A Time To Support Fatherhood

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James R. Dudley, PhD; Jay Fagan, DSW

Introduction

As we move further into the 21st Century, the state of fatherhood in American society remains a major societal concern. Some recent social indicators, for example, reveal the diminishing role of a growing numbers of fathers (Dudley & Stone, 2001; Horn, 2001a):

- Approximately one-third of all children under 18 years (24 million children) live apart from their biological father.
- While both the biological father and mother were present in almost 81 percent of family households back in 1960, both parents were present in only 55 percent of family households by 2000.
- One-third of all births were to unmarried women in 2000, in contrast to 4 percent in 1960.
- Alternative family forms have not usually been favorable to the participation of the biological father, as mother-only families have almost tripled and mother/step-father families have almost doubled over the past 40 years.
- Over one million children are newly affected by their parents' divorce each year.
- A white child has one chance in two of living continuously with a biological father through the age of 18, while an African American child has one chance in four.
- Children who live separate from their biological fathers are more likely to be poor, experience adjustment problems, use drugs, be victims of child abuse, and engage in criminal behavior than children who live with both of their biological parents.

- In 1999, more than a million parents were in federal, state, or local prisons, accounting for 2 to 3% of all children in the U.S. Most of these parents were fathers (Mumola, 2000).

Fathers who live with their children face significant issues as well. For example:

- In a national study of dual-earner families (both mothers and fathers worked full-time), the Families and Work Institute found that 20 percent of the men reported significant conflict and 40 percent reported some conflict between work and family life (Galinsky, Bond, & Friedman, 1993).
- There appears to be strong evidence that the behavioral health problems of some fathers are risk factors for the development of psychopathology in children (Phares, 1997).
- The dislocation of jobs contributes to the challenge of fathering for many men. Minority fathers have been hit the hardest by the changing economy, and are consequently more likely to be debilitated by the economic expectations of their fathering role (Staples & Johnson, 1993).

A frightening reality in all of these statistics is that countless fathers are either absent from their children's lives, carrying diminished roles, or seriously struggling to be active parents. Further, it appears that these social patterns will remain high and possibly increase in the future if nothing more is done to reverse them. It could be easily argued that the decline in the quality and extent of fathering is the most serious social problem currently facing our society.

James R. Dudley is a Professor in the Department of Social Work at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

Jay Fagan is Associate Professor at Temple University's School of Social Administration.

Correspondence should be addressed to:

Dr. James R. Dudley, Department of Social Work, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, 9201 University City Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28223
E-mail:jrdudley@email.uncc.edu

Dr. Jay Fagan, Temple University, Ritter Hall Annex, 5th Floor, 13th Street and Cecil B. Moore Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19122
Telephone: (215) 204-1288

Purpose of Special Issue

The purpose of this special issue is to focus attention on a large and diverse group of fathers who are either struggling to assume a parenting role or are absent from their children's lives. While there is an emerging literature that focuses on such fathers, findings are still quite sparse and overlook many untouched and unanswered questions. All of the articles in this issue were selected to cultivate a better understanding of the strengths and needs of these fathers and how we can help them become more active parents.

The fathers who are the focus of this issue come from all walks of life, representing all racial and ethnic groups and all ages and income levels. They are unmarried, married, and divorced; both custodial and non-custodial; both teens and adults. Some are separated from their families because they are in prisons. Others are struggling with a substance abuse problem or a conflicting relationship with their children's mother. Still, others are primary parents floundering with inadequate resources and skills.

Emphasizing Strengths

The perspective that we are promoting in this issue has some distinct aspects that we will emphasize. We are interested in strengthening families in ways that support active parenting by both biological parents whenever this is possible. We support decisions that take all family members' needs into account and give priority to the "best interests of children." We believe that many fathers need more help with parenting skills. Numerous fathers also need help diffusing exchanges of hostility and acrimony that are characteristic of many families in these circumstances. Unfortunately, such destructive exchanges are often fueled inadvertently by the agencies sanctioned to help them, such as family court systems and legal counsels. In addition to diffusing destructive exchanges, fathers need help in learning how to work cooperatively with the biological mother, particularly when they are attempting to co-parent in separate households. Finally, many

fathers, particularly lower income and teen, need help in becoming more effective wage earners.

