

CHILD & FAMILY

RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

LBJ SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

TEXAS REGIONAL FATHERHOOD SUMMIT | 06.25.2019

TEXAS REGIONAL FATHERHOOD SUMMIT 2019 DALLAS

#TXdads2019 #fatherhood



WELCOME

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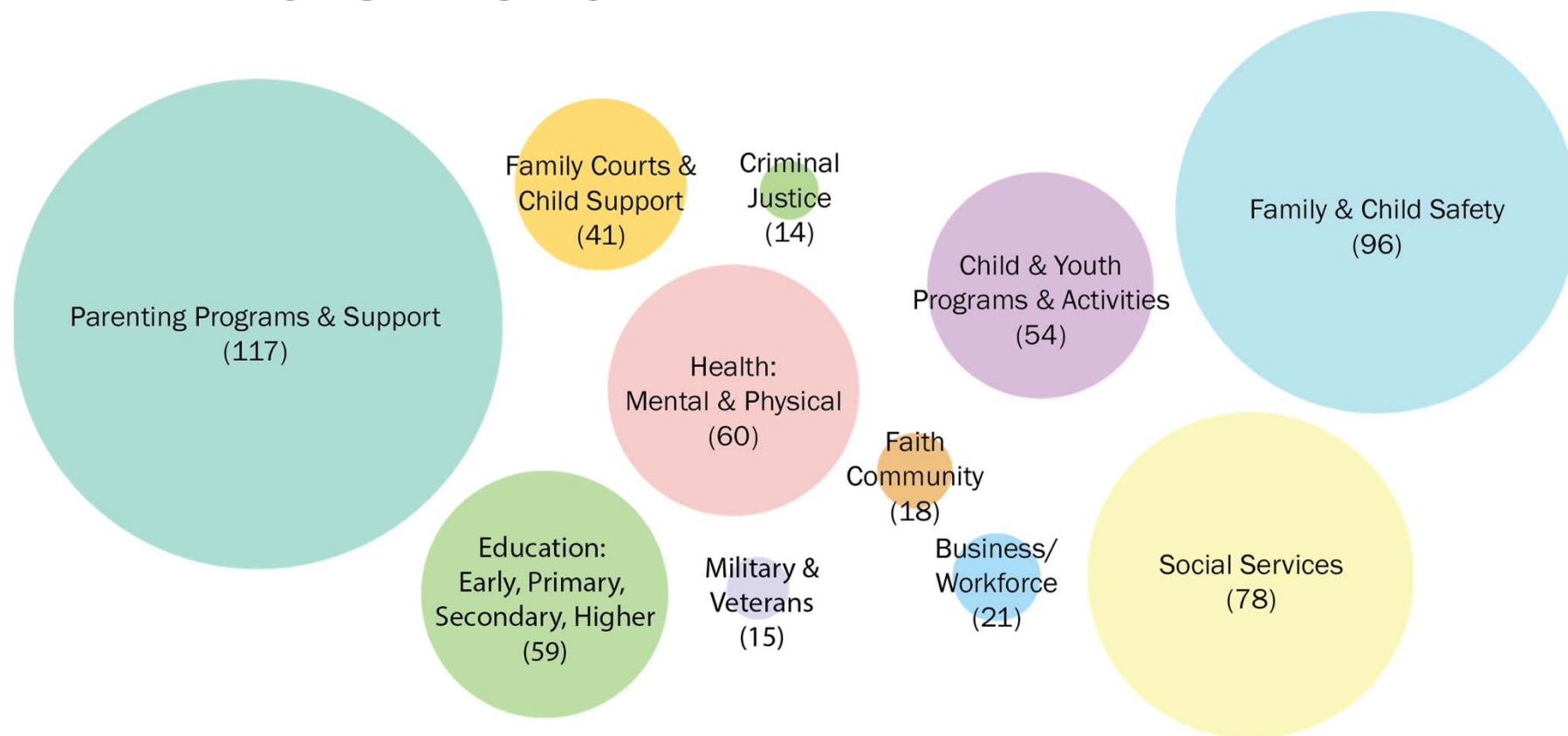
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WHO IS HERE?

Who's here?

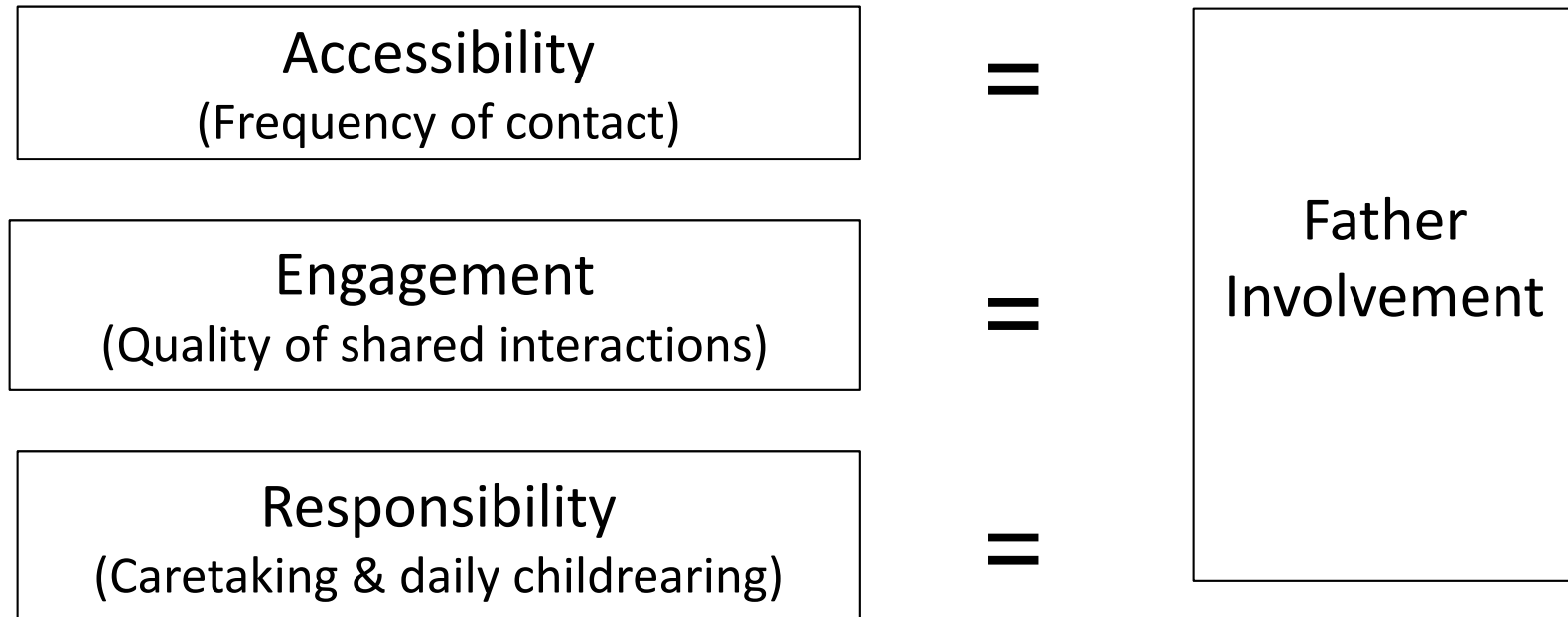


DADS 101: WHY DADS MATTER FOR KIDS

Overview

- Positive father involvement is good for children and families
- Many fathers are not involved in their children's lives
- There are potential negative impacts on children from father absence and early adversity
- We can help improve father involvement

What do we mean by “father involvement”?



Changing conception of father involvement

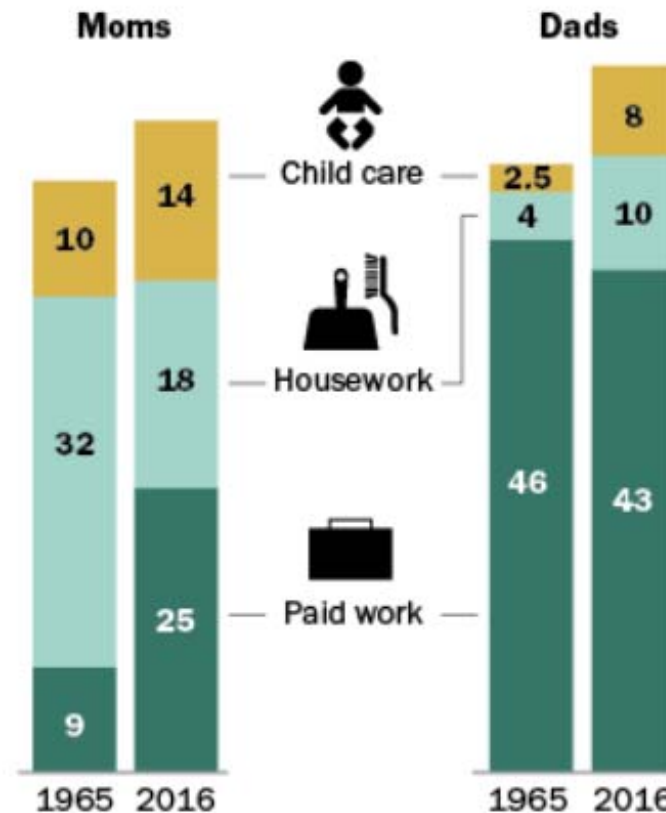
- Historically, social welfare programs have focused on mothers and children
- Programs for fathers have traditionally focused on increasing financial contributions to family
- Growing body of research supports the importance of father involvement in children's lives
- Government funding for fatherhood programs has increased over the last two decades

Changes in father involvement

- Fathers spending more time with kids
- Cultural shift from breadwinner role to (more) equal co-parent
- Men desire more involvement
- Increased nonmarital childbearing, separation, and divorce — more dads doing things on their own
- Increase in women at work — dads are taking on more childrearing and nurturing

Fathers are spending more time with their children

Average number of hours per week spent on ...



Note: Paid work includes commute time.

Source: 1965 data from table 5A.1-2, Bianchi, S.M. et al., "Changing Rhythms of American Family Life" (2006). 2016 data from Pew Research Center analysis of American Time Use Survey (IPUMS).

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Why father involvement is important

- Positive paternal involvement is linked with positive child outcomes:
 - Academic success^a
 - Reduced delinquency^{b,c}
 - Social/emotional wellbeing^{a,d,e}
 - Reduced impact of maternal depression^{f,g}
- Early involvement matters:^e
 - Involvement in first few years affects cognition, language, and social/emotional development
 - Involvement in first nine months is linked with reduced cognitive delay
 - Encouragement and support for maternal breastfeeding^{h,i}
 - Fathers' presence at the birth is a key predictor for maternal and child wellbeing^j

DADS MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE!

Children who grow up with INVOLVED fathers are:

39%

MORE LIKELY TO
EARN MOSTLY A'S
IN SCHOOL

45%

LESS LIKELY
TO REPEAT
A GRADE

60%

LESS LIKELY TO BE
SUSPENDED OR
EXPELLED FROM
SCHOOL

2X

AS LIKELY TO GO TO COLLEGE
AND FIND STABLE
EMPLOYMENT AFTER
HIGH SCHOOL

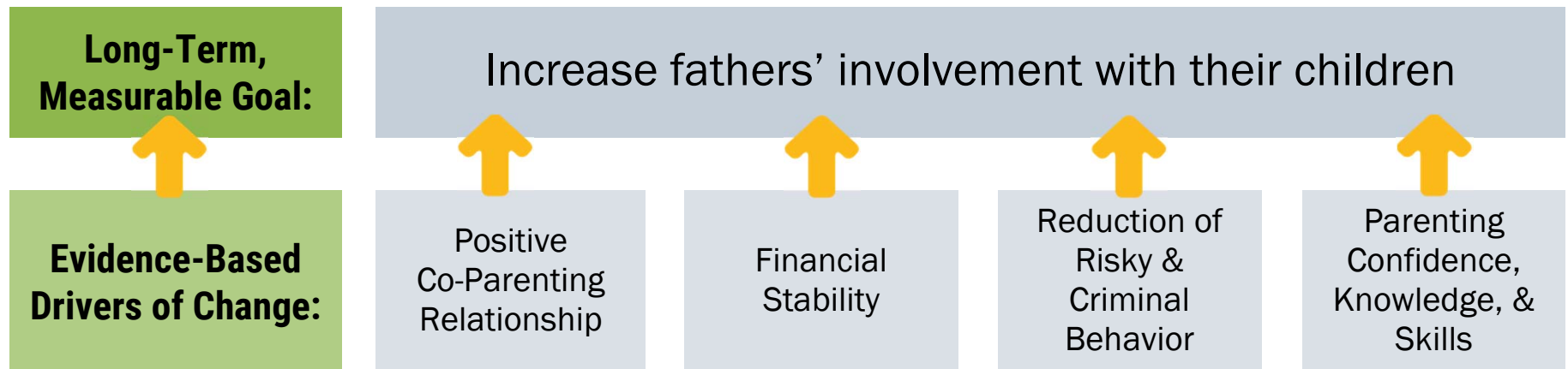
75%

LESS LIKELY
TO HAVE A
TEEN BIRTH

80%

LESS LIKELY TO
SPEND TIME
IN JAIL

Four pillars of father involvement

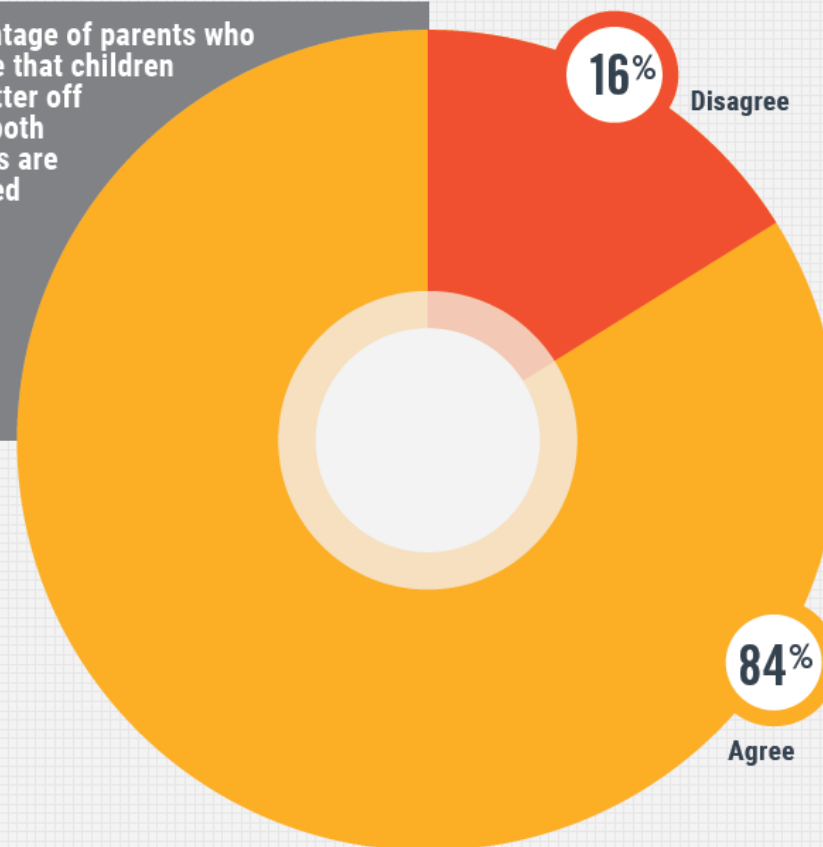


Positive co-parenting relationship

- Relationship quality is a consistent predictor of father involvement^{a,b}
- Regardless of parents' relationship status, when mothers support fathers' relationships with their children and parents can cooperate with and support one another in raising their child, fathers see their children more, engage in more activities with them, and have more positive relationships with them.^{c,d,e}
- Mothers who have positive relationships with their children's fathers are more likely to have positive co-parenting relationships with them.^f
- Efforts to improve father involvement should focus on improving parents' approach to conflict management and collaboration^b

MOMS AND DADS AGREE THAT CHILDREN ARE BETTER OFF WHEN BOTH PARENTS ARE INVOLVED

Percentage of parents who
believe that children
are better off
when both
parents are
involved

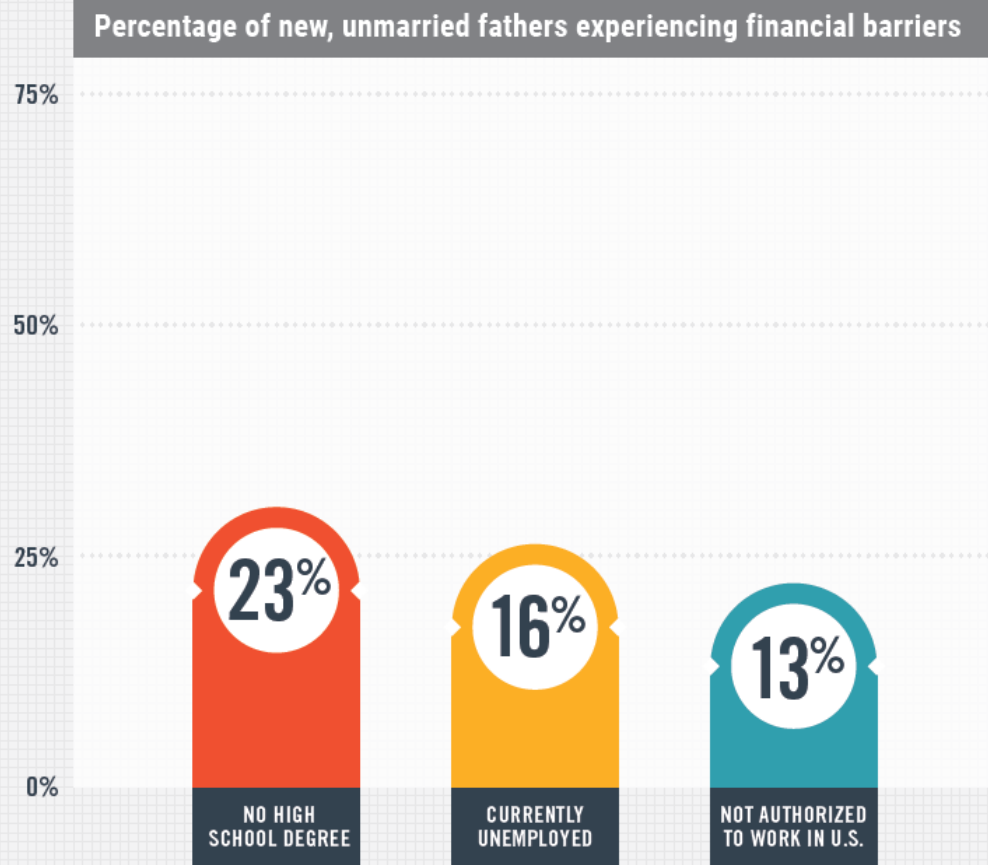


SOURCE: ZERO TO THREE NATIONAL PARENT SURVEY, 2016.

