



Promoting Fatherhood in Michigan

A
Resource
Guide for
Civic,
Business,
and Non-Profit
Leaders

2nd Edition



Dear Friend:

Thank you for your interest in promoting responsible fatherhood. This second edition of “Promoting Fatherhood in Michigan” contains current fatherhood facts and statistics as well as updated links to state and national fatherhood resources.

At Michigan Family Forum, we believe the involvement of responsible fathers is essential to the economic, emotional, and social health of children. As David Blankenhorn, author of “Fatherless America” puts it, “In virtually all human societies, children’s well-being depends decisively on a relatively high level of paternal investment.” Indeed, research consistently shows that children who grow up without a father tend to struggle in many areas of life - lower educational performance, criminal activity, substance abuse and decreased physical and emotional health.

Clearly, if we care about children and the future of our society, we must be concerned about father absence. We must also have the courage to address its major causes. A genuine fatherhood movement has emerged during the past decade to do just that. This growing, diverse chorus of voices is starting to confront the issue of father absence in communities across America. Here in Michigan, we have begun to stimulate local fatherhood initiatives, but there is so much more that could be done.

This resource guide is intended to help you become more informed, involved and prepared to make a difference in your community. Whether you are seeking more information or are already engaged in the fatherhood movement, we hope this resource will be helpful.

Again, thank you for your interest in being an advocate for fatherhood. Please don’t hesitate to call us if you have any questions or would like to order additional copies of this resource. We look forward to working with you!



Brad Snavely
Executive Director

To learn more about the work of Michigan Family Forum visit
WWW.MICHIGANFAMILY.ORG.

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Father Absence in Michigan

For several decades social scientists have tracked problems such as increasing crime, failing education, poverty, teen pregnancy, drug use, growing dependence on welfare, and other social ills in American life. Despite our government's best-intended policies and programs, these problems continue to plague us. Among these scientists, consensus is growing that these problems frequently have a common denominator—fatherlessness.

In 1960, fully 80 percent of American children could expect to spend their growing years in a home with their married biological parents. But today, only 50 percent can expect that their parents will remain married and live with them throughout their childhood and teen years.

The primary causes of fatherlessness are divorce and out-of-wedlock births. The number of Michigan children who experienced the divorce of their parents increased from 19,209 in 1960 to 34,580 in 2005. The rate of out-of-wedlock births is also alarming, with Michigan counties reporting between 14 and 54 percent of births to unwed mothers. Well over 500,000 Michigan children under the age of 18 live in a female-headed household with no father present. Nearly 250,000 additional father-absent children live with relatives or in other settings.

Tracking the problem of fatherlessness in America is difficult, particularly since it is not merely a term describing the physical absence of a father. Children may live with a father who is physically present, but who is emotionally absent and uninvolved in their lives. Ideally, children do best when there is a close, long-term relationship with a loving and committed father. However, at present, there is no data which adequately measures the quality of father-child relationships in the US.

According to Wade Horn, HHS Assistant Secretary for Children and Families and former president of the National Fatherhood Initiative (NFI), the best measure for father involvement is family structure. Studies show that fathers who live with their children generally have a committed, loving, and involved relationship with them. While no measure can adequately take into consideration the special circumstances of all families, it is true in general that a married, biological father situation is better than a stepfather situation, and that a stepfather situation is better than a single mother situation.

Horn acknowledges that these guiding principles cannot accurately reflect the quality of each and every father-child relationship. It is certainly true that there are some living situations that are better for the children's health and well-being than living with their biological fathers would be. Nonetheless, he states, "the argument must be made—frequently and with great conviction—that society needs a critical mass of married two-parent families, both to raise their own children well and to serve as models for children growing up in alternative family structure."

Tragically, we are in great danger today of losing that critical mass; in some communities it has already been lost. In the city of Detroit, for example, less than 30 percent of children under 18 live with their married, biological parents while Benton Harbor provides only 17.9 percent of its children with married, biological parent families.

The time is right for Michigan to follow the lead of other states and Washington, D.C. in promoting fatherhood. Several states are leading the way in creating successful initiatives, and leaders in our nation's capital are providing funding to assist in their efforts. Michigan is just beginning to take advantage of the opportunities to improve the lives of our children and their fathers. The time is ripe to vigorously promote responsible fatherhood in Michigan.

