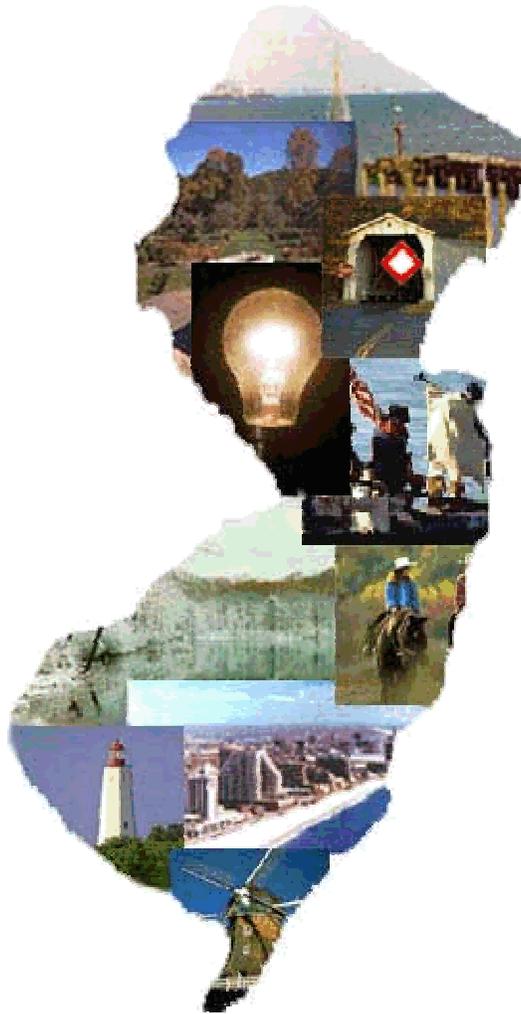


# THE FRAGILE FAMILIES AND CHILD WELLBEING STUDY

## NEWARK, NEW JERSEY

Baseline Report:  
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## INTRODUCTION

**Newark, New Jersey** is one of twenty cities across the United States in which parents are participating in a study of Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing.<sup>1</sup> The study follows a new birth cohort of approximately 5,000 children and their parents in an effort to learn more about a growing group of families in the United States today: that comprised of unmarried parents and their children. We use the term *fragile families* to underscore the fact that unmarried parents and their children are families, and to remind the reader that these families have a higher risk of poverty and family dissolution than traditional families. The proportion of children born to unmarried parents has increased dramatically during the past forty years, with close to one third of births now occurring outside of marriage. Despite this trend, very little is known about the resources of and relationships within these families, and the ways in which government policies affect the parents' and children's lives. As a consequence, public perceptions are often shaped by unsubstantiated myths about unmarried couples, and policymakers and community leaders often must rely on anecdotal evidence when designing policies and programs. Without adequate information, such programs may not be as effective as intended, and in some cases, they may even unintentionally undermine the stability of these families.

The study addresses four sets of related questions:

- What are the conditions and capabilities of new unmarried parents, especially fathers? How many of these men hold steady jobs? How many want to be involved in raising their children?
- What is the nature of the relationships between unmarried parents? How many of these couples are involved in stable relationships? What proportion expects to marry? What proportion is exposed to high levels of conflict or domestic violence?
- What factors push new unmarried parents together? What factors pull them apart? In particular, how do public policies affect parents' behaviors and living arrangements?
- What are the long-term consequences for parents, children, and society of new welfare regulations, stronger paternity establishment and stricter child support enforcement, and changes in healthcare and childcare financing and delivery?

To answer these questions, our study follows families from the birth of the child through age four. New mothers are interviewed in person at the hospital within 48 hours of giving birth. Fathers are interviewed either at the hospital or someplace else as soon as possible after the birth. Three follow-up interviews will be conducted when the children are 12, 30, and 48 months old, including in-home child assessments at 30 and 48 months. The full sample will be representative of all non-marital births in the U.S. to parents residing in cities with populations over 200,000. Also, the data are representative of non-marital births within each of the cities that comprise our sample. A comparison group of married parents also will be followed in each city.

The study design has at least three benefits. By gathering data at birth and tracking child development throughout infancy and early childhood, we can distinguish between differences that are present at birth (or shortly thereafter) and those that evolve over time. Second, following fathers

as well as mothers allows us to learn more about unmarried fathers and to study the evolution of the parents' relationship from two points of view. Finally, by following children as well as parents, we can relate changes in parental behavior and family environment to fluctuations in the health and development of children.

