.58	9.59

Table 9.4 Comparison of frequency of participation in each balance family leisure activity with satisfaction with balance family leisure involvement

Balance family leisure activity category	Frequency of participation	N	%	Mean satisfaction with balance family leisure involvement	SD
Community-based social activities (going to restaurants, parties, shopping, visiting friends/neighbors)	At least daily	7	4	31.71	4.03
	At least weekly	54	32	29.15	5.81
	At least monthly	68	40	27.24	6.39
	At least annually	13	8	28.77	5.57
	Never	28	16	12.14	6.48
Spectator activities (movies, sporting events, concerts, plays or theatrical performances)	At least daily	3	2	28.00	3.46
	At least weekly	18	11	28.83	6.92
	At least monthly	78	46	28.73	5.42
	At least annually	31	18	29.10	5.24
	Never	40	24	15.40	8.77
Community-based sporting activities (bowling, golf, swimming, skating)	At least daily	3	2	20.66	11.01
	At least weekly	15	9	30.80	4.17
	At least monthly	57	34	28.84	5.63
	At least annually	24	14	30.33	5.38
	Never	71	42	20.64	9.37
Community-based special events (visiting museums, zoos, theme parks, fairs)	At least daily	1	1	26.00	—
	At least weekly	6	4	26.83	6.46
	At least monthly	40	24	29.02	6.09
	At least annually	77	45	29.09	5.54
	Never	46	27	16.82	8.80
Outdoor activities (camping, hiking, hunting, fishing)	At least daily	2	1	21.50	6.36
	At least weekly	8	5	26.00	7.83
	At least monthly	25	15	30.48	5.04
	At least annually	66	39	29.81	5.87
	Never	69	41	20.01	8.71
Water-based activities (water skiing, jet skiing, boating sailing, canoeing)	At least daily	1	1	40.00	—
	At least weekly	4	2	31.25	3.77
	At least monthly	13	8	30.38	4.66
	At least annually	44	26	31.38	5.37
	Never	108	64	22.41	8.48
Outdoor adventure activities (rock climbing, river rafting, off-roading, scuba diving)	At least daily	3	2	30.33	7.32
	At least weekly	4	2	29.75	2.21
	At least monthly	6	4	25.33	10.38
	At least annually	28	16	30.85	4.78
	Never	129	76	24.31	8.85
Tourism activities (traveling, visiting historic sites, visiting state or national parks)	At least daily	1	1	26.00	—
	At least weekly	1	1	27.00	—
	At least monthly	8	5	29.50	1.92
	At least annually	85	50	29.65	5.71
	Never	75	44	20.69	9.26

leisure activity categories, all eight ANOVAs indicated an overall significant difference in mean core satisfaction scores according to fathers' frequency of participation. Tukey's HSD *post hoc* tests were then used to investigate the relationship between satisfaction levels and the five specified frequencies of participation, i.e. at least daily, weekly, monthly, annually and never. Tukey's HSD *post hoc* tests revealed that satisfaction with core family leisure by fathers who 'never' participated in the activity was significantly lower than those who participated 'at least annually', 'at least monthly', 'at least weekly' or 'at least daily'. Doing an activity 'at least annually' resulted in a higher level of satisfaction than never doing the activity with their child(ren) during parenting times. There were, however, no other significant subgroup differences (i.e., weekly vs. monthly vs. annually) in satisfaction scores, showing that how frequently fathers participated did not matter to satisfaction levels: what mattered was whether or not fathers participated in the activity with their children at all. It is perhaps surprising that high levels of participation did not increase levels of satisfaction, and interesting that even infrequent participation – 'at least annually' – was sufficient to do so.

Equivalent analysis was applied to balance family leisure activities. For the eight balance family leisure activity categories, all eight ANOVAs indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between fathers' overall family leisure satisfaction score for each category of activity based on their frequency of participation in those activities. Tukey's *post hoc* test again found that non-resident fathers who participated at a minimal level (at least annually) demonstrated higher levels of satisfaction than those who never participated. For participation in community-based sporting activities (swimming, bowling, skating, etc.) and participation in outdoor activities (hiking, camping, fishing, etc.) satisfaction with balance activities was not significantly different for those who 'never' do them compared to those who do them 'at least annually'. These findings indicate that 'never' doing the activity and doing the activity 'at least annually' resulted in similar satisfaction scores for these non-resident fathers. These satisfaction scores, however, were significantly lower than for those fathers who participated in these activities at least daily, weekly, or monthly with their child(ren) during parenting times.

