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Factors influencing compliance with child support obligation

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Research findings on child support compliance to date

- Contact between Non-Resident Parent (NRP) and child
- Satisfaction with parenting arrangements
- Attachment of NRP to resident parent and child prior to separation
- Parental conflict
- Type of child support arrangement
- Perceived fairness of child support
- Demographic characteristics of NRP



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Hypothesised causal paths

- Increased child support payment leads to more contact
- Increased contact leads to payment of child support
- Reciprocal relationship
- A third factor causes both child support compliance and contact
 - Contact and payment of child support are linked to common influences
 - Correlation between child support and contact are spurious and due to a third factor relating to parental commitment



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Analysis of Wave 1 data

Data

- Wave 1 of LSAC, child cohort only (n= 542 sample weighted cases)

Indicators

- Level of child support compliance (outcome variable)
- Specifics of the child support agreement
- Connection between child and non-resident parent
- Extent and quality of parental relationship
- Attachment (ties) to other parent and child prior to separation
- Demographics



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Results – Bivariate Analysis

List of variables with statistically significant differences between compliance categories

Specifics of the child support agreement

Child support liability amount

Type of child support arrangement

Connection between child and non-resident parent

Frequency of contact between child and non-resident parent

Patterns of contact

Time child spends with non-resident parent

Extent and quality of parental relationship

Contact between parents

Consultation with non-resident parent

Parental conflict

Attachment (ties) to other parent and child prior to separation

Marital status of parents prior to separation

Length of time parents lived together



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Results – Multivariate Analysis

Table 1 Ordered logistic regression analysis of full compliance
(only lists variables that remained statistically significant at the .05 level)

Variables	Odds ratios	95% confidence intervals	
		<i>Upper</i>	<i>Lower</i>
Parent-child contact			
Scheduled at least once a fortnight	3.35	1.91	5.88
Unscheduled at least once a fortnight	2.09	1.05	4.15
<i>Unscheduled less than once a fortnight</i> <i>(reference variable)</i>			
Type of child support arrangement			
Private collect	0.36	0.22	0.58
Private agreement	0.49	0.27	0.87
<i>CSA collect (reference variable)</i>			
Parental conflict	0.85	0.73	1.00
Length of time parents lived together	1.12	1.01	1.25

Source: LSAC Wave 1



Longitudinal analysis of Wave 1 and 2 data

Child support compliance

Table 2 Distribution in Wave 1 and 2

Child support compliance	Wave 1 (%)	Wave 2 (%)
Full	63.4	63.1
Partial	14.4	13.4
Null	22.2	23.4
Total (n=320)	100.0	100.0

Source: LSAC Wave 1 and 2

- Level of compliance in the sample remained the same

• However, 36% of cases moved between compliance categories

Table 3 Change from Wave 1 to Wave 2

Change	%
No change	64.4
Increased Compliance	16.9
Null → Partial	1.3
Null → Full	7.8
Partial → Full	7.8
Decreased Compliance	18.8
Full → Null	7.5
Full → Partial	8.4
Partial → Null	2.8
Total (n=320)	100

Source: LSAC Wave 1 and 2



Parent-child contact

Table 4 Change from Wave 1 to Wave 2

Change	%
No change	66.5
No contact → Contact	2.6
Contact → No contact	5.4
Change in frequency of contact	26.5
Total (n=388)	100.0

Source: LSAC Wave 1 and 2

Table 5 Distribution in Wave 1 and 2

Amount	Wave 1		Wave 2	
	%	Daytime hours in a year	%	Daytime hours in a year
Less than once a year	14.2	—	17.6	—
Once or twice a year	6.8	95	8.6	103
At least once every 3 months	15.5	180	16.2	203
At least once a fortnight	24.4	698	27.6	632
More than once a fortnight	39.1	858	30.1	848

