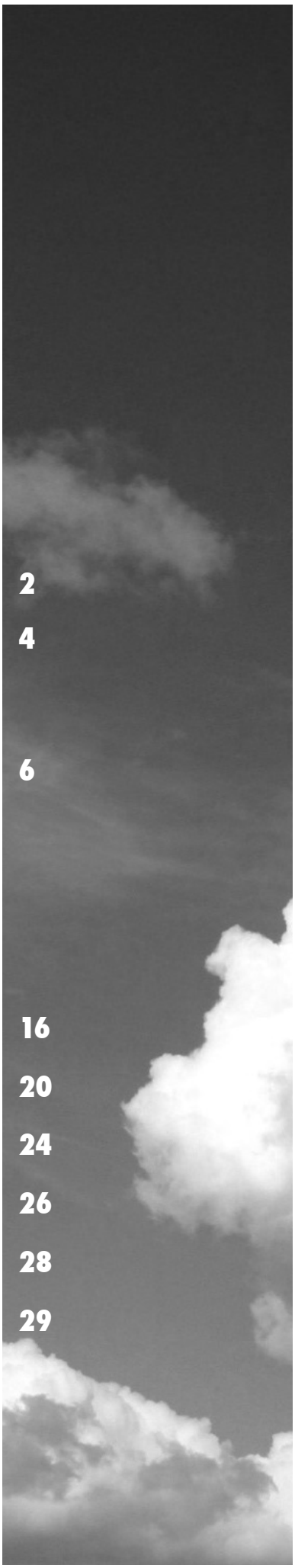
POP'S CULTURE: A National Survey of Dads' Attitudes on Fathering



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"Ninety-nine percent of the fathers agreed that being a father was a very important part of who they are..."

A telephone survey of 701 American men selected to be representative of American fathers age 18 and older with at least one biological or adopted child (not a stepchild) under the age of 18 yielded the following findings:

1. Ninety-one percent of the respondents agreed that there is a father-absence crisis in the country, but strong agreement varied considerably among the different kinds of respondents, being relatively low among the very young, the less religious, and those in high-income households.

2. Eighty-one percent of the surveyed fathers agreed that men generally perform better as fathers if they are married to the mothers of their children. Fifty-seven percent "strongly agreed" and only eight percent "strongly disagreed." The respondents less inclined to support the importance of marriage to good fathering include those low in religiosity, the youngest respondents, and those not married to the mothers of their child or children. The relatively low support for marriage among the youngest respondents is consistent with results from other surveys that suggest a decline in pro-marriage attitudes.

3. Only slightly more than half of the fathers agreed, and less than a fourth "strongly agreed," that they felt adequately prepared for fatherhood when they first became fathers. Although 78 percent agreed that they now have the necessary skills and knowledge to be good fathers, only a third "strongly agreed."

4. A summary index of the conditions that the respondents perceived to be obstacles to good fathering revealed substantial differences among the different kinds of fathers. Among those who perceived the greatest obstacles were those not married to the mothers of their "focal child" (the child selected for special attention by the survey), those who did not live with that child, those who had one or more stepchildren, and older fathers in low-income households.

5. When the respondents were asked which of eight possible sources of help they had drawn upon to be a better father, "wife, partner, or child's mother" was most frequently chosen (by 89 percent of the respondents), followed by "other fathers or men," their own mother, and then their own father. About half had received help from a place of worship, and only 29 percent had sought help from a professional person.

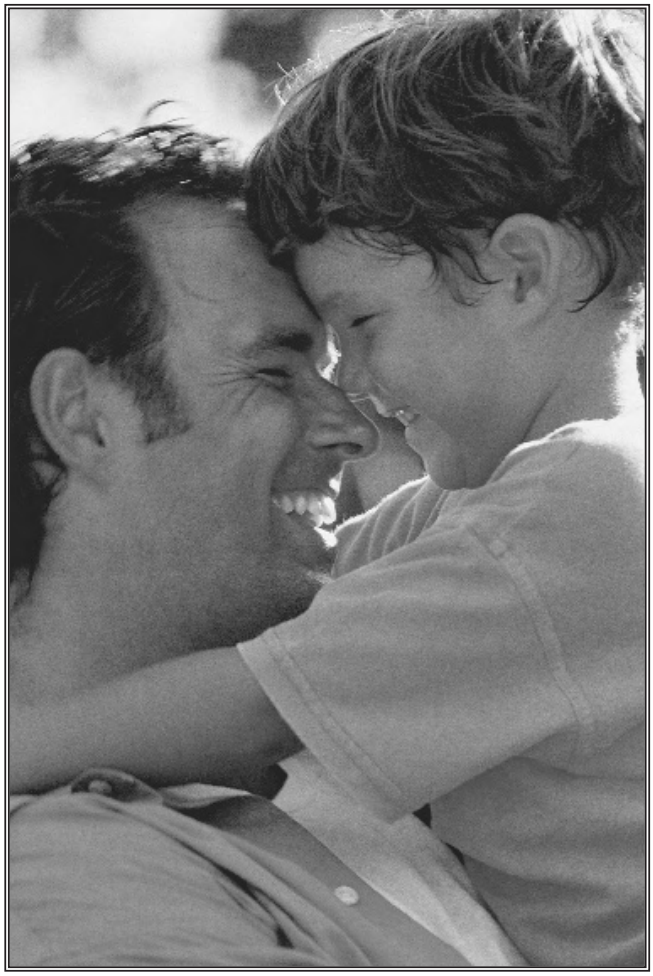
6. Among the respondents as a whole, "work responsibilities" was most frequently given as an obstacle to being a good father, with 47 percent saying that it was "a great deal" or "somewhat" of an obstacle. "The media/popular culture" and "financial problems" ranked next. The fathers not married to the mother of the "focal child" reported resistance and lack of cooperation from that mother to be the most important obstacle to their being good fathers, followed by "work responsibilities," "financial problems," and "treatment of fathers by the courts."

7. Sixty-seven percent of the respondents agreed that the government should do more to help and support fathers, but strong agreement that more government assistance is needed was relatively infrequent among "very religious" respondents and those in higher

income households. In contrast, African American fathers were very favorable toward government assistance.

8 A small majority of the respondents agreed with statements that fathers are replaceable by mothers (53 percent) and by other men (57 percent), although very few "strongly agreed" with the statements. Those most likely to agree that fathers are replaceable were the respondents with little education, but those with graduate degrees also were relatively likely to agree that other persons can be adequate substitutes for fathers. The "very religious" fathers were less likely than the less religious ones to think that fathers are replaceable.

9 Fathers of infants and very young children did not differ much from one another in their reported activities with their offspring, but fathers of older children and adolescents reported considerably more activities with their "focal child" if they lived with that child, were well-educated, and did not have a stepchild or stepchildren.



10 Respondents who did not live with their "focal child" were much more likely than other fathers to say that they did not spend enough time with that child and that they did not feel very close to that child. More surprising, respondents who had a stepchild or stepchildren under age 18 reported feeling distinctly less close to their own focal child than did other fathers regardless of whether or not they lived with their focal child. How close the respondents felt to their focal child varied inversely with the age of that child, that is, on average they felt closest to infants and very young children and least close to teenagers.

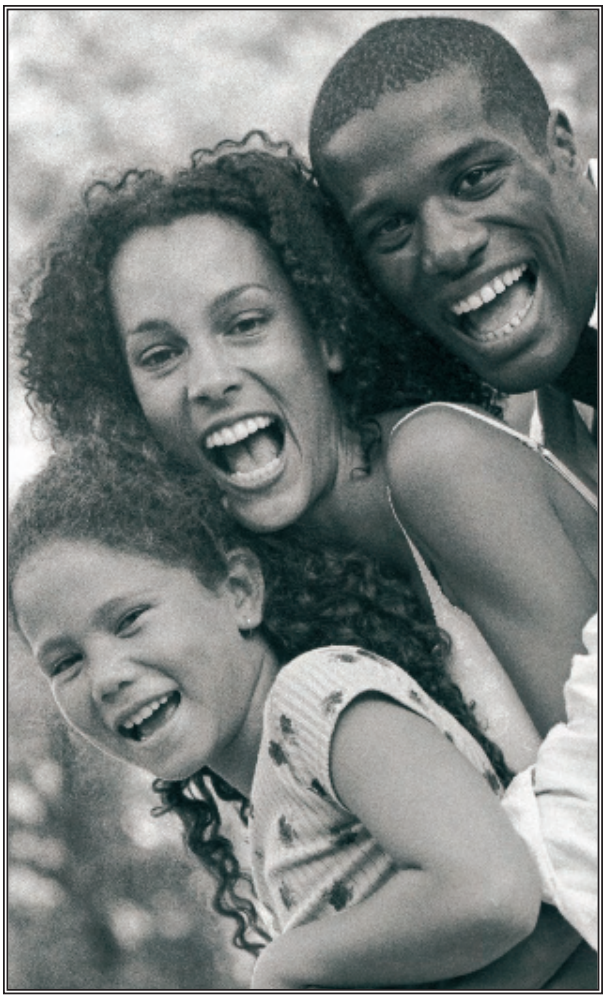
11 Ninety-nine percent of the fathers agreed that being a father was a very important part of who they are, and 94 percent "strongly agreed." At a minimum, these findings indicate a strong social norm that being a father should be a crucial aspect of a father's identity.

INTRODUCTION

"Our primary purpose in conducting the survey was to gauge the fathering-related attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors ..."

One of the more important developments in American society in recent years has been the growth of awareness of the importance of responsible fatherhood to the well-being and proper development of children and to the health of the society as a whole. It would be an exaggeration to claim that a consensus has emerged on this issue–there remains a few "family diversity" advocates who deny the importance of fathers and what they do for children. But those who deny the importance of fatherhood seem to be increasingly irrelevant in the public discourse.

Important unanswered questions remain, however, about the bases of responsible fatherhood and how those who would promote it can best attain that goal. The telephone survey that yielded the findings reported here was conducted to help answer those questions. We, the authors of this report, designed the survey in collaboration with advisors at National Fatherhood Initiative (NFI), the organization at the forefront of efforts to promote responsible fatherhood, in order to provide information useful to NFI, its partners, and the many individuals and organizations that serve fathers and families. Our primary purpose in conducting the survey was to gauge the fathering-related attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors of fathers age 18 and older in the United States in a sample as representative of that population as can be attained for a telephone survey. Many of the questions pertain to how the respondents viewed fatherhood in general, but many others relate to the respondents' relationship to one of their children under age 18. Every father in the sample had at least one child (not a stepchild) under age 18, and if the respondent had only one child in that age range, that child was designated the "focal child," about which many questions were asked. If the respondent had more than one child under age 18, the focal child was the one with the most recent birthday.



