

**A STUDY OF PATERNITY DECISIONS OF
YOUNG, UNMARRIED PARENTS**

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A STUDY OF PATERNITY DECISIONS:
PERSPECTIVES FROM YOUNG MOTHERS AND YOUNG FATHERS*

INTRODUCTION

This research project was designed to identify the factors that encourage or discourage young, unmarried parents in their decision to establish paternity for their out-of-wedlock child, and to discover the differential profiles of "avowers" and "disavowers".

Two distinctive features characterize this study:

1. Interviews were conducted with both mothers and the fathers of the child(ren).
2. A multi-racial data base was constructed.

The study was based on the assumption that there is an obligation of support and responsibility for children that should be assumed in a framework of equality between the mother and the father. The research philosophy assumed a child-centered focus.

Background

In striking contrast to the concentration of studies of young females, (and to a lesser degree males,) on their decision-making in matters of sexual behavior, contraception, parenting, and abortion, no systematic research had been conducted on decision-making in paternity determination for the out-of-wedlock children of young, unmarried parents.

This remarkable absence of research has led to inaccurate and incomplete judgments, which ultimately affect policy decisions on how to approach the

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complex issues embedded in paternity determination of a large and escalating number of out-of-wedlock children.

A previous exploratory study, funded by the Ford and McKnight Foundations and the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, University of Minnesota, "Issues in Paternity Adjudication for Teen Parents,"* revealed the pivotal importance of paternity establishment for the out-of-wedlock child. Valuable information was disclosed on the complex environment that surrounds decision-making, but a systematic study of the routes to acknowledgment or disavowal of paternity, from the perspective of young parents, was yet to be accomplished.

This study was designed to redress this neglect by providing information and insights needed to understand the circumstances and perceptions of paternity decision-making of young, unmarried parents. The study builds on the basic knowledge that was derived from the exploratory project mentioned above.

The findings from this study are intended to provide guidance for both human service programs and public policy on an issue that has profound, long-term consequences for the social and economic status of non-marital children.

METHODOLOGY

Sampling Design

Sampling was carried out in conjunction with the Hennepin County AFDC and IV-D offices which were instrumental in the identification and location of potential participants for the study. Criteria for inclusion in the sample included mothers age 21 years and younger who had a child 12 months of age or younger, and listed in the current AFDC data file. Fathers' names, linked to

*See "Establishing Paternity for Nonmarital Children," Public Welfare, Summer, 1987 and "Unmarried Father: Perplexing Questions", Vol. 19, No. 2 Children Today reprinted in Chronical Guidance, January, 1991.

mothers' names, were obtained from the paternity unit of the IV-D office. In April, 1989, 1,000 letters were sent to the AFDC recipients and IV-D clients, inviting their participation in a confidential, face-to-face interview in which decision-making about their family formations would be discussed.

At the direction of AFDC officials, to safeguard confidentiality and informed consent, the invitational letter was sent out on Hennepin County letterhead, with an enclosed return postcard to be returned to the project office, indicating the subject's interest. From this initial pool, 179 letters were returned, unopened, to the County, "address unknown." Forty-three of these were from the AFDC group, 136 from the IV-D file with fathers' names. In addition to this, 16 ineligible were contacted due to computer error, and removed from the refined sample of 805 potential participants.

In order to ensure participation of younger members of the sample frame, an additional letter was sent to 70 pairs of young, unmarried parents under age 18, encouraging their participation. The final mailing was sent out on July 20th, using an attractive, colorful flyer which summarized the project and inviting participation. Summarizing this recruitment effort: 805 individuals and 140 matched pairs under age 18 were contacted, comprising the matched pairs group from AFDC/IV-D .

A final group of 594 women who did not have matching IV-D partners were contacted by mail for study participation. It was assumed that the majority of this latter group would have had partners who were disavowers, and that it might be possible to contact these males through information provided by the females. A small proportion of the dyadic sample was derived from this tracking effort. In all, three-quarters of the final sample consisted of dyads, while one-quarter were unmarried parents without a corresponding

partner in the study. The resulting sample included the following:

White Dyads	45 -- 90 interviews
Black Dyads	45 -- 90 interviews
Inter-racial Dyads	32 -- 64 interviews
American Indian Dyads	4 -- 8 interviews
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Total Dyads	126 -- 252 interviews
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Single Interviews/ Partners Unavailable	82 interviews (67 female; 15 male)
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Total Number of Completed Interviews	334 interviews

The sample of fathers included 11 men who were incarcerated at the time of the interview. Five of the mothers were interviewed at a residential treatment facility for emotionally disturbed, parenting adolescents. One female respondent was living in a foster home with her child.

In order to assess the generalizability of findings beyond the sample, the final age distribution of white and black female study participants (constituting the two largest racial groups) was compared to the AFDC population according to County figures from May 1, 1989:

<u>AFDC</u> <u>Population</u>	<u><15 Years</u> 5 (0.2%)	<u>15-17</u> 186 (7.2%)	<u>18-19</u> 1023 (39.7%)	<u>20-21</u> 1362 (52.9%)	<u>Total</u> 2576 (100%)
<u>AFDC</u> <u>Sample</u> (including 10 black females from interracial dyads)	3 (1.7%)	35 (19.3)	74 (40.9%)	69 (38.1%)	181 (100%)

A Chi Square Goodness of Fit comparison indicated that, overall, there was no difference in the distribution between the population and sample. While not statistically significant, the AFDC sample does include approximately 12% more mid-adolescents (age 15-17), and about 14% fewer young

adults, age 20-21. This may be attributed to the special effort that was made to recruit younger adolescents into the sample, so as to be able to explore, in greater depth, the particular dynamics affecting younger families. It is our judgment that the respondents in this study may be more mobile and needy than the overall population from which this sample was drawn. The need for the \$25 incentive fee was usually requested with a sense of urgency.

The overall goodness of fit, however, suggests that the findings from this sample may be generalized among white and blacks to the larger AFDC population of females, as constituted at the time of drawing the sampling frame. (Comparable information on the age distribution of males in the IV-D files is not yet available for similar comparison.)

Notes on the Questionnaire

This research project was designed to acknowledge diverse sources of influence that could affect paternity decisions. The thirty-three page questionnaire (Appendix 1) that was constructed has items dealing with: demographic data; patterns of influence contributed by family, peers, and the community; attitudes and expectations of life situations; circumstances and outcomes of decision-making in paternity.

This structured interview with open-ended questions was formulated and tested with items that would yield data on these items. The open-ended questions were designed to seek understanding on the interactive, behavioral, community, and structural factors that shape decisions to "avow" or "disavow" the legal link of a father to a child.

The distinctive feature of this research is the inclusion of the fathers of the children. The data from fathers was derived in separate interviews.

Three hundred thirty-four in-depth interviews were conducted by same race, same gender graduate students. Each participant received a participation payment of \$25.

All interviews were conducted face-to-face with study participants, at a location of their choosing. These turned out to be chiefly public places, such as restaurants, libraries, parks, and a small proportion at home. Sixteen interviews were conducted in treatment and correctional facilities.

DEFINITIONS

Dyad: For purposes of this study, dyad refers to paired interviews with the mother and the father of the child.

YUM: Young Unmarried Mother.

YUF: Young Unmarried Father.

YUP: Young Unmarried Parent.

Paternity Establishment: The process by which men who father children born to unmarried mothers assume the rights and responsibilities of parenthood, as defined by law.

Declaration of Parentage: A Declaration of Parentage is a written document in which a child's mother and father declare and acknowledge under oath that they are the biological parents of the child. To be valid, the Declaration must be signed by both parents before a notary public. When the Declaration is sent forward to Vital Statistics, the father's name appears on the birth certificate.

In Minnesota, the Declaration gives the child rights to worker's compensation dependent allowances, veteran's dependent education benefits, inheritance, and benefits in legal causes of action according to a person's survivor; grants the mother and child rights to certain individual and group insurance coverages; and creates a presumption that the man is the biological father of the child for the purposes of establishing paternity.

In recent practice, the Declaration of Parentage is used for eligibility for AFDC-UP and recovering medical expenses associated with the birth of the child. Minnesota Statutes, section 257.34, subdivision 1 (1990).

Adjudication of Paternity: An adjudication of paternity is a judgment or order of the court determining the existence of the parent and child relationship. In Minnesota, an order for paternity must contain provisions concerning child support, custody of the child, name of the child, visitation privileges with the child, and any other matter in the best interest of the child.

Minnesota Statutes, section 257.66, subdivision 3 (1990).

Avower: (1) Paternity has been court adjudicated. (2) Paternity has not yet been adjudicated, but it is in process with papers having been served and/or a court date set. (3) A Declaration of Parentage has been signed and the intention is to pursue court adjudication.

Disavower: (1) Respondent is unwilling to pursue court adjudication. (2) No Declaration of Parentage has been signed and the father is unwilling to do so. (3) The Declaration of Parentage has been signed but this is regarded as irrelevant and unimportant; unwilling to pursue paternity through a court adjudication.

HIGHLIGHTS: PROFILES OF YOUNG, UNMARRIED PARENTS¹

Age and Childbearing Patterns

- o In this study sample of young (21 and under), unmarried mothers* on AFDC and the fathers** of their children, childbearing began in early adolescence. Black*** couples are distinctly younger than their white counterparts, both at the age of their first child and at the time of the interview.
- o Mothers' ages ranged from fourteen to twenty-one and fathers' from fifteen to thirty-six.
- o Across racial and gender lines the birth of a child is disconnected from marriage (98 percent). This is a "never married" cohort, even in instances of second and third children.
- o Repeat pregnancies are prevalent. At the time of the interview, a sizable proportion had two or more children: 32 percent of white females and 48 percent of black females. One in four mothers had a second child when they were seventeen and under, and one-third of fathers had a second child while they were still teenagers.
- o In repeat pregnancies, there is a striking absence of monogamy across racial lines. Substantially more than half of the mothers with two or more children had different fathers for succeeding children. Among white YUFs who had more than one child, 46 percent had gone on to

¹For a detailed report, see p. 25, "Findings."

*Young, unmarried mothers will be referred to as YUMs.

**Young, unmarried fathers will be referred to as YUFs

***"Black" and "African-American" are used interchangeably in this report.

father a child with a different mother than that of their first child. Among black YUFs, 80 percent had succeeding children with different mothers.

Family Formations Following the Birth of a Child

- The birth of a baby is not the result of a casual encounter. Almost half of the YUPs* were living together before the birth of the baby, in periods varying from a few months to a few years.
- Almost two-thirds of the fathers across racial lines were present in the delivery room or nearby in the hospital when the baby was born.
- For a substantial proportion of our respondents, having a child is not a bond for forming a stable family formation with the father present. Approximately 75 percent of respondents were not living with their partners and their child following the birth of the child.
- Disparities across racial lines, between mothers and fathers, are noted in the reports of "living together" relationships. More than one in four male respondents reported living with the mother and their child (35 percent for black males and 24 percent for white males) following the birth of the baby. At the time of the interview when the child was under one year of age, more than one in four males reported a "living together" relationship. In contrast, female respondents, across racial lines, deflated these figures. Only 24 percent of black female respondents and 18 percent of their white counterparts stated "living together" as a description of their relationship. Aside from a tendency of the father in this study to over-report his attachment to mother and child, the disparities probably also reflect the turbulent nature of the relationship.

Present at the Birth

- A sizable proportion of fathers both black and white were present at the birth of the baby (67 percent for white males and 61 percent for black).

Living Arrangements

- Family life for mothers and fathers, following the birth of the baby, appears to be organized around kinship networks rather than around the child.
- The data discloses that in a sizeable proportion of cases (almost two-thirds) fathers move into a variety of household arrangements, mostly with kinship networks. Distinctive racial patterns emerge: one in four white fathers live with their fathers (12 percent); very few black fathers have this available as a living arrangement (4 percent).
- Mothers and their children, to a significant degree, create new households, but not with the father (50 percent of black YUMs and 39% of white YUMs). Many of these new households are created in association with kinship networks: sharing a duplex, apartment or house. Very young mothers and children remain with their family of origin. Few totally independent households are created.
- Only 18 percent of children were living with both parents at the time of the interview when the child was under one year of age.
- Few were living with a partner other than the father/mother of their child. More white females were in this arrangement than the other groups.

Relationships between Young Parents at the Time of the Interview

- The quality of relationships was perceived with some degree of variance as reported by fathers and mothers, across gender and race lines.
- Almost half of the respondents (more mothers than fathers) reported their relationships in various stages of dissolution: "just friends," "no longer see each other," "see each other occasionally."
- A striking proportion of fathers maintained a relationship to the child, despite the dissolution of the relationship to the mother. However, mothers, across racial lines, trimmed down the reported number of visits and contributions.

Mobility

- Under 10 percent of respondents have lived at their current address for a year or more.
- More than 88 percent of both black and white YUPs have lived in their current household for less than six months.
- These young families are on the move. Doubling-up with family, friends and relatives is a common housing circumstance.

Contributions to Households in which Young, Unmarried Parents Live

- Respondents contribute money, emergency assistance, and transportation to the multiple households in which they live. Two-thirds of black and white female respondents contributed money frequently. Almost half of white males do so as compared to 30 percent of black males.

Educational Attainment

- Fewer than half of the respondents, across gender and racial lines, had graduated from high school. Patterns of educational attainment were similar between black male and female respondents. But for white respondents, significantly more male than female respondents had completed high school.
- Slightly more than one in four respondents had gone beyond high school to vocational technical institutions and, to a lesser degree, to college or other post-high-school programs.
- Twice as many females as males were presently in a training program (one in four respondents).
- Twice as many females as males dropped out of school when pregnancy occurred.
- Nine out of ten respondents, across gender and race lines, not currently in school, indicated that they were interested in returning to school.
- One-third of the respondents reported a troubled school experience prior to the pregnancy: disciplinary problems, truancy and finally dropping out. White males more than black males reported unsatisfactory school experiences.

Employment History

- Sizable proportions of the male respondents, both black and white, had job experiences in the unskilled labor market that were both temporary and marginal: cooks, dishwashers, gas attendants, pick-up construction workers, stock clerks. A small proportion had job experiences that were attached to modest wages: auto mechanics and

truck and bus drivers. Distinctively, black males had fewer job experiences and in a narrower range than their white counterparts.

- In the month before the interview, both black and white males in sizable proportions reported that they had worked for wages. White males had the highest employment experience and were associated with a household that had another wage earner (81 percent) compared to black counterparts (69 percent).
- Black females were the least likely to work for wages or live in a household with another wage earner.
- At the time of the interview, the employment patterns noted above had dwindled: 65 percent for white males and 48 percent for black males.

Cash Income

- Two-thirds of respondents are in a poverty or near poverty category. Overall, more than one in five reported under \$500 in household cash income for the previous month. Almost one-half reported between \$500 but less than \$1,000.
- A very modest proportion (7 percent) reported cash income of \$2,500 or more within the previous month.
- Mothers, across racial lines, reported less income than their male counterparts.

Use of Public Assistance Programs

- A heavy reliance on AFDC, Medicaid, and food stamps is characteristic of our respondents.
- Four times as many black males compared to white males rely on general assistance. Almost half of the respondents lived in a

household where other members relied on AFDC, Medicaid, and food stamps.

- Two-thirds of respondents lived in a household that used food stamps.
- Public assistance programs were more heavily used by black dyads than their white counterparts

Summary

- This portion of the report summarizes demographic data of respondents stratified by gender and race. Age, fertility patterns, repeat pregnancies, stability/instability of relationships, composition of family households, mobility, educational attainment, and socio-economic information provide the profile.
- Generally, this is a very low income group, heavily reliant on public assistance programs, notably mobile in their housing patterns, unstable in their living arrangements, and uncertain in their job attachments.
- Mothers and fathers are in volatile relationships with each other, but fathers appear to maintain a relationship to their children.

Background: Early Family Experiences

- A startlingly high proportion of respondents indicated early family experiences that were stressful and traumatic.
- White female respondents expressed the highest percentage of runaway patterns: actually running or wanting to (79 percent), and black males the lowest (45 percent). More females than males, across racial lines, used running away as a solution to stressful family situations.
- About one in four respondents spent a sizable portion of their growing up years cared for by grandparents, older siblings, extended family,

and friendship networks. A small number grew up to foster homes. Ten percent of white respondents had been adopted.

- Distinctly different patterns of geographic location for growing up years is reported between black and white respondents. A suburban experience for white respondents and an inner city location for black respondents suggest a distinctive difference in community background. Moreover, most white respondents remained in the state. Although a small proportion grew up in small towns, their homes were chiefly from Minneapolis and suburbs. For African-American respondents, almost one-third, across gender lines, had grown up in another state and often in different cities and in different states, during their growing up years.
- A sizable proportion of all respondents spent their childhood in a family that relied on welfare assistance. This was especially the case for African-American respondents across gender lines (72 percent) compared to 58 percent for white respondents.

Community Ties and Friendship Networks

- More than one-third of respondents report having some church affiliation with a conspicuously high portion of white female respondents (70 percent) noting an affiliation. However, less than 10 percent attend regularly. Black male respondents report the least affiliation and attendance. About half of black males chose not to answer the question: "Is the church a source of help and support for you?"
- Only one in four respondents (across race and gender lines) had a connection with a community organization, such as a neighborhood self-

help group, A.A., volunteer programs, etc.

- Respondents, across race and gender lines in sizable proportions, are satisfied with their friendship networks and the support and solace they gain from them. While a portion of fathers (both white and African-American) describe themselves as "loners," few say they are "lonely." White males are the least likely to have satisfying friendship networks. African-American men have the highest level of satisfaction with their friendship associations (80 percent).
- In summary, respondents are embedded in friendship networks that to some extent share their situation: young, unmarried families with children. This is particularly the case with African-American female respondents.

Peer Culture

- Respondents, across racial and class gender categories, say that in their peer groups fathers generally acknowledge fatherhood on hearing news of the pregnancy. Few report that men will leave town. However, more white female respondents (25 percent) believe this is a possibility.
- In a sizable proportion (78 percent), male respondents, both African-American and white, report that marriage will not be discussed as a possibility on hearing news of the pregnancy. In contrast, female respondents across racial lines report that this reference group will discuss marriage (51 percent for white), but black female respondents report that only 31 percent will discuss this as a response to news of the pregnancy.
- Of all groups, black female respondents are the most pessimistic that marriage is an option following the birth of the baby. Almost three

times as many white women believe this might be an option. However, male respondents, both black and white, discourage this option as a possibility. Black males (80 percent) are notably more pessimistic than white (71 percent) on this score.

Family Culture

- A generational change is noted in the response from females, across race. Female respondents are younger than their mothers in beginning their childbearing. This pattern is more striking among white female respondents, 65 percent of whom were younger, compared to 50 percent of their black counterparts.
- Among sisters of respondents, a sizable proportion also had out-of-wedlock children (62 percent for African-American YUMs compared to 50 percent for their white counterparts).

Future Expectations

- Generally, the future looks promising to all respondents.
- A conspicuously large portion of our respondents (80 percent) reported that in five years their circumstances will change and for the better.
- In comparison to their parents' generation, African-Americans were most likely to assess their current situations as better (69 percent) compared to their white counterparts (58 percent).
- White males, of all groups, have the most pessimistic view of the future. Twenty-one percent believe the future will be worse for their children. Only 4 percent of black males shared this perception.
- Marriage as a future possibility showed marked variations in both gender and racial groups. One in four respondents reported that they would eventually marry the mother of their child. White women were

the most optimistic (70 percent). Black and white male respondents were also confident that marriage was in their future (62 percent for both). Black female respondents were the most pessimistic about this outcome.

SUMMARY

- In summary, while respondents grew-up in stressful and traumatic circumstances and currently lived in bleak economic and social circumstances, they managed, generally, to retain an optimistic view of life.
- They were embedded in satisfying friendship networks and did not feel alienated, although their connections to church and other community organizations were sparse. Their peer and family cultures were familiar with the circumstances of young, unmarried parents, and generally counselled acknowledgement of paternity but not marriage.
- Respondents were optimistic about the futures of their children. White males are the least likely to share this perception.
- Marriage is considered a possibility in the future. Black females are the least likely to share this perception.

Knowledge about Paternity Establishment

- Female respondents, both black and white, were better informed than males. Generally, information was partial. Each group demonstrated a lack of information on particular items.
- Both white and black male respondents, in sizable proportions, did not know that the Declaration of Parentage could be signed in locations other than the hospital.

- In significant numbers, both black female and male respondents, did not know that visitation rights for the father can only be enforced if he has declared legal paternity. This vital piece of information was answered correctly by two-thirds of white respondents.
- Correct information, partial and distorted information, and "don't know" responses were threaded through all the responses. However, black respondents, generally, were less well informed. One exception should be noted: 90 percent of black males knew that a range of benefits accrue to a child whose father is in the armed services. Almost one-third of other groups did not possess this information.