Economic stability

- Fathers who are unemployed or feel they are inadequate providers are less involved with their children and use fewer positive parenting behaviors.^a
- Nonresident fathers who provide either formal child support or informal financial or in-kind support to their children tend to have more contact with their child.^b
- Nonresident fathers who have more contact with their children tend to provide more informal support.^b
- Child support arrears can reduce fathers' willingness or ability to engage with their children.^c

BARRIERS PREVENT FATHERS FROM SUPPORTING THEIR FAMILIES

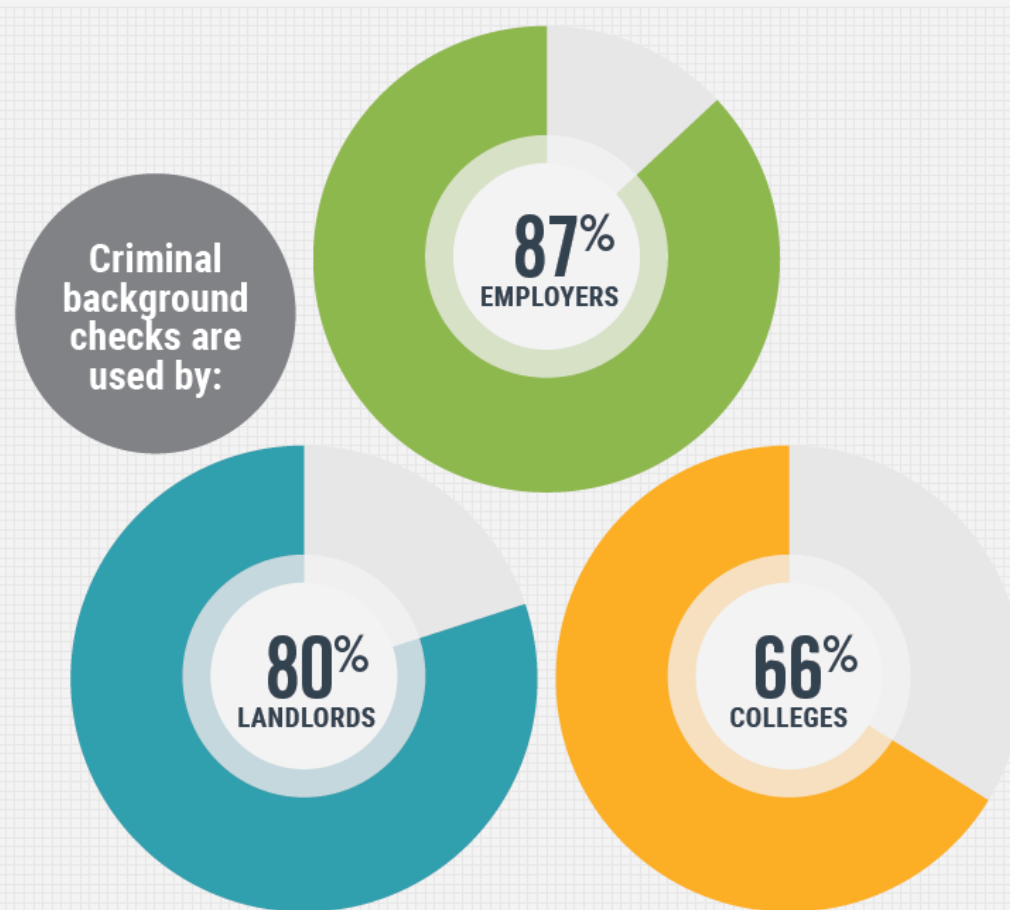


SOURCE: CFRP PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT STUDY, TEXAS MOTHERS AT 3 MONTHS AFTER CHILD'S BIRTH, 2013 (N=700).

Reduction of risky & criminal behavior

- Fathers with a history of incarceration,^{a,b} abusive behavior,^c or drug and alcohol problems^d are less likely to have positive interactions or maintain contact with their children over time.
- Other risk factors for low father involvement include multipartner fertility,^e depressive symptoms,^f stress,^g unintended pregnancy or low prenatal involvement,^h and young age at the birth of the child.ⁱ
- Fathers' resilience (e.g., employment, completion of education, family and social support, high-quality romantic relationship with child's mother) in the context of these risk factors is associated with fathers' involvement with their children.^j

INCARCERATION RECORDS MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR MANY FATHERS TO GET A JOB, A HOME, AND A HIGHER EDUCATION

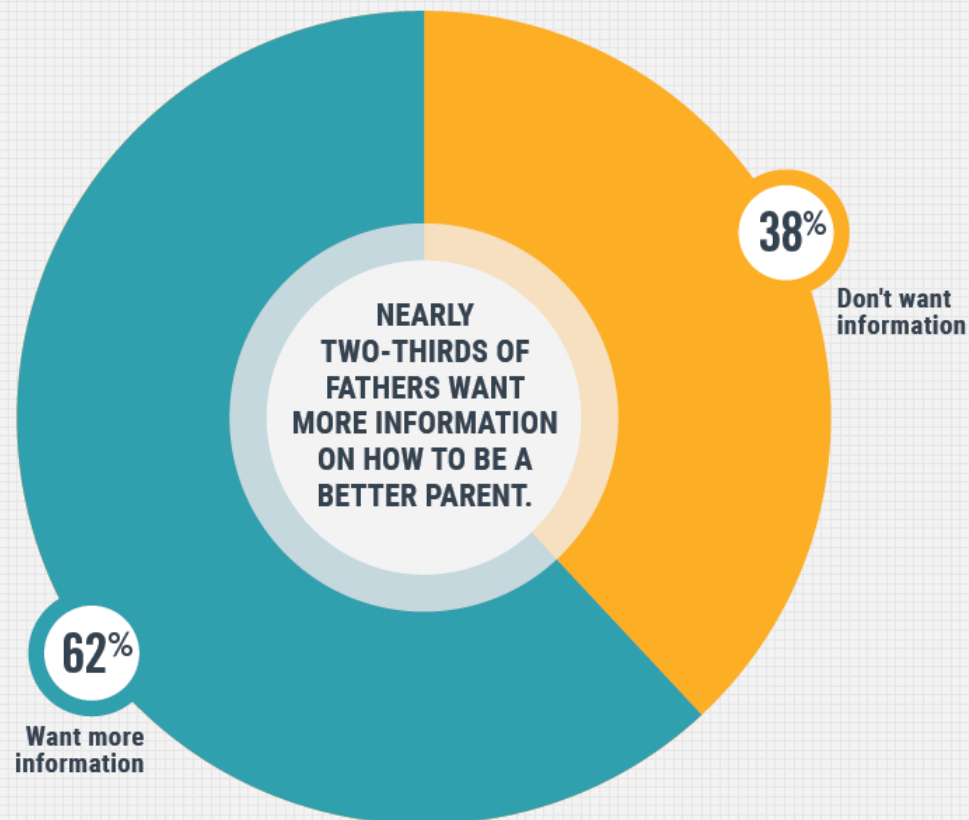


SOURCE: CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS, 2015.

Parenting confidence, knowledge, & skills

- When fathers feel competent^a and believe that they can parent well,^b they spend more time with their children, take on more caretaking responsibilities, and engage more positively with their children.^{c,d}
- Increasing the amount of time they spend with their children allows fathers to build more parenting skills and efficacy;^{a,e,j} in turn, having parenting skills and efficacy is linked to increased involvement.^f
- Fathers who understand and value their identity as fathers are more involved with their children and have higher-quality relationships with them.^{g,h}
- Fathers who have positive beliefs about fatherhood and the importance of father involvement are more engaged with their children.ⁱ

FATHERS WANT HELP TO BE A BETTER DAD



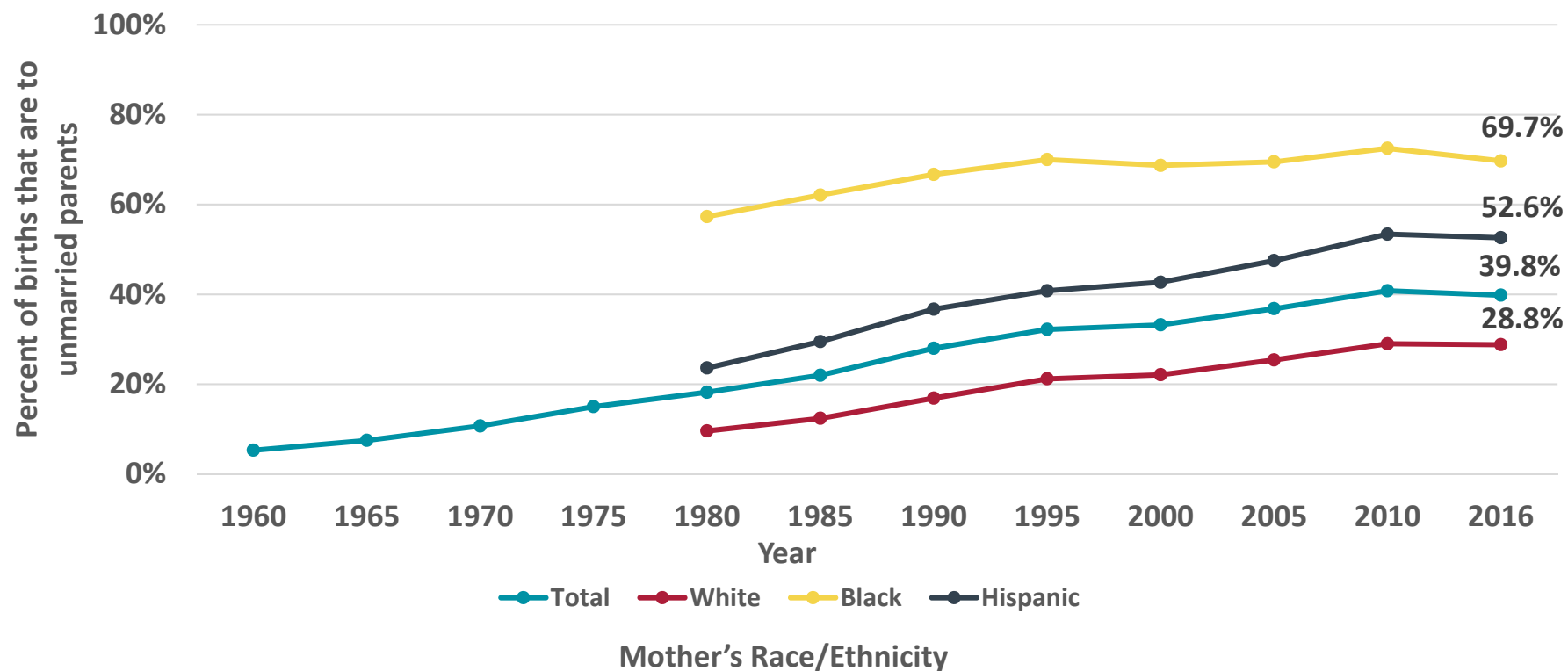
SOURCE: ZERO TO THREE NATIONAL PARENT SURVEY, 2016.

FATHER ABSENCE AND ITS LASTING IMPACT ON CHILDREN

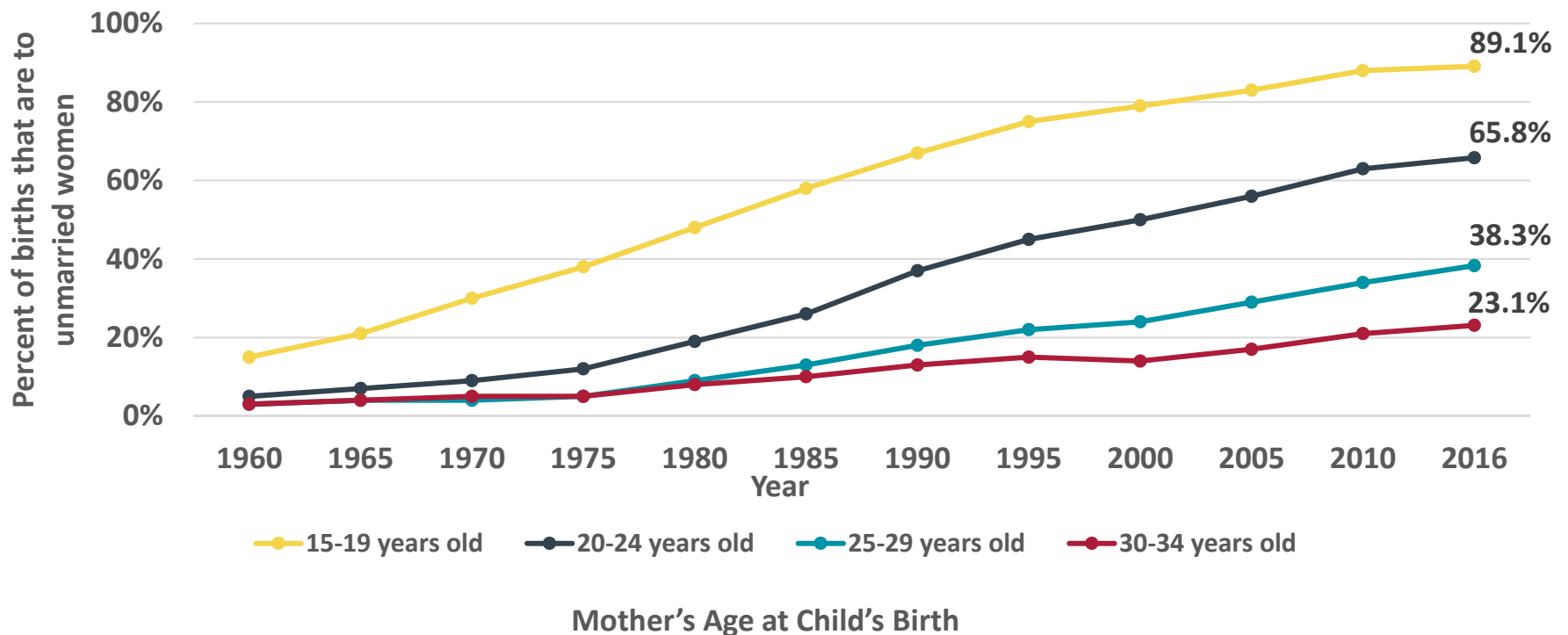
U.S. families are increasingly complex and less stable

- 40% of children are born to unmarried parents^a
- Of nonmarital births, most children are born to cohabitating parents – who will soon split up^b
- Only 51% of children live in a “simple” family^c
- Unmarried, nonresident fathers are less likely to see their children and less likely to provide consistent support^d