The time is right to expand our understanding of fragile families. Welfare reform requires mothers to enter the labor force and raises concerns about the affordability and quality of childcare. Child support laws are getting tougher and raising questions about the rights and responsibilities of non-resident fathers. As mothers reach time limits on welfare, receiving support from fathers will become increasingly important to them. At the same time, the healthcare system is undergoing major restructuring. As many of these policy changes are being implemented at the local level, families in different parts of the country are experiencing very different policy environments as well as disparate labor market conditions. The Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing study represents a major step toward identifying the individual and joint effects of these changes on some of the most vulnerable families in our country. Because families formed outside of marriage are disproportionately African-American and Hispanic, research on unmarried parents is essential to understanding the health and development of children in these populations. We undertake this effort so that policymakers and program directors can design programs that encourage—rather than undermine—the efforts of new parents to raise healthy children, maintain self-sufficiency, and make productive contributions to their communities.

This report summarizes what we have learned from our initial analysis of the first wave of data on unmarried parents collected in Newark, New Jersey in the summer of 1999.<sup>2</sup> Three findings stand out:

- Unwed parents in Newark are committed to each other and to their children at the time of the birth. Eighty-four percent of unmarried parents are romantically involved; 48 percent live together. Seventy-seven percent of unmarried mothers say the chances that they will marry the baby's father are "50-50" or better. Eight out of ten unmarried fathers in Newark provided financial or other types of support during the pregnancy, and 89 percent of mothers plan to put the father's name on their child's birth certificate. The overwhelming majority of mothers want the father to be involved in raising their child. The challenge for policymakers and community leaders is to nourish rather than discourage these commitments.
- Most unmarried parents in Newark are poorly equipped to support their families financially. Although about 90 percent of mothers and fathers worked at some time during the previous year and a half, 92 percent of mothers and two-thirds of fathers earned less than \$20,000 in the past 12 months. In addition, the human capital of both parents is low: thirty-eight percent of mothers and 31 percent of fathers lack a high school degree, and less than a quarter of parents have more than a high school degree. Increases in human capital and earnings are likely to play critical roles in the success or failure of parents in maintaining stable families. In fact, an overwhelming majority of respondents felt that steady employment of both partners is "very important" to a successful marriage.
- Most unmarried mothers in Newark are healthy and bear healthy children. However, about one third of these mothers do not receive prenatal care in the first trimester, and 16 percent of babies are born below normal weight. Furthermore, 8 percent of mothers drank alcohol, 8

percent used drugs and 23 percent smoked cigarettes at some time during the pregnancy, according to their self-reports. Improving the healthcare of all mothers during pregnancy should be an important objective of policymakers.

We plan to re-interview both parents one year later to ask about their child's health and development as well as their parenting styles, childcare arrangements, relationships, access to and use of community resources, personal health, and economic wellbeing. Our hope is that the information contained in this report and those that follow will help community leaders and policymakers design programs that meet new unmarried parents' needs and thereby strengthen fragile families in Newark.

## RESULTS

### I. PARENTS' CHARACTERISTICS AND CAPABILITIES

We begin by describing the characteristics of new unmarried parents in Newark to gain a better sense of their needs as well as their capabilities and constraints. We are particularly interested in their human capital – age, education, work experience, and health status – and their obligations to other children. These indicators can reveal a great deal about parents' ability to support themselves and their new babies. We also are interested in the cultural backgrounds of new parents – ethnicity, religion and immigrant status – as these are likely to affect access to public and private resources.

Table 1 (see Appendix) presents profiles of mothers and fathers obtained from the baseline interviews in Newark.<sup>3</sup> As nearly all the mothers we approached in the hospitals agreed to participate in the study, and because we interviewed mothers in all five of the city's birthing hospitals, we are confident that our sample is representative of the population of unmarried women giving birth in Newark.<sup>4</sup> We are less confident that our sample of unmarried fathers is representative, as we were able to interview only 58 percent of these men. Compared to the average unmarried father, the men in our sample are more strongly attached to the mothers of their children than the men we were unable to interview, and they are likely to differ in other ways as well. Anticipating this problem, we asked all mothers a few questions about the fathers of their children so that we could compare fathers who participated in the study with those who did not. The information in Table 1 about fathers' age, education, work status, race/ethnicity, and drug and alcohol problems is based on mothers' reports; thus, it characterizes all unmarried fathers in Newark. The rest of the information in Table 1 (immigration status, religion, number of children, and health status) is based on the self-reports of the 58 percent of unmarried fathers who were interviewed. Sample sizes might preclude precise estimates of certain rare events, such as serious drug problems.

