Step-parenting

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Abstract:
Many Australian children spend part of their childhood living in a step-family and many will grow up to be the step-parents of tomorrow. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] (2007), approximately one in ten couple families contain resident stepchildren. In Wave 3 of the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey, 13% of households had either residential or non-residential step-children, or both (Qu & Weston, 2005). Early research, both in Australia and overseas, has found that children often experience difficulty adjusting to the changes associated with their parents’ repartnering, especially in regard to developing a relationship with a parent’s new partner, the step-parent. This chapter focuses on the role of the step-parent and presents an overview of research and clinical literature that informs our understanding of the role and experiences of being or having a step-parent.

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