

IV. WELL-BEING AND HARDSHIPS AMONG PARENTS AND NON-PARENTAL CARETAKERS IN CHILD ONLY CASES

This chapter presents findings on the status and well-being of the parents and non-parental caretakers in child only cases. In addition, the chapter presents findings on the resources available to child only households, and their experience with hardships in the last 6 months. Many of the questions in this chapter are based on the NSAF surveys, including the following:

- the four questions that comprise the Caretaker Aggravation Index;
- the five questions that comprise the Caretaker Mental Health Index; and
- selected items from the Simple Hardship Index.

The chapter compares the data for child only cases in North Carolina with the NSAF data on low-income families across the country.¹ The chapter also presents findings on questions that were not part of the NSAF surveys.

A. HEALTH STATUS AND CAPACITY OF PARENTS AND NON-PARENTAL CARETAKERS

This section presents findings from the surveys on the health status and incapacities of parents and non-parental caretakers in child only cases in North Carolina.

Respondents in Parental Cases Were More Likely to Report Health Problems and Disabling Conditions Than Respondents in Non-Parental Cases

As shown in Exhibit IV-1, about 49 percent of the respondents in parental cases reported that their health was poor or only fair, compared to only 32 percent of the respondents in non-parental cases. The reason for this is no doubt that a large percentage of the respondents in parental cases were receiving SSI disability payments.

As indicated in Exhibit IV-2, about 19 percent of the respondents in parental cases reported that their health was worse or much worse than 6 months ago, compared to only 8 percent of the respondents in non-parental cases.

In addition, as shown in Exhibit IV-3, almost 57 percent of the respondents in parental cases reported that they had a physical, learning, or mental health condition that limited their ability to do regular work, compared to only 29 percent of the respondents in non-parental cases.

¹ The NSAF data in this chapter are derived from the following reports: (1) *NSAF Snapshots: Children's Family Environment*, and (2) *NSAF Snapshots: Family Economic Well-Being*.

Exhibit IV-1 - Health Status of the Respondent, by Case Type

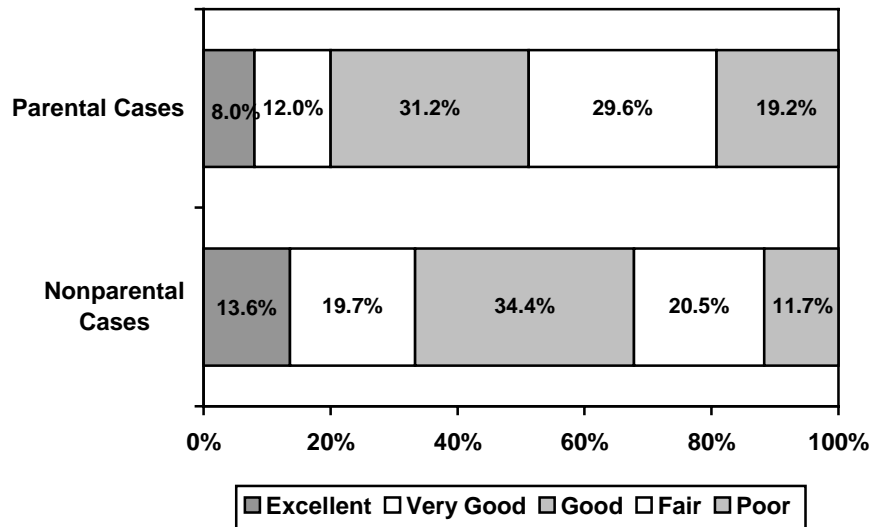


Exhibit IV-2 - Health Status of the Respondent Compared to 6 Months Ago, by Case Type

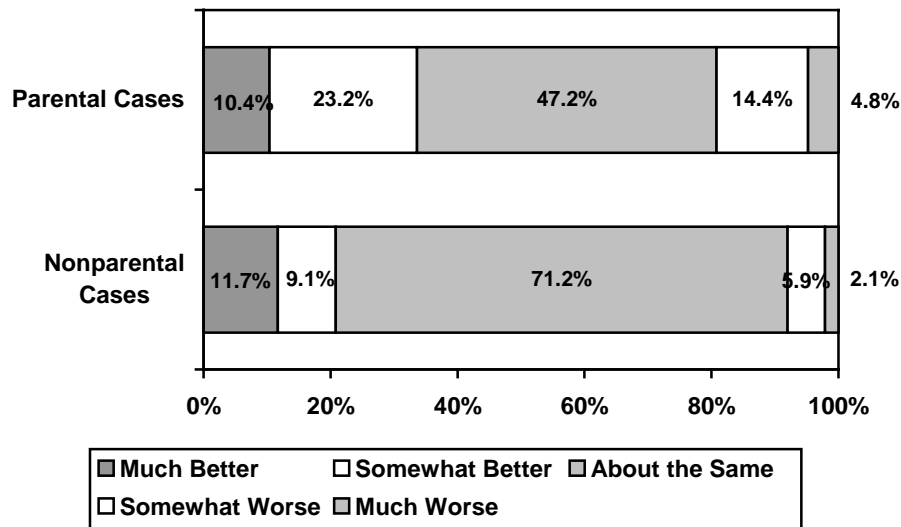
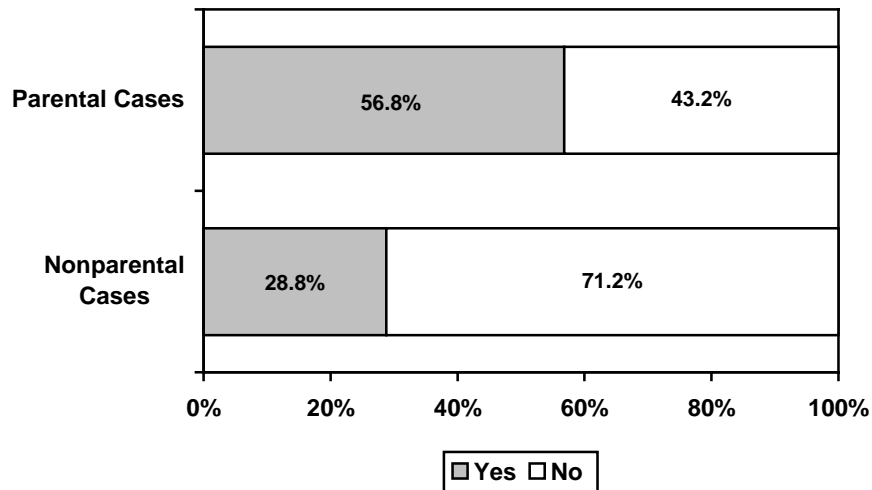


Exhibit IV-3 - Do You Have a Physical, Learning, or Mental Health Condition That Limits Your Ability To Do Regular Work? -- by Case Type



About 40 Percent of the Respondents in Parental Cases Reported That They Had a Condition That Limited Their Ability to Participate in Usual Activities, Compared to Only 28 Percent of Respondents In Non-Parental Cases

As shown in Exhibit IV-4, about 40 percent of the respondents in parental cases reported that they had a physical, learning, or mental health condition that limited their ability to participate in activities usually engaged in by people of their age. This compares to only 28 percent of the respondents in non-parental cases. It should be noted that some of the respondents in parental cases were not on SSI themselves.

Exhibit IV-5 shows that the percentage of respondents who reported limiting conditions was correlated with age.

**Exhibit IV-4 - Do You Have a Physical, Learning, or Mental Health Condition That Limits Your Participation in Usual Activities Done By People Your Age?
-- by Case Type**

