



# **The Stepfamily Puzzle: Intergenerational Influences (Journal of Divorce and Remarriage, Vol 19, No 3/4)**

*Craig Everett*

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Do stepfamilies experience greater levels of stressors than first families? Do they also experience more negative manifestations of stress? Find the latest research on these questions and more in this groundbreaking exploration of the complex factors and dynamics that make up stepfamilies. The Stepfamily Puzzle fills a gap in research that has not kept pace with the rapid growth of interest in this subject. It sets some of the pieces of the stepfamily puzzle into an intergenerational framework that includes the roles of grandparents, parent-child interactions, the struggles to define boundaries and achieve marital intimacy, and the underlying effects of financial support on stepfamily well-being. The Stepfamily Puzzle compares the effects of stress in stepfamilies and conditions in other families and reveals that the differences between the two types of families may not be as dramatic as long assumed. It also examines in-depth the emotional and financial stressors that impact stepfamilies and how this stress is exhibited in family relationships. Other groundbreaking research presented in this book includes:

- the closeness of relationships between children and grandparents in stepfamilies as compared to children and grandparents in first families
  - effects of ongoing attachment to the former spouse on post-divorce relationships
  - stepsibling subsystems
  - a comparison of self-esteem and behavior problems of stepchildren and children in other family structures
  - social support received by children in stepmother, stepfather, and intact families
  - quality of stepfather-adolescent relationships
  - effect of child support on stepfamily satisfaction
- Therapists, attorneys, and those interested in the numerous therapeutic and psychoeducational programs, self-help groups, and trade literature available on stepfamily relationships will find The Stepfamily Puzzle a valuable introduction to current research in this area. By presenting the complex variables that interact within stepfamilies, this book helps professionals understand the dynamics behind stepfamily relationships so they can provide effective support and care.

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