Organizations Promoting Fatherhood

MICHIGAN RESOURCES

Michigan Department of Human Services

Duane Wilson
PO Box 30037
Lansing, MI 48909
(517) 373-2035
email: wilsond6@michigan.gov

DHS offers funding and networking opportunities, best practices resources, publications and assistance on state policy and regulations.

St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center

Nanci Swain, President and CEO
27400 West 12 Mile Road
Farmington Hills, Michigan 48334-4200
(248) 626-7527

Team Fatherhood encourages and supports young dads in building and maintaining relationships with their children and their children's mothers. Team Fatherhood also helps prepare dads for full-time employment with GED prep and life skills training.

Partnership for Dads

Kevin O'Shea, Founder and President
825 North Glenhurst Drive
Birmingham, MI 48009
www.partnershipfordads.org

Partnership for Dads works with existing institutions to help fathers become more involved parents through the following programs: Fathers First, Fatherstyle, Dads In School, Doctor Dad

Fathers Education Network, Inc.

Donald Burwell, Executive Director
1435 Brainard
Detroit, MI 48208
(313) 831-5838

FEN provides family life training, education programs and services for fathers who are in transition from institutions, substance abuse, and/or dysfunctional family life situations.

Fathers and Infants, Metropolitan Detroit Youth Foundation

Vince Proctor, Program Director
60 Farnsworth Street
Detroit, MI 48202
(313) 843-8210

This program is designed to teach the responsibilities that go along with becoming a dad.

Kent County Parents' Fair Share Project

Mr. William D. Camden, Friend of the Court Office
50 Monroe Avenue, NW -- Suite 260
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
(616) 235-5111

Parents' Fair Share facilitates job training and placement, temporary reduction in child support owed by low-income fathers, and offers social support to foster continued connection with their children.

Male Responsibility Program, Detroit Urban League

Michael Cross, Director
208 Mack Avenue
Detroit, MI 48201
(313) 832-4600

This program is designed to teach adolescents about the responsibilities of fatherhood and to train adults to serve as role models for younger boys.

Michigan Fatherhood Coalition

Mike Kildee, President
1214 Bement St.
Lansing, MI 48912
(248) 760-9418
www.michiganfatherhood.org

MFC assists practitioners working in the human services field to more effectively work with fathers to help them become better parents with thriving children.

MICHIGAN RESOURCES CONTINUED

Detroit Head Start Fatherhood Initiative

Sondai Lester, Program Manager
13560 East McNichols Road
Detroit, MI 48205
(313) 526-4001, Ext. 30
www.hsfsc.org/Department-Fatherhood_Initiative/Fatherhood.htm

The Fatherhood Initiative offers the following activities to build and enhance the father connection: computer seminars and classes to help fathers gain relevant workplace skills, man to man discussions & retreats, career preparation workshops, employment fairs, parenting workshops, family issues seminars, referrals to agencies and resource centers; social and recreational activities for the entire family, forums on child custody and support issues, and ex-offenders employment seminars.

Dads of Michigan

6632 Telegraph Rd., Ste 110
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48301
248-559-DADS (3237)
www.dadsofmichigan.org

Dads of Michigan features monthly meetings hosting experts on fathering issues; provides electronic message and event bulletin boards; advocates on behalf of fathers' rights.

Lutheran Child and Family Service of Michigan

Deldria Glosson, Young Fatherhood Coordinator
15160 West Eight Mile Road
Oak Park, Michigan 48237-3007
(248) 968-0100, Ext. 249,
www.lcfsmi.org/youngfatherhood.asp

The Young Fatherhood Program is designed to provide leadership, guidance and reassurance to young fathers who are striving to be accountable to their paternal responsibilities. The Young Fatherhood Program desires for young males to become independent thinkers, understand and accept their male responsibilities and exemplify the essence of a father-to-child relationship.

Learning Institute of Family Education (LIFE)

Mary Taylor, Ph. D., Founder and Executive Director
P.O. Box 351051
Detroit, MI 48235
(313) 342-0006
www.lifefam.org

LIFE workshops and seminars are designed to expose individuals who are single, engaged, married, separated, divorced or widowed to information that will assist them with understanding and developing strategies to build unity, productive relationships, stronger marriages and families for the well-being of children.