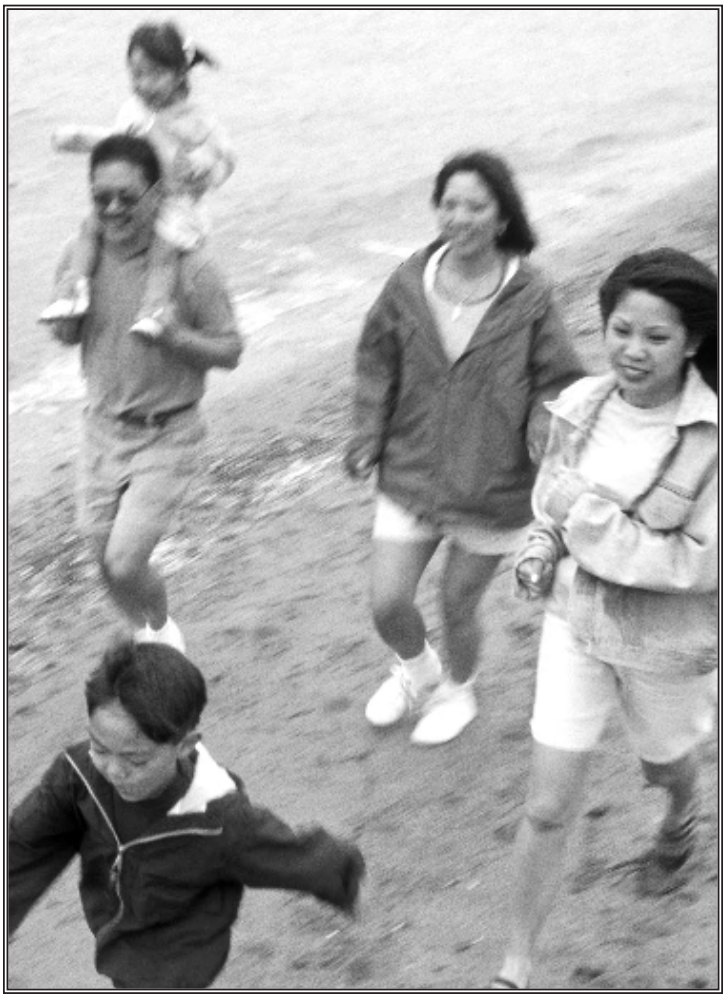
More specifically, our purpose was to provide insight into why some fathers perform their fatherhood role more effectively than others, to assess what the fathers perceived to be major obstacles to good fathering, and to provide promoters of responsible fatherhood with information about how they can more effectively accomplish their task.

A PROFILE OF THE SURVEY RESPONDENTS

The 701 respondents to the survey varied in age from 18 (the minimum age for qualifying for inclusion in the sample) to 68, the median age being 41. Thirteen percent of the fathers were under age 30, 12 percent were age 50 or older, and three quarters were in the age range of 30 through 49. Thirty-five percent had only one child under age 18, while four percent had five or more, and 12 percent had at least one offspring age 18 or older. Ten percent had at least one stepchild under age 18, and nine percent lived with at least one pre-adult stepchild. The marital status distribution is 85 percent married (with 78 percent married to the mother of the focal child selected for attention in this study), nine percent divorced, fewer than one percent widowed, and six percent never-married. Of those who were married, 22 (about three percent of the total sample) were not living with their wives. Six percent of all respondents were living with women to whom they were not married, and four percent had romantic relationships with women with whom they did not live. Three percent lived with the focal child's mother but were not married to her, and 90 percent of the respondents lived with their focal child.

Seventy-seven percent of the sampled fathers lived with their biological or adoptive father when they were age 16, 11 percent lived with their mother only, and seven percent lived with their mother and a stepfather. The rest had other living arrangements, such as living with grandparents.

Twenty-seven percent of the sampled fathers said that they were "very religious," and ten percent said that they were "not at all religious." The religious preferences of the respondents include 21 percent Catholic, 42 percent Protestant or Christian (unspecified denomination or type), four percent Mormon, and 20 percent with no religious preference.



THE RESPONDENTS' ATTITUDES
ABOUT FATHERHOOD AND THEMSELVES AS FATHERS

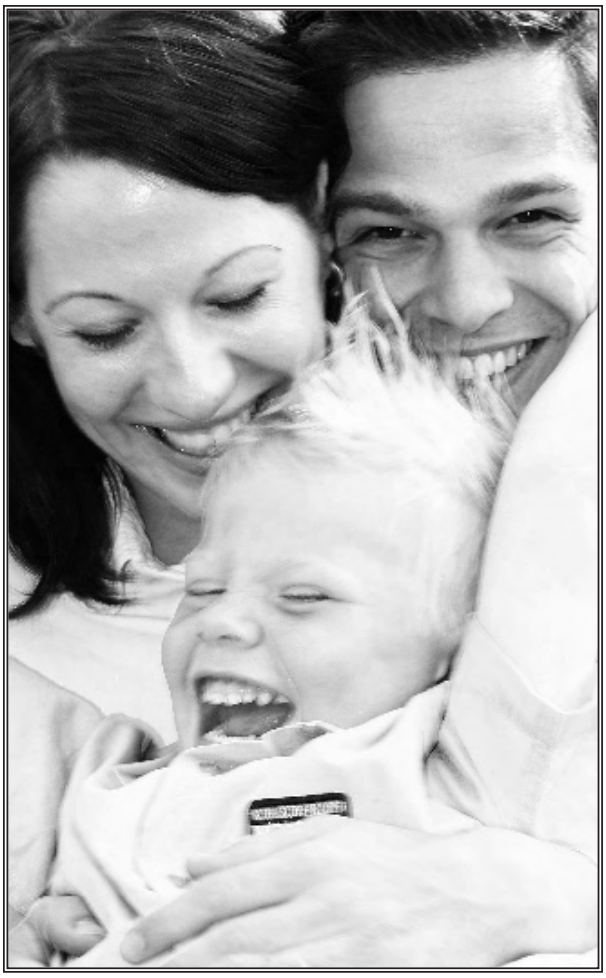
"...responses do indicate that there is a strong norm in American society that being a father should be an important part of a father's sense of who he is..."

The respondents to the survey were asked 14 questions concerning their attitudes about fatherhood in general, about their views of themselves as fathers, and about their own fathers. These questions were in the form of statements about which the respondents could choose "strongly agree," "somewhat agree," "somewhat disagree," or "strongly disagree." The combined "strongly agree" and "somewhat agree" percentage for each statement is given in Table 1, in which the statements are divided into those about fatherhood in general and those about the respondents' or their fathers' performance, qualifications, and feelings as fathers.

A majority of the respondents agreed with each of the statements, but the "agree" percentages vary from 99 percent in the case of the statement that being a father is an important aspect of the respondent's identity to 53 percent for the statement that mothers can adequately substitute for fathers.

The question about fatherhood being an important part of the respondent's identity is the kind that is likely to elicit "socially desirable" responses, that is, those that reflect well on the respondent and that are not necessarily honest. It is perhaps not surprising that in a sample of 701 men who acknowledged that they are fathers, only five failed to agree that being a father is an important part of who they are and only 45 failed to "strongly agree." This is an example of a survey question that proves not to be very useful because there is very little variation in responses to it. However, the responses do indicate that there is a strong norm in American society that being a father should be an important part of a father's sense of who he is.

All of the other questions elicited much more varied responses. For instance, although 92 percent of the respondents agreed that they received a lot of respect for being fathers, only 52 percent "strongly agreed," and although 91



percent agreed that there is a "father-absence" crisis in the country, only 62 percent "strongly agreed." Some, but not all, of the questions elicited responses that varied considerably by such variables as the age, education, and religiosity of the fathers.

Space limitations preclude discussion of all of these variations, but a few have special policy relevance or should be of special interest to persons who would understand the bases of responsible fatherhood in the United States.

TABLE 1. Percentage of Respondents Who Agreed ("Strongly" or "Somewhat") with Selected Statements

("Not sure" and similar responses are excluded from the base for the percentages. The base varies from 684 to 701 cases for the different percentages.)

Attitudes and Perceptions About Fathering in General	
There is a "father-absence" crisis in the United States today.	91%
All else being equal, men perform best as fathers if they are married to the mothers of their children.	81
The government should do more to help and support fathers.	67
The media (e.g., commercials and TV shows) tend to portray fathers in a negative light.	65
If a child does not have an involved father, a male role model, such as a teacher or a family friend, can be an adequate substitute for a father.	57
If a child does not have an involved father, a mother can be just as effective preparing a child to be a well-adjusted and productive adult.	53
Personally Relevant Attitudes and Perceptions	
Being a father is a very important part of who you are.	99%
You get a lot of respect for being a father.	92
You now feel that you have all of the necessary knowledge and skills to be a good father.	78
As a father, you feel a responsibility to help other fathers improve their fathering skills.	77
In general, you are a better father than your own father was to you.	76
You had an involved, responsible father while you were growing up.	74
You are inspired to be a better dad when you see and/or hear advertisements and media featuring good fathers.	64
When you first became a father, you felt adequately prepared for fatherhood.	54

THE REPLACEABILITY OF FATHERS

Arguably the most important debate about fatherhood in the United States today is about the necessity and irreplaceability of fathers. One point of view is that good biological or adoptive fathers perform functions that cannot be adequately performed by anyone else, even though such others as male teachers and family friends can be partial substitutes for good fathers. The opposing view is that a variety of family forms can adequately serve children and that no one kind of family structure should be favored over others or presented as an ideal.

"Those who believe most strongly in the importance of fathers will be concerned to learn that a majority (though a small majority) of the fathers we surveyed seemed to think that they are replaceable."

Those who believe most strongly in the importance of fathers will be concerned to learn that a majority (though a small majority) of the fathers we surveyed seemed to think that they are replaceable. Fifty-seven percent of the respondents agreed with the statement "If a child does not have an involved father, a male role model, such as a teacher or family friend, can be an adequate substitute for a father," and 53 percent agreed that "If a child does not have an involved father, a mother can be just as effective in preparing a child to be a well-adjusted and productive adult." However, the "strongly agree" percentages for both statements are much smaller, 13 and 20 respectively, and are exceeded by the "strongly disagree" responses, which are 19 and 23, respectively. Thus, while only about a fifth of the fathers strongly believed that fathers are NOT replaceable, a strong belief that they ARE replaceable was even rarer. This suggests that a large percentage of the fathers who do not now take a strong position about the importance of fathers might be persuaded to do so.