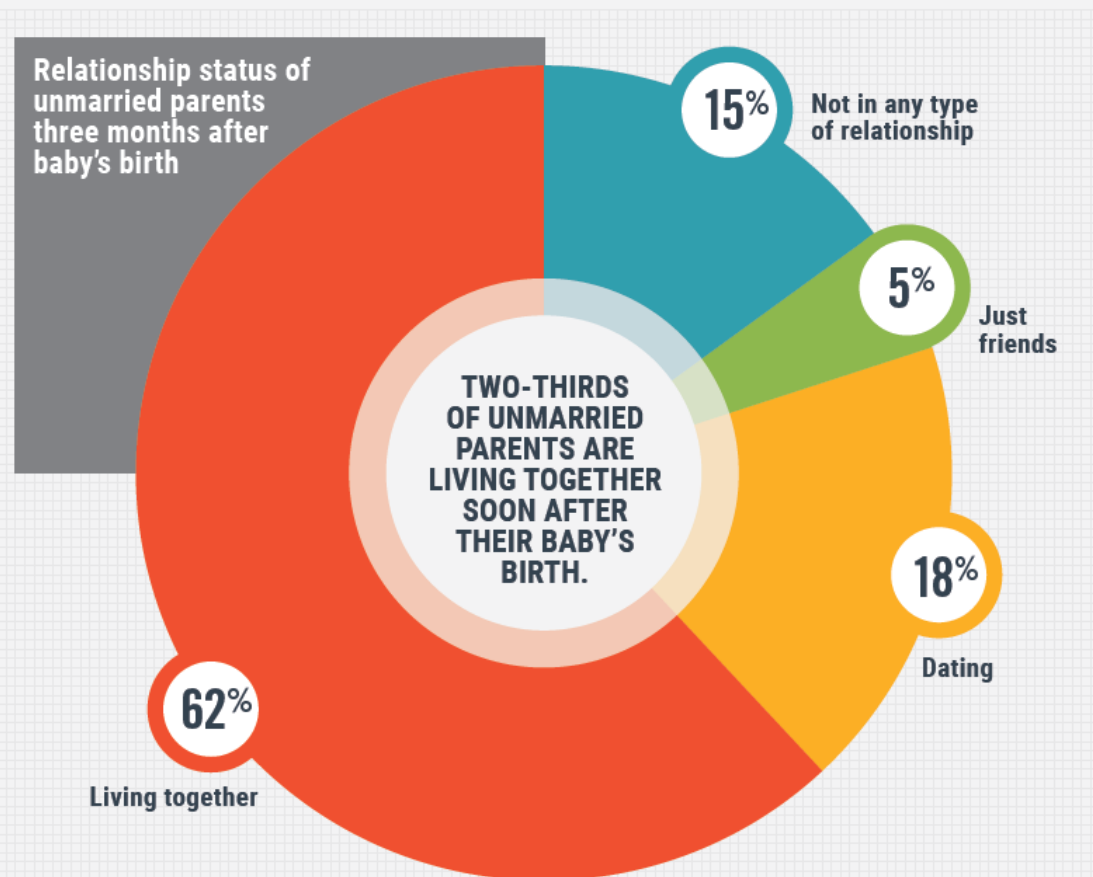
Increase in nonmarital childbirth



Nonmarital childbearing is the norm for younger parents

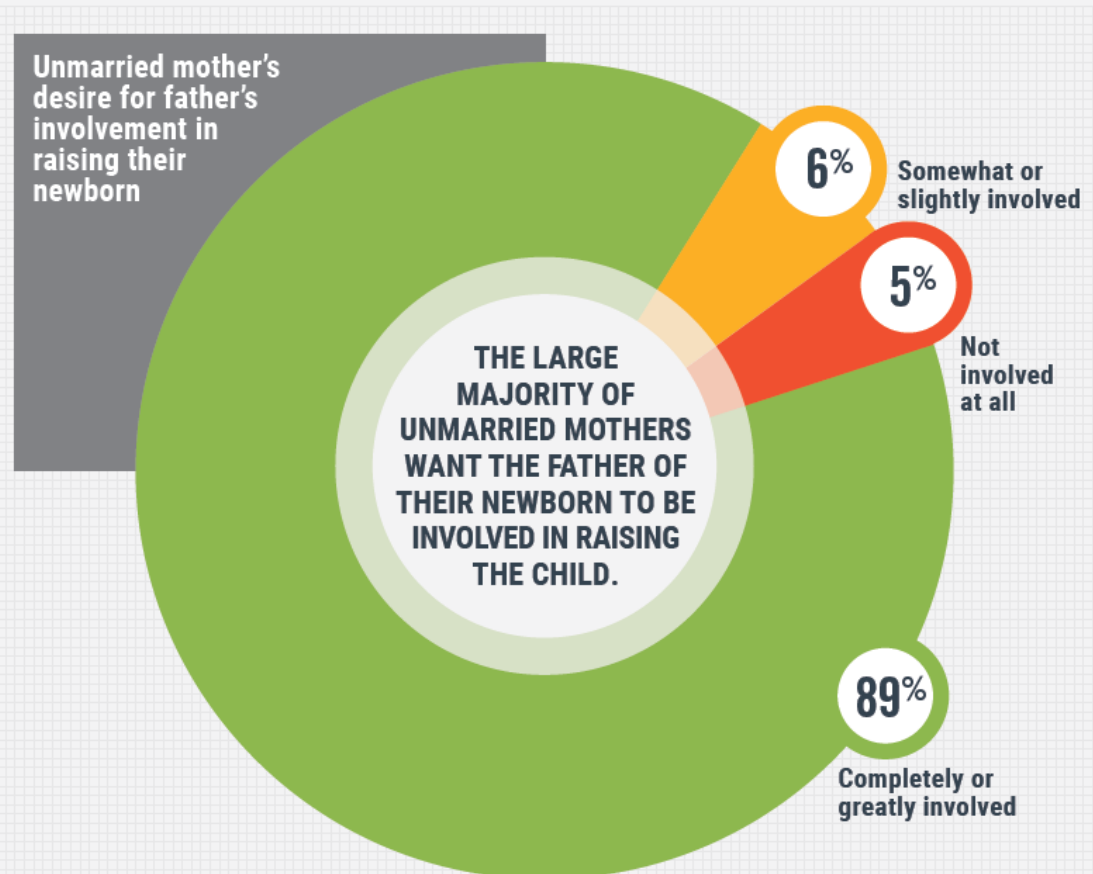


MOST UNMARRIED PARENTS ARE TOGETHER AROUND THE TIME OF THEIR BABY'S BIRTH



SOURCE: CFRP PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT STUDY, TEXAS MOTHERS AT 3 MONTHS AFTER CHILD'S BIRTH, 2013 (N=700).

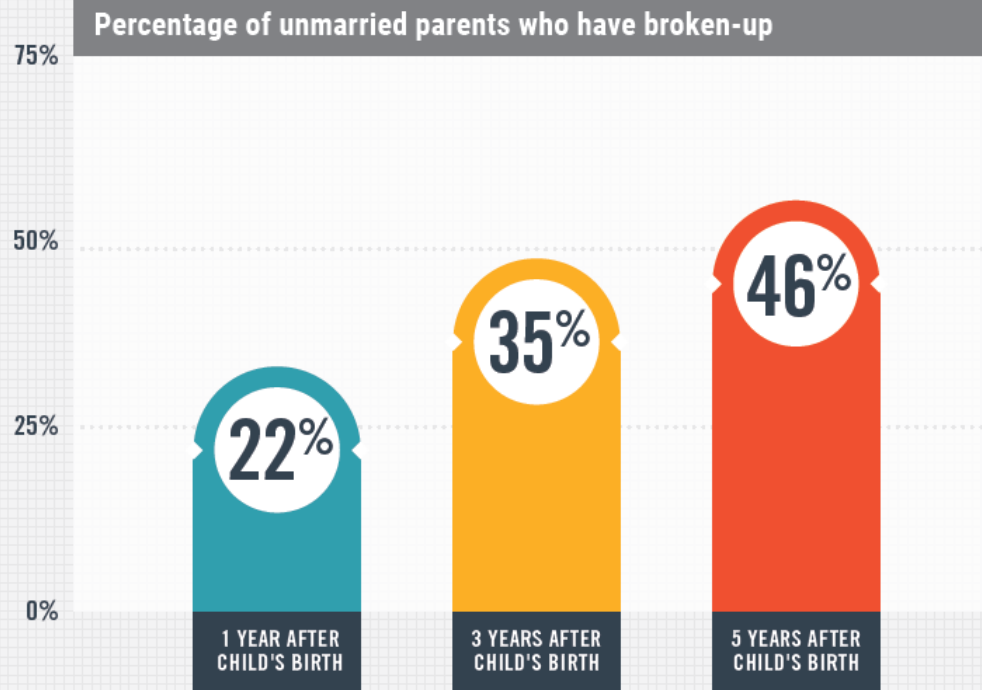
MOST UNMARRIED PARENTS WANT DAD TO BE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN THEIR NEWBORN'S LIFE



SOURCE: CFRP PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT STUDY, TEXAS MOTHERS AT 3 MONTHS AFTER CHILD'S BIRTH, 2013 (N=700).

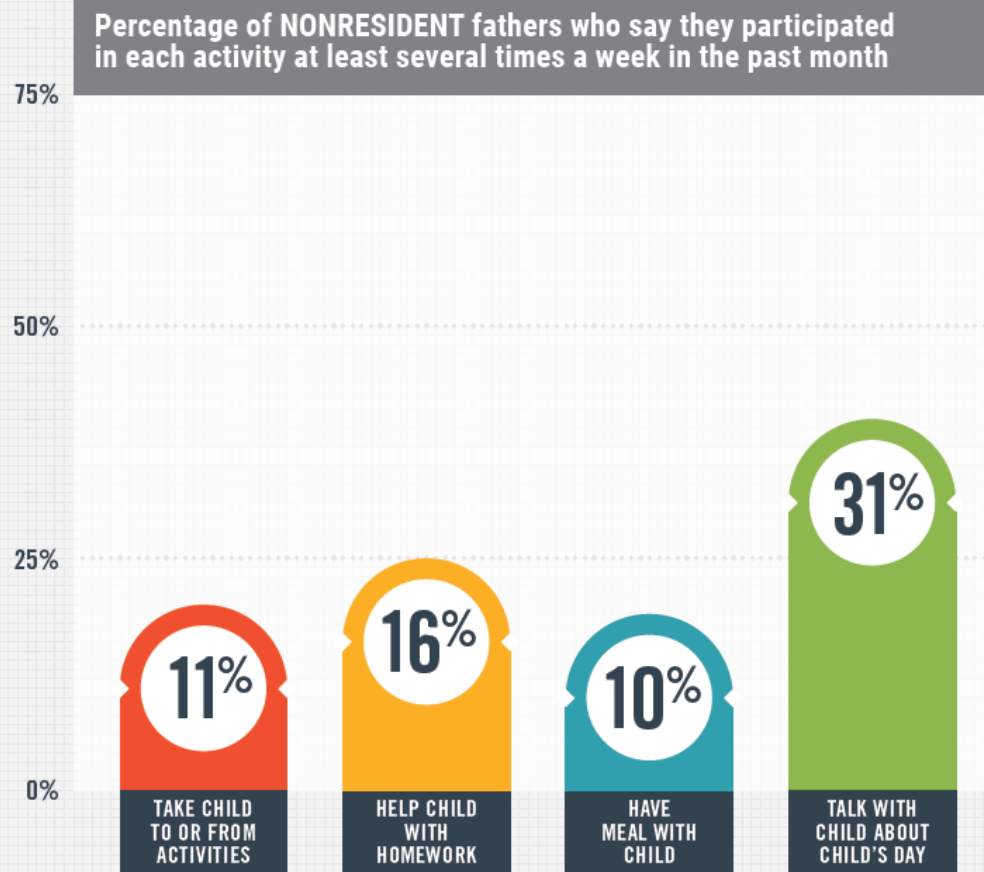
UNMARRIED PARENTS' RELATIONSHIPS ARE FRAGILE

ABOUT HALF OF PARENTS WHO WERE UNMARRIED AND LIVING TOGETHER AT THEIR CHILD'S BIRTH HAVE BROKEN UP BY THE TIME THEIR CHILD IS 5 YEARS OLD.



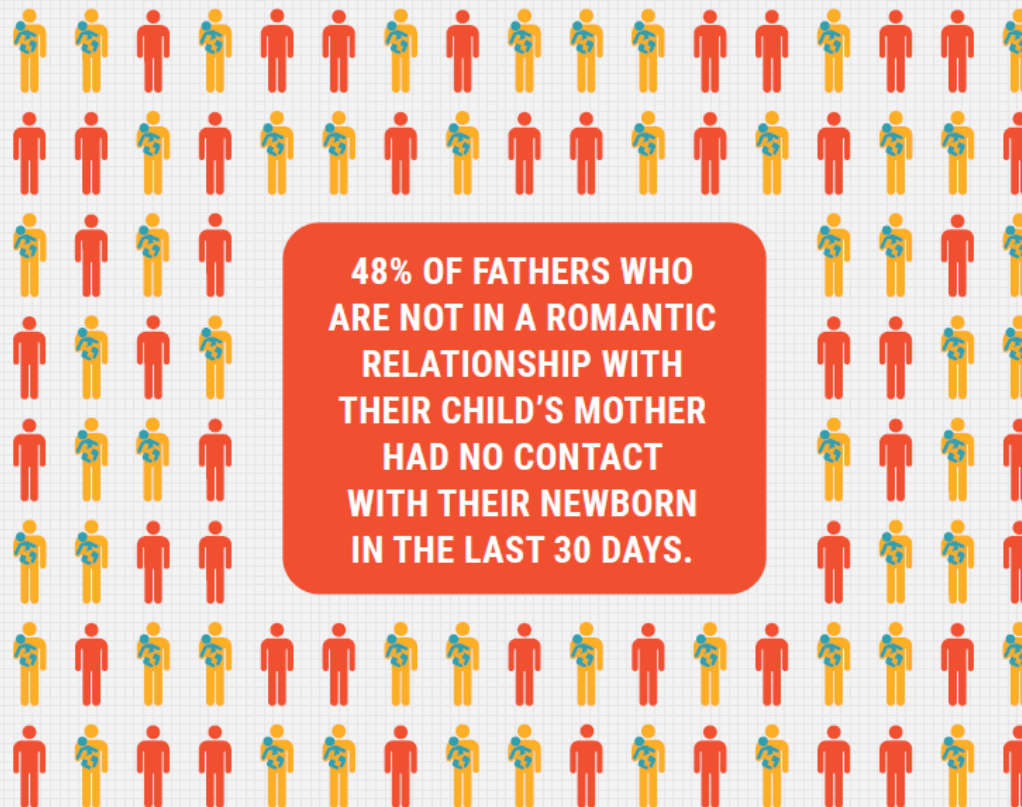
SOURCE: CARLSON AND VANORMAN, 2013 USING FRAGILE FAMILIES DATA.

FATHERS WHO DO NOT LIVE WITH THEIR CHILDREN MISS OUT ON DAILY LIFE



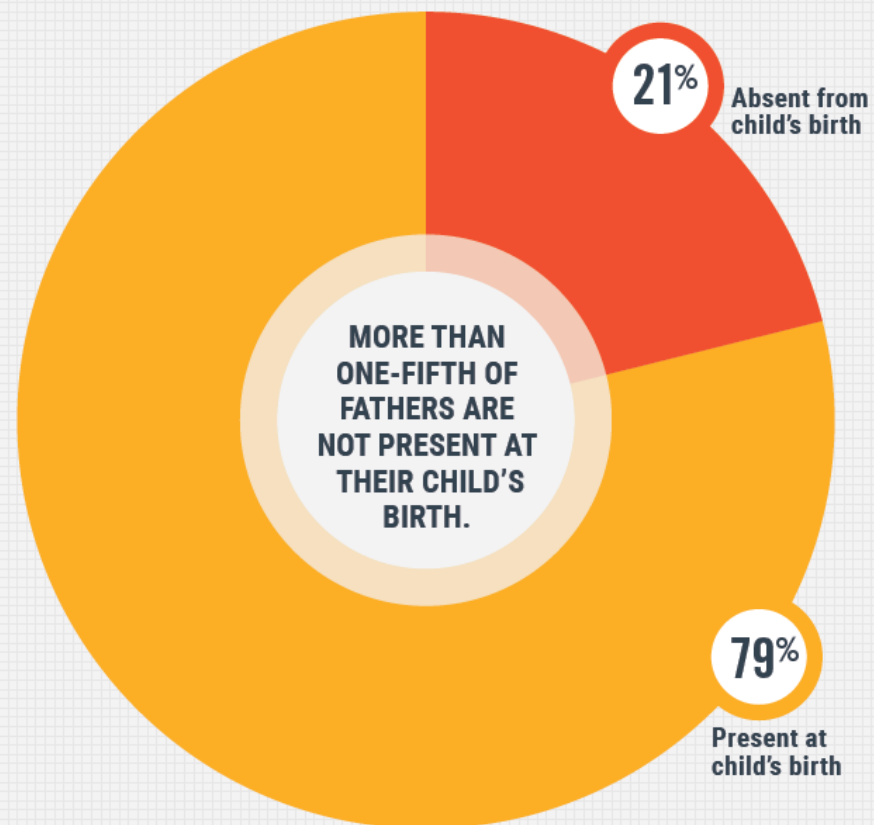
SOURCE: PEW RESEARCH CENTER CALCULATIONS OF THE 2006-08 NATIONAL SURVEY OF FAMILY GROWTH.

WHEN UNMARRIED PARENTS BREAK UP, HALF OF FATHERS DO NOT SEE THEIR NEWBORNS



SOURCE: CFRP PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT STUDY, TEXAS MOTHERS AT 3 MONTHS AFTER CHILD'S BIRTH, 2013 (N=700).

SOME FATHERS ARE NOT INVOLVED FROM THE START



SOURCE: CFRP PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT STUDY, TEXAS MOTHERS AT 3 MONTHS AFTER CHILD'S BIRTH, 2013 (N=700).

FATHER'S ABSENCE AT HIS CHILD'S BIRTH SIGNALS RISK FOR THE MOTHER AND BABY

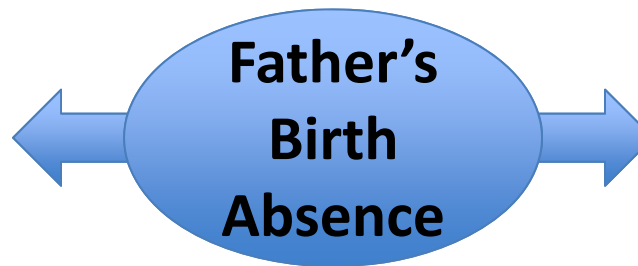
Outcome	Birth-Absent Father	Birth-Present Father
MOTHER EXPERIENCED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DURING PREGNANCY	43%	13%
MOTHER RECEIVED NO HELP FROM FATHER DURING PREGNANCY	75%	12%
BABY HAD SERIOUS HEALTH COMPLICATIONS AT BIRTH	9%	3%
MOTHER EXPERIENCED SERIOUS HEALTH PROBLEMS DURING PREGNANCY OR AT BIRTH	30%	17%

SOURCE: CFRP PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT STUDY, TEXAS MOTHERS AT 3 MONTHS AFTER CHILD'S BIRTH, 2013 (N=700).

