

MARITAL INTERACTIONS AND PARENT - CHILD CONFLICT: THE MODERATING  
ROLE OF COPARENTING

by

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To my supportive and loving parents, thank you for always believing in me.

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ROLE OF COPARENTING

by

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MARITAL INTERACTIONS AND PARENT-CHILD CONFLICT: THE MODERATING  
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The University of Texas at Dallas, 2020

Supervising Professor: Jackie A. Nelson, Chair

Greater marital conflict relates to more parent-child conflict. However, parent-child conflicts can be navigated in different ways (i.e., collaborative and oppositional conflict qualities).

Additionally, the way parents communicate with each other and in their relationship with their child may be influenced by the support they perceive from their partner in their parenting role.

The current study was broken into two parts. First, I investigated coparenting support as an enhancer or buffer of the link between marital behaviors and mother-child conflict, depending on the valence of the marital behaviors (i.e., positive or negative) and mother-child conflict quality (i.e., collaborative or oppositional). Second, I investigated coparenting as a buffer of the link between mothers' and fathers' negative marital behaviors and oppositional parent-child conflict. Multilevel modeling was used in a sample of 142 families with a 5- to 8-year old child. Results revealed that on days parents engaged in more negative behaviors toward their spouse than usual, they were more likely to have a conflict with their child. In this study, coparenting did not serve as a buffer between parents' marital behaviors and parent-child conflict interactions. Results are

discussed in terms of the importance of understanding family system processes that unfold over time in predicting parent-child conflict interactions.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

It is well-documented in the field that marital interactions influence parent-child relationships (Erel & Burman, 1995). For example, greater marital conflict relates to more parent-child conflict (Smith, Nelson, & Adelson, 2019). However, parent-child conflicts can be navigated in different ways. Collaborative conflict qualities include parents and children negotiating and working together to solve problems. On the other hand, oppositional conflict qualities include hostile and contentious arguments with a focus on blaming rather than problem-solving. Parents' ability to communicate with their partner during a conflict reflects in their abilities to communicate with their child during conflict. For example, we know negative interactions between parents have been shown to lead to more negative interactions between parents and children (Conger, Ge, Elder, Lorenz, & Simons, 1994). Conversely, we also know that parents' positive interactions between each other can lead to less negative interactions between parents and children (Amato, 1986; Frosch, Mangelsdorf, & McHale, 2000). However, the way parents communicate with each other and in their relationship with their child may be influenced by the support they perceive from their partner in their parenting role.

Coparenting is defined as extent to which parents' utilize shared efforts and supportive alliance between each other to raise their child (Margolin, Gordis, & John, 2001). Supportive coparenting relationships are characterized by solidarity, consistency in supportive behaviors between partners, and mutual attunement to children's needs (McHale, 1997). Coparenting quality is associated with positive parent-child relationships (Pedro, Ribeiro, & Shelton, 2012) and children's social and emotional adjustment (Katz, 2004). Specifically, early school-age

children benefit from supportive coparenting with increased attention, academic achievement, and activity and independence to learn (Dopkins & Neitzel, 2003). Additionally, coparenting is associated with marital relationship quality, such that positive marital behaviors are seen more often in homes with supportive and harmonious coparenting (McHale, 1995), and negative marital behaviors are seen more often in home with hostile-competitive and less supportive coparenting (Schoppe-Sullivan, Mangelsdorf, Frosch, & McHale, 2004). Although the coparenting and marital relationships have similar attributes, these constructs are considered conceptually distinct.

To account for these distinctions and the complexities of the family system, the current study was broken into two parts. There has been limited research investigating both positive and negative marital behaviors with parent-child conflict qualities and how these systems interact with coparenting. The first part of this study investigated coparenting support as either an enhancer or buffer of the link between marital behaviors and mother-child conflict, depending on the valence of the marital behaviors (i.e., positive or negative) and mother-child conflict (i.e., collaborative or oppositional). There have been numerous studies relating negative marital behaviors and hostile parent-child conflict concurrently and longitudinally (e.g., Gerard, Krishnakumar, & Buehler, 2006; Gonzales, Pitts, Hill, & Roosa, 2000; Steinberg & Silk, 2002). However, literature investigating the father's role within the daily context of these negative marital behaviors and conflict characteristics has been lacking. A more comprehensive look into the role coparenting plays on the association between mothers' and fathers' negative marital behaviors and parent-child conflict qualities is needed. For this reason, the second part of the

current study investigated coparenting as a buffer of the link between mothers' and fathers' negative marital behaviors and oppositional parent-child conflict.

### **Coparenting and Marital Relationships**

Married adults with children have to manage both their marital relationship and their coparenting relationship, and this may be especially difficult for families experiencing high conflict across roles (Katz & Low, 2004; McHale, 1995; Schoppe, Mangelsdorf, & Frosch, 2001). Coparenting and marital quality are related such that both constructs involve two people in a romantic relationship working together in a collaborative dyad within the family system (Kolak & Volling, 2007). The coparenting and marital relationships link multiple subsystems within the family including the mother's parenting and marital role, the father's parenting and marital role, and the child (Cox, Paley, & Harter, 2001). Positive marital behaviors consist of positive interactions containing intimacy and companionship that create a healthy and supportive marital relationship (Driver & Gottman, 2004). These behaviors lead to less frequent marital conflict, and when marital conflict does arise, partners who report more positive behaviors within their relationship experience minimalized negativity in their conflict interactions (Feeny, 2002). Effective management of negativity in the marital relationship is crucial for the quality of the coparenting relationship (Feinberg, 2003). For example, being able to compromise and come to a conflict resolution within the marital relationship increases the likelihood of partners parenting effectively together due to the fact that these relationships tend to be characterized by good communication and support (Webster-Stratton & Hammond, 1999). Additionally, there is evidence to suggest consistent beliefs and goals in parenting can bring partners together to foster a stronger marital connection (Crnic & Low, 2002), such that parents with similar parenting

beliefs and goals work in synchrony to parent their child and ultimately feel closer to their marital partner. Thus, coparenting relationships can be an important area of cooperation or discord between marital partners.

Although the coparenting and marital relationships are considered overlapping, it is important to recognize that these constructs are conceptually distinct from each other in a few important ways (Belsky, 1998; Margolin, Gordis, & John, 2001). First, while coparenting dynamics include the child, marital dynamics, even though influenced by parenting issues, do not always include the child. Parents can still interact negatively with their partner during conflict, yet come together in an alliance to support each other in responding to their child's needs. Second, although higher relationship stress has been related to parents perceiving a less supportive coparenting relationship (Schoppe-Sullivan, Magelsdorf, Frosch, & McHale, 2004), parents' management of stress in the context of parenting can be different from managing stress within their marital relationship. For example, even if parents portray negative relationship behaviors towards each other, parents' may protect their child from repeated exposure to marital stress and collaborate in childrearing despite their negative feelings towards their partner (Sullivan, 2008; Talbot & McHale, 2004). In fact, quality coparenting may serve as an important buffer for children in families characterized by high marital negativity. Thus, it is important to recognize that although the marital and coparenting relationships are interrelated, they are distinct constructs that are not interchangeable.

### **Marital Behaviors and Parent-Child Conflict Interactions**

Literature has shown that how couples communicate and engage with each other reflects in parents' relationships with their children (Belsky, Putnam, & Crnic, 1996; Feinburg & Kan,

2008). For example, hostile marital interactions have been shown to increase negativity in the parent-child relationship, which in turn, affects children's social, emotional, and cognitive development (Grych, Fincham, Jouriles, & McDonald, 2000; Grych, 2005). The spillover hypothesis from Family Systems Theory suggests the allocation of negative emotions and behaviors can be directly transferred from one family relationship to another (e.g., spillover from parent to child). According to this theory, the family system consists of a unit in which every family member plays a role. The unit can be broken down into smaller components or subsystems, such as the marital, parent-child, coparenting, and sibling relationships (Erel and Burman, 1995). The family subsystems (i.e., marital, parent-child) influence and interconnect behaviorally and emotionally with one another (Erel and Burman, 1995; Gonzales, Pitts, Hill, & Roosa, 2000). Therefore, tension and hostility within the marital relationship can increase parents' negative affect during conflict interactions with their children (Morris, Silk, Steinberg, Myers, & Robinson, 2007; Rinaldi & Howe, 1998). Alternatively, positive aspects of the marital relationship may enrich parent-child relationships, such that positive marital interactions increase parents' emotional availability and school-age children's feelings of emotional security in the parent-child relationship (Frosch, Mangelsdorf, & McHale, 2000).

Marital stressors are known to affect parents' mood (Bolger, DeLongis, Kessler, & Schilling, 1989), and parents experiencing more stress are more likely to experience conflict with their children (Steinberg, 2001). Negative marital behaviors may increase the likelihood of parent-child conflict occurring (Almeida, Wethington, & Chandler, 1999; Bradford, Vaughn, & Barber, 2008). Specifically, more negative marital relationship behaviors such as conflict, undermining, and hostility make it more likely that parents and children will find themselves in

contentious interactions (El-Sheikh & Elmore-Staton, 2004). These contentious interactions can lead to children's emotional maladjustment. For example, Davies and Cummings (1994) report the frequency of marital conflict is linked to children's emotional insecurity, distress, and aggression, all of which increase the likelihood of later parent-child conflict interactions (Almeida, Wethington, & Chandler, 1999; Cummings, Iannotti, & Zahn-Waxler, 1985; Webster-Stratton, 1990).

In addition to negative marital behaviors increasing the likelihood of parent-child conflict (Davies & Cummings, 1994), once a conflict occurs between parents and children, more negative marital behaviors reported by parents are associated with more contentious forms of parent-child conflict (El-Sheikh & Elmore-Staton, 2004). For example, Nelson, Boyer, Villarreal, and Smith (2017) showed that daily relationship stress was uniquely related to mother-child conflict qualities, such that mothers reporting more negative marital behaviors reported more mother-child conflict interactions characterized by negative reactivity, hostility, and punitive behaviors with their 5-to 8-year-old child on those same days.

Spillover between family subsystems can also involve positive behaviors. Greenberger and colleagues (1994) provide evidence that positive features of both mothers' and fathers' work environment, such as complexity and stimulation, were linked to positive parenting behaviors including increased warmth and responsiveness to their child. Additionally, there is evidence that positive marital interactions can enrich the parent-child relationship (Erel & Burman, 1995). For example, expressions of understanding, validation, or compliments during marital conflict are linked to more positive parent-child conflict interactions (Webster-Stratton & Hammond, 1999). These supportive marital behaviors allow parents to have more patience and model similar



behaviors towards their children (Peterson & Zill, 1986); they also provide a model of negotiation and positive conflict resolution for children to mimic during future conflicts (Grych, & Fincham, 1990).

There are a number of reasons why spillover might occur between marital and parent-child relationships. First, children tend to imitate their parents' behaviors (Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1993). Thus, negative marital interactions may relate to children's greater negativity and opposition toward their parents. Additionally, relationship stress may increase negative parent-child conflict interactions through children's lack of emotional security in a stressful environment (Davies & Cummings, 1994). Children's compromised emotional security can lead to later difficulties in regulating emotions and coping with stressful events, such as parent-child conflict interactions (Davies & Cummings, 1994; Repetti, Taylor, & Seeman, 2002). For example, children from homes exhibiting negative parental behaviors may exhibit avoidance or externalizing behaviors (i.e., verbal or physical aggression) as an attempt to reduce the impact or their exposure to marital conflict within the home (Morris, Silk, Steinberg, Myers, & Robinson, 2007). Furthermore, relationship stress may spill over into parent-child conflict interactions through emotion socialization where parents' respond, discuss, and provide exemplary models of how children should properly express and regulate their emotions during conflict interactions (Zeman, Cassano, Perry-Parrish, & Stegall, 2006). Relationship stress affects the emotion socialization messages parents pass to their children, such that parents' availability to guide children through coping strategies and health-promoting ways to think about and experience emotions is hindered by negative stressful experiences (Maccoby, 1992). These difficulties are likely to increase the likelihood of negative parent-child conflict interactions. Stress may also

occur from the compilation of marital problems compromising parents' patience and emotional availability with their child. The accumulation of stress in the marital relationship is related to more negativity in other family relationships, including the parent-child relationship. Kitzmann (2000) found this accumulation of stress in the marriage was related to children experiencing harsher parenting practices including harsher punishments or verbal attacks due to parents' heightened anger and frustration created by on-going marital problems (Gao, Davies, & Cummings, 2018; Kitzmann, 2000).

Another Family Systems Theory process related to family functioning is crossover. Like spillover, crossover involves the transfer of affect or behaviors across subsystems. However, the crossover process is different in that this transfer of affect occurs between individuals, as opposed to within one individual's multiple roles. Crossover can occur when the stress of the marital relationship experienced by one partner is detrimental to the other partner's relationship with the child. One way crossover can occur is through a lack of clarity in parents' roles within the home and marital relationship. A lack of clear expectations within varying roles and role overload (i.e., taking on more responsibilities within family relationships than the partner) are thought to increase strain within the marital relationship and carry over to other roles within the home (i.e., parental role; Duxbury & Higgins, 1991; Reppetti, 1989). The strain one parent feels is outwardly expressed towards their partner through negative behaviors like hostility, aggression, and tension in the home, which increases the likelihood of the partner experiencing similar negative emotions. Thus, if one parent experiences marital role strain, the other parent is apt to experience feelings of stress, and this negative affect is likely to crossover to partners' interactions with children. Crossover can also occur through parents' expression of negative

affect among family members. Newland, Ciciolla, and Crnic (2015) found parents' emotions impacted other interpersonal relationships in the home through outwardly-expressed behaviors. For example, hostility is prone to transmission across family members, such that hostility in one parent may transmit to the other parent, which in turn, may result in greater hostility expressed toward the child.

