

## Keeping Unmarried, African American Adolescent Fathers Involved with Their Children

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**The study:** The findings of this study were based on in-depth interviews with 24 low-income, African American kinship systems recruited from the greater Chicago area. Each of the 24 kinship systems was made up of an adolescent father, his parents (the paternal grandparents), and the adolescent mother of his baby and her parents (the maternal grandparents). Each person in the kinship system was interviewed individually and privately during late pregnancy and again when baby of the adolescent parents was 1, 6, 12, 18, and 24 months of age. During pregnancy all of the adolescent mothers and adolescent fathers said that they wanted the father to stay involved with the baby.

### Please share this information:

1. African American males are more than twice as likely to father a baby during adolescence (teen) in comparison with Caucasian and Latino males.
2. Teen fathers can provide important support for the mothers of their children. Children also benefit by having regular contact with their fathers when their parents can get along.
3. Teen fathers who were involved either lived with their children and their children's mother or kept their babies overnight several nights a week. These teen fathers needed the help of the maternal and paternal grandmothers to stay involved with their children.
4. Maternal grandmothers helped teen fathers stay involved by: permitting the teen father to come to her home to visit the baby and permitting the teen father, or his mother, to come by and pick the baby up for overnight stays.
5. All of the 14 teen fathers involved with their babies at 24 months had a *supportive* paternal grandmother. *Supportive* paternal grandmothers helped teen fathers stay involved by: keeping an eye on his parenting and providing advice and information; intervening with maternal grandmothers when they denied the teen father access to the baby; letting the teen father and his baby stay in her home; and, when needed, picking the baby up from the maternal grandmother's home and transporting the baby to the teen father's home.
6. We learned that the 10 teen fathers who were not involved with their children were in kinship systems that had more problems. The most common problems were: conflict between the paternal and maternal families and between the teen parents, more repeat pregnancies, doubts about the teen father actually being the biological father of the baby, and maternal grandmothers who denied, or threatened to deny, the teen father permission to see his child.