Ratings on Benefits Valued

- Distinctive patterns are noted in perceived values of benefits associated with legal paternity.
- Health benefits for the child from a work-related health plan through the father's employment receives high marks across all groups.
- The psychological benefits of identity and security of one's heritage is particularly valued by women, both black and white, with a slightly higher emphasis by the latter group. Of all groups, black males place least value on this item.
- For black respondents, Social Security has high value, especially among black female respondents. Distinctly less value is placed on this item by both white female and male respondents.
- Armed services' benefits receive a modest value by black females, followed by black males. White males, among all groups, value this benefit the least.

Child Support Information

- Across all groups, misunderstandings and incorrect information were noted with variations by gender and race.
- Male respondents in sizable proportions, had more correct information than female respondents on interstate authority in pursuing child support.
- Female respondents had more correct information on the \$50 pass-through of a child support payment. Black males had the least correct information on this item.
- Child support information was incomplete on important items and "don't know" responses were threaded throughout.

Interviews with Single Parents: Partners Unavailable

- Eighty-two single-parent interviews, 67 female, 15 male, were conducted. Relationships between parents had been dissolved by the time of the birth of the child or immediately after.
- Relationships had been broken off, according to female respondents, because of negative behaviors of fathers: violence associated with gang life, physical abuse, drugs, criminal behavior and rape.
- Very few reported a denial of paternity (four black female respondents noted this) and only one male described the relationship as a casual encounter.
- Partners were unavailable for a variety of reasons: mobility (could not be reached); in correctional institutions; hostile relationship with partner.

Attitudes about Paternity

- A strikingly large number of respondents, across racial and gender lines reported that the father's name on the birth certificate was important.
- A sizable portion of respondents, across racial and gender lines affirmed the value of legally established paternity. (85 percent white males and 79 percent black males). Female respondents gave slightly less weight to the value (73 percent white females and 82 percent black females).
- Responsibility for initiating the paternity decision had mixed responses. Slightly more black fathers reported that the decision was entirely their own. Slightly more white fathers stated it was a joint decision.

Perceived Impediments Posed by the System of Paternity Procedures

- Casual neglect and racial discrimination were reported as frequent circumstances in the way hospitals performed their role in presenting the form, "Declaration of Parentage" to the YUPs. More than 60 percent of fathers were present at the hospital following the birth of their child. Of these, 62 percent of white fathers and 41 percent of black fathers reported that the form had been presented to them but rarely with explanations.
- A sizable information gap on paternity and legal rights was reported by fathers: 73 percent of black fathers did not receive coherent and understandable information, compared to 40 percent of white fathers.
- Sources of information were chiefly formal for women (through the AFDC eligibility worker) and informal for male respondents. The mother of

the child was the chief source for white male respondents and informal street-level networks (friends, relatives, rumors) supplied information to black fathers.

- Court adjudication was generally perceived as dense, complicated, threatening, and to be avoided.

Perceived Impediments Posed by Policy

- AFDC-UP was not seen as a useful policy for encouraging paternity by male respondents (AFDC was perceived as a feminized institution to which they would not want to be attached). A sizable portion of respondents perceived AFDC-UP as "off limits," although they possessed meager information about this program.
- A proposed increase in the \$50 per month pass-through (child support is paid to the county to offset the cost of the AFDC grant) received mixed responses as an incentive for paternity decisions. More white male respondents supported the idea than black counterparts, but the idea was not considered by either group as a pivotal influence.
- An assortment of conflicts about the system were reported. Use of a sheriff, criminalizing the process, the intimidation of the courts, the negative attitudes of personnel in child support enforcement offices, hospitals, and AFDC all were mentioned, in varying degrees, as impediments to the decision to pursue paternity.

Influence of Relationships between Young, Unmarried mothers and Fathers

- The quality of the relationship between the parents was identified by a significant portion of respondents, across race and gender lines, as the chief impediment to paternity. Close to 76 percent pinpointed

this as the central barrier in paternity decisions. White males gave even more emphasis to this than their black counterparts.

- Both black and white gender groups also identified negative behaviors of their partners as impediments. White males had a higher proportion of negative observations of the mothers of their children (33 percent reported the mother as essentially abusive, using drugs and alcohol, and neglecting the child). In comparison, only 8 percent of black male respondents made these observations. Female reports were reversed. Notably more black female respondents reported negative behaviors of the fathers of their children than their white counterparts.

Recommendations from Perspective of Young, Unmarried Parents

In answer to questions probing ways of encouraging young parents to acknowledge paternity, responses across race and gender lines were wide-ranging. For white fathers, the most important recommendation would center on better information on visitation, custody, and ways of getting the father's name on the birth certificate. For black fathers, the most important recommendation was stopping child support pursuit of the father.

Other recommendations, across racial lines included: reducing the role of the court system; increasing counselling services for the father to assist them to accept their responsibility.

However, both black and white respondents reported that the chief impediments to paternity were associated with a poor relationship with the mother and fear of economic responsibility.

Almost one in five, in all groups, stated they did not have any ideas on how to improve the system.

Highlights of Follow-Up Interviews, One Year Later

In a follow-up study of white and black YUMs, one year later, only a small number could be reached because of the extraordinary mobility of this cohort. Disconnected telephones, letters returned "address unknown," and failed tracking efforts suggest a deteriorating housing situation for a sizeable proportion of our sample. Despite the small number reached, however, pertinent and suggestive observations can be made.

This small group (22 percent of the sample) revealed a remarkable sense of optimism and resiliency. Stability of living arrangements (with a variety of kin and friendship networks) and participation in programs are key factors in their perception of improvement in their lives since the interview a year ago.

Repeat pregnancy rates were almost the same for both groups (28 percent), with a slightly lower rate for African-American respondents.

A few distinctive differences between white and African-American YUMs are noted. The economic status of black YUMs had not improved (none had been able to leave AFDC, as compared to white YUMs in which almost half either left or relied only partially on AFDC).

These are the salient observations: the economic status of the African-American women had steadily deteriorated; there was a further loss of confidence that paternity establishment would improve the lives of their children, and one year later, African-American fathers had already drifted away from a relationship with their children. These items should remain as important subjects for the policy agendas of the '90's.

DETAILED FINDINGS: A DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE
OF WHITE AND BLACK,* YOUNG, UNMARRIED MOTHERS
AND THE FATHERS OF THEIR CHILDREN

This sample of young (21 and under), unmarried mothers** on AFDC and the fathers of their children revealed a pattern of childbearing that began in early adolescence. However, in our sample, African-American couples are distinctly younger than their white counterparts, both at the age of their first child and at the time of the interview, when their current child was one year or younger.

Age Distribution of African-American and White Respondents at the Time of the Interview

Table 1. Age of Respondents at the Time of the Interview:
293 Interviews

	<u>White Females</u>	<u>Black Females</u>	<u>White Males</u>	<u>Black Males</u>
	65% (97)	51% (74)	35% (52)	49% (70)
Age:				
Under 15	--	4% (3)	--	--
15-17	9% (9)	31% (26)	6% (3)	11% (8)
18-19	49% (58)	22% (16)	14% (7)	23% (16)
20-21	40% (39)	41% (30)	38% (19)	22% (15)
22	2% (2)	2% (2)	12% (6)	7% (5)
23-25	--	--	17% (9)	16% (11)
26-29	--	--	15% (4)	17% (12)
29-35	--	--	--	4% (3)

- There are distinctive clusters within the age groups.
- Black YUMs are clustered in the 15-17 age group (31 percent).
- In contrast, almost half of the white YUMs are clustered in the 18-19 age group (49 percent).

* "Black" and "African-American" will be used interchangeably in this report.

** Young Unmarried Mothers will be referred to as YUMs, Young Unmarried Fathers as YUFs, and Young Unmarried Parents as YUPs throughout.

- Both black and white males are clustered in the 18-21 ages, with white males slightly older.
- At the time of the interview, the age span for white males was 17-29, and for black males 16-36.
- The youngest black female was 14 and the youngest white female was 15.
- Thirty-four percent of black male respondents were teenage fathers.
- Nineteen percent of the white male respondents were teenage fathers.

Discrepancies in Age Reporting

The female partners of both black and white YUFs report their partners' ages as both younger and older than the self-report. This discrepancy is noted especially in the self-reported age of fathers in the 16-17 age group (mothers report they are younger) and in the YUFs who report their age above 20 (mothers report they are older).

A significant number of YUMs did not know the age of the fathers of their children.

Fertility Patterns

This sample of young, unmarried mothers began their childbearing in early adolescence.

Table 2. Age at First Birth

	<u>White Females</u>	<u>Black Females</u>	<u>White Males</u>	<u>Black Males</u>
14 and under	2% (1)	17% (6)	2% (1)	2% (1)
15-17 years	33% (18)	53% (19)	15% (7)	29% (20)
18-19 years	50% (28)	25% (9)	30% (14)	28% (19)
20-21 years	15% (8)	3% (1)	28% (13)	20% (14)
22-25 years	--	--	12% (6)	17% (12)
over 25 years	--	--	6% (3)	4% (3)

- For a significant group of mothers, the experience of pregnancy and parenting was a strikingly premature event: 22% had a first baby under the age of 15. Three mothers had a child when they were 13 and under.

- The incidence of first birth in the very young age group of 14 and under was represented by 17 percent of black YUMs and 2 percent of white YUMs.
- African-American fathers also began their fertility history at a younger age than their white counterparts. Of black fathers, 17 percent were 16 and under when they had their first child, compared to 4 percent of white YUFs.
- Of black YUMs, more than half were in the age category 15-17.
- In contrast, one-third of white YUMs had their first child when they were in the 15-17 age group.
- The incidence of first birth in the older age group (20-21) dropped sharply for both black and white YUMs.

The pattern for black males also reflected a younger age for beginning their history as fathers. There were twice as many black, first-time fathers in the 15-17 age group as white. Both were equally represented in the 18-19 age group. White males, comparatively, were more numerous in the 20-21 category (28 percent to 20 percent). In the older age category of 22 and over, both were somewhat equally represented (18 percent to 21 percent).

Typically, fathers, both black and white, were 2-3 years older than the mothers of their children, but the teenage mothers asserted that the fathers of their children in older age groups were older than their self-report.

Marital Status

Only a very few of the study group reported having been married: a small number of African-American males were currently divorced or separated (4), and an even smaller number of other groups (1 white male, 2 white females and 1 black female) reported having been married. In the entire group, 98 percent were "never-married."

Repeat Pregnancies

Table 3. Number of Children at Time of the Interview

	<u>White Females</u>	<u>Black Females</u>	<u>White Males</u>	<u>Black Males</u>
1 child	68% (66)	51% (38)	78% (40)	56% (40)
2 children	23% (22)	30% (22)	14% (7)	18% (13)
3 "	8% (8)	16% (12)	6% (3)	9% (6)
4 "	1% (1)	1% (1)	2% (1)	7% (5)
5 "	--	--	--	7% (5)
6 "	--	1% (1)	--	1% (1)
8 "	--	--	--	1% (1)

Repeat pregnancies are prevalent, but strikingly more so among African-American young, unmarried parents.

- Among black YUMs, one out of two had two children or more. One of the respondents had six children.
- Among black YUFs, almost one out of two had two or more children, with almost one in four having three children or more. Thirty percent had four or more children. One respondent reported having eight children.
- Two-thirds of white YUMs had one child, and almost one in four had two children. Thirteen percent had three or more.

At the time of the interview when all YUM's had at least one child under the age of one, eight percent (7) of white YUMs and 14 percent (10) of black YUMs were pregnant.

In linking age to repeat pregnancies: one in four mothers in this sample had a second child when they were 17 or under. More than one-third of fathers had a second child while they were still teenagers.

Three fathers were reported by the mothers as being 16 and younger when they fathered the mother's third child.

Table 4. Response to the Question:
Did Babies Have Same or Different Mother/Father?

	<u>White Females</u>	<u>Black Females</u>	<u>White Males</u>	<u>Black Males</u>
Yes/the same	33%	42%	54%	20%
No/different	66%	58%	46%	80%

In repeat pregnancies, there is a notable absence of monogamy. Two-thirds of white YUMs reported a different father for their second and in a few cases their third child. While black YUMs were more likely to have the same father for their second and succeeding children, still, substantially more than half (58 percent) had different fathers for their children.

In more than half of the white YUFs, they remained as partners to the mothers of their first child, but in 46 percent of the cases, white YUF's had fathered children with different mothers than their first child.

Among black YUFs, 80 percent had gone on to relationships with different women than the mothers of their first child.

For male respondents (34 percent), a second child had been fathered while they were still teenagers (19 and under).

For mothers who had a second child, more than 26 percent (26.4 percent) were still 17 and under.

At the time of interview, almost 12 percent of the respondents were pregnant. Mothers reported that over 11 percent of the fathers were older men (28 and older). The oldest father in the incidence of multiple births was 54.

Three fathers were reported as being 16 and younger when they fathered the mother's third child.

COMPOSITION OF FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS

Both black and white YUPs reported complicated family households within a variety of living arrangements. Varying lengths of time, from a few weeks to two years, in one household or another revealed the volatility of their living arrangements.

Living arrangements, as reported by mothers and fathers in their separate interviews, did not always match, reflecting, perhaps, the turbulence in their relationships: patterns of brief periods of living together punctuated by frequent periods of living apart. Perceptions differed, between couples, on both the quality and the stability of their relationships.

Living Together Following the Birth of the Baby

The expectations that a family will be formed by mother and father living together with their child was only dimly realized by our study respondents. In short, the arrival of a child was not the occasion of a two-parent family for 75 percent of respondents. Across racial lines, approximately 25% were living together at the time of the interview, when the child was under one year of age.

The data on "living together" relationships should be treated with caution, however. Various discrepancies arose between the reports of the partners, across racial lines.

More than 35% of black men reported living together with the mothers of their child, but only 24% their partners reported this arrangement. Twenty-five percent of white males reported living with the mother of their child, but only 18% of mothers confirmed this status.

Aside from discrepant interpretations of "living together, the number of YUPs living together may be under-reported. In interview data, there was

considerable anxiety about reporting this arrangement because of fear of jeopardizing AFDC eligibility.

Patterns of Living Together Before the Birth of the Baby

Varying degrees of longevity in their "living together" relationships revealed the volatility of living arrangements of our sample.

Table 5. Longevity in Living Together Relationship

<u>At Some Time in the Past</u>	<u>Less Than One Year</u>	<u>Between One & Two Years</u>	<u>More Than Two Years</u>
45%	11%	9%	8%

Clearly, the birth of the child was not the outcome of a casual encounter. Almost half were living together for a period of time ranging from a few months to a few years. However, relationships among these young parents, both black and white, were not only transitory, but inconsistently perceived. Twenty-five percent of white females and 19 percent of black females stated that the fathers broke off the relationship right after they found out about the pregnancy. None of the males, white or black, reported a rupture in the relationship at this point.

Table 6. Male Response to News of the Pregnancy

	<u>White Females</u>	<u>Black Females</u>	<u>White Males</u>	<u>Black Males</u>
Yes: Acknowledged he was the father	88%	88%	83%	85%
No: did not acknowledge he was the father	12%	12%	17%	15%

Only a small portion of men, 16 percent, across racial lines, stated that they did not acknowledge fathering the child (slightly more white males were in this category). Mothers did not entirely concur with this report. Female respondents stated (88 percent, across racial lines) that an even smaller number of their partners (12 percent) disputed their fatherhood when pregnancy news was conveyed. YUMs were likely to observe that their partners, on occasion, revised their memory on acknowledgement: if the relationship was breaking up, they might, at that point, raise doubt about their biological paternity.

Moreover, content in the paired interviews revealed discrepancies in reporting the timing of this "breaking off" the relationship. Fathers overstated the length of their commitment in comparison to the reports of their partners. This was so across racial lines. Both black and white female respondents (19 percent for the former and 25 percent for the latter) stated that the father broke off the relationship soon after hearing about the pregnancy. None of the fathers, across racial lines, reported breaking off at this stage. Rather, both black (71 percent) and white (50 percent) male respondents stated that the relationship was broken off some months after the baby was born. Female respondents, across racial lines, reported that the relationship had broken off at an earlier time.

Father's Presence at Birth

While disparities in commitment to the relationship were noted, a surprising number of fathers, almost two-thirds, were present in the delivery room, at the time of the birth of their child. The numbers were significant for both African-American and white fathers, although slightly higher for the latter group (61 percent compared to 67 percent).

Slight disparities were also noted in response to the question of the father's presence at the birth. This was disputed by mothers in 8% of the cases, across racial lines.

Quality of the Relationship

While substantially more than half these young, unmarried parents were seeing each other on a somewhat regular basis, there were discrepancies, across racial and gender lines, on the perception of stability of these relationships. Distinctively, men over-reported their contacts and the quality of the relationship compared to mothers' perceptions.

Female respondents, both African-American and white, reported varying degrees of dissatisfaction. Male respondents, across racial lines gave rosier views of satisfaction with of the relationship.

Twenty-two percent of white female respondents and 16 percent of their black counterparts reported that they no longer see the father. Fewer men acknowledged the total break in the relationship (16 percent for white males and seven percent for black males.)

Almost half of the respondents reported that the relationship had deteriorated into various stages of dissolution: "just friends," "no longer see each other," "see each other occasionally." In these categories, respondents, both black and white, disclosed variances, again on gender lines. Across racial lines, men were less inclined to report on the deterioration of their relationship.

A salient observation can be made, at this point. Despite the staged dissolution of the relationship between the parents, fathers maintained an attachment to the child in this first year of the child's life.

This attachment was more marked among African-American males in comparison with their white counterparts.

Expectation of Marriage to the Mother/Father of their Child

Approximately one in four of the respondents say that they will, eventually, marry the mother/father of their child.

Table 7. Will Marry Mother/Father of their Child

	<u>White Females</u>	<u>Black Females</u>	<u>White Males</u>	<u>Black Males</u>
Yes	25%	24%	23%	35%
No	75%	76%	77%	65%

While white couples, more or less, had the same expectation of marriage, black females were distinctively more pessimistic than their partners of this outcome following the birth of their child. This finding is in contrast to the question as to whether marriage, not necessarily to the mother/father of their child, is a viable option in the future. A sizeable portion of black and white male respondents say "yes" (62 percent). White women were the most optimistic (70 percent), and black women the least (46 percent).

Living Arrangements of Children

Most babies (over 77 percent) were living with the baby's mother in her independent household arrangements. Eighteen percent of children were living with both parents. Five percent of the babies were in various "other" care situations, such as foster home care, mother's or father's relatives, and in one case, living with the father as primary caretaker.

With a second and third child, "living together with child(ren)" increased, somewhat, for both black and white respondents.

Living Arrangements of Young, Unmarried Parents

Family life for mothers and fathers, following the birth of the baby,

appears to be organized, chiefly, around kinship networks rather than around the child.

The data discloses that in a sizeable proportion of cases (almost two-thirds) fathers move into a variety of household arrangements. Women and their children, to a significant degree, create new households, but not with the father.

Male respondents, both black and white, live in a broad spectrum of households -- in the homes of maternal and paternal relatives, siblings, and friends. However, some distinctive patterns emerge. More than one in four white men were living with their fathers, in contrast to very few black male respondents for whom this was an available living arrangement (27 percent to 4 percent). White males lived with a variety of relatives -- mothers (37 percent), brothers (15 percent), and sisters (12 percent). Black men lived with an assortment of relatives, but chiefly in households headed by their mothers in which siblings were present. A small portion of both white and black YUFs lived with friends (white 15 percent and black 11 percent). Six percent of white males, and eight percent of African-American males were living with partners other than the mother of their children.

Only a small proportion of YUFs, both African-American and white, reported living alone (under 7 percent). Two respondents identified themselves as homeless. These were African-American men.

A significant proportion of mothers reported that they had established independent households (50 percent for black YUMS and 39 percent for white YUMs). But often, these were in association with kin and friendship networks (in a duplex; sharing an apartment, house).

Few of our sample were living with a partner other than their child's parent. However, white females tended to be in such an arrangement more than

the other three groups. Twelve percent of white females were in this arrangement, four times as many as African-American females.

Mobility: Households in Transition

The households, as well as the family formations of our respondents, are conspicuously volatile. Across racial and gender lines, these young, unmarried parents are on the move and doubling up. Under 10 percent have lived at their current address for a year or more. More than 88 percent of both black and white YUMs and YUFs have lived in their current household for less than six months. These young mothers and children and the fathers of these children have moved at least four or five times within the last two years. Doubling up with family, friends and relatives is a common housing situation.

The data from our sample reveals not only complicated family living arrangements, but the multiple households to which financial contributions were made by both men and women across racial lines.