#### Parents' Human Capital

In our Newark sample, the typical unmarried mother is in her early twenties. Twenty percent of them are under 20, and 20 percent are 30 and older. For legal reasons, we were only able to include a fraction of mothers under age 18 in our study.<sup>5</sup> As a consequence, this Newark sample of unmarried mothers is slightly older than the actual population of new unmarried mothers in Newark. According to data computed by the National Center for Health Statistics, 31 percent of all births to unmarried mothers in the United States in 1997 were to women under age 20, and 12 percent were

to women under 18 (Martin, 1999). In our Newark sample, seven percent of births were to very young teens (under age 18).

The typical unmarried father in Newark is in his twenties. He is less likely than the mother to be a teenager and more likely to be thirty or older. On average, fathers are 3.2 years older than their children's mothers. Recent reports in the popular press have raised concerns about the proportion of teenage mothers having children with much older men. To investigate this claim, we examined age differences between teen mothers in our sample (under age 20) and their partners. Sixty-seven percent of teen mothers in Newark had partners who were within four years of their own age, while 16 percent had partners who were eight or more years older.

Lack of education is a serious problem for unmarried parents in Newark. Thirty-eight percent of these mothers lack a high school degree, and only 23 percent have attended any college. Although fathers are somewhat more likely than mothers to have a high school degree, overall, they have similar levels of education, as most mothers and most fathers have a high school degree or less. In today's world, where advanced training and education are increasingly important for employment and income stability, these numbers do not bode well for the future of these new parents.

The baseline interviews were conducted in the context of a strong economy in Newark—the unemployment rate was around 4.6 percent during the data collection period (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2000), and 89 percent of the mothers and 90 percent of the fathers had worked at some time during the past year and a half. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (1999), the 1998 national labor force participation rate for mothers in female-headed families with children under six years was 64 percent, while the rate for fathers in male-headed families with children under six years was 87 percent.

### **Parents' Individual Characteristics**

We find that 69 percent of the new unmarried mothers in Newark are black, 27 percent are Hispanic, and the remaining 4 percent are White or "Other." These racial and ethnic percentages are similar to those reported by the National Center for Health Statistics.<sup>6</sup> Twenty-three percent of mothers and twenty-six percent of fathers indicate that they are immigrants. Sixty percent of new mothers and forty-eight percent of new fathers report their religion as Protestant, about two out of ten identify as Catholic, and 12 percent of new mothers and 20 percent of new fathers belong to other religious groups. Seven percent of mothers and 10 percent of fathers report that they have no religious affiliation. Sixty-six percent of mothers and 51 percent of fathers indicate that they have other children.

According to their own reports, unmarried parents in Newark appear to be in fairly good health. When asked whether their own health was "excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor," about two-thirds (64 percent of mothers and 74 percent of fathers) said "very good" or "excellent." The national averages for persons ages 25 to 44 reporting "very good" or "excellent" are 68 percent of women and 73 percent of men (Benson and Marano, 1998). Because we interviewed the mothers shortly after the birth of their children, we might expect their self-assessed health status to be lower than otherwise.

On a less positive note, Newark parents do not always engage in healthy behaviors. Four percent of mothers reported having a drug or alcohol problem that interfered with their work or personal relationships in the past year, and five percent of mothers reported that the father of their child had a drug or alcohol problem that interfered with his work or personal relationships in the past year. As the data on drug and alcohol problems are based on mothers' self-reports, they are likely to be underestimates of the true proportions.

## II. RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN FRAGILE FAMILIES

The media often present negative stereotypes of unmarried parents, sometimes depicting babies as the products of casual sexual liaisons or depicting mothers as the victims of irresponsible fathers. For policymakers and program directors, getting the facts straight about the nature of parents' relationships is critical for designing effective programs and policies. If, for example, mothers and fathers are truly indifferent to one another, it makes sense to treat them separately. If, on the other hand, they are involved in marriage-like relationships, policies and programs need to treat them as such or they may be ineffective or even undermine parents' relationships.