NATIONAL RESOURCES

National Fatherhood Initiative

Roland Warren, President
101 Lake Forest Blvd., Suite 360
Gaithersburg, MD 20877
(301) 948-0599
www.fatherhood.org

The National Center for Fathering

Carey Casey, Chief Executive Office
Peter Spokes, President and COO
P.O. Box 41388
Kansas City, MO 64141
(913) 384-4661
www.fathers.com

National Center on Fathers and Families

Dr. Vivian Gadsden, Director
University of Pennsylvania
3440 Market Street, Suite 450
Philadelphia, PA 19014
(215) 573-5500
www.ncoff.gse.upenn.edu

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Great Lakes Regional Director
233 N. Michigan Ave, Suite 1300
Chicago, IL 60601
(312) 353-5160
<http://fatherhood.hhs.gov>

Coalition of Community Foundations for Youth

Cindy Sesler Ballard, Executive Director
1055 Broadway, Suite 130
Kansas City, MO 64105
(800) 292-6149
www.ccfy.org/fathers/index.htm

National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families

John L. Pride, Executive Director
1003 K Street, NW, Suite 565
Washington, D.C. 20001
(202) 737-6680
www.npnff.org

Dads & Daughters

2 West 1st Street, Suite 101
Duluth, MN 55802
www.dadsanddaughters.org

Family and Corrections Network

Jim Mustin, Executive Director
32 Oak Grove Road
Palmyra, VA 22963
(434) 589-3036
www.fcnetwork.org

National Family Preservation Network

Priscilla Martens, Executive Director
3971 North 1400 East
Buhl, ID 83316
(888) 498-9047
<http://nfpn.org/fatherhood>

The Center for Successful Fathering

Ron Klinger, Founder / CEO
13740 Research Blvd, Suite L-2
Austin, TX 78750
(512) 335-8106
www.fathering.org

National Head Start Association

JoAnn Nelson-Hooks, Fatherhood
Coordinator
1651 Prince Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 739-7560
www.nhsa.org/program/fathers

All Pro Dad

Family First
609 West De Leon Street
Tampa, FL 33606
(813) 222-8300 or (800) 956-8300
www.allprodad.com

Dads Adventure

230 Commerce, Suite 210
Irvine, CA 92602
(800) 318-3803
www.newdads.com

Center for Family Policy and Practice

23 N. Pinckney Street
Suite 210
Madison, WI 53703
Phone: 608-257-3148
Fax: 608-257-4686
www.cffpp.org

Startup & Models in Michigan

FIRST STEPS

- Communities should organize a series of fatherhood forums designed to assess local fatherhood issues and needs, existing community-based programs available to support fathers, and the services that are needed to fill existing gaps.
- Communities should recruit program partners (civic, education, governmental and religious organizations) committed to meeting the needs identified in the community forums.
- Communities should establish a fatherhood resource center that provides community members with information, training and technical assistance to meet the fatherhood needs identified in the community forums.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS FOR SUCCESS

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services identifies ten programmatic recommendations for successful fatherhood initiatives:

- Work to get fathers who are not married to, or residing with, the mother to declare paternity, maintain a meaningful presence, commit to economic support and provide meaningful input into the child's life.
- Involve mothers when feasible, particularly since mothers are generally the “senior partner” in parenting, to promote trust, understanding and cooperation.
- Promote the well-being of mothers and of the mother/father partnership to create a healthy atmosphere and to benefit from their unique contributions.
- Consider the social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds of those involved.
- Emphasize critical transition points for fathers and children such as pregnancy, childbirth and school entry.
- Involve an employment dimension.
- Deal with the father's relationships with community systems, including the courts, child support enforcement agencies, hospitals or clinics, social service agencies, and schools in order to remain responsibly involved with their children.
- Train staff who work with children and families to promote responsible fathering.
- Involve fathers working with fathers.
- Be created to promote the viability of caring, committed, and collaborative marriage as the optimal environment for children.