It is important, therefore, to examine how attitudes on this issue are distributed among the different kinds of fathers. For this purpose, we constructed a "replaceability of fathers index"

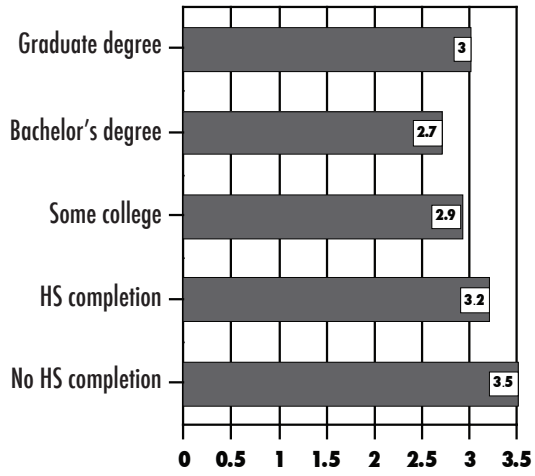


FIGURE 1. Mean Replaceability of Fathers Index, by Education

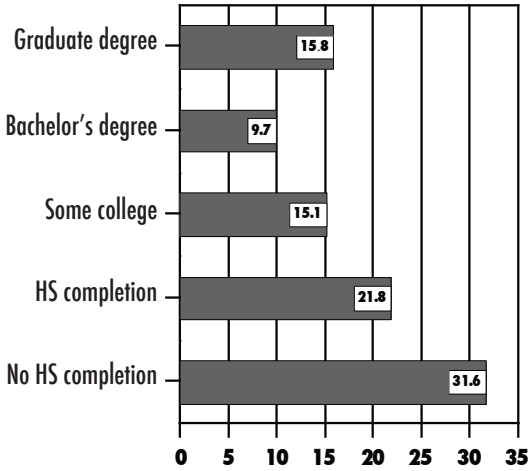


FIGURE 2. Mean Percentage of "Strongly Agree" Responses to Father Replaceability Statements, by Education

by recoding the response alternatives so that the higher numbers represent belief in replaceability and by summing the scores from the two relevant questions. A multivariate statistical analysis, the results of which are not presented here, revealed important variation in the index values by education and by religiosity that could not be explained by variation of other kinds. There was no important variation by household income, race, or the age of the fathers, and although fathers not

living with their children were more likely than others to say that they believe in the replaceability of fathers, this difference is fully explained by the lower average education of the nonresident fathers.

The variation in the index values by education is shown in Figure 1. The fathers most likely to believe that fathers are replaceable were those with the least education, and the mean index scores decrease steadily with increases in education up through a bachelor's degree. However, the fathers with graduate degrees were more likely than those with only bachelors' degrees to choose the "replaceability" responses, and this difference is statistically significant (which means that it is unlikely to have occurred by chance). The relative length of the bars in Figure 1 might lead one to believe that the differences among the educational levels are not very important, but the data in Figure 2 on the percentages of respondents who "strongly agreed" with the replaceability statements more accurately reveal the importance of the differences. Those respondents with the least education were about three times as likely as those with a bachelor's degree to "strongly agree" that fathers are replaceable—clearly an important difference.

Belief in the replaceability of fathers by respondents at the lower educational levels may result largely from lack of exposure to information about the importance of fathers, but we speculate that the relatively high score for the fathers with the most education reflects a prevalence of an ideological commitment to "family diversity" at that educational level. If so, the attitudes of the low-education fathers are likely to be amenable to change through educational efforts while those of the highly educated fathers may be more resistant to change.

As would be expected, the "very religious" respondents were less likely to consider fathers replaceable than were the less religious ones (Figure 3), but the differences among those who said that they were "moderately religious," "not very religious," and "not at all religious" are not large enough to be important (and are not statistically significant). Again, the percentages of respondents who said that they "strongly agreed" give a better indication of the importance of the differences (see Figure 4), and those percentages for the least religious categories are about twice those for respondents who

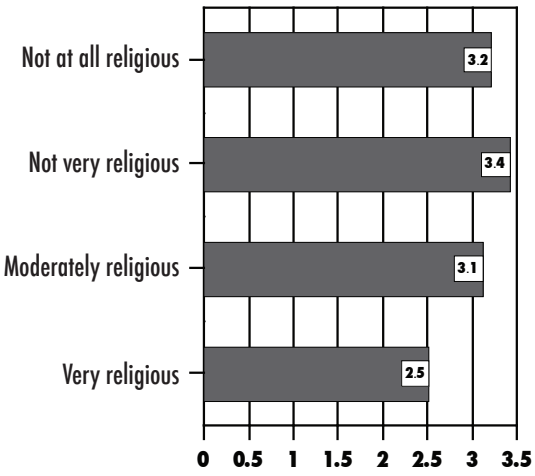


FIGURE 3. Mean Replaceability of Fathers Index, by Religiosity

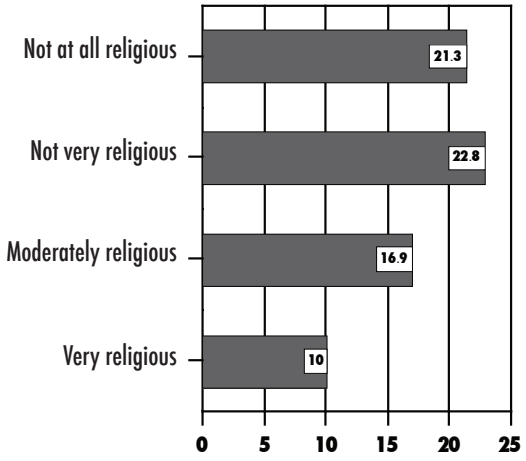


FIGURE 4. Percentage of "Strongly Agree" Responses to Father Replaceability Statements, by Religiosity

said that they were "very religious." "Very religious" persons are clearly a major source of support for the view that fathers are irreplaceable, but they constitute only 27 percent of the fathers we surveyed.

"The most striking relationship of the responses about marriage and fatherhood is to whether or not the respondent was married to the mother of the focal child."

HOW MARRIAGE AFFECTS FATHERING

Another important debate is about the extent to which men's marriages to the mothers of their children affect their performance as fathers. There is a great deal of evidence that these marriages promote effective fathering[2] (including evidence from our survey reported below), but an opposing point of view is that only the parents' cooperation is needed in order for men to be good fathers. (We assume that almost everyone would agree that such cooperation is more likely if the mother and father are married to one another and have a good marriage.) However, 19 percent of the respondents to our survey disagreed with the statement that "All else being equal, men perform best as fathers if they are married to the mothers of their children," and only 57 percent strongly agreed with the statement. It is important, therefore, to identify the kinds of fathers who are least likely to see a strong connection between marriage and good fathering.

A multivariate analysis, the results of which are not reported here, revealed three variables to be independently related to the responses to the importance-of-marriage question, namely, religiosity, respondent's age, and whether or not the respondent was married to the mother of the focal child (the respondent's child under age 18 about which detailed questions were asked on the survey). Such variables as education, race, and household income do not bear an important relationship to the responses when the other explanatory variables are statistically held constant.

The relationship between religiosity and agreeing with the importance-of-marriage question is, as would be expected, quite strong, with the percentage of "strongly agree" responses being twice as great for the very religious respondents as for those who said they were not at all religious (see Figure 5). Only eight percent of the very religious persons, compared with 26 percent of the not-at-all-religious ones, disagreed with the statement (data not shown graphically).

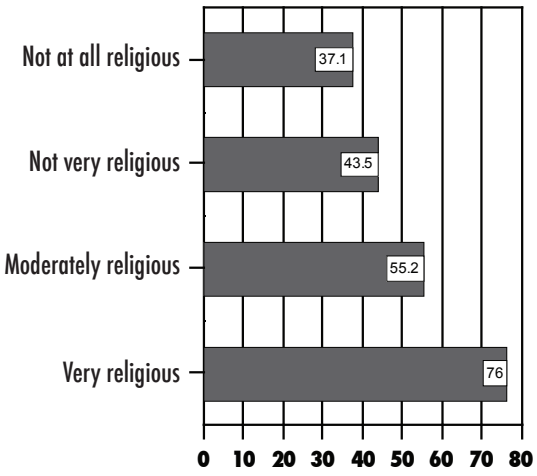


FIGURE 5. Percentage of "Strongly Agree" Responses to Statement about Importance of Martiage to Fatherhood, by Religiosity

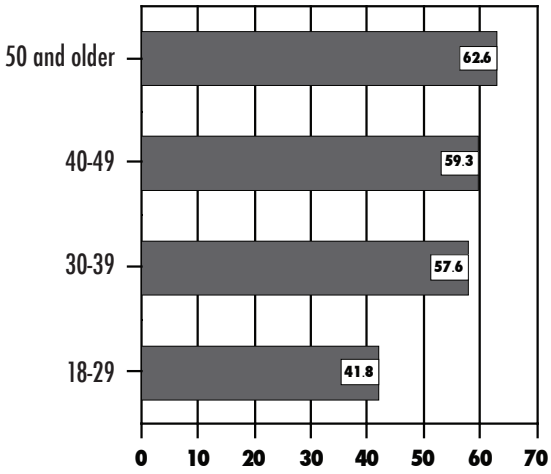


FIGURE 6. Percentage of "Strongly Agree" Responses to Statement about Importance of Marriage to Fatherhood, by Respondent's Age

The responses to the importance-of-marriage

question relate less strongly to the age of the respondents than to religiosity, the main difference being that the fathers under age 30 considered marriage less important than did the older ones (see Figure 6). This finding is consistent with findings from NFI's National Marriage Survey conducted in 2004, which found the youngest adults to be less pro-marriage than the older ones.[3] It is not clear whether the relatively weak support for marriage among the youngest adults will persist as these people grow older or whether they will become more pro-marriage as they reach middle age.

The most striking relationship of the responses about marriage and fatherhood is to whether or not the respondent was married to the mother of the focal child (see Figure 7), the percentage of "strongly agree" responses being more than twice as great for those married to the mother as for those not married to her. This finding is hardly surprising, but the reasons for it are likely to be complex. At least to some extent, a lack of belief in the importance of marriage is likely to account for the lack of the men's marriage to the mothers of their children, and these fathers may have a need to rationalize their situation. Probably more important is that some of the men's co-parenting experiences with the mothers may have been problematic, and those divorced from the mothers (who can't be identified in the survey data) may have experienced unsuccessful co-parenting before the divorce. If so, the men's personal experiences may have colored their views about marriage and mothers in general.