**Parent gender differences.** Associations between the marital and parent-child relationships may differ based on parent gender. Mothers and fathers tend to respond differently to relationship stress (McBride, Schoppe, & Rane, 2002). For example, mothers report experiencing stress more frequently than fathers do, and they tend to appraise stress as more threatening in comparison to fathers (Matud, 2004). Mothers are more often exposed to daily stressors related to their role as a spouse and parent, and they are more likely to report family life as stressful due to the many responsibilities mothers take on within the home (Repetti & Wood, 1997). In addition, mothers tend to be more direct with their feelings and express their burdens of household and relationship responsibilities and demands to their spouse in comparison to fathers (Toussaint & Webb, 2005). On the other hand, fathers tend to be more emotionally withdrawn and avoidant within marital and family conflict compared to mothers, which can further increase mothers' stress and role overload (Grych, 2002). Unlike mothers, fathers are less likely to seek out comfort from their partner and tend to take a more resilient or internalizing approach to coping with marital stress (Benzies, Harrison, & Magill-Evans, 2004). Additionally, fathers tend to rely more on mothers to inform their parenting role, which is less well defined in our society (Parke, 2002) Together, these findings suggest that mothers may be at a greater likelihood of conflict and more likely to report marital and parenting stress than fathers due to their

susceptibility to stress and their overload of multiple family roles. I also expect crossover is more likely to occur from mothers' marital experiences to father-child interactions than from fathers' marital experiences to mother-child interactions because of mothers' outwardly expressed emotions likely to cross over into the father-child relationship.

Furthermore, the mechanisms leading to stress spillover and crossover may differ depending on the gender of the parent. Mothers tend to be in charge of the emotional climate within the home and managing children's behavior (Erickson, 2005). Mothers in stressful situations tend to exhaust their resources when attending to management of emotions within the home, such that their children's greater distress and insecurity creates a greater demand on mothers' emotional resources (Meyer, Raikes, Virmani, Waters, & Thompson, 2014). Therefore, in the face of relationship stress, we may see an increase in the likelihood of mother-child conflict interactions due to the expenditure of mothers' allocated resources. Additionally, fathers tend to rely on mothers to serve as an emotional peacekeeper within the household (Jacobvitz & Bush, 1996). They may rely heavily on mother's emotional management in the marital and parent-child relationship, again expending mothers' resources, and increasing the likelihood of mother-child conflict interactions. Additionally, fathers' role in the household is less defined and varies within the literature. Fathers tend to be more involved in play with children than caretaking tasks (Lewis & Lamb, 2003). In the face of family conflict interactions, fathers are more likely to withdraw emotionally, which children may interpret as dismissal or abandonment, further compromising father-child relationships (McBride, Schoppe, & Rane, 2002). Thus, mothers and fathers may navigate and respond to parent-child conflict interactions differently, especially in the presence of marital stress.

## **Qualitative Differences in Conflict**

Parent-child conflict interactions are a common daily experience among families that involve shared opposition and can vary in topic and severity. Frequent parent-child conflict topics include disagreements about daily routines, homework, lying to parents, and fighting with siblings. Past literature has emphasized the negative outcomes associated with conflict for children and parent-child relationships (Amato, 1996; Brody, Arias, & Fincham, 1996). More recently, perspectives have shifted to examine qualitative differences in parent-child conflicts that occur in the context of parental support and result in more positive outcomes for children (Adams & Laursen, 2007; Laursen & Hafen, 2010). Specifically, research suggests parent-child conflict interactions can include collaborative or oppositional characteristics. This more nuanced perspective on conflict recognizes the varying strategies parents use to navigate conflicts with children, some of which can actually improve children's problem-solving skills.

Although collaborative and oppositional conflict interactions are shown in the literature to be negatively correlated and include mutual disagreements, they are considered distinct dimensions with unique goals (Nelson, 2015). Oppositional conflict qualities are defined by partners focusing blame on each other and asserting their own position into the argument (Deutsch, 1973). Oppositional conflict qualities are characterized by divisiveness and contempt. Further, oppositional conflict interactions are highly emotionally reactive and result in parental threats, child negativity, less cooperation, and subsequent contempt (Rueter & Conger, 1995). Oppositional parent-child conflict is related to a lower likelihood of finding a solution and more academic and behavior problems among children (Nelson, Boyer, Sang, & Wilson, 2014; Smetana, 1996).

By contrast, collaborative conflict is defined as the utility to finding a solution and preventing future conflict interactions. Collaborative conflict interactions focus on future-oriented planning, and behaviors such as parents' emotional responsiveness to children, child inclusiveness, and respect for children's emotions during conflict interactions. This form of conflict incorporates goals of parents and children in order to problem-solve and reach a compromise (Rinaldi & Howe, 1998). Collaborative parent-child conflict is related to a higher likelihood of resolution, greater independence and self-esteem in early childhood, fewer child behavior problems, and better social and academic adjustment (Adams & Laursen, 2007; Nelson et al., 2014; Nelson, 2015). The current study examined these conflict qualities, as well as the likelihood of conflict, at the daily level to better understand marital and coparenting influences on parent-child interactions.

### **Coparenting as a Moderator**

Because the marital and coparenting relationships are distinct, the association between marital stress and parent-child conflict interactions may vary depending on parents' perceptions of coparenting with their partner. Coparenting has been studied as a protective factor in the face of marital conflict, negative parenting behaviors, and family conflict interactions within the home, such that coparental support and parenting-based closeness may decrease the magnitude of marital or parent-child conflict (Cox & Paley, 1997; Feinberg, 2002; McHale, 1995). For instance, parents who exhibited coparenting support, including affirming their partners' competence as a parent, acknowledging the other parents' contributions, and upholding parenting decisions and authority, presented less negative emotions even in the presence of marital conflict (Feinberg, 2002; Feinberg & Kan, 2008). Additionally, Cowan, Cowan, Heming, and Miller

(1991) provide preliminary evidence for coparenting buffering the relationship between family stress and parent-child conflict interactions, such that warmth and cooperation between partners protected children from the negative effects of family conflict. This suggests that coparenting support may actually prevent stress spillover from occurring, possibly due to imitation or children's emotional security. As mentioned, if children witness negative marital interactions they are likely to imitate the same negative behaviors towards their parents (Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1993). This association may be buffered by children observing coparenting support. Besides the fact that greater coparenting support is directly associated with more positive family relationships (Katz & Low, 2004), coparenting also facilitates more communication between partners to effectively respond to the needs of the family (McHale, Waller, & Pearson, 2012), which may increase collaborative qualities of parent-child conflict interactions. Additionally, children's lack of emotional security in the parent-child relationship can stem from marital stress. This association may also be buffered by coparenting support. When parents effectively coparent, they have more patience and emotional availability to handle parent-child conflict interactions. Even if both parents are experiencing negative emotions in their marital relationship, their ability to work together collaboratively to raise their child may lessen the likelihood of children experiencing a lack of emotional security, and thus lessen the likelihood of negative marital behaviors spilling over into parent-child conflict interactions. In this study, coparenting support may serve as a protective factor that buffers the harmful effects of parents' negative relationship stress on the likelihood of parent-child conflict occurring, as well as the oppositional qualities of parent-child conflict interactions.

In addition, the current study aimed to investigate coparenting as an enhancer for positive family interactions. If parents experience more positive marital behaviors, more effective coparenting may serve as an enhancer in the relationship between positive marital behaviors and a lower likelihood that parent-child conflict will occur, or a greater likelihood that the conflict will be navigated in a more collaborative way if one does occur on that day. This can also be related back to the spillover and crossover mechanisms discussed earlier; for example, warmth and positivity toward one's partner in multiple contexts (i.e., marital and coparenting) may particularly enforce children's emotional security and self-regulation, resulting in few parent-child conflicts.

### **The Current Study**

The emotional quality of marital and parent-child interactions can vary from one day to the next (Nelson et al., 2017). A one-time report of family interaction fails to capture the changes that can occur in people's experiences and behaviors at the daily level. Instead, an intensive longitudinal design, or daily diary study, provides methodological advantages. The naturalistic, daily approach is used to gauge family interactions in the marital and parent-child relationships as they would naturally unfold within the family (Repetti, Robles, Reynolds, & Sears, 2012). Laurenceau and Bolger (2005) outline many advantages of diary methods to study marital and family processes. First, these daily reports reduce the likelihood of retrospection bias because they minimize the time between experiencing and reporting conflict or stress. Second, research on marriage and families is able to generalize and extend findings to everyday settings using daily diary methods. Dairy methods look at families' natural behaviors unfolding over the course of a day in comparison to a laboratory setting which may underestimate behaviors. Lastly, daily



diary methods allow us to tap into microlevel processes. For example, examining day-to-day relationship stress and parent-child conflict interactions allows us to view fluctuations within and between families. Because of these advantages, the current study aimed to examine parents' daily positive and negative marital behaviors and parent-child conflict interactions.

The current study focused on two main research goals. The first goal of the study took into consideration the existing spillover literature on the relation between mothers' marital behaviors and mother-child conflict interactions and how coparenting may moderate the effects of stress (Frosch, Mangelsdorf, & McHale, 2000; Grych, 2005; Rinaldi & Howe, 1998). My first goal was to examine coparenting support as an enhancer or buffer of the relation between mothers' marital interactions and mother-child conflict qualities at the daily level. Additionally, due to the lack of research pertaining to positive marital behaviors and collaborative conflict, I also sought to extend the literature by examining both positive and negative marital behaviors and their influence on collaborative and oppositional mother-child conflict interactions. The second model in this study extended from the first model to include both parents and their effects on parent-child interactions. Investigating spillover and crossover effects will address the lack of literature pertaining to fathers' role within these family interactions (Davies & Cummings, 1994; Lewis & Lamb, 2003). Therefore, in the second model, I examined coparenting as an enhancer or buffer on the spillover and crossover links between mothers' and fathers' negative marital behaviors and mothers' and the likelihood of mother-child and father-child conflict occurring on that day, as well as oppositional parent-child conflict qualities on days conflicts did occur.

**Model 1.** As previously stated, mothers are more often exposed to daily stressors within the home in comparison to fathers (Repetti & Wood, 1997), and mothers tend to be responsible

for emotions in the home (Erikson, 2005). Due to the scarce literature on parent-child conflict qualities in general and the impact positive marital behaviors have on these conflict qualities, model 1 focused on mothers' coparenting reports moderating the relationship between mothers' marital behaviors and mother-child conflict qualities. As I have argued based on prior literature, coparenting may buffer or enhance the association between mothers' marital relationship behaviors and mother-child conflict qualities (Katz & Low, 2004; McHale, Waller, & Pearson, 2012; Saltzman et al., 2011). The proposed model, as seen in Figure 1, examined the moderating effects of coparenting support received by mothers on the association between mothers' positive and negative marital relationship behaviors on both the likelihood of mother-child conflict, as well as the collaborative and oppositional qualities of those mother-child conflict interactions that do occur.

I sought to extend previous research in a number of ways with model 1. First, I analyzed marital behaviors, the likelihood of mother-child conflict, and mother-child conflict qualities when a conflict occurs at the daily level in order to delve into micro-level processes of multiple family relationships within the family system. Second, I investigated whether coparenting support, assessed once at the start of the study, potentially buffered the relation between marital behaviors and the likelihood of mother-child conflict, as well as collaborative and oppositional mother-child conflict qualities. Third, I examined both positive and negative marital behaviors and parent-child conflict qualities in order to better understand multidimensional features of these interactions. Based on the family systems theory, I hypothesized the following:

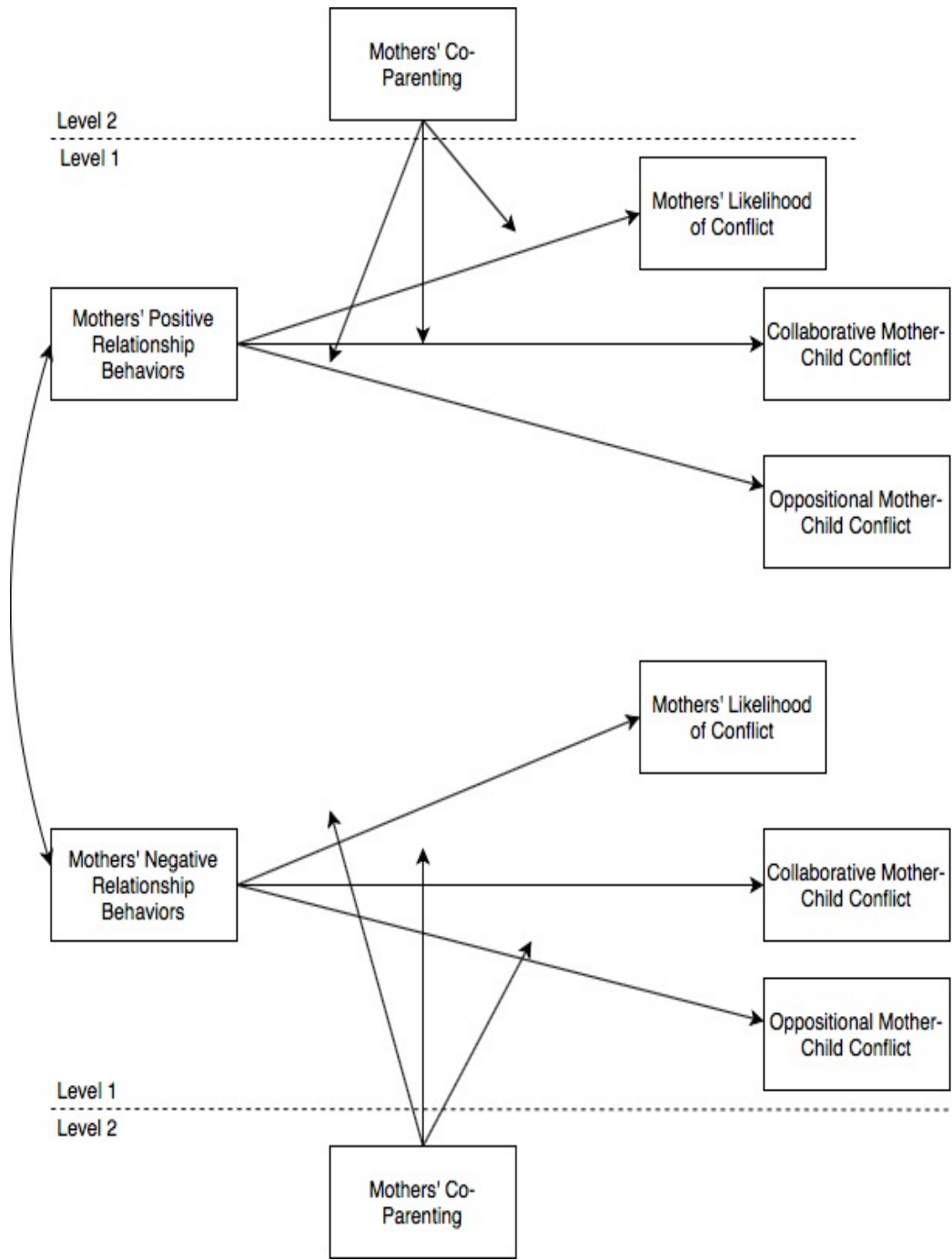


Figure 1. The conceptual model for model 1 examines mothers' coparenting moderating the relationship between mothers' relationship behaviors and mothers' likelihood of conflict and mother-child conflict qualities.

