



How Fathers Figure

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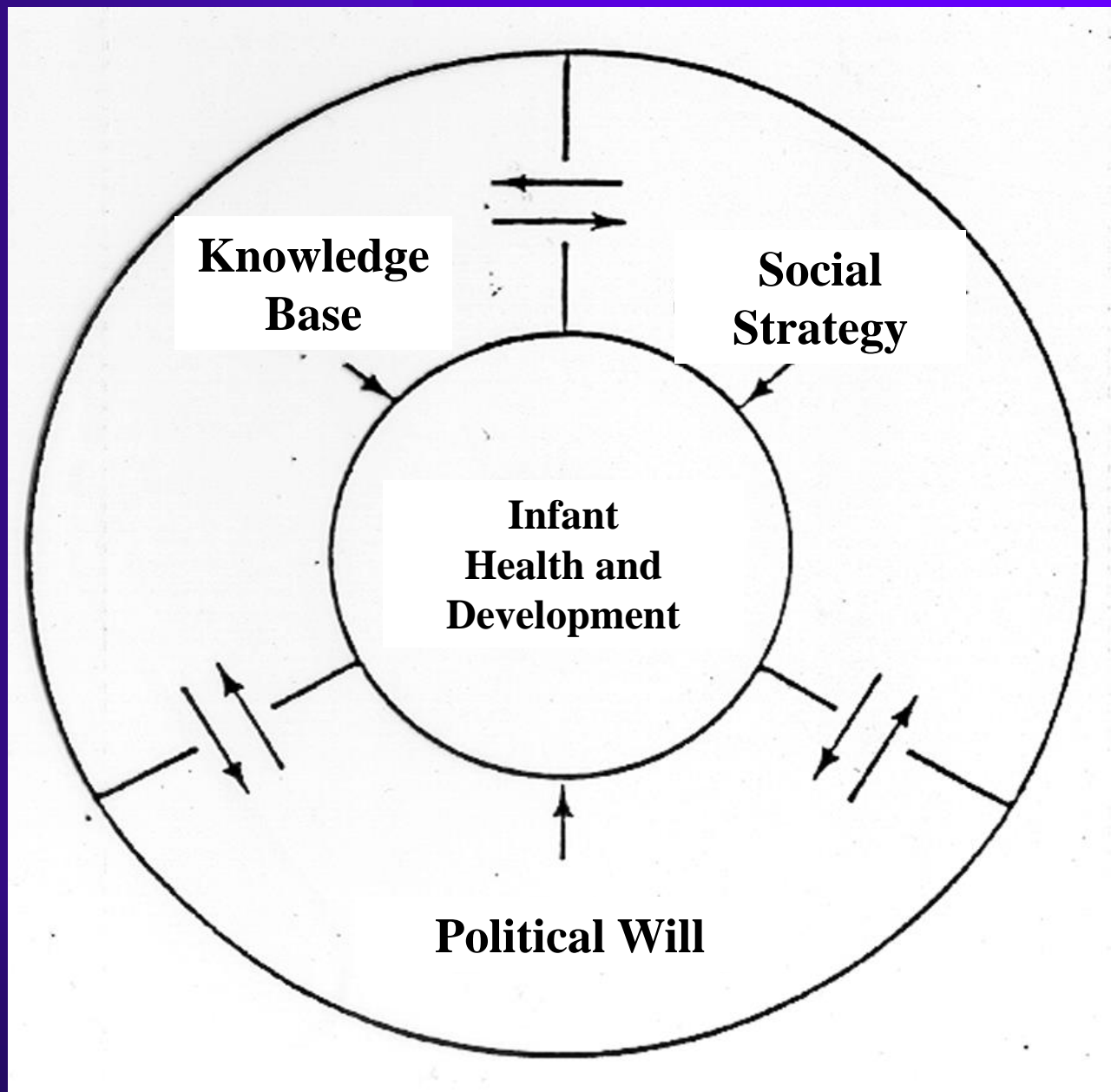
Boston University School of Public Health

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Goals for Talk

1. Convey the complexity and richness of father involvement in early child development
2. Share a public health knowledge, action, and policy perspective on father involvement
3. Encourage us to address the barriers to greater father involvement in early child development





Public Policy Goals for Fatherhood Involvement

Child Oriented Policy Goals

1. Enhance the infant's social development by expanding opportunities for social interaction
2. Improve the infant and child's cognitive development and gender role development

Adult Oriented Policy Goals

3. Enhance adult male development
4. Increase male and female gender role equality

Societal Public Policy Goals

5. Equalize the child care burden between men and women
6. Encourage marriage (and paternal responsibility) to reduce the societal burdens of single parenthood
7. Strengthen families and community

The Nature of the Child's Tie to his Father

Order of Presence in the Experimental Room

| Order 1 | Order 2 |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| Mother and Father | Mother and Father |
| Mother | Father |
| Mother and Stranger | Father and Stranger |
| Stranger | Stranger |
| Stranger and Father | Stranger and Mother |
| Father | Mother |
| Father and Mother | Mother and Father |
| Father | Mother |
| Father and Stranger | Mother and Stranger |
| Stranger | Stranger |
| Stranger and Mother | Stranger and Father |
| Mother | Father |
| Mother and Father | Father and Mother |