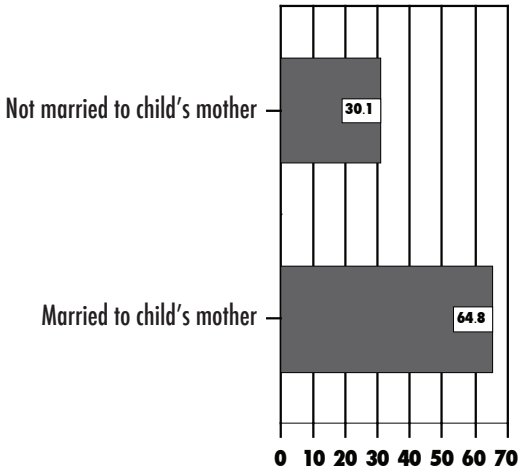


FIGURE 7. "Strongly Agree" Responses to Statement about Importance of Marriage to Fatherhood, by Whether or Not Respondent Was Married to Mother of Focal Child

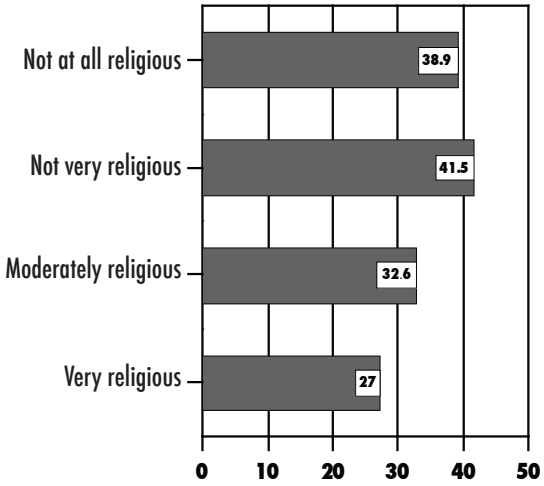


FIGURE 8. Percentage of "Strongly Agree" Responses to Statement that More Government Support of Fathers Is Needed, by Religiosity

ATTITUDINAL SUPPORT FOR GOVERNMENT HELP TO FATHERS

Of special interest to activists in the movements to promote responsible fatherhood and healthy marriages are the responses to the question about whether or not the government should do more to help and support fathers. Although agreement among the respondents that the government should do more was moderately high, a third did not agree that greater government assistance is needed, and only a third "strongly agreed" that the government should give more help and support.

A finding that may cause some consternation among advocates of state and federal programs to promote responsible fatherhood is that "very religious" fathers, who are among the strongest supporters of responsible fatherhood, as a whole seem not to be very enthusiastic about the government assistance (see Figure 8). One possible reason is a moderately high association of religiosity with economic conservatism and the fact that economic conservatives tend not to favor government social programs. However, a multivariate analysis shows that 79 percent of the association

"...more religious respondents were more likely to perceive a father-absence crisis than the less religious ones..."

of religiosity with responses to the "governmental support" question remains after such variables as race, education, age of the respondents, and household income are statistically held constant. It seems, therefore, that religiosity itself, or something closely associated with it, may contribute to lack of support for government programs for fathers. For instance, some highly religious persons may believe that assistance to fathers is best left to churches and other religious organizations.

A multivariate analysis shows that household income and race are strongly related to attitudes about government assistance when several other variables are statistically held constant. African Americans are unusually likely to favor the government assistance while fathers with high household income are unusually likely not to favor it (see Figures 9 and 10). The latter relationship suggests that the support of high-income persons for the government programs may be very hard to get. However, we report below some findings that suggest that the views of the high-income fathers may result partly from lack of awareness of the seriousness of the father-absence problem–something more changeable than political ideology.

The bottom line is that the bases of support for the government programs are complex, and efforts to increase the support need to take that complexity into account.

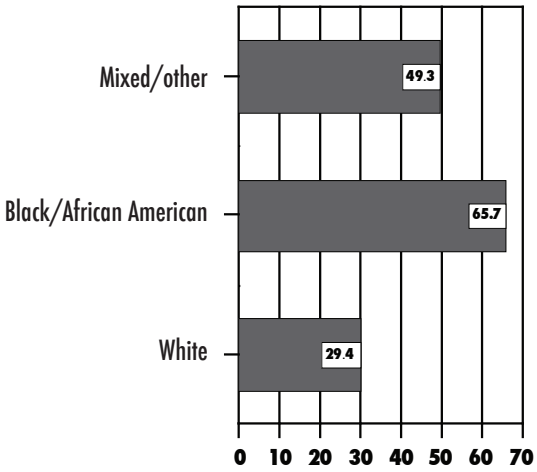


FIGURE 9. Percentage of "Strongly Agree" Responses to Statement that More Government Support of Fathers Is Needed, by Race

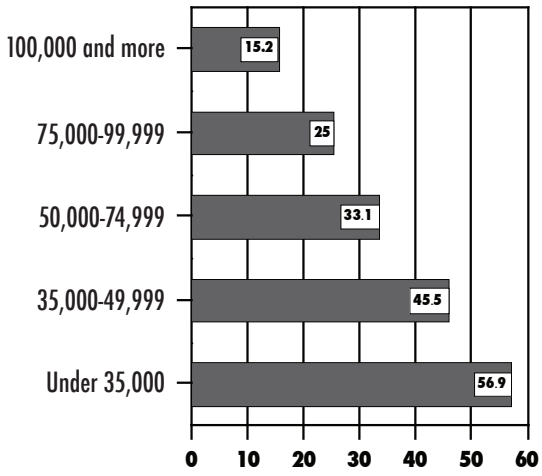


FIGURE 10. Percentage of "Strongly Agree" Responses to Statement that More Government Support of Fathers Is Needed, by Household Income

BELIEF IN A FATHER-ABSENCE CRISIS

Although reported belief in a father-absence crisis in this country was quite high among the respondents to the survey, support for government and private programs to promote responsible fatherhood is likely to differ considerably between those who "somewhat agreed" and those who "strongly agreed" that there is such a crisis. As stated above, only 62 percent selected the "strongly agree" response alternative, so there is considerable variation in the responses.

We again conducted a multivariate analysis to detect patterns of variation, and we discovered that when other explanatory variables were statistically held constant, the responses varied considerably by religiosity and somewhat less by age and household income.

That the more religious respondents were more likely to perceive a father-absence crisis than the less religious ones (Figure 11) is expected and thus not particularly interesting. What are interesting, however, are the differences between the "strongly agree" responses in Figure 11 and those in Figure 8, which deals with government help and support. Seventy-two percent of the "very religious" fathers "strongly agreed" that there was a father-absence crisis, but only 27 percent of those highly religious respondents "strongly agreed" that the government should give more help and support to fathers. In contrast, among the respondents who said that they were "not at all religious," the "strongly agree" responses are slightly higher for the government support question than for the father-absence crisis question.

These differences reflect what researchers call a statistical interaction, which exists when the magnitude (and sometimes the direction) of an association between two variables depends on the value of a third variable. This interaction is graphically shown in Figure 12, which shows the association between the responses to the father-absence crisis question and those to the government support question at each of four levels of religiosity. The statistic used is gamma, which is a measure of the association between the two variables. The value for the "very religious" is near zero and is not statistically significant (that is, the small indicated association could easily have resulted from chance), while the other gammas are statistically significant, and the one for "not at all religious" indicates a positive association of moderate magnitude.

These findings indicate that whereas a large percentage of highly religious fathers believe that there is a father-absence crisis, many of them do not believe that government programs are an appropriate solution to that crisis. Contrary to common belief, the strongest supporters of the government programs seem to be relatively secular persons, and they probably are predominantly moderate conservatives, centrists, and moderate liberals rather than extreme conservatives. Of course, the findings from this survey provide no direct evidence on the general political and ideological positions of the fathers with the different views on fatherhood and on government programs to support responsible fatherhood–a topic that deserves further investigation.

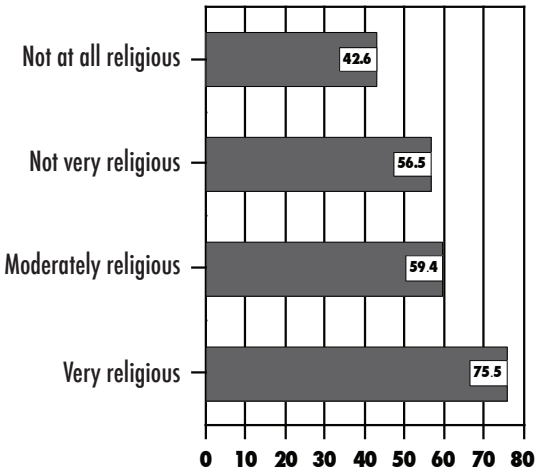


FIGURE 11. Percentage of "Strongly Agree" Responses to Statement that there is a Father-Absence Crisis, by Religiosity

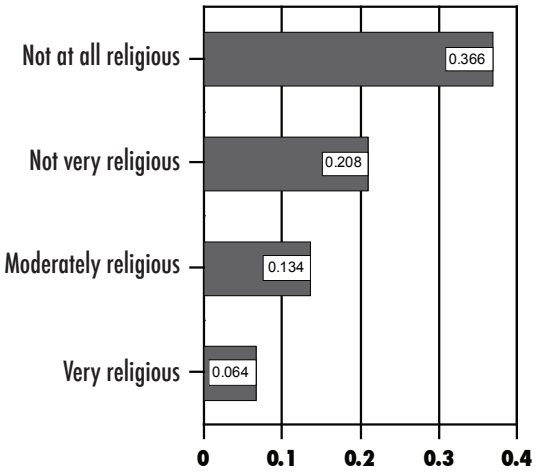


FIGURE 12. Association (Gamma) of Responses to Father-Absence Crisis Question with Responses to Government-Support Question, by Religiosity

The data on the relationship of belief in a father-absence crisis to the age of the fathers (Figure 13) is similar to those reported in Figure 6 on the importance of marriage to responsible fatherhood. That is, the youngest respondents differ from everyone else. Again, the meaning of the finding is unclear. These young fathers might change as they grow older, or they might not. If they do not, their views reflect an emerging trend–and one that supporters of responsible fatherhood will find disturbing.

"...those respondents who had nonresident fathers generally did not regard those fathers very positively."

As we show above, the higher-income respondents to our survey were not very favorably inclined toward government programs to help fathers, one possible reason being that the economic conservatism that is prevalent among higher-income persons makes them unsupportive of government social programs of all kinds. However, the data in Figure 14 suggest another reason, namely, that higher-income fathers are less inclined to consider father-absence to be a major problem. One might speculate that higher-income fathers tend to be isolated from the segments of the population in which fatherlessness is more prevalent, but in our sample there was virtually no relationship between household income and whether or not the fathers lived with the focal child. Of course, the kind of fatherlessness in which the father does not acknowledge paternity, and the kind in which the father provides little or no financial support to the child, may be more prevalent at the lower income levels, and the negative consequences of fatherlessness are more obvious and conspicuous among the poor.

