

The Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study changed its name to The Future of Families and Child Wellbeing Study (FFCWS). Due to the issue date of this document, FFCWS will be referenced by its former name. Any further reference to FFCWS should kindly observe this name change.

THE FRAGILE FAMILIES AND CHILD WELLBEING STUDY

AUSTIN, TEXAS

Baseline Report:
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PART I: INTRODUCTION

Austin, Texas is one of twenty cities across the United States in which parents are participating in a study of *Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing*.¹ The study follows a new birth cohort of approximately 5000 children in an effort to learn more about the fastest growing group of families in the United States today - unmarried parents and their children. 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. Yet very little is known about the resources of and relationships in these families, and the ways in which government policies affect their lives. As a consequence, public perceptions are often shaped by unsubstantiated myths about unmarried couples, and policy makers and community leaders are often forced to rely on anecdotal evidence in 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 fragile families.

The Study addresses four major 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 relationship between unmarried parents? How many of these couples are involved in stable relationships? What proportion expect to marry? What proportion are 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 health care 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 at the hospital within 24 hours after giving birth. Fathers are interviewed either at the hospital or someplace else, as soon as possible after the birth. Three annual follow-up interviews are conducted over the telephone, and the final follow-up interview includes an in-home assessment of the child's school readiness at age 4. The data will be representative of non-marital births to parents residing in cities with populations over 200,000. In each of the cities that make up our sample, the data will be representative of non-marital births in that city. A national comparison group of married parents will also be followed in each city.

The study design has multiple benefits. (1) By gathering data at birth and tracking child development throughout infancy and early childhood, distinctions can be made between differences that are present at birth (or shortly thereafter) and those that evolve over time. (2) By following fathers as well as mothers, more can be learned about fathers and the evolution of the parents' relationship can be studied from two points of view. (3) By following children as well as parents, connections can be made between changes in parents' behavior and/or family environment and fluctuations in child health and development outcomes.

The time is right to expand our understanding of fragile families. Welfare reform is pushing mothers into the labor force and raising 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 mother reach time limits on welfare, receiving support from fathers will also become increasingly important to them. At the same time, the health care system is undergoing major restructuring. Because 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 (FFCW) represents a major step toward identifying the individual and joint impacts of these changes on some of the most vulnerable families in our country. Because fragile families are comprised disproportionately of African-American and Hispanic families, studying children born outside of marriage is essential to understanding the health and development of children in these populations. We undertake this effort so that policy makers 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 inaugural report summarizes what we have learned from our initial analysis of the first wave of data collected in Austin, Texas in the spring of 1998.² Three findings stand out:

- *Austin parents in fragile families are initially highly committed to each other and to their children. Over half of unmarried parents in Austin live together, and another quarter are romantically involved. Two thirds expect to marry. Over seven out of ten Austin fathers provided support to the mothers during the pregnancy, and eight of ten mothers put the father's name on the child's birth certificate. The overwhelming majority of mothers want the father to be involved in raising their child. The*

challenge for policy makers and community leaders is to nourish rather than undermine these commitments.

- *Most unmarried parents in Austin are poorly equipped to support their families. The typical father has an income of less than \$12,500 dollars and the typical mother earns less than \$4000 a year. The human capital of both parents is low. Nearly half of both mothers and fathers lack a high school degree. Only 20 percent 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.*
- *The overwhelming majority of unmarried mothers in Austin families are healthy and bear healthy children. However, about 30 percent of these mothers do not receive prenatal care in the first trimester and 10 percent give birth to below-normal-weight babies. Improving the health care of all mothers during pregnancy should be an important objective of local policymakers.*

We plan to re-interview both parents next year 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 policy makers design programs that meet new parents' needs and thereby strengthen fragile families.

