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In family law, the marital family serves as a misleading synecdoche for all families, not only marginalizing nonmarital families but also actively undermining their already tenuous bonds. Addressing the needs of both marital and nonmarital families requires a new theory of state regulation as well as new doctrines, institutions, and norms in practice. Some feminists argue that the state should privilege caregiving between parents and children instead of marital relationships, while other commentators advocate marriage primacy—the elevation of marriage above other family forms—despite the evidence that marriage promotion fails. These responses fundamentally misunderstand nonmarital family life, in which dynamics between parents deeply affect children, yet parents are unlikely to marry. We must instead understand that it is possible to separate marriage from parenthood but not relationships from parenthood. Accordingly, the state should help unmarried parents become effective co-parents, especially after their relationship ends, so both parents can provide children with the healthy relationships crucial to child development.