OTHER ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS

We forgo detailed discussion of the variation in the responses to the other attitudinal questions, but the responses of all of the fathers to some of the questions are instructive. For instance, the fact that only 54 percent of the fathers agreed, and only 22 percent "strongly agreed," that "When you first became a father, you felt adequately prepared for fatherhood," indicates a need for pre-fatherhood parental education. Similarly, the fact that only 78 percent agreed, and only 34 percent "strongly agreed," that they now have the necessary skills and knowledge to be good fathers indicates that parental education is needed for many of those who are already fathers. These needs seem to be prevalent in all

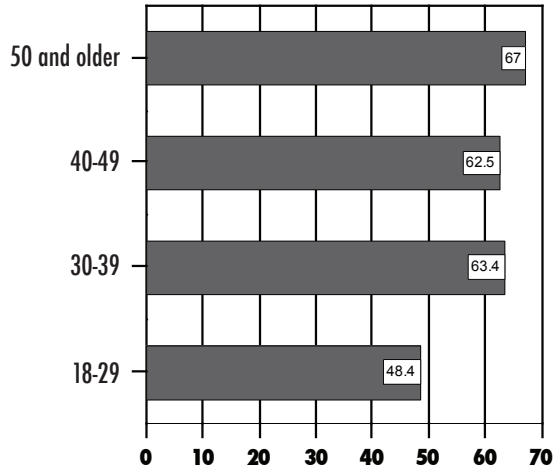


FIGURE 13. Percentage of "Strongly Agree" Responses to Statement that There is a Father-Absence Crisis, by Respondent's Age

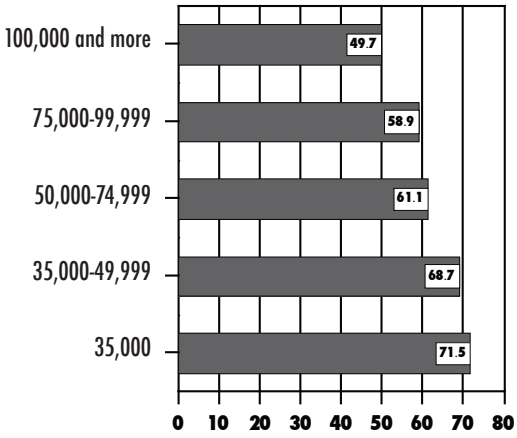


FIGURE 14. Percentage of "Strongly Agree" Responses to Statement that There is a Father-Absence Crisis, by Household Income

major segments of the population, though they are apparently somewhat more prevalent among the poor and those with relatively little formal education.

About three-fourths of the respondents agreed that they had involved, responsible fathers while they were growing up, and 52 percent "strongly agreed." However, of those who were not living with their biological or adoptive fathers at age 16, only 32

percent agreed with the responsible father statement and only 14 percent strongly agreed. On a related topic, about three-fourths of the fathers who responded to the relevant question agreed that they were better fathers than their own fathers were, and 35 percent "strongly agreed." However this question was apparently difficult for some of the fathers to answer, because an unusually large number (four percent) either said that they weren't sure or refused to answer the question. Of those who did not live with their fathers at age 16 and who responded to the question, 94 percent agreed and 68 percent "strongly agreed" that they were better fathers than their own fathers were. Clearly, those respondents who had nonresident fathers generally did not regard those fathers very positively.

RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS
OF OBSTACLES TO GOOD FATHERING

"The most commonly perceived obstacle by a wide margin was work responsibilities..."

The respondents to the survey were presented with 14 conditions that might be obstacles to being a good father and were asked to rate each according to how much it was an obstacle, the response alternatives being "a great deal," "somewhat," "not very much," and "not at all." For each condition we constructed a Fathering Obstacle Index by scoring "not at all" zero, "not very much" one, "somewhat" two, and "a great deal" three and then multiplying by ten. The mean values for all of the respondents are given in Figure 15.

The most commonly perceived obstacle by a wide margin was work responsibilities, followed by the media/popular culture, and financial problems. "A lack of knowledge about how to be a good father" and "resistance/lack of encouragement from the child's mother" rank next, choice of the latter obstacle being largely by fathers not married to the mother of the focal child selected for this study. The other mean index values are quite low, even though a few fathers considered each condition to be an important obstacle.

The reported perceptions of obstacles to good fathering by the 150 fathers not married to the mother of the focal child differ in important ways from those of the fathers as a whole (see Figure 16). Among these respondents, "resistance/lack of encouragement from the child's mother" ranked first, and "treatment of fathers by the courts," "lack of acceptance and support from mothers of your child's friends," and "a relationship with a woman other than the child's mother" all ranked several positions higher than among all respondents. Furthermore, the index value is higher for the fathers not married to the mother of the focal child than for all fathers on most of the conditions, the only major exception being "work responsibilities." These findings add to the already substantial body of evidence on the importance of marriage for responsible fatherhood.

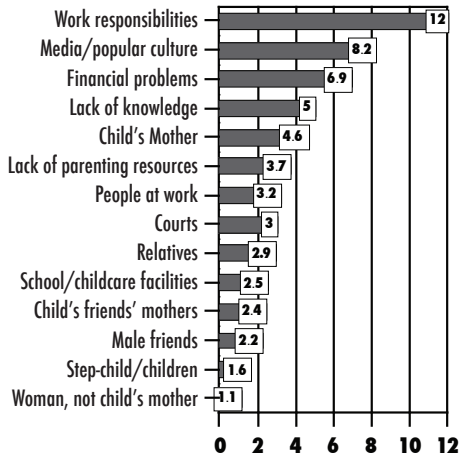


FIGURE 15. Mean Obstacles to Good Fathering Index, by Source, All Fathers

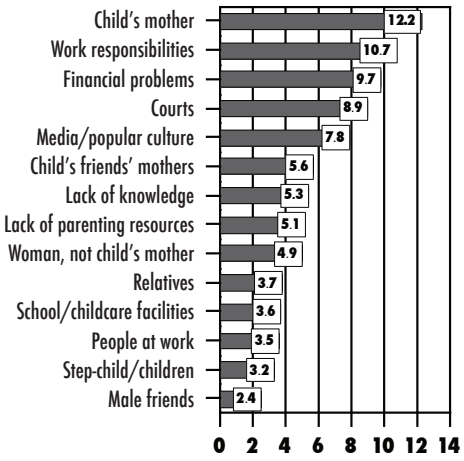


FIGURE 16. Mean Obstacles to Good Fathering Index, by Source, Fathers Not Married to Focal Child's Mother

For the purpose of doing a multivariate analysis, we created what we call the Summary Obstacles to Fathering Index (SOFI), which is based on the responses to all of the 14 relevant questions. This index is the sum of the values for the Obstacles to Fathering Index for the individual questions and thus is a global measure of the fathers' perceptions of obstacles to being good fathers. We used the multivariate analysis to see how the index values relate to different explanatory variables when the other explanatory variables are statistically held constant.

The explanatory variables that emerged as being independently related to the SOFI are being married to the mother of the focal child, living with the focal child, having one or more stepchildren, age of the respondent, and household income. Race, education, and age of the focal child bear no substantial relationship to the index values when the other explanatory variables are held constant.

The relationship (without controls for other variables) of being married to the focal child's mother to the SOFI is shown in Figure 17. Obviously, the relationship is strong, as it is even after other explanatory variables are held constant. This is additional evidence of the importance of marriage in enabling good fathering.

Another variable closely related to being married to the mother of the focal child is living with the focal child, but these two variables seem to exert influence independently of one another. The relationship of living with the child to the SOFI is shown in Figure 18, and it is even stronger than the relationship of being married to the mother of the focal child to the SOFI.

This strong relationship adds to the already strong evidence on the importance to good fathering of co-residence with the child.

Having a stepchild or stepchildren did not loom large as an obstacle to good fathering for the sample as a whole because only 10 percent had at least one stepchild under age 18. However, for those few, step-parenting did seem to be an important obstacle to being a good father (see Figure 19). The difference shown in the figure is statistically significant, as is the relationship when other explanatory variables are statistically held constant. More than a quarter of the fathers

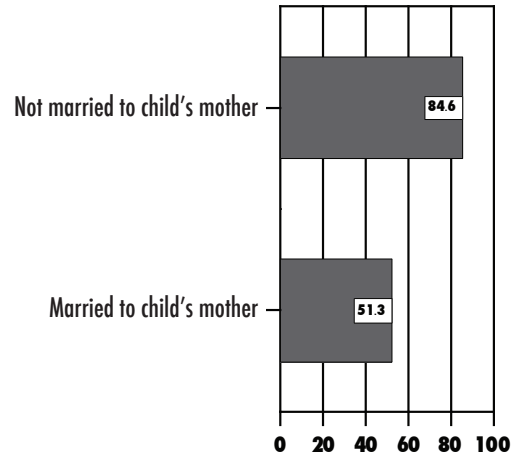


FIGURE 17. Mean Summary Obstacles to Fathering Index, by Whether or Not Respondent was Married to Mother of Focal Child

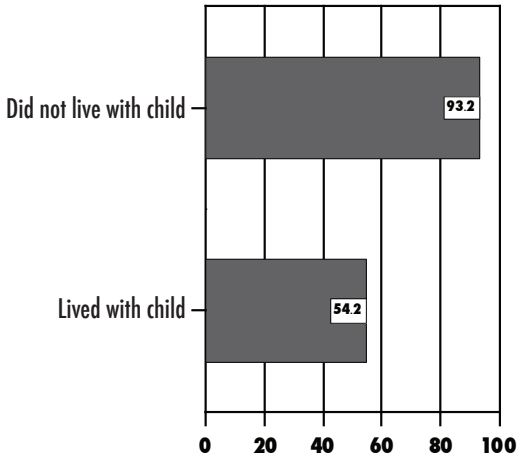


FIGURE 18. Mean Summary Obstacles to Fathering Index, by Whether or Not Respondent Lived with Focal Child

who had a stepchild or stepchildren agreed that "Responsibility for a stepchild or stepchildren" was an obstacle to being a good father. This is further evidence that fathering tends to be more difficult with less conventional and more complex family forms.

"...this finding identifies older low-income fathers as a group who appear to be especially in need of assistance with their fathering."