PART II: PARENTS' CHARACTERISTICS AND CAPABILITIES

We begin by describing the characteristics of the new unmarried parents

in Austin to gain a better sense of their needs, their capabilities, and the constraints they face. We are particularly interested in parents' *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 baby. We also are interested in the cultural backgrounds of new parents - ethnicity, religion, and immigrant status - since 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 Austin. Since nearly all the mothers we approached in the hospitals there agreed to participate in the study, and since we interviewed mothers in all of the birthing hospitals in the city, we are confident that our sample is representative of the population of unmarried women giving birth in Austin. We are less confident that our sample of unmarried fathers is representative, since we were able to interview only 75 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 and are likely to differ in other ways as well. Anticipating this problem, we asked the 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 and ethnicity, and drug and alcohol problems is based on mothers' reports. Thus it characterizes all unmarried fathers in Austin. 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 75 percent of fathers that were interviewed.

Parents' Human Capital

In our Austin sample, the typical unmarried mother is in her early twenties. Less than 25 percent of these mothers are under 20 and 15 percent are over thirty. For legal reasons, we did not include mothers under age 18 in our study.³ As a consequence, this Austin sample of unmarried mothers is slightly older than the actual population of ne'P unmarried mothers in Austin. According to data computed by the National Center for Health Statistics, 30 percent of all births to unmarried mothers in the United States in 1996 were to women under 20, and 10 percent to women under 18. Extrapolating these figures to Austin, we estimate that our sample misses about 10 percent of new mothers by virtue of the age restrictions of our sample (Ventura et al, 1997).

The typical unmarried father in Austin is in his early twenties. As compared with the mother, he is less likely to be a teenager and more likely to be over thirty. On average, the fathers are 2.5 years older than the mothers. Recent reports in the popular press have raised concerns about the proportion of teenage mothers who have children with much older men. To investigate this claim, we examined the age difference between the teen mothers in our sample and their partners. About seventy five percent of teen mothers in Austin had partners who were no more than four years older than themselves, and less than 14 percent had partners who were eight or more years older. Since our sample excludes the youngest teen mothers - those under 18 - fourteen percent is probably an underestimate of the true percentage of unmarried mothers with much older partners. However, even if half of the "missing" teen mothers had partners eight or more years older, the average for all teen mothers in Austin would still be only 26 percent, a figure substantially lower than the numbers often reported in the popular press.

Lack of education is a serious problem for unmarried parents in Austin. Nearly half

of these mothers lack a high school degree, and fewer than 30 percent have ever attended college. Fathers are slightly more educated than mothers, but a majority have only 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.

In spite of their limited education, however, unmarried parents in Austin are strongly attached to the labor force: 87 percent of mothers and 85 percent of fathers were employed during the year prior to the birth of their child. Compared with national averages, the employment numbers in Austin are quite high. According to a recent survey of American Families (the Urban Institute, 1999), the employment rate was 74 percent for unmarried parents and 63 percent for poor unmarried parents. The high Austin figures reflect the vibrant local economy, with monthly unemployment rates averaging 2.7 percent during the first three months of 1998 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1998). They also call attention to a need for good childcare for working parents.

According to their own reports, unmarried parents in Austin appear to be in good health. When asked whether their own health was "excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor," over sixty percent of parents (61 percent of mothers and 73 percent of fathers) said "very good or excellent." The national averages for this particular age group are 74 percent for women and 72 percent for men (Benson and Marano, 1998). Since we interviewed the mothers shortly after the birth of their children, we might expect their self-assessed health status to be a little lower than normal. Austin mothers engage in reasonably good health practices. Fewer than 4 percent reported using drugs and fewer than 9 percent reported using alcohol during their pregnancies. Only 1 percent of mothers reported that drugs or alcohol were a problem

in their lives.⁴ On a less positive note, about 19 percent of mothers smoked cigarettes during pregnancy. Maternal smoking during pregnancy is strongly associated with low birth weight and other poor birth outcomes.

Not surprisingly, the unmarried fathers in Austin are more likely than the mothers to engage in risky health practices. They are much more likely to smoke cigarettes and use alcohol. They also have more problems with drugs and alcohol, according to mothers' reports. Since most of the data on fathers' health status and health behavior is based on the fathers' own reports, the figures in Table 1 are likely to be underestimates of the true proportions. We suspect that the fathers who participated in our study have fewer problems with drugs and alcohol than the fathers who did not participate. This bias would not affect the estimate for problems with drugs and alcohol, however, since we used the mothers' responses to get this number.