Contributions to Households in Which They Lived

Table 8. Financial and Support Contributions to Households

	<u>White Females</u>	<u>Black Females</u>	<u>White Males</u>	<u>Black Males</u>
Contributes Money				
Frequently	65%	62%	48%	33%
Emergencies	29%	29%	12%	48%
Transportation	29%	14%	28%	30%

White and black women contributed more money (65 percent and 62 percent) than the men to households in which they are currently residing. However, black men helped out in emergencies (48 percent) and provided transportation more often (30 percent) than other groups.

Interestingly, both white and black YUMs contribute to their households in the same proportion for money and emergencies, and only differ in their response to transportation (29 percent of white women and 14 percent of black women make this contribution).

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Current School Enrollment

Overall, two-thirds of respondents, across race and gender lines, were not enrolled in school at the time of the interview, although 43 percent of our sample was of school age (19 and under). A significantly greater proportion of white females than males were enrolled in school (43 percent vs. 20 percent). Among African-Americans, the difference was also significant (44 percent vs. 26 percent). However, a higher proportion of African-American males were enrolled in school compared to their white counterparts. These findings await further exploration.

Table 9. High School Diploma Attained

<u>White Females</u>	<u>Black Females</u>	<u>White Males</u>	<u>Black Males</u>
55%	37%	45%	46%

Fewer than half of respondents had graduated from high school, either through completion of 12th grade (34 percent) or completion of the GED (12 percent). Another 39 percent had completed 10th or 11th grade, while 16 percent had completed no higher than 9th grade. Patterns of educational attainment were similar between African-American males and females. For whites, significantly more males than females graduated from high school by completing the 12th grade (42 percent vs. 32 percent). Females were far more

likely to finish high school by completing the GED (23 percent females vs. 4 percent males) suggesting their higher rates of returning to school after dropping out.

Slightly more than one in four respondents (27 percent) indicated they had received some schooling in addition to high school. For this group, additional education included vocational-technical school, (90 percent), college (72 percent), or other (63 percent). The overlapping percentages suggest that most of these respondents had received more than one kind of post-high school education.

Finally, one-quarter of study participants indicated that they were currently enrolled in some additional kind of training program. Almost twice as many females as males were noted in the category reflecting the mandates imposed on women through STRIDE (the Minnesota version of the Family Support Act, 1988).

Impact of Pregnancy on Educational Plan

As might be expected, a significantly greater proportion of females than males indicated that once they learned of the pregnancy, it caused a change in their educational plans. Three-quarters of males compared with one-third of females indicated the pregnancy caused no change in their plans, while twice as many females as males dropped out (25 percent vs. 13 percent). This pattern is similar among black and white respondents [Note: check this out.].

As far as future plans are concerned, over 9 in 10 respondents not currently in school indicated that they were interested in going back, with no differences evident by gender or by race.

Grades as an Indication of School Performance Prior to the Pregnancy

Reports of failing or near failing grades appeared to be more common among white than black respondents. Over one-third of whites indicated that their typical grades were failing or barely passing, compared to 11 percent of blacks. Forty percent of whites and 69 percent of blacks reported typically getting C's and B's, while close to a quarter of each reported typically getting B's and A's.

School Performance and Absences Prior to Pregnancy

Prior to the pregnancy, over one-third of respondents indicated that they had suffered a troubled school experience. Long absences from school, poor grades, and cutting classes were common experiences. White females had a disproportionate record of poor school experiences among all the respondents.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC INFORMATION

Employment History

The work experience of female respondents was meager. Babysitting and restaurant work were typical as occasional experiences. Even amongst the older YUMs, few had established a work record of any consistency.

Male respondents worked chiefly in the unskilled sector of the labor market. Temporary, marginal jobs were characteristic: cook, dishwasher, car washer, stock clerks, construction (i.e., pick up job removing asbestos, etc.), factory assembly work.

A small portion had, at one time, worked at jobs with modest wages: truck driver, bus driver, machinist, bodyshop mechanic.

Occasionally, jobs in the human services were reported: daycare center aide; park board aides in recreation.

Only a few respondents had been attached to occupations that indicated

stable income: bookkeeper/auditor; nursing assistant.

Among the few self-employed, one farmer, one musician, and one potter was identified.

Strikingly, black males reported fewer job experiences and in a more restricted range. Fast food restaurant work, temporary warehouse work, and gas stations attendant were characteristic of a largely unskilled labor force employment history.

Recent Employment

A sizeable proportion of male respondents had worked within the month preceeding the interview, and this was evident across racial lines. However, distinct gender differences were evident. This was widest among whites (84 percent vs. 23 percent), and less so among African-Americans (78 percent vs. 47 percent). Over half of both white and African-American respondents reported that other household members had also worked for wages within the last month. White males were the most likely to report another working household member (81 percent) followed by African American males (69 percent), then white females (51 percent), and African-American females (35 percent). Black YUMs were the least likely to be working for wages or associated with a household that had a wage-earner making a contribution to family income.

Current Employment

Considerable instability of income from wages was reported. Noting the fairly high levels of male employment, above, it is noteworthy that at the time of the interview, one month later, the percent of employed males dipped to 65 percent of white males, 48 percent of African-American males.

Employment of females also dwindled to: 15 percent for African-American females, and 11 percent for white females.

Table 10. Employment Status at Time of the Interview

	<u>White Females</u>	<u>Black Females</u>	<u>White Males</u>	<u>Black Males</u>
Employed	11%	15%	65%	48%
Unemployed	89%	85%	35%	52%

Household Cash Income Within the Past Month

Despite a high level of working for wages, low levels of cash income was the norm for study members. Overall, more than one in five reported under \$500 in household cash income within the previous month. Close to half (46 percent) reported between \$500 but less than \$1,000. Another one in five reported income between \$1,000 and \$1,499, while 8 percent indicated income of \$1,500 to \$2,499. Approximately 7 percent of respondents indicated cash income of \$2,500 or more within the previous month. A significant number of our respondents (two-thirds) are in a poverty or near poverty category.

Gender differences were significant in this regard, as might be expected, with females reporting less cash income than males across racial lines.

Use of Income Assistance and Other Services

Table 11. Respondents' Use of Income Assistance and Medicaid
(in percents)

	<u>White Females</u>	<u>Black Females</u>	<u>White Males</u>	<u>Black Males</u>
Yes, received help	98	97	23	97
Medicaid	61	81	47	23
Food stamps	92	90	53	50
AFDC income	100	100	47	27
GA income	2	5	13	55
Other	39	29	33	31

A heavy reliance on public assistance and various subsidies was typical of both black and white YUMs. All female respondents relied on AFDC for income. In addition, a sizable proportion used Medicaid and food stamps. Rent, child care, and utility subsidies were also reported as income assistance in the past month.

The following patterns of utilization of income assistance and services are noted:

- Substantially more health care needs among African-American mothers and their children were revealed by the distinctively greater use of Medicaid (80 percent) compared to white YUMs (61 percent) in the month preceding the interview.
- Inasmuch as the data base was drawn from the AFDC program, this source of support was universal for women, but it is noteworthy that food stamps were widely used to supplement AFDC income--90 percent for black YUMs and 92 percent for white YUMs.
- Significant gender differences appeared in the use of income assistance and health care. General Assistance, within the past month, was used primarily by men. For African-American men this was a more prevalent source of income (17 percent) than for white men (4 percent).
- The use of AFDC by men is perplexing inasmuch as only a few (3) reported their participation on AFADDC-UP. It is believed that 47% of white males and 27% of black males in the past month, in some way shared the resources coming to the mother from the AFDC grant.
- Food stamps and Medicaid were the most common public assistance programs used by men. The reliance on food stamps shows the following pattern: 50 percent black YUFs and 53 percent white YUFs. For Medicaid, the racial difference in male usage is as follows: 23 percent black YUFs and 47 percent white YUFs.
- Of all groups, white males had the lowest use of public assistance programs (one in four). Strikingly, the other groups relied heavily on such programs--more than 90%.

Table 12. Other Household Members' Use of Income Assistance and Medicaid
(in percents)

	<u>White</u> <u>Females</u>	<u>Black</u> <u>Females</u>	<u>White</u> <u>Males</u>	<u>Black</u> <u>Males</u>
Yes, received help	25	47	29	57
Medicaid	35	57	72	36
Food stamps	50	61	67	71
AFDC income	55	61	78	79
GA income	14	15	6	7
Other	10	27	11	33

As might be expected, it was common for other members of the respondent's household to be receiving various forms of assistance. Approximately half reported that a household member other than themselves had received Medicaid services within the past month; two-thirds had used food stamps, 70 percent had received AFDC, 10 percent General Assistance, and one-quarter reported the receipt or use of other assistance or services. In summary, a heavy reliance on AFDC, Medicaid, and food stamps is characteristic of the sample and the households in which they lived.

SUMMARY

This portion of the report summarizes our demographic data on age, fertility patterns, repeat pregnancies, stability/instability of relationships, composition of family households, households in transition, educational attainment, and socio-economic information. These data present profiles of our respondents stratified by gender and race.

Generally, this is a very low income group, heavily reliant on public assistance programs, strikingly mobile in their housing locations, and unstable in their living arrangements. Mothers and fathers are in volatile relationships with each other. Fathers, however, maintain a relationship with their children. Following the birth of the baby, only one in four constructs

a family formation around the child, with both parents present.

A note of optimism can be struck, however. Almost 75% of respondents, across gender and race lines, who were not presently in school, expressed an interest in going back to school to finish high school and continue beyond, with a special interest in vocational-technical school education.

DETAILED FINDINGS: SOURCES OF INFLUENCES IN DECISION-MAKING

EARLY FAMILY EXPERIENCES, PEER AND FAMILY CULTURE

A series of questions were asked in order to grasp an understanding of respondents' growing-up experiences.

In answer to the question, "When you were growing up, did you ever run away or really want to run away?" the following response is significant.

Table 13. Runaway Patterns: A Measure of Dissatisfaction

<u>White Females</u>	<u>Black Females</u>	<u>White Males</u>	<u>Black Males</u>
79%	63%	58%	45%

The incidence of runaways (either wanting to or actually running away) among our sample of YUPs is startling. (This incidence is in marked contrast to data recorded by the Adolescent Health Survey which disclosed that 16 percent of 7-12th graders wanted to or actually did run away; the data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, 1980, had an even small percent of incidence of teen runaways--9-12 percent.)

A distinctively higher percentage of females than males, found a solution to their problems by running away or wanting to, and among females, there was a higher incidence of white females (almost 80 percent) than black females (62 percent). Among males, a markedly higher percentage of white males than black counterparts revealed a runaway pattern.

Since running away is a telling clue to intolerable family situations, this data, reinforced by the biographies of these YUPs, discloses a high degree of traumatic events in the young, growing-up years of our sample. An explanation of the distinctively different patterns as reflected in race and gender factors remains to be explored. African-American young men and women

do not appear to use running away to the same extent as their white counterparts as a solution to stressful family situations.

A sizeable portion (90%) of study participants grew up with mothers as their chief caretakers, but these household did not uniformly provide a nurturing environment. Ten percent of all groups described getting their care and support, while growing up, from grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles, and in a small percentage (5 percent), from foster homes.

Table 14. Growing Up: Living with Friends and Relatives

<u>White Females</u>	<u>Black Females</u>	<u>White Males</u>	<u>Black Males</u>
69%	58%	46%	62%

Living with friends and relatives or wanting to was part of the growing-up experience of a major portion of YUPs. Among the females, more white than black actually left home to live elsewhere, or wanted to. This pattern is reversed with the men. Growing-up, more black males than white lived with friends and relatives.

Contextual differences between black and white respondents were noted. Ten percent of white study participants were reared in adoptive homes; no black respondents reported this experience. Thirteen percent of black respondents reported that they grew up with mother's boyfriend in the home. Only a few white respondents reported this family arrangement.

The perception of positive role models is also revealing of a contextual difference. Two-thirds of white males reported positive male role models, compared to 57% of black males. The reverse is true for female role models. For black respondents, 95 percent reported positive female role models compared to 78 percent for white respondents.

Distinctively different geographic experiences are revealed.

Location of Growing-Up Years

Table 15. Geographic Location of Early Years

	<u>White Females</u>	<u>Black Females</u>	<u>White Males</u>	<u>Black Males</u>
Minneapolis	31%	48%	44%	46%
Suburb	49%	3%	37%	3%
St. Paul	--	--	--	10%
Other (small town)	8%	--	6%	--
Other State	6%	31%	8%	32%

While a large number of YUFs, both African-American and white, spent their early years in Minneapolis, almost half of the white YUMs grew up in the suburbs as did more than one-third of the white YUFs. In contrast, only 3 percent of the black YUPs had a suburban experience. A small percentage (under 10 percent) of white YUMs and YUFs grew up in small towns. Less than 10 percent of white YUPs had moved to Minnesota from another state, in contrast to almost one-third of black YUPs who had migrated to Minneapolis. African-American YUPs had a higher incidence of living in more than one state and in different cities in their young years. This was especially the case with black YUMs. In summary, a suburban experience for the white respondents and an inner city and migrant move to Minneapolis from out-of-state for the black respondents suggests a distinctive difference in community background.

Growing-up: The Welfare Experience

Over half (58 percent) of respondents also reported that while they were growing up, someone in their household, most typically the mother, had received welfare. While this was a common experience among a significant number of respondents across racial lines (40 percent of white), the pattern was especially pronounced among African-Americans (72 percent), with no

differences between males and females within each group. Longevity patterns varied, but for African-Americans, welfare reliance was more persistent.

Community Ties and Friendship Networks

Table 16. Membership in a Church

	<u>White Females</u>	<u>Black Females</u>	<u>White Males</u>	<u>Black Males</u>
Yes	70%	49%	31%	34%

About one-third of both black and white YUPs reported having some church affiliation. A strikingly high percent of white YUMs are church members (70 percent), and almost half of black YUMs are also attached to a church.

Among white respondents, a high proportion are Lutheran; black respondents are overwhelmingly Baptist. A distinctive number of white YUPs are Catholic, almost a quarter of females and more than a third of males. A significant number of respondents chose not to identify their religious identity.

Table 17. Church-Going Patterns

	<u>White Females</u>	<u>Black Females</u>	<u>White Males</u>	<u>Black Males</u>
Occasionally	36%	21%	31%	25%
Rarely/Never	50%	55%	59%	69%

Less than 10 percent attend church regularly. Substantially more than half of all groups rarely attend. A strikingly high percentage of black males (69 percent) reveal that they rarely, if ever, attend. On the whole, these YUPs are detached from a pattern of regular church attendance.

The Church as a Source of Help and Support

Predictably, perhaps, considering their detachment from regular or even sporadic church attendance, a high percentage of respondents (almost half) chose not to answer the question, "Is the church a source of help and support for you?" Black YUMs revealed a more positive association with the church than other groups.

Attachment to Community Organizations

Table 18. Response to the Question: Are you Involved with Community Organizations or Groups?

	<u>White Females</u>	<u>Black Females</u>	<u>White Males</u>	<u>Black Males</u>
Yes	22%	27%	27%	24%
No	78%	73%	73%	76%

Approximately three-fourths of the respondents had no connection with community organizations, such as community center activities; neighborhood organizations; self-help groups.

Support from Friendship Networks

A high proportion of respondents are attached to friendship networks ranging from "a few good friends" to "lots of friends." Black females, especially, identify themselves as part of large friendship networks. While a proportion of respondents, both black and white YUFs, considered themselves "loners," only a small number of women, and an even smaller number of men, describe themselves as "lonely." Of all groups, white males are the least likely to have large friendship networks.

Our respondents, across race and gender categories, report that they are connected, in a satisfying way, with a network of friends. There are minor

differences (African-American men have the highest level of satisfaction, over 80 percent, with the lowest level among white women, 65 percent), but still only a small proportion report loneliness and alienation. "Not sufficient time to spend with friends," an observation shared across race and gender categories, is the major complaint.

Our respondents are, generally, embedded in friendship networks that share their situation: young families with children. However, white YUFs are least likely to have friends who have children and black YUMs are most likely to have a great many friends who share their situation.

When asked if these friendships share a common set of values and responses to the event of out-of-wedlock pregnancy and parenting, some strong similarities are shared across race and gender categories, as will be observed in the responses to questions about the peer culture.

PEER CULTURE

Responding to News of the Pregnancy

On hearing about the pregnancy, across race and gender categories, our respondents believed that the male, in their friendship networks, was likely to acknowledge that he was the father of the child. Eighty-three percent of white men assert this is so, and 88 percent of white women agreed. Eighty-five percent of black men and 88 percent of black women agreed that the male will acknowledge he's the father of the child. Few report that men will leave town on hearing news of the pregnancy. However, more white women (25 percent) than other groups believe this is a possibility.

Talk about Marriage

Table 19. Peer Culture: Marriage as a Possibility on Hearing of the Pregnancy

	<u>White Females</u>	<u>Black Females</u>	<u>White Males</u>	<u>Black Males</u>
Yes	51%	31%	22%	22%
No	49%	69%	78%	78%

Marriage as an option, when news of the pregnancy is disclosed, has marked variance across gender lines. White and black YUMs report that among their friends, it is discussed as a possibility (more so among white female respondents, 51 percent, than black women, 31 percent). However, both black and white men stated that only a small proportion of their friends would consider or even talk about marriage to their pregnant partners (22 percent for both).

Expectations of Marriage to Mother/Father of the Child

Table 20. Marriage to the Mother/Father of the Child as a Possibility after the Child is Born

	<u>White Females</u>	<u>Black Females</u>	<u>White Males</u>	<u>Black Males</u>
Yes	42%	15%	29%	20%
No	58%	85%	71%	80%

The expectation of marriage to the mother/father after the child is born is strikingly low among all groups, except for white mothers. Here, a sizeable proportion maintain optimism that marriage is a possibility. For an overwhelming number of African-American, young, unmarried parents, this option is unthinkable. Only 20 percent of black males stated that marriage to the mother of the child is a possibility. Even fewer black females (15 percent)

considered marriage to the father of their child as a realizable option.

Of all groups, white women are the most optimistic that, in their peer group, marriage to the father of their child is a possibility (42 percent). Black women, in observing their peer culture, are deeply pessimistic. Eighty-five percent responded that, in their networks, marriage to the father of their child is not a prospect.

Abortion

Table 21. Peer Culture: A Consideration of Abortion

	<u>White Females</u>	<u>Black Females</u>	<u>White Males</u>	<u>Black Males</u>
Yes	42%	34%	21%	19%
No	58%	66%	79%	81%

There were discrepancies across gender lines on whether abortion was considered on hearing news of the pregnancy. White women were more likely than other groups to say that this was a possibility (42 percent), while white males reported that only a small proportion (21 percent) of men would encourage abortion. Similarly, black women, 34 percent, stated that in their peer groups, there might be a consideration of abortion on hearing news of the pregnancy, but less than 20 percent of black men would entertain this possibility.

The Family Culture

Both black and white women in our sample were younger, generally, than their mothers in beginning their childbearing. For white women, the departure from their mother's pattern is stronger: 65 percent say they are younger than their mothers, compared to 50 percent of black YUMs.

Elements in the family culture predisposing a pattern toward early non-marital childbearing is disclosed in the distinctive number in our sample of respondents who had unmarried sisters who were pregnant. The proportion is much higher among the black respondents (62 percent of black women and 59 percent of black men). Among white female respondents, 50 percent reported an unmarried sister who was pregnant or had a child compared to 36 percent of white males.

Future Expectations and Opportunities

Respondents were asked a number of questions about their views and expectations of the future, both for themselves and their children. The overwhelming majority (at least 80 percent) of both white and African-American respondents, across gender lines, believed that the future (approximately five years from now) would be different. When asked to compare their own opportunities for work, education, and living a healthy life with their parents', about two-thirds believed their own opportunities to be better. Notably, African-Americans were most likely to view their opportunities as better (69 percent) compared with white (58 percent).

Comparing opportunities for themselves and their children, 80 percent of respondents said the future would be better, 10 percent worse, and 10 percent about the same for their children as for themselves. Interestingly, twice as many whites (14 percent) as African-Americans (7 percent) believed the future would be worse for their children. This view was most frequently expressed by white males (21 percent), compared with only 4 percent of African-American males, and 10 percent of both white and African-American females.

Marriage as a future option (not necessarily to the mother of their child) showed differences along both gender and race lines. While white and

African-American males equally agreed that marriage probably would (62 percent) or wouldn't (37 percent) occur, the greatest difference was evident between white and African-American females. A substantial portion of African-American YUMs stated that marriage, at some future time, was not a viable option (46 percent). Almost a third of white YUMs shared this pessimism. (30 percent). However, a significant portion of YUFs, both black and white, were optimistic that marriage, at a later time, would take place (62 percent). Again, of all groups, African-American YUMs were the most pessimistic and white YUMs the most optimistic about their chances for marriage.