The multivariate analysis showed a positive association of age of the respondents with the SOFI, but because this relationship appeared only after household income was held constant, we report data in Figure 20 that shows the relationship of the index values to both age of the respondent and household income. The reported perceived obstacles to good fathering were higher for the older respondents at all age levels, and the perceived obstacles varied inversely with household income among both the younger and the older fathers. The SOFI is especially high for the older low-income fathers, who, in contrast to the younger low-income fathers, were almost certainly unlikely to anticipate that their economic condition would improve very much. Also, some research has indicated that income is to some extent a marker for parental competence[4], and this is likely to be more true for older than for younger persons. At any rate, this finding identifies older low-income fathers as a group who appear to be especially in need of assistance with their fathering.

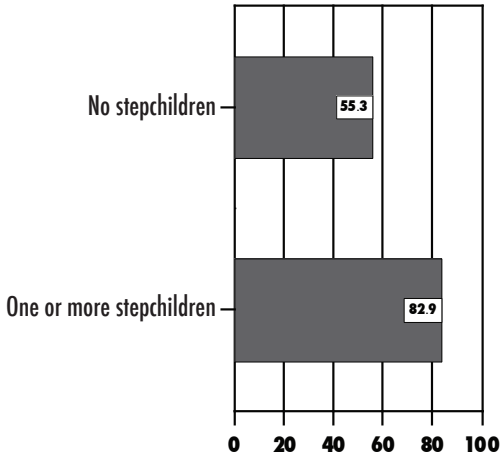


FIGURE 19. Mean Summary Obstacles to Fathering Index, by Whether or Not Respondent Had a Stepchild or Stepchildren

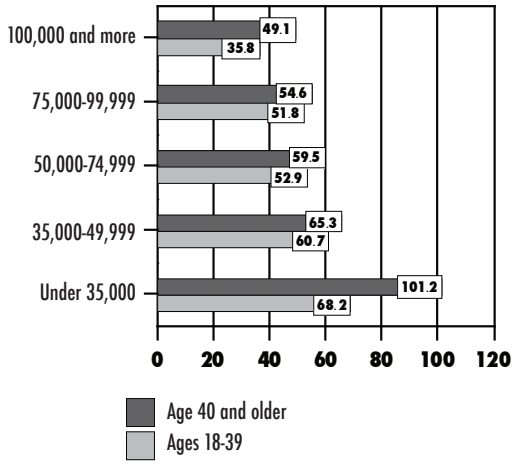


FIGURE 20. Mean Summary Obstacles to Fathering Index, by Age of Respondent and Household Income

RESPONDENTS' PERFORMANCE
AS FATHERS

"One might think that fathers would be relatively willing to admit that they find it difficult to spend enough time with their children..."

We have no illusions about being able to gauge with precision how well the respondents to the survey have performed as fathers. If, as seems to be the case, being a father is generally an important part of the men's identities, the self reports of what they do as a father will tend to be colored by a natural tendency to deny or downplay deficiencies and exaggerate the positive aspects of their fathering. Therefore, we interpret the findings with caution and place more emphasis on variations in responses among different kinds of fathers than on the responses from the entire sample (what researchers call the marginal frequencies).

One might think that fathers would be relatively willing to admit that they find it difficult to spend enough time with their children, given that presumably a major reason for their lack of time is what they do to provide financially for their child or children. Still, the responses of the fathers to a question about the adequacy of the time that they were able to spend with their children are almost certainly biased toward the adequate end of the scale. Only 21 percent said that the time spent with the focal child selected for this study was less than adequate and 31 percent said that it was more than adequate, the remainder simply choosing "adequate." The clustering of the responses near the high end of the scale shouldn't be taken very seriously, but the variation in the responses makes sense. A multivariate analysis revealed that fathers who lived with their child were considerably more likely to say that they spend an adequate amount of time with him/her and that other potentially explanatory variables made little or no difference. The difference between the resident and nonresident fathers in the percentage who said that they were not able to spend an adequate amount of time with their child is shown in Figure 21. The responses of both kinds of fathers are likely to be biased, but the large difference in responses between the two almost certainly reflects a real difference.

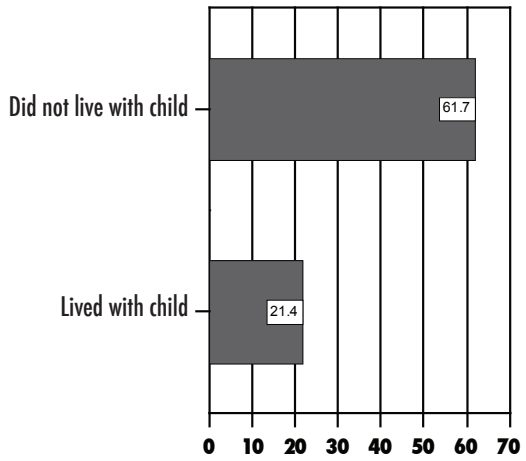


FIGURE 21. Percentage of Respondents Who Said That They Spent an Inadequate Amount of Time with Focal Child, by Whether or Not They Lived with That Child

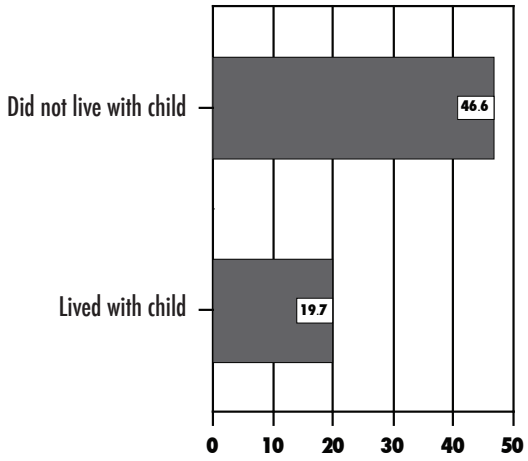


FIGURE 22. Percentage of Respondents Who Said That They Were Less than "Very Close" to Focal Child, by Whether or Not They Lived with That Child

The fathers almost certainly also exaggerated their degree of closeness to their focal child, in that 40 percent said that they were "extremely close," 37 percent said that they were "very close," and only 2 percent said that they were "not at all close." But again, the variation in the responses generally falls into patterns that would be expected. A multivariate analysis revealed the strongest relationship to be with whether or not the father lived with the focal child (the closeness of course is greater if he does), but the reported closeness is also greater if the father doesn't have a stepchild or stepchildren (but bears no relationship to whether or not he has additional children of his own under age 18) and is greater for younger than for older children or teenagers. The only counter-intuitive finding is that, with the other explanatory variables statistically held constant, the reported closeness of the fathers to the focal child is somewhat greater on average if they were not married to the child's mother. This finding resulted from two rare conditions, namely, the few fathers who lived with their focal child but were not married to the child's mother reported feeling especially close to the child on average, and the few who were married to the mother but did not live with the child reported an unusually low average degree of closeness.

The difference by residential status in the percentage of fathers who said that they were less than "very close" to the focal child is reported in Figure 22. The difference is large and is not diminished by statistically holding constant the other explanatory variables. The data in Figure 22 (as well as those in Figure 21) clearly indicate that it is more difficult for men to be good fathers if they do not live with their children. Evidence on this issue from some other sources is even stronger than the evidence we report here.[5]

Additional evidence that less conventional family forms tend to hamper good fathering is reported in Figure 23, which shows that, on the average, the fathers who had one or more stepchildren felt less close to their focal child than did the other fathers. Only a small part of this difference is explained by the fact that the fathers with stepchildren were somewhat less likely to live with the focal child. Furthermore, the difference is not simply a "dilution of resources" effect–whereby the father's time and attention must be shared with other dependents–because there was essentially no difference in reported closeness to the focal child according to whether the father had other own children under age 18. The

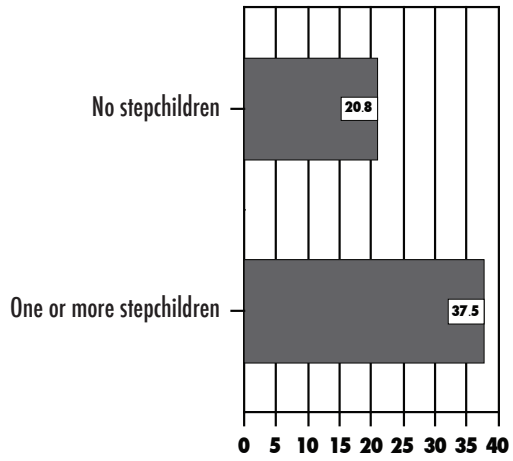


FIGURE 23. Percentage of Respondents Who Said That They Were Less than "Very Close" to Focal Child, by Whether or Not Respondent Had a Stepchild or Stepchildren

explanation apparently lies in the complex and often less than harmonious relationships that characterize some stepfamilies.

On the average, the fathers felt closest to their focal children ages 0-5 and least close to those who were teenagers (Figure 24). This might be regarded as simply the result of a natural and normal progression toward independence of offspring as they grow older, but the relatively low degree of closeness that the fathers felt toward their teenagers may be reason for concern. Parental guidance, which no doubt is highly associated with parental closeness, is crucial in helping adolescents avoid delinquency, pregnancy, and problems with drugs and alcohol. We know of no strictly comparable data about the closeness of mothers to their offspring, but we suspect that the pattern of closeness by age of the offspring might be similar for mothers.

Findings from other research led us to expect that the fathers would say that they felt closer to their male children than to their female ones. However, there was no statistically significant difference in the responses to the "closeness" question by the gender of the focal child. Furthermore, the pattern of difference in reported closeness by age of the offspring did not differ substantially by the gender of the focal child.

We asked the survey respondents several questions about their

activities with their focal child–questions that we realized are very susceptible to social desirability response bias; that is, to eliciting responses that reflect well on the respondent rather than honest ones. For each activity, the respondent was asked if he had done it "frequently," "fairly often," "infrequently," or "never." "Frequently" was the modal response for all of the activities except "taken your child to work" (for which the modal response was "never") and "taken your child to a doctor or other professional person without the child's mother present" (for which the modal response was "infrequently"). We are not inclined to take these responses at their face value, but the variation in responses among the different categories of fathers might be meaningful.

Some of the activities are applicable mainly to infants and very young children, and we analyzed responses to questions about these activities only for respondents whose focal child was ages 0-5. Other activities are applicable mainly to older children and adolescents, and we analyzed responses to questions about these activities only for respondents whose focal child was ages 6-17. For each class of activities, we recoded the responses so that "frequently" equals three and "not at all" equals zero. We then summed the values for the items relating to each kind of activities to create an Activities with Child 0-5 Index and an Activities with Child 6-17 Index.