### Mother-Father Relationships

Table 2 presents information on the living arrangements, expectations, attitudes about marriage, and sources of conflict between unmarried parents in Newark. We present information on three groups of unmarried mothers – all mothers in the sample, mothers for whom a father interview was not completed, and mothers for whom a father interview was completed. One of the most striking findings is the high rate of cohabitation among these parents. Forty-eight percent of unmarried mothers are living with the father of their child at the time of the child's birth, and another 36 percent are romantically involved with the father but living apart. Nine percent are “just friends,” and seven percent have little or no contact with the father. Mothers without a father interview (column 2) are much less likely to be cohabiting and much more likely to report “no contact” with the father than mothers with a father interview (column 3). The difference between columns 2 and 3 confirms our suspicion that the fathers who agreed to be interviewed are much more involved with the mothers than are the fathers who did not complete interviews.

Seventy-seven percent of the unmarried mothers surveyed in Newark believe that their chances of marrying the father are 50 percent or better. When asked if they strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the statement, “it is better for children if their parents are married,” 64 percent said they agree or strongly agree. Fathers also expressed positive views of marriage, which is what we would expect from our select sample. When we look at unmarried couples for whom we have two interviews in columns 3 and 4 (e.g., the mother and father of the child were both interviewed), the fathers and mothers are both positive about marriage, with fathers slightly more likely to perceive benefits of marriage for children. About 90 percent of fathers say their chances of marriage are 50 percent or better (compared to 91 percent of mothers with a father interview), and about 80 percent agree or strongly agree that marriage is beneficial for children (compared to 63 percent of mothers with a father interview).

There is strong consensus among these unmarried parents about what qualities make a successful marriage. When asked to identify the qualities that are important for a successful marriage, over 90 percent of the mothers rated *emotional maturity* and *husband having a steady job* as very

important. In addition, 86 percent rated *wife having a steady job* as very important. The fathers expressed values similar to those of the mothers, although they rated *wife having a steady job* lower than mothers did. They also rated *a good sex life* slightly higher (51 percent of fathers as compared with 45 percent of mothers). Finally, when asked about the level and sources of disagreement in their relationship during the past month, mothers identified *spending time together* and *money* as the major points of contention. However, *being faithful*, *sex* and *the pregnancy* were also sources of conflict. Comparing columns 3 and 4, unmarried fathers reported slightly less conflict than the mothers (except about sex); and they agreed that *spending time together* was the major source of conflict, followed by *sex*, *being faithful* and *money*.

In sum, the unmarried parents in this Newark sample have high hopes for their future together. The majority view marriage as a positive institution that benefits their children. Steady employment and emotional maturity are widely regarded by both the new mothers and fathers as essential prerequisites for good marital relations.

### **Paternal Involvement**

Questions about the paternal role – how and to what extent a father is and should be involved in his child’s life – are at the core of many moral, social, and economic debates. The Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing study investigates several indicators of paternal involvement within fragile families, including whether the parents want the father’s name on the birth certificate, whether the child will take the father’s surname, whether the father helped the mother during her pregnancy, and whether the mother wants the father to be involved in raising the child. For each of these indicators, both mothers and fathers expressed high levels of intent for, and interest in, strong paternal involvement.<sup>7</sup>

The figures in Table 3 will surprise those who believe that unmarried fathers are indifferent to their children. About 85 percent of mothers and 95 percent of fathers indicated that the father contributed financially during the pregnancy; and 80 percent of mothers and 92 percent of fathers reported that he contributed in another way during the pregnancy. In addition, 89 percent of the mothers and 98 percent of the fathers indicated that the father’s name will be on the birth certificate, and 78 percent of mothers and 89 percent of fathers indicated that their child will take the father’s surname. Finally, the overwhelming majority of unmarried parents, including mothers who are no longer romantically involved with their children’s fathers, *want* the fathers to be involved in their children’s lives. Again, fathers’ responses to these questions need to be viewed in light of the fact that the unmarried men who participated in our study are likely more committed to the mothers and children than the average unmarried father in Newark. Even so, the mothers’ responses to these questions, which do not reflect a select group of unmarried mothers, indicate very high levels of intended father involvement.

From a public policy perspective, these findings are of tremendous import, not only because they debunk popular conceptions but also because they provide a foundation for new policy initiatives. Given that mothers *want* the fathers’ assistance in raising their children, and given that fathers *want* to be a part of their children’s lives, policies and programs should facilitate, build upon, and maintain the commitment that unmarried fathers articulate at the “magic moment” of their children’s births.<sup>8</sup>

The Fragile Families study seeks to generate a greater understanding of new parents' perceptions of what being a father means as well as the images of fatherhood that shape these perceptions. The results presented in Table 4, which show parents' views about the characteristics of a good father, are especially interesting. When asked to rank the qualities of a good father, the majority of unmarried mothers (59 percent) identified *showing love and affection to the child* as the most important quality. Forty-seven percent of unmarried fathers ranked this quality first as well. Similarly, when asked to name the least important characteristics, the mothers chose *providing direct care, serving as an authority figure, and providing regular financial support*. Fathers' assessments of the least important characteristics were similar.