Father absence at birth

Signal of risk during prenatal period

- Dating <6 months
- Unplanned pregnancy
- Doubting paternity
- Broke up during prenatal period
- No instrumental help
- No financial support
- Not at prenatal appointments
- Not at 20-week ultrasound



Predictor of perinatal and postnatal outcomes

- Low birthweight
- Serious maternal health complications
- Serious child health complications
- TANF
- Medicaid
- Domestic violence
- Depressive symptoms
- Maternal stress
- Potential adverse childhood experiences

Negative outcomes of father absence

- Greater risk of infant mortality
- More likely to become pregnant as a teenager
- More likely to drop out of high school
- More likely to have behavioral problems
- More likely abuse drugs and alcohol
- More likely to go commit a crime and to go to prison^a

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Abuse	Neglect	Household Challenges
Emotional abuse	Emotional neglect	Mother treated violently
Physical abuse	Physical neglect	Household substance abuse
Sexual Abuse		Mental illness in household
		Parental separation or divorce
		Incarcerated household member

- One of the most prevalent ACEs is the divorce or separation of a parent or guardian
- Children are less likely to live with their fathers after a separation
- Most ACE studies disregard nonmarital births

State and national prevalence of ACEs

Adverse Child or Family Experiences (ACEs) Items	Texas	National
Extreme economic hardship	29.0%	25.7%
Family disorder leading to divorce/separation	20.0%	20.1%
Has lived with someone who had an alcohol/drug problem	9.8%	10.7%
Has lived with someone who was mentally ill/suicidal	8.0%	8.6%
Witnessed domestic violence in the home	7.9%	7.3%
Has been a victim/witness of neighborhood violence	7.3%	8.6%
Parent served time in jail	6.9%	6.9%
Treated or judged unfairly due to race/ethnicity	3.6%	4.1%
Death of a parent	2.6%	3.1%
Child had 1+ ACEs	48.1%	47.9%

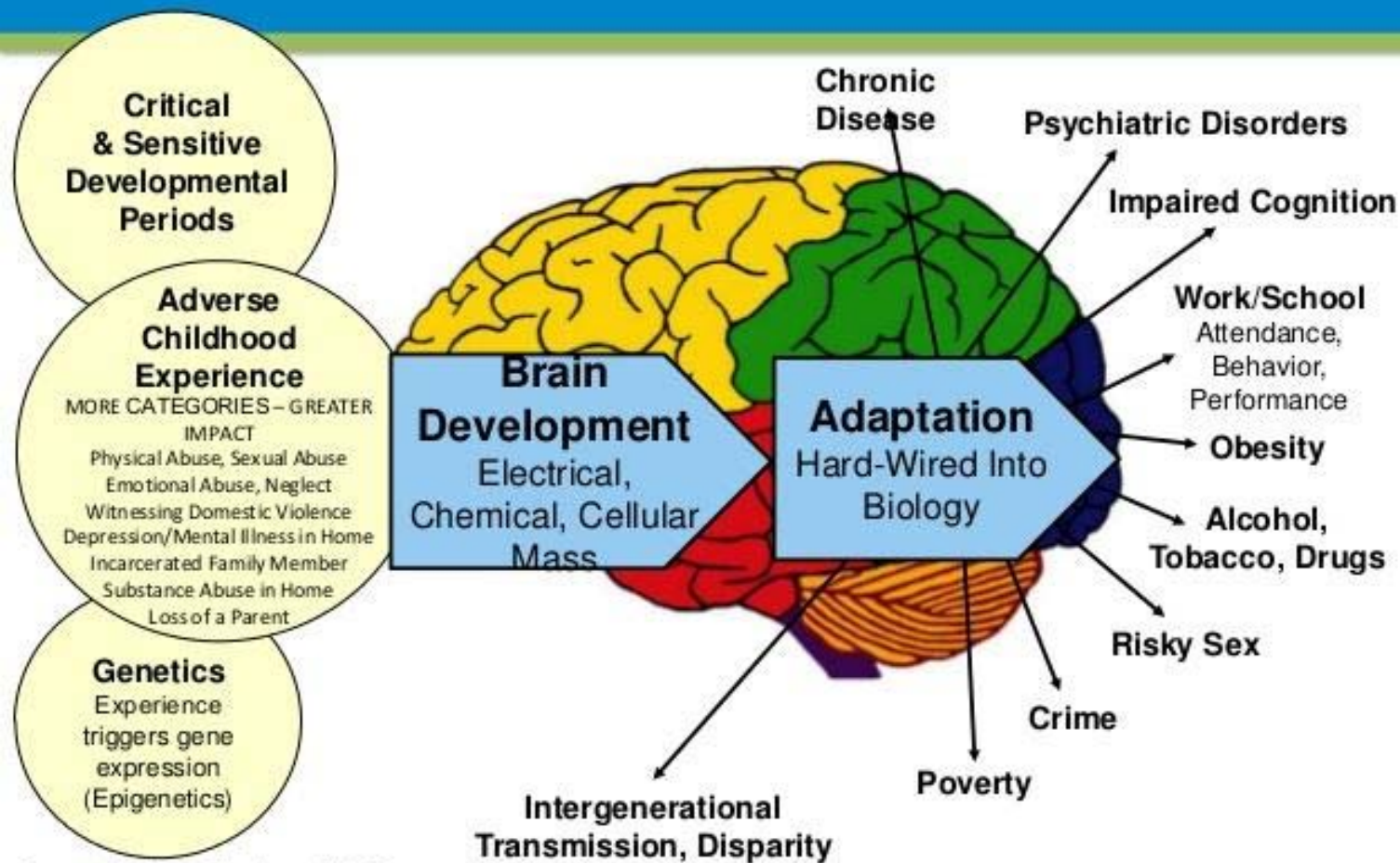
Our earliest experiences shape our lives

- Our brains are the only organ that is not fully developed when we are born
- Our brains are shaped by our environments – both good and bad experiences
- 90% of our brain has developed by age 5, but the most sensitive period is prenatal to age 3

Toxic stress is harmful to the developing brain

- Some stress is healthy – it teaches resilience
- Other stress is tolerable – it is acute, but with social supports we recover
- Chronic exposure to adversity – the absence of a loving, safe, stable relationship permanently mars the developing child
- Early adversity is linked with poor adult health and behaviors