Figure 1

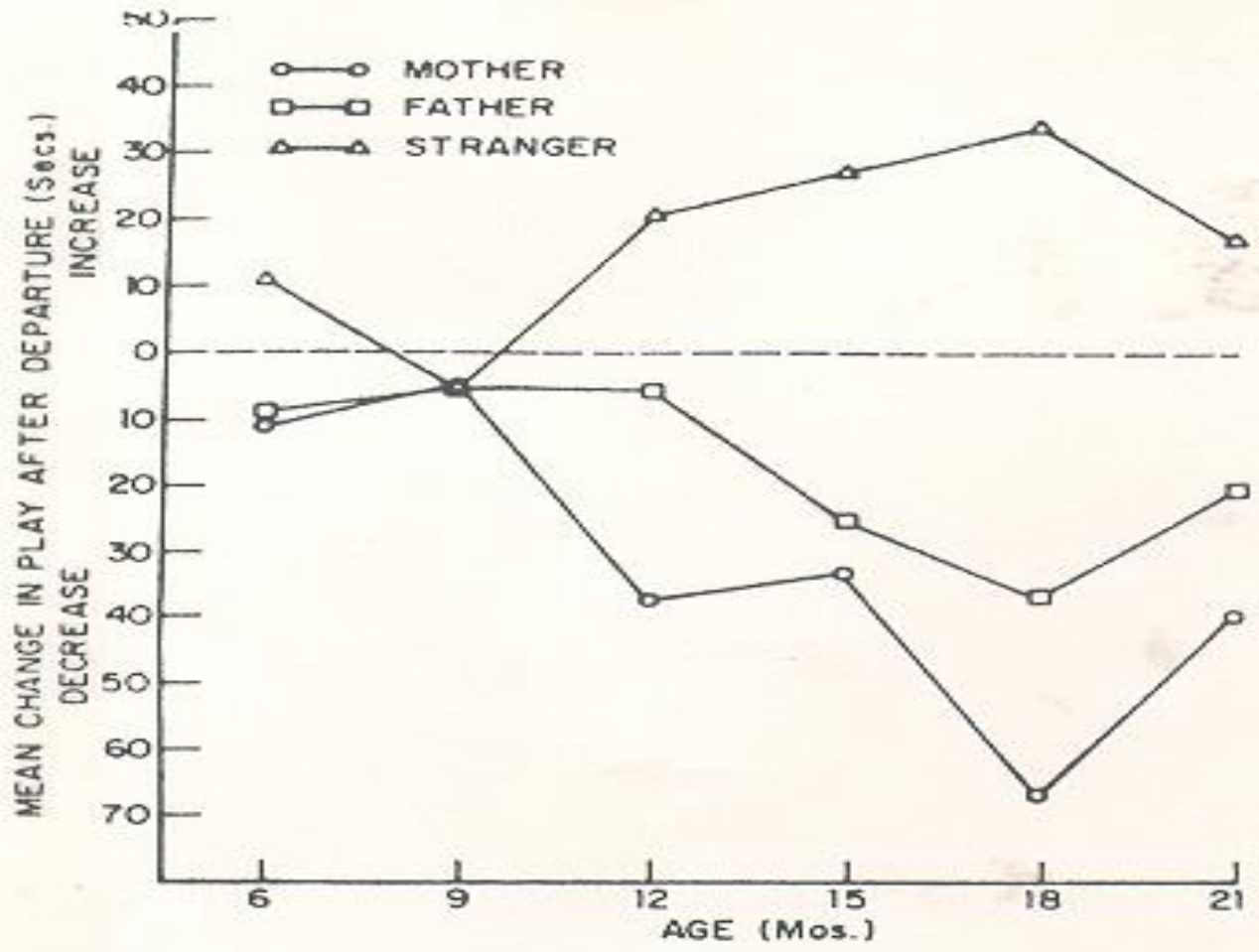


Figure 2

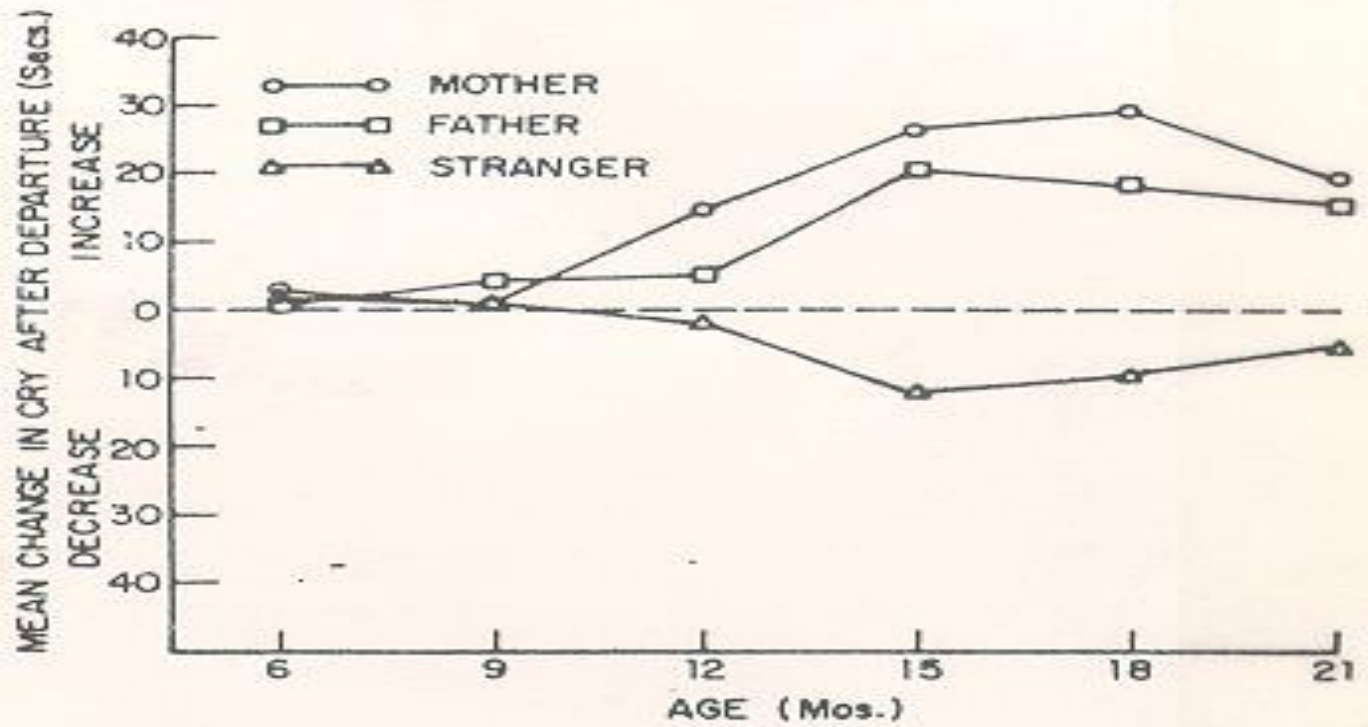




Figure 3

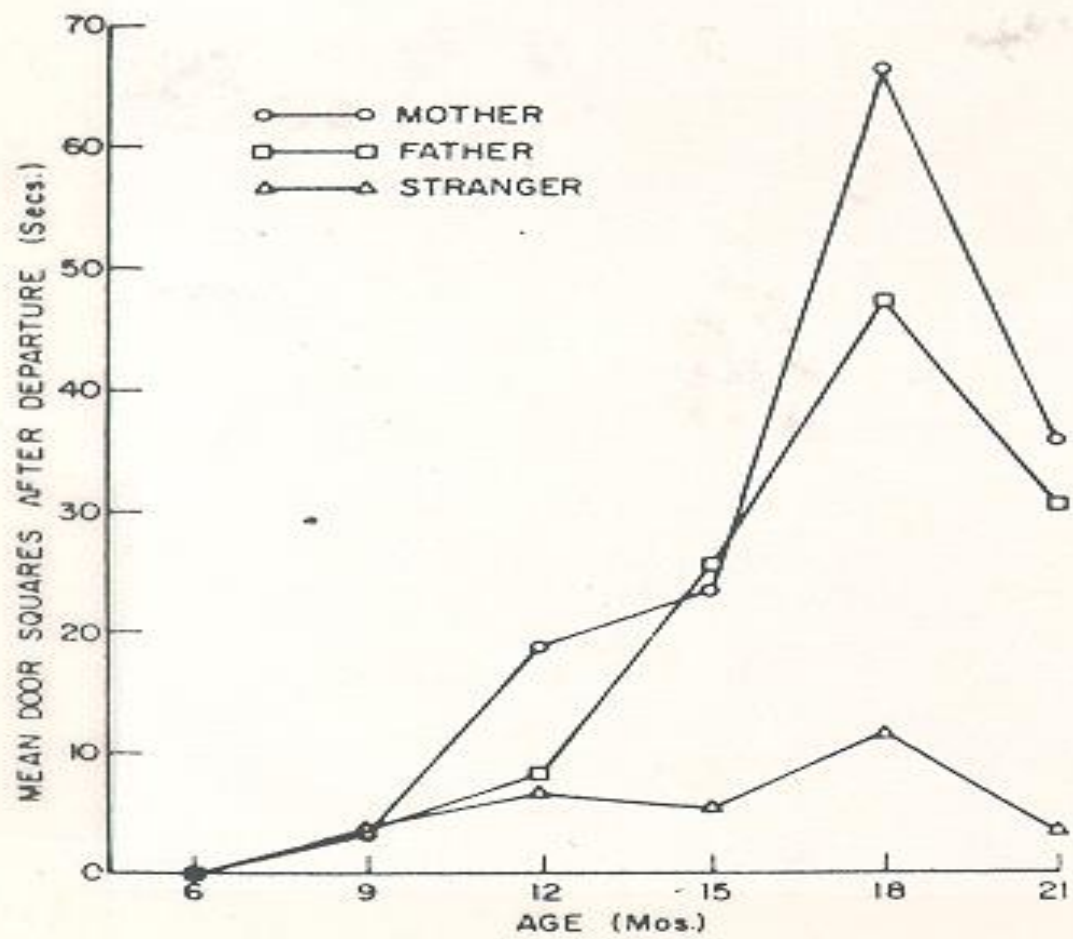




Figure 4

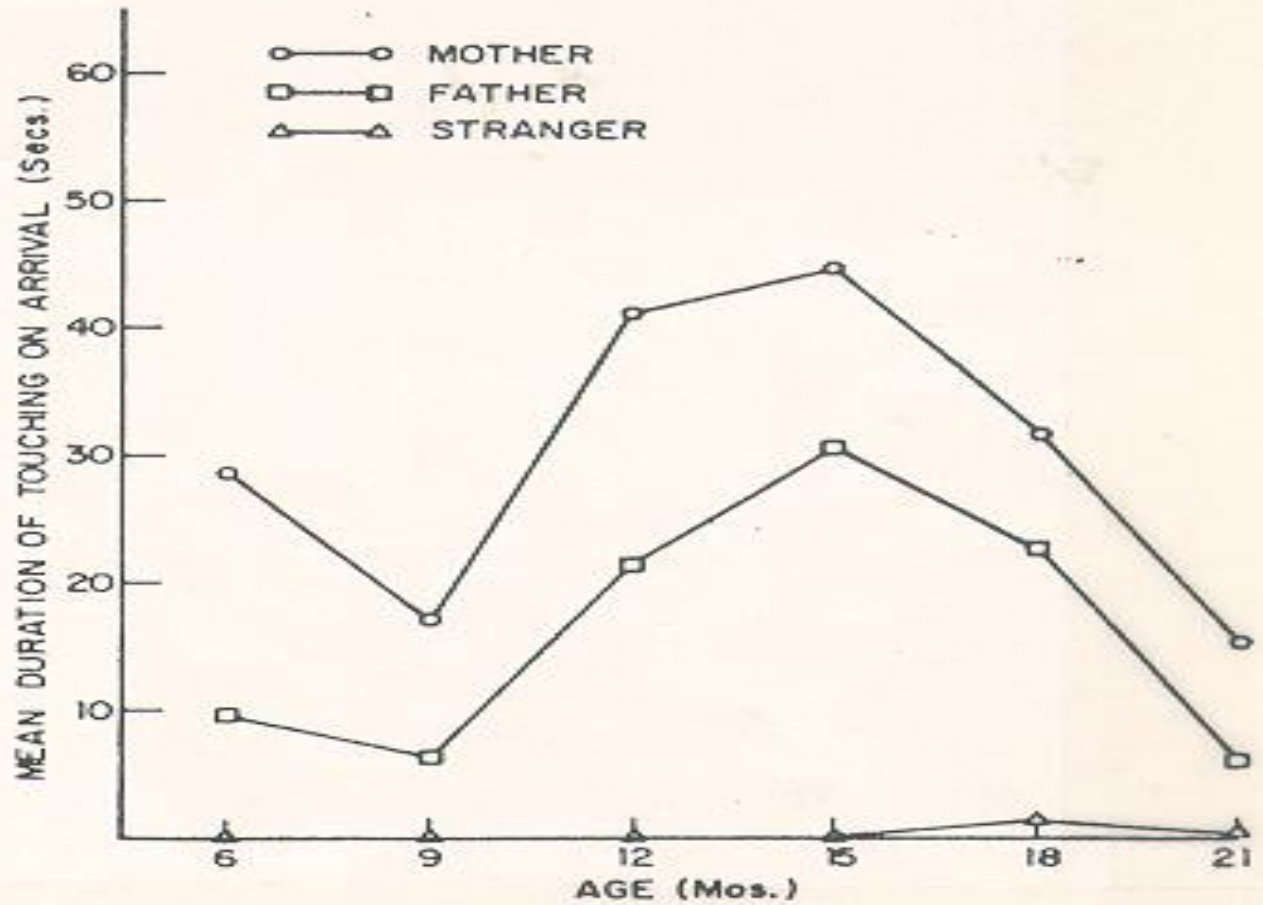


Table 2

Number of Children Who Played Greater than 120 seconds on the Departure of a Parent with the Other Parent or Stranger Remaining

| Age in Months | Father Departed | | Mother Departed | |
|---------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| | Mother Remained | Stranger Remained | Father Remained | Stranger Remained |
| 6 | 18 | 16 | 20 | 14 |
| 9 | 23 | 19 | 23 | 18 |
| 12 | 20 | 14 | 18 | 10 |