### III. PARENTS' ACCESS TO PUBLIC AND PRIVATE RESOURCES

The next section of this report focuses on parents' access to and use of public and private resources. This information is important in determining the needs of unmarried parents, as well as their potential and actual sources of support, and for ensuring that policy and programs complement rather than compromise existing family networks and community support networks.

Unmarried parents rely on multiple sources of income and in-kind support to help raise their children. According to Table 5, over half of all mothers reported having no earnings in the 12 months prior to the survey. Among those with earnings, most earned less than \$10,000 per year. In general, fathers earned considerably more than mothers. Almost three-quarters of fathers earned more than \$10,000 in the past 12 months. Earnings estimates for fathers in our sample are likely to be somewhat higher than for those of all unmarried fathers. Compared to the average unmarried father in Newark, the men in our sample are more likely to be employed in the past year and a half (according to the mothers) and thus to have higher earnings. Mothers *with* a father interview reported that 93 percent of the fathers were employed, whereas mothers *without* a father interview reported that 71 percent of fathers were employed (figures not shown).

Household income is substantially higher than earnings. While 16 percent of mothers and 9 percent of fathers reported a household income of less than \$5,000 in the past 12 months, 46 percent of mothers and 58 percent of fathers reported household income of \$20,000 or higher. The substantial difference between the earnings and household income figures for mothers in part reflects the fact that nearly half of new unmarried mothers are cohabiting. Even so, a majority of new mothers and almost half of new fathers live either below or just barely above the poverty line. Forty-four percent of unmarried mothers in Newark are poor (according to the official poverty line based on total household income) and another 21 percent are "near poor," with incomes below 200 percent of poverty. (It is important to note that the majority of new parents have other children to support, which is taken into account by the poverty threshold.) Not all unmarried parents in Newark are in such dire straits, however: thirty-five percent of mothers and 53 percent of fathers enjoy more comfortable living standards.

The extended family is an important source of support for new unmarried parents. Nearly all unmarried parents we interviewed in Newark said there was someone in their family to whom they could turn for help with financial problems, housing, or childcare. Over half of mothers received financial support from relatives during the past year, 43 percent received a place to live, and 36 percent received free childcare from kin. Although mothers were more likely than fathers to rely

on relatives, a substantial proportion of fathers also received financial support (26 percent) or a place to live (32 percent).

Many new unmarried parents in Newark do not appear to have particularly strong ties to their neighborhoods or communities. In general, the longer people live in a neighborhood, the more likely it is that they know their neighbors and will have them available as a source of support. As shown in Table 6, 44 percent of new mothers and 35 percent of new fathers lived in their neighborhoods for two years or less. In addition to the length of residence, the quality of the neighborhood can also affect the degree of interaction between neighbors and, thus, one's potential support from that source. More than two-thirds of unmarried mothers and a similar proportion of unmarried fathers in Newark characterize their neighborhoods as "safe" or "very safe." Another potential source of community support is organized religion. Ninety-three percent of mothers and 90 percent of fathers in our sample report having a religious preference, yet only 20 percent of mothers and 16 percent of fathers attend a religious service on a weekly basis.

Substantial proportions of unmarried mothers in this sample rely on government support. During the past year, 33 percent received welfare or food stamps, 17 percent received other government transfers (unemployment insurance, workmen's compensation, disability, or social security), and 26 percent received some type of housing subsidy. The proportion receiving government assistance is even higher for women who have another child—42 percent of these mothers received welfare or food stamps (figure not shown). As expected, unmarried fathers are much less likely than unmarried mothers to receive government support.

Recent changes in welfare policy have shifted much of the responsibility for assistance from the federal government to individual states, which differ in terms of their eligibility restrictions and work requirements for welfare recipients. Given these changes, it is important that welfare recipients and potential recipients understand the new policies in their respective states. We found that many unmarried parents in Newark are uninformed about the new welfare rules and regulations. Forty-eight percent of the mothers say they do not know how many years a woman can receive welfare in New Jersey, and 60 percent do not know how long they can receive benefits before having to work. The fathers are somewhat less knowledgeable than the mothers about new welfare rules. It is difficult to imagine that policies intended to encourage parental responsibility and create disincentives for dependence can be effective if many of those who are the most likely recipients are not even aware of them.