Cultural and Social Capital

Turning from the individual characteristics to the cultural backgrounds of our new parents, we find a strong Hispanic-Catholic influence among Austin parents. Over half of the new unmarried mothers in Austin are Hispanic, nearly 30 percent are Black, and the rest are White and "Other" (mostly Native American). These figures are consistent with those reported for Austin births by the Texas Department of Health for 1996,⁵ and they reflect both the racial and ethnic composition of the Austin population overall (a large number of Hispanic immigrants) and the relatively high fertility rates among both immigrant and native Hispanics. About a fifth of the Austin mothers are immigrants, primarily from Mexico, and many of these families are highly

mobile. Indeed, a major reason why we were unable to interview some of the new fathers was that they were living (often temporarily) in Mexico. Consistent with Hispanic culture, a majority of new parents report their religion as Catholic and a large number identify as Protestant. The percentage of parents reporting no religion is very small - about 10 percent.

PART III: RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN FRAGILE FAMILIES

The media often present negative stereotypes about unmarried parents, sometimes depicting babies as the products of casual sexual liaisons or depicting mothers as the victims of irresponsible fathers. For policy makers 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 as separate units. 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 and attitudes about marriage, and sources of conflict between unmarried parents in Austin. We present information on three groups of mothers - all mothers, mothers for whom a father interview was not completed, and mothers for whom a father interview was completed. By far the most striking finding is the high rate of cohabitation among these parents. Nearly 56 percent of unmarried mothers are living with the fathers of their children at the time of their child's birth, and

another 21 percent are romantically involved with the fathers but living apart. Nine percent are "just friends," and 14 percent have no contact with the fathers. 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. This is supported further by column 4, interviewed fathers (73 percent of whom report cohabiting with the mother).

Over two thirds of the unmarried mothers in Austin 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 unmarried*, over two thirds of mothers said they agree or strongly agree. Fathers' responses were even more positive, which is what we would expect from our somewhat "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 same child were both interviewed), the fathers still appear to be slightly more pro-marriage than mothers. Nearly 90 percent of fathers say their chances of marriage are 50 percent or better (as compared with 81 percent of mothers), and nearly 40 percent strongly agree that marriage is better for children (as compared with 21 percent of mothers).

There is strong consensus among these unmarried parents about what the qualities of a successful marriage are. When asked to identify the qualities that are important for a successful marriage, over two thirds of the mothers rated *maturity*, *husband having a steady job*, and *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* a little lower than the mothers did. They also rated *a good sex life* a little higher. 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. Mothers for whom we have no interview with the father (column 2) reported somewhat higher levels of conflict than the other mothers. They also reported more conflict than the other mothers over *the pregnancy*, *sex*, and *being faithful*. Unmarried fathers reported somewhat less conflict than the mothers (compare columns 3 and 4), but agreed that time and money were the major sources of conflict.

In sum, the unmarried parents in this Austin sample have high hopes for their future together. The vast majority view marriage as a positive institution, one 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 FFCW study investigates several indicators of father-involvement within fragile families, including whether the father's name will be 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 express high levels of intent for and interest in strong father-involvement.

Those who believe that unmarried fathers are indifferent to their children will be surprised by the numbers in Table 3. Over 95 percent of the fathers (and over 80 percent of

the mothers) indicate that the father's name will be on the birth certificate. Eighty percent of the mothers and 96 percent of the fathers said that their child will take the father's surname. Equally large proportions report that the father gave money or bought things for the baby during the pregnancy or helped the mother in other ways. 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 probably more committed to the mothers and children than the average unmarried father in Austin. 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 data are of tremendous import. 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.⁶

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 overwhelming majority of unmarried mothers identified *showing love and affection to the child* as the most important quality. Nearly 60 percent of unmarried fathers gave this response as well. Similarly, when asked to name the least important characteristic, the mothers chose

authority, financial support, and direct care. Again, the fathers agreed, although they were somewhat less negative than the mothers about the importance of direct care.

PART IV: PARENTS' ACCESS TO PRIVATE AND PUBLIC 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 these parents as well as their potential and actual sources of support. It is essential to ensuring that policies and programs complement rather than undermine existing family networks and community support networks.