1. I expected there to be a main effect between mothers' positive marital behaviors and mother-child conflict.
  - a. On days when mothers reported more positive marital behaviors than their average, I expected a lower likelihood that mother-child conflict would occur.
  - b. On days when mothers reported more positive marital behaviors than their average and reported a conflict with their child, I expected more collaborative mother-child conflict qualities during those interactions.
  - c. On days when mothers reported more positive marital behaviors than their average and reported a conflict with their child, I expected less oppositional mother-child conflict qualities during those interactions.
2. I expected there to be a main effect between mothers' negative marital behaviors and mother-child conflict.
  - a. On days when mothers reported more negative marital behaviors than their average, I expected a greater likelihood that mother-child conflict would occur.
  - b. On days when mothers reported more negative marital behaviors than their average and reported a conflict with their child, I expected less collaborative mother-child conflict qualities during those interactions.
  - c. On days when mothers reported more negative marital behaviors than their average and reported a conflict with their child, I expected more oppositional mother-child conflict qualities during those interactions.

3. I expected coparenting support to serve as an enhancer of the association between mothers' positive marital behaviors and mother-child conflict interactions.
  - a. For mothers who perceived greater coparenting support, on days when mothers reported more positive marital behaviors than their average, I expected a lower likelihood that mother-child conflict would occur compared to mothers who perceived lower coparenting support.
  - b. For mothers who perceived greater coparenting support, on days when mothers reported more positive marital behaviors than their average and reported a conflict with their child, I expected those conflicts would have more collaborative qualities compared to mothers who perceived lower coparenting support.
  - c. For mothers who perceived greater coparenting support, on days when mothers reported more positive marital behaviors than their average and reported a conflict with their child, I expected those conflicts would have fewer oppositional qualities compared to mothers who perceived lower coparenting support.
4. I expected coparenting support to buffer the effect of mothers' negative marital behaviors and mother-child conflict interactions.
  - a. For mothers who perceived greater coparenting support, on days when mothers reported more negative marital behaviors than their average, I expected a lower likelihood that mother-child conflict would occur compared to mothers who perceived lower coparenting support.

- b. For mothers who perceived greater coparenting support, on days when mothers reported more negative marital behaviors than their average and reported a conflict with their child, I expected those conflicts would have more collaborative qualities compared to mothers who perceived lower coparenting support.
- c. For mothers who perceived greater coparenting support, on days when mothers reported more negative marital behaviors than their average and reported a conflict with their child, I expected those conflicts would have fewer oppositional qualities compared to mothers who perceived lower coparenting support.

**Model 2.** As previously stated, mothers and fathers may navigate marital stress differently (McBride, Schoppe, & Rane, 2002). Because mothers tend to be in charge of family emotions, fathers tend to rely on mothers to inform their parenting role (Erikson, 2005; Parke, 2002). Therefore, in the face of marital stress, there might be a higher likelihood of mother-child conflict interactions than father-child conflict interactions. Further, because mothers and fathers respond differently to marital stress, such that mothers tend to report more distress due to the expenditure of allocated resources, whereas fathers tend to withdraw emotionally (Jacobvitz & Bush, 1996; McBride, Schoppe, & Rane, 2002), the extent to which parents feel they have a cohesive coparenting partner in the face of marital stress is especially important for parent-child conflict interactions. Model 2, as seen in Figure 2, focused on negative relationship behaviors and incorporated fathers in order to examine spillover and crossover effects between parents.

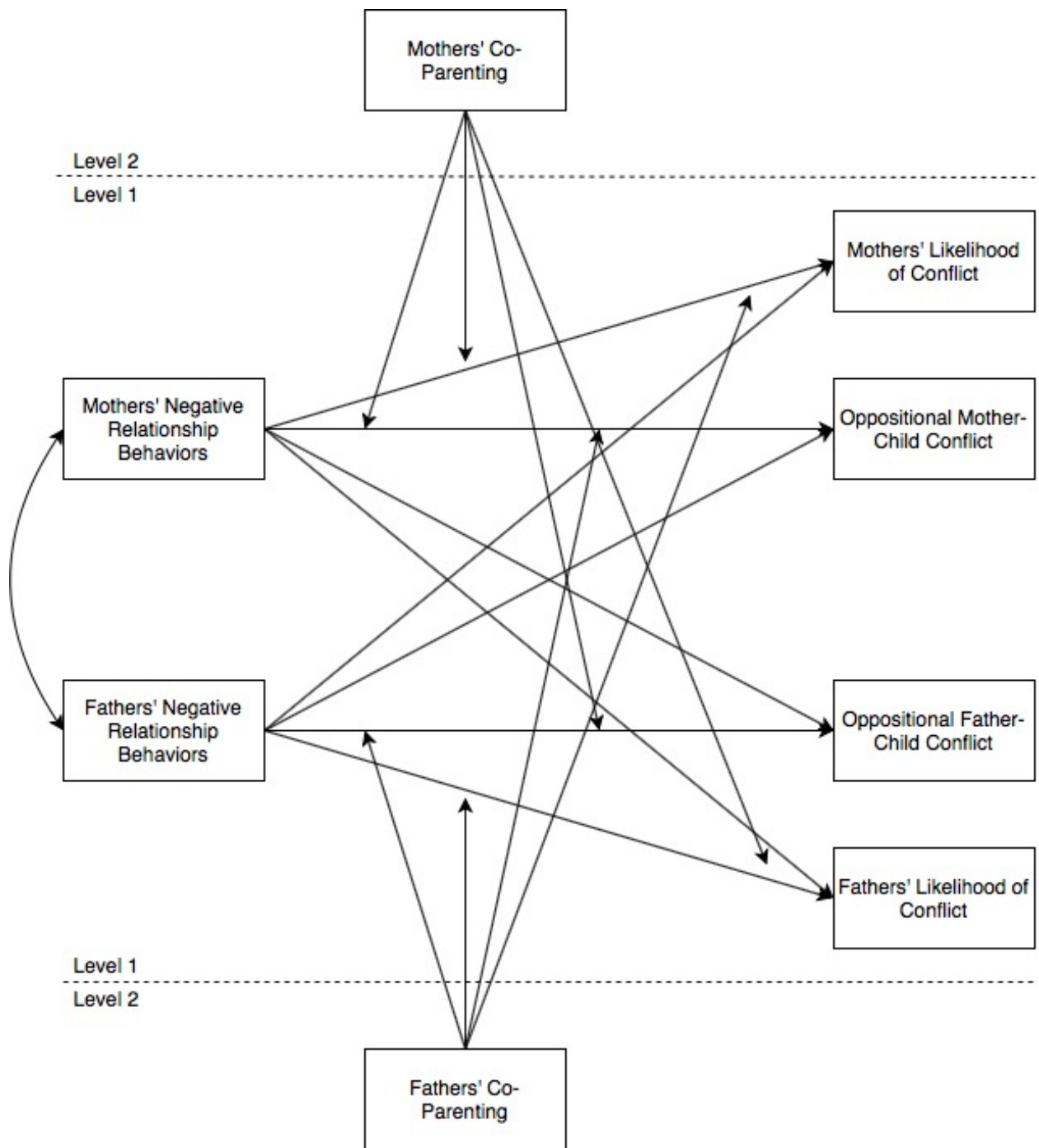


Figure 2. The conceptual model for model 2 examines mothers' and fathers' perceived coparenting support moderating the relationship between mothers' and fathers' negative relationship behaviors and parents' likelihood of conflict and oppositional parent-child conflict.

Specifically, I tested the moderating effect of mothers' received coparenting support on the association between mothers' negative relationship behaviors and the likelihood of mother-child conflict, as well as oppositional and collaborative conflict qualities when a conflict occurs, as previously assessed in model 1. In addition, I examined the moderating effect of fathers' perceived coparenting support on the association between fathers' negative relationship behaviors and the likelihood of father-child conflict, as well as oppositional and collaborative conflict qualities when a conflict occurs. I also explored whether coparenting support may moderate the crossover effects between mothers' negative marital behaviors and father-child conflict, and between fathers' negative marital behaviors and mother-child conflict.

The second model was guided by one central purpose. Due to the seemingly abundant literature linking negative relationship behaviors and oppositional parent-child conflict interactions (Cox, Paley, & Harter, 2001; Gerard, Krishnakumar, & Buehler, 2006), I focused on these negative relationship characteristics to better understand parent gender differences within these associations. I extended model 1 by examining parent gender differences, dyadic relationships, and crossover effects at the daily level, as well as examining parent-gender differences in the moderating effect of coparenting support. I hypothesized the following:

5. I expected there to be a spillover main effect between mothers' and fathers' negative marital behaviors and parent-child conflict, such that mothers' negative marital behaviors will relate to mother-child conflict and fathers' negative marital behaviors will relate to father-child conflict.
  - a. As in model 1, on days when mothers reported more negative marital behaviors than their average, I expected a greater likelihood of mother-child



conflict, even when including fathers in the model. Additionally, on days when fathers reported more negative marital behaviors than their average, I expected a greater likelihood of father-child conflict. I expected mothers' spillover association would be stronger than fathers' spillover association.

b. As in model 1, on days when mothers reported more negative marital behaviors than their average and reported a conflict with their child, I expected more oppositional mother-child conflict interactions, even when including fathers in the model. Additionally, when fathers reported more negative marital behaviors than their average and reported a conflict with their child, I expected more oppositional father-child conflict interactions. I expected mothers' spillover association to be stronger than fathers' spillover association.

6. I expected there to be a crossover main effect between mothers' and fathers' negative marital behaviors and parent-child conflict, such that mothers' negative marital behaviors would relate to father-child conflict and fathers' negative marital behaviors would relate to mother-child conflict.

a. On days when mothers reported more negative marital behaviors than their average, I expected a greater likelihood of father-child conflict. Additionally, when fathers' reported more negative marital behaviors than their average, I expected a greater likelihood of mother-child conflict. I expected mothers' influence on father-child conflict to be stronger than fathers' influence on mother-child conflict.

- b. On days when mothers reported more negative marital behaviors than their average and fathers reported a conflict with their child, I expected more oppositional father-child conflict interactions. Additionally, when fathers reported more negative marital behaviors than their average and mothers reported a conflict with their child, I expected more oppositional mother-child conflict interactions. I expected mothers' negative marital behaviors to affect father-child oppositional conflict more strongly than fathers' negative relationship behaviors affecting mother-child oppositional conflict.
- 7. I expected coparenting support would buffer the spillover effect of parents' negative marital behaviors and parent-child conflict interactions. Because there is no previous literature to suggest coparenting support is more or less protective for men versus women, I explored parent gender differences for each of the proposed moderation tests but did not make specific hypotheses.
  - a. As in model 1, on days when mothers reported more negative marital behaviors than their average, I expected a greater likelihood of mothers reporting a conflict interaction with their child, but less so among mothers who perceived higher coparenting support, even when including fathers in the model. On days when fathers reported more negative marital behaviors than their average, I expected a greater likelihood of fathers reporting a conflict interaction with their child, but less so among fathers who perceived higher coparenting support.

- b. On days when mothers reported more negative marital behaviors than their average and reported a conflict with their child, I expected these conflicts would have more oppositional qualities, but less so among mothers who perceived higher coparenting support, even when including fathers in the model. On days when fathers reported more negative marital behaviors than their average and reported a conflict with their child, I expected these conflicts would have more oppositional qualities, but less so among fathers who perceived higher coparenting support.
- 8. Finally, I expected coparenting support would buffer the crossover effect of parents' negative marital behaviors and parent-child conflict interactions. These tests and any possible gender differences were also exploratory in nature.
  - a. On days when mothers reported more negative marital behaviors than their average, I expected a greater likelihood of fathers reporting a conflict interaction with their child, but less so among fathers who perceived higher coparenting support. On days when fathers reported more negative marital behaviors than their average, I expected a greater likelihood of mothers reporting a conflict interaction with their child, but less so among mothers who perceived higher coparenting support.
  - b. On days when mothers reported more negative marital behaviors than their average and fathers reported a conflict with their child, I expected these conflicts would have more oppositional qualities, but less so among fathers who perceived higher coparenting support. On days when fathers reported

more negative marital behaviors than their average and mothers reported a conflict with their child, I expected these conflicts would have more oppositional qualities, but less so among mothers who perceived higher coparenting support.