Source: LSAC Wave 1 and 2



Parental conflict

Table 6 Change from Wave 1 to Wave 2

Change	%
No change	47.6
No longer have contact	13.9
Increased conflict	15.2
Low → Medium	8.3
Low → High	1.4
Medium → High	5.5
Decreased conflict	23.3
High → Low	1.7
High → Medium	6.7
Medium → Low	15.0
Total (n=361)	100.0

Source: LSAC Wave 1 and 2



Consultation with non-resident parent

Table 7 Change from Wave 1 to Wave 2

Change	%
No change	66.4
Increased consultation	14.5
Never/Rarely → Sometimes	5.1
Never/Rarely → Often/Always	6.9
Sometimes → Often/Always	2.5
Decreased consultation	19.1
Often/Always → Never/Rarely	11.5
Often/Always → Sometimes	2.8
Sometimes → Never/Rarely	4.8
Change	100.0

Source: LSAC Wave 1 and 2

- 11.5% of parents who consulted often/always moved to consulting never/rarely



Table 8 Sequential logistic regression analysis of Wave 2 full compliance
 (only lists variables that remained statistically significant at the .05 level)

Variables	Odds ratios	95% confidence intervals	
		Upper	Lower
Wave 1 full compliance	6.72	3.80	11.86
Wave 1 partial compliance	2.74	1.34	5.60
Wave 1 parent-child contact			
Scheduled contact at least once a fortnight	2.43	1.22	4.83
<i>Unscheduled contact less than once a fortnight</i> <i>(Reference variable)</i>			
Non-significant controls: Wave 1 parental conflict			
Wave 1 consulting other parent			

Source: LSAC Wave 1 and 2



Table 9 Sequential logistic regression analysis of Wave 2 full compliance
(only lists variables that remained statistically significant at the .05 level)

Variables	Odds ratios	95% confidence intervals	
		Upper	Lower
Wave 1 full compliance	6.24	3.51	11.08
Wave 1 partial compliance	2.63	1.27	5.43
Wave 2 parent-child contact			
Scheduled contact at least once a fortnight	2.96	1.35	6.47
<i>Unscheduled contact less than once a fortnight</i> <i>(Reference variable)</i>			
Non-significant controls:			
Wave 1 parent-child contact			
Wave 2 parental conflict			
Wave 2 consulting other parent			

Source: LSAC Wave 1 and 2



Table 10 Sequential logistic regression analysis of Wave 2 scheduled contact at least once a fortnight
 (only lists variables that remained statistically significant at the .05 level)

Variables	Odds ratios	95% confidence intervals	
		Upper	Lower
Wave 1 parent-child contact			
Scheduled contact at least once a fortnight	11.71	5.75	23.86
No contact	0.13	0.02	0.72
<i>Unscheduled contact less than once a fortnight - (Reference variable)</i>			
Wave 2 extent non-resident parent is consulted	1.49	1.22	1.83
Non-significant controls: Wave 1 parental conflict			
Wave 1 consulting other parent			
Wave 2 parental conflict			

Source: LSAC Wave 1 and 2



Table 11 Sequential logistic regression analysis of Wave 2 NRP is consulted Often/Always