Summary

While respondents grew-up in stressful and traumatic circumstances and currently lived in bleak economic and social circumstances, they managed, generally, to retain an optimistic view of life. They were embedded in satisfying friendship networks and did not feel alienated, although their connections to church and other community organizations were sparse. Their peer and family cultures were familiar with the circumstances of young, unmarried parents, and generally counselled paternal acknowledgement of the child, but not marriage. For themselves, respondents were optimistic about the futures of their children. White males are the least likely to share this perception. YUFs believe marriage is a possibility for them in the future. White YUMs are the most optimistic of all groups that marriage will be an option for them. Black YUMs are the least likely to share this perception.

ATTITUDES TOWARD PATERNITY

Study participants were asked to respond to a variety of questions that probed attitudes toward paternity. These questions were focused on the significance of having the father's name on the birth certificate; circumstances and attitudes toward the Declaration of Parentage; and attitudes toward court adjudication of paternity.

Table 22. Importance of Father's Name on Birth Certificate

	<u>White Females</u>	<u>Black Females</u>	<u>White Males</u>	<u>Black Males</u>
Yes	89%	84%	87%	84%
No	11%	16%	14%	16%

Most respondents, across race and gender lines, in sizeable proportions stated that the father's name on the birth certificate was important.

This striking affirmation of support for the father's name on the birth certificate struck a wide-ranging set of responses, especially from male respondents: recollections of past humiliations on submitting a birth certificate citing "father unknown"; formal recognition of the father to ensure parental rights; "to give the baby the father's name"; an important feature of the couple's relationship; acknowledgement of the father's role for providing emotional support and nurturance to a child -- something missing from their own lives. Frequently, more than one response was given.

In actual behavior, more than half of the parents had actually signed the Declaration of Parentage which is the vehicle for placing the child's name on the birth certificate (52 percent of white respondents vs. 63% of black respondents).

Responses to the question, "Do you think it's important that legal paternity be established?" again demonstrates the value placed on the father's connection to the child.

Table 23. Importance of Establishing Legal Paternity

	<u>White Females</u>	<u>Black Females</u>	<u>White Males</u>	<u>Black Males</u>
Yes	73%	82%	85%	79%
No	27%	18%	15%	21%

Across gender and race lines, a striking majority of respondents affirm the value of legally establishing paternity. Interestingly, female respondents, both black and white, give slightly less weight to this value. The discrepancy between belief and behavior is apparent, however, as shown in the table below.

Table 24. Signed the Declaration of Parentage
(in percents)

	<u>White Females</u>	<u>Black Females</u>	<u>White Males</u>	<u>Black Males</u>
Yes	57	49	57	54
No	43	52	43	46

Respondents interpreted legal paternity as one that is court adjudicated.

But as we see in the table below, only a small proportion of YUFs are committed to a court adjudication.

Table 25. Involvement in Court Adjudication
(in percents)

	<u>White Females</u>	<u>Black Females</u>	<u>White Males</u>	<u>Black Males</u>
Paternity adjudicated	9	9	13	19
In process	16	7	8	0
Court date	3	1	4	0
TOTAL	28	17	25	19

In the section of the report on avowers and disavowers, an exploration of this discrepancy will be made.

Decision-Making to Acknowledge Paternity

As we see in the tables below, there was considerable similarity across black and white groups among the disavowers, with slightly more black fathers reporting that this is their own decision and slightly more white fathers stating it is a joint decision.]

Table 26. Decision not to Acknowledge Paternity:
Who Decided?*

	<u>White Males</u>	<u>Black Males</u>
Own Decision	27%	30%
Joint Decision	27%	22%
Mother's Decision	14%	22%
Never Discussed	14%	13%
Still Thinking About It	9%	--
Don't Know	9	13%
Don't Know		

*Disavower responses

For fathers who are avowers, there are some racial differences in

reported reasons that shaped their decisions: for white fathers, a sizeable majority reported, "... wanted to. It was the right thing to do." For black fathers, the paternity decision was guided by wanting a formal recognition of the father's role and rights, and a considerable number who reported that they wanted to declare paternity because "... never had a father," and they do not want to visit this injury on their child.

Table 27. Decision to Acknowledge Paternity*: Reasons

	<u>White Males</u>	<u>Black Males</u>
"The right thing to do"	49%	25%
Recognition of father's role and rights.	26%	33%
To assure father's nurturance role.	13%	9%
Important for partner's relationship.	9%	--
Never had a father in their life.	--	17%
Other	3%	16%

*Avower responses

Perceived Impediments Posed by the System of Paternity Procedures

The circumstances under which the Declaration of Parentage was presented at the hospital reveals mundane neglect and some evidence of racial discrimination. Sixty-two percent of white fathers had been presented with the Declaration of Parentage form, but only 41 percent of blacks, even though more than 60 percent of fathers had been present at the birth of their child. Various personnel in the hospital brought the form to the attention of the YUP's: nurses, social workers, clerks, and occasionally, the notary republic.

Formal and informal sources of information were reported. Gender differences were noted. For women, AFDC was the major source of information. Generally, information was given in a routine way by eligibility workers.

Wide variations were reported on the context in which the information was presented. Missing was a counselling environment. Rarely were the specific benefits to the child discussed.

Table 28. Male Sources of Information on Paternity

	<u>White Males</u>	<u>Black Males</u>
Mother of Child	40%	16%
Hospital	12%	9%
Participation in Interview	9%	33%
Other (a variety of friends,	39%	42%

For fathers, the informal, street-level network was the common source of information, along with fragments of information from the mothers of their child. Interestingly, participation in the interview of this study was identified as a chief source of information by 33 percent of black fathers, whereas, 40 percent of white fathers identified the mother of their child as principal source of information.

Policy and Community Influences on Decision-Making

While prosecution for statutory rape was a piece of knowledge that was widely known, a sizeable portion of respondents, both black and white and across gender lines, stated that this was not a deterrent in their decision-making. In a few dyadic interviews, the threat to divulge the father's age by the maternal grandmother of the child was disclosed, however.

The availability of AFDC-Up (the policy which permits an unemployed parent without regard to marital status to be placed on the grant) which has existed in Minnesota for a number of years was not widely known by the respondents. However, only one male respondent (white male) indicated that this influenced his decision to establish paternity. While a major proportion

of respondents noted that this policy, if widely known, could influence the decision of others, male respondents were, personally, not swayed by it. The resistance to using AFDC-UP appeared to be tied up with the notion that AFDC was a feminized institution, and the male respondents did not want to be associated with it. AFDC-UP was vaguely associated with an attack on their manhood.

An assortment of complaints about the system were reported. The use of a sheriff, criminalizing the process, the intimidation of the courts, the negative attitudes of personnel in child support enforcement offices, hospitals, AFDC, all were mentioned, in varying degrees and combinations, as procedural impediments to the decision to pursue paternity.

Influence of Relationship Between YUMs and YUPs

The quality of the relationship between the mothers and father was identified by a major proportion of respondents, across race and gender lines, as the pivotal impediment to paternity. Close to 70 percent pinpointed this as the central barrier in paternity decisions. White males gave even more emphasis to this than their black counterparts.

Both gender groups also identified negative behaviors of their partners as impediments. White males had a higher proportion of negative observations of the mothers of their children than their black, male counterparts. A significant proportion of white YUFs (33 percent) reported the mother as emotionally abusive, using drugs and alcohol, neglecting the child, in comparison to 8 percent of their black male counterparts. Female reports were reversed. Significantly more black female respondents reported negative behaviors of the fathers of their children than their white counterparts.

Recommendations from the Perspective of Young, Unmarried Parents

In answer to questions probing ways of encouraging young parents to acknowledge paternity, responses across race and gender lines were wide-ranging. Almost one in five, in all groups, stated they did not know. For white fathers, the most important recommendation would center on better information on visitation, custody, and ways of getting the father's name on the birth certificate. For black fathers, the most important recommendation was stopping child support pursuit of the father.

An assortment of recommendations from YUFs, across racial lines included: reducing the role of the court system; increasing counselling services for the father to assist them to accept their responsibility.

However, both black and white respondents reported that the chief impediments to paternity were associated with a poor relationship with the mother and fear of economic responsibility.

Summary

More than half of YUPs had signed the Declaration of Parentage and a sizeable majority report that establishing legal paternity is important. However, serious impediments are perceived as barriers: mundane neglect associated with hospital procedures; fragmented information sources; the criminalized procedures (sheriffs, court system) of paternity adjudication. However, the quality of the relationship between the young parents is identified as a pivotal circumstance that encourages or discourages the decision to pursue legal paternity. Gender and racial factors give various weights to these impediments.

KNOWLEDGE ABOUT PATERNITY ADJUDICATION:
RESPONSES TO A QUESTIONNAIRE*

To assess respondents' knowledge about paternity adjudication, 25 true-false questions were posed during the interview. The data from these responses must be treated with caution, since guessing is highly associated with responses to true-false questions. Nevertheless, some valuable insights are gained from this inquiry.

Responses were varied, with each group demonstrating a lack of correct information, more, or less, on different items. Generally, information was partial.

A substantial portion of the respondents (40 percent), across race and gender, had correct answers for three-quarters of the questions. More than half (52 percent) had correct information for well over half of the questions. A small portion had meager information, with scattered pieces of knowledge. This group included 15 respondents who had incorrect answers for all items.

As we see below in Table 29, females of each group were better informed than the males.

Table 29.* Number of Correct Responses to Twenty-Five True/False Paternity Items (by Respondent Gender and Race)

<u>Group</u>	<u>Number Correct</u>	<u>Number Responding</u>
White Males	16.1	52
White Females	17.8	97
Black Males	14.8	71
Black Females	17.6	74
Nat. American Males	13.1	12
Nat. American Females	16.0	10

Responses to Specific Items in the Questionnaire

* See Appendix 2.

*For details of responses on paternity procedures and information, see Appendix 2.

On selected specific questions, males and females, by race, had a parallel level of knowledge. This suggests the possibility that women, who have a more accurate grasp, derived chiefly from their AFDC association, share this information with their partners.

Female respondents, both black and white, had high levels of accurate knowledge on the facts surrounding the Declaration of Parentage (e.g., understood that they and the father had to sign the document before a notary public and have the document sent to Vital Statistics in order for the father's name to be on the birth certificate). The corresponding males shared the same level of knowledge on these items.

However, several significant disparities are noted.

According to Minnesota law, the legal document known as the "Declaration of Parentage" can be signed in any location where it can be witnessed by a Notary Public. A substantial percent of black females knew this (60 percent), as well as a smaller percent of white females (53 percent). However a large portion of males, across racial lines, were misinformed, responding incorrectly. They understood that the document could only be signed at the hospital. Black males responded incorrectly in greater numbers on this item.

A second item also revealed less correct information possessed by men, both white and African-American. According to Minnesota law, at present, in Hennepin County, the site of this study, paternity adjudication is a legal process which requires an appearance in court to see a judge. While more than half of female respondents, both black and white, responded correctly (more black women than white women knew this), fewer males, both black and white understood this (fewer black men than white).

Strikingly, all groups, YUMs and their partners, across racial lines, revealed a significant degree of uncertainty on this crucial piece of

information. Almost one-third stated they did not know the correct response to this item.

On a third item, information that the father cannot legally have visitation rights unless he has had paternity established, misinformation prevailed among both black females and males. While more than two-thirds of white respondents, females and males, answered this correctly, less than half of the black respondents did so.

Interestingly, all groups had a good grasp of the fact that the mother has sole custody of the child until paternity has been adjudicated. Further, all groups had correct information that child support payments cannot be ordered until a legal step of paternity adjudication has been taken, although both black males and females were less sure of this than their white counterparts.

On a fourth item, all groups, across racial and gender lines, were uninformed on the fact that when a blood test is ordered and the father is unable to pay, the county is obligated to pay the costs. Interestingly, black males had a higher correct response rate on this and black females the lowest, but a high level of "don't know" prevailed, especially among white males.

On a fifth item, the fact that a guardian ad litem must accompany a minor father if he is in court on a paternity adjudication was widely understood, across all groups, but generally, white males and females were less informed. Black females and males knew this fact in higher numbers than their white counterparts. More than a third of white males and females responded with "don't know" on this item.

On a sixth item, while a large portion of all groups understood correctly that social security benefits may go to a child whose father has legally established paternity, white males had the lowest level of understanding on

this issue, with more than one out of four stating that they did not know.

On a seventh item, while two-thirds generally across racial and gender lines had correct information on the fact that benefits accrue to a child whose father is in the armed services, providing paternity has been established, the level of understanding of this information was extremely high among black males (90 percent). For the other groups, almost one-third did not know this essential piece of information.

Rating on Benefits Values

Generally, across all groups, including the child in the health benefits of a work-related health plan of the father is valued, particularly by both white and African-American mothers.

The second benefit most valued by all groups is the importance to the child of the psychological security and identity that is derived from knowing one's father. Women especially found this an important benefit, particularly white women. Of the four groups, black males placed the least value on this benefit.

An interesting distinction is noted in the response to the importance of social security benefits for the child. Here, these benefits are more highly valued by black men and women (particularly black women) than their white counterparts. This benefit was least valued by white women. Black females, followed by black males, more than the other groups, placed a higher level of importance on armed services benefits.

The following table reveals the differences in priorities among the groups.

Table 30. Rating on Benefits Valued

	<u>White</u> <u>Females</u>	<u>Black</u> <u>Females</u>	<u>White</u> <u>Males</u>	<u>Black</u> <u>Males</u>
1. Health Benefits	46%	51%	48%	48%
2. Psychological Benefits	58%	49%	42%	37%
3. Social Security	14%	42%	23%	31%
4. Armed Services Benefits	16%	26%	6%	18%

Information on Child Support*

All groups across race and gender lines possessed accurate information on the fact that "good cause exceptions" to naming the father would allow the mother to receive AFDC for herself and the child; the fact that child support orders reflect the income of the father; and the fact that the court can order a father to show that he is looking for work if he is out of school and unemployed.

However, individual groups lacked accurate information on essential items.

Black men were least knowledgeable about the fact that if the mother refused to cooperate in naming the father, her portion of the AFDC grant would be eliminated.

Further, a significant portion of black males had incorrect information or did not know that child support payments, except for the \$50 pass-through, is retained by the government to **offset payment of** the AFDC grant. On this item, both black and white females had distinctively more accurate information than their male counterparts.

*See Appendix 2 for details.

White males had the highest level of "don't know" in response to the fact that a father's child support obligation is postponed until he is earning money.

The gender distinction in possessing accurate information on whether the state can reach a father who has moved to another state is notable. Male respondents, both African-American and white, knew that the state did have interstate authority to reach the father (black fathers less than white) in contrast to their female counterparts who had incomplete knowledge on this issue. A significant number of women, across racial lines, responded with "don't know" on this item.

THE SEARCH FOR DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AVOWERS AND DISAVOWERS

One aspect of this study was designed to explore demographic, experiential, attitudinal, and socio-economic variables that might differentiate avowers from disavowers.

It was expected that distinct and sharply defined profiles would emerge. This did not turn out to be the case. In a wide range of variables, no sizeable differences could be detected. Only a few striking differences between avowers and disavowers were disclosed. However, a multivariate analysis did produce predictive profiles for white and black avowers and disavowers. Profiles with selected variables revealing differences between avowers and disavowers are delineated below.

A PROFILE OF WHITE MALE AVOWERS AND DISAVOWERS

- Living arrangement analysis discloses that a small number of YUFs live with friends. Twice as many disavowers as avowers chose this option.
- More avowers grew-up with a father in the household (75 percent) compared to disavowers (50 percent).
- One half of the avowers described their fathers as having a caring and nurturing presence in their growing-up years. Less than 20 percent of disavowers had this perception of their fathers.
- Despite troubled family life as recalled by the respondents, most reported that at the time of the interview they had fairly regular contact with their family of origin and disavowers were particularly strong in keeping up their family of origin contacts (94 percent as compared to 73 percent for avowers). One can only speculate that avowers had, symbolically at least, moved to a strong interest in

their newly created family formation, while disavowers remained tied to their family of origin.

- In responding to questions about behaviors of their peer group, one-third of avowers indicated that in their friendship networks a father would discuss marriage with the mother on hearing of the pregnancy. Significantly, only a small portion of disavowers stated that marriage with the mother would be discussed.
- Twice as many disavowers (70 percent) had not graduated from high school compared to avowers (35 percent).
- At the time of the interview, almost half of the disavowers were unemployed (46 percent) as compared to avowers of whom less than 20 percent were unemployed.
- In a puzzling response, a greater proportion of disavowers (66 percent) believed that, in the future, life would be better for their children. This optimism of future expectations was not as widely shared by avowers of whom a smaller proportion, 44 percent, reported confidence that the future held a better life for their children.
- While both groups saw marriage as an option in five years, a sizable proportion believed it would not necessarily happen to the mother of their child. Avowers were more inclined to believe that marriage, in the future, to the mother their child was a possibility.

Summary

We failed to find significant differences between avowers and disavowers on various factors such as age at first birth of father's child, stress in households during growing-up years (as measured by running away), current living arrangements with the mother of their child (in both groups, 23 percent

were living with the mother of their child), status of the relationship with the mother, and connectedness to friendship and community networks.

The finding that more avowers grew up with a father that was perceived to have a nurturing presence suggests, perhaps, that a caring father, during formative years, does shape a sensitivity to an enduring responsibility toward one's child.

Both avowers and disavowers were currently facing bleak financial circumstances. Of those employed, 63 percent in both groups earned approximately \$200 per week. However, the unemployment factor was a telling indicator of the differences between the groups. Twice as many white disavowers as avowers were unemployed at the time of the interview. This may be related to another sizable difference: the attainment of school completion. Seventy percent of disavowers had not graduated from high school. In a comparative figure, only 35 percent of avowers had not completed high school.

Potential for employment, as measured by completion of high school, and a propensity for leaning toward responsibility toward a child as disclosed by the presence of a role model of a nurturing father in growing up years, appear to be crucial factors that delineate the difference between white avowers and disavowers.

A PROFILE OF BLACK MALE AVOWERS AND DISAVOWERS

- Disavowers had less contact than avowers with their family of origin, i.e., with the adults who reared them (63 percent of avowers continued to see their families at least monthly compared to 44 percent of disavowers). The reverse is true for white male counterparts.
- Disavowers were less likely to have grown up with a father in the household (23 percent compared to 46 percent of avowers).

- African-American disavowers grew-up in households with the most varied compositions of all groups: extended relatives, grandparents, step-parents, boyfriends in the home.
- A greater proportion of disavowers had migrated from another state.
- Disavowers were significantly less likely than avowers to discuss marriage as an outcome to an out-of-wedlock birth.
- Avowers were less likely to have graduated from high school (82 percent vs. 44 percent of disavowers who had not graduated). This runs counter to an intuitive judgment.
- Three times as many disavowers as avowers lived in a household that was heavily reliant on public assistance.
- Among black avowers there was more frequent contact with the child. Ninety-five percent of avowers, compared to 72 percent of disavowers reported that they saw their child more than weekly.
- Only 4 percent of black male respondents stated that they never saw their child. These were all disavowers.
- Most fathers (about eight in ten) believed that legal establishment of paternity was important for the well-being of families and children and this belief was predominant among black avowers (96 percent vs. 71 percent of black disavowers).
- While eight out of ten fathers believed the father's name on the birth certificate was important, in behavior, significantly less disavowers (91 percent of avowers vs. 44 percent of disavowers) actually signed the Declaration of Parentage.
- A modest difference between avowers and disavowers was reported (57 percent vs. 33 percent) on being present in the hospital at the time

of the birth and having the opportunity to sign the Declaration of Parentage.

- A distinctive difference is revealed in the provision of information about paternity and legal rights of fathers. Only 15 percent of disavowers reported receiving information about paternity compared to 53 percent of avowers who did have knowledge about the legal rights of fathers.

Summary

Significant differences between avowers and disavowers on various demographic factors such as age at first child, living arrangements, connectedness to friendship and community networks did not emerge. Only an insignificant difference emerged in valuing the father's name on the birth certificate. In fact, only a modest difference emerged in the differences between avowers and disavowers who were present at the delivery.

A significant difference emerges in the growing up experiences of disavowers. Significantly fewer of these male respondents grew up with a father present and a sizable portion grew up in a range of diverse households. One could speculate that their sensitivity to traditional responsibility to a child did not receive reinforcement by positive male role models.

Disavowers, across racial lines, in a distinctive pattern, do not expect to marry the mother of their child, as the table below reveals.

African-American disavowers were less likely to think of marriage than all other groups. A broad explanation could be linked to their severe economic disadvantages. Higher rates of unemployment, lower rates of high school completion, and significantly higher rates of living in households heavily dependent on public assistance confirms a deterioration of their economic status.

The fact that black disavowers receive significantly less information than other groups about paternity and legal rights of fathers indicates a detachment, if not alienation, from typical sources of information--such as mothers of their children.