To view the full report, “Responsible Fathering: An Overview and Conceptual Framework,” go to <http://fatherhood.hhs.gov/concept.htm>

THE IMPORTANCE OF EVALUATING YOUR PROGRAM

The U.S. Department of Human Services encourages program evaluation for several important reasons:

- Reveals what is and is not working in the program.
- Aids fundraising efforts by showing program funders and the community what the program does and how it benefits the participants and community.
- Raises community awareness of the program by demonstrating its effectiveness.
- Improves staff efforts by identifying strengths and weaknesses.

For the complete discussion on program evaluation, visit the Administration for Children & Families at www.acf.hhs.gov and view their publication “The Program Manager's Guide to Evaluation.”

TWO MODELS IN MICHIGAN

Muskegon County Responsible Fathers Initiative

Initiated in 1998, the Muskegon Responsible Fathers Initiative (MRFI) is one of the best developed programs in the state. Under the leadership of Probate Court Judge Gregory Pittman, MRFI received a \$7,500 grant from the Muskegon Family Coordinating Council to assist with start-up costs and to identify community needs. By January 2000, MRFI had secured \$76,117 in funding from the State Court Administrators Access and Visitation Grant, the Coalition of Community Foundation for Youth, Muskegon County Family Coordinating Council, and Muskegon County Department of Employment and Training. Later that year, Muskegon Public Schools provided a temporary employee to serve as the MRFI program coordinator. MRFI has since hired Mr. Christopher Sanford as the program director. He can be reached at (231) 725-7268 for more information.

Community Partners (partial listing)

Muskegon County Family Court	Muskegon Training and Education Center
Muskegon County Family Independence Agency	Mercy General Hospital
Muskegon Community Foundation	Child and Family Services
Family Coordinating Council	MAISD – Head Start
Hackley Hospital	Muskegon County Cooperating Churches
Muskegon Heights Community Education	Urban League of Greater Muskegon

Program Focus and Principles (partial listing)

Focus

Education, Employment and Training
Parenting and Life Skill Training
Substance Abuse

Principles

Fathers are critical to the success of children and families
Encourage voluntary participation, not punitive
Confidential and user-friendly service delivery

Quantitative and Qualitative Outcomes to be Measured

- Improve father's understanding of legal rights regarding child support and parenting time
- Improve father's educational levels and parenting skills.
- Establish long-term relationships between fathers and children not previously involved with each other
- Increase frequency and regularity of child support payments.
- Improve father's conflict resolution skills with respect to issues involving the child.

Measurement Tools

Questionnaires	Client Interviews	Circuit Court Records
Pre/Post Tests	Attendance Logs	Employment Referral and Placement Records

Programs and Outreach

Access and Parenting Time – A collaboration between MRFI and the Family Court Services to empower non-custodial fathers to be emotionally, socially, and financially involved in their children's lives.

Incarcerated Fathers Count – A collaboration between MRFI and the Michigan Dept. of Corrections to help fathers maintain contact with their children and prepare for responsible parenting upon release.

Character and Enrichment Program – A collaboration with the faith-based community to teach fathers ways to handle conflict, child care, and communications and meet family needs with character and integrity.

Mothers Program – A collaboration with women's agencies, dispute resolution agencies, and the faith-based community to encourage open and respectful communication between the mother and the father of a child.

Father's Day Rally and Picnic – A collaboration between MRFI and the faith community to provide fun, information, and support for fathers, their children, and entire families.

Dads Always on Duty – A collaboration between MRFI, Mercy General Health Partners, and the Family Court services to train non-custodial fathers in infant-caregiving and parenting skills.

MODELS IN MICHIGAN CONTINUED

Detroit Head Start Fatherhood Initiative

Community transformation requires keeping fathers connected to their children in a way that enables them to successfully reach their fullest potential. With this in mind, the City of Detroit Head Start Family Services began their fatherhood initiative. The mission of the City of Detroit Head Start Fatherhood Initiative (CDHSFI) is to build a “community of fathers” capable of uplifting fathers, families, and communities by maintaining and enhancing the crucial connection between fathers and their children. This “community of fathers” will participate in activities that can strengthen the connection between them and their children. Nurturing meaningful connections between fathers and their children can help overcome the serious social problems caused by father absence. Partnering with other local groups, the CDHSFI offers many resources to fathers and their families ranging from housing assistance and mental health information to employment preparation and fatherhood seminars