Zero order correlations were used to help examine the relationship between two variables while ignoring the influence of other variables. The zero order correlations among study variables indicated that non-resident fathers' family leisure satisfaction increased as participation in both core ($r = .534$) and balance ($r = .588$) activities increased (see Table 9.5). Together, core and balance activities (total family leisure) had a significant relationship to total satisfaction ($r = .639$). Income was another predictor of higher leisure satisfaction. Higher income resulted in higher satisfaction with both core ($r = .277$) and balance activities ($r = .308$). It appears income plays a significant role in determining the type and frequency of leisure activities that fathers are able to engage in with their children during parenting time. Because of the circumstances of divorce, money is a necessary facilitator

Table 9.5 Zero order correlations among study variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. FLSS total	1	0.963**	0.959**	-0.015	0.002	0.081	0.119	0.277**	0.534**	0.588**	0.639**
2. FLSS Core		1	0.846**	-0.060	0.003	0.029	0.051	0.227**	0.559**	0.472**	0.586**
3. FLSS Balance			1	0.033	0.000	0.129	0.181*	0.308**	0.465**	0.663**	0.644**
4. No. children				1	-0.005	-0.097	-0.014	0.031	0.103	0.184**	0.167*
5. Remarried					1	0.073	0.107	0.254**	-0.010	0.056	0.025
6. Age						1	0.139	0.271**	0.041	0.182*	0.125
7. Ethnicity							1	0.426**	0.089	0.251**	0.190*
8. Annual income								1	0.124	0.343**	0.263**
9. Core									1	0.542**	0.875**
10. Balance										1	0.881**
11. Total leisure											1

Note: * $p < 0.05$ (2-tailed); ** $p < 0.01$ (2-tailed); FLSS = family leisure satisfaction scale

for fathers to engage in both core and balance activities (even if they are minimal, such as transportation for the child). If a father can afford to engage in leisure activities with his child(ren) then his satisfaction is significantly higher than a father who cannot engage at all.

Discussion

Non-resident fathers' leisure patterns

Contrary to popular belief or perception, the non-resident fathers' leisure patterns in this study were primarily home based, inexpensive activities done on a fairly regular basis (core activities). These activities included eating meals together, playing games, attending children's performances/sporting activities, attending church together, or playing outside around the house.

In the early 1970s terms such as 'Disneyland dad' became commonly used to characterize non-resident fathers' leisure patterns when they had time with their children. The term alludes to non-resident fathers spending large amounts of money on their children during parenting time, or treating their children to extravagant activities seemingly to replace daily, routine time at home with their children. According to this study, however, participation in balance activities (activities that require time, money and planning, such as family vacations or adventure activities) was much lower than participation in core activities. This finding is consistent with Stewart's (1999) examination of the types of activities non-resident parents engage in with their children. Stewart examined both non-resident mothers and fathers and found that non-resident fathers tended to not spend excess amounts of money or attend extraordinary events/activities while engaging in parenting time with their children. Her conclusion was that non-resident fathers did not deserve the 'Disneyland Dad' stereotype. Current findings support her claim.

Furthermore, when non-resident fathers' family leisure patterns were compared to those from traditional family samples, non-resident fathers' core scores were not much lower than the core scores from any of the traditional family samples. This may be an indicator of the essential nature of this type of family leisure involvement. Participation together in these common, everyday, home-based types of family activities are said to provide 'predictable family leisure experiences that foster personal relatedness and feelings of family closeness or cohesion' (Zabriskie and McCormick 2003: 169). Zabriskie and McCormick (2003) also found that children reported higher levels of satisfaction with family life when engaging in core activities with their family members versus balance activities. They explained that youth appeared 'to have a greater need for stability, consistency, and regularity in their preferences for family leisure involvement' and that they 'may simply desire to attain a stable sense of belongingness and closeness through family leisure' (2003: 182). Although data were not collected from children in this sample, the higher participation in core family leisure by non-resident

fathers seems likely to reflect a similar and perhaps even greater need for stability and consistency as well as 'the desire to attain a stable sense of belongingness and closeness through family leisure' (2003: 182) from both children and non-resident fathers.

Although non-resident fathers engaged in high levels of core activities, their participation in balance activities with their children during parenting time was much lower when compared to traditional family samples. These findings are consistent with Smith, Taylor, Hill and Zabriskie (2004) who examined family leisure among young adults who were raised in single-parent homes. Smith stated, 'single-parent families participated in considerably less balance leisure, but not significantly less core leisure than dual-parent families' (2004: 54).

Because single-parent families and non-resident fathers are engaging in lower levels of balance activities when compared to other families, the associated leisure benefit of increased flexibility may be limited. Flexibility is an essential component of family functioning. Given the unique circumstances of divorce, it seems increasing family flexibility would be important for strengthening the family system following divorce for both the non-resident parent, and the child(ren). Likewise, the very nature and dynamics of divorced families are likely to demand the development of basic adaptive and flexible family skills. Perhaps when facing limited time together, however, the need to further develop these traits through balance types of family leisure falls second in priority to the need to redevelop and maintain the foundation of stable relationships and feelings of closeness related to core family leisure involvement. Either way, it appears that participation in both core and balance leisure activities with their children is desired among non-resident fathers.

