

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.

Fathers' Roles Amidst Family Complexity After a Nonmarital Birth

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ABSTRACT

Notable changes in family life over the past half century suggest a disconnection between marriage and childbearing/childrearing and an increase in family complexity. Many men, particularly disadvantaged men, will be living away from some or all of their biological children and/or living with children (of their partners) to whom they are not biologically related. In this paper, we provide new quantitative information about the prevalence and nature of urban unmarried fathers' roles amidst complexity after nonmarital births (as compared to marital births) using data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study over 9 years after a birth. To the extent that fathers' involvement has an important influence on children and on the wellbeing of men themselves, this research provides important new information about what contemporary fathers do—and hence what children 'get'—in the context of contemporary family complexity.