Unmarried parents rely on multiple sources of income and in-kind support to help raise their children. As shown in Table 5, mothers' median income was about \$4000 per year and fathers' median income was about \$12,500. The reader should keep in mind that the figure for fathers in our sample is likely to be somewhat higher than the figure for all unmarried fathers. Compared to the average father, the men in our sample are more likely to be employed (according to the mothers) and thus to have higher earnings. Mothers *with* a father interview reported that 92 percent of the fathers were employed, whereas mothers *without* a father interview reported that only 65 percent of fathers were employed.

Household income is substantially higher than personal income - about \$14,000 (median) among the mothers and \$20,000 (median) among the fathers - reflecting the fact that most new, unmarried parents are living with other adults. Even so, the vast majority of new parents live either below or just barely above the poverty line. Fifty three percent of unmarried mothers in Austin are poor (according to the official poverty line) and another 22 percent are "near poor," with incomes below 200 percent of the poverty

line;. (It is also important to note that just over half of these new parents have other children to support, which is taken into account by the poverty threshold.) Not all unmarried parents in Austin are in such dire straits, however. Twenty five percent of the mothers and 40 percent of the fathers enjoy relatively comfortable living standards. Again, the reader should keep in mind that the figures for the fathers in our sample are likely to be somewhat higher than the figures for all unmarried fathers.

The extended family is an important source of support for new unmarried parents. Nearly all the parents we interviewed in Austin said there was someone in their family to whom they could turn for help with financial problems, housing, or childcare. Nearly sixty percent of the mothers received financial support from relatives during the past year, 40 percent received help with housing, and 36 percent received free childcare. Although the mothers are more likely- than the fathers to rely on relatives, a substantial proportion of the fathers also receive financial support and help with housing.

New unmarried parents in Austin do not appear to have strong ties to their neighborhoods or communities. In general, the longer a person lives in a neighborhood, the more likely it is that she (he) knows her (his) neighbors and will have them available as a source of support. As shown in Table 6, the average parent has lived in her (his) neighborhood about 2.5 years. In addition to the length of residence in one's neighborhood, neighborhood quality can also impact the degree of interaction between neighbors and thus, potential support from that source. Over 80 percent of unmarried parents in Austin characterize their neighborhoods as safe. Another potential source of community support is organized religion. Although 90 percent of the unmarried parents in our sample report

having a religion, only 20 percent of the mothers and 11 percent of the fathers attend church on a weekly basis.

A substantial proportion of unmarried mothers in Austin rely on government support. During the past year, about 44 percent received welfare or Food Stamps, 5 percent received other government transfers, and a full 17 percent received housing subsidies. The proportion receiving government assistance is even higher for women who have another child-53 percent of these mothers received welfare or Food Stamps. 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 from the federal government to the 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 or potential recipients understand the new policies in their respective states. We found that unmarried parents in Austin are woefully uninformed about the new welfare rules and regulations. Nearly 50 percent of the mothers answer they "do not know" how many years a woman can receive welfare in Texas or how long he can receive benefits before having to work. The fathers are even less knowledgeable than the mothers about new welfare rules. It is difficult to imagine that policies implemented to encourage parental responsibility and create disincentives for dependence can be effective if those who are the most likely recipients are not even aware of the rules.

In contrast, unmarried parents in Austin are much better informed about the child support system. When asked whether a blood test can prove whether a man is the father of a child, 90 percent of the parents answered yes. However, only 10 percent reported receiving information about

establishing paternity at the hospital. It is possible that some parents may have received information after we spoke with them and others may not have understood the information presented to them. If some parents did not receive comprehensible information or did not receive any information at all, child support officials are missing a golden opportunity to give potentially valuable paternity information in a friendly and cost-effective manner.

PART V: HOW ARE THE CHILDREN DOING?

Low birth weight is an important indicator of children's current and future health status. In this Austin sample of non-marital births, 10 percent of the babies weighed less than 2500 grams at birth. The 10 percent figure is higher than both the national and Texas averages for all births - 7.4 and 7.2 respectively. It is identical, however, to the average for children born in Texas to unmarried parents - 10 percent (Texas Department of Health, 1999).

