

*The Culture of
Fatherhood:
Relationships,
Rituals, and
Return on
Investments*





Hospital Birth



Home Birth



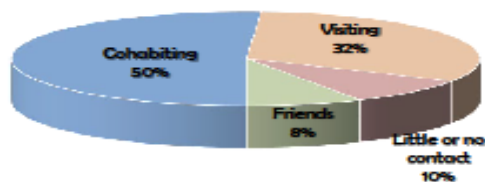
From the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study Fact Sheet

fragilefamilies.princeton.edu/publications

Non-marital childbearing has increased dramatically since the 1970s. At that time, about 10% of all births were to unmarried parents. In 2006, the number was nearly 40%. To gain a better understanding of what these trends imply for parents, children and society, the *Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study* has been following approximately 5,000 children born in large U.S. cities between 1998 and 2000, including a large oversample of children born to unmarried parents. The study has yielded a number of important findings.

A large proportion of unmarried parents are in "marriage-like" relationships at the time of their child's birth. One-half of unmarried parents are living together at the time of their child's birth, and another 32% are in 'visiting unions,' defined as romantically involved but living apart. Less than 20% are not romantically involved at the time of the child's birth.

Figure 1. Unmarried Parents' Relationship Status at Birth



Most unmarried fathers are very involved during pregnancy and immediately after the birth, especially fathers in cohabiting and visiting unions. Over 80% provide support to the mother during the pregnancy and over 70% visit the mother and baby at the hospital. In addition, the vast majority of unmarried fathers say they want to help raise their child.

Table 1. Unmarried Fathers' Involvement, By Parents' Relationship Status at Birth

	Cohabiting (%)	Visiting (%)	Non-romantic (%)
Gave money, bought things	97	84	28
Visited hospital	97	71	29
Name on birth certificate	96	80	52
Mother wants father involved	99	99	74

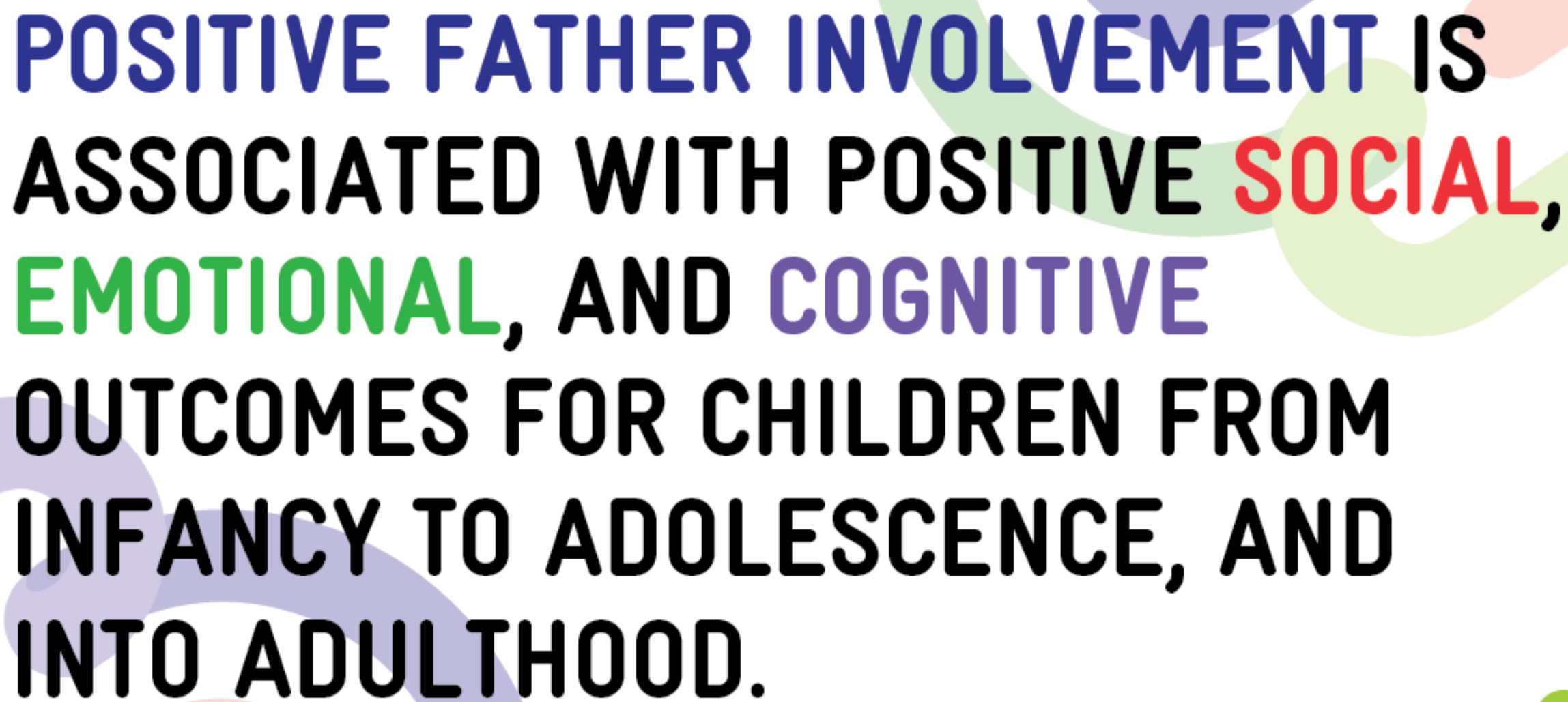
Unmarried parents are much more disadvantaged than married parents.