Community Partners and Resources (partial listing)

Detroit Housing Commission	Southwest Counseling Solutions
Neighborhood Service Organization	Mercy Education Project
Catholic Social Services of Wayne County	Detroit Institute for Children
Goodwill Industries	City of Detroit Work Force Development
Siena Literacy Center	Off The Streets (Emergency Shelter)
THAW (The Heat and Warmth Fund)	Cabrini Clinic

Services and Programs

Ex-offenders employment seminars	Man to Man discussions & retreats
Parenting workshops	Family issues seminars
Employment & career preparation workshops	Social and recreational activities for the entire family
Referrals to agencies and resource centers	Forums on child custody and support issues
Computer seminars and classes to help fathers gain relevant workplace skills.	

Goals and Strategies for Healthy Parenting

- Improve communication and cooperation between custodial and non-custodial parents of Head Start children
- Assist fathers and mothers in becoming aware of the unique and valuable contribution that fathers make to the nurturing and development of their children
- Increase the involvement of fathers in the nurturing and development of their children
- Teach effective parenting skills

Outreach and Events

Detroit Head Start Father and Daughter Dance – This annual event, held to emphasize the importance of fathers in their daughters’ lives, includes special gifts, pictures, dinner & dancing.

Fathers and Families Picnic – Head Start hosts this community event to bring family and friends together for a time of fun, food, and fellowship.

Fatherhood Basketball Tournament – Head Start hosts this annual basketball tournament for fathers and their families. In addition to basketball, there is storytelling, arts & crafts, food and free books.

BIC Fire Safety Project – This collaboration between CDHSFI and Bic Corporation helps fathers train their children in fire safety and prevention.

VNHS Celebration of Cultures – Volunteers hand out books, educational CDs and sunglasses to community children.

By The Numbers

Number of Children Under Age 18 involved in Divorces in 2005 by County of Decree

Alcona	32	Iron	51	Presque Isle	32
Alger	40	Isabella	195	Roscommon	103
Allegan	400	Jackson	753	Saginaw	593
Alpena	123	Kalamazoo	869	St Clair	628
Antrim	111	Kalkaska	88	St Joseph	297
Arenac	49	Kent	2,026	Sanilac	161
Baraga	16	Keweenaw	2	Schoolcraft	29
Barry	239	Lake	82	Shiawassee	182
Bay	442	Lapeer	223	Tuscola	216
Benzie	73	Leelanau	63	Van Buren	343
Berrien	586	Lenawee	408	Washtenaw	998
Branch	193	Livingston	597	Wayne	5,778
Calhoun	622	Luce	16	Wexford	175
Cass	194	Mackinac	44		
Charlevoix	113	Macomb	2,907		
Cheboygan	94	Manistee	72	MICHIGAN	34,580
Chippewa	106	Marquette	209		
Clare	133	Mason	107		
Clinton	252	Mecosta	136		
Crawford	52	Menominee	85		
Delta	130	Midland	349		
Dickinson	119	Missaukee	58		
Eaton	609	Monroe	566		
Emmet	137	Montcalm	265		
Genesee	1,647	Montmorency	26		
Gladwin	116	Muskegon	739		
Gogebic	61	Newaygo	210		
Grand Traverse	381	Oakland	3,763		
Gratiot	114	Oceana	125		
Hillsdale	247	Ogemaw	87		
Houghton	96	Ontonagon	25		
Huron	116	Osceola	65		
Ingham	998	Oscoda	29		
Ionia	199	Otsego	104		
Iosco	97	Ottawa	764		

Source: Vital Records and Health Data Development Section, Michigan Department of Community Health, 2005