| 15 | 23 | 10 | 19 | 8 |
| 18 | 24 | 3 | 18 | 1 |
| 21 | 20 | 8 | 21 | 6 |



Table 4

Mother-Father Difference in
Duration Proximity when Both Parents Present

| Age in Months | Mother Greater than Father | Mother Equals Father | Father Greater than Mother |
|---------------|----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| 6 | 9 | 14 | 1 |
| 9 | 9 | 9 | 6 |
| 12 | 14 | 6 | 4 |
| 15 | 13 | 3 | 8 |
| 18 | 12 | 5 | 7 |
| 21 | 11 | 5 | 8 |





FATHER INTERACTION AND SEPARATION PROTEST

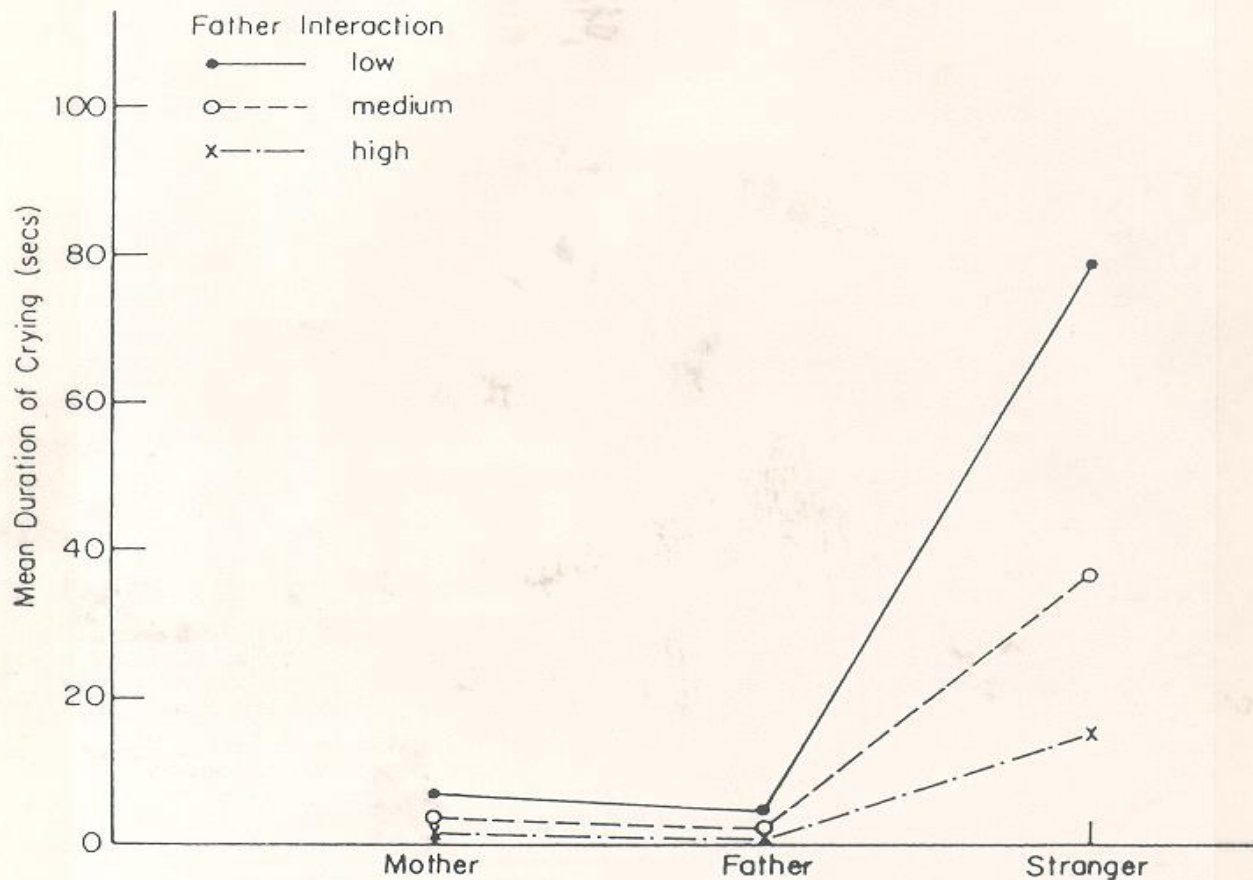
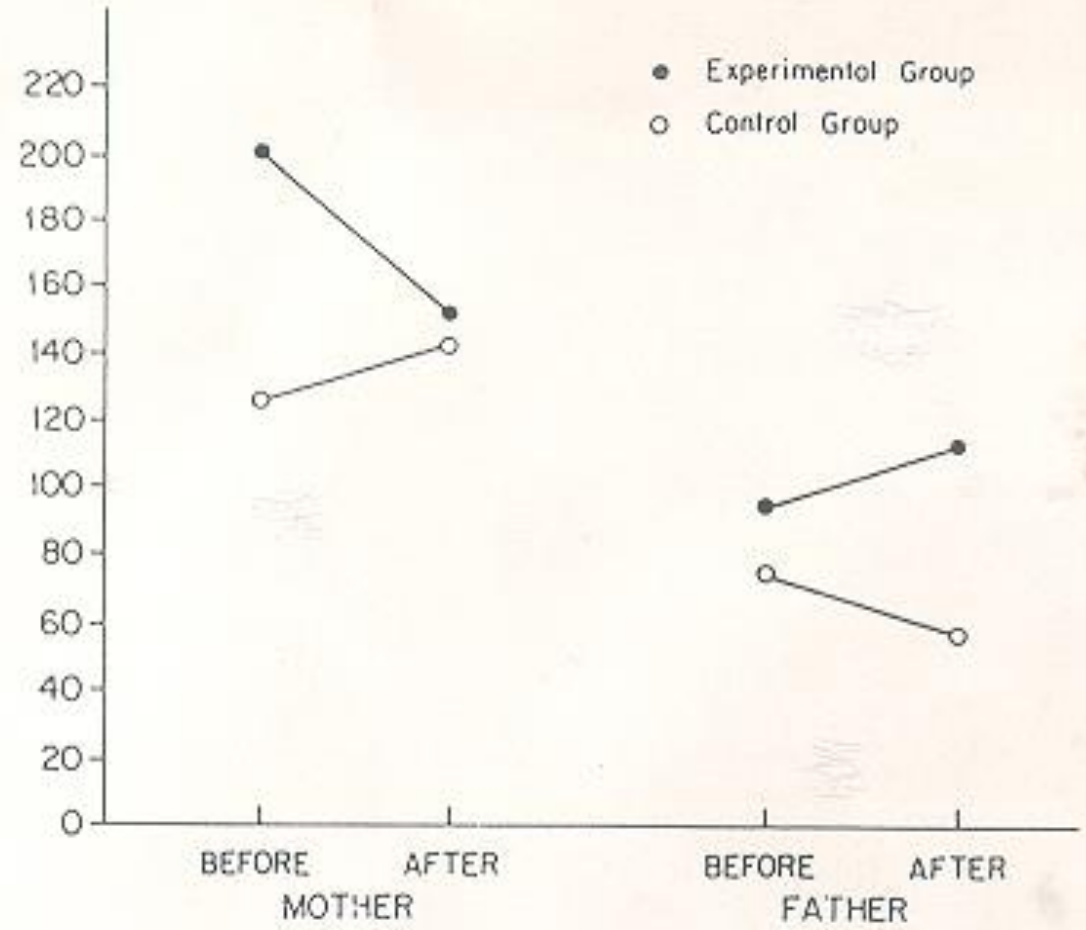
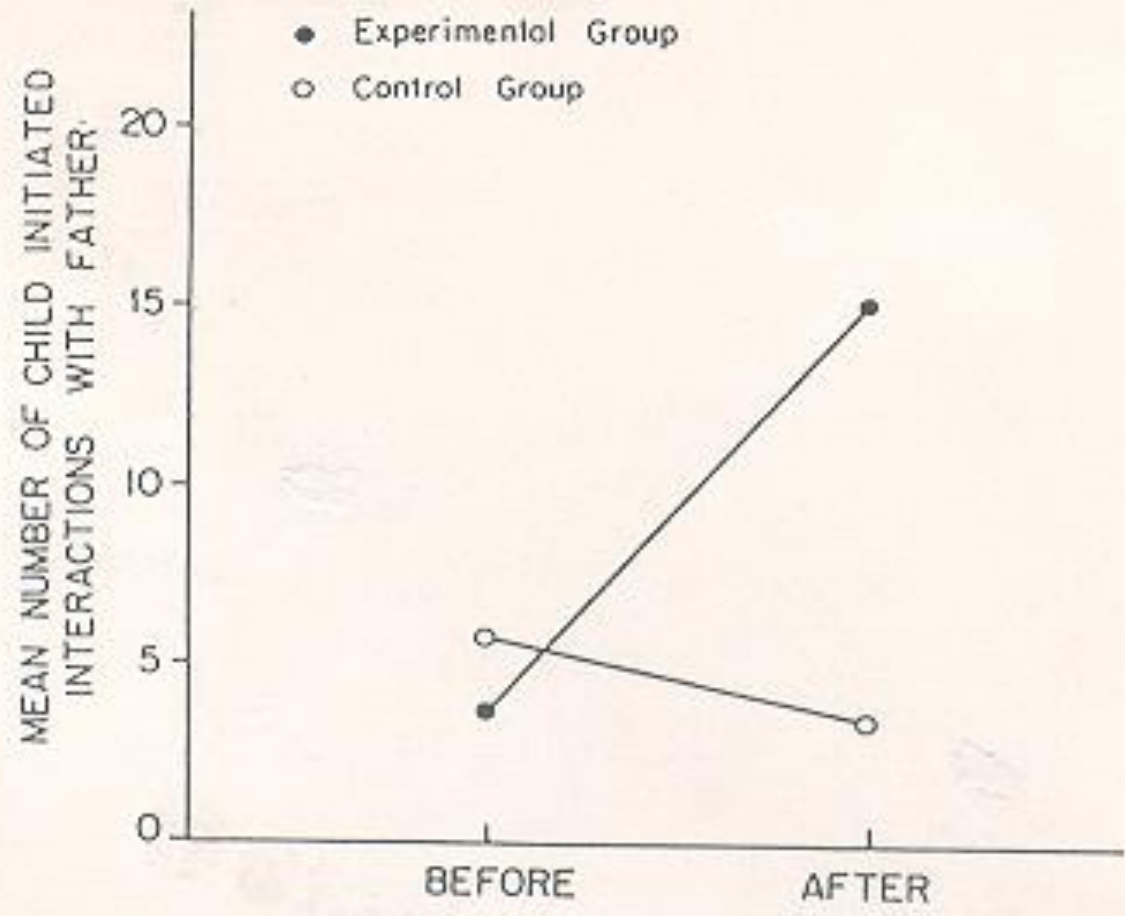


