

Sanford L. Braver & Stephanie DeLusé, Department of Psychology, Arizona State University, Sanford.Braver@ASU.Edu

AALS: Workshop on Family Law, Plenary Session: Dispute Resolution

Summary: Divorcing Parent Education Programs have very recently become a very popular court-based adjunct designed to achieve better long-term and short-term outcomes for divorcing families, especially children. Unfortunately, there have been very few well-designed and/or convincing evaluations that they in fact accomplish their intended aims. We explain the previous assertion more thoroughly with a brief primer on research design. While fully experimental designs are often precluded, nearly as rigorous “quasi-experimental” designs may be an option. We present the results from one such design, a “regression discontinuity” design using archival records, which showed that the primary effect of participation in such a program was to increase the parenting time allotment in the decree for the noncustodial parent. Especially important, it appeared, was the father’s participation in such programs.

- I. Divorcing Parent Education Programs as ADR
 - A. *What is “Parent Education”?*
 - B. *Prevalence*
 - C. *Previous research findings (and lack thereof)*
- II. Evaluating the Efficacy of Parent Ed
 - A. *What are the findings?*
 - B. *What outcomes should be/are explored?*
 - C. *Compared to what?: Research Design Issues*
- III. Research Design Primer (Campbell & Stanley, 1963)
 - A. *Pre-Experimental Designs*
 1. One-Group Post-Test Only
 2. Pre- and Post-Test
 - B. *Experimental Designs (using random assignment)*
 1. Pre- and Post-test Control Group
 2. Post-Test Only
 - C. *Quasi-Experimental Designs*
 1. Non-Equivalent Control Group
 2. Faulty Randomization
 3. Interrupted Time-Series
 4. Regression Discontinuity
- IV. The Current Regression Discontinuity Study: “Quasi-Random”
 - A. *Design, Program and Outcomes Measured*
 - B. *Results: Intent-to-treat (ITT)*
 - C. *Results based on attendance*
 - D. *Interpretations and limitations*
- V. What’s Needed Now