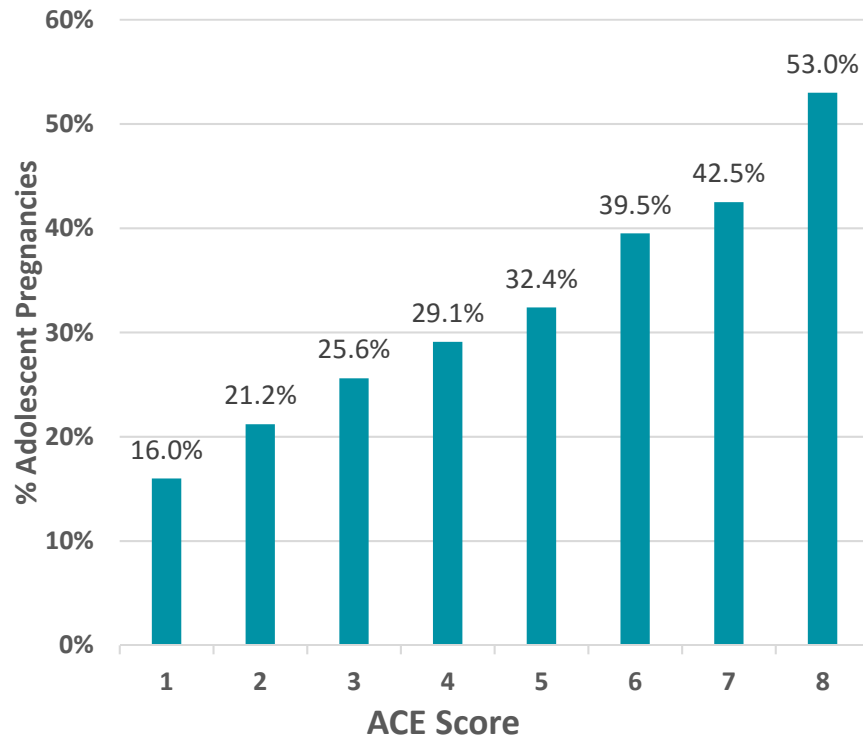
Lifespan Impacts of ACEs



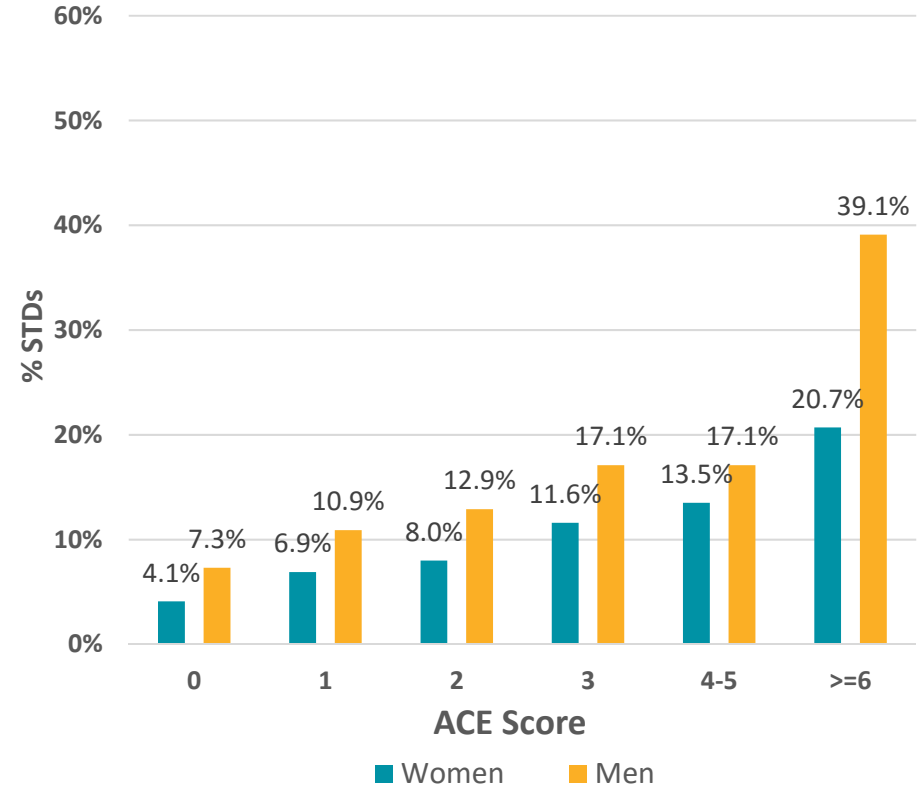
Source: Family Policy Council, 2012

ACE score and sexual behavior

Adolescent Pregnancy by ACE Score

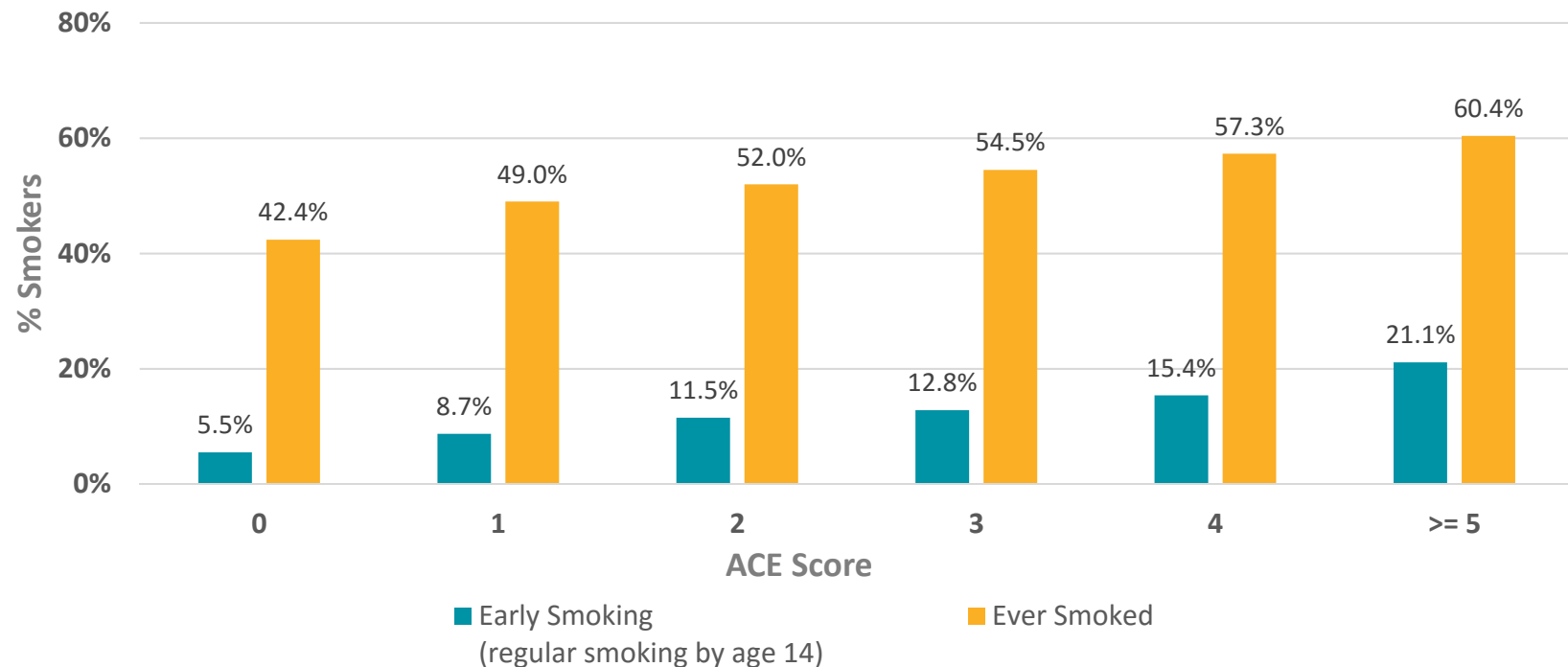


Prevalence of STDs by ACE Score

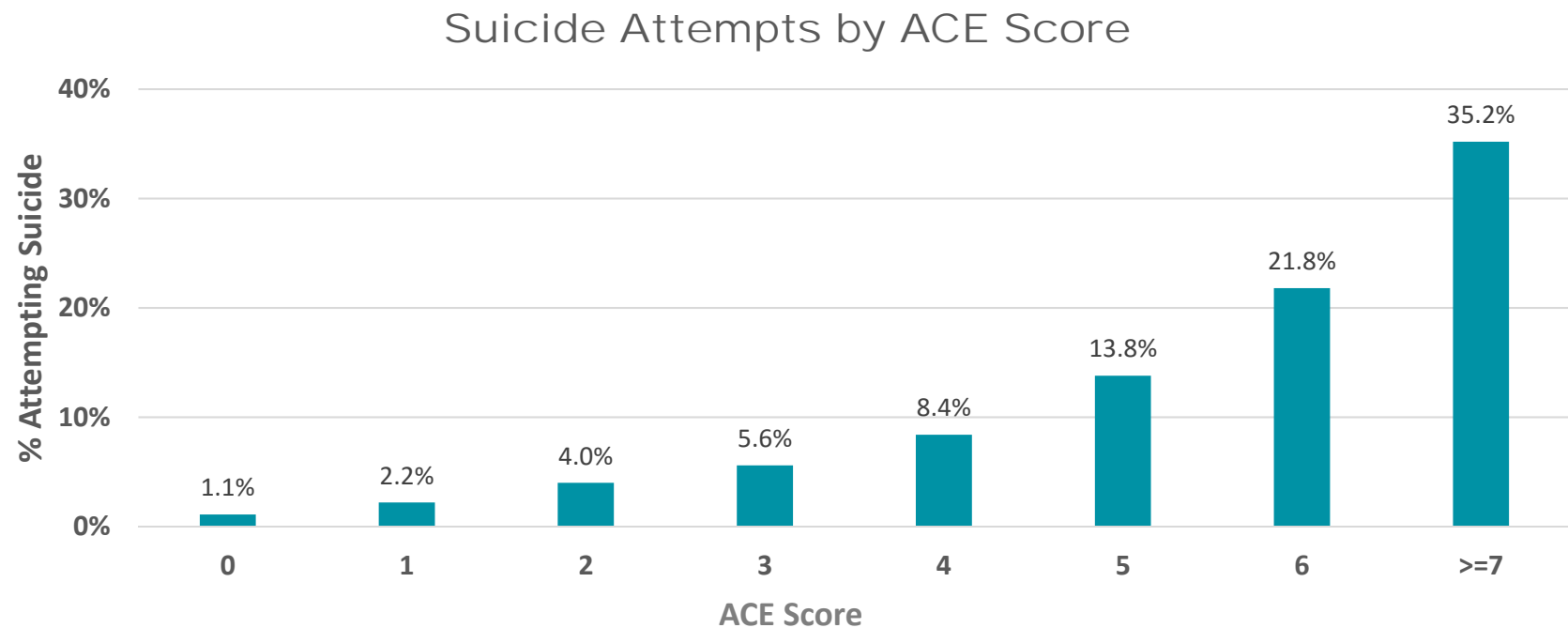


Adverse childhood experiences increase prevalence of smoking

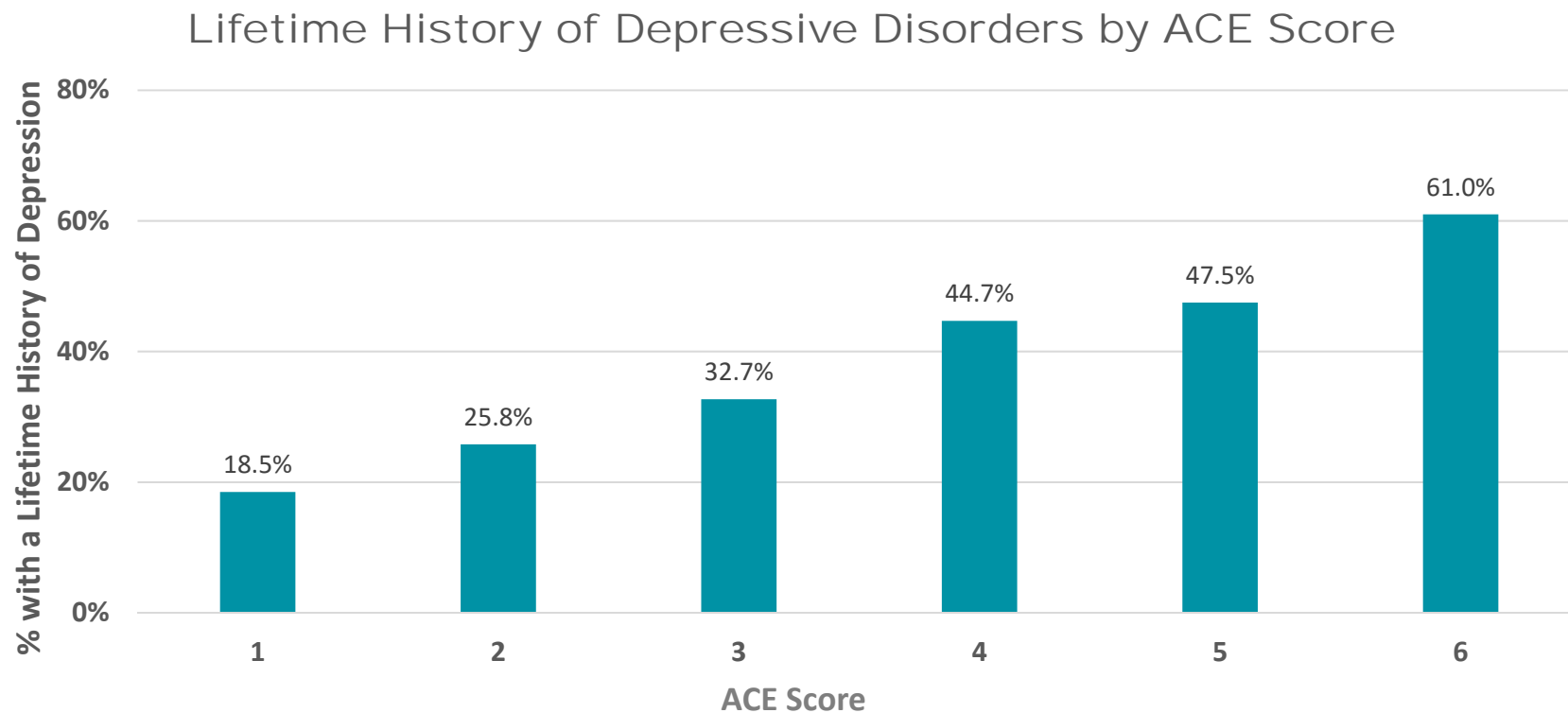
Prevalence of Smoking by ACE Score



Childhood experiences underlie suicide attempts



Childhood experiences underlie depression



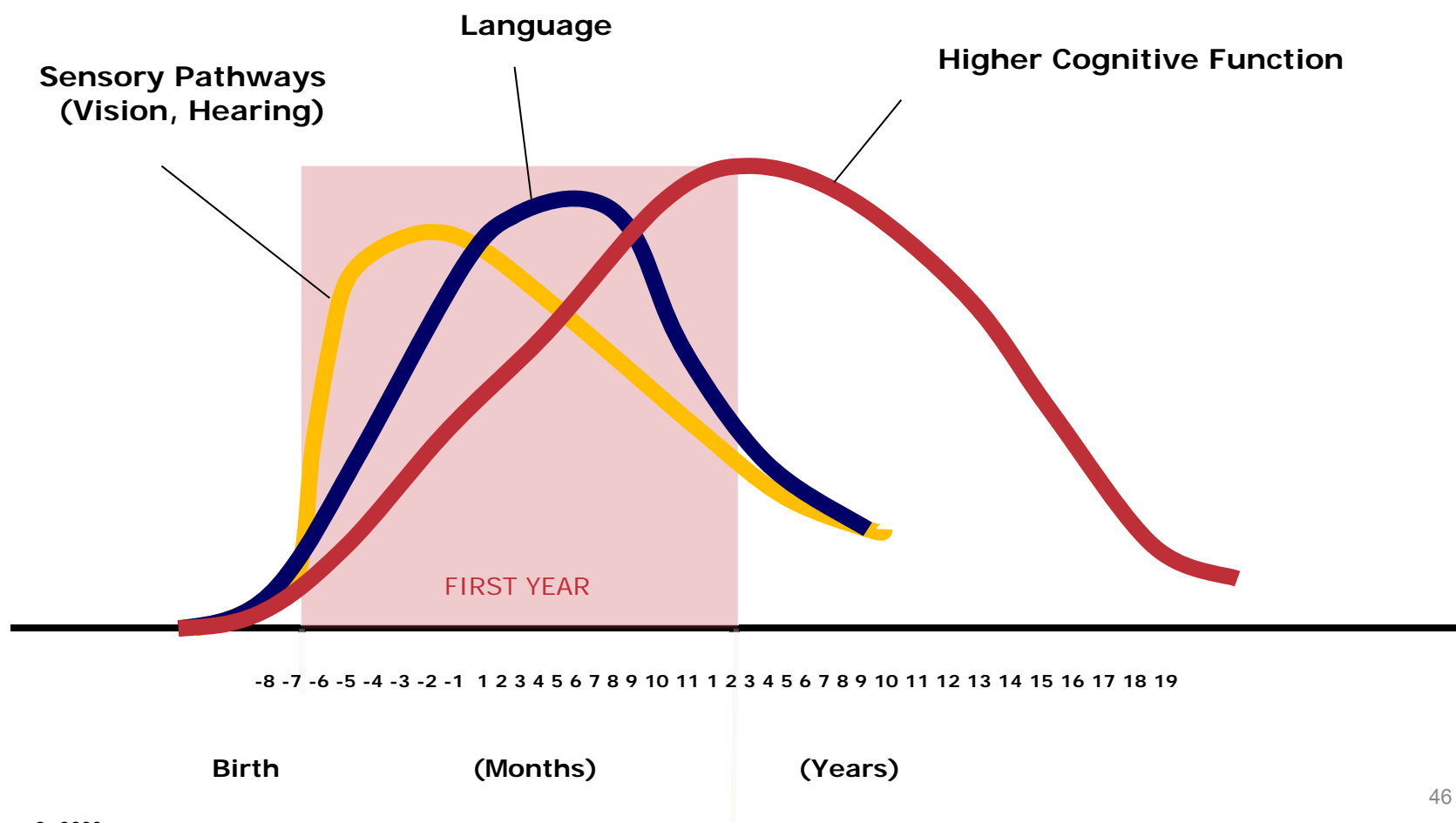
4 connected pathways to long-term effects of adversity

- Brain Architecture
- Epigenetics
- Stress Response
- Bi-directional Social Interaction

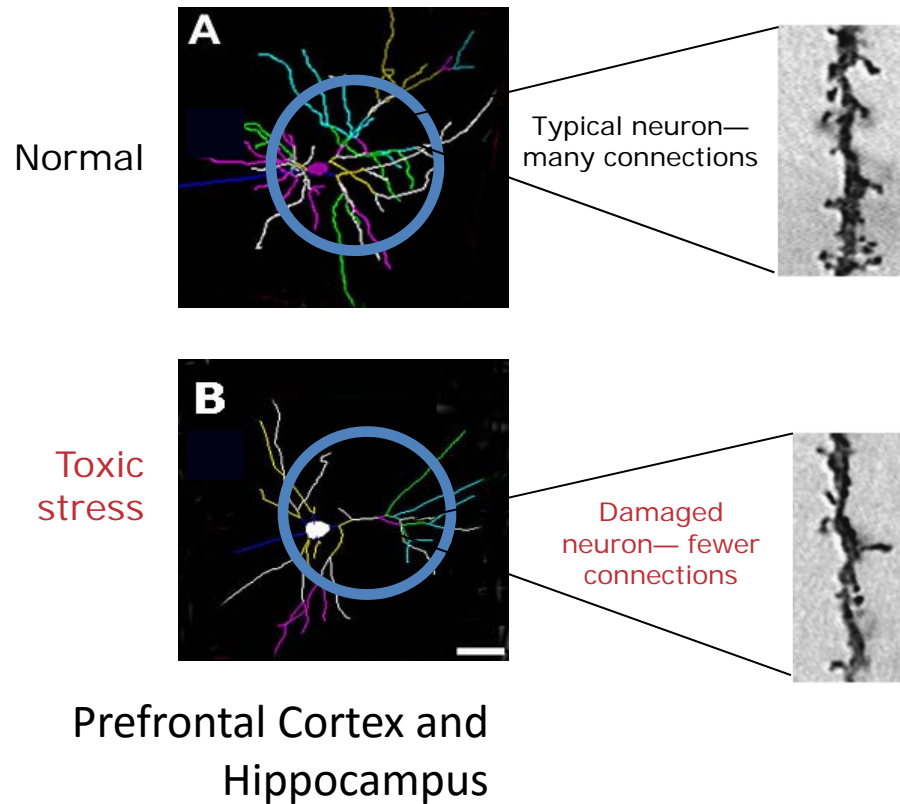
Brain architecture

- Our brain has sensitive periods for development – the first 1000 days is the most sensitive
- The brain is VERY responsive to its environment – it will take in ALL input, and it can't differentiate between “good” and “bad” input
- Inputs create and strengthen neural connections

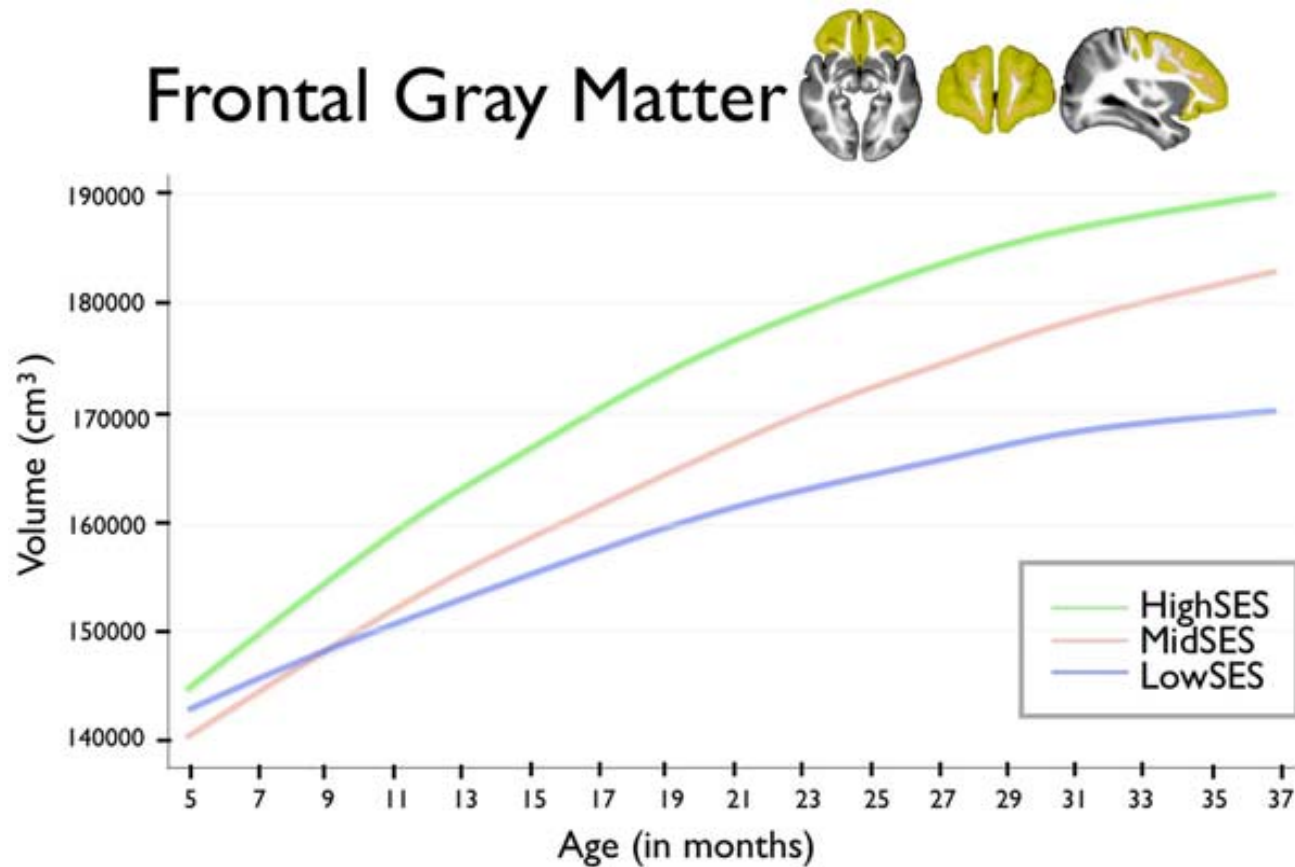
Plasticity and critical periods



Toxic stress changes brain architecture



Your brain on poverty!



Epigenetics

- We are born with a genetic code (our DNA)
- Our environment determines which genes will “turn on” and which ones will not
- Effects can be intergenerational
- Genes = computer operating system
- Epigenetics = software that tells it what to do

Stress response system

- Adversity affects the immune and stress response system
- Adversity causes increased levels of stress hormones and “ages” the body
- Our bodies adapt to the stressors and incorporate unhealthy coping mechanisms

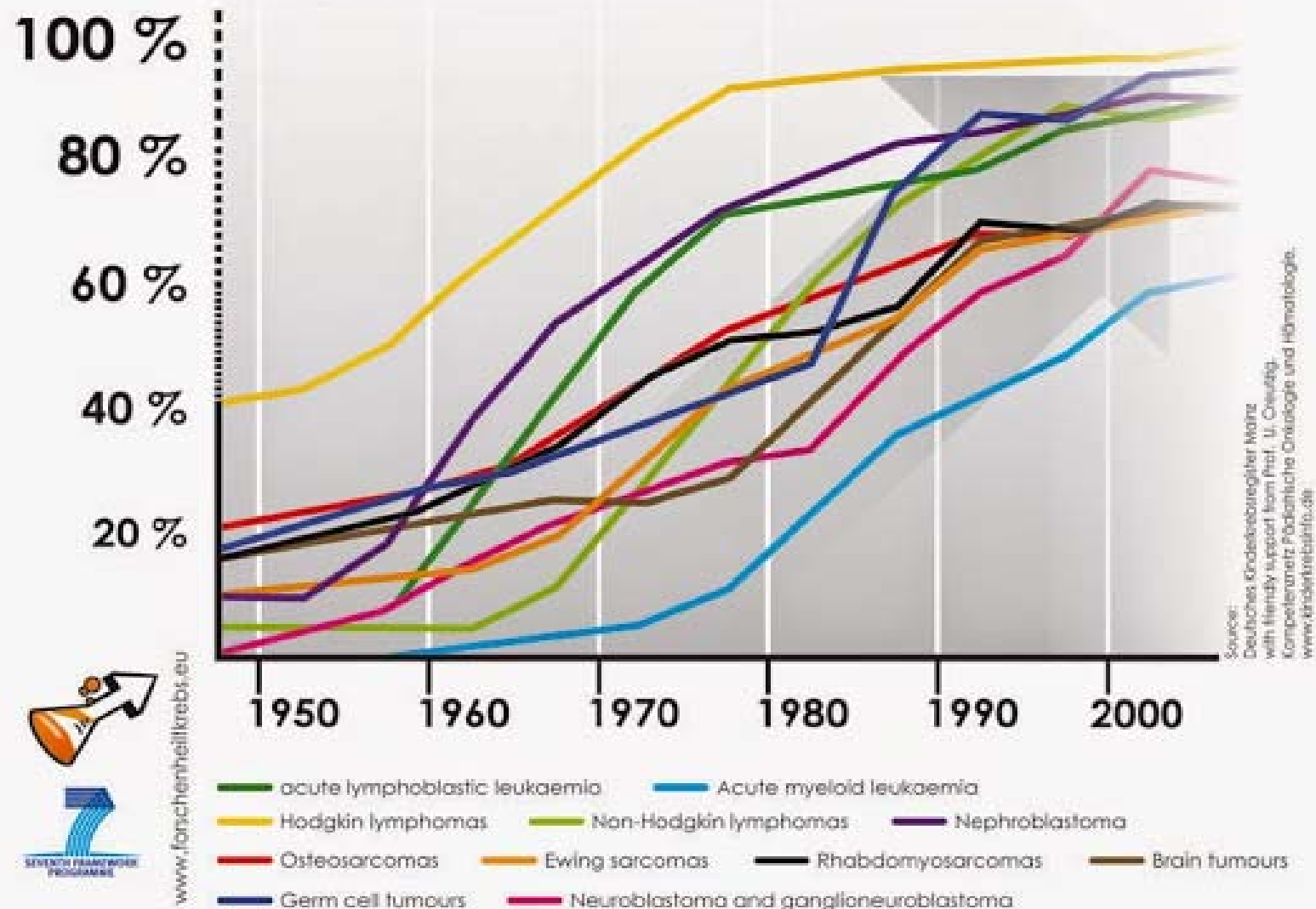
Social interaction

- Brain development affects how we see the world – with adversity, we perceive more threats in our environment
- Our learned behavior can be tragically misinterpreted by others (e.g. running from the cops when danger is present)
- Our social network can reinforce the effects on our body

We are resilient!

- A strong attachment to one loving, safe, caring, stable adult can offset many of the negative effects of adversity
- Stimulating brain growth early is “simple” – and parents want to support their children
- Spreading the science is key – we will find solutions!

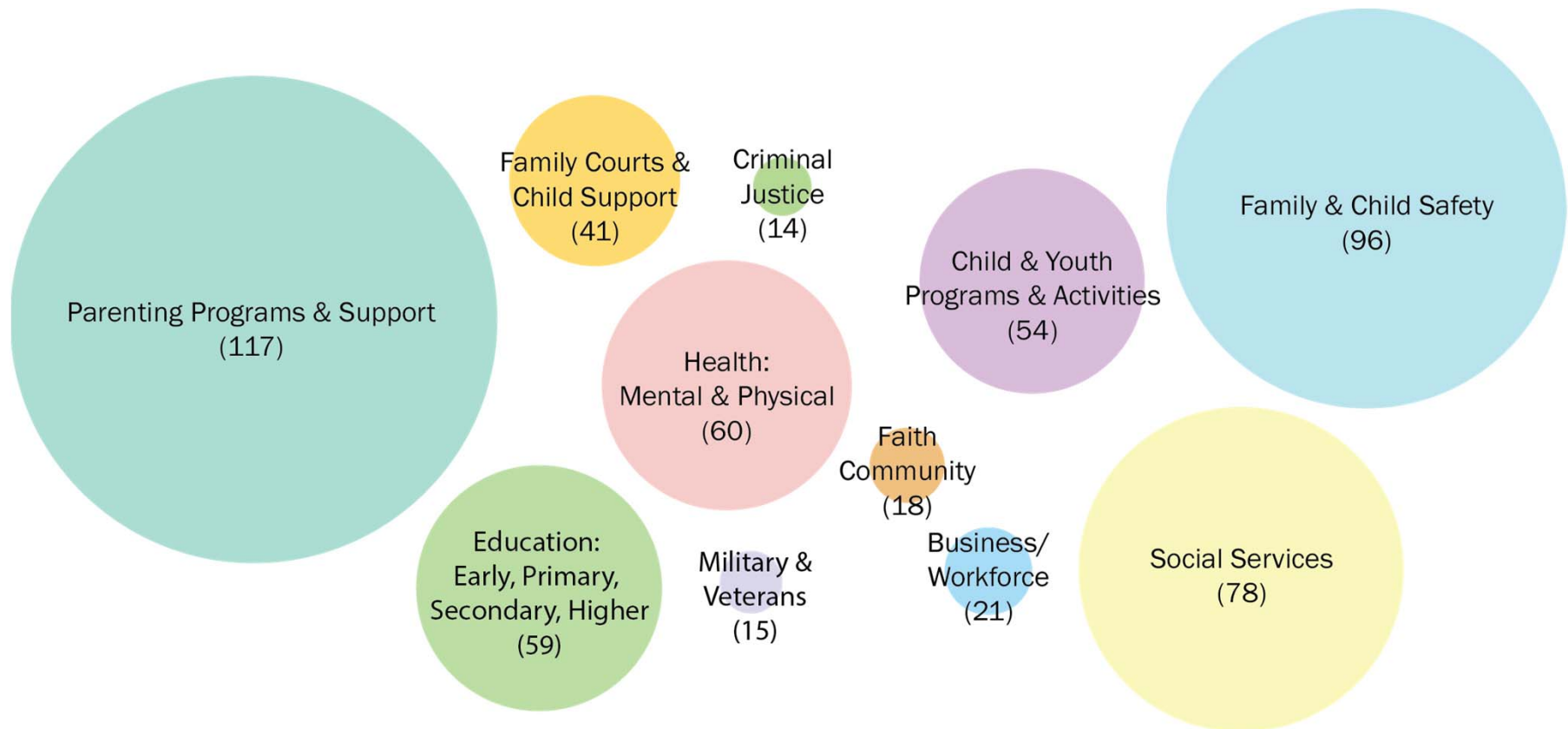
Survival Rates of Children and Young Adults Suffering from Cancer



Summary

- Dads matter in the lives of their children
- Some dads struggle to be present for their children
- Father absence can negatively impact their children
- We can make a difference for dads and their kids

Who's here?