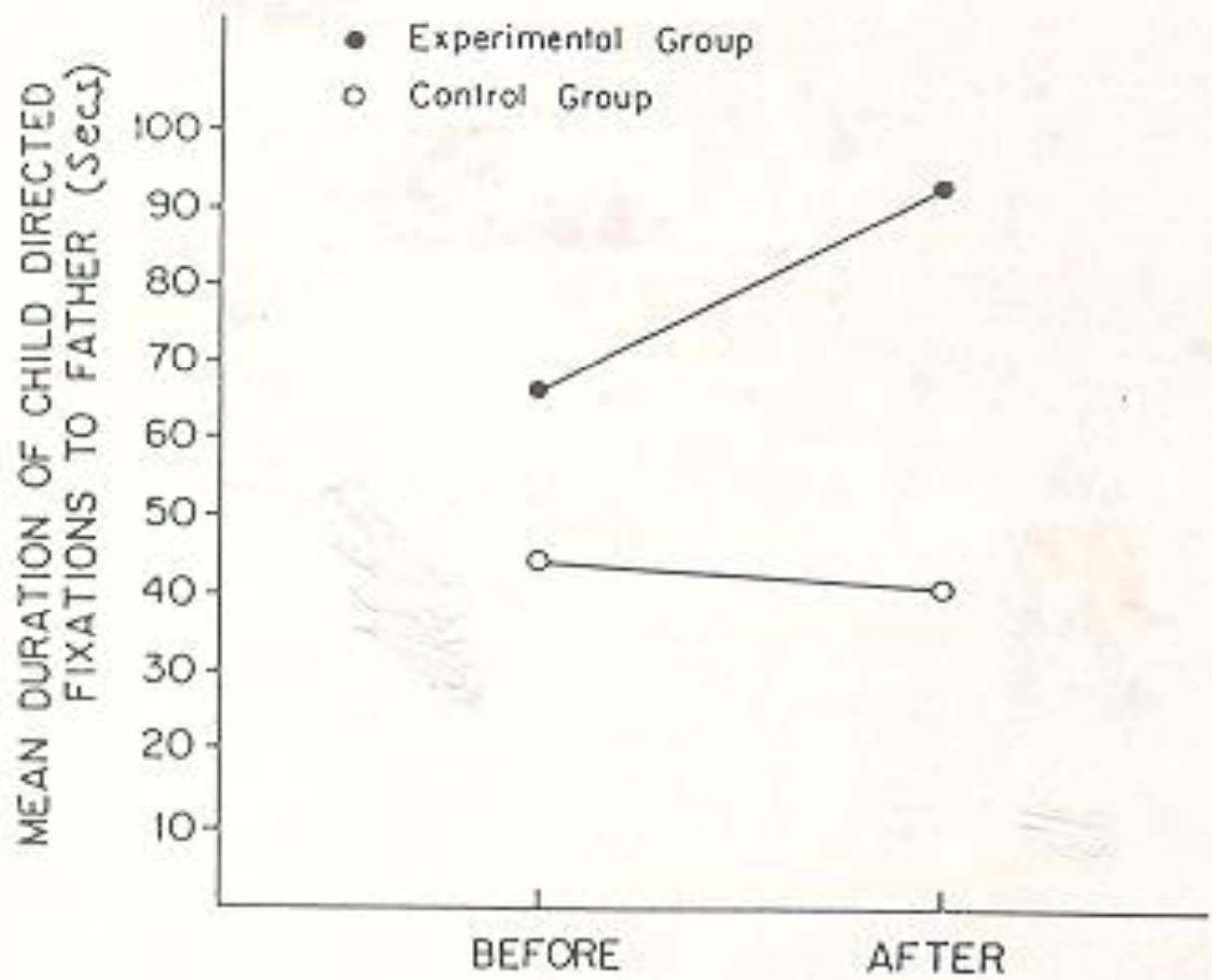
FIG. 2. Mean duration of crying when alone with each adult as a function of level of interaction with father.



MEAN DURATION OF PROXIMITY TO MOTHER AND FATHER DURING FREE PLAY (Secs.)









