An Investigation of Internet-Based Information for Mothers in Stepfamilies

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When mothers repartner or remarry, their relationships with their own children may be placed under stress. Research suggests that mothers are increasingly turning to the internet for information about parenting. This study investigated the information and guidance available on the internet for mothers in stepfamilies, and compared this information to the conclusions that researchers have reached about parenting and stepparenting. Information provided for mothers was extracted from 69 websites that purported to provide information for stepfamilies. The extracted data were analyzed using a process of thematic analysis. The content that was provided was relatively consistent with research findings in regard to parenting in a stepfamily. It emphasized the importance of mothers' care and support, a supportive stepfather role, problems around stepfather discipline, and the importance of the couple's relationship. However, the information provided was often brief, did not cover all important areas and was presented inconsistently across the websites, leading to a lack of consistent research-based information and guidance.

Keywords: stepfamily, mother-child, internet-based, stepparent role.

Approximately 90% of residential stepfamily households contain a mother, her children from a previous union, and her partner (Smith, 2008; Thomson, Mosley, Hanson, & McLanahan, 2001). Hence, the majority of stepfamily research has focused on stepfather families. Researchers have concluded that children often experience adjustment difficulties in the first two years of living in a stepfamily (Amato, 2001; Hetherington & Kelly, 2002) and that mother-child relationships can become more conflicted and less positive during this transition period (Cartwright, 2010; Hetherington & Kelly, 2002). Children in stepfamilies are more likely to rate their family climates as more conflicted (Kurdeck & Fine, 1993) and feel less secure in relationships with parents (Planitz, Feeney, & Peterson, 2009). Despite this, reviews of the stepfamily literature conclude that researchers have rarely given primary focus to mothers in stepfamilies (Cartwright, 2008; Coleman, Ganong, & Fine, 2000; Ganong & Coleman, 2004). This is surprising given the importance of mother-child relationships to children's adjustment, and the crucial role that mothers play in the integration of children into the stepfamily (Ganong & Coleman, 2004; Hetherington & Kelly, 2002; Pryor & Rodgers, 2001). On the other hand, it may reflect the perception of an urgent need to understand more about the stepparent role in children's lives (Ganong & Coleman, 2004) and a belief that the mother-child relationship is resilient (Cartwright, 2008).

The evidence of increased difficulties for mothers and children in stepfamilies suggests that mothers may benefit from the provision of research-based parenting information to assist them with the transition. However, there is concern that the dissemination of research-based knowledge for stepfamilies is "inadequate" and "sporadic" (Pryor & Rodgers, 2001, p. 270). The internet is a growing resource generally for mothers who are looking for information and guidance on raising their children (Radey & Randolph, 2009; Sarkadi & Bremberg, 2005) as it offers readily available and frequently updated content. A recent survey of 1,081 parents found that 76% reported using the internet as a parenting resource and mothers reported accessing online parenting information more frequently than fathers (Radey & Randolph, 2009). Hence, this current study aimed to investigate the information and guidance provided on the internet to mothers in stepfamilies in regard to the parenting of their children, and the quality and depth of the available information.

Mothers in stepfamilies

As is true for all family types, 'authoritative' parenting, which is high in warmth and support, and flexible discipline and control, is mostly strongly associated with child adjustment (Hetherington, 2006; Pryor & Rodgers, 2001). Hetherington and Kelly (2002), in their 20 year longitudinal study of families after divorce, concluded that authoritative parenting by mothers in stepfamilies is associated with children's self-esteem, academic achievement, sense of security and development of social skills - all of which can mediate the risks of negative outcomes. The structure and involvement provided by authoritative mothers also strengthens relationships with children, which in turn reduces the likelihood of problems during adolescent years (Ganong & Coleman,

2004). Authoritative parenting by mothers is particularly important during family transitions, however, there is evidence that mothers in stepfamilies are less like to parent authoritatively compared to mothers in first marriages, due to the increased stresses they may experience (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002).