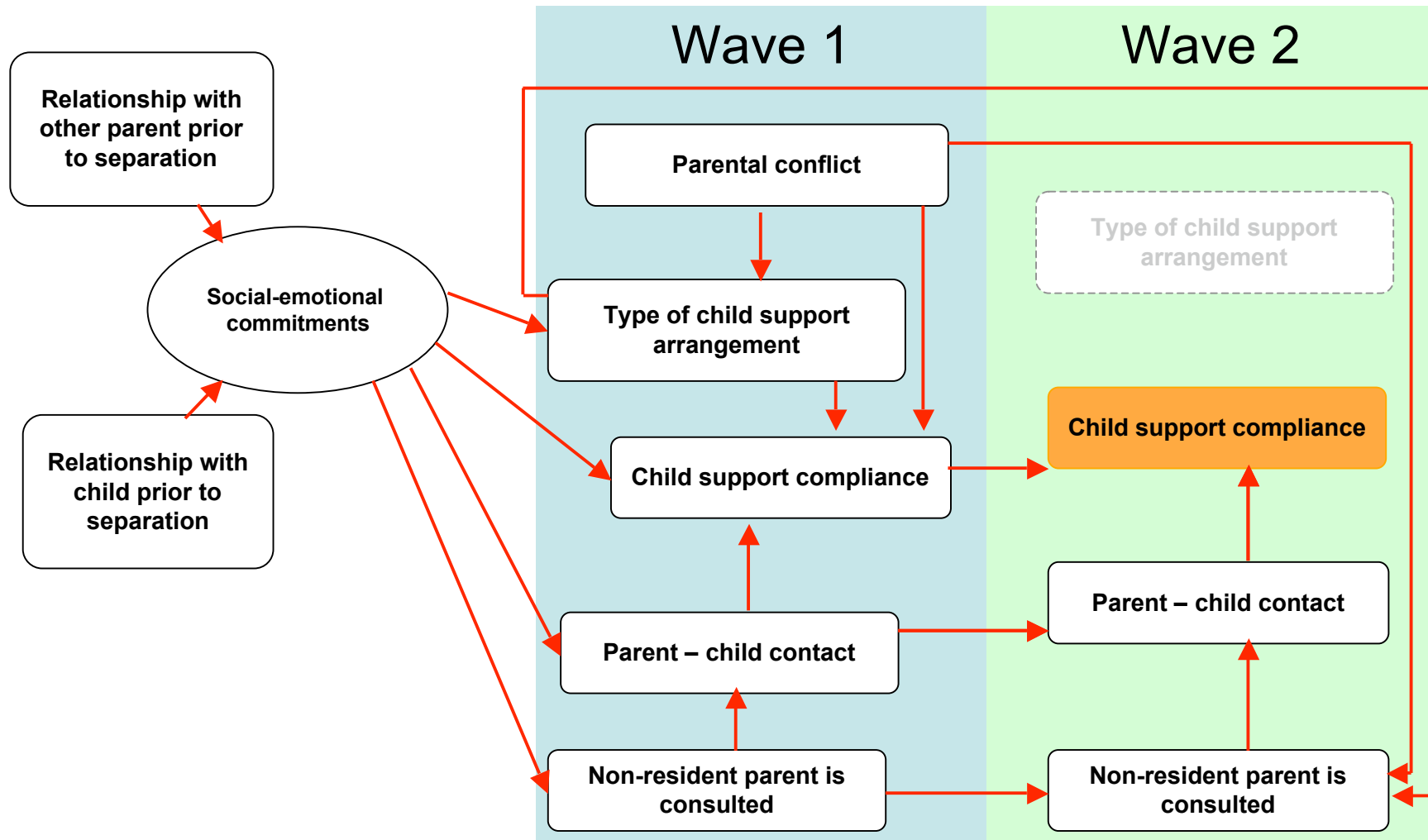
(only lists variables that remained statistically significant at the .05 level)

Variables	Odds ratios	95% confidence intervals	
		Upper	Lower
Wave 1 type of arrangement			
Private collect	2.07	1.06	4.06
Private agreement	2.12	1.00	4.53
CSA collect (<i>Reference variable</i>)			
Wave 1 parental conflict	0.75	0.57	0.99
Wave 1 extent non-resident parent is consulted	1.69	1.42	2.00
Non-significant controls: Wave 1 parent-child contact			

Source: LSAC Wave 1 and 2



Figure 1 Proposed model for path analysis





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Discussion

- **Family Law Amendment Act 2006 — Introduction of *equal shared parental responsibility***
 - Current research found a positive association between child support compliance and consulting other parent on major decisions about the child
- **Level of child support compliance and its predictors tend to change over time**
 - Services to assist parents to maintain existing arrangements and/or negotiate new arrangements