Fully 97 percent of unmarried mothers in Austin reported receiving prenatal care, which is good news indeed. This number compares favorably with the national average, which is 90 percent (Abma et al., 1997). However, nearly 30 percent of mothers did not start receiving care until the second or third trimester of pregnancy; this figure is only slightly below the national average (23 percent) for all mothers (Abma et al., 1997). The data on medical insurance coverage during pregnancy shows that Medicaid is an important resource for unmarried mothers in Austin, where two-thirds of unmarried mothers are covered by public insurance and another quarter by private insurance. The mothers with private health insurance were more likely to receive prenatal care during the first trimester than were mothers covered by Medicaid.

The length of maternity stay in the hospital is another issue that has attracted much public attention. Although critics of "drive-through deliveries" argue for longer maternal stays, 80 percent of the mothers in the sample said they were ready to go home and did not want to stay in the hospital any longer.

Finally, we asked the unmarried mothers who the baby was going to live with as a way of measuring the resources that would be available to the child over the near term. Going home meant very different things for these babies. Over 60 percent are expected to live with both the mother and father, 25 percent will live with the mother and another adult, and fewer than 20 percent will live with the mother alone. These figures are consistent with the relatively high level of commitment between the parents at the time the child is born. A major challenge for policy makers is to develop ways to sustain this initial level of commitment.

ENDNOTES

The other 19 ones include: Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Corpus Christi, Detroit, Indianapolis, Jacksonville, Milwaukee, Nashville, New York, Newark, Norfolk, Oakland, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Richmond, San Antonio, San Jose, and Toledo.

² The Austin sample contains 325 **families**, 250 unmarried couples plus 75 married couples who serve as a comparison group. Data were collected in all Austin birthing hospitals from April 9th through June 30, 1998. Mothers giving birth during this time were approached in the hospitals and asked to participate in the study. Approximately 93 percent of the 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. Approximately 90 percent of married fathers and 75 percent of unmarried fathers agreed to participate in the study. The mother's interview lasted about 30 minutes and the father's interview lasted 40 minutes.

³ In order to interview minor mothers, we would have needed to gain permission from the 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 a few selected cities where hospitals requested that they be interviewed.

⁴ These numbers probably underestimate the use of drugs and alcohol since mothers may be reluctant to report behaviors that may reflect negatively on their mothering skills.

⁵ The figures from the Texas Department of Health in 1996 were 54 percent Hispanic, 28 percent Black, 18 percent white, and <1 percent other.

⁶ At the same time, it is important to recognize that a small minority of mothers (11%) do not want the father involved in raising their child. In the follow-up survey, we will examine whether this may be due to experiences with domestic violence in the past.

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APPENDIX OF TABLES

Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study
Non Marital Births in Austin, Texas

Table 1. Parents' Characteristics and Capabilities

	Mothers	Fathers
Age		
<20	24%	11%
20-24	45%	41%
25-29	17%	24%
30+	15%	24%
Average Age Difference	2.53	2.53
Education		
Less than high school	45%	39%
High school only	28%	32%
Some college	22%	24%
College+	5%	4%
Worked Last Year	87%	85%
Race/Ethnicity		
White Non-Hispanic	18%	14%
Black Non-Hispanic	27%	32%
Hispanic	52%	50%
Other	2%	3%
Immigrant	20%	20%
Religious Affiliation		
Protestant	39%	36%
Catholic	43%	44%
Other religion	6%	10%
No religion	12%	10%
Other Children	59%	53%
Very Good Health	61%	73%
No Alcohol Use	91%	26%
No Drug Use	96%	82%
No Cigarette Use	81%	60%
Problems with Drugs/Alcohol	1%	9%
Total Number of <u>Respondents</u>	251	188

**Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study
Non Marital Births in Austin, Texas**

Table 2. Parents' Relationships and Attitudes About Marriage

	<u>All Mothers</u>	<u>Mothers Without Father Interview</u>	<u>Mothers with Father Interview</u>	<u>Fathers</u>
Relationship Status				
Cohabiting	56%	17%	69%	73%
Not Cohab - Romantic	21%	19%	21%	20%
Not Romantic - Friends	9%	21%	5%	4%
Not Romantic - No Contact	14%	43%	5%	3%
Chances of Marriage (50% or greater)				
	67%	27%	81%	89%
Marriage Better for Kids				
% Agree	51%	52%	51%	42%
% Strongly Agree	21%	21%	21%	38%
Successful Marriage (% Very Important)				
Friends	12%	8%	14%	16%
Husband Steady Job	90%	95%	89%	90%
Wife Steady Job	68%	71%	67%	47%
Same Race/Eth	8%	10%	7%	11%
Good Sex	27%	24%	28%	37%
Religion	27%	32%	26%	24%
Maturity	91%	94%	90%	86%
Sources of Conflict				
Money	19%	22%	18%	14%
Time	23%	27%	21%	15%
Sex	13%	19%	11%	7%
Pregnancy	14%	25%	11%	7%
Drink/Drug	6%	8%	5%	3%
Being Faithful	10%	17%	7%	9%
Total Number of Respondents	251	63	188	188

Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study
Non Marital Births in Austin, Texas

Table 3. Indicators of Father's Involvement with Child

	All Mothers	Mothers without Father Interview	Mothers with Father Interview	Fathers
Father's Name on Birth Certificate	81%	50%	91%	95%
Child has Father's Surname	80%	45%	92%	96%
Father Contributed during Pregnancy				
Financial	72%	33%	85%	90%
Other	73%	30%	87%	89%
Want Father Involved	89%	67%	97%	98%
Total Number of Respondents	251	63	188	188

Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study
Non Marital Births in Austin, Texas

Table 4. Parents' Attitudes About Fatherhood

	<u>All Mothers</u>	<u>Mothers without Father Interview</u>	<u>Mothers with Father Interview</u>	<u>Fathers</u>
Defining a "Good Father"				
(% Most Important)				
Financial support	6%	5%	7%	9%
Teacher	9%	13%	7%	11%
Direct care	6%	8%	5%	14%
Show love	73%	63%	76%	58%
Protection	4%	8%	3%	3%
Authority	2%	3%	1%	4%
(% Least Important)				
Financial support	28%	37%	26%	26%
Teacher	6%	5%	7%	9%
Direct care	26%	27%	25%	13%
Show love	0%	0%	0%	2%
Protection	5%	2%	6%	6%
Authority	32%	27%	34%	41%
Total Number of Respondents	251	63	188	188

Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study
Non Marital Births in Austin, Texas

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

	<u>Mothers</u>	<u>Fathers</u>
Total Personal Income (median)	\$4,000.00	\$12,500.00
Total Household Income (median)	\$14,049.78	\$21,275.24
Poverty Status		
<50% of line	27%	19%
50% to 100% of line	26%	18%
100%-200% of line	22%	24%
200%-300% of line	15%	20%
300% or more	10%	20%
Kin Resources		
Financial assistance	58%	33%
Housing assistance	41%	27%
Childcare assistance	36%	
Potential help	97%	93%
Total Number of Respondents	251	188

Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study
Non Marital Births in Aastin, Texas

Table 6. Parents' Access to Resources: Neighborhood and Government

	<u>Mothers</u>	<u>Fathers</u>
Neighborhood Resources		
Religious attendance	20%	11%
Neighborhood safety	82%	82%
Years in neighborhood (mean)	2.44	2.63
Government Transfers and Services		
Welfare or food stamps	43%	13%
Other government transfers	5%	3%
Housing subsidy	17%	11%
Awareness of Welfare and Child Support Rules (% lacking information)		
Years eligible for welfare	49%	60%
Work requirements	52%	60%
Voluntary paternity establishment	88%	91%
Total Number of Reseondents	251	188

Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study
Non Marital Births in Austin, Texas

<u>ALL BIRTHS</u>	
<u>Mothers</u>	
Low Birth Weight Baby	9%
Initiation of Prenatal Care	
1st Trimester	72%
2nd Trimester	22%
3rd Trimester	7%
Health Insurance	
Medicaid	65%
Private	26%
Other	8%
Enough Time in Hospital	80%
Baby's Living Arrangement	
Mother and father	57%
Mother and others	25%
Mother only	18%
Total Number of <u>Respondents</u>	251