## CHAPTER 2

### METHODS

#### Participants

The sample that was used for this study was drawn from a larger daily diary study examining daily stress and parent-child conflict across a week. The current study included 142 families with a 5- to 8-year old child ( $M = 84.10$  months,  $SD = 13.90$ ). All families provided mother reports; 43% ( $n = 61$ ) of families also had father reports available. In model 1, the 142 mothers were analyzed for the proposed model. In model 2, the same 142 mothers were analyzed, in addition to 61 of their partners. Families were recruited through public elementary schools, and flyers throughout the community and university from the Dallas, Texas area. Families with a child between the ages of 5- to 8-years old were recruited for further eligibility and were enrolled in a 7-day daily diary study where they answered questions regarding demographic information, parenting beliefs, daily stress experiences, and daily parent-child conflict interactions. Research ethics committee approval was received by the university office of research compliance (protocol 14-27, “Daily Stress Study”).

Approximately half (52%) of the children were female; 59% were Caucasian, 20% Hispanic, 9% African American, and 6% were identified as mixed or other ethnicities. Mothers were 35.32 years old ( $SD = 6.16$ ) on average and partners were 39.75 years old ( $SD = 6.98$ ). Eighty-eight percent of mothers reported living with a romantic partner (70% married); only fathers living in the home participated in the study. Fifty-eight percent of mothers reported being employed (62% full-time, 38% part-time), and 93% of fathers were employed (83% full-time, 10% part-time). Parents in the current sample were highly educated; approximately 97% of

mothers had attended at least some college, and almost half (49%) had completed a 4-year college degree, whereas 32% of partners had attended at least some college, and 36% had a 4-year college degree. The family income-to-needs ratios were calculated using poverty thresholds for a given family size during the year of data collection. This sample was economically diverse; 44% of families were considered low income (ratios <2), 47% of families were considered middle income (ratios 2-5), and 9% were considered high income (ratios >5).

### **Procedure**

In order to enroll a family in the study, research assistants spoke with families over the phone to obtain basic contact and eligibility information. During this phone call, parents were asked to select a typical week to participate during which all family members, including the study child, would be at home together. Parents were told what to expect in the study, how to define conflict, and when to report on interactions. An email the day before families participated was sent out to remind them of the study information and our conflict definition.

Once the study was underway, parents completed questionnaires using Qualtrics survey software for 8 consecutive days (see Appendices for all study measures). The first day, parents each received an email containing a link to an initial survey. The initial survey contained a web-based consent form and questionnaires assessing demographic information and coparenting support, among other stable aspects of family life (e.g., parenting beliefs). The initial survey link expired one week after the sent date to give parents enough time to complete the lengthy survey. The daily diary surveys started the next day immediately following the initial survey for seven more consecutive days. Families were eligible to start the diaries on any day of the week. Parents independently completed daily survey measures every evening assessing one specific parent-

child conflict interaction and their daily stress experiences, including those in their marital relationship. Parents received an individual email each morning containing two separate links to the day's online conflict and stress surveys, which expired at 3:00am the following morning to maximize the likelihood that parent reports reflected the events happening that day.

Not all survey questions were relevant for all families. In the initial survey, parents were asked if their child had another parent or adult involved in their care. If they selected yes, parents were directed to the coparenting survey. If parents selected no, parents were moved on to the next questionnaire. In the daily stress survey, which parents were instructed to complete at the end of their day in order to reflect on their stressful experiences throughout the day, display logic within Qualtrics was used to filter parents who were not currently involved in a romantic relationship. Parents who answered "yes" to the question, "Are you currently in a romantic relationship?" were displayed the relationship stress measure. Thus, the relationship stress measure was not displayed to parents who reported they were not in a romantic relationship. In the daily conflict survey, parents were initially asked if a conflict had occurred that day. If they selected yes, display logic asked parents to report on details of the interaction for that day. If parents selected no, parents were redirected to the end of the survey.

Parents were compensated \$5 for each day they completed surveys and were then entered into a gift card drawing if all surveys were completed throughout the week. The research assistants monitored daily survey completion and contacted participants with reminders if a survey was not completed the night before telling families, "not to worry about last night's surveys but to focus on today's experiences and their interactions with their child". Families in

the current sample were highly compliant, completing six out of the seven daily diary surveys on average.

### **Initial Survey Measures**

**Demographics.** For families in romantic relationships interested in participating, they reported on information about their partner's age, ethnicity, educational background, occupation, relationship length, if they live in the home with the child, and their relationship to the child (e.g., biological father, stepfather, unrelated father figure). After enrollment in the study, mothers provided basic demographic information in the initial survey. The demographic questionnaire included information on their age, ethnicity, educational background, occupation, their relationship to their child (e.g., biological mother, stepmother, unrelated mother), and their romantic relationship status. Additionally, mothers provided information on their child's date of birth, gender, and ethnicity, and provided information on other children living in the home (e.g., age and gender). Finally, mothers were asked to estimate their family's total yearly income before taxes.

**Coparenting support.** Parents reported on the degree to which they believed they had a sound working relationship with their child's other parent using the Parenting Alliance Inventory (PAI; Abidin & Brunner, 1995). The questionnaire consists of 20 items about interactions with their child's other parent (e.g., "*When there is a problem with our child, we work out a good solution together*"). Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each statement. Responses are rated on a 5 point scale from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly Agree*). According to Cronbach's alpha, the scale was reliable for mothers,  $\alpha = .96$ , and fathers,  $\alpha = .94$ .



## Daily Survey Measures

**Relationship Stress.** Parents who reported being involved in a romantic relationship completed an adapted version of the Relationship Behaviors Checklist (Buck & Neff, 2012) to examine relationship stress. The measure included a list of 5 negative relationship behaviors (e.g., “*You dismissed your partner’s feelings*”), and parents reported on whether or not they engaged in each behavior that day (0 = *no*, 1 = *yes*). According to Cronbach’s alpha the negative behaviors scale was reliable for mothers,  $\alpha_{\text{within}} = .53$ ,  $\alpha_{\text{Between}} = .90$ , and fathers,  $\alpha_{\text{within}} = .72$ ,  $\alpha_{\text{Between}} = .88$ . The measure also included a list of 5 positive relationship behaviors (e.g., “*You tried to make your partner/spouse feel loved*”), and mothers reported on whether or not they engaged in each behavior that day. According to Cronbach’s alpha the positive scale was reliable for mothers,  $\alpha_{\text{within}} = .72$ ,  $\alpha_{\text{Between}} = .81$ .

**Parent-child Interactions.** Parents first indicated whether a conflict occurred with their child that day. This yes/no response was used to measure the likelihood of a conflict occurring. Parents received a 1 if they reported experiencing a conflict and a 0 if they did not report a conflict that day. If parents reported experiencing a conflict with their child on a specific day, they were asked to complete a measure describing the conflict interaction. Qualities of the interaction were assessed using a measure developed for the current study regarding the nature of the conflict between the parent and their child. Common conflict topics included children’s conflicts with siblings, eating behaviors, bedtime routines, morning routines, and not listening to parents. The first part of the measure assessed basic elements of the conflict including the time of day and duration. Then, the measure contained a list of 34 behaviors parents and children may have displayed during the conflict interaction, including items describing collaborative and

oppositional conflict qualities. Parents were asked to report the degree to which each behavior was present during the interaction ranging from 1 (*not present at all*) to 4 (*clearly present*). The collaborative conflict scale included 14 items assessing parents' emotional responsiveness, tendencies towards a solution, openness to a child's perspective, and support towards the child's negative emotions (e.g., *I asked my child to provide suggestions for how we should resolve the conflict*). The oppositional scale included 20 items regarding negative emotional reactivity of parents and children, parents' dismissal of the child's negative emotions, lingering negativity, and punitive behaviors (e.g., *When my child became upset/frustrated during the conflict, I punished him/her for getting too worked up*). Higher collaborative conflict scores indicate more behaviors that led to collaborative parent-child conflict interactions, while higher oppositional conflict scores indicate more behaviors that led to oppositional parent-child conflict interactions. The collaborative scale was reliable at both the within and between levels for mothers,  $\alpha_{\text{within}} = .78$ ,  $\alpha_{\text{Between}} = .95$ . The oppositional scale was reliable at both the within and between levels for mothers,  $\alpha_{\text{within}} = .85$ ,  $\alpha_{\text{Between}} = .90$ , and for fathers,  $\alpha_{\text{within}} = .86$ ,  $\alpha_{\text{Between}} = .84$ .

## **Analytic Plan**

**Preliminary Analyses.** Preliminary analyses examined descriptive information and correlations for between-level study variables and covariates. Covariate analyses tested whether conceptually relevant demographic variables were related to the study variables; if so, those demographic variables were included in the MLM models as predictors of the level 2 intercept. I conducted a missing value analysis to inform my selection of an appropriate estimation method to account for missing data in the models. An MLM post-hoc power analysis in Mplus revealed small effect sizes resulted in sufficient power ( $>.80$ ) for all within-person effects in model 1.

Moderate effect sizes resulted in sufficient power for partner effects predicting mother-child conflict in model 2. However, large effects were required for sufficient power to detect actor and partner effects predicting father-child conflict in model 2 due to the smaller amount of available data from fathers. To account for the large effects required for sufficient power for fathers in model 2, I investigated whether mothers and fathers needed to be analyzed separately (i.e., were distinguishable dyads), or whether parents could be combined to increase power to detect significant effects (i.e., indistinguishable dyads). Thus, distinguishability analyses were conducted to examine if parent gender differentiated outcomes for model 2.

**Multilevel Modeling.** Using Mplus version 8 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2017), multilevel modeling (MLM) was utilized due to the hierarchical nature of the data in the proposed study. I ran model 1 using robust maximum likelihood (MLR) estimation which is a maximum likelihood parameter that estimates with standard errors and chi-square statistics that are robust to non-independence and non-normality of observations (Maydeu-Olivares, 2017). However, my first step was to examine distinguishability of the parent dyads for model 2. Examining distinguishability as a function of gender differences examines freely varying gender interactions against an indistinguishable model with mothers' and fathers' estimates constrained to be equal. I ran these analyses in SPSS statistical software using a maximum likelihood estimation for oppositional parent-child conflict (continuous DV) paths. Evidence for distinguishability for oppositional parent-child conflict was evaluated using a chi-square difference test ( $\chi^2$ ) to determine whether a distinguishable or indistinguishable model provided the most parsimonious fit to the data (Kenny & Ledermann, 2010). Evidence of distinguishability means the estimates for mothers and fathers differ; therefore, allowing the

inclusion of gender as a freely estimated parameter. Following tests of distinguishability, I ran the best fit model using Restricted Maximum Likelihood (REML) estimation. Because distinguishability analyses cannot be conducted with dichotomous dependent variables, I tested whether gender significantly interacted with my paths of interest testing the likelihood of conflict, and through these analyses, decided whether or not I would consider parent dyads distinguishable. This was done through running a generalized mixed model for parents' likelihood of conflict (dichotomous DV) in SPSS.

There are two levels in all the MLM models: one level examined within-person, or daily relations (level 1), and the second level examined between-person relations, or average level across the week (level 2). Level 1 variables assessed change that occurs within a person across the 7 daily diary days and the level 2 variables assessed mean level differences between families. Level 1 variables were group-mean, or person-mean centered to examine if there is an effect above or below an individual's average level during the week, such that the person's individual daily score is subtracted from that person's weekly average. Alternatively, level 2 variables were grand-mean centered to examine if there is an effect above or below the weekly average across the full sample of families, such that the individual's average is subtracted from the average of the entire sample. I tested unconditional models with random intercepts to determine if significant variability existed in parents' conflict qualities<sup>1</sup>. If significant level 1 variability existed in parents' reports of conflict quality, it suggested that if a conflict occurred, parents reports of the qualities of the conflict interaction differed from one conflict to the next across the

<sup>1</sup> I did not test unconditional models for the likelihood of conflict variable because it is dichotomous. Level 1 variance can only be estimated for continuous outcomes.

week. The proportion of variability explained at level 1 versus level 2 was computed by dividing the variability at that level by the total variability in conflict qualities.

The first model addressed hypotheses 1 and 2 by examining the main effects of mothers' positive and negative relationship behaviors on the likelihood of mother-child conflict, and collaborative and oppositional parent-child conflict interactions when a conflict occurred. Additionally, the first model addressed hypotheses 3 and 4 by examining six cross-level interactions. The first set of cross-level interactions examined interactions between coparenting support (level 2 between-subjects variable) and mothers' positive relationship behaviors (level 1 within-subjects variable) on mothers' likelihood of mother-child conflict, and on collaborative and oppositional mother-child conflict interactions. The second set of cross-level interactions examined interactions between coparenting support and mothers' negative relationship behaviors on mothers' likelihood of mother-child conflict, and on collaborative and oppositional mother-child conflict interactions.

The second model addressed hypothesis 5 by examining the level 1 spillover main effects of mothers' negative relationship behaviors on the likelihood of mother-child conflict and oppositional mother-child conflict interactions (as was previously tested in model 1), as well as the main effects of fathers' negative relationship behaviors on the likelihood of father-child conflict and oppositional father-child conflict interactions. Hypothesis 6 examined the level 1 crossover main effects of mothers' negative relationship behaviors on the likelihood of father-child conflict and oppositional father-child conflict interactions, as well as the crossover main effects of fathers' negative relationship behaviors on the likelihood of mother-child conflict and oppositional mother-child conflict interactions. The seventh hypothesis examined the cross-level

spillover interactions between mothers' coparenting support (level 2) and mothers' negative relationship behaviors (level 1) on mothers' likelihood of mother-child conflict and oppositional mother-child conflict interactions (as tested in model 1), as well as the interaction between fathers' coparenting support (level 2) and fathers' negative relationship behaviors (level 1) on fathers' likelihood of father-child conflict and oppositional father-child conflict interactions. Finally, hypothesis 8 examined cross-level crossover interactions between mothers' coparenting support (level 2) and fathers' negative relationship behaviors (level 1) on mothers' likelihood of mother-child conflict and oppositional mother-child conflict interactions, as well as the interaction between fathers' coparenting support (level 2) and mothers' negative relationship behaviors (level 1) on fathers' likelihood of father-child conflict and oppositional father-child conflict interactions.