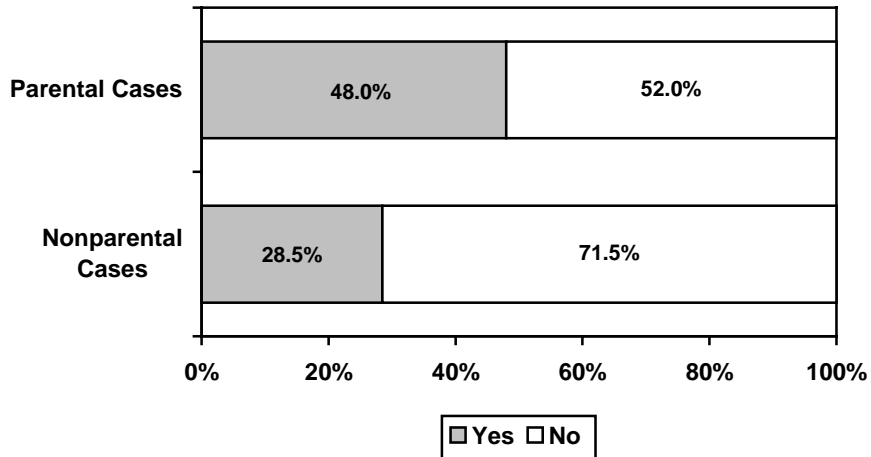
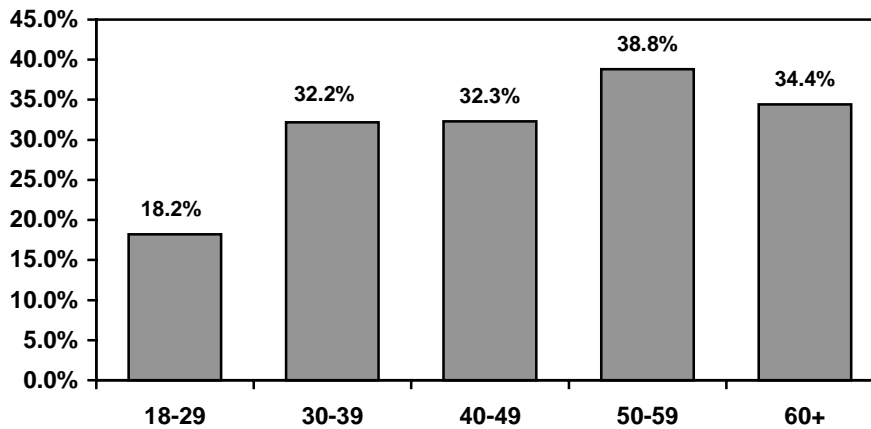


Exhibit IV-5 - Percent of Respondents Who Had a Physical, Learning, or Mental Health Condition That Limited Participation in Usual Activities Done By People Their Age, by Respondent's Age



B. MENTAL HEALTH STATUS OF PARENTS AND NON-PARENTAL CARETAKERS

This section presents findings on the five questions that comprise the NSAF Caregiver Mental Health Index. The section also compares the North Carolina data to the NSAF national data.

Respondents in Parental Cases Were Much More Likely to Report Problems with Nervousness, Anxiety, and Depression

As shown in Exhibit IV-6, almost 28 percent of the respondents in parental cases reported that they had been very nervous all or most of the time in the past month, compared to only 13 percent of the respondents in non-parental cases.

Exhibit IV-7 shows that only 27 percent of the respondents in parental cases had been calm or peaceful all or most of the time in the past month, compared to 60 percent of the respondents in non-parental cases.

As indicated in Exhibit IV-8, about 28 percent of the respondents in parental cases had been downhearted or blue all or most of the time in the past month, compared only 10 percent of the respondents in non-parental cases.

Exhibit IV-9 shows that only 36 percent of the respondents in parental cases had been happy all or most of the time in the past month, compared to 67 percent of the respondents in non-parental cases. Exhibit IV-10 shows that 19 percent of the respondents in parental cases reported that all or most of the time in the past month, they had been so depressed that nothing could cheer them up. This compares to only 7 percent of the respondents in non-parental cases.

Exhibit IV-11 shows the summary score for the percentage of parents and caretakers who had poor mental health, based on the NSAF Caregiver Mental Health Index. This index combines the responses from the preceding five exhibits, using the NSAF scaling system.

As shown in the exhibit, about 47 percent of the respondents in parental cases could be classified as having poor mental health, compared to only 19 percent of the respondents in non-parental cases. A partial explanation for this may be that the adults in parental cases were more likely than the adults in non-parental cases to be disabled or incapacitated, based on their SSI status. In addition, the adults in parental cases were more likely to be lacking support in the form of a spouse or other social supports (see the data presented later in this chapter).

Exhibit IV-6 - How Often Have You Been Very Nervous in the Past Month? -- by Case Type

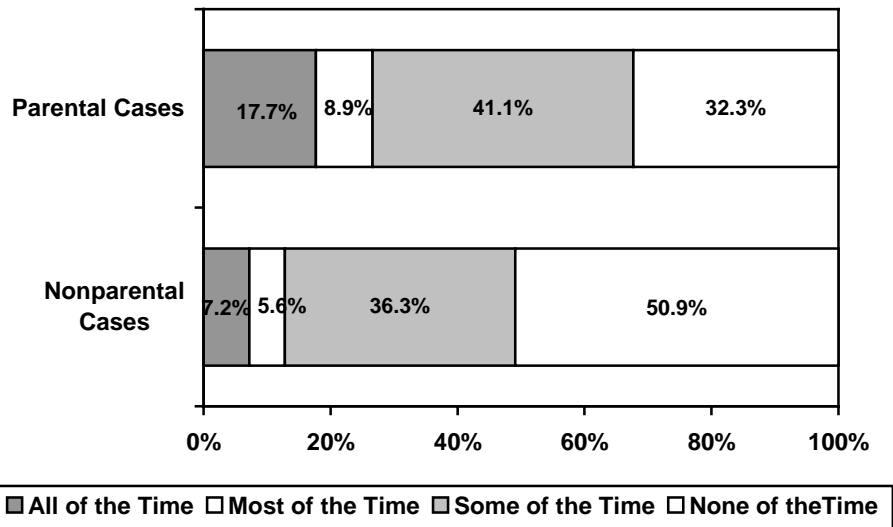


Exhibit IV-7 - How Often in the Past Month Have You Felt Calm and Peaceful? -- by Case Type

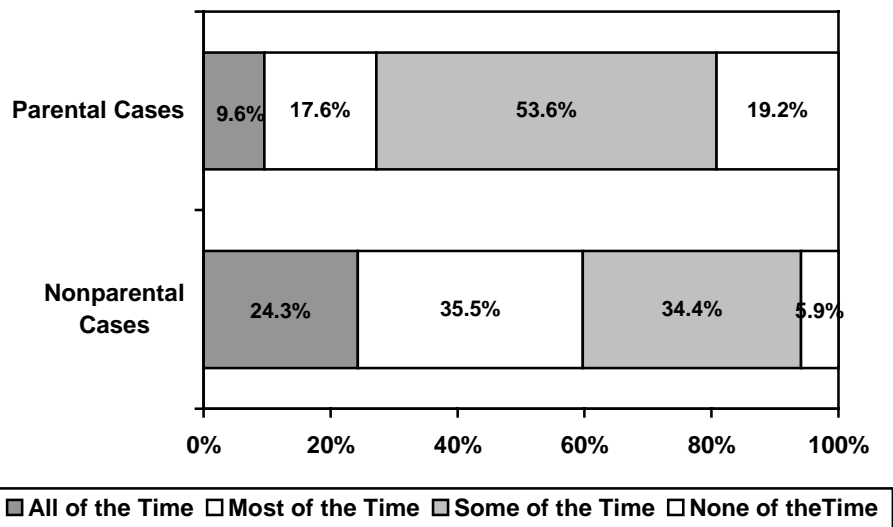


Exhibit IV-8 - How Often in the Past Month Have You Felt Downhearted or Blue? -- by Case Type