A number of qualitative studies conducted in New Zealand have provided insight into the issues that may impact on the mother-child relationship. These include children's experience of a loss of maternal time and attention that occurs when mothers gain a new partner (Cartwright, 2003, 2005; Cartwright & Seymour, 2002); a potential lack of consultation and preparation at the time of repartnering or remarriage (Cartwright & Seymour, 2002); children's resentment or disapproval of the mother's choice to remarry (Cartwright, 2005); and different expectations of relationships and roles in the new stepfamily (Cartwright, 2005). On the other hand, a number of positive themes emerged from these studies. Children and young adults reported appreciating parents who, after repartnering, continued dedicating one-on-one time and attention to their children in order to maintain a strong parent-child relationship (Cartwright, 2005). Children also saw it as important that the mother continue to take the lead parenting role, particularly in terms of support and discipline (Cartwright, 2005). Being respectful of the non-residential parent was also deemed important (Cartwright, 2005). Hence, these studies emphasized the importance of mothers in stepfamilies maintaining their authoritative parental roles of warmth/support and discipline/control. These New Zealand studies support similar findings from studies in the United States, including the longitudinal studies of Bray (1999) and Hetherington & Kelly (2002).

The impact of the stepfather role on mother-child relationships

Researchers have drawn attention to the lack of clarity that exists in regard to the stepfather role. For example, studies have found a lack of agreement between stepfathers themselves (Marsiglio,

2004) and between mothers, stepfathers and children (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002) in regard to an appropriate role for the stepfather. Couples often believe a stepfather's role should be similar to that of a biological parent (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002) whereas children often view the stepfather as not having parental rights (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002; Pryor & Rodgers, 2001) and instead expect him to assume the role of a "friend" (Fine, Coleman, & Ganong, 1998). With confusion over the role, many stepfathers initially interact as 'distant acquaintances' with the child (Hetherington & Clingempeel, 1992), or alternatively tend to 'over-parent' and adopt an early authoritarian or even authoritative role (Ganong, Coleman, Fine, & Martin, 1999; Hetherington & Kelly, 2002). Children tend to respond to these approaches with resentment (Hetherington & Jodl, 1994; Papernow, 2006). Children are more likely to develop closer affinity with stepfathers who take a 'laid-back' approach, and focus on developing warm friendships (Ganong, et al., 1999). Ganong and Coleman (2004) in their review of stepfamily research conclude that is works best if stepfathers are supportive of the mother's authority and gradually develop a relationship or friendship with their stepchild.

In summary, competent parenting by mothers during family transitions improves the quality of mother-child relationships and, in turn, has "the most proximate and pervasive influence on child and adolescent psychological distress" (Falci, 2006, p. 142). Despite this, reviews of the stepfamily literature have found little primary empirical focus on parenting by mothers in stepfamilies (Cartwright, 2008; Fine, et al., 1998; Ganong & Coleman, 2004). Given the difficulties and challenges that mothers in stepfamilies may face, it is important for them to have access to research-based information and guidance. To date, no studies have investigated the parenting information directed towards these mothers. This study, therefore, aims to investigate the information and guidance that is available on the internet for mothers in stepfamilies and to determine if this is consistent with research findings for mother-child relationships that have been discussed

in this introduction.

METHOD

Website selection

This study investigated websites provided by organizations that purported or gave the appearance of providing reliable information or guidance for stepfamilies. Both the *Google* and *Yahoo!* search engines were used to search the internet for the term 'stepfamilies'. The first 250 stepfamily websites from *Google* were selected. This selection was followed by a search of the first 150 websites from *Yahoo!* to ensure inclusion of the majority of websites for stepfamilies. Websites advertising books, courses, discussion forums, and social networking sites were excluded. While discussion forums and social networking sites might be of interest to mothers, this study examined sites that appeared to provide information for stepfamilies, as opposed to personal discussion of stepfamily experiences.