In contrast, unmarried parents in Newark are much better informed about the child support system (figures not shown). When asked whether a blood test can prove whether a man is the father of a child, more than 94 percent of the mothers answered "yes." However, only four percent of mothers and one percent of fathers reported receiving information about establishing paternity at the hospital. It is possible, however, that some parents may have received information after we spoke with them, and others may not have understood the information presented to them.

#### **IV. HOW ARE THE CHILDREN DOING?**

Drinking, smoking and drug use during pregnancy can pose substantial health risks for newborns. Eight percent of mothers reported drinking alcohol during their pregnancy, and eight percent reported using drugs. Twenty-three percent of mothers reported smoking cigarettes during

their pregnancy, a behavior strongly associated with low birth weight and other poor birth outcomes.<sup>9</sup>

Low birth weight is an important indicator of children's current and future health status. In this Newark sample of non-marital births, 16 percent of the mother had babies that weighed less than 2,500 grams at birth. This figure is considerably higher than the 1997 national average of 7.5 percent (which includes both marital and non-marital births) (National Center for Health Statistics, 2000a), but similar to the 1997 average proportion of low birth weight births among unmarried mothers in Newark of 14 percent (New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, 1997).

Fully 93 percent of unmarried mothers in Newark reported receiving prenatal care by the end of the second trimester. Sixty-six percent of mothers initiated prenatal care in the first trimester, a figure somewhat lower than the national average for all pregnancies among never-married women, which is 77 percent (Abma et al., 1997). The data on medical insurance coverage during pregnancy show that Medicaid is an important resource for unmarried mothers in Newark, with 73 percent of unmarried mothers covered by Medicaid. Not surprisingly, the mothers with private health insurance were more likely to receive prenatal care during the first trimester than were mothers covered by Medicaid (72 percent versus 65 percent, figures not shown).

The length of maternity stay in the hospital is another issue that has attracted much public attention. Hospital stays for women who deliver babies have become longer in recent years after an outcry against the practice of "drive-through deliveries." Seventy-five percent of the mothers said they were ready to go home and did not want to stay in the hospital any longer at the time they were interviewed. This response may reflect the fact that mothers are benefiting from the federal "Newborns and Mothers Health Protection Act of 1996." Implemented January 1, 1998, this law prohibits all health insurance providers who cover hospital stays for childbirth from restricting hospital stays for mothers and newborns to less than 48 hours.

Finally, as a way of measuring the resources that would be available to the child in the near term, we asked the unmarried mothers with whom the baby was going to live. Going home meant very different things for different babies. Forty-three percent are expected to live with both their mother and father, 46 percent will live with the mother alone, and 10 percent will live with the mother and another adult.<sup>10</sup> A major challenge for policymakers is to find ways to support new parents as they work together to raise their children under various circumstances.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> The other 19 cities, which were selected to represent different policy environments and labor markets, are: Austin, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Corpus Christi, Detroit, Indianapolis, Jacksonville, Milwaukee, Nashville, New York, Norfolk, Oakland, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Richmond, San Antonio, San Jose, and Toledo.

<sup>2</sup> The Newark sample contains 343 families (261 unmarried couples plus 82 married couples who serve as a comparison group). Data were collected in Newark at Columbus, Newark Beth Israel, St. James, St. Michael's and University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ) hospitals from June through August of 1999. All mothers giving birth during this time were approached in the hospitals and asked to participate in the study until both the non-marital and marital quotas were reached. The research design assumes that families of children born in this three-month period are the same as families who have children at other times of the year. Seventy-eight percent of married and ninety-one percent of unmarried mothers agreed to participate. Mothers were asked to provide locating information on the fathers, and fathers were contacted either in the hospitals or as soon as possible after the child's birth. Seventy-eight percent of married fathers and 58 percent of unmarried fathers agreed to participate in the study. Four additional unmarried fathers were subsequently interviewed (but their data are not reflected in this report), bringing the response rate to at least 60 percent, and we are still attempting to interview several more. The mother's interview lasted about 30 minutes and the father's interview lasted about 40 minutes.

<sup>3</sup> In general, there were few missing values on individual questions. Variables with a substantial number of missing values are noted on the tables.