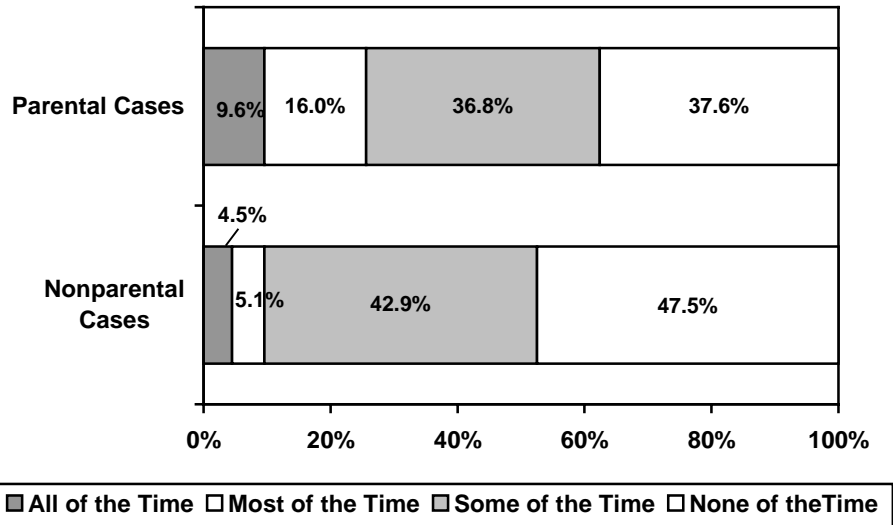


Exhibit IV-9 - How Often in the Past Month Have You Been Happy? -- by Case Type

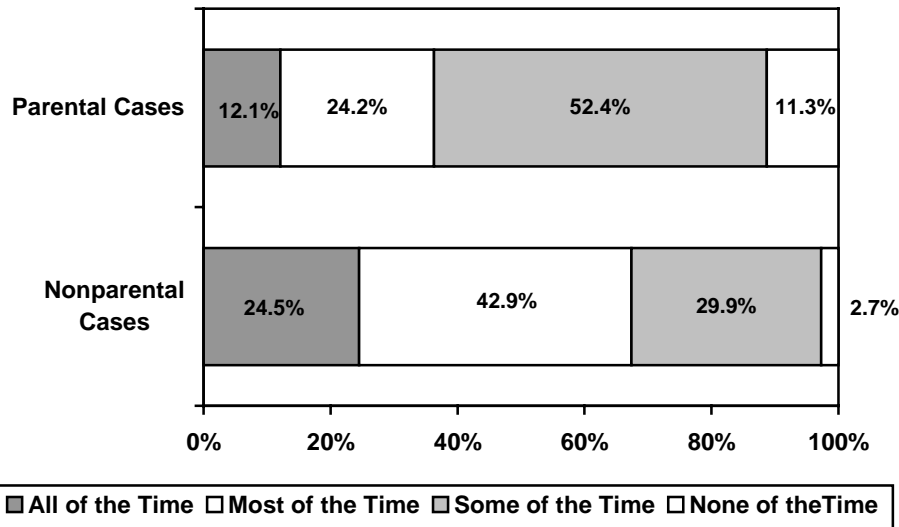


Exhibit IV-10 - How Often in the Past Month Have You Felt So Down in the Dumps that Nothing Could Cheer You Up? --- by Case Type

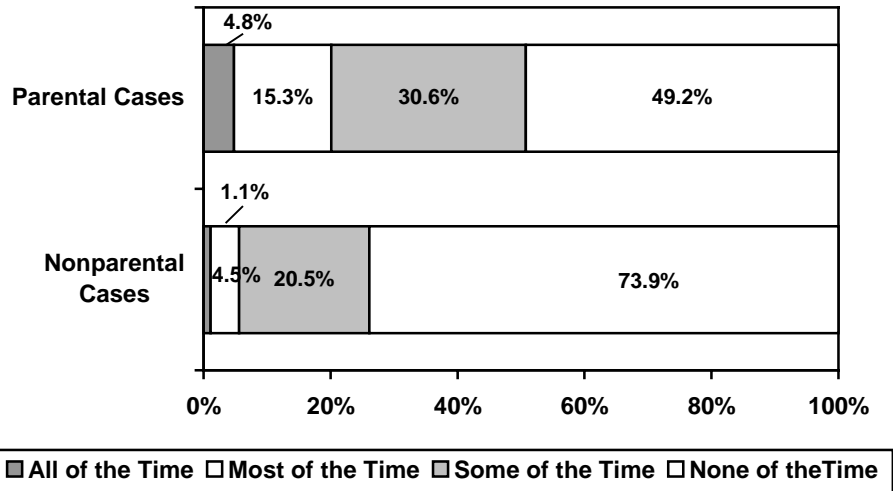
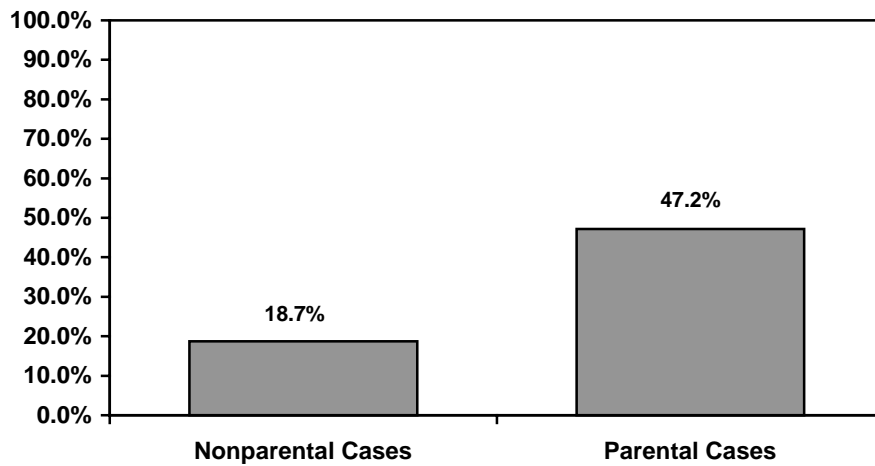


Exhibit IV-11 - Percentage of Respondents With Poor Mental Health, Based on the NSAF Caregiver Mental Health Index, by Case Type



Respondents in Parental Cases Greatly Exceeded the National Average for Low-Income Families in Terms of Having Poor Mental Health, While Respondents in Non-Parental Cases Had Fewer Mental Health Problems than the National Average

As shown in Exhibit IV-11-A, about 24 percent of the 1999 NSAF survey respondents in families below 200 percent of poverty were classified as having poor mental health. This was only about half the rate that we found for respondents in child only parental cases in North Carolina.

In contrast, respondents in child only non-parental cases in North Carolina did somewhat better than the national average for low-income families in terms of mental health.

Exhibit IV-11-A Percent of Cases With a Parent or Caretaker Reporting Symptoms of Poor Mental Health (Cases With Children Aged 0-17)

Sample Unit	Percent
1999 NSAF data for families below 200 percent of poverty	24.5%
North Carolina child only parental cases	47.2%
North Carolina child only non-parental cases	18.7%

In Households Where the Respondents Had Poor Mental Health, the Focal Child Was More Likely to Have a High Level of Behavioral and Emotional Problems

Exhibit IV-11-B shows the scores of the 6-17 year old focal children on the NSAF Child Behavior Index, by the scores of the respondent on the NSAF caregiver Mental Health Index. As indicated, respondents with poor mental health were much more likely to have children with a high level of behavioral and emotional problems.

In parental cases, for example, 23 percent of the respondents who had poor mental health had children who had a high level of behavioral and emotional problems. In contrast, only 8 percent of the respondents who did not have poor mental health had children with a high level of behavioral and emotional problems

The same general pattern was found in non-parental cases. Of the respondents who had poor mental health, 24 percent had children with a high level of behavioral and emotional problems. In contrast, only 12 percent of the respondents who did not have poor mental health had children with a high level of behavioral and emotional problems

Exhibit IV-11-B
Child Behavior Index, by Caregiver Mental Health
(Children Ages 6 to 17)

Child Behavior Index	Parental Cases	
	Poor Mental Health	Not in Poor Mental Health
High level of behavioral/emotional problems	23.1%	8.3%
Moderate level of behavioral/emotional problems	53.8%	45.8%
Low level of behavioral/emotional problems	23.1%	45.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%
Child Behavior Index	Non-Parental Cases	
	Poor Mental Health	Not in Poor Mental Health
High level of behavioral/emotional problems	24.1%	12.4%
Moderate level of behavioral/emotional problems	62.1%	58.1%
Low level of behavioral/emotional problems	13.8%	29.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

C. PARENT AND CARETAKER AGGRAVATION

This section presents findings on the four questions that comprise the NSAF Caregiver Aggravation Index. The section also compares the North Carolina data to the NSAF national data.

Respondents in Parental Cases Were Somewhat More Likely to Report Being Aggravated With the Children in Their Care

As shown in Exhibit IV-12, about 16 percent of the respondents in parental cases reported that all or most of the time in the past month they had felt that the child(ren) in their care were much harder to care for than most children. By comparison, only 9 percent of the respondents in non-parental cases felt this way.

Exhibit IV-13 shows that almost 10 percent of the respondents in parental cases reported that all or most of the time in the past month, the child(ren) in their care did things that really bothered them, compared to only 5 percent of the respondents in non-parental cases.

As indicated in Exhibit IV-14, about 22 percent of the respondents in parental cases reported that all or most of the time in the past month, they felt that they were giving up more of their lives to meet their children's needs than they expected. By contrast, only 18 percent of the respondents in non-parental cases felt this way.

As indicated in Exhibit IV-15, there was not much difference between the two types of cases in the percentage of respondents who had been angry with the children in their care all or most of the time during the past month – only 1-2 percent in both types of cases. About 30

percent of the respondents in both types of cases had been angry with the child(ren) some of the time in the past month.

Finally, Exhibit IV-16 shows the summary score for the respondents on the NSAF Caregiver Aggravation Index. As indicated, almost 17 percent of the respondents in parental cases could be classified as having a high level of aggravation, compared to only about 13 percent of the respondents in non-parental cases.