Two international websites which had a combined total of over 1000 pages of stepfamily information were excluded. These websites were the American National Stepfamily Resource Centre (ANSRC) and the Stepfamily Association of South Australia (SASA) websites, which were ranked numbers 6 and 15, respectively, on Google. These sites provided links to a vast array of other sites and articles, some of which were analysed for the study. The ANSRC was vast and difficult to navigate with links to a wide variety of publications from the early 1990s. An analysis of these links and publications could constitute a second study.

This left a total of 69 websites to be examined (see Appendix 1). The websites that were included in this study varied in their content and style. Some websites were general parenting sites with stepfamily information, others were online magazines ('e-zines'), which contained stepfamily articles written by therapists working in the stepfamily area. Several were affiliated with churches and individual professional therapists. The majority of websites provided information in a magazine style using informal language, whereas other websites presented information

as 'fact sheets', 'quick guides' or 'tip sheets'.

Data analysis

The data from the first 25% (18) websites were printed out and examined. Throughout the process described below, the first author did the preliminary examination of the data, and both authors reviewed each step of the analysis, made adjustment to the process where necessary, and decided on the next step.

The data relevant to mothers in stepfamilies were extracted. Each segment of the data was then examined and codes were developed to represent the data. These codes represented the content and meaning of each segment of data. A list of all the codes (or content areas discussed) was then created. The content areas fell into two broad categories titled 'background information', and 'guidance for mothers'. The background information fell into two further categories, titled 'stepfamily difficulties", and "children's reactions to stepfamily living'.

The category of data on guidance for mothers related closely to our research aims – understanding the information available for mothers. Previous researchers have investigated parenting and stepparenting using the two parenting dimensions of warmth/support and discipline/control (e.g. Hetherington

& Kelly, 2002). Hence, a decision was made to analyze the data related to guidance for mothers using these two dimensions. This data was then divided into two categories – data related to warmth/support and discipline/control. This allowed for a more systematic analysis of the guidance in relationship to these parenting dimensions.

This process resulted in four categories of data. A thematic analysis was then conducted on each of these categories of data using the methods described by Braun and Clarke (2006). This process of data analysis was similar to that described above. Each segment of data was examined and coded for content and meaning. Once this was completed for a category of data, a list of codes was developed. Codes that represented related ideas were combined into provisional themes. These provisional themes and the data under them were reviewed by the authors, and areas of disagreement were discussed prior to development of the final themes.

RESULTS

Website information directed towards mothers in stepfamilies

Sixty-nine of websites from Google and Yahoo! search engines met the criteria for this study. On average, 40% of the information on the

stepfamily websites included in this study was directed towards mothers in stepfamilies and the mother-child relationship, although there was variability across the websites (range = 0% - 96.5%). For the majority of these websites, the remaining information was directed to stepparents. Six websites had no information for mothers - these sites were targeted solely at stepparents (3), children in stepfamilies (2), and grandparents in stepfamilies (1).

Thematic analysis

This section presents results from the analysis of the data within the data sets 'Background Information' and 'Guidance for mothers'. Table 1 provides an overview of the categories and themes. The percentage of websites with data under each category is given.

Background information

This first section presents the results of the thematic analysis of the data within the background information in regard to stepfamily difficulties and children's reactions to stepfamily living.

Stepfamily difficulties

Forty-five websites (65%) drew attention to some common stepfamily difficulties, problems with ex-spouses, roles and expectations, and resource issues.

Roles and expectations. Thirty-eight

Table 1: Overview of the categories and themes

BACKGROUND INFORMATION	GUIDANCE FOR MOTHERS
Stepfamily difficulties (65%)	**Warmth and Support (86%)**
▪ Difficulties with the ex- spouse (33%) ▪ Roles and expectations (55%) ▪ Resource issues (38%)	▪ Strengthening the mother-child relationship (62%) ▪ Supporting the stepfamily (70%) ▪ Nurturing the couple relationship (51%)
Children's reactions to stepfamily living (48%)	**Discipline and Control (58%)**
▪ Unwanted changes (35%) ▪ Resistance to the step-relationships (36%) ▪ Age and gender differences (25%)	▪ Communication and consistency (29%) ▪ Mother as the disciplinarian (45%) ▪ Stepfather as a friend (35%)

(55%) websites referred to stepfamily difficulties resulting from uncertainty over roles and responsibilities of mothers and stepfathers, and stepfamily members having different or unrealistic expectations of stepfamily functioning. This role confusion results in "hardly anyone knowing what to do or how to act" largely due to a lack of "formal parenting roles, rights, responsibilities, and social etiquette" for stepfamilies.