A multivariate analysis with the Activities with Child 0-5 Index as the outcome variable revealed it to be independently associated with only one explanatory variable, namely, whether or not the father was married to the mother of the focal child, and as expected, fathers married to the mothers reported more activities on the average. The difference without other variables being held constant, shown in Figure 25, is small but statistically significant. Other potentially explanatory variables such as age of the respondent, race, education, and household

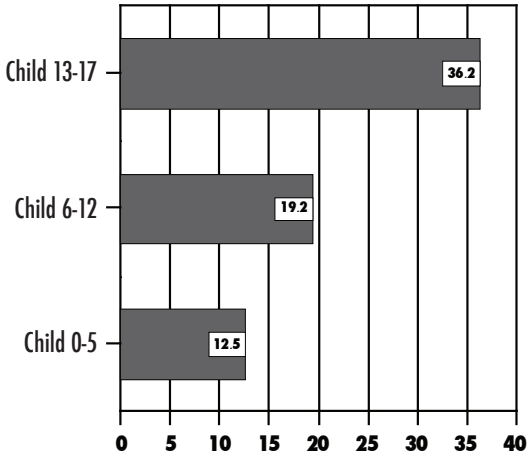


FIGURE 24. Percentage of Respondents Who Said That They Were Less than "Very Close" to Focal Child, by Age of Child

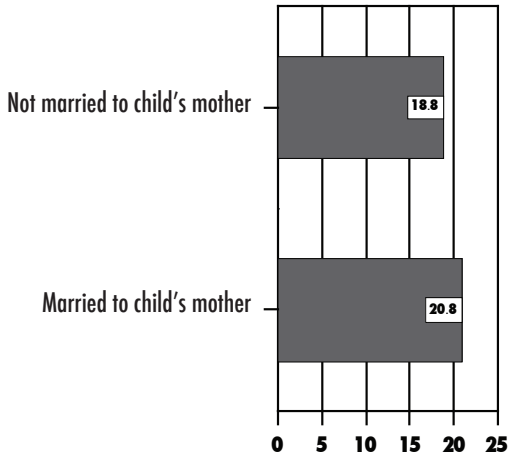


FIGURE 25. Mean Activities with Child 0-5 Index, by Whether or Not Respondant Was Married to Mother of Focal Child

income seem to have made little difference.

The values of the Activities with Child 6-17 Index are somewhat more variable than those of the Activities with Child 0-5 Index and, according to a multivariate analysis, relate independently to three variables. Fathers who lived with the focal child reported more activities than those who did not; highly educated respondents reported more activities than less educated ones; and fathers who

had a stepchild or stepchildren apparently were less active with their focal child than were other fathers (see Figures 26, 27, and 28). These findings are consistent with those reported above that suggest that co-residence with the child, high education, and the lack of stepchildren are all conducive to good fathering. Again, the association of having one or more stepchildren with an unfavorable outcome cannot be explained simply by a dilution of resources, because respondents who had more than one child under age 18 reported slightly more activities with their focal child than did those with only one child.

We expected that the fathers would do more activities with their sons than with their daughters, and although the differences in the mean Activities with Child 0-5 Index and the mean Activities with Child 6-17 Index are in the predicted direction, neither is statistically significant. Therefore, while we suspect that the fathers were somewhat more active with their sons, we cannot be highly confident that the observed differences didn't result from chance.

The respondents were asked how comfortable they would be discussing certain topics (sex, relationships/dating, alcohol use/abuse, tobacco use, illegal drug use, health issues, character, and religion/spirituality) with their focal child. These topics are relevant mainly to the older offspring, so we analyzed only the responses from fathers whose focal child was a teenager. Except for the first two topics, at least around 85 percent of the 222 fathers of teenagers said that they would be "very comfortable" discussing each topic with their focal child, and there was too little variation in the responses to do a meaningful multivariate analysis with them. We view these high percentages with suspicion, but at least most of the respondents felt that they should be comfortable discussing such topics with their teenagers. As would be expected, smaller percentages of the respondents said that they felt very comfortable discussing sex and relationships/dating with their focal child, but even these percentages are suspiciously high, being 54 and 71. The question about comfort in discussing sex yielded the only statistically significant difference in the entire study between the fathers of male and female focal children–the "very comfortable" percentage being 66 for the former and only 39 for the latter.

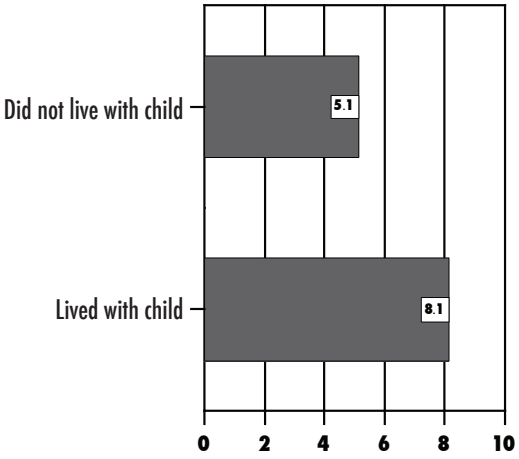


FIGURE 26. Mean Activities with Child 6-17 Index, by Whether or Not Respondant Lived with Focal Child

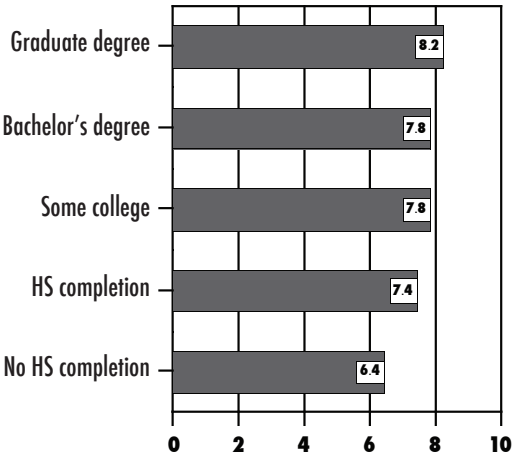


FIGURE 27. Mean Activities with Child 6-17 Index, by Education

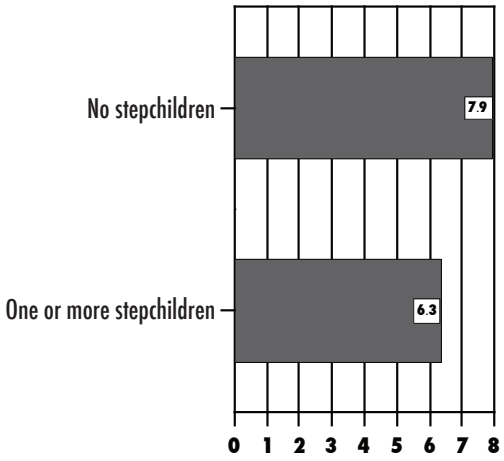


FIGURE 28. Mean Activities with Child 6-17 Index, by Whether or Not Respondent Had a Stepchild or Stepchildren

SOURCES TO AID FATHERING

"'Wife, partner, or child's mother tops the list of sources for help in being better fathers..."

The survey asked which of eight possible sources had respondents drawn upon to improve their fathering.

The percentage of fathers who said that they had drawn upon each source is reported in Figure 29. "Wife, partner, or child's mother" tops the list, followed by other men–probably close friends–and parents. Few had drawn upon a professional person, and only a little more than a half said that they had drawn on a place of worship. Interpersonal relations, then, seem to have been the main sources of assistance.

Space limitations preclude a detailed examination of the variation in the responses, most of which is commonsensical. It's not surprising, for instance, that "very religious" fathers were more likely than others to have drawn upon a place of worship (88 percent said that they had done so) or that those respondents who had lived with their fathers at age 16 and who considered those fathers to have been involved and responsible were more likely than other respondents to have drawn upon their fathers (83 percent said that they had done so).

One of the more important variations in responses is between fathers not married to the mother of their focal child and all other respondents, and thus we report the responses of the former in Figure 30. These fathers were much less likely than other respondents to have gotten help from "wife, partner, or child's mother" and were less likely to have gotten help from their father or a place of worship. They were more likely to have received assistance from siblings or a professional person, but the overall level of help that they got seems to have been lower on average than that received by other fathers.

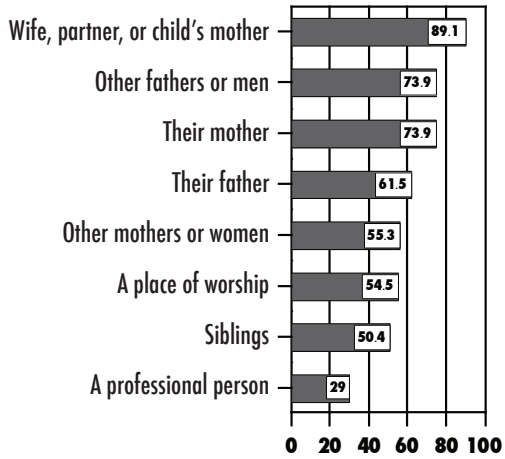


FIGURE 29. Percentage of Respondents Who Said That They Had Drawn on Selected Sources for Help in Being Better Fathers

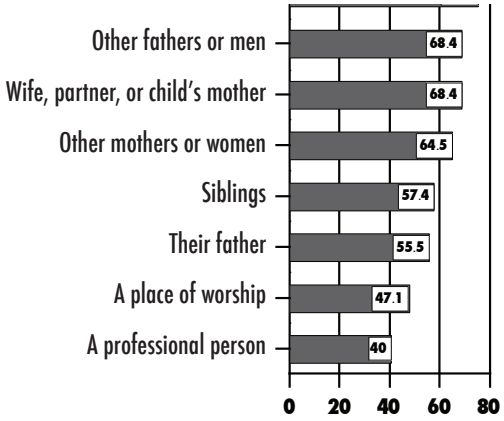


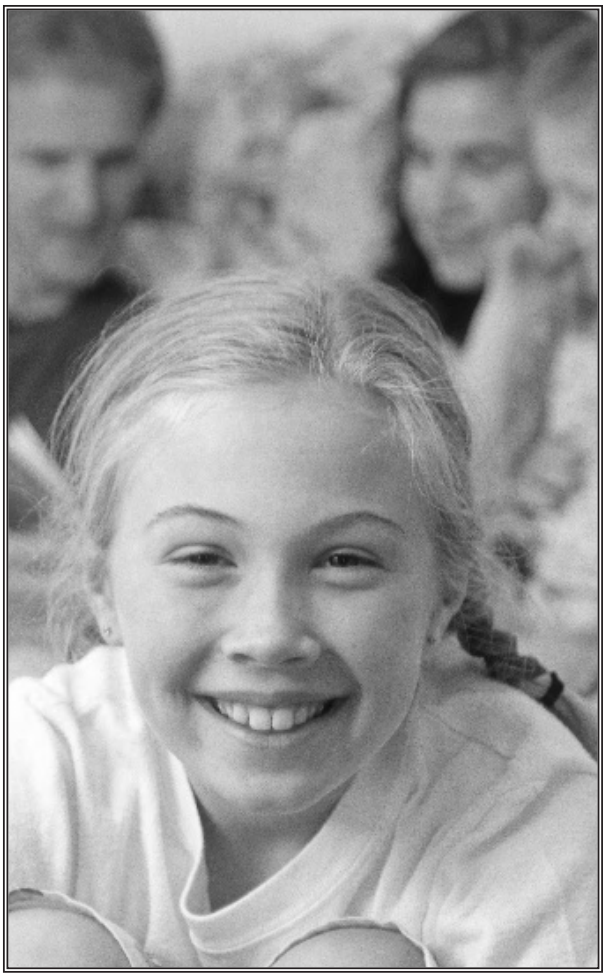
FIGURE 30. Percentage of Respondents Not Married to the Mothers of Their Focal Child Who Said that They Had Drawn on Selected Sources for Help in Being Better Fathers

CONCLUSIONS

"...our findings suggest that fathers with stepchildren, as a whole, should be targeted for special attention by responsible fatherhood organizations."