Exhibit IV-12 - How Often in the Past Month Have You Felt that the Children You Care for Are Much Harder to Care for than Most? --by Case Type

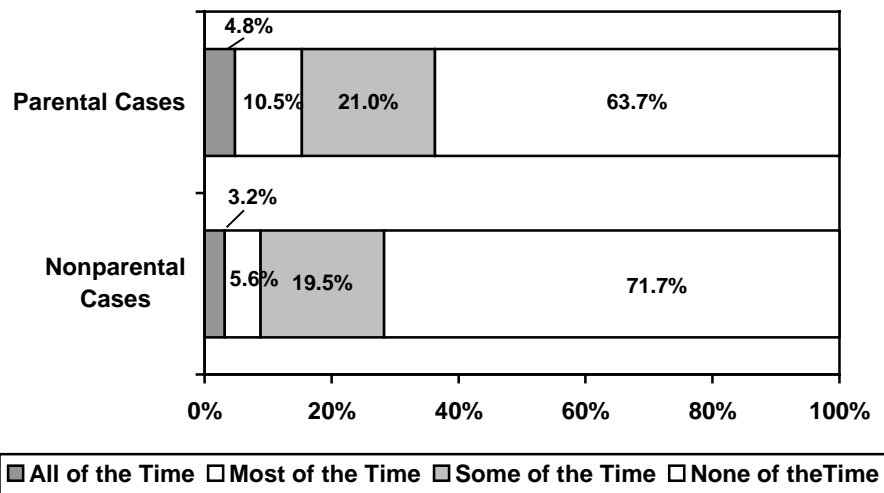


Exhibit IV-13 - How Often in the Past Month Have You Felt that the Children You Care for Do Things that Really Bother You? - by Case Type

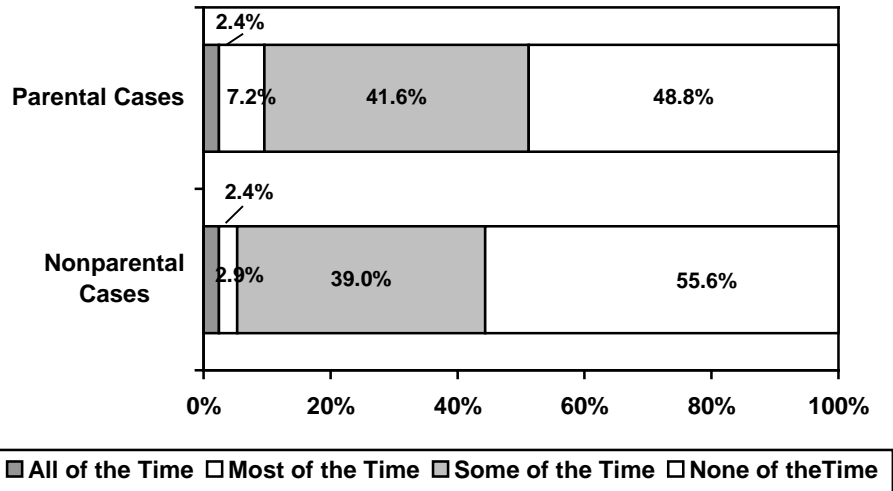


Exhibit IV-14 - How Often in the Past Month Have You Felt that You're Giving Up More of Your Life to Meet the Children's Needs Than You Ever Expected? - by Case Type

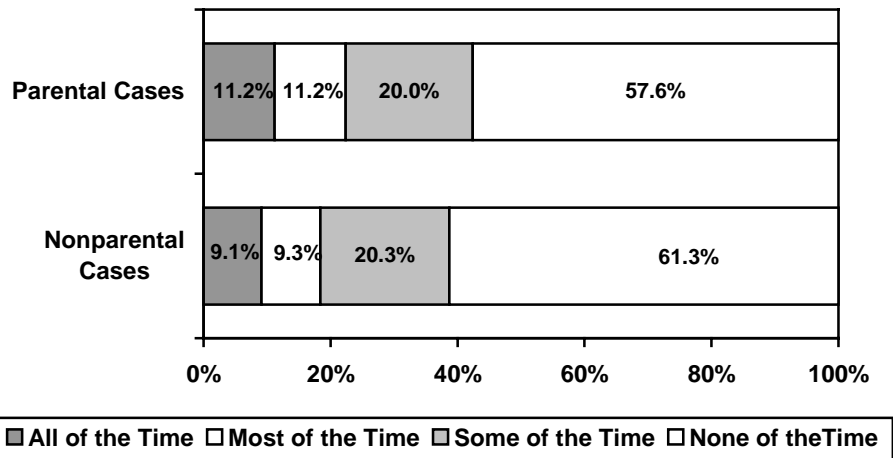


Exhibit IV-15 - How Often in the Past Month Have You Felt Angry with the Children You Care For? - by Case Type

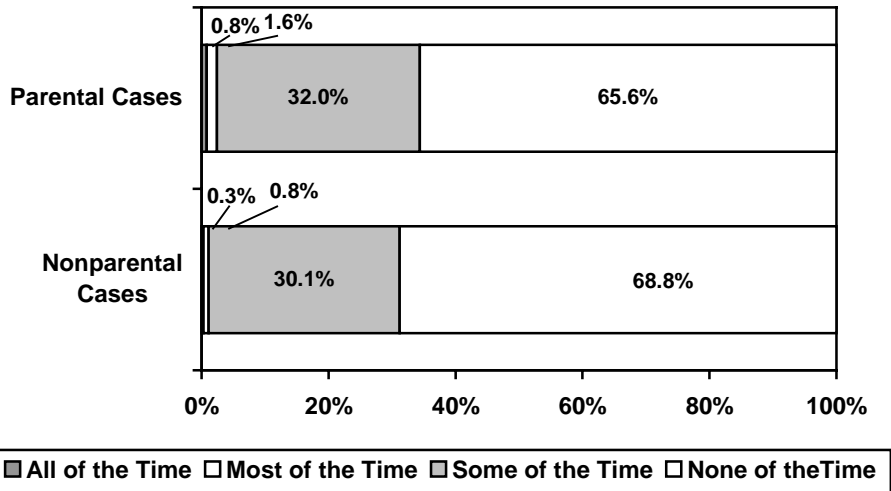
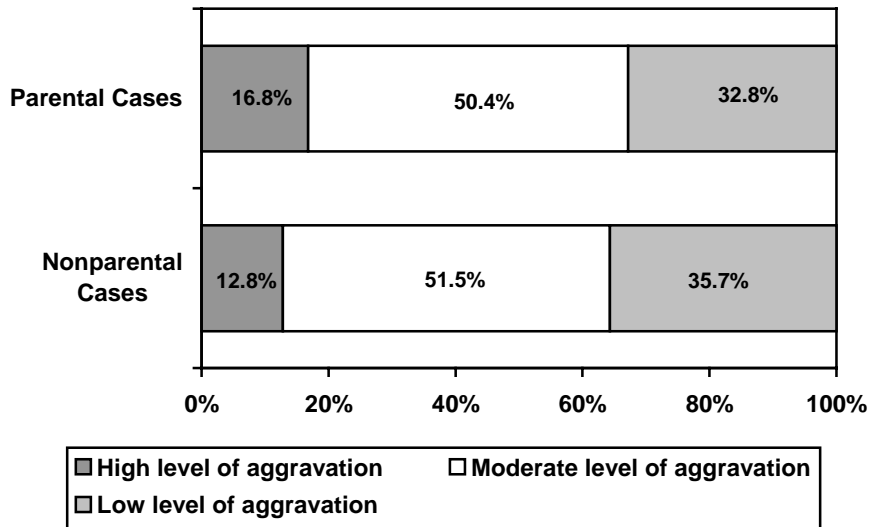


Exhibit IV-16 - Caretaker Aggravation Index, by Case Type



Respondents in Parental Cases Somewhat Exceeded the National Average for Low-Income Families in Terms of Having High Aggravation with the Children in Their Care, While Respondents in Non-Parental Cases Had Slightly Lower Aggravation than the National Average

As shown in Exhibit IV-16-A, almost 14 percent of the 1999 NSAF survey respondents in families below 200 percent of poverty were classified as being highly aggravated with the children in their care. This was less than the 17 percent that we found for respondents in child only parental cases in North Carolina.

Respondents in child only non-parental cases in North Carolina did slightly better than the national average for low-income families in terms of aggravation with children.

**Exhibit IV-16-A
Percent of Cases With a Parent or Caretaker Who Was Highly Aggravated
(Cases With Children Aged 0-17)**

Sample Unit	Percent
1999 NSAF data for families below 200 percent of poverty	13.9%
North Carolina child only parental cases	16.8%
North Carolina child only non-parental cases	12.8%

D. PARENT AND CARETAKER SUPPORT NETWORKS

This section presents findings on the availability of social supports for parents and non-parental caretakers in child only cases. The section also compares the North Carolina data to the NSAF national data on the involvement of the parents and caretakers in religious services.