The Father-Infant Relationship

1. Do fathers impact on infant mental health?
2. Do infants impact on father's mental health and development?
3. What facilitates their dyadic interdependent relationship?



Father Interacting Styles

- ◆ Care Giver
- ◆ Playmate-Teacher
- ◆ Disciplinarian
- ◆ Disengaged Father

Jain, Belskey, Crnic (1996)



Paternal Involvement

1. Paternal Engagement

(Direct interaction with child in play or caretaking)

2. Responsibility for Care of Child

(Including economic support)

3. Accessibility

4. Biologic Generativity

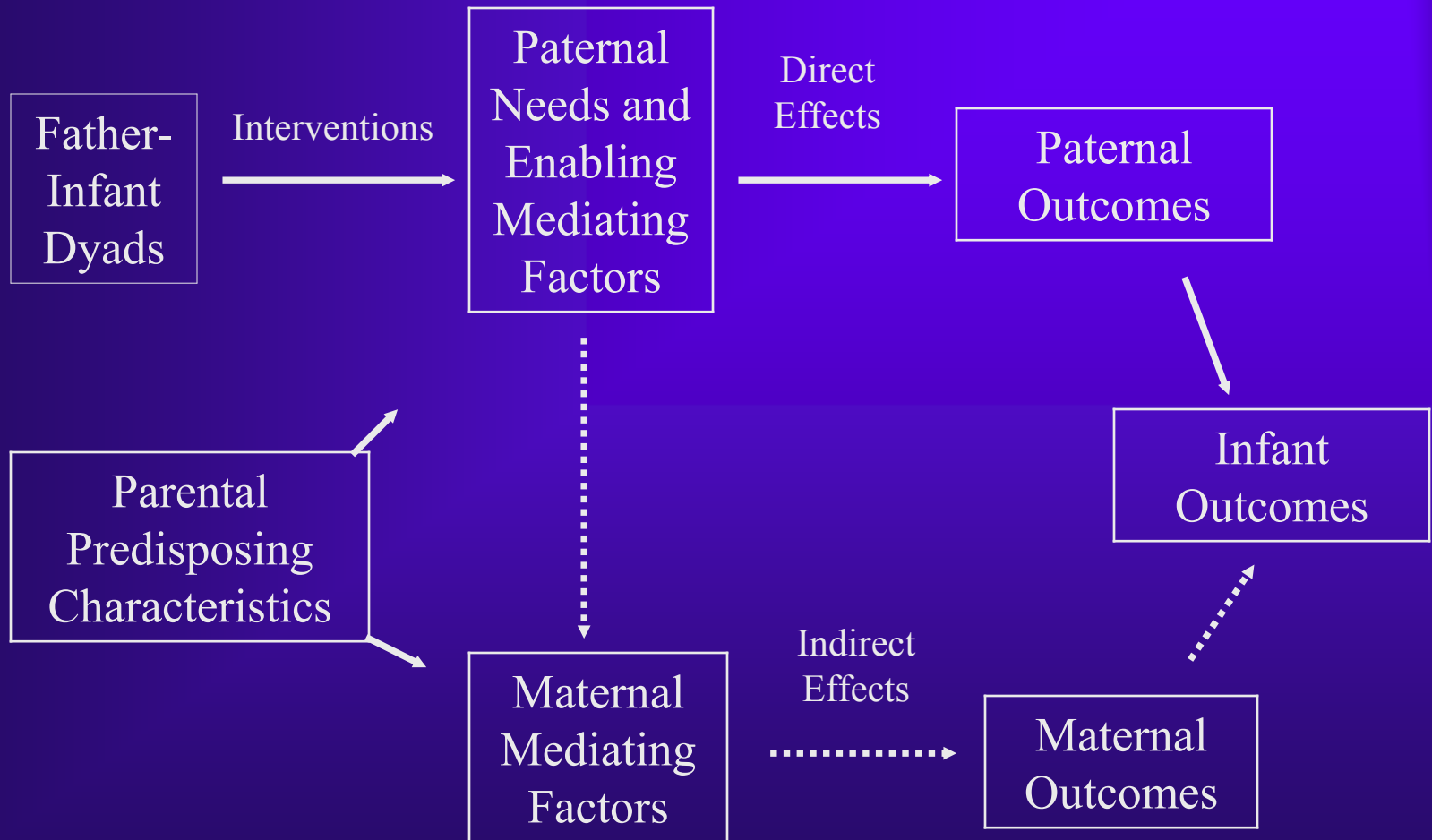
(adapted from Lamb *et al.*, 1986)



Paternal Impact on Infant Mental Health

- ◆ Direct Impact
- ◆ Indirect Impact through the Mother

Paternal Intervention Impacts





Infant Impact on Paternal Development and Generativity

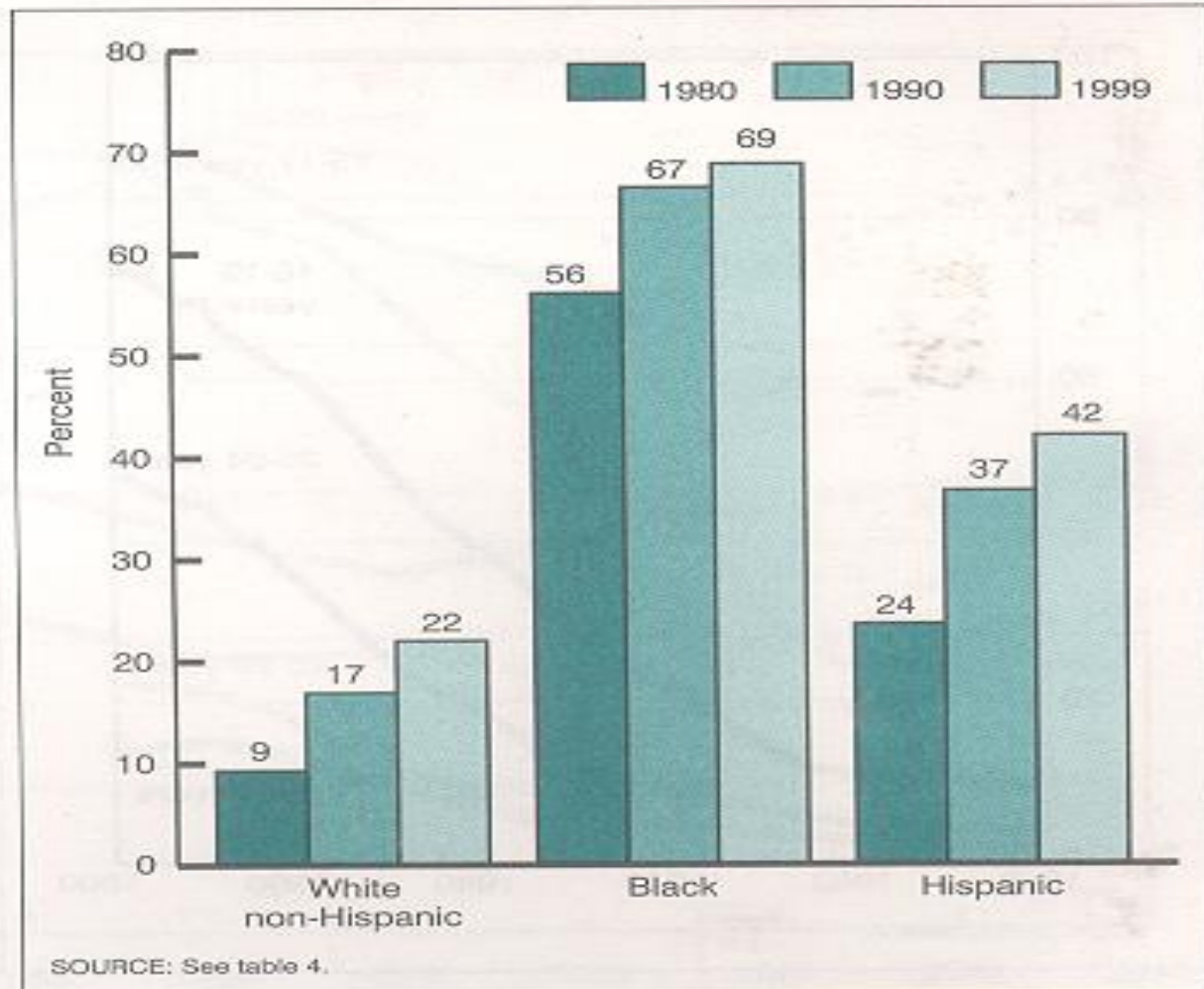


Figure 9. Percent of all births to unmarried women: United States, 1980, 1990, and 1999