ENGAGING FATHERS: WE CAN DO BETTER

Responsible fatherhood programs seek to:

- Increase father involvement and involvement with children
- Improve co-parenting relationship
- Increase fathers' financial stability

Why are fathers initially drawn to the programs?

- Desire to be better fathers
 - Strengthen relationship with their children
 - Learn to be a better father than their own fathers
- Hope the program can help them gain access to their children
 - Improve relationship with mother
 - Sway family court judge or probation officer
 - Strongly encouraged by parole officer or drug treatment counselor

Fathers' participation in programs is limited

- Fathers tend to have lower participation than mothers in parenting programs
- Men, particularly disadvantaged or marginalized men, have difficulty asking for help
 - Contradicts gender norms of self-reliance
 - Admission of failure as men and parents

Father inclusion

Is your organization ready to serve dads?

Are your organizations services relevant to fathers?

Does your staff value moms and dads equally?

Is your environment welcoming to fathers?

Father recruitment

How do you get dads to your program?

Are recruitment materials addressed to both parents?

Is your staff fully aware of the value of services for fathers?

Have you asked fathers to be involved?

Where are the dads you want to serve?

Father retention

How do you keep dads involved in your program?

Is there flexibility for program participation?

Are there incentives for fathers to stay in the program?

Do you check if you are meeting their needs?

Tips for father inclusion

- Use inclusive or gender-neutral language
- Ensure that the physical space is welcoming and inclusive for the whole family
- Train staff on importance of father engagement
- Review your strategic plan and mission

Tips for father recruitment

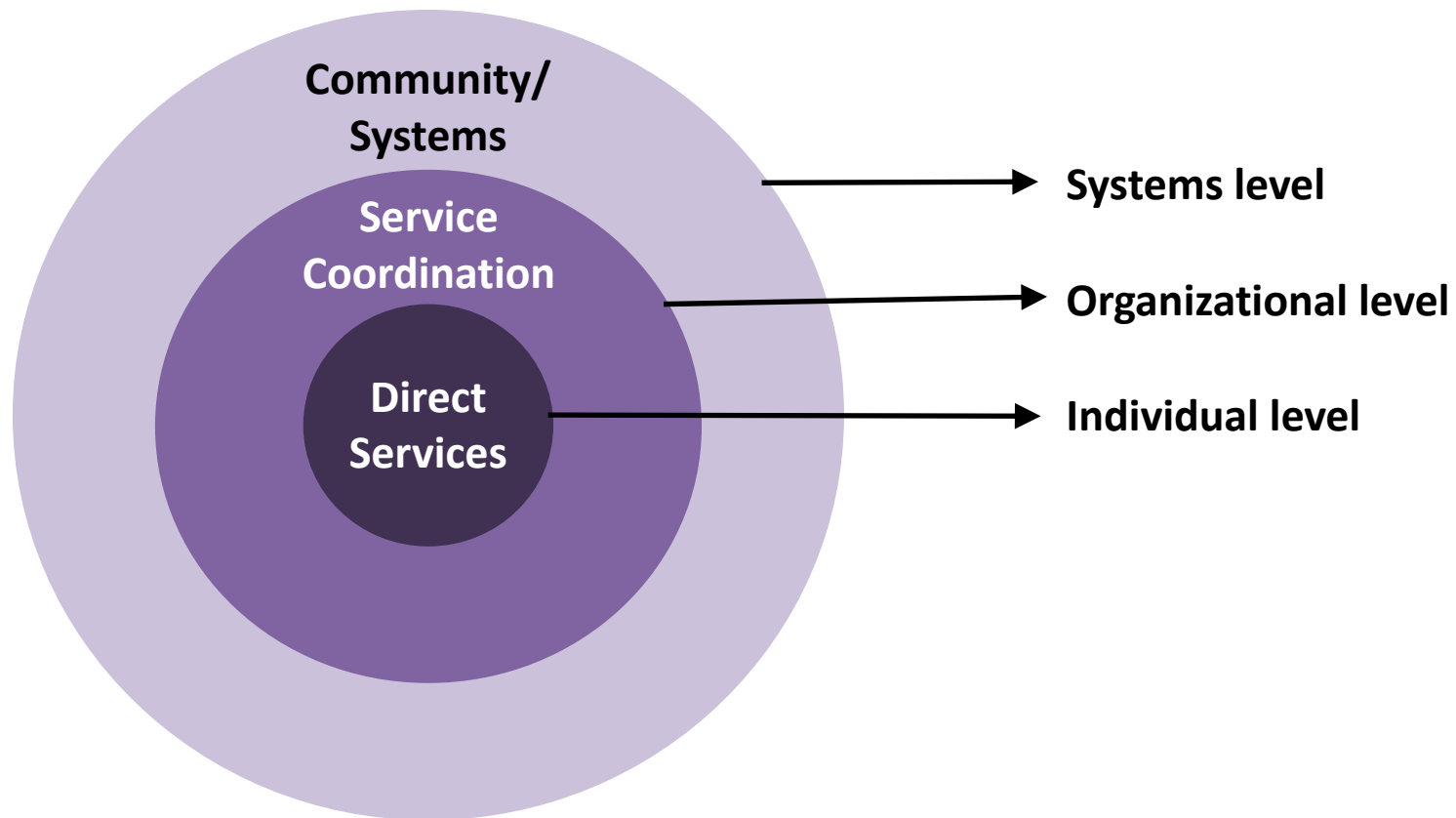
- Invite fathers
- Address all mailings and documents to both parents, and include space for both parents' names
- Talk to dad at hospital, home visit, child care center, etc.
- Support fathers as a support for mothers
 - Breastfeeding, postpartum depression

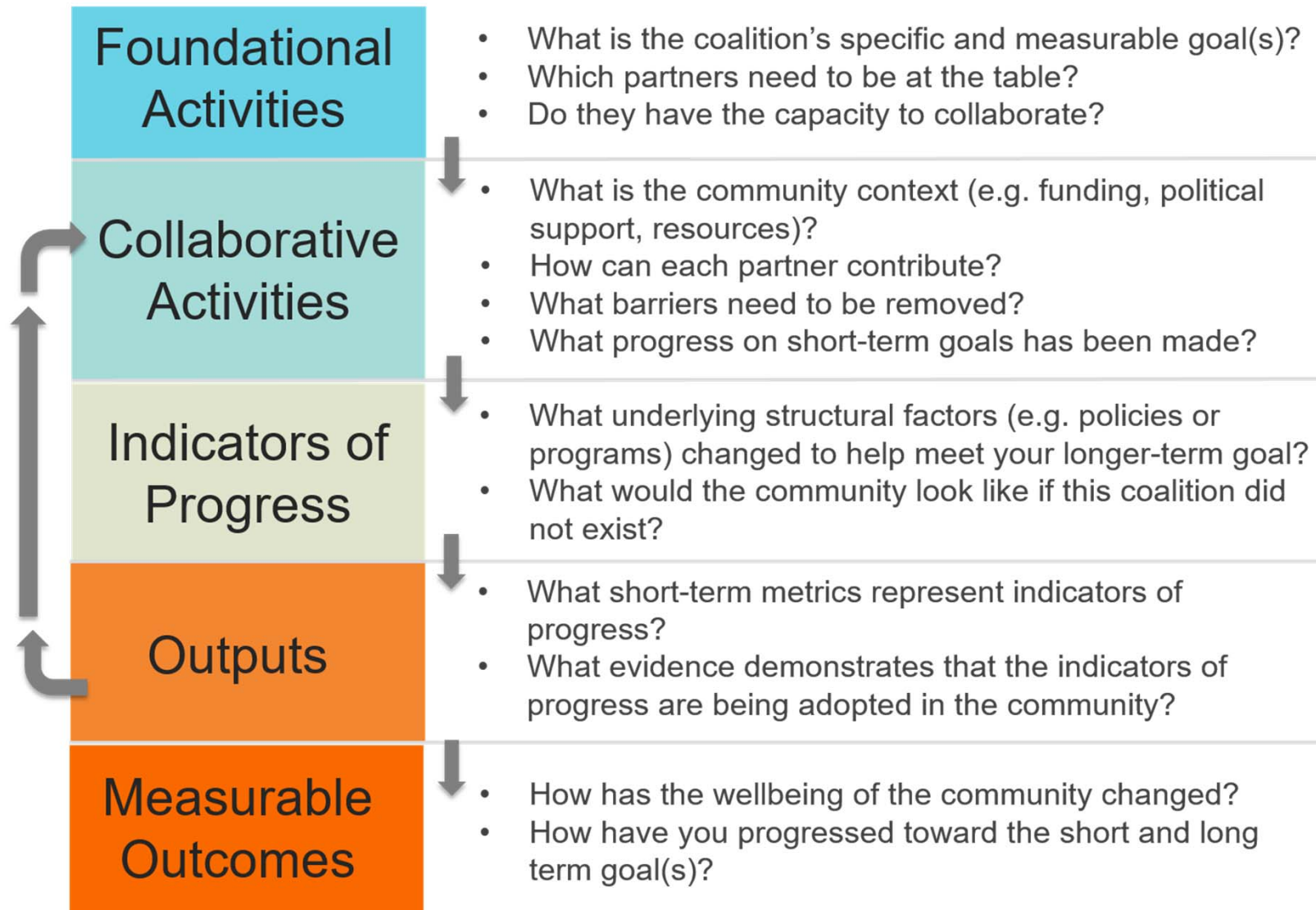
Tips for father retention

- Work around fathers' work schedule
- Adapt the program length
- Use creative solutions
 - Ask community partners and donors to help provide transportation support (i.e. bus passes)
 - Provide meals
- Make fathers feel valued and connected
- Ensure fathers understand their value

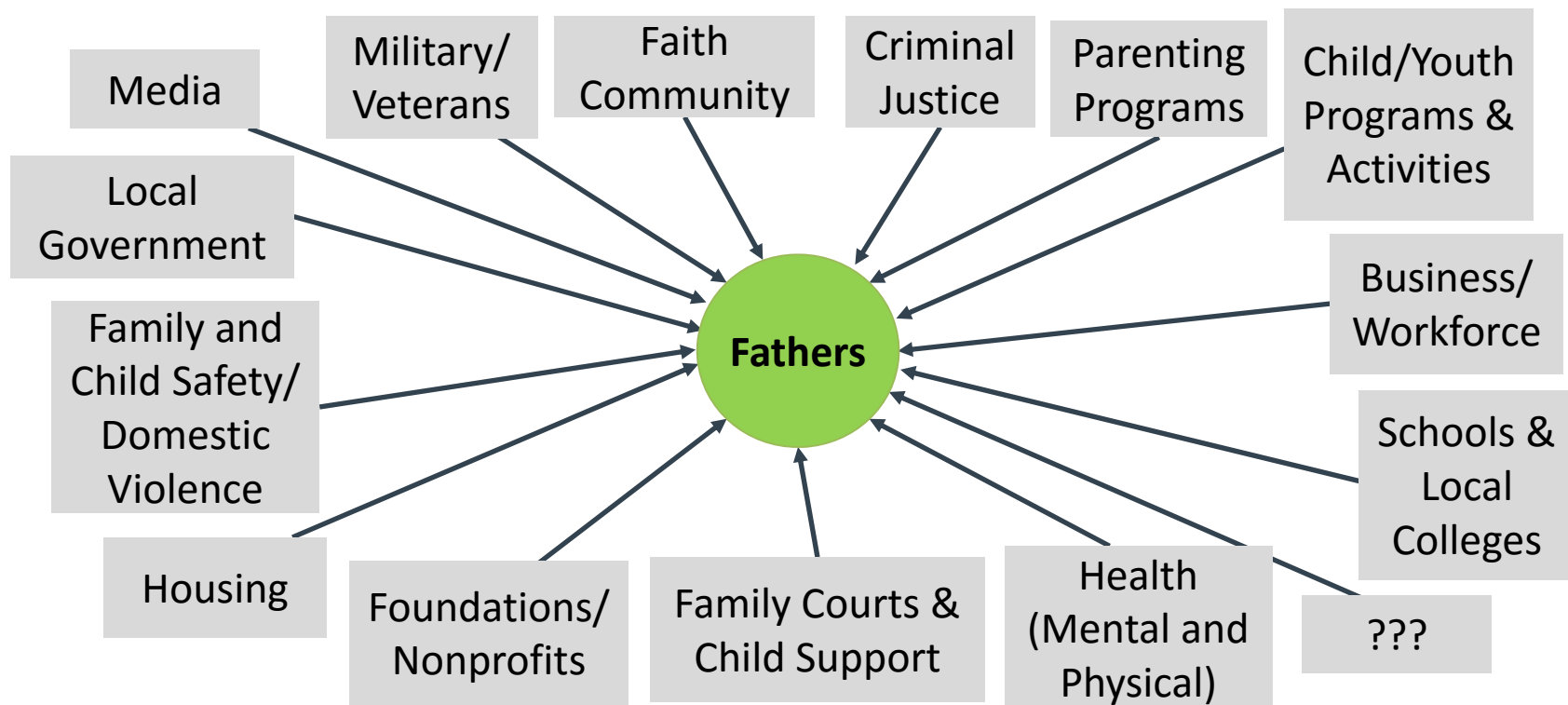
Why take a systems-level approach?

- There are no silver bullets
 - **Complex needs** of at-risk families extend beyond what an individual program can support
 - **Community-level issues** can negatively affect families
- Systems-level change takes a long time to achieve, but progress must be (and can be) demonstrated in the interim
- Developing measures (indicators) of progress can assess whether a community is on the right track toward its goals





Who needs to be at the table?



Framework for Systems-Level Change

**Long-Term,
Measurable Goal:**

Increase fathers' involvement with their children

**Evidence-Based
Drivers of Change:**

Positive
Co-Parenting
Relationship

Financial
Stability

Reduction of
Risky & Criminal
Behavior

Parenting
Confidence,
Knowledge, &
Skills

**Indicators of
Progress:**

*For Each Evidence-Based
Driver of Change:*

Policies & Practices
Physical Environment
Public Perception & Awareness
Programmatic Availability & Alignment
Peer Networks & Support
Physical Planning & Place

Indicator of Progress	Definition
Policies & practices	Decisions made by a legislative or administrative body which determine what actions and implementation options are available to communities and organizations
Physical environment	The physical characteristics of a space that compose its character, utility, and potential
Public perception & awareness	Opinions and knowledge of the public and media
Peer networks & support	Integration and linkages between community groups, individuals, families, businesses, and other entities
Physical planning & place	Spatial relationships between systems (e.g., job access, transit routes)
Programmatic availability & alignment	Ensuring adequate availability of evidence-based services and resources that are aligned with: 1) larger systems goals, 2) the need in the community, and 3) other programs across sectors

Framework for Systems-Level Change

**Long-Term,
Measurable Goal:**

Increase fathers' involvement with their children

**Evidence-Based
Drivers of Change:**

Positive
Co-Parenting
Relationship

Financial
Stability

Reduction of
Risky & Criminal
Behavior

Parenting
Confidence,
Knowledge, &
Skills

**Indicators of
Progress:**

Public Perception:
A public campaign
on the importance
of positive co-
parenting is
launched

**Physical Planning &
Space:**
Public
transportation
routes between
jobs and
neighborhoods
exist launched

**Policies &
Practices:** Lower
barriers to
employment or
housing for non-
dangerous ex-
offenders

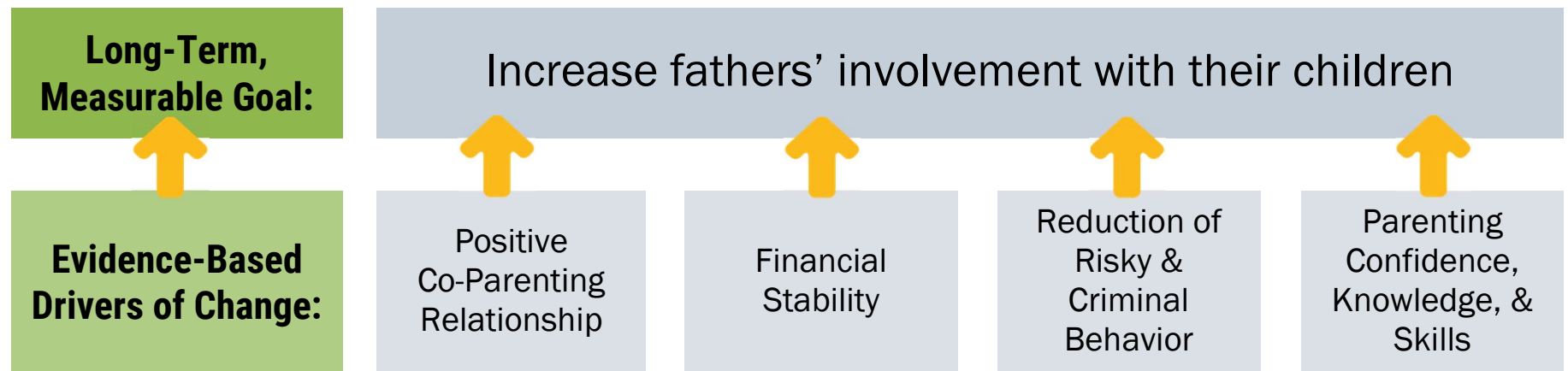
**Physical
Environment:**
Changing tables
are required in
both men and
women's
bathrooms

Keys to systems-level change

- Systems-level change in your community:
 - Aligns services and programs across the community
 - Removes barriers to access
 - Creates policies and practices that support families
 - Develops healthy communities with positive norms about children and families
- It is an active, iterative process that requires key stakeholders to work collaboratively toward a shared, measureable goal
- Indicators of progress encompass all relevant aspects of a community

SUPPORTING FATHERS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Four pillars of father involvement

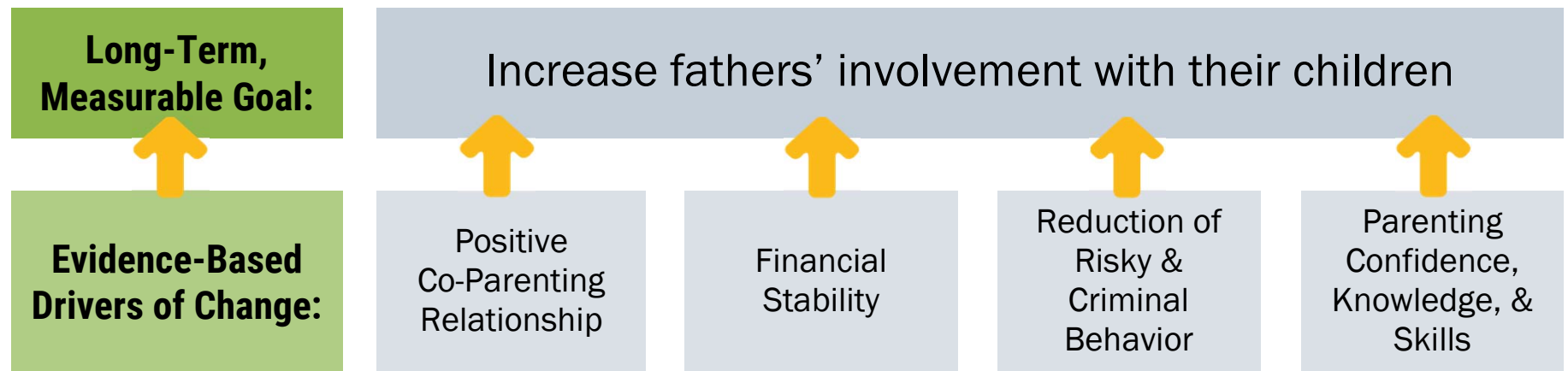


What difficulties do the fathers in your community face?