Resource issues. Twenty-six (38%) websites said that resource issues place a particular strain on stepfamily members. Financial resources were mentioned several times as being "complex", and "causing stress", and resources relating to housing and the sharing of "territory" with stepparents and stepsiblings were also named as being problematic. Some websites said that stepfamily formation compromises parental resources because "sometimes the adults are so busy with their own upset and grief they don't have much time for their children or for explaining things to them". A lack of societal support/resources for stepfamilies added to the difficulties, with little "preparation or information on serial marriages in our culture" and "no rules on how to put together the various units of blended families".

Difficulties with ex-spouses. Twenty-three websites (33%) in this category commented that challenges in stepfamily living arise due to the mother's previous spouse, or the "ex-factor". In particular, it was emphasised that stepfamilies "don't start with a clean slate" because members bring with them grief and distress over their "losses" associated with the previous divorce. These losses include loss of a partner, parent, position in family, time, finances, lifestyle, and the unfulfilled "dream of what family life could have been". In stepfamilies, it was observed that "this grief often remains unresolved and affects stepfamily relationships".

Children's reactions to stepfamily living

Thirty-three websites (48%) mentioned children's reactions to stepfamily living. The themes of this category were: resistance to the step-relationship, unwanted changes, and age and gender.

Resistance to the step-relationship.

Twenty-five (36%) websites stated children may react to stepfamily living through resistance to the stepfather because of feeling "threatened", a perception that he is "a competitor", feeling "left out of the loop of the new couple", or "unimportant or invisible" to their biological parent. Children's resistance to step-relationships may also be based on the loyalty binds that they experience. It was suggested that children may "feel something like, if I love you that means I do not love my real parent." Children's resistance to stepfathers can then result in difficult or challenging behaviour, such as "acting up" in order to "sabotage the new relationship", "playing one grown-up off against the other", ignoring rules, or being "defiant". Other sites named specific adjustment difficulties that children can experience, for example changes in sleeping, eating and schoolwork, a loss of interest in their hobbies, withdrawal, or being more demanding than previously.

Unwanted changes. Twenty-four (35%) websites discussed the emotional reactions that children can have to unwanted changes in their family situation, including uncertainty, worry, grief, and anger. It was emphasised that children may feel uncertain about how relationships with their mothers will be affected by the presence of a stepfather and begin to "question even the most basic things in life, such as her parents love for her". Websites also name other changes as causing children "confusion and worry" such as moving to a new home, neighbourhood or school, and sharing a house with new people. Several sites also commented that many children have a "fantasy" that their biological parents will reunite. This hope, and the unwanted changes in parental time and attention, stability, and living situation, "add up in making kids upset, resentful and angry" and cause them to feel "like they have lost a parent, lifestyle and social position".

Age and gender. Seventeen (25%) websites mentioned the importance of age and gender. Some mentioned gender differences and agreed that daughters feel more opposed to remarriage than boys, particularly during adolescence: "Remarriage when a daughter is entering adolescence promises to produce

tremendous tension and resentment on the part of the daughter". It was also concluded by these websites that adolescents and teenagers have the most difficulty adjusting to stepfamily living. These difficulties were attributed to the developmental stage of adolescence being a critical time of identity formation and "need for separation and independence". It was also suggested that younger children's "may feel a sense of abandonment or competition as their parent devotes more time and energy to the new spouse".

Guidance for mothers

This section presents the results of the thematic analysis of the practical guidance given to mothers for the care of their children, in regard to warmth and support, and discipline and control.