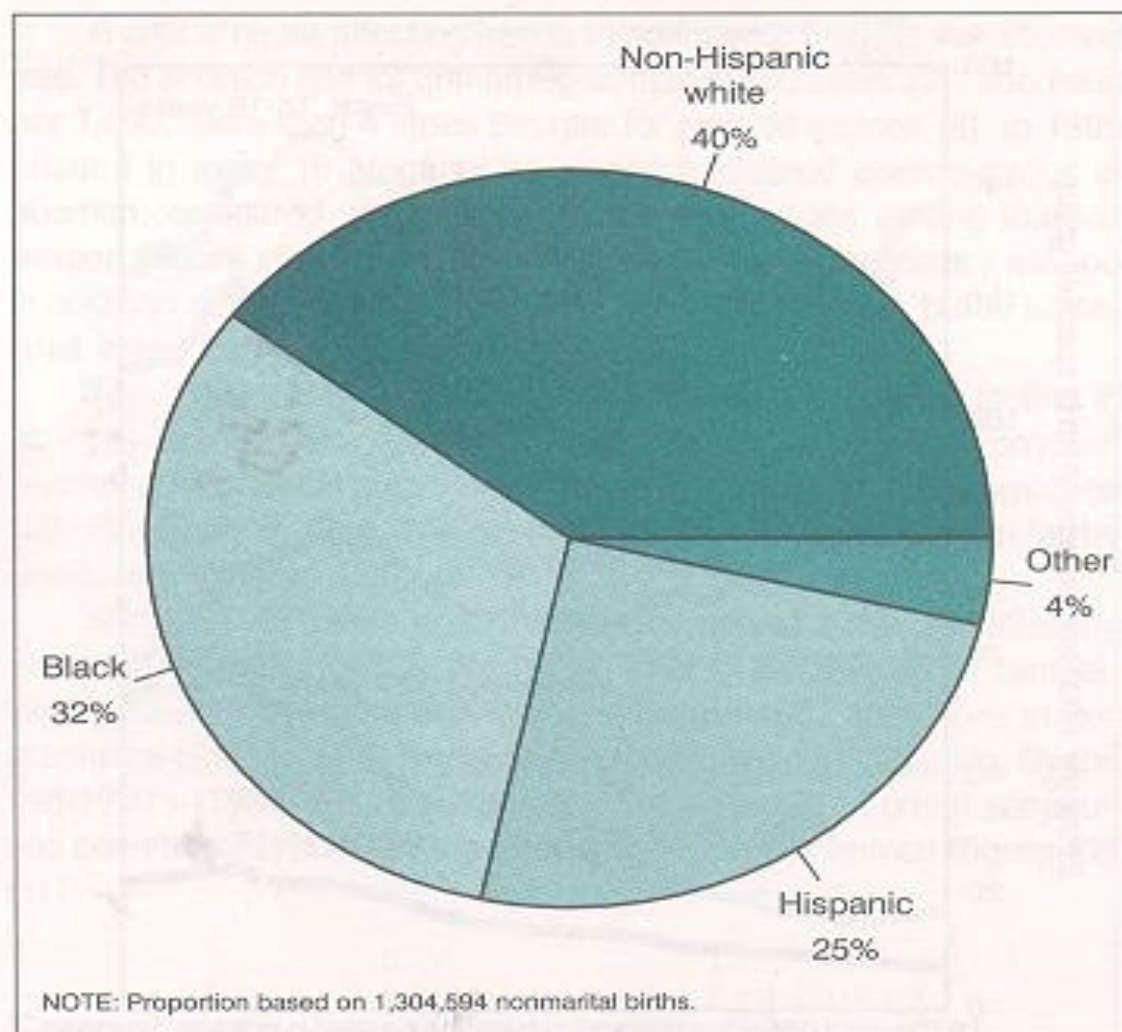


Figure 11. Distribution of nonmarital births by age, race, and Hispanic origin: United States, 1999

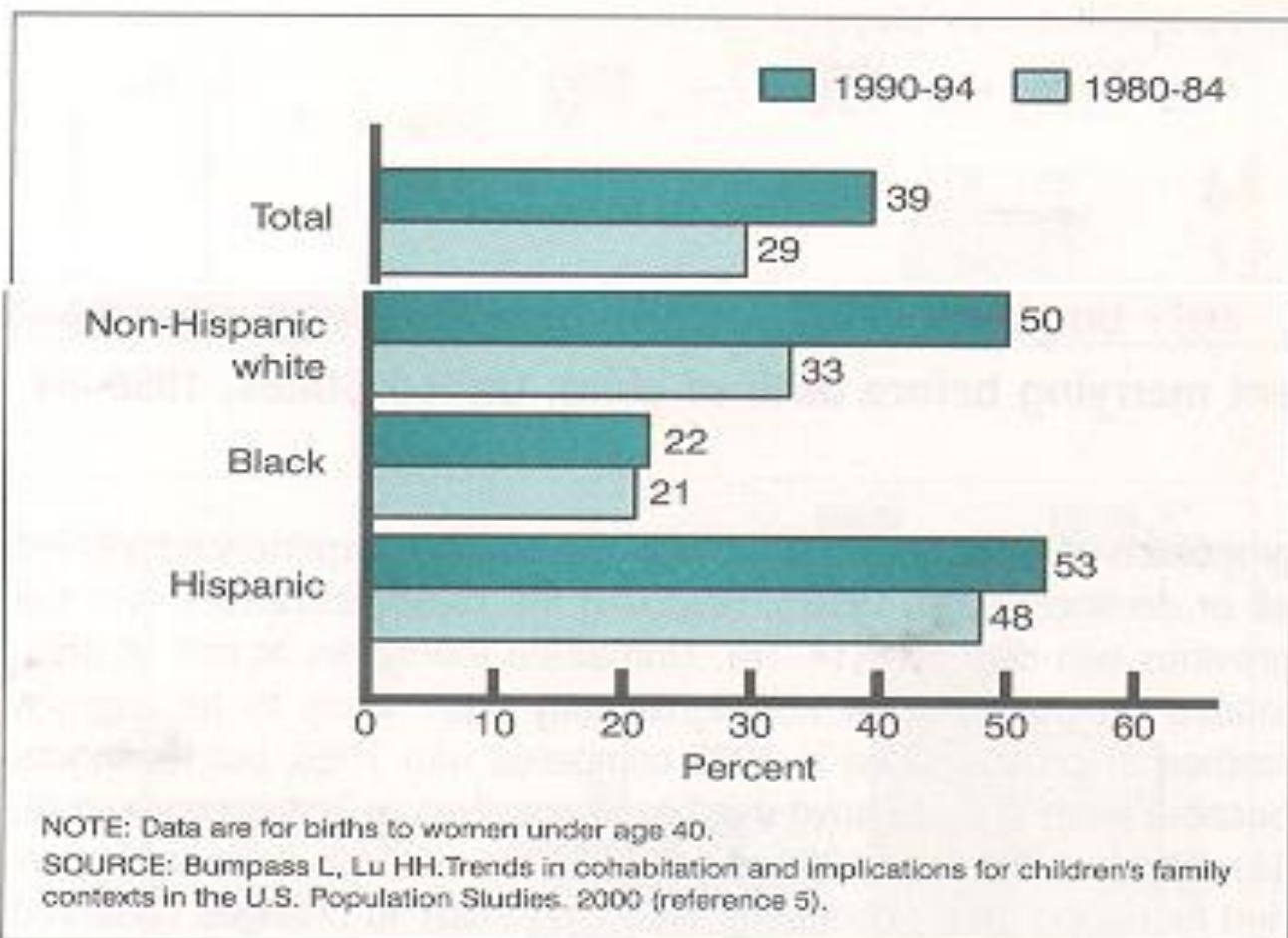


Figure 15. Percent of nonmarital births to cohabiting parents, by maternal characteristics: United States, 1980-84 and 1990-94