Table 31. The Possibility of Marriage to Mothers of Their Child: Avowers and Disavowers (in percents)

<u>Avowers</u>	<u>White Males</u>	<u>Black Males</u>
Yes	55	67
No	35	33
Don't know	10	--
 <u>Disavowers</u>		
Yes	44	33
No	48)	48)
Don't know	8)	19)

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS

In order to clarify those factors that best distinguish between avowers and disavowers, two discriminant function models were generated, one for whites and one for blacks. Discriminant function analysis permits a multivariate assessment of the relative ability of explanatory variables to sort or distinguish between comparison groups. The bivariate analysis explicates those variables that are or are not significantly related to avowal status, and the discriminant models identify the salience of those differentiating factors.

White Fathers:

Twelve variables were significant predictors of avowal/disavowal status for white fathers. The single most important predictor was whether the

father's name was on the baby's birth certificate, which was associated with avowal. This variable alone explained 20% of the variance in correct group classification, as shown in Table 32. In stepwise progression, the other variables predictive of acknowledging paternity included:

- the respondent's father being pleased about the pregnancy
- having a father who looked after and nurtured the respondent while growing up
- having discussed the possibility of marriage with the child's mother, having received any kind of information about paternity and parental rights
- respondent's mother suggesting that he take responsibility for the child
- having consistent (positive) feelings about having a baby during the course of the pregnancy
- having friends who encouraged taking responsibility for the child, frequently seeing the baby
- being presented with a Declaration of Parentage at the hospital, not being discouraged or deterred by the paternity system in establishing paternity
- not viewing the mother of the baby as emotionally abusive.

The findings for white fathers indicate the primary importance of their own family of origin, as well as friends, as a frame of reference for paternity decision making. This includes the high salience of being raised by a father in the family of origin, receiving positive feedback from the father about the pregnancy, and being encouraged by one's mother and friends to assume responsibility for the child. As other research on substance use decision-making and sexual decision-making among young people has demonstrated, reference group norms, stemming from both parents and peers, are of integral importance to the individual's decision making and behavior. In addition to this, relationship factors with the mother of the baby are

strongly predictive, including discussion about marriage between the baby's mother and father, and not regarding the mother as emotionally abusive, which may be taken as some kind of proxy variable for perceived quality of interpersonal relationship. Finally, the system within which paternity is acknowledged is a significant impediment or facilitator of this outcome, including access to information about paternity and parental rights, experiencing the overall system associated with paternity as either facilitative or at least neutral, as opposed to oppositional, and having immediate access to the opportunity to sign the Declaration of Parentage at the hospital. More than a systems factor, this represents a proximal situational variable that can be key in capitalizing on the positive feelings about the baby and new family, and helping to create a family unit that is legally and societally acknowledged.

Table 32: Discriminant Analysis of Factors that Differentiate Avowers and Disavowers Among White Fathers

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Explained Variance</u>	<u>Significance</u>
Father's name on birth certificate	20.1%	p<.001
Respondent's father pleased about the pregnancy	10.9%	p<.001
Being raised and nurtured by a father in family of origin	10.6%	p<.001
Discussion about marriage with baby's mother	5.6%	p<.001
Received information about paternity and parental rights	4.9%	p<.001
Respondent's mother encouraged taking responsibility for child	2.8%	p<.001
Consistent feelings about having a child during the course of the pregnancy	2.5%	p<.001
Friends encouraged taking responsibility for child	2.0%	p<.001
Frequency of seeing child	1.7%	p<.001
Being presented with the Declaration of Parentage at the hospital	1.4%	p<.001
Being discouraged by the system of establishing paternity	1.6%	p<.001
Perceiving the baby's mother as emotionally abusive	1.4%	p<.001

The overall discriminant model was highly significant in its ability to correctly classify avowers and disavowers ($X^2=46.72$, $df=12$, $p<.0001$). Overall correct group classification was a remarkable 94.2%, including the ability of these variables to correctly predict 91% of avowers and 97% of disavowers.

Black Fathers:

For blacks YUFs, a different set of predictor variables emerged in the discriminant analysis. Eight variables were significant predictors of ayowal or disavowal, together explaining 45% of the variance in group classification. In stepwise order, the variables that were predictive of acknowledging paternity among black fathers were:

- Not graduating from high school
- Believing it is important that paternity be established for the child
- Being advised by friends to assume responsibility for the child
- Friends being pleased about the pregnancy
- Having frequent contact with the adults that raised the respondent
- Friends not suggesting abortion as a pregnancy outcome
- Being currently employed
- Having received information about paternity and parental rights

The explained variance and significance level of each variable is shown in Table 33.

Table 33: Discriminant Analysis of Factors that Differentiate Avowers and Disavowers Among Black Fathers

<u>Significance</u>	<u>Variable</u>	<u>Explained Variance</u>
	Having graduated from high school	12.7% p<.01
	Believing establishment of paternity is important	8.7% p<.001
	Having friends who encouraged taking responsibility for the child	8.0% p<.001
	Having friends who were pleased about the pregnancy	6.1% p<.001
	Frequent contact with adults who raised the respondent	2.7% p<.001
	Friends not suggesting abortion as a the preferred pregnancy outcome	2.7% p<.001
	Being currently employed	2.1% p<.001
	Having received information about paternity and parental rights	1.7% p<.001

This model was also highly significant in its ability to correctly classify avowers and disavowers ($X^2=37.84$, $df=8$, $p<.001$), with correct group classification at 84.3%, including correct prediction of 86% of avowers and 83% of disavowers.

Reference group norms were especially salient for black fathers, particularly among the peer group, although frequent contact with the adults who raised the respondent was also a strong predictive variable. Unlike whites, holding a strong personal belief in the importance of establishing paternity was directly predictive of paternity avowal. To a lesser extent,

though still significant, having received information about paternity was also predictive. The employment variable suggests the importance of having a job to family formation, and the clear pattern of consistent, higher unemployment among blacks than whites highlights an impediment to formal family formation.

In this regard, the contextual nature of the greater economic disadvantage, generally, of black respondents sheds light on the discouraging economic factors associated with formal paternity acknowledgement. Evidence of disadvantage in their own current earnings and in their employment and unemployment experiences, as compared to white respondents, is further reinforced by the economic hardships of the households to which black male disavower respondents were attached. In these households, fewer members were working for wages and the households were more heavily reliant on public assistance.

Educational Attainment: A Significant Race Difference Between Avowers and Disavowers

There was a significant group difference in educational attainment between avowers and disavowers. For both blacks and white, about 54 percent had not graduated from high school. Among whites, 69% of disavowers had not graduated from high school compared to 35% of avowers, a difference of two to one ($X^2=6.03$, $df=1$, $p<.02$). As will be seen, this relative disadvantage in educational attainment among the disavowers is also accompanied by a greater likelihood of current unemployment for disavowers.

However, this relationship was completely reversed for black fathers. Eighty-two percent of black avowers had not graduated from high school compared with 44 percent of disavowers. In other words, for blacks, 56 percent of disavowers were high school graduates compared with only 18% of avowers.

So as a group, both black and white fathers constituted an academically at risk group, with over half indicating they had not graduated from high school. Among whites, disavowers were far more likely to be high school drop outs, consistent with the sociological portrait of those young men who become teen fathers, in general. For black YUFs, it was the avowers who were far more likely not to have graduated from high school. A coherent explanation of this relationship between avower status and incomplete high school education is still to be explored.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS: WHAT THE FINDINGS SAY

What is the capacity of YUF's to contribute to child support?

We have seen from the analysis that the current economic status of YUF's in this study is marginal, including both their current employment status, earnings, past school performance, and educational attainment.

The fathers in this study were chiefly employed in jobs such as fast food restaurants, warehouse work, gasoline station attendants, i.e., jobs that are temporary, part-time, with low-wage scales. We speculate, then, that they rely on relatives, government assistance, or illicit activities to subsidize their income.

With the increasing marginalization of relatively well paying jobs in the manufacturing sector that do not require higher education and advanced work skills, the prospects for improvement appear slight. The proliferation of low paying service sector jobs without benefits in urban areas over the past decade accentuate the problem for these young fathers: lack of access to occupational pathways toward upward mobility. Forty two percent of white fathers and 56% of black fathers were living in households with combined income of under \$1,000. The most dramatic race differential was in the very low percentage of blacks (6%) as compared with 25% of whites, who reported household income of \$2,500 or more within the past month. A greater proportion of whites were also currently employed compared to blacks (65% vs. 47%). Among whites, of those unemployed, a significantly greater proportion were disavowers. Among African-American YUFs, the unemployed were equally divided between avowers and disavowers.

Furthermore, a substantial proportion of YUF's who continue to live with the family of origin indicated that they contributed money to the household,

which suggests that earnings levels do not necessarily represent available disposable income to support the family of their non-marital child. Forty eight percent of whites and one third of blacks living with their family of origin indicated that they frequently contributed money to the household; another 28% and 42% respectively, did so from time to time.

It seems, therefore, that the capacity of most of the YUF's to contribute to child support in cash is small. Significantly, over 80% of YUF's indicated that they currently participated in the care of the baby in non-financial ways, including babysitting, transportation, food, and diapers.

Are there different aspirations and time horizons between avowers and disavowers?

While there were differences in educational attainment between avowers and disavowers, there were no differences in the proportion of avowers and disavowers who wished to return to school (more than 75%), or their desired levels of educational attainment (60% wanted to attend community college or vocational-technical school). About one in five white fathers and one in four black fathers were in school at the time of the interview, with no difference between avowers and disavowers. There were no significant differences in avowal status in the proportion of YUF's who believed that the future would be better or worse for their own children, and for the proportion of those who saw marriage as an option for themselves within the next five years. However, significantly more disavowers than avowers, across racial lines, believed that marriage to the mother of their child was not a possibility.

What is the effect of reference group norms on paternity decision making?

It was apparent that avowers and disavowers received differential advice from their kin and friendship networks regarding the appropriate response to the birth of the child. Avowers, across racial lines, were somewhat more

likely to be advised to assume responsibility by their own mothers. However, when asked how their own mother felt about the pregnancy, a significantly greater proportion of white avowers than disavowers indicated that their mother was upset about the pregnancy (60% avowers, 28% disavowers). Similarly, fathers of white avowers were significantly more likely to be upset than YUF disavowers. Overall, no such distinctions were revealed among black YUFs. Displeasure over the pregnancy was far less likely. Among white YUFs who were avowers, friends were likely to advise that responsibility be taken. Among black YUFs, friendship networks had wide support for a role of "responsibility" for the fathers toward their out-of-wedlock children.

Both racial groups were closely associated with friendship networks in which the event of an out-of-wedlock child was not unusual. The definitions of "taking responsibility," however, were broad and rarely included formal, legal paternity. Rather the definitions implied "being there" in a vaguely supportive way.

Are there differences in school attainment, work histories, welfare reliance, family of origin patterns between avowers and disavowers?

Two-thirds of our respondents, across race and gender lines, are poor. This means they have many of the demographic characteristics of the chronically poor in the United States. A good number of our respondents are high school drop-outs. White females do somewhat better than the other groups, but the percentage of high school graduates among this group is still low. Fifty-five percent of white, unmarried mothers have graduated from high school. Yet, only 37% of black unmarried mothers have graduated from high school. The male graduation rates are not so strikingly different. Forty-five percent of white males report graduating from high school and 46 percent of black men report graduating from high school.

Accordingly, given the low levels of educational achievement, economic status is also low. At the time of the interview, eleven percent of the white females reported being employed, 15 percent of the black females were employed. The data for the men is even more telling along racial lines. Fully 48 percent of the black men reported being unemployed, despite high school graduate rates which matched white men. Sixty-five percent of the white men reported being employed. They were the group most likely to be working.

Although our sample is poor, overall, African-American adolescents appear to come out of a class background which is even more impoverished than white adolescents. Fully 72 percent of the black adolescents come out of a background of welfare dependency. This is dramatically different from the 40 percent of white youths who come out of such a class background. Indeed, currently, black men in our sample were more likely to be using G.A. and represented the two men in our sample who were homeless at the time of the interview. They are more likely to be unemployed than white men, reflecting an extremely economically marginal population.

Are there cases where the fathers cannot be located? If so, what are the circumstances of these cases?

We cannot, from our data, provide accurate information on the proportion of fathers who could not be located. Sixty-seven interviews were conducted with female participants who identified their partners, who subsequently could not be located. We failed to find these fathers chiefly because of their mobility (as measured by phones disconnected and mail returned "address unknown"). Occasionally, paternal relatives explained that fathers were reluctant to be available for an interview because of deteriorating relationships with the mothers of their children. On a few occasions, appointments were set up, but fathers failed to show up.

The proportion of fathers in the general population of unwed fathers who are in correctional institutions is not available data, but our interviews with 15 fathers in correctional institutions shed some light on their attitudes and circumstances. We cannot stereotype their attachment or detachment from their child. Nor can we make a judgment from our meager data on the circumstances which would encourage mothers to use "good cause exceptions" to deny fathers the opportunity to pursue legal paternity. The issues of imprisoned fathers and the long-term consequences for children remains to be studied.

Are there basic pieces of information about paternity that are not known or incorrectly perceived?

Among the study group, female respondents, across racial lines, had a more accurate grasp of paternity processes than the male respondents. The source of information for YUMs was the AFDC eligibility process.

The following items had significant rates of error or were incorrectly perceived:

- The Declaration of Parentage can be signed at any location that provides a notary public. This is an important piece of factual information. A sizeable portion of female respondents knew this, but a majority of men thought the form could only be signed in the hospital.
- A significant degree of uncertainty was revealed by all groups on the role of the judge and the courts in the formal adjudication process. (In Hennepin County, an appearance in court is required for paternity, which is combined with child support, visitation, and custody orders.)
- Visitation rights can be denied a father unless paternity has been established. This important fact was incorrectly grasped by a significant number of African-American respondents, across gender lines.
- When a blood test is ordered and the father is unable to pay, the county is obligated to pay the costs. This information was incorrectly grasped by all groups.
- Social security benefits are awarded to a non-marital child if paternity has been established. Fewer white males than other groups were aware of this.

- Certain benefits accrue to a non-marital child whose father is in or has served in the armed services. Fewer white males, compared to other groups, had correct information on this item.

Overall, incomplete and fragmented information was a pervasive pattern, especially among male respondents. Interviewers reported that respondents were generally surprised by the benefits that accrue to a child when paternity is declared. The gaps in information require attention. Unarguably, this is a issue for community agencies to address.

What are the barriers to access for services in establishing paternity, as perceived by YUMs and YUFs?

Throughout the interviews, a repetitive theme was struck: formal adjudication of paternity through the court system, which typically begins with filling out the eligibility form in the AFDC office, was perceived as a dense maze of procedures, caught up in unintelligible fits, starts, delays, and uncertainties.

A portion of our sample of YUMs (29 percent of white female respondents, and 17% of black female respondents) who had initiated court adjudication to secure child support complained of delays, inefficiencies, and neglect by the IV-D office.

In our follow-up study, one year after the original interview, for those YUMs who had initiated a judicial proceeding for paternity, child support, and visitation, the process had broken down. "They tried to serve papers. He [the father] told them he was not the person they were looking for. They just walked away."

For a portion of YUMs, the benefits to the child have not been explained. Interestingly, following the interviews in this study, several in the follow-up study stated that they had begun proceedings.

A sizeable portion of YUMs had decided judicial adjudication was not in their best interest for the following reasons: would interfere with informal support now provided by the father; the \$50 pass-through, with the remainder of the child support going to the county, was not enough to enhance the economic status of their child; the punitive attitudes of some personnel put the whole process "off limits"; perception of the father's economic viability to pay child support was so dim, it wasn't worth the trouble.

From the YUPs interviews, two negative themes emerged: the criminalization of the process and the intimidation of the court system. Using the sheriff to serve papers posed both a symbolic and real threat. Illustratively, one father told of his fright at seeing the sheriff at the door because a robbery had occurred at his place of work, and he thought he was about to be arrested on a false charge. Although not stated directly, the juvenile delinquency records of a sizeable portion of fathers and the sheriff serving the paternity papers becomes linked, in an uncomfortable way, setting the stage for avoidance.

The court system, itself, is perceived in very negative ways. Some fathers spoke of the delays which cost them their jobs. Verification of earnings and documentation of expenses almost always meant scheduling more court hearings. The issue of paternity often got lost in the procedures for ordering child support. One father spoke of a two-year delay which he endured for his first child. He and his partner decided to forego judicial paternity determination for their second child.

For both YUMs and YUFs who are voluntarily seeking a legal paternity determination for their child, the judicial procedures are viewed as an enormous barrier. A considerable portion of young, unmarried parents had fragments of sophisticated knowledge about how the system worked, but the

rationale and usefulness of judicial procedures was undermined by suspicion. As several YUMs and YUFs stated, it was best to keep "them" out of one's business. Avoidance was the best strategy from their perspective.

The foregoing are procedural barriers. Also playing a part in the decision to pursue paternity are the social influences embedded in peer group and family cultures. Our data indicate that "taking responsibility" for a child is supported, to a large degree, by these contextual influences. But this responsibility is not articulated in a way that suggests court adjudicated paternity.

What kind of information is presented at the hospital where the baby was born and how was it presented?

There is an assumption that the Declaration of Parentage form (sometimes known as the Affidavit of Paternity or "paternity papers") is routinely presented at the hospital, following the birth of a non-marital child. This form, when signed by both parents before a notary public, is sent to Vital Statistics, which then issues a birth certificate with the father's name inscribed. The review of responses to the above question by all groups, reveals that this crucial step in paternity determination is treated with mundane neglect.

Written materials explaining the rights and responsibilities of fathers were not available. Discussion about the meaning of the form for the child was haphazard. Persons presenting the form ranged from medical records clerks, nurses, social workers, and occasionally doctors. The circumstances and timing were inappropriately improvised.

Black male respondents, in a number of instances, perceived a dismissive attitude of hospital personnel toward them. Incidents were reported of sitting in the room but not being consulted. In a few incidents, black female

respondents were warned not to let the father sign. Our data on this perceived discrimination are too slim for a broad generalization but it is suggestive of the need to explore the attitudes of those presenting this important form.

These comments are typical of the casual neglect that characterized the circumstances around acknowledging or disavowing the Declaration of Parentage.

White male respondents:

"They never talked to me. The nurse said something. But when she came back, I had left the hospital to tell my friends (admit the birth)."

"I was not approached. It never came up."

"A notary from the hospital gave it to my girlfriend's half sister instead of to me. I took it to a lawyer and he said not to sign."

For those who signed the Declaration of Parentage, usually it was at the instigation of the mother with some explanation by the presenter: "A hospital employee came and made an appointment and my girlfriend told me we were going to sign papers. Explained a little bit. I read it too and then I signed."

White female respondents:

"Someone just gave it to me, with other things to fill out."

"I was in the shower. She just left it. Then I lost it."

"I was confused with all the forms. But he's on the grant (AFDC-UP). So we signed right away."

"A nurse gave us the form. We asked if he had to sign. She said, no. We were relieved."

"I don't remember. I just had a baby and I was exhausted."

A sizable proportion of black males respondents chose not to answer the question. However, those that did, commented on the lack of information that was given them.

Black male respondent:

"Nurse asked if I wanted to sign for the baby. I said yes, she said, sign these papers."

Black female respondents:

"They explained to him that if he signed he could be saying he's the father and that his name could be on the birth certificate. He wouldn't sign. He's still too scared of his mom."

"I don't remember. I had just taken one of my pills."

"It was a nurse or social worker. They asked if he wanted his name on the birth certificate. I said yes, but he was asleep. They never came back."

Questions Still to be Explored

1. Why do fathers play a dwindling role after the first year of the child's life?
2. What will the contribution of AFDC-UP be to a stable family formation?
3. What are the design features of successful outreach to fathers who want to continue school and job training?

COMMENTARY

A disconcerting variety of profiles and circumstances emerged from the data collected in this study. Stereotypes associated with young, unmarried parents were shaken up. However, a few distinct but interrelated themes emerged which increases our understanding of paternity decision-making and brings us to recommendations that may ensure the legal link between out-of-wedlock children and their fathers.

Marriage: A Fading Option

Our data confirms the extensive documentation of demographic studies: marriage is rejected as a response to an out-of-wedlock birth, and this is so across race and gender lines, although more pronounced in our black dyads. Among our respondents and their peer groups, only 22 percent say that marriage is even discussed as a possibility when a pregnancy occurs. In follow-up interviews, when the child is at least a year old, a very small number of white females respondents say that marriage is planned. For black female respondents, none are living with the fathers of their children and no marriages are planned. Of all groups, they are the most pessimistic that marriage is a viable option.