Respondents in Non-Parental Cases Were Somewhat More Likely to Have Better Social Support Systems and Were Much More Likely to Attend Religious Services on a Regular Basis

As indicated in Exhibit IV-17, almost 14 percent of the respondents in parental cases felt that they did not have family, friends, or neighbors that they could count on in an emergency, compared to less than 8 percent of the respondents in non-parental cases.

Exhibit IV-18 shows that 62 percent of the respondents in non-parental cases attended religious services at least once per week, compared to only 40 percent of the respondents in parental cases.

Exhibit IV-17 - Do You Feel You Have Family, Friends, Neighbors, or Other People That You Can Count On in an Emergency? -- by Case Type

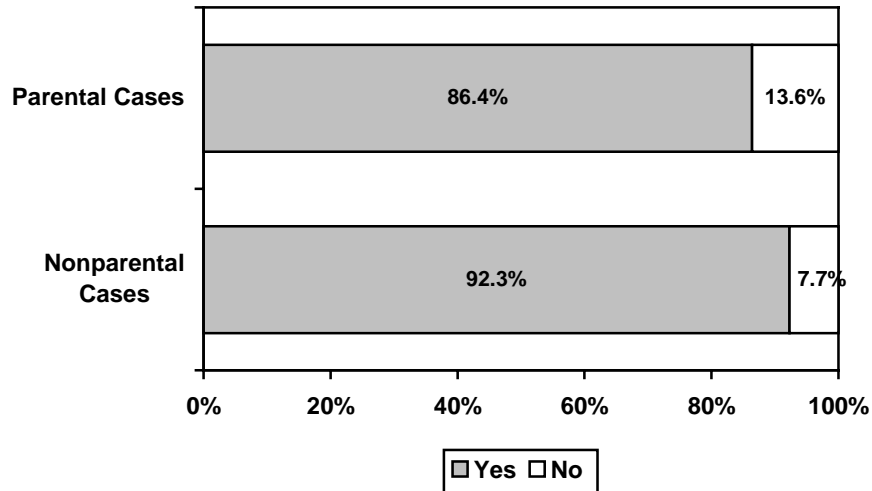
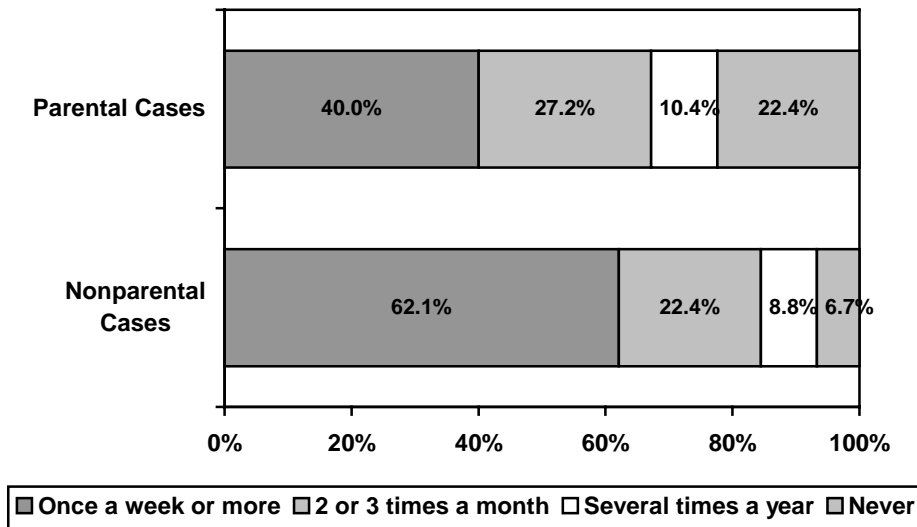


Exhibit IV-18 - How Often Do You Attend Church or Other Religious Services? -- by Case Type



Respondents in Both Types of Child Only Cases Exceeded the National Average for Low-Income Families in Terms of Attending Religious Services, But Respondents in Non-Parental Cases Exceeded the National Average by a Greater Margin than Respondents in Parental Cases

As shown in Exhibit IV-18-A, about 54 percent of the 1999 NSAF survey respondents in families below 200 percent of poverty reported that they attended religious services at least a few times per month. This compares to 67 percent of respondents in child only parental cases in North Carolina, and 84 percent of respondents in child only non-parental cases. In general, the NSAF data show higher levels of attendance at religious services in southern states.

**Exhibit IV-18-A
Percent of Cases With a Parent or Caretaker Who Attended Religious Services at Least a Few Times per Month (Cases With Children Aged 0-17)**

Sample Unit	Percent
1999 NSAF data for families below 200 percent of poverty	54.5%
North Carolina child only parental cases	67.2%
North Carolina child only non-parental cases	84.5%

E. RESOURCES AND HARDSHIPS AMONG HOUSEHOLDS IN CHILD ONLY CASES

This section presents findings on the resources available to child only households, and their experience with hardships in the last 6 months. Comparisons are made to the NSAF data on selected questions.

Adults in Non-Parental Households Were More Likely to Have Bank Accounts and to Own Vehicles

As indicated in Exhibit IV-19, about 70 percent of the respondents in non-parental cases reported that at least one adult in the household had a bank account, compared to only 42 percent of the respondents in parental cases.

As shown in Exhibit IV-20, about 79 percent of the respondents in non-parental cases reported that at least one adult in the household owned a vehicle, compared to only 44 percent of the respondents in parental cases.

Exhibit IV-19 - Does Any Adult in the Household Have a Bank Account? - by Case Type

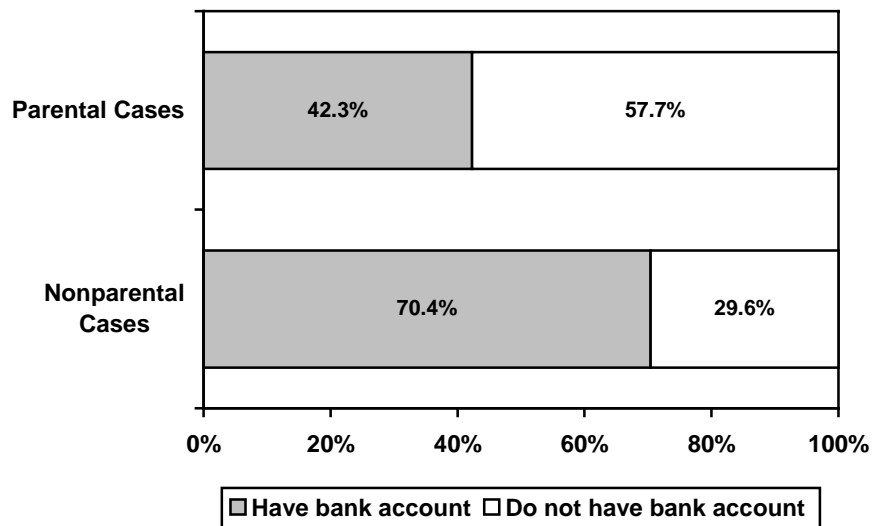
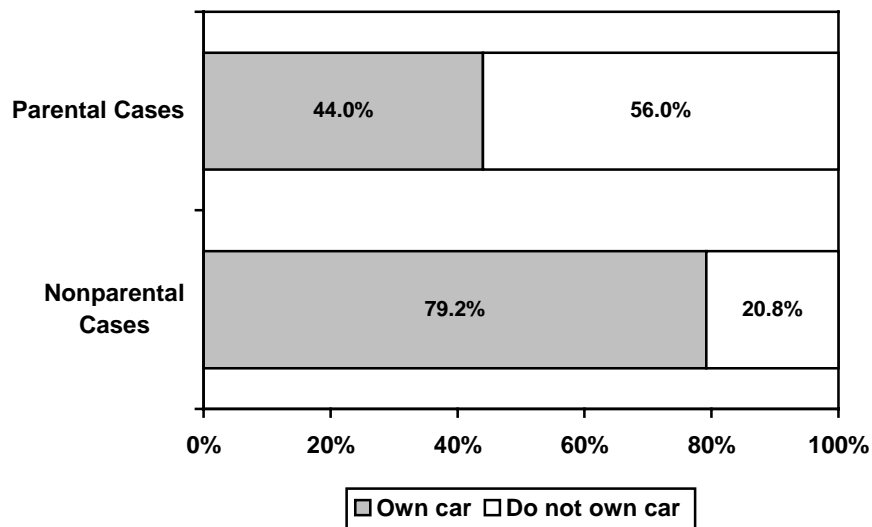


Exhibit IV-20 - Does Any Adult in the Household Own a Vehicle? - by Case Type



Non-Parental Households Had Higher Incomes Than Parental Households

As shown in Exhibit IV-21, almost 75 percent of the respondents in parental cases reported household incomes of \$1,000 per month or lower. This compares to only 36 percent of non-parental households

**Exhibit IV-21
Monthly Household Income, by Case Type**

Monthly Household Income	Parental Cases	Non-Parental Cases
\$500 and under	14.6%	4.6%
\$501-\$1,000	60.2%	31.5%
\$1,001-\$1,500	17.9%	19.8%
\$1,501-\$2,000	2.4%	16.3%
\$2,001-\$2,500	0.0%	10.9%
\$2,501-\$3,000	0.8%	4.6%
More than \$3,000	0.0%	9.2%
Refused	4.1%	3.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Parental Households Were More Likely to Have Experienced Problems Paying Housing Costs in the Past Six Months

As shown in Exhibit IV-22, almost 31 percent of the respondents in parental cases reported that there had been times in the past 6 months when they were not able to make housing payments. This compares to only 20 percent of the respondents in non-parental cases.