We encourage utilization of a strengths perspective in all efforts to help fathers and their families. It is incumbent upon social workers and other human service workers in social agencies to search for and affirm these strengths whenever possible. Unfortunately, a large portion of the recent literature on fathers indicates that their problems and pathology are being emphasized and their strengths overlooked. Fathers' problems need attention, but we know from experience that efforts that focus only on problems and pathologies have not succeeded in helping fathers (Palm, 1997).

Perhaps the strengths of many of these fathers are difficult to identify easily, but their strengths clearly exist and need to be recognized and utilized (Saleebey, 1997). Strengths could include the father's loyalties, insights, patience, cultural heritage, pride, or survival skills. Strengths are evident in a father's stories about his family and himself, and in the parent-child concerns that he raises. If a father brings up his children in discussions, that is likely a strength; undoubtedly, his children are on his mind. Negative comments possibly have strengths embedded in them as well. For example, the intensity of a father's anger may be a strength, because it reflects the depth of his love for his children. Further, if a father feels that he is being "shut out" of his children's lives, he may be revealing both vulnerabilities and potential desires that can become an important focus.

Multi-Dimensional Approach

We also support a holistic approach that focuses on all dimensions of fathering, not just their economic responsibilities. Job training and employment, preparation during the prenatal period, individual and group counseling, educational approaches, family therapy, peer support groups, parent-child activities, family mediation, and other creative interventions must be offered when they are needed. In addition, we believe that child support

enforcement can be more effective when pursued within this multi-dimensional context.

A holistic approach also includes the promotion of healthy living among fathers. Healthy living refers to fathers' attention to their own health and well-being, so they can be positive role models to their children (Gadsden, Fagan, Ray, & Davis, 2001). An example of healthy living is seeking out appropriate resources when faced with emotional and psychological challenges. The findings of research conducted with practitioners in the fathering field reveal a general consensus — that healthy living goals are extremely important to the fathers in their programs (Gadsden, Fagan, Ray, & Davis, in press).

Much of the literature on fathering also neglects a multi-cultural perspective. We need more understanding of both the struggles and joys of low-income fathers, racial and ethnic minority dads, parents who are recent immigrants, and others who are often at the margins of our society. Historically, social workers have been deeply committed to these groups in promoting their well-being and advocating for their social justice. The time has come for more social workers to renew their commitment to these groups of fathers.

Finally, we contend that men's "help-seeking behavior" is different in important ways from that of women. Fathers appear to be more difficult to reach, more cautious about the values and goals of intervention programs, and more private in their personal change efforts; fathers have fewer supports systems for positive change as well (Hawkins & Fagan, 2001). Merely extending traditional services and programs that have helped mothers, to fathers, likely will not work well. Practitioners will need to think about new and different approaches to serving fathers. Fatherhood initiatives that are emerging throughout the country are developing such approaches, and the programs of one fatherhood initiative are described in this special issue.

Social Movements Supporting Fatherhood

Ken Canfield (2001), President of the National Center on Fathering in Kansas City, recently suggested that a fatherhood movement is taking place in the United States. The evidence to support this claim, while inconclusive, does seem to suggest substantial social change. A recent national study of married, residential fathers revealed much higher levels of paternal participation with children than had been reported in previous studies (Yeung, Sandberg, Davis-Kean, & Hofferth, 2001). The proportion of time fathers spent engaged with their children (i.e., direct interaction) on weekdays was 67 percent that of mothers, and on weekends, 87 percent that of mothers. An often-cited review of studies conducted in the 1990s of fathers' time spent with children revealed that fathers spend about two-fifths as much time as mothers engaged in face-to-face interaction with their children (Pleck, 1997). The Yeung et al. study had the advantage of a large representative sample and the use of a father involvement measure, the time diary, which has been shown to be highly valid and reliable.

The rapid growth of social programs for fathers also provides evidence suggesting that a fatherhood movement is taking place. Grass roots efforts initiated in past decades have matured into stronger programs. There is now a plethora of programs for fathers in early childhood settings, social service programs, health care related institutions, and national organizations. The level of activity around fathers may be reflected in the fact that 33 out of 50 states now have formal fatherhood initiatives (A Comparative Review of State Fatherhood Initiatives, 2001).