In the second model, I planned to examine parent-gender differences on significant path estimates. However, these gender comparisons were dependent on distinguishability analyses. If there was no evidence of distinguishability, the estimates for mothers and fathers did not differ, and therefore parent-gender differences were not examined. However, literature suggests there is evidence for these parent-gender differences. For example, mothers will be more affected by stress spillover (e.g., Matud, 2004; Repetti, 1997), and mothers will have more of an influence on fathers' interactions with the child to create crossover effects compared to fathers' influence on mothers (e.g., Nelson et al., 2009; Parke, 2002). In order to examine parent-gender differences, I used the loglikelihood to compute a difference test which bases the loglikelihood values and scaling factors with the MLR estimator. The difference tests are used to compare an unconstrained model (paths freely estimated for mothers and fathers) to a series of constrained

models with specific path estimates set to be equal across parent gender. The difference tests determined whether constraining a particular path resulted in a significant change in model fit. The change in chi-square for each unconstrained-constrained comparison was used to test whether mothers' and fathers' estimates were statistically different.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESULTS

#### Preliminary Analyses

Overall families completed 65% of the daily surveys in the larger study. For surveys used in the current analyses, mothers completed 84% and fathers' completed 40% on average. Descriptive information and correlations for between-level study variables and covariates are included in Table 1. Correlations among study variables showed that mothers' reports of negative marital behaviors were associated with more oppositional mother-child conflict qualities and less collaborative mother-child conflict qualities. Mothers' reports of positive marital behaviors were associated with reports of more collaborative conflict with their children. Fathers' reports of negative marital behaviors were associated with greater reports of father-child oppositional conflict. Mothers' coparenting reports were associated with all study variables except mothers' collaborative conflict, and fathers' coparenting reports were associated with mothers' negative marital behaviors and fathers' oppositional conflict. The likelihood of conflict, a categorical variable, was excluded from correlational analyses. However, independent samples t-tests revealed no associations between mothers' likelihood of conflict with children and study variables. Fathers' likelihood of conflict with children was marginally associated with fathers' negative marital behaviors,  $t(292) = 3.20, p = .075$ , and was significantly associated with parents' reports of coparenting,  $t(297) = 4.47 p < .05$ . Interestingly, these associations were positive suggesting the presence of conflict was related to increases in parents' reports of coparenting support.



Table 1. *Descriptive Information and Correlations among Study Variables.*

	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>Range</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<b>Level 1 Variables</b>											
1. Mothers' Negative Behaviors	0.84(1.27)	0.00-5.00									
2. Fathers' Negative Behaviors	0.65(1.18)	0.00-5.00	.39**								
3. Mothers' Positive Behaviors	3.22(1.55)	0.00-5.00	-.14**	.17**							
4. Mothers' Oppositional Conflict	35.43(10.29)	20.00-70.00	.22**	.16*	-.04						
5. Fathers' Oppositional Conflict	33.77(9.48)	20.00-64.00	.05	.19*	-.15	.17					
6. Mothers' Collaborative Conflict	34.35(9.48)	14.00-56.00	.10*	.03	.18**	-.08	-.03				
<b>Level 2 Variables</b>											
7. Mothers' Coparenting	4.23(0.74)	1.00-5.00	-.34**	-.16**	.30**	-.16**	-.19*	.02			
8. Fathers' Coparenting	4.33(0.50)	1.00-5.00	-.19**	-.05	.05	-.03	-.27**	-.07	.43**		
9. Income-to-Needs Ratio	2.44(1.45)	0.00-5.00	-.17**	.10*	-.03	-.06	.00	-.13**	.16**	.21**	
10. Length of Relationship	11.59(5.47)	0.83-27.00	-.11**	.00	.01	-.11*	-.02	-.12*	.14**	.19**	.11**

*Note:* Descriptives for Level 1 variables were calculated using the parents' scores averaged across the 7 days. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .001$

Using Maximum Likelihood (ML) estimation and Generalized Mixed Models (GLM), deviation and interaction tests were conducted to provide evidence for distinguishability by gender. Chi-square difference testing provided evidence for indistinguishability between mothers' and fathers' oppositional conflict scores,  $\chi^2(5) = 10.58, p = .94$ . Additionally, there were no significant gender interactions for mothers and fathers likelihood of having a conflict, as reported in Table 4; thus, I used this as evidence for indistinguishability between mothers' and fathers' likelihood of conflict scores. Because both models provided evidence that parents within dyads had significantly similar scores that were not distinguished by their gender, all analyses for model 2 were treated as indistinguishable. Therefore, I did not conduct parent-gender difference testing for hypotheses 5-7.

Missing data analyses showed that data were missing completely at random (MCAR; Little's MCAR test:  $\chi^2(42) = 49.93, p = .187$ ), which indicates that the missingness of study variables was not systematic. I used correlational analyses to identify potential confounding variables to include in the models based on their associations with the study variables. Relationship length and family income-to-needs ratio were included as between-family covariates in both models. For relationship length, the longer parents' reported being in a relationship, mothers reported fewer negative marital behaviors,  $r = -.11, p < .05$ , and less oppositional and collaborative conflict with their child,  $r = -.10, p < .05, r = -.11, p < .05$ , respectively. Additionally, for income-to-needs ratio, the higher the income families reported, mothers' and fathers' reported fewer negative marital behaviors,  $r = -.17, p < .01, r = -.10, p < .05$ , respectively.

I tested unconditional models for all continuous dependent variables to determine if significant variability existed at level 1 without the inclusion of predictors. For mothers' reports of collaborative conflict, there was significant level 1 variance,  $b = 47.19, p < .01$ . This indicates there was significant variability from one conflict to the next in mothers' collaborative tendencies throughout the week. For mothers' collaborative conflict, 52% of the total variance was attributed to level 1 variance. For mothers' oppositional conflict, there was significant level 1 variance,  $b = 74.40, p < .01$ . This indicates there was significant variability from one conflict to the next in mothers' oppositional tendencies throughout the week. For mothers' oppositional conflict, 70% of the total variance was attributed to level 1 variance. For fathers' oppositional conflict, there was significant level 1 variance,  $b = 67.87, p < .01$ , indicating variability from one conflict to the next in fathers' oppositional conflict qualities. For fathers' oppositional conflict, 76% of the total variance was attributed to level 1 variance.

### **Model 1**

After controlling for relationship length and family income-to-needs ratio at level 2 (see Tables 2 and 3), there was significant variability in the dependent variables at levels 1 and 2, which suggests mothers' varied on average and day to day on their reports of mother-child conflict qualities. There was also a level 2 association between mothers' perceived coparenting support and relationship length,  $b = 0.90, p < .05$ , suggesting the longer mothers' have reported being in a relationship was related to mothers' perceiving more coparenting support from their partner. Additionally, there was a level 1 association between oppositional and collaborative mother-child conflict qualities,  $b = -5.71, p < .05$ ; the more oppositional conflict qualities that

were used during mother-child conflict were related to less collaborative conflict qualities used during mother-child conflict.

**Hypothesis 1.** I hypothesized there would be significant level 1 associations between mothers' positive marital behaviors and mother-child conflict qualities. There were no main effects for mothers' positive marital behaviors on mother-child conflict (likelihood, collaborative, oppositional) at level 1, as seen in Table 2. This suggests on days when mothers' reported more positive marital behaviors, they were not less likely to report mother-child conflict or to report oppositional mother-child conflict qualities, and they were not more likely to report more collaborative mother-child conflict qualities. Therefore, I did not find support for Hypotheses 1A, 1B, or 1C.

**Hypothesis 2.** I hypothesized there would be significant level 1 associations between mothers' negative marital behaviors and mother-child conflict qualities. There were no main effects between mothers' negative marital behaviors and mother-child conflict (likelihood, collaborative, oppositional) at level 1, as seen in Table 3. This suggests on days when mothers' reported more negative marital behaviors, they were not more likely to report mother-child conflict or to report oppositional conflict qualities, and they were not less likely to report collaborative mother-child conflict qualities. Therefore, I did not find support for Hypotheses 2A, 2B, or 2C. Although a main effect did not exist, there was significant variability across families in the relation between mothers' negative marital behaviors and oppositional mother-child conflict qualities,  $b = 4.94, p < .05$ . This suggests that there may be an association between these variables at level 1 for *some* mothers, even though negative marital behaviors and opposition conflict were not related on average across the sample.

Table 2. *Multilevel Estimates for Mothers' Relationship Behaviors Model Predicting Mothers' Likelihood of Conflict.*

Variable	Likelihood of Conflict
	Estimate(SE)
Intercept	-0.97(0.13)**
Relationship Length	-0.08(0.53)
Income-to-needs ratio	-0.01(0.14)
Variation of negative RBC	0.03(0.11)
Variation of positive RBC	-0.01(0.04)
<b>Block 2</b>	
Variation in Neg RBC X Coparenting	0.05(0.13)
Variation in Pos RBC X Coparenting	0.21(0.23)
Level 1 intercept variance	0.87(0.29)**
Level 2 intercept variance	0.54(0.09)**

*Note.* Likelihood of Conflict Model  $N=659$ . The model fit index (log likelihood) model 2 is  $ll(34) = -1352.55$ . RBC

= Relationship Behaviors Checklist.

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ .

Table 3. *Multilevel Estimates for Mothers' Relationship Behaviors Predicting Mothers' Conflict Qualities.*

Variable	Oppositional Conflict		Collaborative Conflict	
	Null Model	Conditional	Null Model	Conditional
	Estimate(SE)	Estimate(SE)	Estimate(SE)	Estimate(SE)
Intercept	35.48(0.61)**	34.97(0.62)**	34.75(0.64)**	34.97(0.62)**
Relationship Length	-	-0.10(0.53)	-	-0.10(0.53)
Income-to-needs ratio	-	-0.01(0.14)	-	-0.01(0.14)
General level of negative RBC	-	3.04(0.90)**	-	1.24(0.96)
General level of positive RBC	-	-.01(0.64)	-	1.60(0.61)**
Variation of negative RBC	-	0.71(0.48)	-	-0.56(0.34)
Variation of positive RBC	-	-0.20(0.49)	-	-0.20(0.34)
Block 2				
Variation in Neg RBC X Coparenting	-	-.10(.53)	-	-.11(.45)
Variation in Pos RBC X Coparenting	-	-0.27(0.65)	-	-0.09(0.42)
Level 1 intercept variance	74.40(6.57)**	27.50(6.57)**	47.19(3.81)**	36.03(5.28)**
Level 2 intercept variance	31.83(5.87)**	0.54(0.09)**	43.98(5.71)**	1.42(1.18)**

*Note.* Likelihood of Conflict Model  $N=659$ . The model fit index (log likelihood) model 2 is  $ll(50) = -1408.98$ . RBC = Relationship Behaviors Checklist. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ .

**Hypothesis 3.** I hypothesized coparenting would serve as an enhancer of the association between mothers' positive marital behaviors and mother-child conflict qualities. Coparenting did not serve as an enhancer of the association between mothers' positive marital behaviors and mother-child conflict qualities, as seen in Table 2. Positive marital behaviors did not relate to a lower likelihood of mother-child conflict, more collaborative conflict, or less oppositional conflict, regardless of the amount of coparenting support mothers perceived. Therefore, I did not find support for Hypotheses 3A, 3B, or 3C.

**Hypothesis 4.** I hypothesized coparenting would serve as a buffer of the association between mothers' negative marital behaviors and mother-child conflict qualities. Coparenting did not serve as a buffer of the association between mothers' negative marital behaviors and mother-child conflict qualities, as seen in Table 3. Negative marital behaviors did not relate to a higher likelihood of mother-child conflict, less collaborative conflict, or more oppositional conflict, regardless of the amount of coparenting support mothers perceived. Therefore, I did not find support for Hypotheses 4A, 4B, or 4C.

**Additional exploratory findings.** Although not a primary aim of the study, I also explored differences between families at level 2. At level 2, mothers' average reports of positive marital behaviors were associated with more collaborative mother-child conflict qualities,  $b = 1.60, p < .01$ , which suggests that mothers' who reported more positive marital behaviors on average across the week were more likely to also report more collaborative mother-child conflict qualities when conflicts occurred. Additionally, at level 2, mothers' average reports of negative marital behaviors were associated with more oppositional conflict qualities,  $b = 3.04, p < .01$ , which suggests that mothers' who reported more negative marital behaviors on average across

the week were more likely to also report more oppositional mother-child conflict qualities when conflicts occurred. Additionally, mothers' perceived coparenting support was associated with mothers' reports of more positive marital behaviors,  $b = 0.26, p < .001$ , and less negative marital behaviors,  $b = -0.18, p < .01$ . This suggests mothers who perceived higher coparenting support were more likely to report positive marital behaviors and less likely to report negative marital behaviors, on average across the week.

## **Model 2**

After controlling for relationship length and family income-to-needs ratio at level 2 (see Tables 4 and 5) there was significant variability in the dependent variables (parents' oppositional parent-child conflict qualities) at levels 1 and 2, which suggests mothers and fathers varied on average and day-to-day in their reports of parent-child oppositional conflict qualities. Again, due to distinguishability analyses, mothers and fathers were treated as indistinguishable dyads in all model 2 analyses. Thus, effects are differentiated by "actor" (spillover) and "partner" (crossover), rather than by parent gender, as mothers and fathers are combined.