BY THE NUMBERS CONTINUED

Number and Percent of Births to Unwed Mothers in 2005 by County of Residence

	Number	Percent		Number	Percent		Number	Percent
Alcona	19	30.2	Iron	34	40.5	Presque Isle	34	29.6
Alger	29	33.3	Isabella	287	39.7	Roscommon	97	47.5
Allegan	474	32.1	Jackson	928	44.5	Saginaw	1,258	47.2
Alpena	119	41.5	Kalamazoo	1,207	38.7	St Clair	751	37.5
Antrim	81	33.2	Kalkaska	91	39.7	St Joseph	378	38.3
Arenac	68	39.1	Kent	3,380	36.0	Sanilac	178	31.4
Baraga	42	41.6	Keweenaw	3	13.6	Schoolcraft	33	43.4
Barry	204	29.5	Lake	68	54.4	Shiawassee	304	36.4
Bay	476	38.2	Lapeer	285	28.9	Tuscola	206	32.0
Benzie	54	26.2	Leelanau	47	22.4	Van Buren	445	41.8
Berrien	878	42.0	Lenawee	522	41.5	Washtenaw	1,044	24.7
Branch	239	38.7	Livingston	344	17.2	Wayne	13,644	49.8
Calhoun	869	46.1	Luce	25	37.3	Wexford	173	40.0
Cass	209	42.0	Mackinac	50	45.0			
Charlevoix	89	30.8	Macomb	2,400	24.1			
Cheboygan	102	39.1	Manistee	102	40.8	MICHIGAN	46,824	36.7
Chippewa	154	39.0	Marquette	196	32.7			
Clare	151	46.3	Mason	122	38.4			
Clinton	167	20.6	Mecosta	177	36.9			
Crawford	55	45.1	Menominee	72	31.2			
Delta	128	30.9	Midland	231	25.4			
Dickinson	101	37.1	Missaukee	65	36.7			
Eaton	384	33.0	Monroe	720	42.3			
Emmet	93	27.4	Montcalm	298	37.2			
Genesee	2,767	46.2	Montmorency	34	53.1			
Gladwin	85	31.1	Muskegon	1,125	47.1			
Gogebic	49	37.4	Newaygo	237	37.4			
Grand Traverse	245	25.8	Oakland	3,255	22.3			
Gratiot	216	41.5	Oceana	155	39.6			
Hillsdale	189	32.4	Ogemaw	81	39.7			
Houghton	76	19.7	Ontonagon	24	45.3			
Huron	108	30.8	Osceola	113	38.8			
Ingham	1,389	38.3	Oscoda	24	32.0			
Ionia	309	38.1	Otsego	99	35.9			
Iosco	96	44.7	Ottawa	757	21.5			

Source: Vital Records and Health Data Development Section, Michigan Department of Community Health, 2005

Father Facts

The infant mortality rate is over twice as high for children born out-of-wedlock as it is for children born to married couple parents. There are 12.1 deaths per thousand births to unmarried mothers while 5.8 infants die for every thousand births to married couples.

2001 Michigan Resident Birth-Death Matched File, Vital Records & Health Data Development Section, Michigan Dept. of Community Health

In Michigan, 509,621 children under the age of 18 lived in female-headed households with no husband present.

U.S. Census Bureau 2000

Every year, for the past 10 years, an average of 37,666 children were involved in divorce cases. That is nearly as many children as the entire population of children that live in Flint, which has Michigan's third largest population of children (37,924).

Michigan Occurrence Divorce Files, Vital Records & Health Data Development Section, Michigan Department of Community Health and U.S. Census Bureau 2000

Highly involved fathers increase their children's economic and educational attainment. However, fathers who are both highly involved and maintain a warm, loving relationship also reduce delinquent behavior and reduce emotional stress for teenagers making the transition to adulthood.

Harris, Kathleen; Furstenburg, Frank; Jr. Marner Jeremy. (1998) Paternal involvement with adolescents in intact families: the influence of fathers over the life course. Demography Vol. 35 No 2: 201-216

Children under 14 who live in a single-parent or step-family are nearly twice as likely to engage in delinquent behavior as those from two biological parent families.

Coughlin, Chris; Vuchinich, Samuel. (1996) Family Experience in Preadolescence and the Development of Male Delinquency. Journal of Marriage and the Family Vol. 58: 491-501

Father absence can cause boys to be more dependent on their peers, have a poor masculine self-concept and to engage in female-aggressive behavior. "These effects are most traumatic and most long lasting when father deprivation occurs prior to age five."