<sup>4</sup> At the time we conducted the survey, women could go to five hospitals in Newark to deliver a baby (Columbus, Newark Beth Israel, St. James, St. Michael's and UMDNJ). We conducted interviews at all five of these hospitals accounting for 100 percent of unmarried births in the city. For more information on the research design, see Reichman et al., 2000.

<sup>5</sup> Some hospitals would not allow us to interview minor mothers without permission from the baby's maternal grandparent. This extra step would have increased the cost of data collection and, most likely, would have reduced response rates. Young teen mothers are included in hospitals that requested that they be interviewed.

<sup>6</sup> The figures for unmarried births from the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS, 2000b) indicate that 68 percent of children born to unmarried women in Newark in 1997 were born to non-Hispanic African-American mothers, 29 percent to Hispanic mothers, and 3 percent to non-Hispanic White mothers.

<sup>7</sup> Putting the father's name on the birth certificate is not the same as establishing legal paternity. However, we view this variable as a good indicator of parents' intentions to establish paternity.

<sup>8</sup> At the same time, it is important to recognize that some mothers (5 percent) do not want the father involved in raising their child, and another two percent say they don't know if they want the father involved. In the follow-up survey, we will examine whether this may be due to experiences with domestic violence in the past.

<sup>9</sup> These numbers probably underestimate the use of drugs and alcohol since mothers may be reluctant to report behaviors that reflect negatively on their mothering skills.

<sup>10</sup> Note that very few parents who are *not* cohabiting expect to move in together when their baby comes home. This suggests that most parents who intend to live together have already taken this step by the time their child is born.

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## APPENDIX OF TABLES

Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study  
Non-Marital Births in Newark, New JerseyTable 1. Parents' Characteristics and Capabilities<sup>a</sup>  
(In percent)

	<u>Mothers</u>	<u>Fathers</u>
<b>Age</b>		
Under 20	20	10
20-24	37	30
25-29	22	26
30 and older	20	34
<b>Average age difference</b>		3.21 years (5.48) <sup>b</sup>
<b>Education</b>		
Less than high school	38	31
High school only	39	46
Some college	21	19
College or higher	2	5
<b>Worked in past year and a half<sup>c</sup></b>	89	90
<b>Very good or excellent health</b>	64	74
<b>Drugs or alcohol interfere with work or personal relationships</b>	4	5
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>		
White, non-Hispanic	1	2
Black, non-Hispanic	69	74
Hispanic	27	21
Other	3	2
<b>Immigrant</b>	23	26
<b>Religious affiliation</b>		
Protestant	60	48
Catholic	20	22
Other religion	12	20
No religion	7	10
<b>Have other children</b>	66	51
<b>Total number of respondents</b>	261	152

<sup>a</sup> The information about fathers' age education, work status, race/ethnicity, and drug and alcohol problems is based on mothers' reports. All other father information comes from the self reports of the 58 percent of fathers who were interviewed.

<sup>b</sup> Standard deviation in parentheses.

<sup>c</sup> About 10 percent of mothers had missing information on own work history.

**Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study  
Non-Marital Births in Newark, New Jersey**

**Table 2. Parents' Relationships and Attitudes About Marriage  
(In percent)**

	<u>All Mothers</u>	<u>Mothers without Father Interview</u>	<u>Mothers with Father Interview</u>	<u>Fathers</u>
<b>Relationship status</b>				
Cohabiting	48	30	61	68
Not cohabiting -- romantic	36	39	34	26
Not romantic -- friends	9	17	3	5
Not romantic -- little or no contact	7	14	1	1
<b>Chances of marrying baby's father</b>				
"50-50" or greater	77	58	91	90
<b>Marriage is better for kids</b>				
Agree	43	47	40	52
Strongly agree	21	19	23	28
<b>Successful marriage</b>				
<b>(% who said the following are Very Important)</b>				
Same friends	12	17	8	16
Husband has steady job	95	96	95	95
Wife has steady job	86	83	88	67
Same race/ethnicity	13	12	13	15
Good sex	45	46	45	51
Same religion	29	28	30	28
Emotional maturity	92	92	92	92
<b>Often a source of conflict</b>				
<b>(% reporting the following)</b>				
Money	17	20	14	11
Spending time together	23	24	23	20
Sex	13	13	13	14
The pregnancy	11	14	9	7
Drinking or drug use	4	4	5	3
Being faithful	14	13	14	13
<b>Total number of respondents</b>	261	109	152	152

**Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study  
Non-Marital Births in Newark, New Jersey**

**Table 3. Indicators of Father's Involvement with Child  
(In percent)**

	<u>All Mothers</u>	<u>Mothers without Father Interview</u>	<u>Mothers with Father Interview</u>	<u>Fathers</u>
<b>Father contributed during pregnancy</b>				
Gave money or bought items for baby	85	74	92	95
Helped in other ways	80	66	90	92
<b>Father's name on birth certificate</b>	89	78	97	98
<b>Child will have father's surname</b>	78	62	91	89
<b>Mother wants father involved/Father wants to be involved</b>	93	85	99	100
<b>Total number of respondents</b>	261	109	152	152

**Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study  
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**Table 4. Parents' Attitudes About Fatherhood  
(Percent reporting the following)**

	<u>All Mothers</u>	<u>Mothers without Father Interview</u>	<u>Mothers with Father Interview</u>	<u>Fathers</u>
<b><u>Defining a "Good Father"</u></b>				
<b>Most Important</b>				
Provide financial support	15	17	14	14
Teach child about life	11	6	15	19
Provide direct care	10	12	9	9
Show love and affection	59	59	59	47
Provide protection	2	3	1	3
Serve as authority figure	3	3	3	7
<b>Least Important</b>				
Provide financial support	26	25	27	20
Teach child about life	7	7	7	9
Provide direct care	31	31	32	25
Show love and affection	0	0	1	2
Provide protection	9	15	5	8
Serve as authority figure	26	22	29	35
<b>Total number of respondents</b>	261	109	152	152

**Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study  
Non-Marital Births in Newark, New Jersey**

**Table 5. Parents' Access to Resources: Personal, Household and Kin**

	<u>Mothers</u>	<u>Fathers</u>
<b>Total earnings in past 12 months (in percent)</b>		
None	55	2
Under \$5,000	16	16
\$5,000 - \$9,999	12	10
\$10,000 - \$19,999	9	36
\$20,000 and over	8	36
<b>Total household income in past 12 months (in percent)<sup>a</sup></b>		
Under \$5,000	16	9
\$5,000 - \$19,999	37	32
\$20,000 - \$49,999	36	43
\$50,000 and over	10	15
<b>Poverty status (in percent)</b>		
Less than 50% of line	22	12
50 - 99% of line	22	15
100 - 199% of line	21	20
200 - 299% of line	17	20
300% or more	18	33
<b>Kin resources</b>		
<b>(% receiving during mother's pregnancy)</b>		
Financial assistance	52	26
A place to live	43	32
Childcare assistance	36	N/A
<b>Consider family a source of potential help (%)</b>		
	95	92
<b>Total number of respondents</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>152</b>

<sup>a</sup>There were a substantial number of missing values on the household income measures; only 70 percent of mothers and 65 percent of fathers reported their total household income. The majority of the non-respondents reported that they "do not know" the total income of the household.

**Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study  
Non-Marital Births in Newark, New Jersey**

**Table 6. Parents' Access to Resources: Neighborhood and Government  
(In percent)**

	<u>Mothers</u>	<u>Fathers</u>
<b>Neighborhood resources</b>		
Lived in neighborhood two years or less	44	35
Neighborhood safe or very safe	70	66
Weekly religious attendance	20	16
<b>Government transfers and services in last year</b>		
Welfare, food stamps or public assistance	33	3
Housing subsidy or live in public housing	26	14
Other government transfers	17	10
<b>Awareness of welfare rules (% lacking information)</b>		
Years eligible for welfare assistance	48	73
Work requirements for welfare recipients	60	69
<b>Total number of respondents</b>	261	152

**Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study  
Non-Marital Births in Newark, New Jersey**

**Table 7. Children's Health and Wellbeing  
(In percent)**

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<u>ALL MOTHERS</u>	
<b>Substance use during pregnancy</b>	
Any alcohol use	8
Any drug use	8
Any cigarette use	23
<b>Low birth weight baby</b>	16
<b>Initiation of prenatal care</b>	
1st trimester	66
2nd trimester	27
3rd trimester	2
No prenatal care	5
<b>Health insurance</b>	
Medicaid	73
Private	17
Other	10
<b>Enough time in hospital</b>	75
<b>Baby's living arrangements</b>	
Mother and father	43
Mother only	46
Mother and others	10
Not mother	1
<b>Total number of respondents</b>	261

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