Warmth and Support

Fifty-nine (86%) websites provided guidance for mothers on the parenting activities of warmth and support. Three themes emerged: Strengthening the parent-child relationship, supporting the stepfamily, and nurturing the couple's relationship. These latter two themes were included as the websites argued that mothers' support of the stepfamily and nurturance of the couple relationship is beneficial to the adjustment of children.

Strengthening the parent-child relationship. Forty-three (62%) websites advised mothers to strengthen their relationship with children in order to help them better adjust to stepfamily living. Specifically, some websites suggested that prior to remarrying, mothers "sit down and discuss the future with [your] children", wait two years after divorce before remarrying, introduce the new person slowly before living together, have patience, and not force a relationship between new partner and children. Some websites also encouraged mothers to reassure children "that you and your ex-spouse will continue to love them and be there for them throughout their lives" and that "your new spouse will not be a 'replacement' for the father. In order to "maintain the security of relationships", mothers were also encouraged to "carve out special time each day" with their children as well as "speaking well of former spouses" and ensuring "your children still get plenty of opportunities

to see your ex."

Supporting the stepfamily. Forty-eight (70%) websites recommended mothers support the integration of stepfamily members into the stepfamily unit in order to help the adjustment of the children. An overarching message for mothers was to "abandon preconceptions" and "recognise that the stepfamily will not and cannot function as a natural family". A large number of websites encouraged mothers to promote open communication with stepfamily members through regular family meetings to "resolve complaints and issues, and to discuss problems and explain things". Some sites talked about the importance of respect, positive attitudes, and adopting "routines and schedules" to "give kids stability". There was also emphasis on the role the mother should play in the development of relationships between her child, the new partner, and/or step-siblings. Several websites cautioned mothers not to "force love" and others suggested that mothers should "foster new family relationships" and "help the stepparent and child build a good relationship by encouraging them to share activities and helping them to understand each other".

Nurturing the couple's relationship. Thirty-five (51%) websites said that stepfamily functioning and children's adjustment is enhanced when the couple nurtures their relationship through "protected and private time together on a regular basis". It was suggested that giving the couple priority helps children by "creating security", strengthening the family foundation, preventing further losses, and "showing the kids what it takes to have a successful relationship." A number of websites emphasized the centrality of the couple relationship in the stepfamily. For example, one website recommended that "the couple relationship should come first, with the children a very close second" or suggested to mothers that "sometimes the reason that our previous marriage failed is because kids were in the centre of the relationship … keep you and your spouse in the centre of this new family". Similarly, another wrote that "the number one priority in stepfamilies is the couple's relationship" and that "your children will benefit much more from this than from you catering to their every

whim." In contrast, a small number of websites put more emphasis on the parent-child relationship in comparison to the couple's relationship. One website wrote that "while the couple may be in love, the primary attachment still lies with the parent and the child". Another stated that "the relationship between parents and children predates the new marital relationship. It may even seem to outweigh it".

Mothers were also guided towards presenting a 'united front' to the children and to "create a boundary around their marriage, and become a real parenting team". They were encouraged to "stand together, without being divided by the biological children". Other websites mentioned the importance of the mother creating 'a united front' with the non-residential parent. This involved cooperating and sharing parenting amicably with their ex-partner through "a low-conflict co-parenting arrangement". A small number of websites, however, considered that it was best to involve all the residential and non-residential adults as "the ideal is to form a parenting coalition among the parents and stepparents in both households".

Discipline and control

Forty (58%) websites gave mothers specific guidance on parenting issues related to discipline and control. Three themes emerged from this category of data: communication and consistency, mother as the disciplinarian, and stepfather as a friend.

Communication and consistency. Twenty (29%) websites recommended that disciplinary matters need to first be discussed with the new partner. They suggested that "house rules", discipline and important values be agreed upon as "basic guidelines" with the new spouse before families blend. Consistency of discipline was discussed in two contexts. Firstly, it was seen as important that there was agreement on discipline between the stepparents and parents, as well as consistency of discipline for each child. The couple needs to "keep discipline the same ... and don't change the rules when [your] partner is not there", as well as "treat all kids equally ... be consistent and fair with each child". Secondly, consistency

of discipline between households (with the non-residential parent) was also mentioned.