Arguably the most important findings from this study are those that show a relationship of responsible fatherhood with co-residence with children and marriage to their mother. These two conditions tend to go together, and thus, in some analyses, only one of the two bears a statistically significant relationship to the outcome variable. Nevertheless, the two together seem always to have important effects on men's performance as fathers and on their perceptions of the obstacles to being good fathers. That co-residence with children and marriage to their mother is important to responsible fatherhood of course is not a new finding, and some other studies provide evidence on this issue that is even stronger than ours.[5] However, the findings in this report provide insight into some of the specifics of how co-residence with children and marriage to their mother promote good fathering, showing for instance that many of the fathers not married to the mothers believe that the mothers make it difficult from them to be good fathers.

The findings from this study about the apparent effects of having stepchildren make a more unique contribution than do those about marriage and co-residence, given the fact that the extensive research on stepfamilies has generally not focused on the relationship between stepfathers and their own children. It is important, therefore, that we found that for many of the fathers who had stepchildren, their responsibilities for those children seemed to have been an obstacle to good fathering of their own children. Having stepchildren often occurs along with lack of co-residence with own children and lack of marriage to the mother of those children, but some of the negative effects of responsibility for stepchildren seem to occur even in the absence of the other two conditions. Of course, it is important to point out that any negative effects of having responsibility for stepchildren are not universal and that some step-families function very well. However, our findings suggest



that fathers with stepchildren, as a whole, should be targeted for special attention by responsible fatherhood organizations. The findings also add to the large and growing body of evidence that the kinds of families that have become more prevalent in the past few decades are not ideal for children.

Another category of fathers who may warrant special attention are the older low-income fathers, who on the average perceived considerably greater obstacles to being good fathers than even the younger low-income fathers. Older fathers perceived greater obstacles to fathering than younger ones at all income levels, but the difference was particularly great at the lowest level. We don't know the reasons for this finding, but we speculate that many of the older low-income men have personal characteristics,

such as addictions and poor social skills, that partly account for both their low-income and their problems with parenting. Or, the finding could simply be the result of the accumulated effects of years of poverty and lower expectations of future financial improvement among the older low-income fathers.

The greater obstacles to fathering perceived by the older respondents are not explained by the fact that their children were older on the average, but the fathers of teenagers may nevertheless need special attention. The respondents with a teenage focal child reported feeling much less close to their focal child on the average than did the respondents whose focal child was younger. In view of the fact that teenagers are at risk for numerous undesirable outcomes that a close relationship with a father should help to prevent, assisting fathers to develop closer relationships with their adolescent offspring strikes us as an especially important task to be undertaken by the responsible fatherhood movement.

Several of our findings should be of concern to responsible fatherhood organizations and might be an appropriate basis for some refocusing of efforts within the fatherhood movement. For instance, more than half of the fathers seemed to think that mothers or other men could adequately substitute for them–not the optimal point of view for motivating involved, responsible, and committed fatherhood. Belief in the replaceability of fathers also was relatively high among the respondents with graduate degrees, who have importance disproportionate to their numbers because of their influence on education, the media, and politics. Another elite group of fathers with troubling attitudes were the highest income respondents, who were less likely to believe that there is a father-absence crisis in the country than medium and low-income respondents. All of these findings call for increased efforts to educate fathers in general, and especially certain kinds of fathers, about the importance of fatherhood and the extent of father absence in the country.

A finding that might be troubling to advocates of government programs to promote responsible fatherhood is that the "very religious" fathers, who were among the strongest believers in responsible fatherhood and a father-absence crisis, were less likely to favor the government programs than were the less religious respondents. Believing that there is a father-absence crisis in the country was rather highly predictive of support for the government programs among the less religious respondents but not among the very religious ones. Among the fathers sampled who favor responsible fatherhood and believe that there is not enough of it in America today, there seems to be a split between those who strongly support the government fatherhood programs and those who give tepid support at most. Only activists "on the front line" know whether or not there is such a division within the fatherhood movement, but its existence in the general public indicates a need for those with the common goal of promoting responsible fatherhood to pursue that goal in non-conflicting and at least minimally coordinated even though different ways.

The survey yielded a moderate amount of information that should be useful to fatherhood activists in planning how to deliver assistance to fathers. For instance, according to their survey responses, the fathers we studied had received assistance in being good fathers primarily from wives, mothers of their children, their parents, and other fathers and men (probably mainly close friends). Few had used professional help, and only a moderate number had drawn upon siblings or a house of worship. In other words, they had generally turned to the persons with whom they had the closest relationships or with whom they shared an interest in the child or children.

END NOTES

1. Although the data set contains a weight variable that allows the data to be weighted by age, race, ethnicity (Hispanic/non-Hispanic), education, and household income, the profile of the respondents and the rest of the data presented in this report are from the un-weighted sample. Weighting the sample makes the distributions of the weight variables in the sample artificially equal to the distributions derived from U. S. Bureau of the Census surveys, a procedure that is useful for some purposes. However, weighting the sample made little difference for the analyses we conducted for this report, and statistical tests of significance are not accurate when applied to the weighted data. Furthermore, the main reason for weighting data from telephone surveys is to correct for the under-representation in those surveys of young low-status males, and the weighting is unlikely to work well for our purposes. The reason is that the young low-status fathers included in the sample are likely to be more responsible parents on the average than those who cannot be reached through a telephone survey, and the weighting is based on the assumption that the young low-status males reached are representative of that demographic category on the main variables covered on the survey.

2. For instance, see U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, Fertility, Contraception, and Fatherhood: Data on Men and Women from Cycle 6 of the 2002 National Survey of Family Growth (Hyattsville, MD, June, 2006).

3. Norval D. Glenn, With This Ring: A Survey on Marriage in America (Gaithersburg, MD: National Fatherhood Initiative, 2005).

4. Susan E. Mayer, What Money Can't Buy: Family Income and Children's Life Chances (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).

5. For instance, see U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, op cit. This publication reports differences in activities with children between fathers who did and did not live with their children that seem to be larger than the similar kinds of differences we report here. One possible reason is that the measures of activities are not strictly comparable, but the main reason is likely to be the almost certain inclusion of a larger proportion of the less responsible fathers in the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) sample. The NSFG included fathers as young as 15, and being a face-to-face survey, it should have been more effective than a telephone survey in locating hard-to-reach kinds of persons.

TECHNICAL APPENDIX

The questionnaire for this study was designed by Norval Glenn of the University of Texas at Austin and David Popenoe of Rutgers University in consultation with staff members at National Fatherhood Initiative. The interviews were conducted by telephone by Harris Interactive, one of the leading commercial survey research firms, which designed the sample to be representative of men age 18 and older who had at least one biological or adoptive child under age 18 and who lived in households with at least one line telephone in the 48 contiguous United States (excluding Alaska and Hawaii). Telephone surveys are known to under-represent young unmarried low-status males, and all surveys that interview one adult from each sampled household under-represent adults in households that have more than the average number of adults. In order to deal with these known biases in the data, Harris Interactive provided a weight variable, based on information from U. S. Census Bureau surveys, to make the sample representative in terms of education, race, ethnicity, income, age, and number of adults in the household. However, use of the weight variable made little difference for the analyses conducted for this study, and the results of statistical tests of significance are not accurate with the weighted data. Furthermore, the weighting does not deal with the most important likely bias in the data from this survey, namely, the almost certain under-representation within demographic categories of the least responsible fathers. Therefore, the data presented in this report are not weighted.

The following differences between the weighted and un-weighted data are typical:

	WEIGHTED	UNWEIGHTED
Reported feeling "extremely close" to focal child (the child selected for special emphasis on the survey)	40.0%	40.1
Reported spending less than adequate time with focal child	27.9	25.8
Strongly agreed that a mother can adequately substitute for an involved father	22.9	19.6
Strongly agreed that a male role model can adequately substitute for an involved father	15.1	13.3
Strongly agreed that men perform best as fathers if they are married to the mothers of their children	52.5	56.9
Strongly agreed that the government should do more to help and support fathers	37.9	33.3

As is usual, the weighting made even less difference in the relationships between variables than in the levels of the individual variables.

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ABOUT NATIONAL FATHERHOOD INITIATIVE

National Fatherhood Initiative (NFI) was founded in 1994 to stimulate a society-wide movement to confront the growing problem of father absence. NFI's mission is to improve the well-being of children by increasing the proportion of children growing up with involved, responsible, and committed fathers in their lives.

A non-profit, non-partisan, non-sectarian organization, NFI pursues its mission through a three-E strategy of educating, equipping, and engaging all sectors of society on the issue of responsible fatherhood.

NFI educates and inspires all people, especially fathers, through public awareness campaigns, research, and other resources, publications, and media appearances centered on highlighting the unique and irreplaceable role fathers play in the lives of children. NFI's national public service advertising campaign promoting fatherhood has generated television, radio, print, Internet, and outdoor advertising valued at over $460 million at the time this study was published.

NFI equips fathers and develops leaders of national, state, and community fatherhood programs and initiatives through curricula, training, and technical assistance. Through its National Fatherhood Clearinghouse and Resource Center, NFI offers a wide range of innovative resources to assist fathers and organizations interested in reaching and supporting fathers.

NFI engages all sectors of society through strategic alliances and partnerships to create unique and effective ways to reach all fathers at their points of need. NFI seeks partnerships through the three pillars of culture—business, faith, and government—to create culture change around the issue of fatherhood.

For more information on the contents of this report, or for general information about NFI, call 301-948-0599 or visit www.fatherhood.org.