Marriage, in a traditional sense, implies permanency, stability, commitment, and continuity for a child. Why this is not a plausible option following the birth of a child is now the subject of intense debate among policy-makers and scholars. Our data suggests that for female respondents, fathers are perceived as "economic losers." This, in combination with negative behaviors, makes them thoroughly unacceptable as marriage partners. Male respondents suggest a wide range of complex factors that shape their rejection of marriage. Their backgrounds, across race lines, though more

pronounced in black males, suggest a lack of experience in a traditional family life that is anchored in a supportive marriage. The absence of a positive and nurturing father and the extensive accounts of neglect and abuse stemming from parents involved with drugs and alcohol implies an intergenerational factor.

One of the most salient findings in our study is the conclusion that the birth of a child is not a bond that creates a stable, two-parent family formation. At the time of the interview, only one in four dyads was living together. But even in these instances, making the leap from cohabitation to marriage was an irrelevant option, given the chaos in their lives.

Volatile and Complex Relationships

While marriage is not considered an option, there are, however, various adaptations to the event of a non-marital child.

The birth of a baby is not the result of a casual encounter. In fact, 70 percent of dyads had lived together at one time (fewer black than white). Only a few male respondents raised a question about the veracity of their biological paternity. Moreover, 84 percent of the friendship networks of all respondents noted that fathers typically acknowledged their biological paternity, without question. At the time of the birth, a sizeable proportion described their relationships with the mother as "going steady," "engaged" (two-thirds of white respondents and three-quarters of black respondents).

Nevertheless, family life is not organized, generally, around the child as the tie that binds. Rather, shortly after the birth of the baby, living arrangements are organized with various kin and friendship networks, and family life is centered there. Living in households with family of origin, grandparents, siblings, extended relatives, and friends is common. Less often is the household formed with the father (one in four). Her family life is

generally organized around various members in her kinship circle. His family life is organized with his parents. Black males live, chiefly, in maternal households; white males often live in households with fathers or male friends.

There is considerable reciprocity in the separate living arrangements of mothers and fathers. Helping out members of other families with direct and indirect services in exchange for sharing shelter is a pervasive adaptation.

The content of the dyadic interviews provides ample illustrations of the fragility of family relationships during the first year after the child's birth. Unsuccessful attempts to establish a family formation that includes the father is revealed in the various patterns of living together, separation and occasional reunions, and the entrance and exits of new partners.

However, this instability of relationships between the young, unmarried parents does not always imply a diminished relationship of the father to his child.

The Meaning of the Birth of the Child and Subsequent Attachment of Fathers

In examining the responses to the birth of the child, we begin to understand an unexpected phenomenon: the father frequently retains an attachment to the child, even during the stages of the dissolution of the relationship to the mother.

In reviewing the data from our study on the event surrounding the birth of the child, one is struck with the meaning that is given to this experience as a primal event. This is so across race and gender lines. In fact, rarely (perhaps in only five interviews out of 340) is the pregnancy and birth seen as a fatal error. While the birth of a child to a very young mother and an ill-prepared father is widely considered a premature event, with serious and disabling long-term disadvantages to all concerned, for our respondents, the birth is a moment of rejoicing and the opportunity for a fresh and optimistic

beginning. The birth is described as an act of recovery. In many instances, the description is in altruistic terms: a gift to their families; one of the few times when the family is drawn together by the joy of the birth. When the mother describes the persons in the delivery room, it is often a "roomful" -- parents, extended family members, and most often, the father of the infant. For both mothers and fathers, the birth is described as a "lucky accident" -- signalling that it is now time "to get my act together," to complete school, get a job, be successful. As one mother put it, the birth of her child gave her a reason "for living on this earth."

Perhaps in these observations we have a broad explanation of the repeat pregnancies which are common in our study group.

For male respondents, both black and white, the birth is described in emotional terms (62 percent were present at the birth). "I know if I die tomorrow, there'll be part of me here."

Fathers, in a repetitive refrain, refer to their obligations and responsibilities to be "there" whenever the child needs them; to be supportive; to be nurturing and caring. These comments are often accompanied by observations on the need to correct their own experiences of neglect and deprivation.

Black Male Respondents:

"I have a responsibility to better myself to take care of my child the best that I can."

"... It made me more responsible to have another mouth to feed."

"It's good to have children ... wish they were all under one roof instead of scattered."

"... Time to grow up."

White Male Respondents:

"... there's not a single feeling to describe it; take all the good feelings together -- job, love ..."

"... very joyous. It takes you by the inside and turns you inside out."

"... like I won a bunch of money."

"... a high."

The father's attachment to his child, despite a dwindling relationship to the mother, is revealed in the fathers' reports on the frequency with which they visit their child. Two-thirds of white fathers and four-fifths of black fathers claim to visit at least weekly. Caution in interpreting this information is advised, given their partners' observations that fathers overstate the commitment to their child.

Nevertheless, more than eight in ten fathers, across racial lines, avowers and disavowers, indicate that they took care of the baby in some way in the first year. Only three percent of white fathers and 15 percent of their black counterparts describe themselves as only slightly interested or having no interest in their child. A considerable proportion of all fathers describe their feelings toward the baby with warmth, a caring attitude, and a feeling of responsibility. (Again, their partners took a dimmer view of this intensity.)

Over eight in ten fathers, across racial lines believed it was important that the father's name appear on the baby's birth certificate.

Even with mother down-sizing the father's contributions to the child, the frequency with which mothers reported that fathers came to see the baby, even though their own relationship had ended, argues convincingly that the attachment of the father to the child may be maintained, apart from the parental estrangement. In our judgment, we should not be so dismissive of father's capability to maintain a relationship to his child.

Procedures are at Odds with Life Situations of Young, Unmarried Parents

Our data disclosed three findings which, together, constitute a formidable barrier to the use of court procedures for paternity adjudication:

1. The extraordinary mobility of YUPs.
2. The lack of recognition that a high proportion of fathers admit, voluntarily, to their paternity.
3. A range of situational conditions.

The high mobility rates of respondents is revealed in the finding that half to two-thirds had moved twice in the last six months, and only 20 percent of our female respondents could be located one year after our original interview for a follow-up. Of 26 men who sent in phone numbers and agreed to be interviewed to form a dyad, only three could be located a few days later: phones had been disconnected and subsequent letters were returned "address unknown." Recent studies have documented the large number of fathers who are "no shows" in court appearances. Little recognition has been given to the realities of the unstable living arrangements of young, unmarried parents: they are doubling up and on the move.

Yet the office of paternity units and child support enforcements offices, despite expedited processes, move in ponderous ways, with long lapses of time.

Illustratively, in Hennepin County, after the father is identified from the AFDC application, four or five months elapses before the father is served by the sheriff with a notice for appearance for a hearing in the court system. That date is likely to be six to eight months hence.

There will likely be further delays at this point. Indeed, second and third hearings may be held because of an overburdened court system.

In summary, the voluntary pursuit of paternity adjudication through the court system is a lengthy procedure, punctuated by fits and starts.

Further, in most jurisdictions, the court system combines paternity, child support, visitation, and custody in one hearing. Although these issues are linked, there is very little recognition that paternity is the first prerequisite for the other issues, and that a major proportion of fathers voluntarily identify their paternity status. The inappropriateness of the court system for voluntary paternity is disclosed in our data. Of our total sample, only 25 percent of white fathers are at some stage of paternity court adjudication. Only 19 percent of black fathers are similarly involved in these procedures. In contrast, 57 percent of white fathers and 54 percent of black fathers have signed the Declaration of Parentage, the document which affords a simple, voluntary declaration.

The inextricable linkage of paternity to the child support enforcement issue in court procedures poses an intimidating barrier to the respondents. Respondents draw a distinction between their willingness to acknowledge their biological paternity and their capacity to respond to a child support enforcement order. When the two are linked, they evade the entire procedure.

Much of this evasion is related to the reality of their marginal economic status which has been documented in this study and elsewhere. As a group, their employment is part-time, temporary, and low-wage. Almost half live in households with a heavy reliance on AFDC, Medicaid, and food stamps. The black respondents are at a greater economic disadvantage than their white counterparts. Generally, fathers are fearful of the court system's imposition of a child support order which will not be realistic. Moreover, as expressed in interview data, they feel there is a perceived advantage to go "off the books" to an informal system. They would rather pay the mother, directly, to improve their child's living conditions than pay the county. This is perceived as an unnecessary diversion of their child support.

Our data suggests that wage withholding, a major initiative in policy for improving child support payments, will not, for the most part, affect our study respondents. They are, generally, not attached to steady, full-time employment with stable employers.

The position of this study is that the responsibility to pay child support for one's child should be an expectation and an understood obligation, but this step should be detached from paternity.

Finally, the court system is incapable of responding, in a timely way, to the realities of chaotic living arrangements and relationships which are constantly in flux. The turbulent nature of relationships among these YUPs often makes appearances in court proceedings obsolete and substantially removed from their situational realities. Illustratively, the arrival of a new boyfriend may encourage the mother to withdraw from proceedings. The complexities of the court calendar are often out-of-step with the timing of a voluntary commitment, which is very much in the "honeymoon" period, within the first year of the child's birth.

In summary, the court system is dysfunctional for the purpose of establishing voluntary paternity.

DECLARATION OF PARENTAGE: AN ACCEPTABLE WAY
OF INSTITUTIONALIZING ENCOURAGEMENT OF PATERNITY

Forging a legal link between a child and the father is defined in state statutes. There is considerable variation on how this is done. Generally, however, there are two approaches. In order to have the father's name included on the birth certificate of a non-marital child, a form known as a Declaration of Parentage (sometimes known as an Affidavit of Paternity, or some variation of this) may be signed before a Notary Public. Vital Statistics accepts this as proof of paternity for purposes of including the father's name on the birth certificate

In some jurisdictions, the Declaration of Parentage is considered a presumption of paternity for other purposes, as well. Some states will accept the Declaration of Parentage as a valid document for establishing eligibility for AFDC-UP (including an unemployed parent on an AFDC grant) and recovering medical expenses associated with child birth. In scattered jurisdictions, the form may also be used for establishing a child support order.

Paternity Adjudication denotes formal procedures that usually begin with a legal service to the father, notifying him of the allegation of fatherhood and ordering him to appear in court on a certain date for a hearing. The hearing is conducted in a courtroom setting, usually before a judge. In many jurisdictions, paternity, child support, custody and visitation are all bound together and settled in the courtroom in one or several hearings.¹

¹ For details on procedures, see Paternity Establishment, Third Edition, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Family Support Administration, National Institute for Child Support Enforcement, September, 1990.

In Hennepin County, the jurisdiction of this study, the Declaration of Parentage is usually signed in the hospital, following the birth of the baby. The form is sent, by the hospital, to Vital Statistics, which then issues a birth certificate with the father's name. The Declaration, according to a state statute, provides the presumption of paternity. A three-year period is allowed for challenges. In Hennepin County, the form, while useful for AFDC-UP eligibility and recovering medical expenses, cannot be used to establish a child support order, custody or visiting arrangement. The sentiment of the county attorney's office is that these matters require the careful scrutiny of judicial proceedings.

However, standing on its own, the Declaration of Parentage provides three crucial, long-term benefits for the non-marital child:

- o the father's name on the birth certificate
- o the presumption of paternity for benefits yet to be established (inheritance)
- o a large list of benefits that have accrued over time with Supreme Court decisions that ensure that non-marital children will enjoy the same rights and privileges as marital children under the equal protection doctrine of the Constitution (see Appendix __).

The findings from this study confront us with the need to fundamentally change the way paternity issues are addressed in this country. The complex features of the current system which ensnares paternity in the tangled web of child support enforcement, custody, and visitation, does discourage YUPs from carrying out a prime and indispensable responsibility: a legal acknowledgment of their child.

We are led, irresistably, to the conclusion that the voluntary establishment of paternity should be disentangled from the issues of child support, custody, and visitation. One could draw the analogy of a marriage certificate: this is not bound up with the specific legalities of

responsibilities for children. These come under separate actions when a dissolution occurs.

There has been broad speculation on whether fathers of non-marital children who are on AFDC are able and willing to contribute to the well being of their children.

The findings from this study disclose that an overwhelming number of fathers (80 percent) are willing to acknowledge their biological paternity; place a high value on their name on the child's birth certificate; and will sign the Declaration of Parentage when it is presented with some explanation.

In an arena of contending interests, the findings from this study reveal an unusual coincidence in unmarried family formations: the blending of the long-term interests of the non-marital child with the values and interests of the parents -- the father's name on the birth certificate.

Two institutional policies would appear to enhance the validity and legitimacy of a Declaration of Parentage as the route to paternity. The Federal Support Act of 1988 encourages states to adopt a simple, civil process for voluntary acknowledgement. Further, several states are beginning to use a Declaration (known, perhaps, under another name such as "Affidavit of Paternity") to create eligibility for AFDC-UP.

The data from this study only partially captures the life situations of family formations of never-married mothers and children on AFDC and the fathers of these children. Random events and impoverishment appear to reinforce shifting and chaotic living arrangements and relationships. The increasingly ambivalent role of the father, as time goes on, underlines the importance of timeliness.

There is a moment in time when this blending of interests occurs: at the birth of the child, and this opportunity for forging a legal link between the child and the father should not be lost.

In sum, we conclude that it is possible to construct a route to paternity based on the principles of decriminalizing the process, disentangling the procedures from a web of complex issues around child support, and providing a timely opportunity for parents to acknowledge their responsibility toward their child.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A decriminalized approach in which voluntary paternity acknowledgement can be expedited in an available, routine, and systematic way is advised. To this end, the following recommendations are made:

1. The hospital setting should be a focus of attention for presenting the Declaration of Parentage (or similar form). The hospital represents the first institutional line of contact with the new father. The opportunity should not be lost.
2. A mandate should be enacted for all hospitals to assume, as a routine obligation, the responsibility for presenting both written and oral information explaining the rights and responsibilities of fathers and the benefits to their child that flows from the Declaration. Culturally sensitive materials (in relevant languages) that are adapted to low literacy levels should be available. A non-threatening environment should be maintained.
3. The value of the Declaration of Parentage should be reinforced, as a legitimate document, by circulating and disseminating its significance to all social service and health agencies and institutions concerned with children, youth, and families.
4. The community, at large, including the media and the legal profession, should participate in creating a climate of opinion that supports the responsibility of young, unmarried parents to sign the Declaration as an indispensable obligation.
5. The hospital should have available referral resources for legal assistance to young parents, if requested.

Provision for Challenges

It is possible that new information may appear that will cause the putative father to seek a way to declare non-paternity after signing the Declaration of Parentage. This provision should certainly be afforded, but within a certain time limit. An 18-month statute of limitation should be imposed. (Minnesota law provides three years which we regard as too long to leave a child's paternity in limbo.)

In order to constrain a frivolous use of a challenge, a blood test should be ordered if a challenge is raised. If the results are positive, then the dismissal of the challenge should be automatic.

This provision should increase the validity and legitimacy of the Declaration of Parentage.

CONCLUSION

This study exposes the complex influences that surround the decision to declare paternity for an out-of-wedlock child.

Apart from the volatile relationship of the parents, mixed social influences, and hesitancy to incur obligations, the procedures themselves are enmeshed in confusing legalities.

The recommendation, a way of constructing the Declaration of Parentage as a routinely available document for purposes of paternity establishment, should counter the lagging paternity rates among the large and growing number of young, unmarried parents. Whether or not the legal attachment of a father to a child ensures a more optimum future for the non-marital child remains to be seen. However, in a life situation that is replete with uncertainties, paternity is an indisputable anchor.

Are there circumstances under which the legal paternal link to a child should not be encouraged? It is our position that the "good causae exceptions" presently enforced in the Child Support Enforcement Program should be maintained.*

This study, with its interview techniques for gathering data, provided pertinent material from responses that were sometimes brief, other times fragmented, and still other times long and discursive. One facet of the complex issues disclosed by the life situations of study respondents is clear, however: most fathers and mothers show concern with the child's well-being.

*Title IV-D, Social Security Act and 45 CFR Parts 300-. See "AFDC: Good Cause Claims for Refusing to Cooperate in Establishing Paternity or Securing Child Support," Social Security Bulletin, 46:5, May 1983, pp. 9-10.

We conclude that voluntary paternity can be encouraged. Something can be done efficiently and effectively to make a legal connection of the child to the father: the use of the Declaration of Parentage.

As to ways in which a father can be encouraged to provide for the economic well-being of his child, the strong interest of fathers in completing school and in job training enables us to end this study on a note of optimism.

ADDENDUM A
LONE PARENTS: PARTNERS UNAVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEW

Eighty-two interviews were conducted with one parent when the other parent was identified and a paired interview was anticipated. However, one of the partners, usually the father, remained unavailable. The lone parent interviews were, chiefly, with unmarried mothers, 18 and older. However, 15 males were interviewed, and these interviews were conducted in prison.

Table 31. Race, Ethnicity, and Gender of Single Parent Interviews*
 (by number of respondents)

	<u>White</u> <u>Females</u>	<u>Black</u> <u>Females</u>	<u>Nat. Am./</u> <u>Hispanic</u> <u>Females</u>	<u>White</u> <u>Males</u>	<u>Black</u> <u>Males</u>	<u>Nat. Am./</u> <u>Hispanic</u> <u>Males</u>
Total	31	31	5	3	9	2

* One bi-racial male was interviewed.

The reasons for unavailability of the partner were mixed.

Half of the white males were either unwilling, when the time came, to actually schedule the interview or could not be reached because telephones were disconnected and a forwarding address could not be traced.

In contrast, only a third of black males were unavailable because they could not be traced or were unwilling.

For both groups, in equal numbers, across racial lines, the relationship of the parents had already been dissolved by the time of the birth of the baby or shortly after. Most of the dissolutions, as reported by mothers, both black and white, were caused by the negative behaviors of the fathers. Among the reasons reported by mothers were: physical abuse, association with gangs, drugs, and criminal behavior, including rape. Both black and white mothers

(one each) reported that the fathers were married to another woman.

Interestingly, among African American mothers, four reported that their partners denied they were the fathers. No such corresponding category was identified for white partners.

The interviews with single males gave imprisonment as the reason for the dissolution of their relationship. Only one male described the relationship as "a one night stand."

A detailed examination of data from this group remains to be studied.

ADDENDUM B
FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEWS, ONE YEAR LATER

Attempts were made to do a follow-up interview, one year later, on the cohort of females who were in the original sample of our study (i.e., they were part of a dyad: the fathers of the children had been identified and interviewed). Only a remarkably low number could be reached by telephone or mail.

Of the 45 white females, only 14 (31%) could be reached, one year later. Sixty-two percent had disconnected phones. One participant had an unlisted number, and one who had no phone at the time of the interview could not be reached by mail: letter returned "address unknown."

Of those who could be reached, the group had undergone changes in relationships, living arrangements, and work/welfare experiences. However, generally, they felt they had achieved some stability; their lives were in better shape than a year ago, and they had optimistic expectations of their futures.

Three distinctive characteristics are noted: their living arrangements are anchored in the households with the fathers of their children, relatives, or with a boyfriend, and they express stability with these arrangements; the fathers of the children have a relationship with their child, even in those cases where they are not living with the mother or the relationship with the mother has cooled; the mothers are at school, in a program, working, or making tangible plans for these options.

These items are of interest:

- More than half of this group (8 of 14) have had paternity adjudicated through the court system, but only two are receiving child support with any regularity.
- Two couples who were no longer on AFDC decided not to pursue paternity.
- Two YUMs reported that AFDC had referred their paternity case to the office of Child Support Enforcement, but nothing had come of it.
- Twenty-eight percent (4) in the follow-up had repeat pregnancies and of these, two were with the same father as the first child.
- Twenty-eight percent (4) have left AFDC; four have partial support; and six remain as AFDC recipients. One of these has the grant extended to their partner and is on AFDC-UP.
- One couple had married and six couples were living together with their child in a family formation in which plans to get married were discussed.
- Of the 14 interviewed, only two no longer saw the father of their child.
- Only two of this group were living alone with their child.
- Seventy-one percent (10 out of 14) are unanimous in their view that their life circumstances are better than a year ago. In fact, only one respondents felt she was going through "tough times."

This brief vignette is telling:

One respondent stated that she placed her second child for adoption. She was still living in her parents' home (as she always had been) and is off of AFDC. She receives child support for her first child. She finished vocational school, has a job, and is looking forward to buying a new car. She says things are going "alot better" in her life.

Of the 45 African-American cohort of females in our original sample of dyads, we were able to reach only 9 of 45 (20%) by telephone or mail. Of the 80% who could not be contacted, disconnected phones and letters returned "address unknown" frustrated attempts for a follow-up.

Generally, this group has undergone changes in their relationships with the fathers of their children. Their status as AFDC recipients remained unchanged. Two-thirds of the small number we were able to reach (6 of 9) felt that things were going better than last year. Participation in programs and stability in living arrangements were factors that provided an optimistic outlook.

