

Effects of Fatherlessness on Children's Development

Issue: In the United States, 1 in 3 children live in a fatherless home.¹ Children deprived of a father are robbed of physical, emotional, intellectual, and economic benefits throughout their lifetime. The fatherless family is the root cause of the majority of social ills today.

Sexual Practices

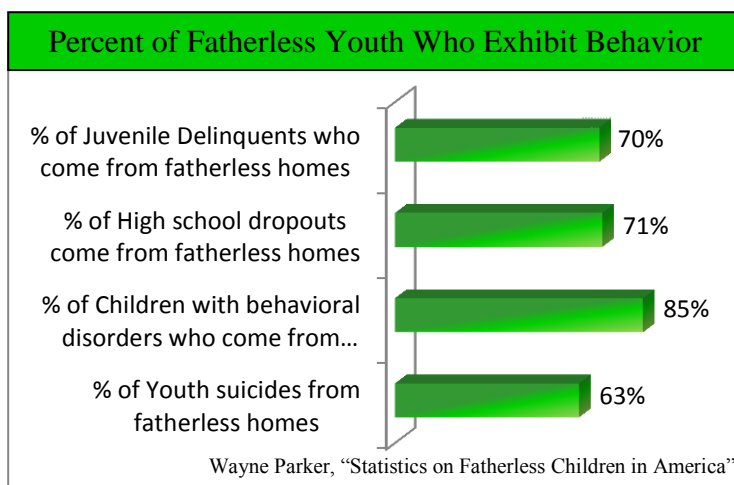
- A girl whose father leaves before she is five years old is eight times more likely to have an adolescent pregnancy than a girl whose father remains in her home.²
- African-American girls are 42 percent less likely to have sexual intercourse before age 18 if their biological father is present at home.³
- Boys that are close with their fathers have better attitudes about intimacy and the prospect of their own married lives than boys who do not feel close to their fathers.⁴
- Adolescents who live without their father are more likely to engage in greater and earlier sexual activity, are more likely to become pregnant as a teenager, and are more likely to have a child outside of marriage.⁵

Education

- Children who live without their fathers are more likely to have decreased school performance.⁶
- Children who do not live with their father are more likely to experience behavioral problems at school.⁷
- 71 percent of all high school dropouts come from fatherless homes.⁸

Deviant Behavior

- The child with an available father is more companionable and responsible as an adult.⁹
- Boys and girls who live without their fathers are less likely to be able to delay gratification, have poor impulse control over anger and sexual gratification, and have a weaker sense of right and wrong.¹⁰
- Children who live without their fathers are, on average, more likely to choose deviant peers, have trouble getting along with other children, be at higher risk for peer problems, and be more aggressive.¹¹



Conclusion: Every child has a fundamental right to a married mother and father. As MARRI research available online shows, society will continue to remain in a crisis until fathers accept the responsibility of caring for and protecting their children.

¹ U.S. Census Bureau. "2010 Census of Population and Housing." (September 2012). Available at <http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/doc/sf1.pdf>. Accessed 6 October 2014.

² Anthony Biglan, Carol W. Metzler, Roger Wirt, Dennis Ary, John Noell, Linda Ochs, Christine French and Don Hood, "Social and behavioral factors associated with high-risk sexual behavior among adolescents," *Journal of Behavioral Medicine* 13 (1990): 245–261; John O. G. Billy, Karin L. Brewster and William R. Grady, "Contextual effects of the sexual behavior of adolescent women," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 56 (1994): 387–404; Bruce J. Ellis, John E. Bates, Kenneth A. Dodge, David M. Fergusson, L. John Horwood, Gregory S. Pettit, and Lianne Woodward, "Does father absence place daughters at special risk for early sexual activity and teenage pregnancy?" *Child Development* 74 (2003): 801–821; Robert L. Flewelling and Karl E. Bauman, "Family structure as a predictor of initial substance use and sexual intercourse in early adolescence," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 52 (1990): 171–181; Laurie L. Meschke, Janine M. Zweig, Bonnie L. Barber, and Jacquelynne S. Eccles, "Demographic, biological, social, and psychological correlates of the timing of first intercourse," *Journal of Research on Adolescence* 10 (2000): 315–338; Ronald L. Simons and Associates, *Understanding differences between divorced and intact families* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1996). As cited in Jenifer K. McGuire and Bonnie L. Barber, "A Person-Centered Approach to the Multifaceted Nature of Young Adult Sexual Behavior," *Journal of Sex Research* 47, no. 4 (2010): 308, 310. As cited in Patrick F. Fagan and Aaron Churchill, "The Effects of Divorce on Children" MARRI Research, January 2012 available at <http://downloads.frc.org/EF/EF12A22.pdf>

³ Robert Day, "The Transition to First Intercourse among Racially and Culturally Diverse Youth," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 54 (1992): 749-762.

⁴ Sharon C. Risch, Kathleen M. Jodl, and Jacquelynne S. Eccles, "Role of the Father-Adolescent Relationship in Shaping Adolescents' Attitudes Toward Divorce," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 66 (2004): 55. As cited in Patrick F. Fagan and Aaron Churchill, "The Effects of Divorce on Children" MARRI Research, January 2012 available at <http://downloads.frc.org/EF/EF12A22.pdf>

⁵ Sarah Allen and Kerry Daly, "The Effects of Father Involvement: An Updated Research Summary of the Evidence," *Father Involvement Research Alliance* (2007): 11.

⁶ Sarah Allen and Kerry Daly, "The Effects of Father Involvement: An Updated Research Summary of the Evidence," *Father Involvement Research Alliance* (2007): 8.

⁷ Sarah Allen and Kerry Daly, "The Effects of Father Involvement: An Updated Research Summary of the Evidence," *Father Involvement Research Alliance* (2007): 8.

⁸ National Institute of Justice and the Executive Office for Weed and Seed, "What Can the Federal Government Do To Decrease Crime and Revitalize Communities?" National Institute of Justice Research Forum (1998). Available at <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/172210.pdf>. Accessed 3 October 2014.

⁹ John Snarey, *How Fathers Care for the Next Generation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 163-164. As cited in Patrick F. Fagan and Aaron Churchill, "The Effects of Divorce on Children" MARRI Research, January 2012 available at <http://downloads.frc.org/EF/EF12A22.pdf>

¹⁰ Sarah Allen and Kerry Daly, "The Effects of Father Involvement: An Updated Research Summary of the Evidence," *Father Involvement Research Alliance* (2007): 9.

¹¹ Sarah Allen and Kerry Daly, "The Effects of Father Involvement: An Updated Research Summary of the Evidence," *Father Involvement Research Alliance* (2007): 10.

Chart: *What Can the Federal Government Do To Decrease Crime and Revitalize Communities?* from the National Institute of Justice, 1998, page 11; Cynthia Harper of the University of Pennsylvania and Sara S. McLanahan of Princeton University cited in "Father Absence and Youth Incarceration." *Journal of Research on Adolescence* 14 (September 2004): 369-397. As cited by Parker, Wayne. "Statistics on Fatherless Children in America." About Parenting. Accessed October 9, 2014. http://fatherhood.about.com/od/fathersrights/a/fatherless_children.htm.