As indicated in Exhibit IV-23, however, respondents in parental cases were much more likely to have received help when they had problems than respondents in non-parental cases.

Exhibit IV-22 - During the Past 6 Months, Was There a Time When You/Your Family Were Not Able to Pay Mortgage/Rent? - by Case Type

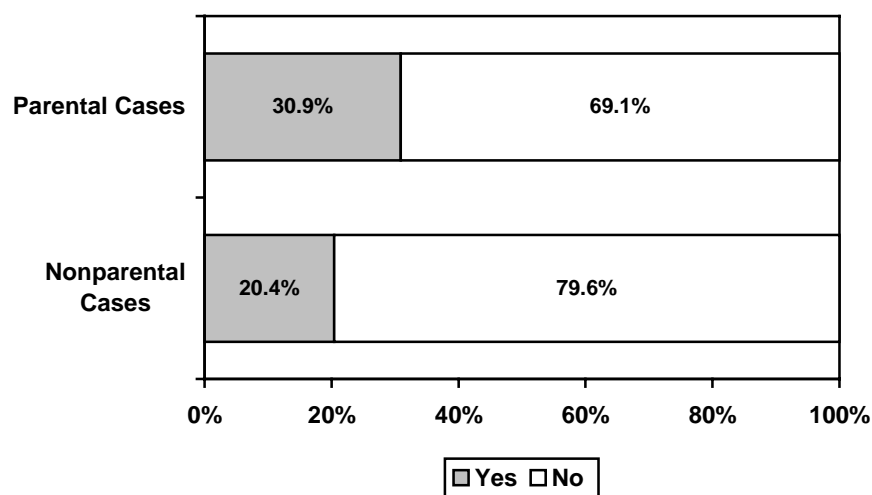
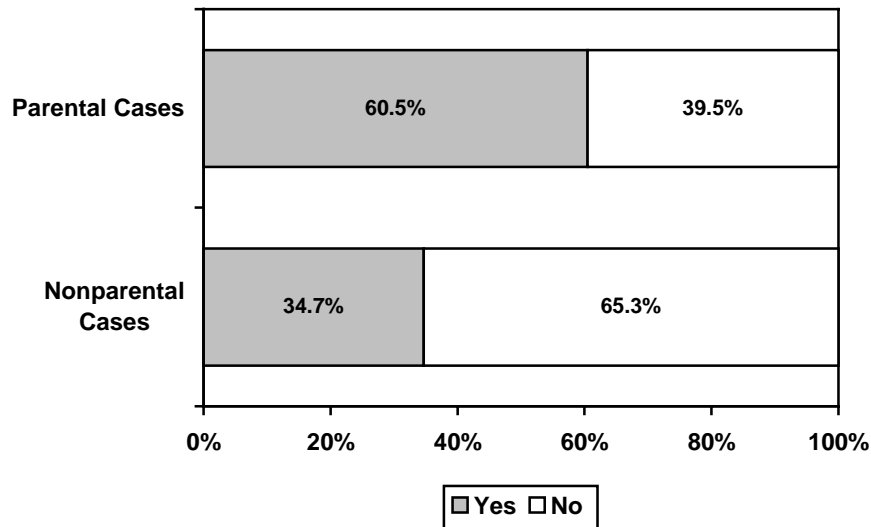


Exhibit IV-23 - Did You Get Help When You Were Not Able to Pay Mortgage/Rent? - by Case Type



Parental Households Were More Likely to Have Experienced Problems Paying Utilities in the Past Six Months

Exhibit IV-24 shows that almost 41 percent of the respondents in parental cases reported that there had been times in the past 6 months when they were not able to pay for utilities (excluding telephone). This compares to only 23 percent of the respondents in non-parental cases.

However, as indicated in Exhibit IV-25, respondents in parental cases were more likely to have received help paying for utilities when they ran into problems.

Exhibit IV-24 - During the Last 6 Months Was There a Time When You/Your Family Were Not Able to Pay Your Utility Bills (Excluding Telephone)? - by Case Type

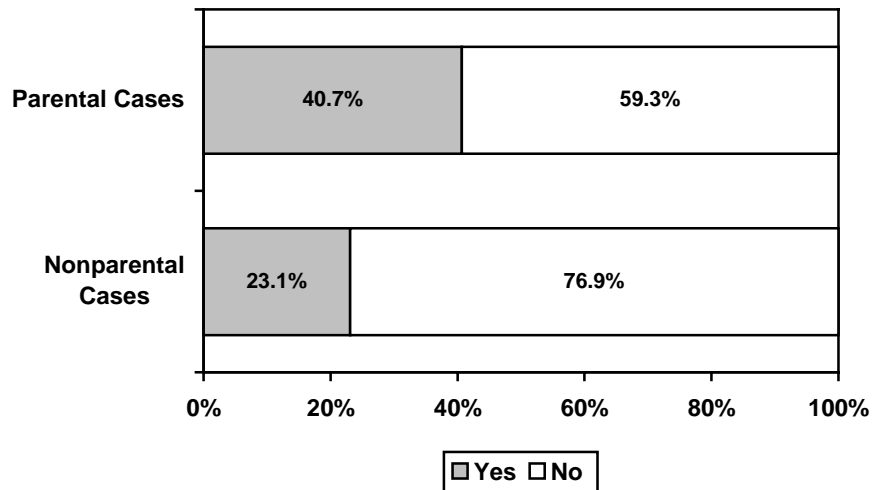
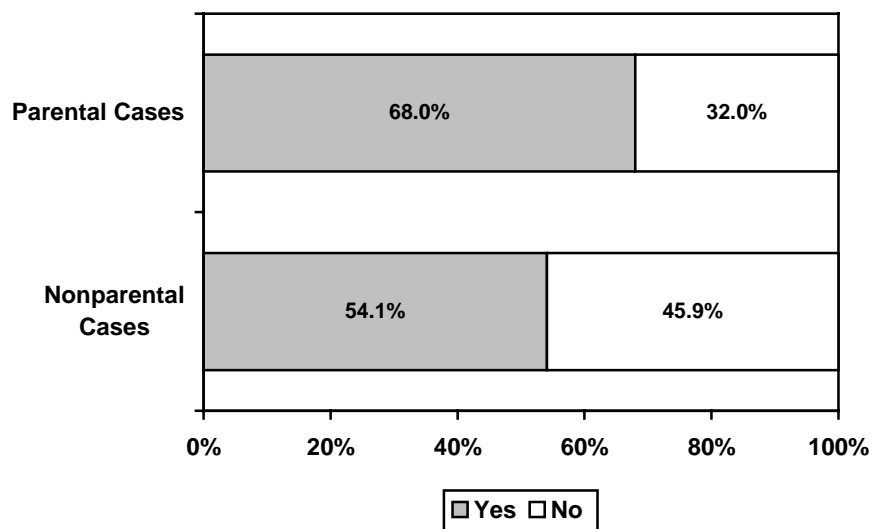


Exhibit IV-25 - Did You Get Help When You Were Not Able to Pay Your Utility Bills? - by Case Type



Parental Households Were More Likely to Have Had Their Utilities Cut Off in the Past Six Months

As shown in Exhibit IV-26, about 10 percent of the respondents in parental cases reported that their utilities, except telephones, had been cut off in the past six months, compared to only 4 percent of the respondents in non-parental cases. As indicated in Exhibit IV-27, about

31 percent of the respondents in parental households reported that their telephone had been cut off in the last 6 months because they did not pay the bill. The percentage for non-parental households was only 15 percent.