Because divorce results in an array of parenting time agreements, opportunities to engage in both core and balance activities may not be possible for all non-resident parents. Many fathers indicated 'never' participating in each of the categories of family leisure activities. Non-resident fathers who do not have access to their children for longer periods of time are at a disadvantage when engaging in balance activities because traditional balance activities (e.g. camping, traveling, summer vacations) require longer periods of time for participation. There may be value for non-resident fathers in creating balance activities by planning with their child(ren), during their time together in their familiar environment, an extraordinary activity in the near future that can be anticipated and organized together. The additional planning for this activity should create a distinction between regular core activities that occur during parenting time, even if the balance activity must be completed in the same length of time as traditional parenting core activities, in order to comply with the parenting time arrangements. This necessary planning and preparation should help create flexibility between the non-resident father and child(ren) as their planning likely will include communication and compromise.

Another limitation fathers may experience to engaging in balance activities is a perceived constraint related to income. Although fathers in this sample reported an annual income that was higher than the US median, a negative correlation was found between income and perceived constraints to family leisure participation. The financial challenges of being a non-resident father may influence their perception of their ability to afford to participate in balance activities such as a summer holiday or a weekend at the lake. Although non-resident fathers may not be able to ameliorate their financial situation in lieu of their child support payment obligations, community programs may be able to facilitate more affordable 'balance type' activities such as community fun-runs, participating in a parade, or competing in a community cook-off.

Non-resident fathers' leisure satisfaction

Non-resident fathers who 'never' engaged in certain activities with their children indicated the lowest levels of leisure satisfaction. Non-resident fathers who were able to participate in certain activities 'at least annually' with their children demonstrated a much higher level of satisfaction. This suggests that if non-resident fathers can engage in some family leisure activities with their children during parenting time, even if it is infrequently, they will have a significantly increased level of leisure satisfaction.

Because leisure satisfaction is related to life satisfaction (Russell, 1987; 1990), increased leisure satisfaction during parenting time is likely to benefit life satisfaction among non-resident fathers. The ability to empirically identify a behavioral characteristic related to higher life satisfaction has considerable implications for non-resident fathers. Zabriskie and McCormick (2003) found a negative correlation between families who had a history of divorce and family satisfaction and reported that 'both the youth and the parents reported having significantly lower levels of satisfaction with their family life if they had ever experienced divorce in their family, whether it was a current situation or if it had happened in the recent or even distant past' (2003: 183). Similarly, the current findings suggest that non-resident fathers are likely to be more susceptible to lower levels of satisfaction with family life, due to divorce and limited access to leisure time with their family. Empirical evidence also suggests that simply increasing the amount of shared family leisure between non-resident fathers and their children is not only related to positive outcomes for the child (Dunn *et al.*, 2004; Menning, 2002) but also contributes to higher satisfaction for the non-resident father. Therefore, court decisions and parenting time negotiations evidently should consider the amount of family leisure time needed when determining parenting time for non-resident fathers.

Further research

Findings from this study provide considerable insight into the family leisure involvement of non-resident fathers. Further research is needed, however, to further examine and understand other aspects and outcomes related to family leisure among non-resident parents and their children. Examining leisure constraints and leisure facilitators from a parent and child perspective for example, would likely add further insight into the dynamic of family leisure among this growing population. Not only would such research identify current constraints that need to be addressed but successful approaches to negotiation could be identified. Related variables such as life satisfaction, family satisfaction, and family functioning should also be included in future studies with this population. Further examination into the meaning and importance of family leisure for non-resident fathers and their children, particularly core family leisure involvement is also recommended. Such studies would also benefit from qualitative approaches.

Because divorce results in a vast array of parenting time schedules for the non-resident parent, it is also recommended that future research examine and compare the leisure patterns of fathers who are given different amounts of parenting time – for instance, non-resident fathers who have parenting time once a month compared to those who have it once a week or once a year. From this perspective, researchers could better understand parenting arrangements, given the circumstances of divorce, and the role of leisure involvement and satisfaction within that context. While this study was able to measure how often fathers engaged in certain activities it did not ask specific information about the parenting time arrangements agreed upon following divorce. This information would enable researchers to determine the percentage of non-resident parenting time that is generally spent in family leisure, and how it related to other outcome variables. Overall, it appears that family leisure plays an important role for non-resident fathers and their children, and is an area requiring further research.