**Hypothesis 5.** I hypothesized there would be a spillover main effect between parents' negative marital behaviors and parent-child conflict. There was a spillover actor effect between parents' negative marital behaviors and their own likelihood of reporting a parent-child conflict interaction, as seen in Table 4. This suggests on days when parents reported more negative marital behaviors, there was a greater likelihood they would also report a conflict with their child. There were not spillover actor effects between parents' negative marital behaviors and oppositional parent-child conflict, suggesting that on days when parents reported more negative marital behaviors, there was not a greater likelihood they would also report more oppositional



Table 4. *Multilevel Estimates for Parents' Negative Relationship Behaviors Model Predicting Parents' Likelihood of Conflict.*

Variable	Likelihood of Conflict
	Estimate(SE)
Intercept	2.37(1.31)†
Gender	-0.51(0.14)**
Relationship Length	-0.02(0.04)
Income-to-needs ratio	-0.11(0.12)
Actor General Negative RBC	0.54(0.27)*
Partner General Negative RBC	-0.04(0.25)
Actor Variation Negative RBC	0.33(0.17)*
Partner Variation Negative RBC	0.10(0.15)
Coparenting	-0.27(0.30)
Block 2	
Actor Negative RBC x Coparenting	-0.03(0.37)
Partner Negative RBC x Coparenting	0.61(0.37)

*Note.* Likelihood of Conflict Model using generalized mixed models to test gender interactions.

Interactions are at the within level. RBC = Relationship Behaviors Checklist.

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ .

parent-child conflict qualities. Therefore, I did find support for hypothesis 5A, but not for hypothesis 5B.

**Hypothesis 6.** I hypothesized there would be crossover partner effects between parents' negative marital behaviors and parent-child conflict. There were not significant crossover partner effects between parents' negative marital behaviors and their partners' reports of oppositional parent-child conflict, as seen in Table 5. Therefore, I did not find support for Hypothesis 6A or 6B.

**Hypothesis 7.** I hypothesized coparenting support would buffer the spillover actor effect of parents' negative marital behaviors and their own parent-child conflict interactions. I did not find support for coparenting buffering the association between parents' negative marital behaviors and their own likelihood of engaging in parent-child conflict, as seen in Table 5. In addition, I did not find support for coparenting buffering the association between parents' negative marital behaviors and the spillover actor effect between parents' negative marital behaviors and their own parent-child oppositional conflict. Therefore, I did not find support for Hypotheses 7A or 7B.

**Hypothesis 8.** I hypothesized coparenting support would buffer the crossover partner effect of parents' negative marital behaviors and their partner's parent-child conflict interactions. I did not find support for coparenting buffering the association between parents' negative marital behaviors and their partner's likelihood of engaging in parent-child conflict, as seen in Table 5. In addition, I did not find support for coparenting buffering the association between parents' negative marital behaviors and the crossover partner effect between parents' negative marital

Table 5. *Multilevel Estimates for Parents' Negative Relationship Behaviors Model Predicting Parents' Conflict Qualities.*

Variable	Null Model	Parents' Oppositional Conflict
	Estimate(SE)	Estimate(SE)
Intercept	35.48(.61)**	43.56(5.77)**
Gender	-	-0.80(0.71)
Relationship Length	-	0.20(0.17)
Income-to-needs	-	0.24(0.52)
Actor General Negative RBC	-	1.23(1.25)
Partner General Negative RBC	-	-0.52(1.24)
Actor Variation Negative RBC	-	2.89(4.23)
Partner Variation Negative RBC	-	4.34(5.26)
Coparenting	-	-2.97(1.31)*
Block 2		
Actor Negative RBC x Coparenting	-	-0.58(0.98)
Partner Negative RBC x Coparenting	-	-1.25(1.24)

*Note.* Indistinguishable (Block 1) with REML estimator and interactions (Block 2) for Parents' Conflict Qualities Model. The best fit model is indistinguishable shown by a chi-square different test,  $\chi^2(5) = 10.58, p = 0.94$ . RBC = Relationship Behaviors Checklist.

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ .

behaviors and their partner's parent-child oppositional conflict. Therefore, I did not find support for Hypotheses 8A or 8B.

**Additional Exploratory Findings.** Although not a primary aim of the study, I also explored associations at the between-family level, or level 2. For instance, at level 2, the more negative marital behaviors parents reported on average across the week, the more likely parents were to report having a conflict with their child,  $b = 0.54, p < .05$ . The more parents reported perceiving coparenting support, the less parents reported oppositional parent-child conflict,  $b = -2.97, p < .03$ .

## CHAPTER 4

### DISCUSSION

The current study evaluated the moderating effect of coparenting on the association between mothers' and fathers' marital behaviors and parent-child conflict interactions at the daily level. Family conflict and stress are inevitable across the lifespan, but understanding factors that may buffer or exacerbate such stressors is beneficial for the parent-child relationship. In addition, it is important to understand the influence parents have on each other in the face of family stress. I found that on days parents engaged in more negative behaviors toward their spouse than usual, they were more likely to have a conflict with their child. No other main effects or interactions were found from the primary hypotheses. However, exploratory findings in model 1 revealed between-level effects where mothers' average reports of positive marital behaviors were associated with more collaborative mother-child conflict qualities, mothers' average reports of negative marital behaviors were associated with more oppositional conflict qualities, and mothers' perceived coparenting support was associated with their reports of more positive marital behaviors and less negative marital behaviors. Model 2 exploratory findings included between-level effects where parents' average reports of negative marital behaviors were associated with a greater likelihood of parents reporting a conflict with their child, and parents' perceived coparenting support was associated with less oppositional parent-child conflict.

#### **Variability in Parent-Child Conflict Qualities**

An initial relevant finding is that parent-child conflict qualities varied across the week. I discovered there was variability from one conflict to the next in mothers' collaborative and oppositional conflict qualities, as well as variability in fathers' oppositional qualities. These

findings suggest that parents navigate conflicts with their children in different ways, possibly depending on their experiences that day, with some conflicts being more collaborative and some being more hostile. This is consistent with one study that found oppositional and collaborative mother-child conflict qualities varied both on average between families and daily from one conflict to the next within mother-child dyads (Nelson et al., 2016). This study shows that same variability also occurs among father-child dyads. This is an important addition to the literature that informs educators and practitioners of the unpredictability within families. Conflict is an inevitable part of the family system and knowing that there is variability within and between families is a critical first step in understanding adaptive family functioning and child well-being. The current study aimed to understand why inconsistency in conflict interactions exists by examining negative and positive marital behaviors to predict to this conflict variability across the week in the context of supportive coparenting.

### **Likelihood of Conflict**

I found that on days when parents' reported more negative marital behaviors there was a greater likelihood they would also report a conflict with their child. This is consistent with preliminary evidence that suggests parents' negative marital relationship behaviors make it more likely that parents and children will engage in contentious interactions (El-Sheikh & Elmore-Staton, 2004). This finding is also consistent with the spillover hypothesis of family systems theory which suggests negative affect in one domain of parents' lives may spill over to create contention in other domains. Past research demonstrates that frequent conflict and negativity between parents decreases parents' warmth and support toward their children, as well as increasing their verbal criticism and physical punishment towards their child (Bradford, Vaughn,

& Barber, 2008; Erel & Burman, 1995; Krishnakumar & Buehler, 2000). Thus, parents' lack of emotional availability and hostile demeanor after experiencing a negative interaction with their partner, may in-turn influence parents' likelihood of engaging in a conflict with their child.

Another explanation includes the self-depletion theory which emphasizes that stress-related depletion may increase the likelihood of parents' contentious conflict interactions with their child due to fewer emotional resources to manage children's behavior (Baumeister, 2002). Parents must manage many daily tasks related to their marital and parenting responsibilities. These responsibilities can include providing emotional support to partners, managing children's routines and behaviors, and completing housework. Stress related to these responsibilities may deplete parents' patience to sensitively respond to their children's emotional needs and therefore increase the likelihood of engaging in parent-child conflict.

Interestingly, this association between parents' negative marital behaviors and a greater likelihood of parent-child conflict only occurred when both mothers and fathers were included in the same indistinguishable model. I did not find mothers' reports alone resulted in a significant association between negative marital behaviors and the likelihood of mother-child conflict. Thus, this effect may be driven by fathers. There are differences in mothers and fathers responsibilities and conflict engagement (Crockenberg & Forgays, 1996; McElwain, Halberstadt, & Volling, 2007). Mothers are generally in charge of managing household emotions and as found in the current study, are more likely to report having a conflict with their child than are fathers. Therefore, negativity in other domains of family life may be more impactful among fathers who are less likely than mothers to experience conflicts with children.

My finding that mothers are more likely to report a conflict with their child than fathers is consistent with past research showing mothers are more likely to report experiencing family stress in comparison to fathers (Repetti & Wood, 1997). Past research shows mothers tend to be primarily responsible for disciplining and managing emotions and behaviors of their children (Schoppe-Sullivan et al., 2015). Still, little is known about predictors of the likelihood of a parent-child conflict interaction occurring on a specific day. Almeida, Wethington, and Chandler (1999) provide preliminary evidence that parents are more likely to have tense parent-child interactions on days when there has been marital tension the day before. Additionally, on days when parents report other stressors (i.e., workload, home demands), they are more likely to experience contentious parent-child interactions than on stress-free days (Larson & Almeida, 1999; Repetti & Wood, 1997). However, the current study is the first to my knowledge to find daily effects between parents' negative marital behaviors and their likelihood of a conflict occurring with their child in a dyadic sample. Thus, because these findings regarding likelihood of conflict are so novel it is important for future research to examine specific marital predictors that may impact the likelihood of a conflict occurring on a specific day. Because this study provided evidence of negative marital behaviors increasing the likelihood of conflict, an important next step would be replication as well as examining specific aspects of those negative marital behaviors. For example, parents' negative mood or reactivity could spark more contentious interactions with their children. Alternatively, parents' may be less tolerant and sensitive, and thus perceive their children's behavior as more irritating and problematic. Therefore, examining parents' daily negative mood, reactivity, tolerance, and sensitivity in



relation to the initiation of parent-child conflict interactions would be an important next step in the literature.

### **Parent-Child Conflict Qualities**

The first model I tested examined mothers' positive and negative behaviors toward their spouse and conflict with their child, while also testing mothers' coparenting support as a potential buffer or enhancer of these associations. Although previous research has examined mothers' negative marital behaviors and oppositional conflict qualities (e.g., Nelson et al., 2017), it is important to also examine the impact positive marital behaviors and collaborative conflict qualities can have on the family system. Positive parent-child relationships are crucial for overall family functioning and child development (Belsky, Youngblade, Rovine, & Volling, 1991; Cox, Paley, & Harter, 2001; Golombok, MacCallum, Murray, Lycett, & Jadva, 2006). For example, positive parent-child interactions are linked to parents' greater emotional responsiveness and support towards their child, family cohesiveness, and children's greater interdependence and self-esteem (Nelson, 2015; Rinaldi & Howe, 1998). Children observing positive interactions between their parents may produce similar behavior styles in the way they resolve conflicts. Collaborative parent-child conflict qualities have been associated with the improvement in children's social competence and emotion regulation, communication skills with their parents, and a greater likelihood of parent-child conflict resolution (Gottman, 2011; Lochman & Vanden-steenhoven, 2002; Nelson, Boyer, Sang, & Wilson, 2014). In light of these benefits for families and children, including positive marital behaviors and collaborative parent-child conflict qualities is an important contribution of the current study.

I found an average association where mothers who reported more negative marital behaviors across the week were more likely to also report more oppositional mother-child conflict qualities during all interactions. Additionally, mothers who reported more positive marital behaviors across the week were more likely to also report more collaborative mother-child conflict qualities during all interactions. This suggests that mothers' negative marital behaviors are associated with oppositional conflict qualities and positive marital behaviors are associated with collaborative conflict qualities with the child at a more global level. This is consistent with other literature looking at single time point measurements of parents' negative marital behaviors on parent-child relationships (Belsky, Youngblade, Rovine, & Volling, 1991; Frosch, Mangelsdorf, & McHale, 2000) and adds novel information to the literature about parents' positive marital behaviors. Thus, families are exhibiting both negative and positive behaviors across multiple subsystems. Families that tend to be more negative and oppositional may display poor modeling, negative mood or personality, or undermining behaviors. However, families who are more positive and collaborative across subsystems may display support and responsiveness, emotion regulation, positive affect, or compromising behaviors, even when conflicts occur with their children.

Interestingly, I was not able to find any main effects at the within-family level for mothers' daily marital behaviors related to daily mother-child conflict interactions. Although there was daily variability in collaborative and oppositional conflict, the lack of effects may be stemming from stability in mothers' marital behaviors. Mothers may be experiencing fluctuations in their conflict interactions due to processes related to their child instead of the marital relationship, such as children's externalizing behaviors that may also be varying day-to-

day. Although past literature has linked mothers' negative marital behaviors to parent-child conflict, research has also shown that mothers with high marital satisfaction may buffer the negative effects of the marital relationship (Lincoln & Chae, 2010; Sweatman, 1999). This is one of many marital buffers that could be at play to lessen the daily effects of mothers' negative marital behaviors. Therefore, mothers who feel a sense of stability and satisfaction in their marital relationship may not be more likely to engage in mother-child conflict interactions, and instead, children's temperament or behavioral patterns may be at fault. Children's externalizing behaviors have shown to be related to mother-child conflict qualities (Jenkins et al., 2005; Verhoeven et al., 2010), but little research has been done at the daily level on various subsystems of the family system.

Because investigating the family system at the daily level is still relatively new to the field, it is also possible that the way the current study measured mothers' coparenting and marital interactions was too globalized for day-specific findings to arise. For instance, because coparenting was measured only at the between-family level, it is possible a portion of the daily variability was lost when examining this construct at the between-family level, thus impacting the ability to predict to within level effects. Another measurement issue that may have limited my ability to find daily effects is the timing of when marital and child interactions occurred during a specific day. It is possible the marital and parent-child conflict interactions could have occurred at very different times and settings during the day which decreases the likelihood of these events being related within a single day, even if they are typically related overall across days. Furthermore, the fact that I found significant variability in the association between mothers' negative relationship behaviors and oppositional mother-child conflict qualities

suggests that there may be a daily association between these constructs for some families, but not for others. Thus, examining different moderators to reveal this association may be fruitful.

