

# Nonresident Mothers<sup>1</sup>

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Figure 1.  
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We read and hear stories with some frequency about “deadbeat dads” or those nonresident fathers who fail to make child support payments. The issue has prompted numerous studies and legislative action as well. But have you ever heard of a “deadbeat mom”? Not likely or rarely. This is a growing problem that has remained largely under the radar.

In a recent study conducted by Urban Institute, in collaboration with Child Trends, researchers reported that in 2002, 4.7 million children did not live with their mothers. This was a million more children than just 5 years earlier. These children face different challenges than those without fathers.

Drawing from the 2002 National Survey of America’s families, the researchers found that nonresident mothers are more likely to be poor than nonresident fathers. According to the research, 11% of nonresident fathers were poor compared to 27 percent of nonresident mothers. Without economic resources, these women are also less likely to pay child support than fathers.

Another striking difference among these mothers and fathers was the outcomes for their children. The report explains that when the father is nonresident, 90% of the time they are with the mother. However, when mothers are nonresident, their fathers are often unavailable as well. And those children who live with non-parental caregivers such as grandparents are also likely to experience relatively high rates of poverty. Concerns for the welfare of these children will no doubt draw greater attention from researchers and policy makers addressing the needs of children and nonresidential parents who face many struggles.

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## References

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National Council on Family Relations: [http://www.ncfr.org/about\\_us/n\\_news\\_announcements.asp?newsid=1195](http://www.ncfr.org/about_us/n_news_announcements.asp?newsid=1195)