Several social movements focusing on fatherhood and other male issues have been a catalyst for the changes that we are seeing among a wide cross section of men (Messner, 1997). These movements began emerging in the late 1960s and continue through the present. Although some of these men's movements did not deal directly with issues of fathering, they did set the stage for genuine exploration of "maleness" that ultimately led to a re-analysis of a man's role as father.

Mythopoetic Men's Movement

One of these social movements is referred to as the "Mythopoetic Men's Movement" led by poet Robert Bly (Messner, 1997). Bly has led men to more deeply consider the significance of their "father wound" resulting from having a remote, absent, or workaholic father.

According to Bly, there is longing, grief, and anger at this loss, which gets buried deep within the psyche. This wounding experience leads men to distrust the older men in their lives and depend too much on women. Men have been taught to cut themselves off from their emotions and to seek fulfillment through work and social status. Bly's movement is very concerned with the impoverishment in men's relationships with their fathers and other men in workplaces, as well as the need men have for positive male role models to help them develop into healthy and well-adjusted men and fathers.

Fathers' Rights Movement

Other men's movements are more truly "fathers' movements." They deal specifically with enhancing the role of fathers in the lives of children and often pursue social and political agendas to help bring this about. The first of these, called the Fathers' Rights Movement, can be traced back to the early 1960s. Members of this movement can be found on the frontlines advocating for such things as child custody, child-support awards, and the rights of unmarried fathers. It is common for members of fathers' rights groups to be politically conservative, however, beliefs within these loosely knit groups exist across a wide political spectrum. A common theme voiced by these groups is their desire for a strong and active relationship with their children.

Million Man March

The Million Man March is another social movement, involving African American men, who led a march on Washington, D.C. in 1995 to promote responsible fatherhood in their local communities (Messner, 1997). The leaders of this March were responding, at least in part, to the major crises confronting many inner city African American neigh-

borhoods. As Anderson (1990) observed, most of the traditional African American adult male leaders who had previously taught the young males the value of hard work, family involvement, and contributing to the community, had moved to the suburbs. The vacuum that they left has been filled by a newer, and in some cases, troubling brand of male leaders, including some who are young street toughs, drug dealers, and gang members.

The Million Man March was a response to this social crisis intending to project a positive image of adult African American males. These men (and some women) voiced a collective proclamation to restore African American men's sense of moral responsibility and leadership in their families. A central purpose was a call to mentor teens and take care of their families and communities (Messner, 1997). An outpouring of volunteers surfaced after this March seeking to be mentors with the NAACP, Big Brothers Association, and other groups.

Promise Keepers

The Promise Keepers is another fathers' movement recently emerging. Founded by a former professional football player, this organization began with 72 men in 1990, and later attracted over 600,000 men to its gatherings by 1995 (Messner, 1997). Promise Keepers has sponsored large gatherings usually in sports stadiums across the United States. Its most notable public gathering occurred when half a million Promise Keepers attended a rally in Washington, D.C. The organization has raised about $3 million per event and the money is largely spent on organizing future rallies and developing a national network of men. This group has successfully included large numbers of racial minorities in its membership and leadership.

Perhaps the heart of the Promise Keepers appeal is that it offers solutions for men who feel that they have lost a sense of "control" over their lives. Their message seems to appeal to men who are searching for ways to make up for their own perceived failures as husbands and/or fathers. As a predominately religious movement, it could be speculated that

the message offers participants a chance for "atonement" for past wrongs they have committed.

The level of activity taking place in many other faith-based organizations provides further evidence of a fatherhood movement. Millions of men have attended events sponsored by other religious organizations, such as The Family Shepherd (Simmons, 1991) and Legacy Builders (Burton, 1996). Horn (2001) points out that no secular organization in America has been as successful as the faith-based programs in reaching out to men about being responsible parents and family members.

Men's Liberation Movement

Finally, as the feminist movement emerged in the 1970s, another social movement — the loosely knit Men's Liberation Movement — sprang up beside it, promoting male consciousness-raising, male feminism, and concern about gender inequities. Many male liberation groups strongly endorsed the messages of the feminist movement and began giving special attention to developing the feminine in themselves (Messner, 1997). Special concerns were also raised about how boys were socialized to be competitive, independent, and publicly successful. Advocates were concerned about how boys' socialization was stunting their capacity to express their full range of emotions and develop close relationships.