The second model of this study was incorporated to examine how mothers and fathers may navigate marital stress differently and how coparenting may serve a different role for mothers versus fathers. Although examining parent gender differences was a reasonable goal of this study, as previous research has found differences in how mothers and fathers react to marital stress and navigate conflicts with their children (McBride, Schoppe, & Rane, 2002), reports from mothers and fathers in this study were found to be indistinguishable. In other words, mothers and fathers do not differ in their mean levels of the study variables of interest; they used similar amounts of negative marital behaviors, coparenting support, and oppositional parent-child conflict. For example, mothers' and fathers' coparenting reports were moderately correlated, suggesting that parents' perceptions of coparenting support were similar. In addition, indistinguishability tests suggest parents were similar in the strength of the associations between study variables. For example, mothers' greater perceptions of coparenting are related to mothers' oppositional conflict and this is equally as likely for fathers' coparenting perceptions on father-child oppositional conflict. Although previous research tends to recognize mothers and fathers navigate marital and parent-child relationships differently (Matud, 2004), the current study examined these family subsystems at a more nuanced, daily level, which may have contributed to these indistinguishable findings.

### **Coparenting as a Moderator**

Coparenting is an important factor to consider when examining buffering effects within the family system. The existent literature suggested coparenting may serve as a buffer to protect

children from the negative effects of multiple family stressors, including marital stress (Crnic & Low, 2002). Coparenting may serve as a source of communication related to the child that can influence parents to work together cooperatively as a team and buffer children from any negative or hostile interactions. Thus, it was important to examine how parents' influence their own relationship with their child as well as their partners' relationship with the child, and how coparenting plays a role between marital stress and parent-child conflict interactions.

In this study coparenting did not serve as a buffer between parents' marital behaviors and parent-child conflict interactions. This finding is surprising, as there are other studies that have provided evidence that coparenting can buffer the negative effects of family stress. For example, coparenting has been shown to buffer the consequences of family stressors such as work and financial stress with parent-child conflict (Cox, Paley, & Harter, 2001; Eamon, 2002; Feinberg, 2003; Jones et al., 2003). It is possible marital stress, which is closely related to parents' ability to work together in parenting, is not a stressor where coparenting can be protective. Parents may not be able to differentiate the roles of the coparenting and marital relationships clearly enough, particularly when both roles are highly supportive or when both roles are highly hostile. In fact, past research has demonstrated a high correlation between marital satisfaction and coparenting support (McHale, 1997; Merrifield & Gamble, 2013; Pedro, Ribeiro, & Shelton, 2012), pointing to a statistical overlap that makes it difficult to detect interaction effects.

Although coparenting did not moderate effects, there was a main effect between coparenting and oppositional parent-child conflict. The more parents reported perceiving coparenting support, the less parents reported oppositional parent-child conflict. In other words, the more parents are able to support their partner when parenting their child, the less likely

parents are to engage in contentious arguments with their child. This is consistent with the literature that most commonly associates coparenting support to both parenting and child outcomes (Belsky, Putnam, & Crnic, 1996; Feinberg, Reiss, Neiderhiser, & Hetherington, 2005). For example, parents who are supportive in the way they parent their children tend to be more supportive in their marital relationship (Belsky, 1994; Holland, McElwain, 2013). Alternatively, parents' who exhibit coparenting conflict tend to be more destructive in their marital relationship and in other family subsystems (Teubert & Pinquart, 2010). Parents' coparenting conflict can have negative effects on children's adjustment including increased antisocial behavior, externalizing and internalizing problems, and risky behaviors (Baril, Crouter, & McHale, 2007; Buehler & Welsh, 2009; Feinberg, Kan, & Hetherington, 2007). Therefore, it is important that parents' find a way to collaboratively work together to parent their child for better overall adjustment. Parents' who are working together and feel supported in their parenting and disciplining practices maybe be able to be more collaborative and supportive towards their child, which in turn, would lead to less oppositional conflict.

Although coparenting did not serve as a moderator in this study, coparenting still linked to certain aspects of parent-child conflict qualities, and thus, is still an important aspect of family life for parent-child conflict researchers to consider. Future research should examine the roles of coparenting support versus marital support in the context of the family system to delve into microlevel difference between the two roles at the daily level, as the daily level may be operating differently than a more global level. Additional explanations from the literature include the role of stress which is known to offset the boundaries between the marital and parent-child

subsystems (Minuchin, 1985), such that stressful interactions within one relationship blur the responsibilities and roles in other subsystems, thus overlapping the two domains.

### **Strengths & Limitations**

Although many of the hypotheses were not supported, the current study has noteworthy strengths that add to the literature. First, the study used advanced methodological practices to examine microlevel processes within the family system. Additionally, this study had two parts in order to extend literature based on mothers' positive and negative marital behaviors and parent-child conflict qualities to better understand multidimensional features of these interactions, and to examine parents' negative relationship characteristics to better understand how mothers and fathers may differ in the way they handle daily marital stress.

Despite these strengths, the current study had some limitations worth mentioning. First, we asked parents to report their most salient conflict each day. This may have influenced parents to only report on their most negative arguments that are less likely to capture collaborative characteristics. Investigating more specific traits of the marital relationship or conflict interactions (i.e., conflict resolution or marital support) will establish preliminary findings at the daily level and create a foundation for future work examining broader elements of positive marital behaviors and conflict interaction qualities. Future research would also benefit from examining severity of conflict interactions as well as examining prior day marital behaviors and next day parent-child conflict interactions. Additionally, the current study had complex and comprehensive models in order to reflect family system processes, which means they required a large number of data points for sufficient power. Although I had sufficient power to detect most small to medium effects, its possible that true effect sizes were very small and maybe too small

to detect with this sample size. There were 61 fathers who participated in the study of the 142 families collected. Most of these participating fathers were married and living in the home (97%); only 3.3% of fathers were unmarried partners of participating mothers. This may indicate father did not participate due to disinterest in the study. This should be taken into consideration when examining partner effects in the second model.

## **Conclusions**

Although coparenting was not a significant moderator within the current study, effective coparenting could still be a critical asset in navigating family interactions amongst the multitude of stressors parents will encounter throughout the day within their marital and parent-child relationships. This domain may be an important opportunity for intervention that can prompt positive change in the family system. The current study is the first to show evidence of parents' negative marital behaviors and the likelihood of parents engaging in oppositional conflict with their child at the daily level. This finding has important implications for the field such as the impact this can have on children's socioemotional well-being, children's willingness to disclose information to parents, and the likelihood of conflict resolution.

Practitioners and educators can facilitate change through coaching parents who are maritally distressed on how to self-regulate and monitor emotions in order to minimize negative spillover and crossover from the marriage to the parent-child relationship. Additionally, programs can assist parents in generating coping strategies for responding to their spouse and child in the face of stressful experiences and working together with their spouse to raise their child, even when the marriage is strained. Incorporating these types of interventions may



promote and improve sensitive parenting and harmonious parent-child relationships in the context of family turmoil, therefore potentially improving children's adjustment and well-being.

## APPENDIX A

### COPARENTING INVENTORY

*The questions listed below concern what happens between you and your child's other parent, or the other adult most involved in the care of your child. While you may not find an answer that exactly describes what you think, please circle the answer that comes closest to what you think. YOUR FIRST REACTION SHOULD BE YOUR ANSWER.*

<b>1 Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>2 Disagree</b>	<b>3 Not Sure</b>	<b>4 Agree</b>	<b>5 Strongly Agree</b>
1. My child's other parent enjoys being alone with our child.				1 2 3 4 5
2. During pregnancy, my child's other parent expressed confidence in my ability to be				1 2 3 4 5
3. When there is a problem with our child, we work out a good solution together.				1 2 3 4 5
4. My child's other parent and I communicate well about our child.				1 2 3 4 5
5. My child's other parent is willing to make personal sacrifices to help take care of				1 2 3 4 5
6. Talking to my child's other parent about our child is something I look forward to.				1 2 3 4 5
7. My child's other parent pays a great deal of attention to our child.				1 2 3 4 5
8. My child's other parent and I agree on what our child should and should not be				1 2 3 4 5
9. I feel close to my child's other parent when I see him/her play with our child.				1 2 3 4 5
10. My child's other parent knows how to handle children well.				1 2 3 4 5
11. My child's other parent and I are a good team.				1 2 3 4 5
12. My child's other parent believes that I am a good parent.				1 2 3 4 5
13. I believe that my child's other parent is a good parent.				1 2 3 4 5
14. My child's other parent makes my job of being a parent easier.				1 2 3 4 5

15. My child's other parent sees our child in the same way that I do.	1 2 3 4 5
16. My child's other parent and I would basically describe our child in the same way.	1 2 3 4 5
17. If our child needs to be punished, my child's other parent and I usually agree on	1 2 3 4 5
18. I feel good about my child's other parent's judgment about what is right for our	1 2 3 4 5
19. My child's other parent tells me that I am a good parent.	1 2 3 4 5
20. My child's other parent and I have the same goals for our child.	1 2 3 4 5

## APPENDIX B

### RELATIONSHIP BEHAVIORS CHECKLIST (RBC)

#### Items by scale

<b>Total Negative Scale</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
1. You showed anger or impatience toward your spouse/partner.		
2. You criticized or blamed your spouse/partner.		
3. You socially withdrew from your spouse/partner or spent time in a separate room, separate part of...		
4. You confronted your spouse/partner about an issue that was bothering you.		
5. You dismissed your spouse/partner's feelings or opinions.		

<b>Total Positive Scale</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
6. You listened to or comforted your spouse/partner.		
7. You tried to make your spouse/partner feel loved.		
8. You did a special favor for your spouse/partner.		
9. You talked about your feelings with your spouse/partner.		
10. You offered your spouse/partner a compliment or affectionate statement.		

## APPENDIX C

### COLLABORATIVE AND OPPOSITIONAL CONFLICT SCALE ITEMS

#### Collaborative

- I provided my child with behavioral options he/she could pick from in order to resolve the dispute.
- It was not necessary for me to listen to my child's opinion on the conflict.\*
- I asked my child to provide suggestions for how we should resolve the conflict.
- I encouraged my child to justify his/her perspective on the problem.
- My child contributed to the solution we came up with.
- During this conflict, I discussed with my child what we can do in the future to make sure this problem doesn't happen again.
- I helped my child think of ideas when he/she could not come up with his/her own.
- When my child became upset/frustrated during the conflict, I comforted him/her.
- When my child became upset/frustrated during the conflict, I let him/her know that it was okay to be upset.
- When my child became upset/frustrated during the conflict, I helped him/her feel better by solving the problem.
- I showed my child affection during or immediately following the conflict.
- I tried to see the problem from my child's perspective.
- I showed my child that I valued his/her opinion.
- Working through this conflict ultimately benefited my relationship with my child.

#### Oppositional

- (Child) Started crying during the conflict.
- (Child) Screamed or yelled during the conflict.
- (Child) Displayed aggression (e.g., slamming doors, hitting objects or people, throwing or breaking things).
- (Child) Remained calm during the conflict.\*
- (Child) Engaged in whining or pouting.
- (Parent) Screamed or yelled during the conflict.
- (Parent) Displayed aggression (e.g., slamming doors, hitting objects or people, throwing or breaking things).
- (Parent) Remained calm during the conflict.\*
- (Parent) Were affected at a physical level (e.g., flushed face, heart pounding, holding your breath).
- Warned your child of a potential punishment if he/she did not comply.
- Took away your child's privileges.
- Used a gentle tone of voice.\*
- Threatened your child.
- When my child became upset/frustrated during the conflict, I punished him/her for getting too worked up.
- When my child became upset/frustrated during the conflict, I thought he/she was overreacting.
- When my child became upset/frustrated during the conflict, it made me angrier.
- This conflict has led to additional problems with my child.
- This conflict with my child put me in a bad mood.
- This conflict with my child affected my ability to concentrate on other activities.
- This conflict with my child created negativity in my other relationships.

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\*Item was reverse-coded.

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## **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

Olivia Smith is a Kentucky resident, but was born in Ontario, Canada. After completing high school at Madison Central in Richmond, Kentucky in 2011, Olivia entered The University of Kentucky as a psychology major and graduated Summa Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology in May 2014. During her undergraduate education, she worked in a child development research lab and was selected as a Chellgren Fellow with the opportunity for one-on-one research mentorship that resulted in two publications prior to graduate school. These publications led to her pursuance in the field of child development examining the influences of family dynamics on adolescent and child socioemotional development. In August 2014, she entered the Psychological Sciences doctoral program at The University of Texas at Dallas in Richardson, Texas, where she accepted her teaching assistant stipend and continued to build upon her teaching and research interests.

# CURRICULUM VITAE

Olivia A. Smith

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(859) 582-8982 [Olivia.Smith@utdallas.edu](mailto:Olivia.Smith@utdallas.edu)

## Educational Background

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- Ph.D.            The University of Texas at Dallas, Richardson, TX (Currently)  
Developmental Psychology, Psychological Sciences  
Graduate Research Advised by Dr. Jackie A. Nelson  
Expected Graduation: May 2020
- M.S.            The University of Texas at Dallas, Richardson, TX  
Psychological Sciences  
Graduate Research Advised by Dr. Jackie A. Nelson  
May 2019
- B.A.            The University of Kentucky, Lexington KY  
Major: Psychology, Minor: Cognitive Science  
Undergraduate Research Advised by Dr. Peggy S. Keller  
Summa Cum Laude; May 2014

## Professional Experience

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**Instructor**, Spring 2019 semester  
BBSU 3310.006; Community-Based Service Learning  
Psychological Sciences, School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences  
The University of Texas at Dallas

**Co-Instructor**, Summer 2017 semester  
PSY 3310.0U1; Child Development  
Psychological Sciences, School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences  
The University of Texas at Dallas

**Graduate Research Assistant**, August 2014 – present  
Healthy Families Project, The University of Texas at Dallas  
PC8D Project, The University of Texas at Dallas  
Mealtime Study Pilot, The University of Texas at Dallas  
CCNES Measure pilot, The University of Texas at Dallas  
Teen Health Study project, The University of Texas at Dallas  
Healthy Families Project, The University of Texas at Dallas  
Daily Teen Life Study, The University of Texas at Dallas  
Supervised by Dr. Jackie A. Nelson

**Undergraduate Research Assistant**, August 2011- May 2014  
Child Sleep Project, The University of Kentucky  
School Start Times Project, The University of Kentucky  
Growing up in my Family Project, The University of Kentucky  
Sleep Apnea Project, The University of Kentucky  
Chellgren Fellowship Independent Project, The University of Kentucky

## **Publications**

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**Smith, O. A.**, Nelson, J. A., & Adelson, M. J. (2019). Interparental and Parent–Child Conflict Predicting Adolescent Depressive Symptoms. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 28(7), 1965-1976.