Exhibit IV-26 - In the Last 6 Months, Were Any of Your Utilities (Except Telephone) Ever Cut Off Because You Didn't Pay the Bills? - by Case Type

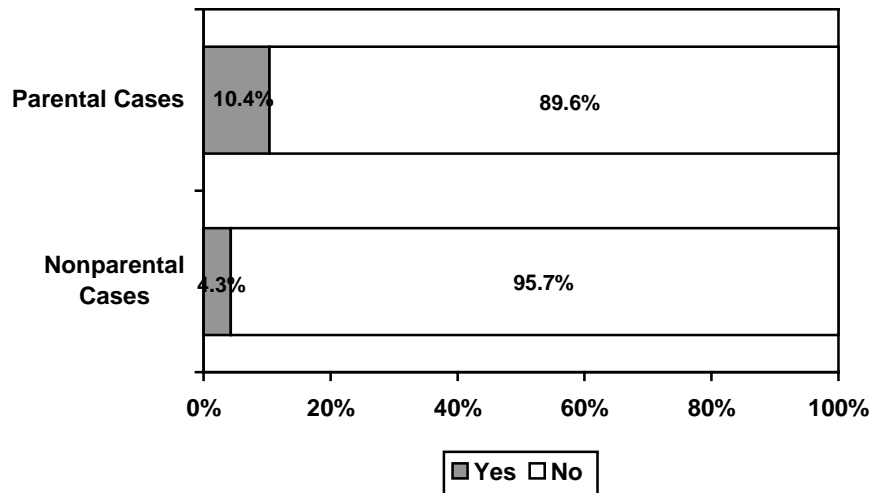
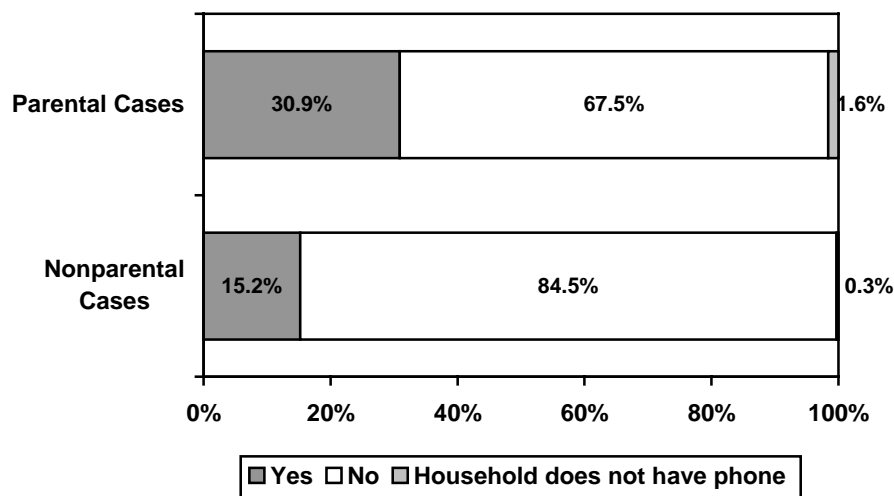


Exhibit IV-27 - In the Last 6 Months, Was Your Telephone Ever Cut Off Because You Didn't Pay the Bills? -- by Case Type



Respondents in Parental Cases Greatly Exceeded the National Average for Low-Income Families in Terms of Having Difficulty Paying for Housing and Utilities

As shown in Exhibit IV-27-A, respondents in child only parental cases were twice as likely to have had problems paying for housing costs and utilities than low-income families across the country, based on NSAF data.

Exhibit IV-27-A Percent of Households That Had Problems Paying Their Mortgage, Rent, or Utility Bills

Sample Unit	Percent
1999 NSAF data for families below 200 percent of poverty*	23.1%
North Carolina child only parental cases**	46.4%
North Carolina child only non-parental cases**	28.8%

* Last 12 months ** Last 6 months

Parental Households Were Much More Likely to Be Receiving Food Stamps Than Non-Parental Households

As shown in Exhibit IV-28, about 74 percent of the respondents in parental households reported that someone in the household was receiving Food Stamps. This compares to only 33 percent of the respondents in non-parental households.

Parental Households Were Much More Likely to Have Been Food Insecure in the Past Six Months

As shown in Exhibit IV-29, almost 26 percent of the households in parental cases could be classified as “food insecure with hunger present” at some time in the last 6 months, while an additional 32 percent were food insecure without hunger.

In contrast, only 4 percent of non-parental households had been food insecure with hunger present in the past 6 months, and only 17 percent had been food insecure without hunger.

Exhibits IV-30 to IV-35 show the results for the individual questions in the food security index.

Exhibit IV-28 - Do You or Anyone in Your Household Currently Receive Food Stamps?

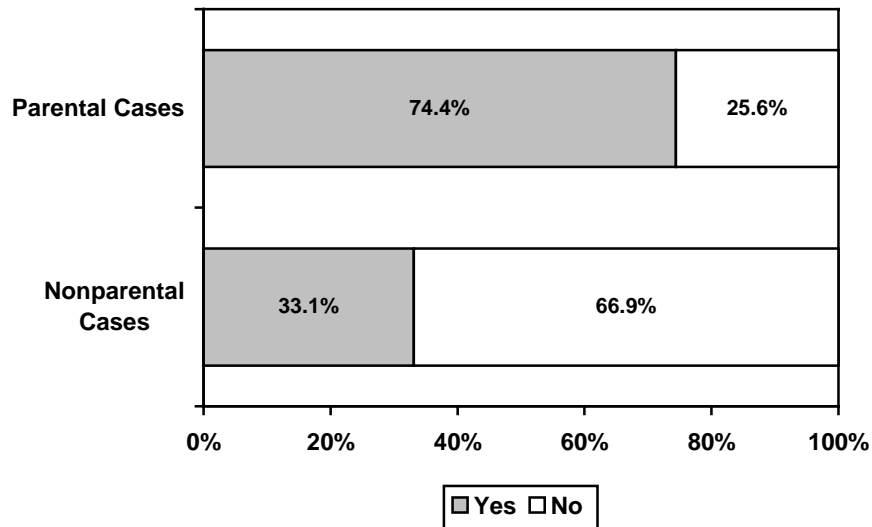


Exhibit IV-29 - Food Security in the Past Six Months (USDA Food Security Index) - by Case Type

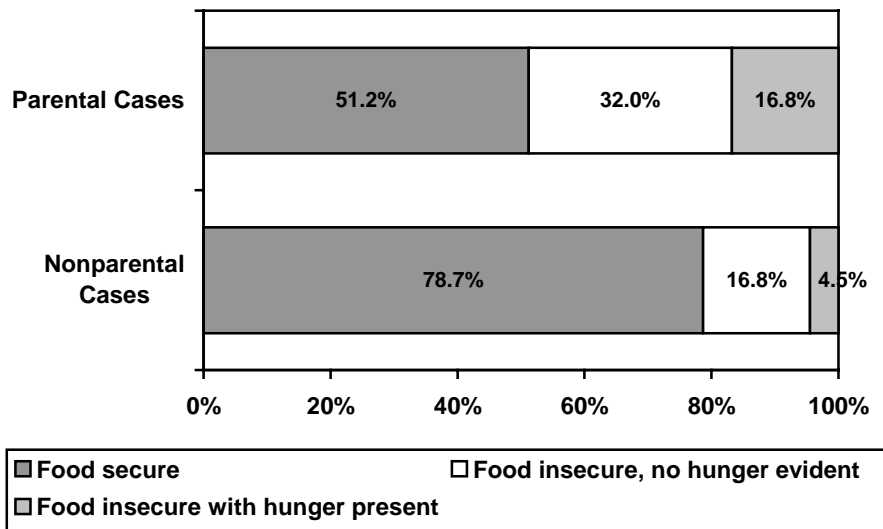


Exhibit IV-30 - "The Food I/We Bought Just Didn't Last, and I/We Didn't Have Money To Get More" in the Last 6 Months - by Case Type

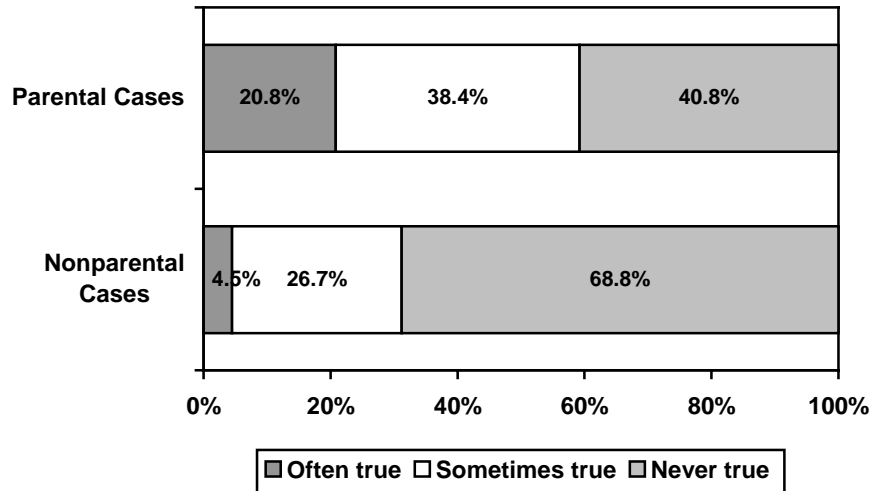


Exhibit IV-31 - "I/We Couldn't Afford To Eat Balanced Meals" in the Last 6 Months - by Case Type