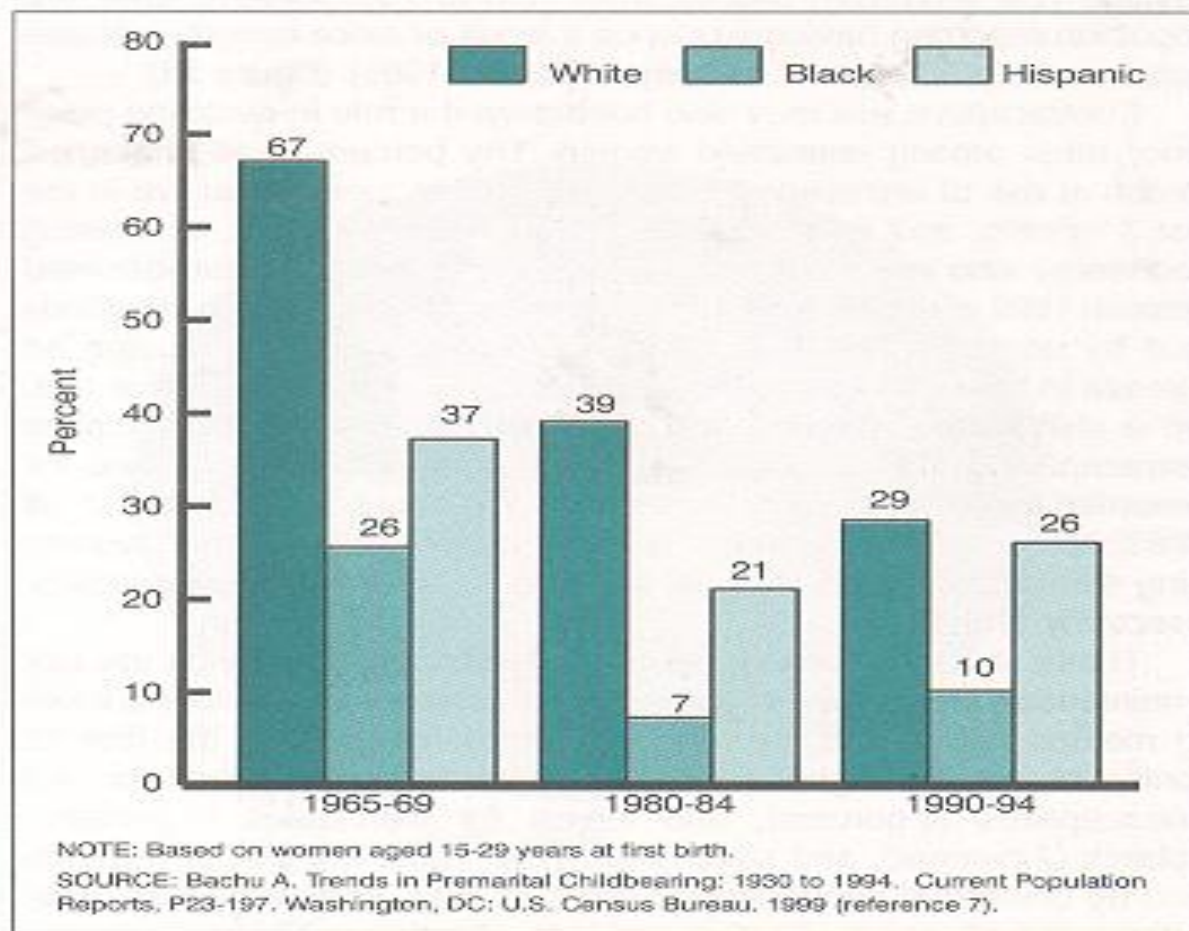


Figure 17. Among first births conceived before marriage, percent marrying before birth of child by race and Hispanic origin: United States, 1965-69, 1980-84, and 1990-94

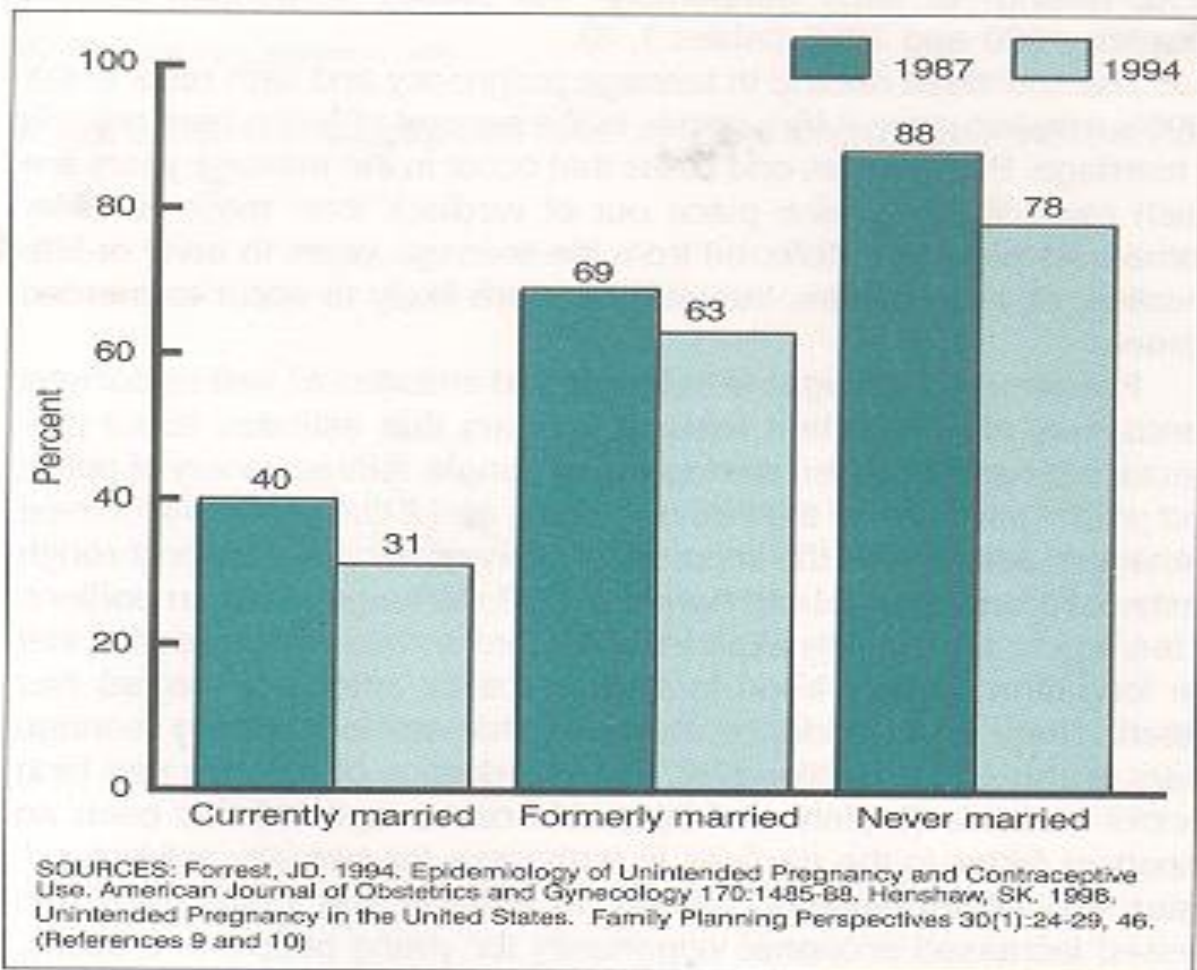


Figure 19. Percent of pregnancies to women aged 15–44 years unintended by woman's marital status: United States, 1987 and 1994

Fathers and Infants: Research Agenda (enhanced knowledge base)

- ◆ Focus on direct assessment of fathers' parenting behavior, rather than relying on maternal report
- ◆ Focus on the effects of father presence on early child development, rather than the effects of his absence
- ◆ Focus on individual differences among fathers, including within-culture and cross-cultural determinants of fathering and their impact on child outcomes
- ◆ Focus on the father's role in gender socialization
- ◆ Focus on conceptualizing family as more than a dyad, regardless of whether a biological or social father is part of the family unit
- ◆ Focus on inclusion of fathers in psychotherapeutic interventions involving families with infant and young children





Social Strategies for Increasing Paternal Involvement in Early Childhood

1. Structural Programs
(jobs, strengthen community...)
2. Incentive Programs
(flex-time, paternity leave...)
3. Direct Interactive Training/Clinical Programs
 - a. Paternal Capacity Development
 - b. Interactive Skills Development
4. Enhance Comfort with and Access to Community-based Infant Health and Development Programs

Table 1. Preliminary Data from the Fathers First Initiative: Fathers At-A-Glance

| Characteristic | Father (n=58) % | Characteristic | Fathers (n=58) % |
|--------------------------|--------------------|---|---------------------|
| <i>Age (years)</i> | | <i>Caregiving Relationship to Child</i> | |
| 17-22 | 50 | Primary | 0 |
| 23-29 | 33 | Secondary | 77 |
| ≥30 | 17 | Shared with child's mother | 23 |
| | | Present at birth | 67 |
| <i>Race/Ethnicity</i> | | <i>Psychosocial Needs</i> | |
| Black | 71 | Alcohol/Substance Abuse | 60 |
| Hispanic | 21 | Domestic violence | 54 |
| White, non-Hispanic | 8 | Depressed | 84 |
| | | Have anxiety/worry | 47 |
| | | Behavioral/Personality disorder | 14 |
| <i>Not Married</i> | 90 | <i>Parenting Needs</i> | |
| | | Little/no parenting skills | 100 |
| | | Negative parenting attitude | 14 |
| | | Negative parenting style | 52 |
| | | Fair/poor child development knowledge | 93 |
| | | Does not read to child | 64 |
| <i>Employment Status</i> | | <i>Familial/Historical Experiences</i> | |
| Employed (full or part) | 72 | Father absent when growing up | 66 |
| Unemployed | 28 | Sustained contact with fathers | 17 |
| <i>Education</i> | | | |
| High school graduate | 33 | | |
| < High school | 67 | | |