Compared to married parents, unmarried parents are:

- ✓ more likely to have started parenting in their teens,
- ✓ less likely to have lived with both biological parents growing up,
- ✓ more likely to have had children with other partners,
- ✓ more likely to be poor,
- ✓ more likely to suffer from depression,
- ✓ more likely to report substance abuse,
- ✓ more likely to have spent time in jail, and
- ✓ disproportionately African American and Hispanic.

Despite their high hopes, most parental relationships do not last, and as a result many children experience high levels of instability. Only 35% of unmarried couples are still living together five years after the birth of their child, and less than half of the 35% are married. Couples that were cohabiting at birth are more likely to be together than couples in 'visiting unions.' Just over 50% of cohabiting couples are married or cohabiting five years after the birth.

Once their relationship with baby's father ends, many unmarried mothers form new partnerships and many have children with new partners. Nearly 40% of all unmarried mothers

The background features several large, overlapping, semi-transparent shapes in shades of blue, green, purple, and red. In the bottom right corner, there is a stylized logo consisting of the letters 'w', 'i', and 'c' in a green, rounded font.

**POSITIVE FATHER INVOLVEMENT IS
ASSOCIATED WITH POSITIVE SOCIAL,
EMOTIONAL, AND COGNITIVE
OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN FROM
INFANCY TO ADOLESCENCE, AND
INTO ADULTHOOD.**

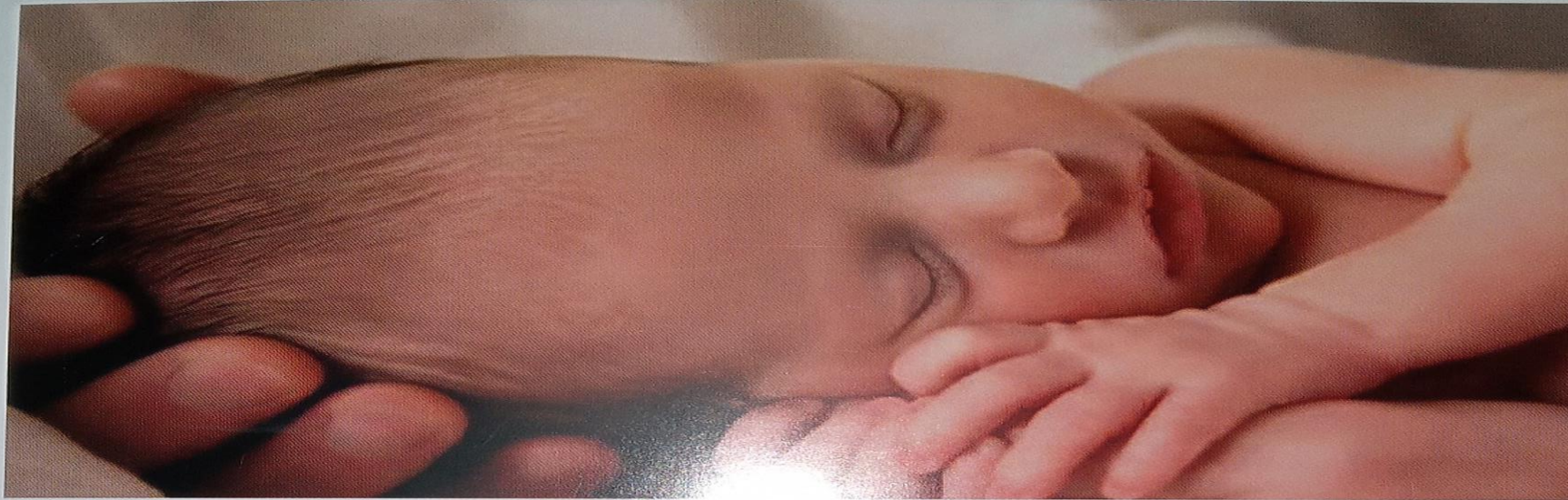
Source: Amato, P. R. (1994). "Father-child relations, mother-child relations, and offspring psychological well-being in early adulthood," *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 56(4), 1031-1042. <https://doi.org/10.2307/353611>

Early Relational Health: is the state of emotional well-being that grows from the positive emotional connection between babies and toddlers and their parents/caregivers when they experience strong, positive, and nurturing relationships with each other.





Ritual: noun; an act or series of acts regularly repeated in a set precise manner



CONSCIOUS FATHERING™



A Guide for Expectant Fathers

By Bernie Dorsey

“The hardest thing we will ever do is parent.
Funny that it will also be the single most important.”



PARENT TRUST
FOR WASHINGTON CHILDREN





Parenting CPR

Consistent
Predictable
Reliable





Rituals= Parenting Experiences



Benefits of Creating Rituals

- Predictable experiences are road map to parenting success
- Helps build emotional connection in relationship
- Parent/caregiver- helps build parenting confidence
- Helps relationship build trust
- Promotes positive childhood experiences
- Prevents adverse childhood experiences (ACES)- potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood

Dove Commercial



Resources



- www.Fatherhood.Gov
- Fast Facts: Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/aces/fastfact.html>



- Engaging Men and Dads At WIC Toolkit- California WIC Association

<https://www.calwic.org/what-we-do/engage-wic-families/engaging-men-a-dads/>

National WIC Association-WICHub.org

<https://thewichub.org/engaging-dads-in-wic-toolkit/>



Families and Child Wellbeing Study Fact Sheet

fragilefamilies.princeton.edu/publications