Mother as the disciplinarian. Thirty-one (45%) websites advised mothers to take total responsibility for parental decisions with her children and "handle rules and punishments, at least initially". It was common for websites to refer to the stepfather's position on discipline in relation to the mother. For example, one website stated that the "biological parent needs to take the lead, with the stepparent standing beside them". In the mother's absence, some websites suggested a stepfather can act as a "babysitter", "monitor", or "an extra set of eyes and ears for the biological parent".

Stepfather as a friend. Twenty-four (35%) websites discussed discipline and control and emphasised that the stepfather's role was to focus on building a relationship with the children. Mothers were guided towards "establishing the stepparent as more of a counsellor" or "coach" rather than a parent, and instead have stepfathers work with the children on "creating a friendship, built on trust". In order to develop "close bonds" the stepfather "should stay out of discipline until he has a positive relationship with them ... he needs to slowly gain their trust and affection". Once these "more solid bonds" have formed it was advised to mothers that stepfathers may then take on a greater parenting role.

DISCUSSION

When the internet search for the term "stepfamily" was conducted, two-fifths of the information provided on the 69 websites was directed towards mothers. However, there was considerable variation in the quantity of information across websites. For example, only 45% of the sites provided guidance about discipline, an area which is found to be central to stepfamily wellbeing (Hetherington & Kelly, 2002). Discipline is one of the most challenging issues faced by stepfamily members (Baxter, Braithwaite, & Nicholson, 1999) and there is evidence that children do better in stepfamilies when the biological mother is responsible for discipline, at least in the early stages (Hetherington & Kelly). Although a number of websites in this study

supported this approach, this important finding was not discussed by over half of the websites. Even fewer sites (35%) talked about the benefits of the stepfather engaging in a 'friend' role initially.

Just under half of the websites provided information, and this was usually brief, about the adjustment difficulties that children experience in the formation of a stepfamily and children's reactions to stepfamily living. This is surprising given the amount of research-based information available in this area (e.g. Hetherington & Clingempeel, 1992; Hetherington & Kelly, 2002), which would assist mothers to better understand their children's responses to the family changes.

On the other hand, the content of the information provided generally reflected the findings from empirical research and stepfamily therapists. For example, when sites did discuss discipline, they often did so briefly, although their guidance was in line with research findings. The majority of websites also talked about the importance of maternal warmth and support. This is in line with research findings that supportive parenting by mothers helps children adjust to stepfamily living (Pryor & Rodgers, 2001) and can reduce a child's sense of insecurity (Bray & Kelly, 1998). Many sites offered practical guidance for mothers about spending time alone with their children, giving reassurance, and communicating supportively. Some also guided mothers towards having realistic expectations of the stepfamily and to not attempt to make the family function like a "nuclear family".

Finally, there was one area of information and guidance that was, to some degree, contradictory to research findings. This included an emphasis on the couple's relationship and child adjustment. Some websites conceptualized the couple's relationship as the primary relationship in the stepfamily and recommended that the mother prioritise her relationship with her partner in order to enhance marital satisfaction and thereby enhance her children's wellbeing. This advice is consistent with some early clinical guidance (Mills, 1984; Visher & Visher, 1996; Webber, 1994; Whiteside, 1982).