Brief Review of Pertinent Literature

While the fatherhood literature has been fairly slow to develop in the social work journals and textbooks, it has grown at a rapid rate in other disciplines, including sociology, psychology, anthropology, education, family studies, and nursing. For example, one of the premiere family science journals, *Journal of Marriage and Family*, published ten articles on fathers during 2001. This number does not include studies in which fathers participated, but were not the major focus of the paper. The child development literature has shown a similar proliferation of research about fathers. The subject of fathers seldom appeared in the professional child develop-

ment literature more than a decade ago. Most studies focused only on mother-child relationships or the effects of maternal care-giving practices on children. Most researchers now recognize the importance of understanding child development within the context of the larger family environment and make every attempt to include mothers and fathers, whether or not the man is living in the household.

The fatherhood literature has also increasingly addressed issues pertaining to diversity among fathers. In the past, research studies focused almost exclusively on white, European American middle-class fathers in either intact or divorced families. The last decade has witnessed a growing interest in fathers from diverse ethnic backgrounds—low-income fathers, immigrant fathers, never married fathers, stepfathers, single residential fathers, and adoptive fathers (e.g., Coley, 2001). The findings of this literature have revealed fairly strict cultural norms about the centrality of the mother-child relationship regardless of the mother's background (Doherty, Kouneski, & Erickson, 1998), but much less agreement about the functions or even the necessity of fathers.

Committed fathers may perform in vastly different ways, depending on the definition of fatherhood to which the father subscribes. For example, Caribbean immigrant men seem to place a lot of emphasis on biological fatherhood, so much so that there are stigmas attached to those men who cannot father children and to those who unknowingly raise someone else's child (Roopnarine, Lewis, & Shin, 2001, p. 245). Most Caribbean men see fatherhood as a route to personal maturity, frequently noting that living under one roof with one's family is the ideal, but hardly essential, for being a capable father.

As the fatherhood literature has grown, we have also seen researchers deepening their understanding of what is meant by father involvement and how to measure this construct. Early measures of involvement focused exclusively on the father's presence or absence. More recently, Michael Lamb and his colleagues (Lamb, 1986; Lamb, Pleck, Charnov, &

Levine, 1985) offered one of the most influential schemes for operationalizing father involvement. Lamb et al. (1985) defined involvement as "the amount of time spent in activities involving the child" (p. 884). They also proposed three components of involvement: (1) engagement, (2) availability, and (3) responsibility. Engagement refers to the father's direct interaction or contact with his child through care giving and shared activities. Availability is a related concept concerning the father's potential availability for interaction, by virtue of being present or being accessible to the child, whether or not direct interaction occurs. Responsibility refers to the role that a father takes in ascertaining that the child is cared for and arranging for the availability of resources (Lamb, Pleck, Charnov, & Levine, 1987, p. 125).

The three components of father involvement developed by Michael Lamb and his colleagues are important for several different reasons. The engagement component is significant because it includes all time spent in direct interaction with children, not just caregiving or nurturing activities. At issue here is that fathers spend a good deal of their time playing and engaging in leisure activities with children. Although several researchers have criticized the engagement concept for downplaying tasks related to taking care of children (Berk, 1980), others have suggested that the concept is a more accurate reflection of fathers' actual involvement (Pleck & Steuve, in press). The engagement component is also important because it draws from child development research about the paternal influences on children (Pleck & Steuve, in press).

The accessibility component is important because of the high level of variability in fathers' availability to their children. Many non-residential fathers are inaccessible to their children. However, there is also much variability in the degree of accessibility among residential fathers. Low-income residential fathers, struggling to be gainfully employed, may be highly accessible to their children during times when they cannot find work

(Fagan, 1998). It is not uncommon for some low- and middle-income fathers to hold several part-time jobs, or one full- and one part-time job. These fathers may be good providers to their children, but their physical availability may be extremely limited.

Responsibility is one of the least-studied and even less understood aspects of fathering. As noted above, this form of involvement refers to the managerial functions of parenting, including the ways in which fathers organize opportunities for their children to participate in a wide range of activities and experiences. With the exception of single fathers who are raising their children, residential fathers frequently do not assume primary responsibility for many parenting functions (Pleck, 1997). In these circumstances, mothers continue to make the majority of decisions regarding what children wear, when they go to the doctor, what they eat, how they are disciplined, and so forth. Mothers also assume much of the responsibility for children's early childhood program involvement. In contrast, when fathers have raised their children as sole custodial parents, without a mother present, or on a part-time basis as a joint custodial parent/active non-custodial parent, they have learned to assume these myriad responsibilities out of necessity.