- Each table has a different pillar of father involvement
- Discuss at your table for 20 minutes
 - To what extent is this pillar a problem in your community?
 - How does it affect young fathers, specifically?
 - What are some of the underlying causes?
 - What services in your community address the problem?
 - What P's could be put in place to help address the problem?
- Share with the group – 10 minutes for each pillar

Indicator of Progress	Definition
Policies & practices	Decisions made by a legislative or administrative body which determine what actions and implementation options are available to communities and organizations
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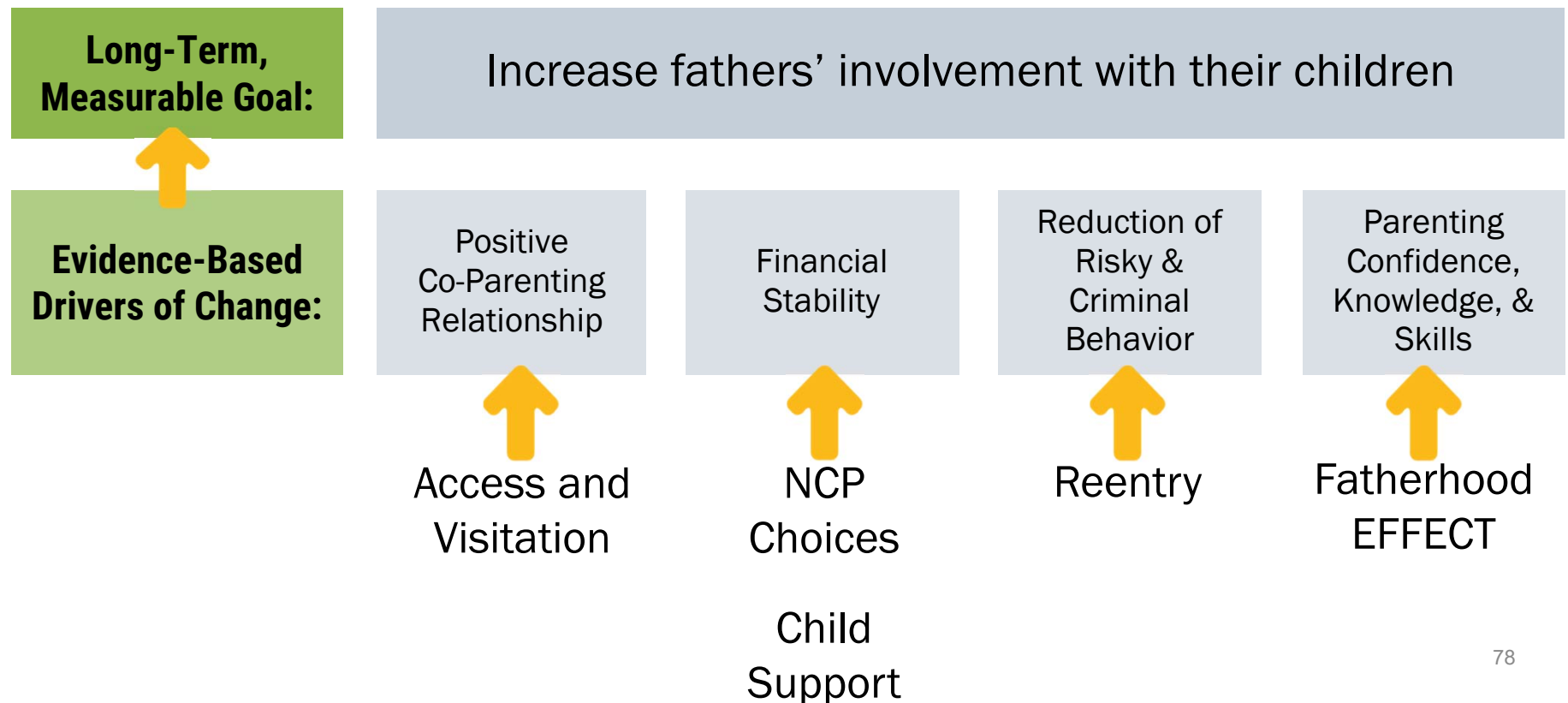
Four pillars of father involvement



Landscape of fatherhood

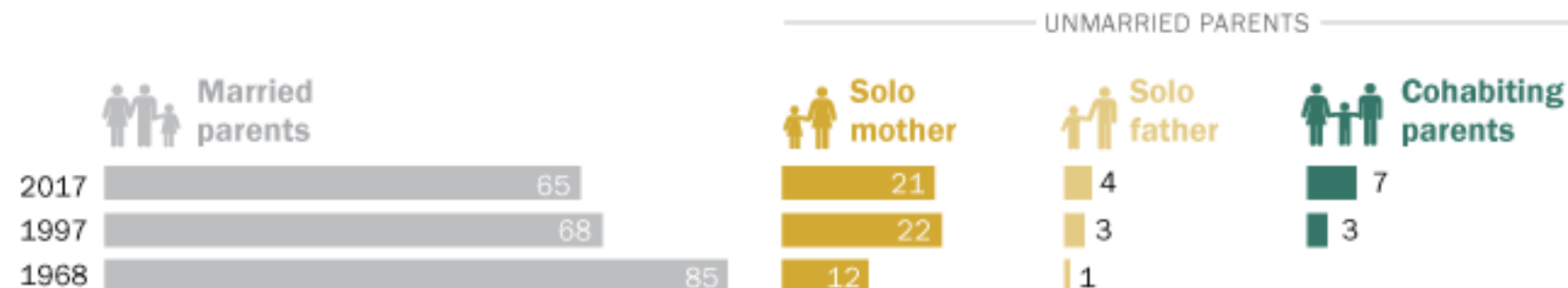
- 70.1 million estimated fathers in the United States
- 24.7% of U.S. children do not live with their father
- Only 17% of custodial single parents in the U.S. are fathers^a
- In 2008, the National Fatherhood Initiative found the public cost of father absence cost, conservatively, at \$99.8 billion^b
- Texas is working to support father involvement
 - Child support and parenting time orders
 - NCP Choices
 - Educating Fathers for Empowering Children Tomorrow (EFFECT)

Texas programs are working to support fathers



About one-in-five children are living with a solo mom

% of children younger than 18 living with ...



Note: Children who are not living with any parents are not shown. Data regarding cohabitation available since 1997 only.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of Current Population Survey March Supplement (IPUMS).

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Child support

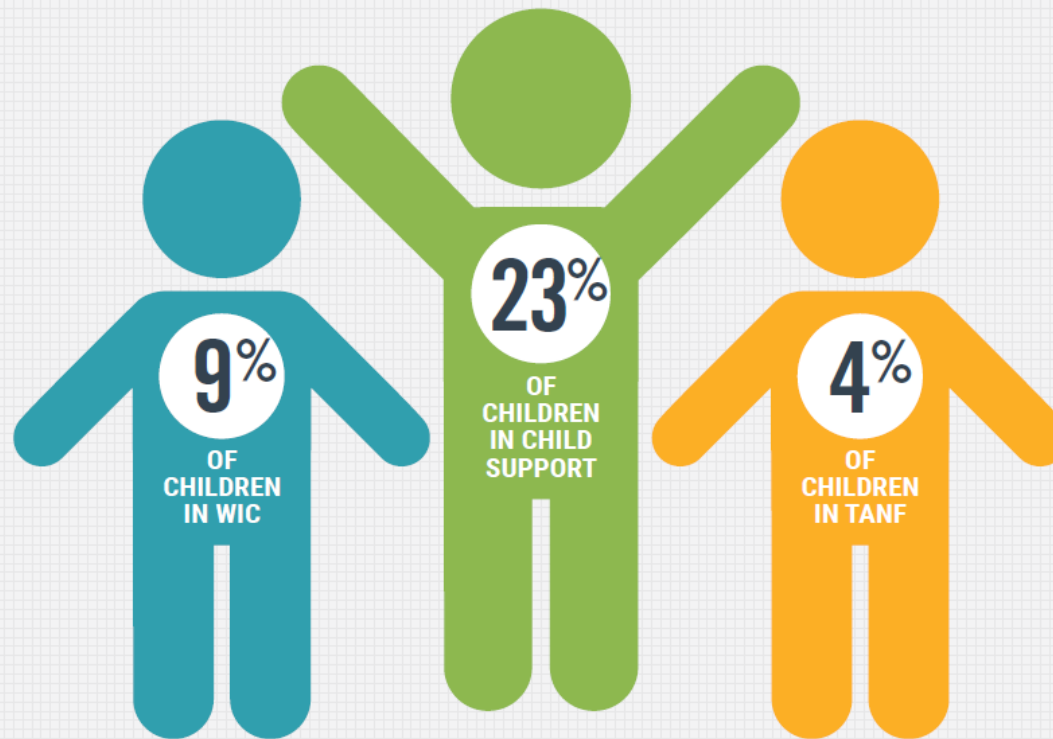
- Almost half of custodial parents have legal or informal child support agreements^a
- 69.3% of custodial parents with a child support order receive some payment from the noncustodial parent, and 43.5% received the full amount^b
- For custodial parents who live below the poverty line and received full child support, child support income was 70.3% of their average annual income^a
- There are over 1.5 million annual child support cases in Texas^c

The Office of the Attorney General is the official Texas child support enforcement agency

- Title IV-D allows the state of Texas to help families by:
 - Establishing paternity
 - Establishing child, medical, and dental support orders
 - Collecting child support
 - Modifying a child support obligation^a
- Child support is handled by district courts, county courts at law, and child support specialty courts^b

CHILD SUPPORT LIFTS NEARLY ONE MILLION PEOPLE OUT OF POVERTY

CHILD SUPPORT IS AN IMPORTANT
PART OF A FAMILY'S SAFETY NET.



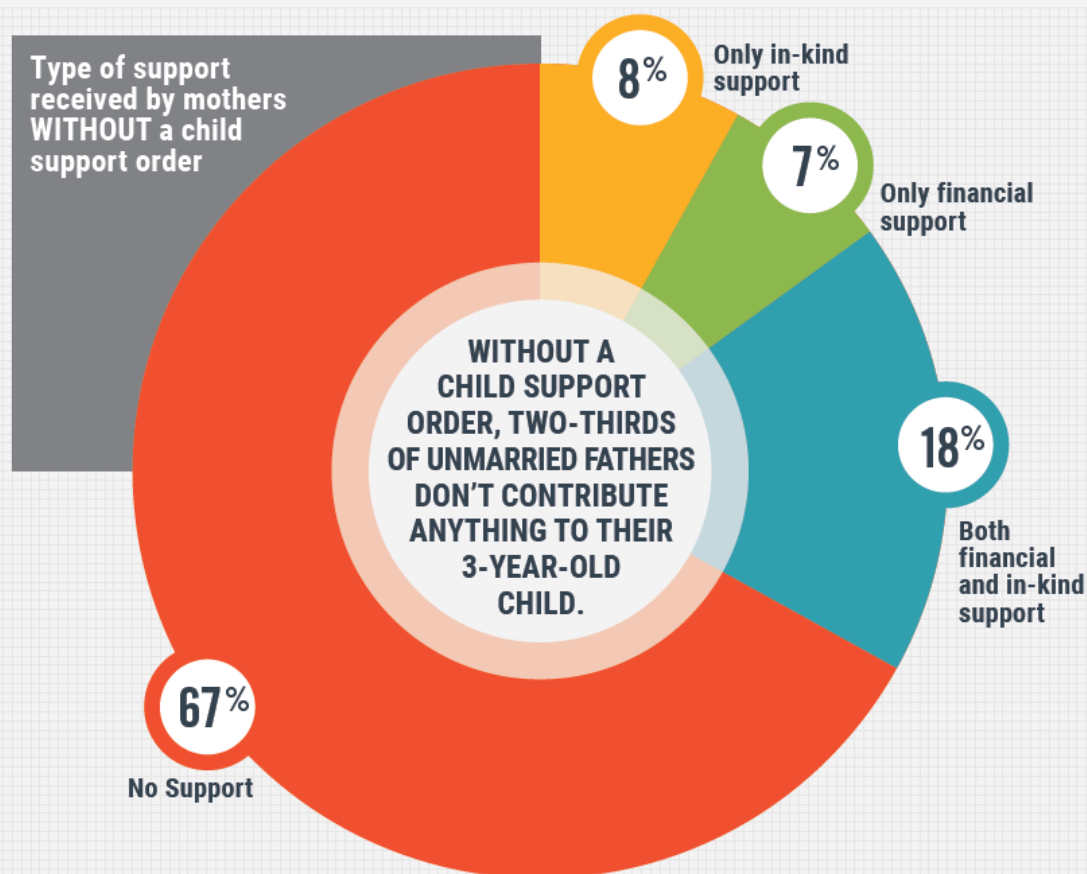
SOURCE: CFRP INFOGRAPHIC, "CHILD SUPPORT: THE HIDDEN SOCIAL SAFETY NET," 2015.

Guidelines for child support

- One child – 20% of the noncustodial parent's net income
- Two children – 25% of net income
- Three children – 30% of net income
- Four children – 35% of net income
- Five or more children – 40% of net income

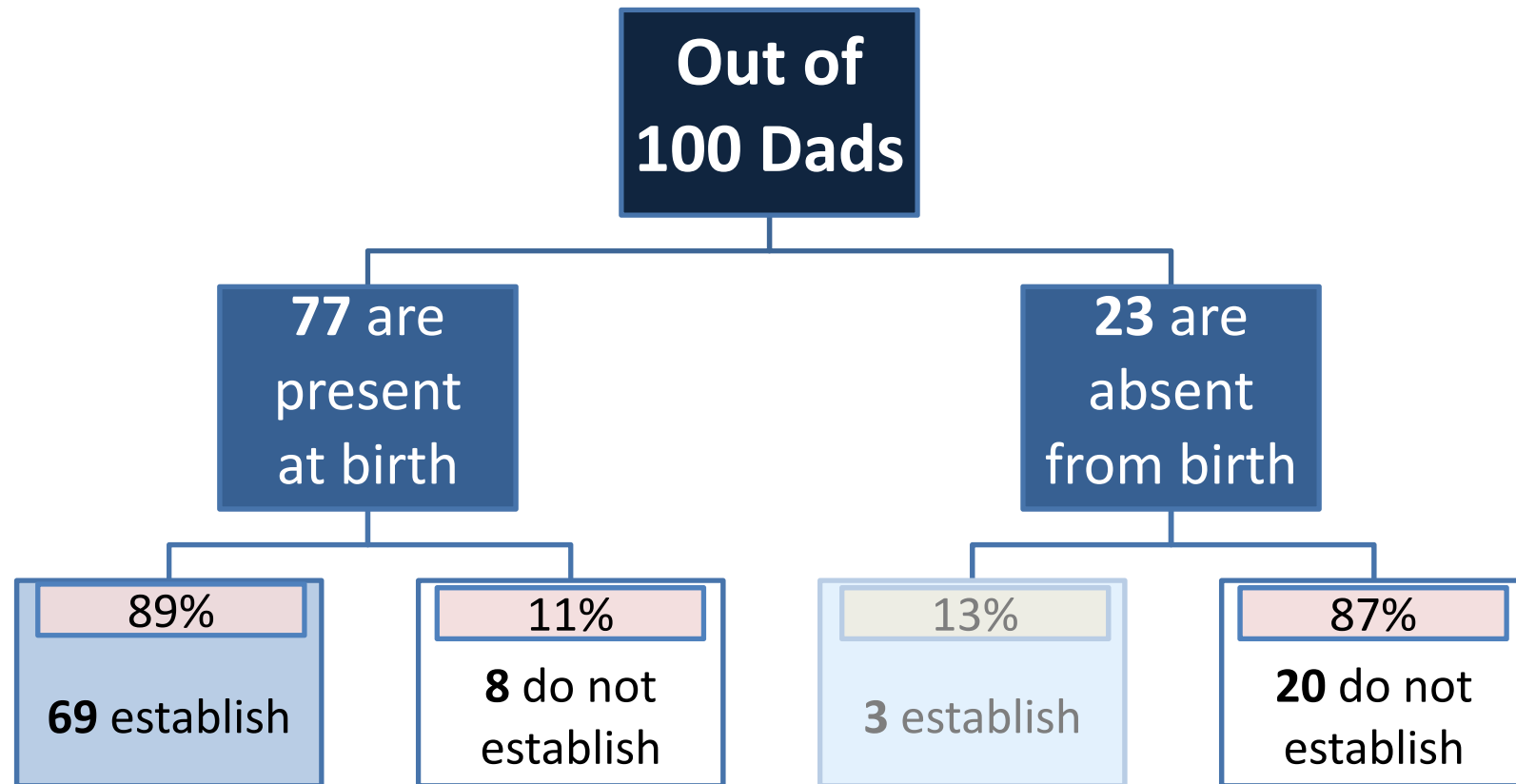
For noncustodial parents supporting multiple children who live in different households, the guidelines are adjusted based on the number of children being supported.