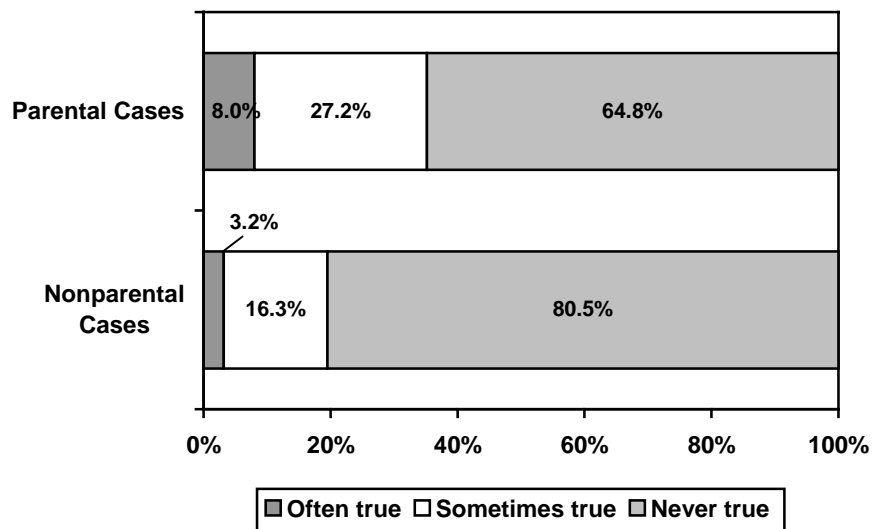


Exhibit IV-32 - In the Last 6 Months, Did You/Other Adults in Household Ever Cut the Size of Meals or Skip Meals Because There Wasn't Enough Money for Food? - by Case Type

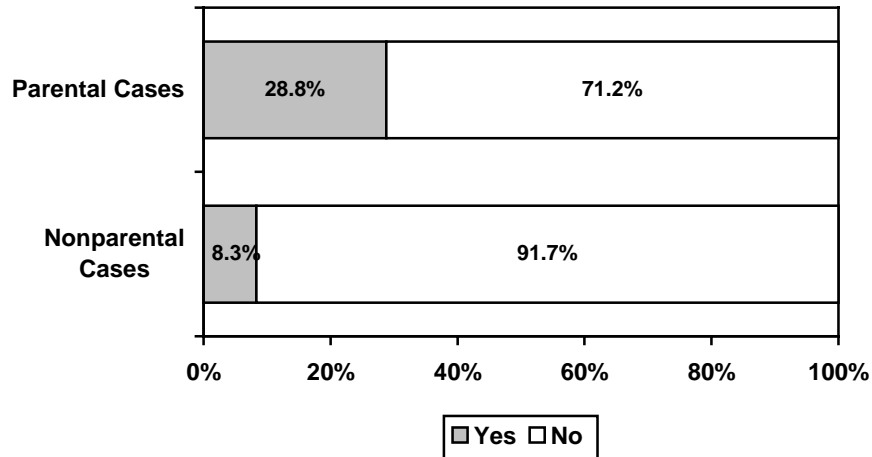


Exhibit IV-33 - Households Who Had Cut the Size of Meals or Skipped Meals -- How Often Did This Happen? -- by Case Type

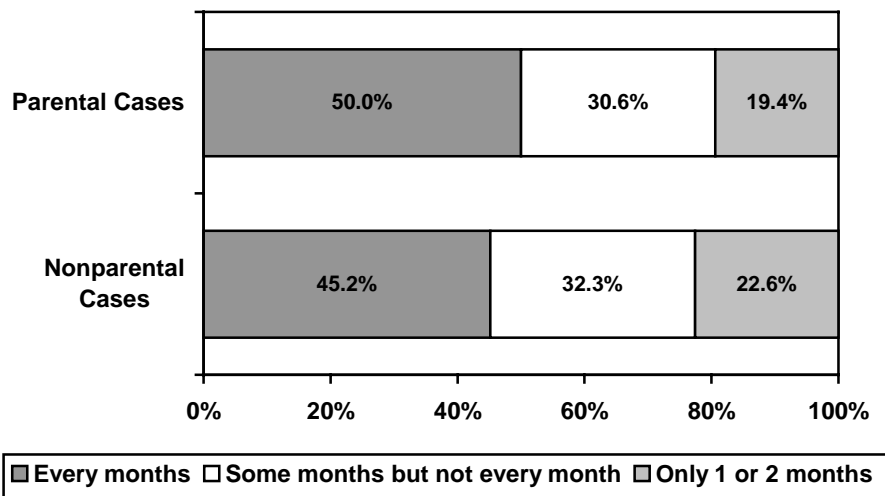


Exhibit IV-34 - In the Last 6 Months, Did You Ever Eat Less Than You Felt You Should Because There Wasn't Enough Money To Buy Food? - by Case Type

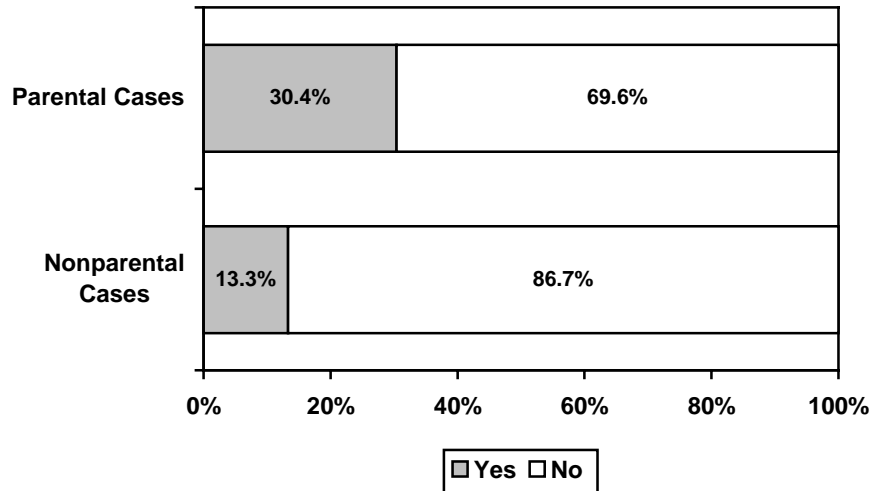
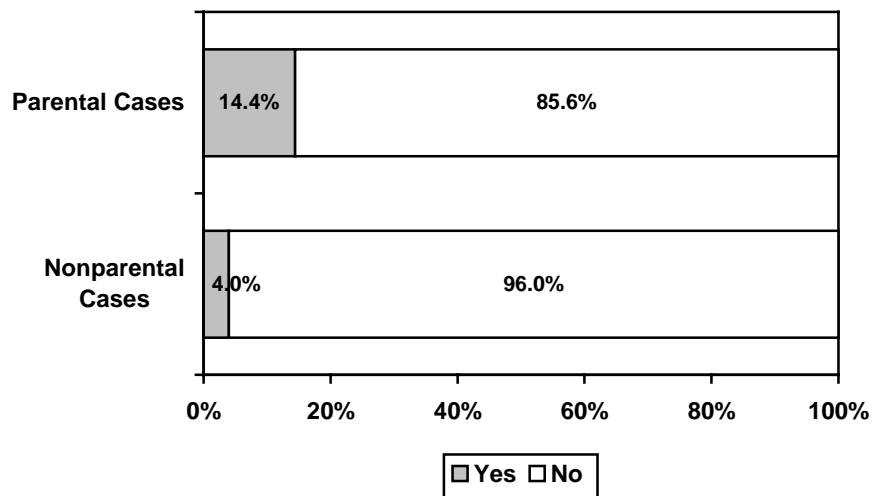


Exhibit IV-35 - In the Last 6 Months, Were You Ever Hungry But Didn't Eat Because You Couldn't Afford Enough Food? - by Case Type



Households Who Were Currently on Food Stamps Were More Likely to Have Been Food Insecure in the Past Six Months

As shown in Exhibit IV-36, about 11 percent of the households that had been “food insecure with hunger present” at some time in the last 6 months were currently receiving Food Stamps, compared to only 5 percent of the households who were not currently on Food Stamps.

Exhibit IV-36 - USDA Food Security Scale - by Receipt of Food Stamps