Father First Intervention

Content (Themes)

Needs Factors

Intrinsic

- Ego Development
 - Conflict Resolution
 - Trust & Respect
 - Identity Formation
 - Self-confidence
 - Responsibility

Extrinsic

- Parenting Skills
- Employment Readiness Skills
- Life Management Skills
- Relationship Skills

Enabling Factors

Intrinsic

- Psychological Health
- Parenting Attitudes
- Child Development Knowledge
- Parenting Style

Extrinsic

- Establishing Routines
- Reading to Child
- Employment
- Education
- Support System
- Presence at Birth
- Paternal-Maternal Relationship



Figure 1. Service Utilization Patterns of Fathers in the Fathers First Initiative (n=58)

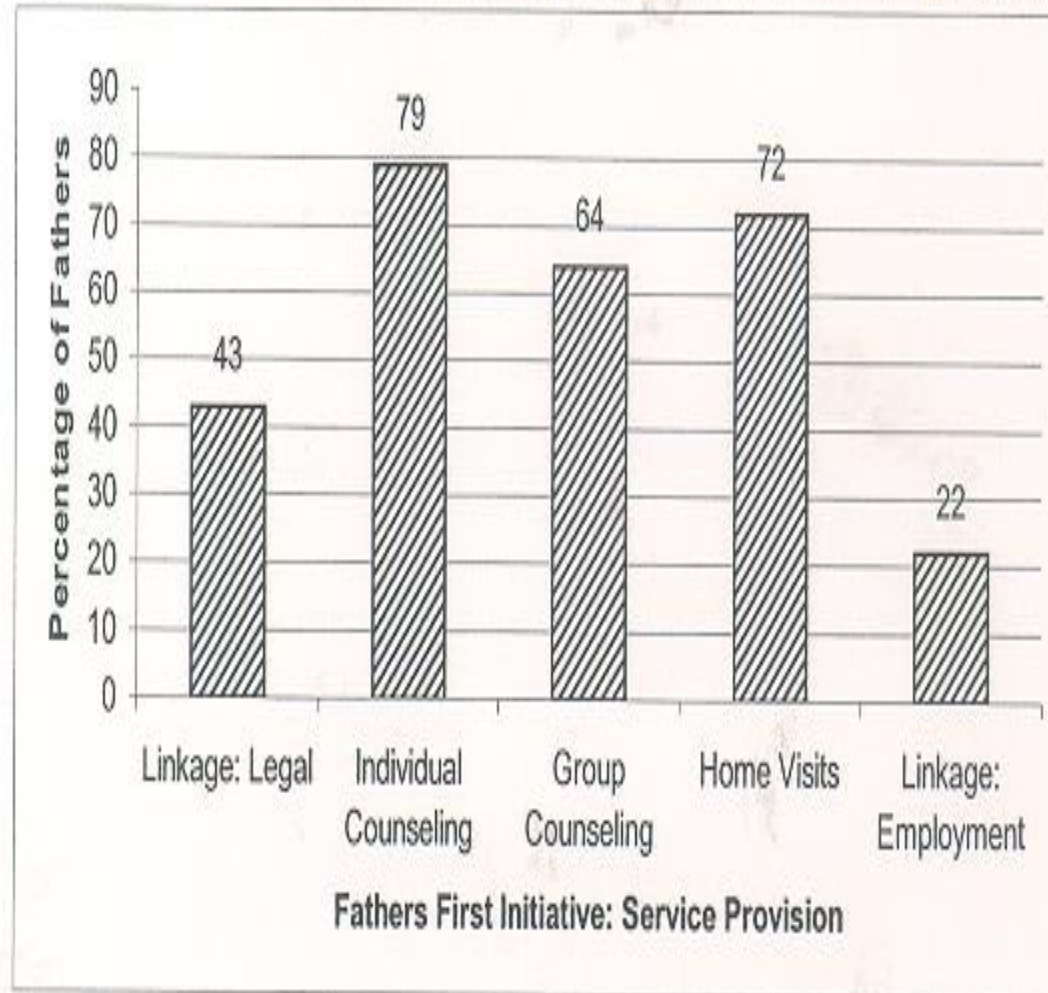
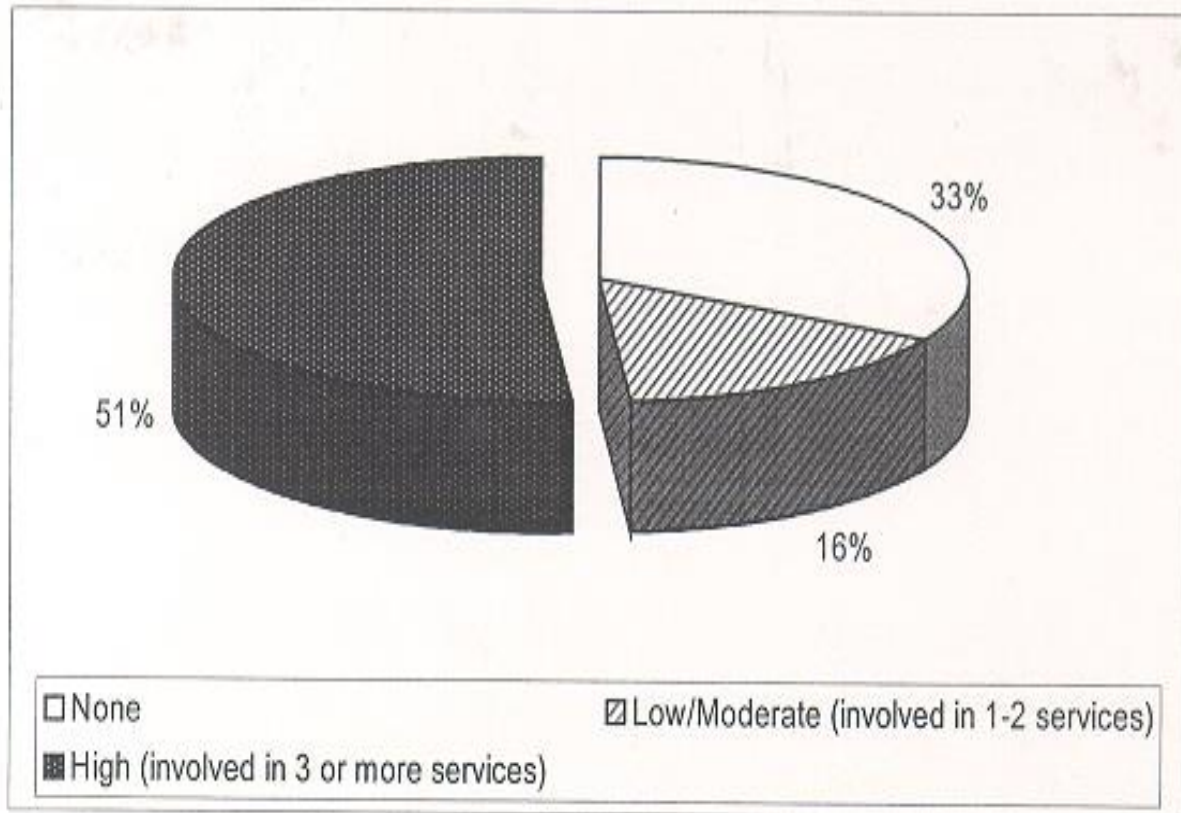


Figure 2. Level of Fathers' Involvement in the Fathers First Initiative Among All Eligible Fathers (n=93)





Father Involvement Programs: Evaluation Dimensions

- ◆ Access/Participation
- ◆ Content
- ◆ Effectiveness/Outcomes Measurement



MESSAGE:

Fathers Not Welcome Here!

Father Unfriendly Program!

Political Will: Fatherhood Initiatives

- ◆ Increase programs and resources for father and family economic well-being
- ◆ Increase Federal coordination of father involvement programs
- ◆ Strengthen coalitions for family involvement in early infant and parenting mental health
- ◆ Increase resources for fatherhood research and program initiatives
- ◆ Broaden federal initiatives on marriage and abstinence to focus more on father involvement
- ◆ Create a Father-Friendly program initiative