Lansford, J. E., Gauvain, M., Koller, S. H., Daiute, C., Hyson, M., Motti-Stefanidi, F., **Smith, O.A.**, ... & Zhou, N. (2019). The importance of international collaborative research for advancing understanding of child and youth development. *International Perspectives in Psychology: Research, Practice, Consultation*, 8(1), 1.

Nelson, J.A., Boyer, B.P., **Smith, O.A.**, & Villarreal, D.L. (2019). Relations between Characteristics of Collaborative and Oppositional Mother-Child Conflict. *Parenting: Science and Practice*. Doi:10.1080/15295192.2019.1615794

Keller, P.S., Gilbert, L.R., Haak, E.A., Bi, S., & **Smith, O.A.** (2017). Earlier school start times are associated with higher rates of behavioral problems in elementary schools. *Sleep Health: Journal of the National Sleep Foundation*, 3(2), 113-118.

Nelson J.A., Boyer B.P., Villarreal D., & **Smith, O.A.** (2017). Relations between mothers' daily work, home, and relationship stress with characteristics of mother-child conflict interactions. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 31, 431-441.



Keller, P. S., **Smith, O. A.**, Gilbert, L. R., Bi, S., Haak, E. A., & Buckhalt, J. A. (2015). Earlier school start times as a risk factor for poor school performance: An examination of public elementary schools in the commonwealth of Kentucky. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 107*(1), 236.

### **Publications under Review**

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Villarreal, D.L., **Smith, O.A.**, & Nelson, J.A. (*in Preparation*). Associations between child behavior problems and mother-child conflict mediated by parental distress.

### **Publications in Preparation**

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Nelson, J.A., Boyer, B.P., Villarreal, D.L., & **Smith, O.A.** (*in Preparation*). Associations of maternal discipline and child negative reactivity with mother-child conflict stability and volatility.

### **Presentations**

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#### **Peer-Reviewed**

England, D.E., Gaias, L.M., & **Smith, O.A.** (2019, March). Building a Global Network: Conducting International Research as a Graduate Student or Early Career Scholar. Professional Development Workshop will be presented at the Society for Research in Child Development, Baltimore, Maryland.

**Smith, O.A.** & Nelson, J.A. (2019, March). Coparenting and Characteristics of Collaborative and Oppositional Mother-Child Conflict. Poster will be presented at the Society for Research in Child Development, Baltimore, Maryland.

**Smith, O.A.** & Nelson, J.A. (2019, March). Coparenting and Characteristics of Collaborative and Oppositional Mother-Child Conflict. Poster will be presented at the International Convention of Psychological Science, Paris, France.

- Smith, O.A.**, Nelson, J.A., & Adelson, M.J. (2019, March). Cumulative interparental conflict risk on adolescent depressive symptoms. Poster will be presented at the International Convention of Psychological Science, Paris, France.
- Smith, O.A.**, & Nelson, J.A. (2018, April). Cumulative interparental conflict risk on adolescent depressive symptoms. Poster presented at the Society for Research in Adolescents biennial conference, Minneapolis, Minnesota.
- Villarreal, D.L., **Smith, O.A.**, & Nelson, J.A. (2017, April). Associations between child behavior problems and mother-child conflict mediated by parental distress. Poster Presented at the Society for Research in Child Development biennial conference, Austin, Texas.
- Nelson, J.A., Boyer, B.P., **Smith, O.A.**, & Villarreal, D.L. (2017, April). Relations between characteristics of collaborative and oppositional mother-child conflict. Poster presented at the Society for Research in Child Development biennial conference, Austin, Texas.
- Smith, O.A.**, & Nelson, J.A. (2016, March). Interparental and parent-child conflict predicting adolescent depression. Poster presented at the Society for Research in Adolescence biennial conference, Baltimore, Maryland.
- Nelson, J.A., Boyer, B.P., Villarreal, D.L., & **Smith, O.A.** (2015). Mothers daily stress and conflict interactions with their children. Paper presented at the National Council on Family Relations annual conference, Vancouver, Canada.
- Smith, O.**, Keller, P. (2014, April). Earlier school start times as a risk factor for poor school performance: An examination of public schools in the commonwealth of Kentucky. Poster presented at the Annual National Council on Undergraduate Research, Lexington, KY. Received the Oswald Research and Creativity Award.
- Haak, E. A., Nichols, T., **Smith, O. A.**, Gilbert, L.R., & Keller, P.S. (2014, March). The impact of parental depression of pubertal timing. Poster presented at the Society for research on Human Development. Austin, Texas.
- Smith, O. A.**, Keller, P.S. (2013, March). Earlier school start times as a risk factor for poor school performance: an examination of public schools in the commonwealth of Kentucky. Poster presented at the Undergraduate Research Showcase at the University of Kentucky. Lexington, Kentucky.

## **Invited**

**Smith, O.A.** (2019, March). Chair of Invited Program Session Jo Boyden: Lives of Children Growing up in Poverty in Diverse Cultural Contexts. TAD talk will be presented at the Society for Research in Child Development Biennial Conference, Baltimore, Maryland.

**Smith, O.A.,** Abel, E., & Henry, M. (2019, March). Stress Management and Mindfulness. Coffee Hour Presentation will take place at the Society for Research in Child Development Biennial Conference, Baltimore, Maryland.

**Smith, O.A.,** & Nelson, J.A. (2018, April). Interparental and parent-child conflict predicting adolescent depressive symptoms. Developmental, Cognitive, and Social/Personality Lecture Series, University of Texas at Dallas.

Nelson, J.A., Boyer, B.P., Villarreal, D.L., & **Smith, O.A.** (2016, March). Mothers' daily stress and conflict interactions with their children. Developmental, Cognitive, and Social/Personality Lecture Series, University of Texas at Dallas.

**Smith, O.A.** (2013, August). Parent-child interaction therapy presentation. Harris Psychological Services Center. Lexington, KY.

**Smith, O.A.,** & Denison, B. (2013, October) Study skills and applications for student athletes: A presentation on useful apps for students managing course work and time management. Center for Academic and Tutorial Services. Lexington, KY.

**Smith, O.A.,** Keller, P. (2013, December) Earlier school start times as a risk for behavioral issues: an examination of public schools in the commonwealth of Kentucky. Senior Honors Thesis Presentation, The University of Kentucky.

## **Research Experience**

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**Graduate Research Assistant**, August 2014- present

Family Research Lab, The University of Texas at Dallas

Supervisor: Dr. Jackie A. Nelson

Behavioral and self-report data collection with children and parents; physiological data collection: salivary cortisol, and ECG and impedance cardiography using MindWare equipment; design, implementation, and management of two 8-day daily diary protocols using Qualtrics Software; observational data coding of parent-child interactions; primary and secondary data organization and analysis using Excel, SPSS, and Mplus; supervision and training of graduate

and undergraduate research assistants; participant recruitment and follow-up.

PC8D Project (Daily Diary Project)

Mealtime Study (in-home video and daily diary project)

Suppression Study (in-lab physiological project)

Teen Health Study (in-lab physiological project)

Daily Life Mood Study (daily diary project)

Qualifying Thesis Project (NICHD secondary analysis)

Dissertation Project (PC8D secondary daily diary analysis)

**Undergraduate Research Assistant, August 2012-2014**

UK Family and Child Development Lab

Supervisor: Dr. Peggy S. Keller

Creating and editing Data Sets in Excel and SPSS. Assisted graduate students in recruitment.

Ran home visits for actigraphy data collection and study overview. Took roles of Child, Parent, and Computer experimenter for lab visits by administering different surveys, experiment tasks, and taking physiological measurements. Extensively involved in data collection while being involved in data entry, video coding, and data analysis using SPSS. Using Inquisit survey software to create surveys. Interviewed participants for data collection. Phone calls to educational institutes and public data base data collection. Assisted in writing study scripts and protocols and conducted hospital visits for survey completion.

Chellgren Fellowship Independent Project

Child Sleep Project

Growing up in My Family Project

School Start Times Project

Senior Honors Thesis Project

Sleep Apnea Project

Teaching Experience

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### **Independent Instruction**

BBSU 3310 Community-Based Service Learning, Instructor, Spring 2019

CLDP/PSY 3310 Child Development, Co-Instructor, Summer 2017

### **Teaching Assistant with Guest Lecturing Responsibilities**

CLDP 3394 Research and Evaluation Methods, Teaching Assistant, Spring 2017

CLDP/PSY 4344 Child Psychopathology, Teaching Assistant, Fall 2016

CLDP/PSY 3332 Social & Personality Development Psychology, Teaching Assistant, Summer 2016

CLDP/PSY 3310 Child Development, Teaching Assistant, Spring 2016

CLDP/PSY 4331 Personality Psychology, Teaching Assistant, Fall 2015

### **Teaching Assistant**

CLDP/PSY 3332 Social & Personality Development Psychology, Teaching Assistant, Spring 2019

CLDP/PSY 4347 Marriage and Family Psychology, Teaching Assistant, Fall 2018

CLDP/PSY 3310 Child Development, Teaching Assistant, Fall 2018

CLDP/PSY 3332 Social & Personality Development Psychology, Teaching Assistant, Spring 2015

PSY 3331 Social Psychology, Teaching Assistant, Fall 2014

### **Certifications**

Advanced Graduate Teaching Certificate, UT Dallas Center for Teaching and Learning

Graduate Teaching Certificate, UT Dallas Center for Teaching and Learning

Online Teaching Certificate, UT Dallas eLearning Support

### **Academic Services**

Learning Service Assistant, CATS (Center for Academic Tutoring Services), August 2013- Fall 2014, Tutor and Mentor, The University of Kentucky. Lexington, KY.

Academic Coach, CATS (Center for Academic Tutoring Services), August 2013- Fall 2014, Tutor and Mentor, The University of Kentucky. Lexington, KY.

UK 201 Orientation for Transfer Students, Spring 2013- Spring 2014, Peer Instructor, The University of Kentucky. Lexington, KY.

Summer ACT Tutoring services, Summer 2012. Richmond, KY.

## **Clinical Experience**

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Jesse G. Harris Jr. Psychological Services Center, Clinical Assistant, Summer 2013. Lexington, KY.

BlueGrass Therapeutic Foster Care, Summer Job Shadow, Summer 2013. Lexington, KY.

## **Professional Training**

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Proficient in Scoring the following Psychometric Assessments:

MMPI2  
CAARS  
BDI  
BAI  
NEO  
CBCL

Proficient with the following programs:

Microsoft Office  
Adobe programs  
SPSS  
Inquisit Survey Software  
Qualtrics Survey Software  
AppToto  
R; Rstudio

## **Service**

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### **Professional/National Organizations**

SECC Representative to the International Affairs Committee, Society for

Research in Child Development (SRCD), 2017-present

Association for Psychological Science Graduate Student Member, 2016-present  
Society for Research in Child Development Graduate Student Member, 2015-Present

Society for Research in Adolescence Graduate Student Member, 2015-present

American Psychological Association Graduate Student Member, 2014-present

The Kentucky Psychological Association Graduate Student Member, 2014-present

### **Service to Journals**

Ad Hoc Reviewer: *Journal of Children and Family Studies*, 2018-present

### **Award Reviewer**

Dissertation Funding Award, Society for Research in Child Development, Student and Early Career Council, 2017-present

APSSC's Student Research Award, Association for Psychological Science, 2017-present

### **University of Texas at Dallas**

Psychological Sciences Doctoral Student Recruitment Committee, 2015-2017

Psychological Sciences Professional Development Lunch Series Committee, 2015-2017

Psychological Sciences Doctoral Welcome Week Committee, 2015-2016

### **University of Kentucky**

Psi Chi (International Honors Society in Psychology) Undergraduate Student Member, 2011-2014

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Undergraduate Student Member, 2012-2014

## **Research Interests**

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Children's educational outcomes

Academic attainment and achievement

Marital and Parent-child relationship quality

Family Stress and vulnerability

Coparenting

Parent-child conflict interactions

Social and emotional development of young children and adolescence

Maternal and Paternal parenting practices

Developmental Health Psychology

Mental Health of young children and adolescence

## **Honors and Awards**

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Nominee for President's Teaching Excellence Award for Teaching Assistants  
*The University of Texas at Dallas*, Spring 2019

RISD Facilitator Fellowship funded by the Quantum Leap System Grant  
Amount: \$2800, Spring 2019

SRCD's Graduate Student Travel Award  
Amount: \$300, Spring 2019

Travel Award for Conference Presentation at ICPS in Paris, France  
Amount: \$1000, Spring 2019

Travel Award for Conference Presentation at SRA in Minneapolis  
Amount: \$1000, Spring 2018



Travel Award for Conference Presentation at SRA in Minneapolis  
*Amount:* \$1000, Spring 2018

Travel Award for Conference Presentation at SRA in Baltimore  
*Amount:* \$1000, Spring 2016

Psi Chi Creativity and Advancement Scholarship Award Winner  
*Amount:* \$300, Spring 2012

Oswald Undergraduate Research First Place Award Winner  
*Amount:* \$350, Fall 2013

Psi Chi Officer: Treasurer, Spring 2012-Spring 2014

Chellgren Fellowship Recipient, Fall 2012

## References

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Jackie A. Nelson, Ph.D.

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Barb Denison

Director of Center for Academic Tutorial Services

University of Kentucky

Email: [bdenist@email.uky.edu](mailto:bdenist@email.uky.edu)