These items are of interest:

- o Only one mother has had paternity adjudicated since last year's interview.
- o For five out of nine (56%) of the respondents, the pursuit of paternity adjudication has broken down. Typical comments: "They tried to serve papers, but he told them he wasn't there when they talked to him at the door." "In court, he was a 'no show'. They haven't pursued it."
- o Three YUMs stated they are in process: one has a court date (no child support will be sought--only legal paternity established); one father is scheduled for a blood test; one is responding to "a package of papers sent by AFDC." One YUM will not initiate any proceedings. The father's behavior makes paternity off limits.
- o Of the nine, only one mother is receiving child support, a \$50 pass-through payment.
- o In the follow-up, two out of nine (22%) had repeat pregnancies. One of these was with the same father as the first child.

- o Only two of this group were living, independently, with their child.
- o Typically, this group is sharing living arrangements with a wide variety of friendship and kinship networks: maternal grandparent; paternal great grandparent; brother's girlfriend, etc., and these arrangements have remained stable through the year.
- o Two of the young respondents were living in a treatment home for emotionally disturbed teen mothers; one of these respondents had been in a foster home with her child.
- o No Black YUMs were living with the father of their child(ren).
- o Only two of the nine respondents are still seeing the fathers.
- o One-third of the respondents (3 out of 9) express strong, hostile feelings toward the negative behaviors of their former partners. "Generally, I can't stand him." She is pursuing a court order for a restraining order. Another said simply, "I hate him." The third said their relationship was "terrible." He has threatened to kill her, and when he came to the house, she called the police, but he got away.
- o None of the respondents was planning to marry either the father of their children or other partners.
- o Participation in STRIDE (Minnesota's welfare reform project), in a school program, and in a treatment program were all mentioned as factors in a sense of optimism that their life circumstances were better than a year ago.

Summary Observations

The numbers in our follow-up project are strikingly small, despite vigorous tracking efforts. Only 20 (22%) of respondents could be reached. The extraordinary mobility of our pool is confirmed again from this follow-up experience. Generalizations, therefore, cannot be made. Nevertheless, some common experiences, as well as dissimilarities between African-American and white respondents are suggestive of the potential for creating a better life for themselves and their children.

Both groups, generally, were able to maintain stable living arrangements, with a variety of kinship networks, and in the white cohort, with fathers of their children. Only a few suffered from multiple moves. Only a few in each group were living on their own with their children. A small number of black mothers were in institutional care.

The repeat pregnancy rates were almost the same for both groups, with a slightly lower rate for African-American respondents.

Some marked differences in experiences were reported. Generally, the economic status of black YUMs was distinctly poorer: none had been able to leave AFDC, whereas almost half of the white respondents had improved their economic situations.

The detachment of African-American fathers from a relationship to the mother and to their child over a year's time was remarkable. In the white respondents, only two fathers no longer saw their child, whereas the reverse was true with the African-American group. While almost half the white couples were living together with their child in a stable family formation, no black YUMs reported this living arrangement in the year following our original interviews.

Paternity adjudication through the court system had been successfully pursued for two-thirds of the white respondents. Only one African-American dyad had paternity legally established.

Only a very small number of either group, however, was receiving child support (two white YUMs and one black YUM).

While marriage is still an option for white respondents (one couple had married and almost half stated they were discussing marriage), none of the African-American YUMs mentioned marriage as an expectation in their future.

This admittedly small follow-up study did reveal the resiliency of a small portion of our sample. Stability of living arrangements and involvement in a program appear to be the factors that engender a sense of optimism. The deteriorating economic status of the African-American women and their loss of confidence that paternity establishment will improve the lives of their children are salient observations. It should also be noted that, one year later, African-American fathers had already drifted away from a relationship with their children. These items should remain as important subjects for the policy agendas of the '90's.

ADDENDUM C
A PROFILE OF FATHERS OF OUT-OF-WEDLOCK CHILDREN
COURT-ORDERED TO PARTICIPATE IN A JOB AND TRAINING PROGRAM

Two programs were funded by the McKnight Foundation to respond to fathers who did not have the capacity to pay child support with job and training opportunities.

One was located in a suburban community under the auspices of a county social services department, the other in the inner city under the auspices of the Episcopal Community Services project. The participants were to be court-ordered to participate in these two programs, the McKnight/PATHS (Priority Access to Human Services) Support Assistance Project and the Jobs for Fathers Project.

McKnight/PATHS

A total of 52 fathers were court-ordered in an 11-month period from February 1, 1990 to January 8, 1991. (At any one time, there are 1,000 open paternity adjudication cases being processed.) Fathers were court-ordered to pay child support following adjudication. Court ordered referral was a result of their being either in arrears or unable because of unemployment status to meet their child support obligation. Twenty-five percent had volunteered for the program. The program director estimates that only one out of two court-ordered fathers actually enters the program. In addition to "no shows," a number of father (no estimate available) could not be located for service.

The following profile emerges:

- The fathers ranged in age from 19 to 47 with a large number clustered between ages 22-24 and another age group between 28 and 31.
- Racial composition: 43 white; 5 African-American; 3 Native American; 1 Asian.

- The mothers and children of these fathers were all maintained by public assistance.
- Almost two-thirds were unemployed: of those who were 22-24, ten of 14 were unemployed; of those 25-27, five of eight were unemployed; and of those older than 31, five of 11 were unemployed.
- Of those employed: seven were part-time workers; two were self-employed; and only one was employed full-time.
- Wages ranged from \$4.00-8.63 per hour.
- Only 6 of 52 had made any payment within the previous six months before they had been court-ordered to pay child support.
- Two had two families for whom they owed child support.

A report on the Father's Project was not available. However, meeting with staff members of both projects revealed sharp differences between the participation rates of the two programs. The suburban program had a higher compliance rate to the court orders than the inner city counterpart because, as the staff member put it, "our county has a reputatio for putting fathers in jail, if they don't come ...". The inner city program has a sizeable proportion of "no shows" and missed court appearances, and a small proportion that come to the program via a court order. Further, a staff person reported that about two-thirds of referrals do not have a high school certificate and reading comprehension is, generally, at the 6th grade level.

ADDENDUM D
SELECTED PROFILES OF RESPONDENTS*

Carol and Les, African-American Unmarried Parents
(Carol was interviewed at the University, Les was interviewed at home.)

Carol's Story

Carol is seventeen years old. She had her first baby at sixteen and is now pregnant with her second child. She went to the ninth grade in school and, with a second baby on the way, her plans for high school in the fall may be put on hold.

Carol's short life has been turbulent. She was labeled "slow" in school. Apparently, she was not placed in special classes and made Fs. Needless to say, she disliked school, never attended classes, and only went to school on occasion. She says, "I didn't want to go to school then, wasn't really interested." She says her mother was physically abusive to her, "She used to beat me." By the time Carol was fifteen, she had run away with a boyfriend. She returned home and was pregnant by age sixteen.

She is now living with the father of the child. And indeed, is back in another abusive relationship. He "hits her every month or so because he's mad about something"; says, "he's the man." He's also emotionally abusive, calling her "dumb" and "stupid." They have lived together for two years, and she plans to marry him when she is eighteen.

Carol says paternity has not been adjudicated. They have signed the Declaration of Parentage, and the father's name is on the birth certificate.

*Names have been disguised.

Yet, because Les helped during the pregnancy and continues to be there for her, she doesn't think it's important for formal adjudication to happen. She says, "we both know he is the father."

She enjoys motherhood. The birth was a "high point." She says, "I felt great, relieved, happy, satisfied. I had a boy and I was proud of him."

Les' Story

Les is a twenty-three-year-old young man who is a high school graduate. He plans to marry Carol.

Les had a rough childhood. He ran away as a teen when his father tried to discipline him in front of a friend. He notes, however, that Carol's life has been infinitely harder. He points out that she was sexually, as well as physically, abused as a child. She was labeled "slow" and was not well thought of in the family. He believes it is his role to create a new family for her.

Economically, Les is on the margin. Although a high school graduate, he has not been able to translate this into steady work. He now works a temporary job, making \$50 per week. Prior to that, he was unemployed for eight months. He has received General Assistance and other services such as Medicaid and food stamps.

He did not mention his own abuse of Carol (see Carol's account). Yet, he is quite proud of his child and plans to be a traditional father, solidifying his family through marriage with Carol. He believes paternity should be "established for child support purposes and to have father's name."

Les needs a job which would provide a living wage for him and his family. Perhaps he needs additional training. Yet, as it stands, even with marriage, \$200 a month will not support his family. This couple might benefit from AFDC-UP, but this must be combined with counseling for this couple.

Summary Observations

This is a sad story. It appears Carol will lose, even if she wins in the conventional sense of getting married. Les is older, more educated, and has a great deal of power in this relationship. Marriage may be a death sentence for Carol if some intervention does not occur. Both she and Les need counseling: Les to control his frustration and anger, Carol to help her self esteem.

Rob -- A White Male, 21 Years Old

(Interviewed in Fast Food Restaurant in Suburbia)

Rob is presently living with his parents, two sisters, and a niece (the out-of-wedlock child of one of his sisters). When he was 19, he moved out of his parents' home and lived with the mother of his child. This lasted five months; he then moved in with a girlfriend and then back to his parents' home. He describes his suburban growing up period as stable, "normal," surrounded by caring parents. He is especially respectful and loving toward his father who taught him to work on cars, and this has remained his passion throughout his life. His Lutheran religious affiliation remains as a positive feature in his life. He goes to church occasionally. His male friendship networks are strong and satisfying.

Rob dropped out of school in the 11th grade. When he was 14-16 years old, he had used drugs. He was a "C" student. He and his pals were more interested in working on cars than sitting in a classroom. His growing disinterest in school was replaced with his absorption in cars; working on them, looking at them; dreaming about owning them.

When he was about 17, he vaguely hints at some trouble with the police. He is optimistic about his future because he intends to get his GED, enroll in auto-mechanics in vocational school, then "start on a new career; owning my own shop; live on my own; buy a new care and live in a house with a driveway and a garage."

His parents, except for a brief use of food stamps, have been self-sufficient. His sister is presently on AFDC and food stamps. He earns about \$220 per week as a supervisor in a manufacturing company. His work history includes pizza delivery, warehouse work, busboy, line cook in a fast food restaurant.

His relationship to the mother of his child lasted for 1 1/2 years. He was unhappy about the pregnancy. They talked about abortion and adoption, but it was the mother's decision to continue with the pregnancy. He paid for medical bills, accompanied her to pre-birth clinic visits, and was there at the birth of the baby. His parents were very upset; stated that he had been entrapped. His friends counselled him to avoid responsibility and told him to encourage abortion. But the birth of the baby was a momentous event. "I walked out of the delivery room, crying. Very joyous. It takes you by the inside and turns you inside out." A year later he still recounts the birth of his child as a pivotal event: "It straightened my life out alot. It gave me a look out on how life really is -- puts you in the picture instead of seeing it through glass." Three months after the baby was born he left. He no longer has a relationship with the mother, but sees the baby occasionally.

Rob states that having legal paternity established is important in order for the father to know "for sure" if the child his. The mother's AFDC worker gave him information on his responsibility and his rights to contest the allegation through a blood test. His sister, who received paternity information from her AFDC worker, also provided information. He does not trust the court system and wants to avoid any legal entanglement: "They trick people." He now has doubts that he is the father and has asked for a blood test, but says the system is very slow in responding. Months have gone by and he has not been contacted.

Rob observes that the mother of his child was alcoholic and drug addicted, "I told her I would not accept that." He is sharply opposed to what he considers the widespread use of AFDC. "They are too lenient. AFDC payments ought to be paid back to the county, even if it takes 6-7 years. The

community shouldn't be responsible. Stiff penalties for avoiding responsibility are O.K."

The interviewer describes Rob as ambitious, confident, independent, but curiously detached from his child and the mother of his child. As time goes on, he doubts more and more that he is the father. At 21, his interests are with his male friends, some girlfriends, and plans for his automotive career. The brief interval of his life as a father seems over.

Note: In the interview with the mother of his child, he is described as leaving three months following the birth of his child because "he couldn't handle the responsibility." The mother "informed" on him to the child support enforcement office for paternity and child support purposes as an act of "revenge" because he had a new girlfriend. The mother, 22, has had two children. The first was placed for adoption; the second, the child of Rob, remains with her; she is pregnant again and plans to have this baby placed for adoption.

Summary Observations

Rob, from a blue-collar, suburban, white working class family, reflects the irreconcilable ethos of a working poor family: personal events keep happening that subvert a basically conservative point-of-view. For example, the interviewer reports his "fraud and deception" attitudes toward AFDC, but he has not acknowledged paternity, nor is he contributing anything for his child. At a particular moment in time, Rob would have signed the Declaration of Parentage, but the opportunity was not there.

An African-American Dyad
(mother age 19 and father age 36)

Mother, African-American, young, unmarried: K.C., age 19

This is a profile of a nineteen-year-old African-American, young, unmarried mother who had her first child at fifteen (father was nineteen), and her second child at seventeen with a different father (age 36). She has lost custody of her two children who are court-ordered to be cared for by her mother. She has been in a series of treatment programs for drug addiction (cocaine) and in other programs for psychotherapy.

K.C.'s growing-up period was full of incidents of abuse and violence. Her mother was drug addicted, and her father disappeared when she was five. Her mother's neglect and the abusive behavior of a series of her mother's boyfriends finally culminated in her running away at the age of twelve. She has not been in school on a regular basis since then. She has been cared for by her maternal grandmother who is described as the mainstay of the family. "She got us to school, the dentist, the doctor. She's the one who took care of us."

Her own mother also had her first child at fifteen and her sisters have had out-of-wedlock children. As far back as she can remember, the household was always maintained by AFDC.

K.C. is handling paternity adjudication for each of her children in a completely different manner. She has established paternity for her 3 1/2-year-old; the father has visitation rights. He is now married and she would like him to have her son, if anything ever happened to her. However, at this point, she does not want to establish paternity for her younger child. The father of this child is a dealer of, and addicted to, cocaine. She knows if she has him sign papers (she says he is willing now, but didn't want to when

he was at the hospital after the child's birth) he will try to be part of her life again. She feels he wanted her to get pregnant in order to keep a relationship with her (in fact, he wanted her to have more children, so as to bind her further; he claims he has seven other children). She doesn't think he will ever change his ways; he has been in treatment numerous times and keeps returning to cocaine. She was using with him until she was seven months pregnant. An interesting comment was that she and a friend had talked when they were younger, about how horrible women were who used drugs while they were pregnant, and here she was doing something she abhorred. In fact, she did consider abortion (is adamantly opposed to adoption), but when she had the money, she used it instead on cocaine. She has been through treatment and claims she is now straight. Other interesting comments were that she would consider establishing paternity if she and the father were just friends and if he were to get Social Security (apparently he has talked about this). She would then try to protect the child's right to some of that money by establishing paternity. She has strong feelings about a fathers' responsibility for child support. "They should be jailed if they don't pay up." She no longer see the father of her second child.

Her goal is to get a job, get off AFDC, and get her children back. She doesn't think that will be a problem when she gets things straightened out. She wants her children to know that she loves them, she wants them to feel secure and that she will always be there to take care of them. She is trying not to hit them as she was hit.

Interviewers note: This is a very intelligent, young Black woman who has aspirations of becoming a social worker, and in my opinion has a realistic idea of what it might take. Although she has only completed sixth grade (and went sporadically through seventh and eighth), she attained her GED while in a

treatment center, and even went to a community college for three quarters. It seems she has, by and large, had some good and lasting experiences with counselors and social workers. It seems clear that she has ample ability. She is enrolling in a certified nursing program and plans to take a menial job in the interim, while she is "straightening out her life" (she used that phrase frequently)--getting back custody of her children and staying off of cocaine.

Father. African-American. age 36

O.T., now 36, was married fourteen years ago and is presently divorced. His child with K.C. is his eighth child. He began his fatherhood career at sixteen and continued to have children with five different women. He is not living with any of his partners or his children. He describes himself as homeless, having moved ten times in the last two years. He moves in and out of shelter provided by his brothers.

O.T. grew-up in the south but he has lived in this community for twelve years. His mother is dead and he has no recollection of his father. His early background was marked by incidents of juvenile delinquency and correctional institutions. He dropped out of school in 10th grade, though he was a B student. Subsequently, he achieved his GED. He has not held a permanent job but does not use public assistance. His relatives help out when he is in financial need.

In many ways, O.T. describes himself as a traditional father; he believes church is a source of comfort and he goes to church occasionally. He believes a father should care for his children and "take care" of the mother. He was happy to hear of K.C.'s pregnancy. His advice to her was "keep the baby, take care of yourself." He strongly opposed her wish to have an abortion. He told

her he would support her "when he got on his feet" and he states he wants to "do right" by his children.

In his own family, both of his sisters had out-of-wedlock children at seventeen. Among his friends, many of whom have children, while they talk about marriage, none, in fact, are married. However, they all acknowledge their fatherhood.

O.T. states that he saw the mother regularly during the pregnancy and now sees her once a week. His friends are indifferent to his repeated, out-of-wedlock, fatherhood incidents. He got there too late for the birth but he was at the hospital when a nurse brought in the forms for the Declaration of Parentage. He got no explanation and did not sign. While he believes it is important to have a fathers name on the birth certificate, "signing papers" is something he will not do. Further, as time has gone on, he wonders if he is the father of the baby.

O.T. has strong feelings that "the system" discriminates against fathers. Courts, the AFDC system, unemployment, fear of being jailed, lack of information, intimidation, all conspire to treat the father like a second class citizen. "Women have all the say; men have no rights." Further, he believes women, as a rule, trick men into relationships, then hold the purse strings through their attachment to AFDC and then seek "revenge" if things do not go right. He does not believe that women should get the \$50 pass through if child support is paid.

He states that he is attentive to K.C. and their child. He states that he gives money, buys food and diapers, takes care of the baby and accompanies the baby to the well-baby clinic.

O.T. observes that he has not received information about paternity from the "system," his friends or his community contacts. He does feel that the

system is deeply entrenched in racism. "They assume that black men are delinquent and not worth anything."

Summary Observations

This dyad is an interesting illustration of the disparities in accounts of mothers and the fathers of their children.

The father is older than he reports, according to K.C. His behavior, according to K.C. is what has put him off-limits to her and their child. She describes O.T. as a drug dealer and addicted to cocaine. Despite several treatment programs he has not been able to shake the habit. There is no mention of this in his interview. Further, the father describes the mother's behavior as non-neglecting and non-abusive. In fact, K.C. states she has lost custody of her children.

His reluctance to sign the Declaration of Parentage (in addition to fear of legal entanglement) is that he now doubts he is the father of the child. K.C. states she will not pursue paternity for this child because of O.T.'s negative behavior. However, if he pursues SSI because of permanent incapacity to work, she might reconsider because she would want her child to have the benefits of Social Security.

Interestingly, in this case, the mother makes a distinction in pursuing paternity. She has done so for the first child because the father's attachment to the child has potential for improving the child's life. She refuses for the second because the father is considered unhelpful and perhaps, dangerous.

Profile of a Young, African-American Mother, Age 14:

At the time of the interview, Terry was 14 years old and her child was eight months old. The father of her child was 17 years old.

Terry, who has been in a series of treatment programs as a "chronic runaway," has recently discovered that she is pregnant again. She is thinking of having an abortion.

She describes her growing-up period as traumatic. A series of events created an environment of danger, risk, and trouble. She, herself, had to undergo serious surgery when she was seven years old. As a very young adolescent, in a very brief period, she experienced the death of a grandmother to whom she was devoted and a cousin to whom she was also close. The cousin was shot to death in a drug fight.

She has lived with her mother and three siblings, and although she feels close to her mother, it is clearly a relationship that is very burdensome to her. She has no relationship to her father, and indeed, cannot identify him.

Her relationship with her mother is turbulent and quarrelsome. In fact, she has run away several times to go and live with friends and relatives because she felt that her mother has been absorbed in her own troubles which she did not want to identify. She has a persistent feeling of neglect because here mother does not have time for her.

Her mother has been on public assistance for more than 14 years, and a sister was also pregnant and became a parent at the age of 14.

Her mother was very angry when she discovered that Terry was pregnant, and threatened to call the police and say that the father was an old man, and therefore, could be charged with statutory rape.

Terry's relationship to the father of her child has been stormy. She actually knew nothing about his family, except that they lived in another state. Now, the father has abandoned her and returned to a southern state.

She feels overwhelmed by the abandonment, the deaths in her family, her pregnancy, and is described by the interviewer as seriously depressed.

Nevertheless, this very young mother speaks warmly about her baby. She wants to be a better mother with her child than her own mother was with her. She explained that her mother, although she cares about her, is, in fact, not a nurturing person.

Interviewer noted that she was very loving with the baby -- "She kissed her, talked to her in a soft voice, and caressed her.

Meaning of the Birth

She said the pregnancy was "something that just happened." She was very distressed when the father told her that he thought the baby was not his.