However, some stepfamily researchers have questioned the principle that places the couple's relationship at the centre of the family as more applicable for first-marriage families than stepfamilies (e.g. Adler-Baeder & Higginbotham, 2004; Golish, 2003). Hetherington and Kelly (2002), in their longitudinal study, found that the quality of the step-relationship was more influential than the couple's relationship on stepfamily adjustment. As they note,

> *In first marriages, a satisfying marital relationship is the cornerstone of happy family life, leading to more positive parent-child relationships and more congenial sibling relationships. In many stepfamilies the sequence is reversed. Establishing some kind of workable relationship between stepparents and stepchildren may be the key to a happy second marriage and to successful functioning in stepfamilies (p.181).*

Hence, the impact of the couple's relationship on child adjustment is not supported by empirical research. While it is clearly important that couples need to foster their relationships, in terms of child wellbeing and relationships between mothers and children, it may be equally or more important to emphasize the parent-child relationship (Papernow, 2008) and recognize the importance of developing friendly relationships between stepfathers and children (Ganong & Coleman, 2004).

In summary, this study investigated internet information and guidance for mothers in stepfamilies and found that many of the empirically-supported parenting practices were mentioned by some of the websites. The only area of significant disagreement is the emphasis, or not, on the couple's relationships over and above other relationships in the stepfamily. However, while most information and guidance reflected empirical findings, the information was not provided consistently by websites. Many websites included accurate information but left out essential information, such as the importance of the mother maintaining responsibility for parenting in the early stages, including discipline. It seems likely

then that mothers seeking information on the internet about parenting in a stepfamily could have a "hit or miss" experience, depending on which sites they choose to look at.

Limitations and future directions

The main limitation of this study was the problems associated with analysing the data on the websites given the variation in amount and type of information on each website. This study also only examined information that was addressed to mothers and analysis of other information within the stepfamily websites may have revealed information aimed at other stepfamily members, which may have been helpful for mothers to also understand.

This study is the first to investigate the information provided on the internet for mothers in stepfamilies. Little is known about what resources are accessed by parents who are repartnering, and future research could investigate if, and how, parents gain information about stepfamily living. This study is important in New Zealand that does not have a Stepfamily Association and draws attention to the question of how parents in stepfamilies are gaining information and guidance that supports their adjustment.

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Appendix 1

Table 2: Search Engines, Websites and Ranks

GOOGLE			
Website	Rank	Website	Rank
Helpguide.com	1	Suite101.com	97
Wikipedia	2	Smartstepfamilies.com	101
Relationship Services	3	Thefreelibrary.com	109
Parenthood in America	7	Troubledwith.com	110
Netdoctor	9	Findarcticles.com	111
Home and Family	11	Remarriageworks.com	116
Psychology Today	12	Family Education	122
Kidsline	17	Lifestyle.ezine.com	123
The Positive Way	20	Missourifamilies.org	127
American Psychological Association	23	Drcomeau	130
Stayhitched.com	24	Mind publications	140
The Stepfamily Centre	27	Stepfamily Foundation, Inc.	158
Psychcentral.com	29	E! Science News	162
Remarriage.com	32	Searchwarp.com	164
Smartmarriages.com	33	Thecutekid.com	173
Happy Stepfamily day	34	Ehow.com	183
Crosswalk.com	35	Lifemanagement.com	184
The stepstop.com	37	Essortment.com	194
Msucares.com	40	Raising Children Network	195
Ezinearticles.com	54	US Catholic	198
Newsforparents.org	57	Health – Howstuffworks.com	199
Divorcedmenonline.com	65	Advice for Relationships	213
Success for Steps	73	Healthy Place.com	231
Familyresource.com	75	Buzzle.com	233
Articlesbase.com	81	Infidelity.com	242
Library adoption.com	87	West Valley Parents	245

Appendix 1

Table 2: Search Engines, Websites and Ranks contd.

YAHOO!			
Website	Rank	Website	Rank
Women's and Children's Health Network	4	Healthline	37
Mass General Hospital for Children	13	Kiwifamilies.co.nz	42
PBS Kids GO!	17	Aamft.org	43
Parenting South Australia	18	The Australian Psychological Society	44
Better Health Channel	23	St. Louis Healthy Families	46
Mayoclinic.com	25	Firstthings.org	51
Stepfamilies Today	29	Bounty	135
Department for Ministry & Family Ministry	31	Wyoming Healthy Family Initiative	142
Stepfamilyzone.com	36		