Beatty, Lee Alan. (1995) Effects of paternal absence on male adolescents' peer relations and self-image. Adolescence Vol. 30: 873-80

For the past ten years, Michigan has averaged over 45,000 births to unwed mothers annually. This number is nearly equal to the entire population of children under 18 in Grand Rapids (53,000). Detroit is the only other Michigan city that has a population of children under 18 that exceeds the annual statewide out-of-wedlock birth number.

Michigan Occurrence Divorce Files, Vital Records & Health Data Development Section, Michigan Department of Community Health and U.S. Census Bureau 2000

Children raised in single-mother families created by divorce have significantly lower levels of education, occupational status, and happiness in adulthood than children from widowed single-mother families. Children from widowed single-mother families have similar outcomes as children from intact biological-parent families in these areas.

Bilbarz, Timothy; Gottainer, Greg. (2000) Family Structure and Children's Success: A Comparison of Widowed and Divorced Single-Mother Families. Journal of Marriage and the Family Vol. 62: 533-548

Children of divorce are almost twice as likely to get a divorce themselves as children of intact marriages.

Paul Amato. (2001) The Transmission of Marital Instability Across Generations: Relationship Skill or Commitment to Marriage? Journal of Marriage and the Family Vol. 63: 1038-1051

Children whose parents divorce tend to consume alcohol more frequently and in larger quantities than children from intact families.

Jeynes, William. (2001) The Effects of Recent Parental Divorce on Their Children's Consumption of Alcohol. Journal of Youth and Adolescence Vol. 30 No. 3: 305-319

Mothers in two-parent households report fewer behavior problems among children with involved fathers compared to children with detached fathers. "Involved fathers" was defined as participating in shared activities, supportive behavior, and displayed feelings of affection.

Amato, Paul. (1999) Paternal involvement and children's behavior problems. Journal of Marriage and the Family Vol. 61 Issue 2: 375-384

Children from single-parent families have more behavior problems and score lower on math and reading tests. The gap in reading scores continues to grow wider the longer a child remains in a single-parent home.

Day, Randall, Paasch, K. (1998) Sibling resemblance in behavioral and cognitive outcomes: The role of father presence. Journal of Marriage and the Family Vol. 60 Issue 4: 835-848

African American boys from father-absent homes are more likely to skip classes, be suspended from school, run away from home, or be in trouble with the law than African American boys whose father resides in the home.

Rodney, H. Elaine. (1999) Behavioral Differences between African American Male Adolescents with Biological Fathers and Those without Biological Fathers in the Home. Journal of Black Studies Vol. 30 Issue 1: 45-61

Father involvement has a direct effect on adolescent behavior. When fathers are involved, there is a significant decrease in adolescent behavioral problems. While this holds true across all family-types, additional benefits are gained when the father resides in the same home as the adolescent.

Carlson, Marcia. (2006) Family Structure, Father Involvement, and Adolescent Behavioral Outcomes. Journal of Marriage and Family Vol. 68: 137-154.

Overall, boys who feel close to their fathers, both custodial and non-custodial, have better attitudes about intimacy and the prospect of their own married lives than boys who do not feel close to their fathers.

Risch, Sharon; Jodl, Kathleen; Eccles, Jaquelynn. (2004) Role of the Father-Adolescent Relationship in Shaping Adolescent's Attitudes Toward Divorce. Journal of Marriage and Family Vol. 66: 46-58.

There is a significant relationship between daughter-father attachment and girls' depressive symptoms and engagement in problem behaviors. This relationship is driven by alienation and disengagement by the father, accompanied by an intense emotional desire for involvement by the daughter.

Coley, Rebekah. (2003) Daughter-Father Relationships and Adolescent Psychosocial Functioning in Low-Income African American Families. Journal of Marriage and Family Vol. 65: 867-875.

About Michigan Family Forum

OUR CORE VALUES

- The family is the fundamental institution in a civil society.
- Healthy, lifelong marriages are beneficial to adults and offer the best environment in which to raise children and care for elders.
- The involvement of responsible fathers is essential to the economic, emotional, and social health of children.
- Children need the protection of stable families and a healthy understanding of human sexuality.
- Elders deserve to have security and care provided by loving family members in a comfortable home environment.

OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE

- Family Health Indicators: A Survey of Michigan Counties
- Forum Online
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