She never thought of abortion or adoption, and indeed, never discussed this option with anyone. She was, "proud, happy" at having the baby, actually, and pleased that the baby was healthy. However, she was "scared of the responsibility." Her great pride is that she is "a good mother." She enjoys taking care of her baby.

Relationship of the Father

She has known the father of her child for a period of a year. He has been emotionally abusive: has called her names and accused her of being a whore.

He denied being the father of the baby. Nevertheless, right after the birth of the child, Terry said he was attentive, actually bought some clothes for the baby, and spent a little bit of time doing babysitting and feeding the

baby. However, he then "took-off." She assumes that he has gone back to his family who live in a southern state.

Paternity

For this very young mother, the Declaration of Parentage is not only not important, but she gathers from gossip from both her sister and her mother, that this should be avoided. No one gave her information about it, in any case. Although she has had some social services that dealt chiefly with parent training and some effort to keep her in school, no discussion about paternity was ever raised. Further, she, herself, does not think it's important to have the father's name on the birth certificate. At the hospital, "a doctor" handed her a form, but never discussed anything about it. It has all been terribly confusing to her. She did mention something to the father, but he said he did not want to become entangled with the legal system.

Education

Terry has had poor school experiences, even before pregnancy. She didn't like the teachers. After her surgery, she was returned to school but was placed in a lower grade. She lost her taste for any school experiences after that. A great many absences and poor academic achievement marked her school experiences. Now, living in a residential treatment center, she has been placed in the eighth grade and reports that she is doing "B" work.

Expectations

Terry remains optimistic that perhaps her child will have a better life than her own. She feels that she has done somewhat better than her mother who did not get as far in school as she has. While she has no knowledge of her own father, she hopes, at least, that she can identify for her child her father. Furthermore, she feels that she is going to be a very good mother. "I will be there for her." "I will teach her the value of right and wrong."

Marriage is not an option, and she is convinced, "will not happen," and indeed, she said she would never encourage it for herself. "Marriage is trouble." "Men cheat on you."

Terry speaks in idealistic and unreal terms about going to college, being a doctor, qualifying this by saying, well perhaps, not a doctor, but a nurse's assistant. "I have time. I'm young. I will make something of myself."

Family Networks

Terry still remains in close touch with relatives, and pointed out that an uncle has, in fact, helped her from time to time. The uncle has provided clothes for the baby, and in a crunch, even helped to pay the family's utility bill.

Terry now feels safe and supported in this facility. Her decision on carrying through the second pregnancy (circumstances unknown) is a decision yet to be faced.

Summary Observations

Terry has suffered abuse, neglect, and a childhood full of traumatic episodes. Her feelings of abandonment at the hands of an abusive young father of her child deepens her sense of despair. The joy in her child is obvious. The intervention of a safe, residential environment and a treatment program may give Terry a chance at a new life. Terry's situation may be a "good cause exception" to the paternity obligation.

Kate: White 21-year-old mother:

Kate has one child and for the past year has lived with a roommate although she had previously lived with the father of her child for 3 years.

Kate grew up in a suburban environment within an intact family and 3 siblings. Her growing-up years are described as extremely stressful because of the father's alcoholism. Kate was burdened with the care of her siblings and a neglecting mother. She thought of running away to "get out of the house and not be the little mom." At sixteen, her father kicked her out of the house and she went to live with friends for two years.

Kate graduated from high school and is currently involved in a community program designed to increase her employability. She speaks warmly of the help that she is getting and has high expectations for her career goals.

Kate was 20 years old and the father was 26 at the time of the birth of the baby. She left the father in the seventh month of her pregnancy. She didn't like his "lifestyle." He helped pay for some medical bills and was there at the birth of the baby. He currently sees the baby twice a week and helps by buying diapers and feeding and changing the baby.

Kate regards the pregnancy and the birth of a child as a lucky accident. She is now motivated to go back to school and get a job and do more than just get by.

She does not feel that paternity adjudication is important because the baby knows who her father is. "I'm not going to chase it down." She does feel that the father's name on the birth certificate is important because the baby might feel bad if there was a blank spot on the birth certificate. Kate observes that the father of the baby doesn't think that paternity adjudication is important and she will not press him to pursue it. The paperwork is intimidating. At this point, the child's father is fully employed as an

automotive repair supervisor. But she is not interested in formal child support.

Comment

Kate, an older mother in our sample, with a completed high school education, is taking good advantage of Stride (a welfare reform program). Kate's family formation does not include the father because of his negative behaviour mostly associated with alcohol abuse.

The father was at the hospital when the baby was born. The nurse left the Declaration of Parentage form but he did not sign because the nurse did not return to pick it up and present it to the notary. The father is extremely resistant to being involved with the court's procedures and its entanglements. Kate acknowledges that the birth certificate is the focal point of her interests. Although her relationship to the father, who is described as "all male, cars, hunting, drinking, and independence," is at a dead end, his close relationship to his child will be encouraged. Kate may suffer from the casual neglect associated with not signing the Declaration of Parentage. Later on she will undoubtedly want and need child support from a father who is securely employed.

Sally: White, 19-Year-Old Mother of Three

Sally is the mother of three children, all of whom have different fathers. She is currently pregnant again. At present, she is living alone but her boyfriend, "basically has his own place but stays here most of the time." Her boyfriend's three children from a previous marriage also live with her.

Sally comes from a very turbulent and abusive background. Her growing up years were traumatic: the death of her father; a mother that was both physically and verbally abusive and at fourteen, Sally was raped. She ran from home because of her mother's lack of support for her. From ages 15 to 17, she was placed with a foster family.

Sally says that all her friends have children. "If you have one baby you're lucky, if you have three, you're like everyone else." Last year her "best friend ever" was stabbed 19 times. He had also been a father to one of her children.

Sally almost finished high school but in her senior year found that she lacked enough credits. She then took her GED and now hopes to become an EKG technician. She says she "loves school" and "would like to get a PhD to go to school for 12 years."

Sally is under an incredible amount of stress and has been hospitalized three times for suicide attempts. All of her children have serious health problems; hearing disability, respiratory and heart ailments.

Sally has had many abusive boyfriends. She had filed a good cause claim on the father of her son but "they didn't accept it and he came back and beat me up." She spent 18 days in the hospital. Paternity was eventually established. Now she has a restraining order.

She no longer has contact with the father of her third child although at

and he took a drink and that blew it." She went through the last pregnancy alone. The father has seen the baby two times since it's birth. She does not believe in abortion except in the case of rape or incest and although she did consider an open adoption she could not do it because she already had a family and she might as well have another one.

Sally is adamant about not wanting the father involved unless he stops drinking because presently "he has no values, so there's no need for him to be involved with her." Despite this, Sally is proceeding with paternity adjudication and has a court date. She says she wants her children "to know their own identity, if anything happens to her, if she dies, the father will come in."

In spite of all her difficulties, Sally seems optimistic that the future for her children will be better and she hopes to achieve this by keeping her family more stable; not moving around so much, building a relationship with her boyfriend and going to school to get her career started.

Comments

Sally's young life has multiple problems. She and her companions appear to be living in a sealed off delinquent culture. She is burdened with abusive relationships with men, repeat pregnancies, and the serious health problems of her three children. The father of her last child has a history of juvenile delinquency and the interviewer describes him as a "punkster." His own self-description is as a "hood." While paternity adjudication for her children is important she makes different decisions for each child depending on the behaviour of the fathers of her children. In one instance, she pursued it at great physical risk. Sally's beginning involvement with community programs that offer treatment and support may pull her through.

She is now living in what the interviewer describes as complete chaos with her own three children and the three children of her boyfriend. She feels "good" fathers need a chance to be with their children. She feels strongly about paternity being established, providing the father is a "good" person. Sally's situation illustrates our intuitive knowledge that some biological fathers are not plausible candidates for a family formation and good cause exceptions should be maintained in policy and procedures.

APPENDIX I
MINNESOTA STATUTES

257.66 JUDGMENT OR ORDER

Subdivision 1. The judgment or order of the court determining the existence or nonexistence of the parent and child relationship is determinative for all purposes.

Subd. 2. If the judgment or order of the court is at variance with the child's birth certificate, the court shall order that a new birth certificate be issued under section 257.73.

Subd. 3. Judgment; order. The judgment or order shall contain provisions concerning the duty of support, the custody of the child, the name of the child, visitation privileges with the child, the furnishing of bond or other security for the payment of the judgment, or any other matter in the best interest of the child. Custody and visitation and all subsequent motions related to them shall proceed and be determined under section 257.541. The remaining matters and all subsequent motions related to them shall proceed and be determined in accordance with chapter 518. The judgment or order may direct the appropriate party to pay all or a proportion of the reasonable expenses of the mother's pregnancy and confinement, after consideration of the relevant facts, including the relative financial means of the parents; the earning ability of each parent; and any health insurance.

257.34 DECLARATION OF PARENTAGE

Subdivision 1. Acknowledgement by parents. The mother and father of a child born to mother who was not married to the child's father when the child was conceived nor when the child was born may, in a writing signed by both of them before a notary public, declare and acknowledge under oath that they are the biological parents of the child. The declaration may provide that any such child born to the mother at any time before or up to ten months after the date of execution of the declaration is the biological child of the signatories. Execution of the declaration shall:

(a) have the same consequences as an acknowledgement by the signatories of parentage of the child for the purposes of sections 62A.041 and 62C.14, subdivision 5a;

(b) be conclusive evidence that the signatories are parents of the child for the purposes of sections 176.111, 197.75, and 197.752;

(c) create a presumption that the signatory is the biological father of the child for the purposes of sections 257.51 to 257.74;

(d) when timely filed with the division of vital statistics of the Minnesota department of health as provided in section 259.261, qualify as an affidavit stating the intention of the signatories to retain parental rights as provided in section 259.261 if it contains the information required by section 259.261 or rules promulgated thereunder;

(e) have the same consequences as a writing declaring paternity of the child for the purposes of section 524.2-109; and

(f) be conclusive evidence that the signatories are parents of the child for the purposes of chapter 573.

Subd. 2. Repealed, 1987 c 403 art 3 s 98.

Subd. 3. The declaration authorized by subdivision 1 shall not affect the rights or duties arising out of a parent-child relationship of any person not a signatory to the declaration claiming to be the parent of the child nor shall the declaration impair any rights of the child arising out of a parent-child relationship against any person not a signatory to the declaration.
HIST: 1980 c 561 s 3; 1981 c 349 s 1; 1983 c 7 s 7; 1983 c 243 s 5 subd 7; 1985 c 250 a 23; 1987 c 384 art 2 s 64; 1987 c 403 art 3 s 45.

APPENDIX II
BENEFITS OF PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT
TO THE OUT-OF-WEDLOCK CHILD

Child Support (usually not awarded except through a court procedure)

A child is entitled to receive support payments from the adjudicated father set up by order of the court based on the father's ability to pay. This is usually set up during the adjudication hearing. The child is entitled to these support payments whether or not the child is on public assistance and usually extends until the child reaches the age of 18.

Social Security Benefits

When paternity has been legally established and the father has been employed and has paid into Social Security, the child is eligible for benefits if the father dies or is disabled. The child will receive a monthly benefit until the age of 18 or until he or she completes high school. This benefit is based on the father's previous earnings.

Benefits from the Military

There are also considerable benefits for the child when the father joins the armed services. If paternity is established, but the mother and father are not married, the father may draw an extra allowance for the purpose of providing a household for his dependents. This may range from \$289.80-\$528.90 a month for enlisted men in non-commissioned ranks. In addition, the child is eligible for medical care and P.X. and commissary privileges (if married, the father can draw an extra allowance and medical care, and P.X. privileges are granted to the entire family). If the father is a veteran and has a service-connected disability that is 100% and permanent, the child is eligible for an education benefit. This is now \$404 a month for a full-time student.

Health Insurance

Health care coverage may be available to the child through the adjudicated father's health care plan associated with his work.

Psychological Benefits

Psychological benefits of security and attachment may be derived from acknowledged paternity.

Genetic History

Tangible benefits may also come from having access to paternal genetic and medical history.

Inheritance Rights

If paternity is adjudicated, the child is entitled to his or her equal share of inheritance from the adjudicated father's estate in case of the father's death.

Birth Record

If the parents have signed the Declaration of Parentage form and this has been witnessed by a Notary Public, then the father's name can appear on the birth certificate. The above benefits, with the exception of child support, may accrue to the child, based on the properly signed Declaration of Parentage.

APPENDIX III
 QUESTIONS ON HOW PATERNITY IS ESTABLISHED
 (Responses by females, in percents)

	<u>White Females</u>			<u>Black Females</u>		
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
* = correct answer						
1. The father's name will <u>not</u> appear on the birth certificate unless he and the mother of the baby have signed a piece of paper called a Declaration of Parentage.	61*	14	25	77*	14	10
2. The Declaration of Parentage must be signed in front of a notary public who puts his/her legal stamp on the document.	67*	14	19	76*	12	12
3. The father will be known as the legal parent if he, along with the mother of the baby, signs a form known as the Declaration of Parentage, and this is sent to the Minnesota State Department of Health, Section of Vital Statistics.	76*	3	21	81*	4	15
4. The Declaration of Parentage form can be signed <u>only</u> at the hospital.	21	53*	26	25	60*	15
5. The father can establish paternity in the hospital when he tells the nurse or social worker that he agrees to have his name on the birth certificate.	52	32*	17	70	16*	14
6. Paternity adjudication is a legal process which requires an appearance in court to see a judge.	52*	16	32	55*	8	37
7. The mother can put the father's name on the birth certificate without the father's permission.	27	61*	12	22	72*	7
8. If a father wishes to have his name on the child's birth certificate against the mother's wishes, he can ask the court to help him.	81*	1	18	77*	11	12
9. Even if the father tells his friends and family he is the father, the mother has sole custody of the child until paternity is adjudicated.	87*	3	10	57*	3	11
10. If the father has not signed legal papers saying he is the father, he still has a right to visit the child.	18	66*	17	47	47*	4

* = correct answer

	<u>White Females</u>			<u>Black Females</u>		
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
11. In Hennepin County, paternity must be adjudicated, i.e., established by a court order, before the county will require the father to give money to support his child.	84*	3	13	76*	11	14
12. When a young man says he is not the father of a child, the mother can get help from the county attorney to prove that he is the child's father.	96*	1	3	99*	0	1
13. A young man who has been identified as the father, but knows or thinks this to be false, can ask for a blood test to prove that he is not the father of the child.	98*	1	1	99*	0	1
14. In Minnesota, when a blood test proves paternity and the father has no money, the county will pay the cost.	56*	14	30	34*	31	35
15. If he has to go to court and he is under 18, a young man must have a <u>guardian ad litem</u> , also known as a personal advocate.	65*	1	34	77*	3	20
16. Certain financial benefits, such as social security, may go to children whose fathers have legally established paternity.	72*	7	21	74*	8	18
17. If paternity has been established, and the father is in the armed services, medical care for the baby and a household allowance for the mother and baby is allowed.	69*	2	29	65*	4	31
18. The following financial benefits go to the children whose fathers' identity and paternity have been legally established. Which of these do you feel is the most important to the child?						
a. Social Security	14			42		
b. Military benefits, such as children's allowances, added to military pay and health care.	16			26		
c. Health and life insurance policy benefits; many places of work automatically insure their employees. This usually cover children.	46			51		
d. In addition, there is the security of knowing who the father of the child is for psychological health and adoption purposes.	58			49		
e. Don't know	1			4		

QUESTIONS ON HOW PATERNITY IS ESTABLISHED
(Responses by males, in percents)

	<u>White Males</u>			<u>Black Males</u>		
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
* = correct answer						
1. The father's name will <u>not</u> appear on the birth certificate unless he and the mother of the baby have signed a piece of paper called a Declaration of Parentage.	60*	17	23	81*	13	7
2. The Declaration of Parentage must be signed in front of a notary public who puts his/her legal stamp on the document.	80*	6	15	70*	16	15
3. The father will be known as the legal parent if he, along with the mother of the baby, signs a form known as the Declaration of Parentage, and this is sent to the Minnesota State Department of Health, Section of Vital Statistics.	73*	15	13	74*	11	15
4. The Declaration of Parentage form can be signed <u>only</u> at the hospital.	25	44*	31	44	44*	13
5. The father can establish paternity in the hospital when he tells the nurse or social worker that he agrees to have his name on the birth certificate.	56	29*	15	86	8*	7
6. Paternity adjudication is a legal process which requires an appearance in court to see a judge.	48*	21	31	29*	36	26
7. The mother can put the father's name on the birth certificate without the father's permission.	15	69*	17	29	66*	5
8. If a father wishes to have his name on the child's birth certificate against the mother's wishes, he can ask the court to help him.	83*	8	8	92*	5	3
9. Even if the father tells his friends and family he is the father, the mother has sole custody of the child until paternity is adjudicated.	79*	6	15	90*	7	3
10. If the father has not signed legal papers saying he is the father, he still has a right to visit the child.	21	69*	10	48	42*	10

* = correct answer

	<u>White Males</u>			<u>Black Males</u>		
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
11. In Hennepin County, paternity must be adjudicated, i.e., established by a court order, before the county will require the father to give money to support his child.	81*	15	4	74*	13	13
12. When a young man says he is not the father of a child, the mother can get help from the county attorney to prove that he is the child's father.	98*	0	2	95*	2	3
13. A young man who has been identified as the father, but knows or thinks this to be false, can ask for a blood test to prove that he is not the father of the child.	100	0	0	98*	2	0
14. In Minnesota, when a blood test proves paternity and the father has no money, the county will pay the cost.	46*	15	40	55*	18	27
15. If he has to go to court and he is under 18, a young man must have a <u>guardian ad litem</u> , also known as a personal advocate.	60*	4	35	74*	7	19
16. Certain financial benefits, such as social security, may go to children whose fathers have legally established paternity.	71*	2	27	73*	11	16
17. If paternity has been established, and the father is in the armed services, medical care for the baby and a household allowance for the mother and baby is allowed.	67*	4	29	90*	2	8
18. The following financial benefits go to the children whose fathers' identity and paternity have been legally established. Which of these do you feel is the most important to the child?						
a. Social Security	23			31		
b. Military benefits, such as children's allowances, added to military pay and health care.	6			18		
c. Health and life insurance policy benefits; many places of work automatically insure their employees. This usually cover children.	48			48		
d. In addition, there is the security of knowing who the father of the child is for psychological health and adoption purposes.	42			37		
e. Don't know	0			6		

TEENAGE PARENT KNOWLEDGE OF THE LAW ON PATERNITY AND CHILD SUPPORT
(Responses by females, in percents)

	<u>White Females</u>			<u>Black Females</u>		
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
* = correct answer						
1. If the mother knows who the father is and refuses to cooperate, she may not get AFDC for herself.	73*	16	11	69*	20	11
2. When the county agrees that there is a "good cause" exception to naming the father, a mother will get AFDC for herself and her child.	84*	2	14	86*	4	10
3. The amount of child support the father will be asked to pay will depend on how much money he makes.	96*	3	1	99*	1	0
4. If a father has no money, he can ask the court to suspend or defer his child support payment.	72*	9	20	61*	9	30
5. If the father is in school, generally no child support is enforced until he is earning some money.	77*	4	19	88*	6	6
6. If the father is out of school and unemployed, the court will order him to show that he is looking for work.	92*	0	8	87*	1	11
7. If the father goes to another state, the people in the State of Minnesota cannot reach him there.	15	63*	22	20	54*	26
8. The child support payments made by fathers go to the government to help pay for the AFDC grant, except for the first \$50 which goes to the mother.	83*	2	15	77*	4	19

TEENAGE PARENT KNOWLEDGE OF THE LAW ON PATERNITY AND CHILD SUPPORT
(Responses by males, in percents)

	<u>White Males</u>			<u>Black Males</u>		
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
* = correct answer						
1. If the mother knows who the father is and refuses to cooperate, she may not get AFDC for herself.	64*	23	13	54*	37	9
2. When the county agrees that there is a "good cause" exception to naming the father, a mother will get AFDC for herself and her child.	77*	6	17	83*	11	7
3. The amount of child support the father will be asked to pay will depend on how much money he makes.	98*	2	0	90*	7	4
4. If a father has no money, he can ask the court to suspend or defer his child support payment.	64*	11	26	68*	12	19
5. If the father is in school, generally no child support is enforced until he is earning some money.	75*	4	23	86*	5	9
6. If the father is out of school and unemployed, the court will order him to show that he is looking for work.	85*	2	13	89*	5	5
7. If the father goes to another state, the people in the State of Minnesota cannot reach him there.	13	77*	1	28	61*	11
8. The child support payments made by fathers go to the government to help pay for the AFDC grant, except for the first \$50 which goes to the mother.	64*	9	28	54*	12	33

APPENDIX IV
QUESTIONNAIRE USED IN FORD PATERNITY STUDY

For a copy of the questionnaire used in this study, please see first copy of report.

