

# Family split-up and children's social well-being at school

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01.06.2017

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## English summary

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**Background:** Family split-up has become more common for children to experience. Several studies from the last decades found that children experiencing family split-up were less well on multiple outcomes e.g. social well-being than children living in continuously intact families. Only few of the previous studies had a focus strictly on the school setting and none captured a general sense of social well-being at school. The objective of this study was to investigate the association between family split-up and a general sense of social well-being at school and furthermore if the association depended on the child's age at the time of the split-up.

**Methods:** This retrospective cohort study of 224 130 children attending 4th-9th grade combined registry data with questionnaire data from the Danish National Well-being Questionnaire 2015. Using multiple logistic regression the association between family split-up (having experienced family split-up or living in an intact family) and social well-being at school (low or high) was estimated. This analysis was further stratified by gender and age. Furthermore, it was examined if the association between family split-up and social well-being at school depended on the child's age at the family split-up including stratification by stepparents and number of changes in family structure to examine if the association could be explained by these.

**Results:** Of the study population, 68 % of the children lived in an intact family while 32 % lived in split-up families. A significant association between family split-up and low social well-being at school was found. Stratification by gender and age revealed that girls and children between 7-13 years had significantly but not substantially higher risks of low social well-being at school than boys and children between 14-19 years, respectively. Furthermore, when dividing the analysis according to the child's age at the time of split-up, the younger the child was, the higher the risk of low social well-being at school.

**Conclusion:** It seems that children experiencing family split-up have a significantly higher risk of low social well-being at school relative to children from intact families and that the risk increased the younger the child was at the time of the family split-up.