



Trends in Fatherhood

The following information is provided by Child Trends:

- ✚ National studies have consistently found a link between strong socioeconomic status and father involvement. Fathers with higher levels of education are more accessible to and engaged with their school-age children.
- ✚ Fathers who are able to provide economically for their children are more likely to stay invested in their marriages and or partner relationships and are more likely to be engaged with and nurturing of their children –even when apart from their children.
- ✚ Fathers who are unemployed or underemployed are more likely to limit their involvement with their families. This may be due in part to the high societal value placed on fathers as economic providers; some men may feel that if they are not able to provide financially for their family they should not (or cannot) be involved in other ways.
- ✚ Unemployed fathers are less likely to form families or assume responsibility for their children born outside of marriage.
- ✚ Research has revealed variations in the amount and type of father involvement based on the racial/ethnic background of the father.
- ✚ Several national surveys have found that African American fathers who do not live with their children are more likely than their white or Hispanic counterparts to share in housework and childcare tasks, participate in childrearing decisions, and visit their children.
- ✚ African American fathers have been found to be less likely than white fathers to read to their children, but are more likely than white fathers to play with them.

The following are some research findings about father involvement that are found in the book *Father Facts* published by the National Fatherhood Initiative:



Trends in Fatherhood (continued)

- ✚ About 40% of children in father-absent homes have not seen their fathers at all during the past year; 26% of absent fathers live in a different state than their children; and 50% of children living absent their fathers have never set foot in their father's home. (Page 15)
- ✚ The United States is now the leader in fatherless homes. (Page 24)
- ✚ Half of black children (49 percent) live with single mothers, compared to one in four Hispanic children (25 percent), and one in six white children (17 percent). (Page 26)
- ✚ Of the 24 million children living in father-absent homes, 64 percent are white, 32 percent are black, and 15 percent are Hispanic (persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race). (Page 26)
- ✚ 20 percent of non-residential fathers are estimated to earn less than \$6,000 a year. (Page 84)
- ✚ Fathers with jobs and education are more likely to be involved with their children after divorce or a non-marital birth. (Page 89)
- ✚ The typical male inmate grew up in a single-parent home and had at least one family member who has been incarcerated. (Page 91)
- ✚ Ten million children have parents who have been incarcerated at some time in their lives. (Page 91)
- ✚ African American children are nearly 9 times more likely to have a parent in prison than white children. (Page 91)
- ✚ The overall rate of child abuse and neglect in single-parent households is 27.3 children per 1,000, whereas the rate of overall maltreatment is 15.5 per 1,000. (Page 103)
- ✚ The poverty rate for children under age six living in single-mother families was 50 percent in 1999. (Page 31)