NO CHILD SUPPORT ORDER = NO SUPPORT FOR THE CHILD

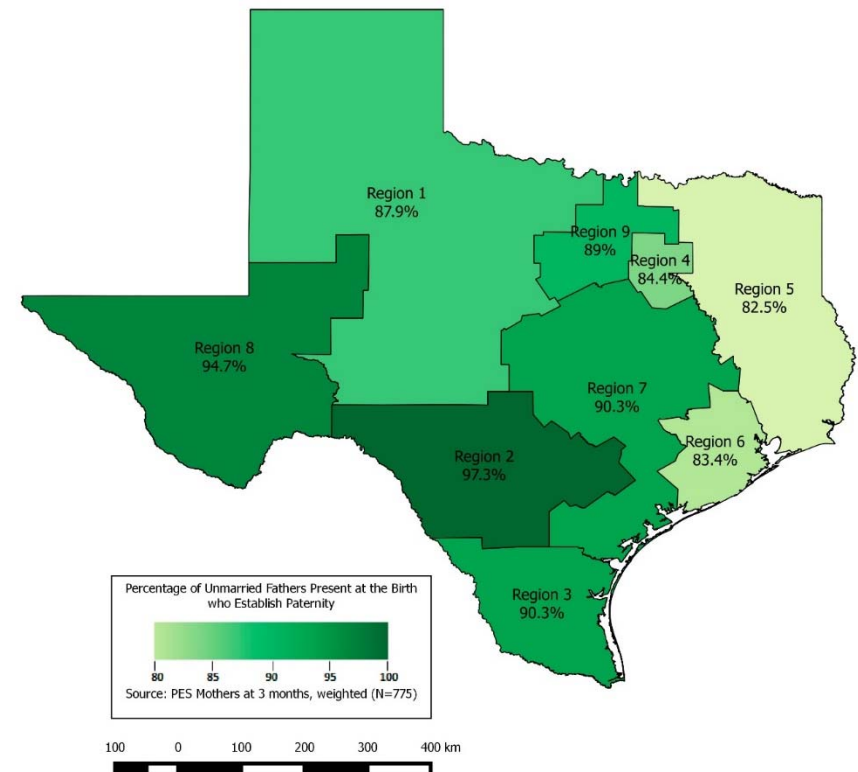
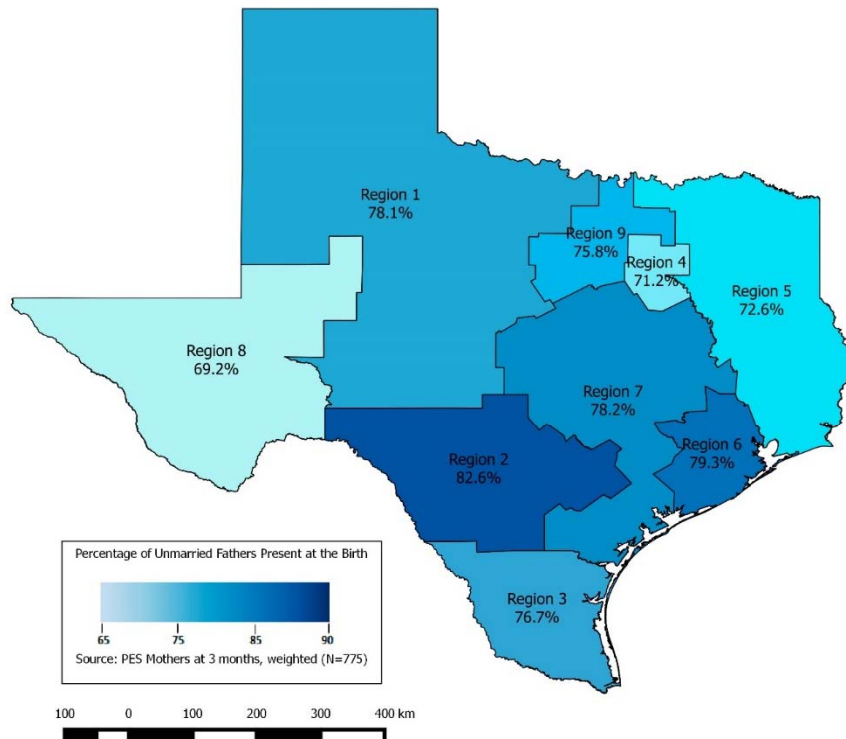


SOURCE: CFRP TEXAS AOP SIGNERS STUDY (TASS) MOTHERS AT 3+ YEARS AFTER BIRTH, 2013 (N=529); OAG-CSD ADMINISTRATIVE DATA FILES.

Unmarried fathers must establish paternity to be the legal father of their child



% Dads Present vs. % Present Who Establish



Child support and visitation

- Fathers who pay child support are more likely to stay involved in their children's lives^a
- Texas was the first state to require a parenting time order accompany child support orders
 - Child support and parenting time are legally separate orders^b

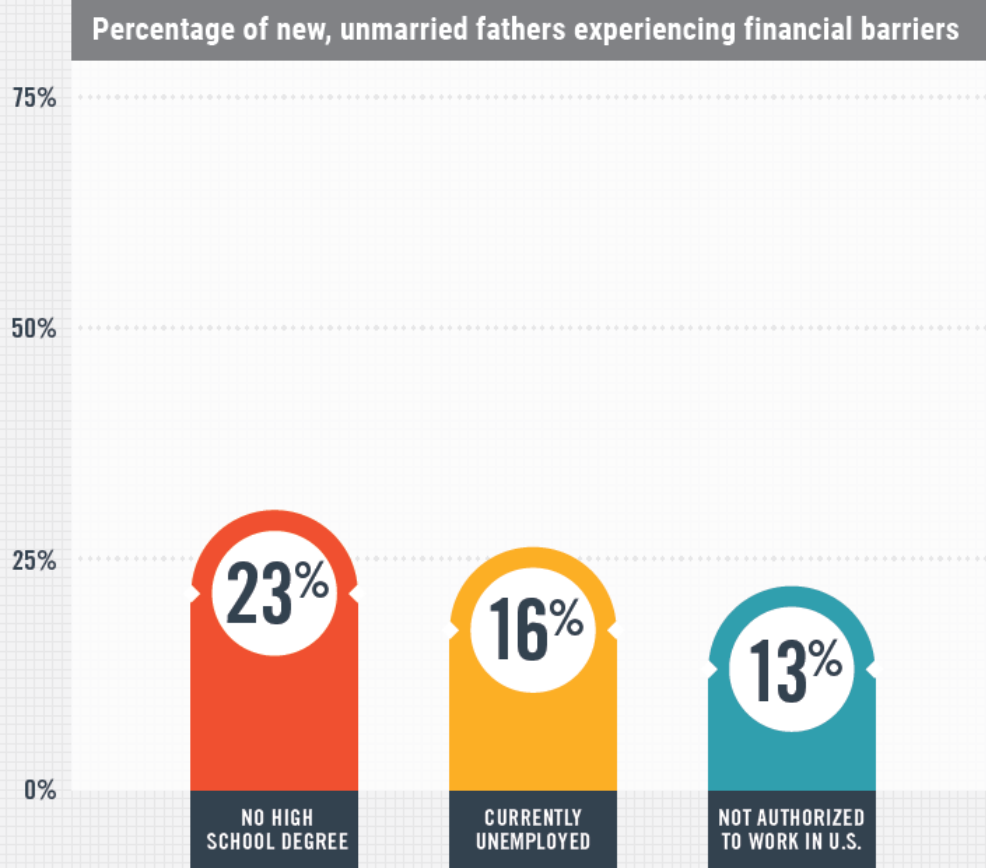
Incarcerated fathers still owe child support

- A 2014 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation study found that the sample of incarcerated noncustodial parents in Texas owed, on average, \$21,606 in arrears
 - Monthly child support obligation was \$244^a
- Individuals released from Texas facilities in 2017 served an average of 4.3 years^b

Barriers facing fathers during reentry

- Child support payments and other debts
- Inadequate employment and education programs in prison and in the community
- Formerly incarcerated individuals primarily live in low-income communities
- State laws and regulations as well as employers' hiring practices bar formerly incarcerated individuals from working in many industries and occupations
- Parole and probation requirements

BARRIERS PREVENT FATHERS FROM SUPPORTING THEIR FAMILIES

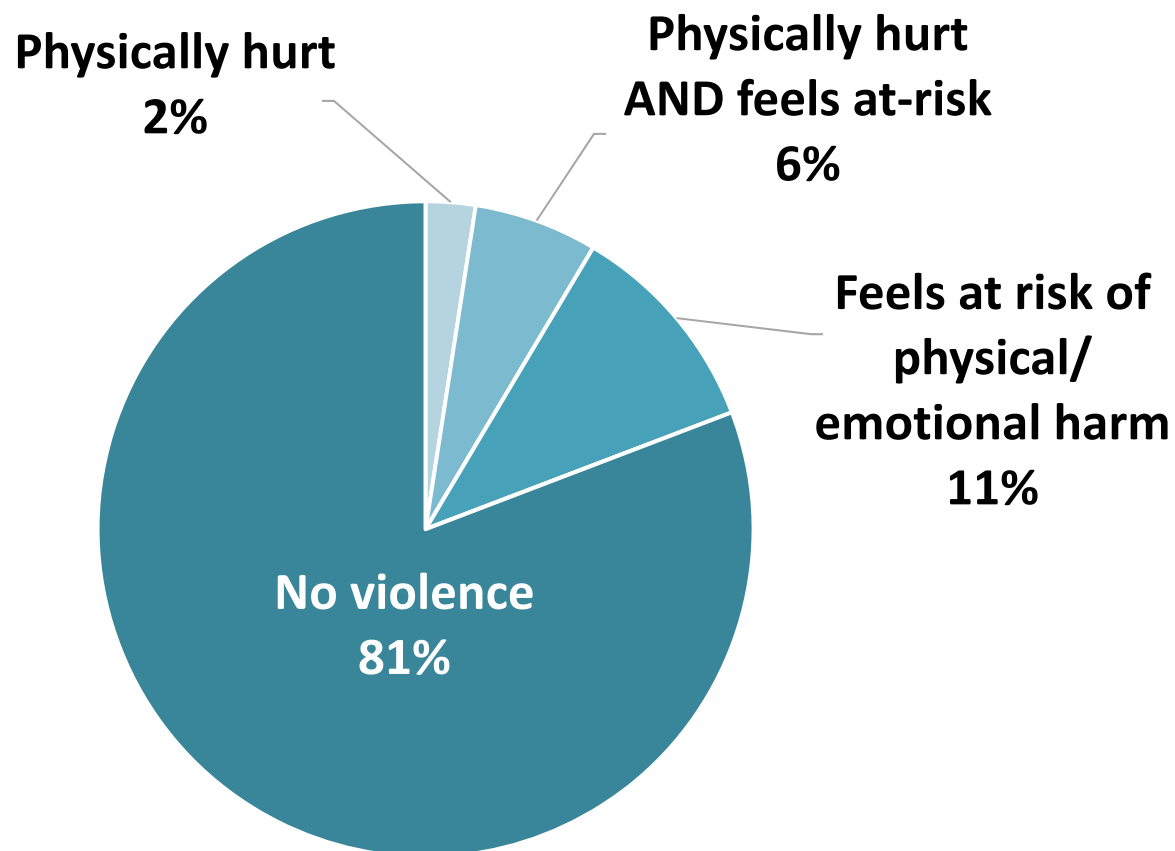


SOURCE: CFRP PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT STUDY, TEXAS MOTHERS AT 3 MONTHS AFTER CHILD'S BIRTH, 2013 (N=700).

NCP Choices

- Between August 2005 and August 2017, more than 38,000 noncustodial parents were enrolled
- 71% of participating noncustodial parents entered employment
- On average, noncustodial parents entered employment within eight weeks
- 77% of participating noncustodial parents retained employment for at least six months^a
- A 2009 study found participating parents paid child support 47% more often with a 51% increase in total collections^b

Family violence for unmarried Texas mothers with 3-month-olds



Understanding the system of services for fathers in your region

- Texas has state-level programs to engage fathers
- The Texas Fatherhood Interagency Workgroup is working to coordinate services
- The panel will explore how these programs are supporting fathers and how they work together

Texas agencies offer multiple programs to engage fathers

Department of Family and Protective Services (CPS)

- Responsible Fathering Initiative

Department of State Health Services

- Someday Starts Now
- Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System
- Maps for New Dads

Department of Family and Protective Services (PEI)

- Fatherhood EFFECT
- Safe Babies
- Texas Home Visiting

Office of the Attorney General (CSD)

- Child Support
- Parenting and Paternity Awareness (p.a.p.a.)
- Family Violence Education
- Access and Visitation hotline
- Reentry
- Arrears Payment Incentive Program

Texas Workforce Commission

- NCP Choices

Texas Department of Criminal Justice

- Day with Dad

Texas Juvenile Justice Department

- p.a.p.a. curriculum in state-operated facilities

UNDERSTANDING THE SYSTEM OF SERVICES FOR FATHERS IN YOUR REGION

Hope Ott, Office of the Attorney General

Leah Leone, Office of the Attorney General

Elizabeth Morrison, ResCare Workforce Services

Shellie Ryan, Texas Council on Family Violence



What You Need to Know About Child Support

Hope Ott



Mission Statement

Encourage responsible parenting by promoting the involvement of both parents and ensuring that children receive the support they need and deserve.



Dispelling Misconceptions

- ▶ **FACT:** Child support cannot be established without establishing paternity first.
 - If paternity has not been established by a prior marriage, AOP or previous court order, the court **MUST** make a ruling on paternity before setting child support.
 - Paternity can, however, be established by a court without a DNA test.
 - Paternity can also be established without the father being present.
 - This is called a default order
 - The way to avoid a default order is to be present, prepared and cooperative.



Dispelling Misconceptions

- ▶ **FACT:** Your court order can be established and enforced by default.
 - Just like with paternity establishment, the court can set support even if the father is a no-show.
 - Missing child support appointments and court appearances is never a good idea. The case can proceed without the father being there.
 - The only thing that stops when fathers miss court dates is their ability to advocate for themselves and what they think is in the best interest of their child.
 - Make your voice heard.



Dispelling Misconceptions

- ▶ **FACT:** We cannot withhold more than 50% of your check
 - By law, CSD can only withhold a maximum of 50% from an NCPs disposable earnings.
 - For NCPs engaged in multiple systems, additional income may be withheld from other entities.
 - The amount withheld may not be enough to cover the entire monthly obligation.
 - Guidelines on setting support only pertain to current child support. NCPs may also owe back child support (arrears).
 - Arrears payments are due in addition to any current support owed.
 - NCPs are still responsible for obligations not covered by wage withholding.

► **AN EXAMPLE OF A MONTHLY CHILD SUPPORT OBLIGATION** (the numbers below are for example purposes only):

- Jimmy's current support is set at **\$220/month**
- He owes \$10,000 in unpaid child-support (arrear)
 - Arrear payment= **\$100/month**
- Jimmy owes **\$320/month** in child support payments

- Jimmy's employer pays him once a month
 - He takes home **\$400/month**
 - OAG withholds **\$200** from Jimmy's check (50%)
 - Jimmy still owes **\$120** in child support
 - **\$20** to fulfill the current obligation
 - **\$100** to pay on the arrears

*This example does not factor in the cost of medical and dental support which is commonly included in orders



Available Resources

- ▶ Modifications
- ▶ NCP Choices
- ▶ Arrears Payment Incentive Program
- ▶ Access and Visitation Program

Child Support in Texas

On a mission to make sure every child receives the support they need and deserve.

[Log In to Child Support Interactive](#)

Who We Are

Our mission and values are reflected in everything we do--always in support of Texas families.

Get Started with Child Support

Ready to open a child support case? Here are your next steps.

About Child Support Interactive

What you need to know about the online tool for managing your child support case.

Child Support Services & Programs

Paying & Receiving Child Support >

[Pay Child Support](#)

[Receive Child Support](#)

[Modify Child Support](#)

Paternity >

[Acknowledgement of Paternity](#)

[Court-Ordered Paternity Tests](#)

[Add a Father to a Birth Certificate](#)

Employers >

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[The Legal Process](#)

[Child Support Calculator](#)

Agency Partners >

[AOP Certified Entities](#)

[p.a.p.a. for Educators](#)

[Attorneys](#)

Families & Parenting >

We are here to serve every Texas family. Learn how we can help yours.

HEROES for MILITARY CHILDREN >

Military and veteran families have unique needs when it comes to paternity establishment and child support. The HEROES program is here to help.

Family Violence >

If you are a victim or survivor of family violence, we have information to help you pursue child support safely.

Incarcerated Parents >

Help is available for parents and family members supporting children during and after a parent's incarceration.

UNDERSTANDING THE SYSTEM OF SERVICES FOR FATHERS IN YOUR REGION

Hope Ott, Office of the Attorney General

Elizabeth Morrison, ResCare Workforce Services

Shellie Ryan, Texas Council on Family Violence

CLOSING REMARKS

Cynthia Osborne, Ph.D.

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CHILD & FAMILY

RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

LBJ SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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