A criticism of the involvement construct is that it excludes the breadwinner role and the provision of economic support for children. Lamb et al. (1985) argue that breadwinning is a part of fathering, even though it is not a component of direct involvement. Others contend that the provision of financial support is a child involvement activity (Christiansen & Palkovitz, 2001). First, most fathers view the breadwinner role as an important facet of their parenting. Second, the meaning of involvement is incomplete unless economic provisions are taken into account. Christiansen and Palkovitz (2001) offer the following example to illustrate this point: "If attendance at a child's dance performance is measured (without considering) the sacrifice made in paying for dance lessons, the meaning of attending the dance performance is diminished" (p. 102).

Focus on At Risk Parenting Among Both Residential and Nonresidential Fathers

The focus of this issue is on two broad groups of fathers whose parenting is often at risk: "residential" and "nonresidential" fathers. Residential fathers live in the same household with their children, while nonresidential fathers primarily live in households separate from their children. The residential fathers that we are focusing on are likely to be single, have custody of their children, or have children with disabilities. The nonresidential fathers include a diverse group of fathers who may be divorced or unmarried. They may have been either estranged from the biological mother of their children, or in some cases, never had a significant relationship with the mother of their offspring. Many unmarried fathers fit the latter circumstance.

While the needs and concerns of these two groups of fathers are often very different, many of their issues are similar. First, many fathers in both groups are often low-income. We focus on low-income fathers for several reasons. Welfare reform has forced many low-income women with children into the labor force since the passing of this law in 1996. Most times, former welfare recipients work in jobs that pay poverty wages with little or no benefits. Many of the women who have been affected by the new welfare policies have had to rely on residential fathers, relatives, or other sources of low-cost childcare to watch children while working. While statistics are not yet available on the number of low-income residential fathers providing such care to their offspring, we know that fathers across all economic groups are the main source of alternative childcare while mothers work (O'Connell, 1993).

Another similarity between these two groups pertains to their parenting skills. While the need for fathers to care for their children is greater now than ever, we also know that many men are not well prepared for the challenging tasks of parenting. From an early age, boys are socialized to be autonomous and independent, while girls are socialized to connect with others. This differential process of social-ization is reflected in the ways that parents relate to their daughters and sons. It is also reflected in the ways in which parents assign household chores to their children. Studies have shown that parents, even dual-earner parents, assign household tasks to their adolescents based on traditional gender definitions (Benin & Edwards, 1990). Ehrensaft (1995) suggests that these socialization processes prepare females for the responsibilities and relationships of mothering, but leave males less prepared for the primary identification and connectedness that are basic requirements of parenting.

It is our belief that residential and nonresidential fathers also share common pressures from the social environment that may inhibit their involvement in family life. We think that one of the main reasons that fathers have not been involved with their children as much as mothers has to do with social structures (Hawkins & Fagan, 2001). Structural conditions can either promote or hinder fathers from fulfilling their fathering responsibilities. The workplace is one such structural condition that has created institutional barriers inhibiting men's involvement with their children. For example, residential and nonresidential fathers often cite work demands as the reason for low levels of participation in children's schooling (Fagan & Palm, 2002).

These two groups of fathers have different types of challenges that are important in understanding them as well. Some of the distinct struggles of each of these groups are summarized below.

Residential Fathers

Residential fathers who may be at-risk in their parenting include single fathers and fathers with children having special needs. Single fathers are far more likely than they were in the past to have custody of their children and to be raising them without the presence of a mother. Indeed, the percentage of father-headed single households has risen from 1% of all single parent households in the 1970s to 6% in the late 1990s. Despite the large increase in the percentage of single residential fathers, the number

of men who are raising their children alone is still relatively small. Several researchers have suggested that these fathers may have to cope with social isolation as a result of their small, yet growing, number. Qualitative research findings indicate that many of these fathers feel at a disadvantage, relative to women, because they do not have access to trusted sources of information (e.g., knowledgeable friends) about parenting and child care (Walker, 2001). Further, fathers complain that they are bombarded with messages from the media and other places suggesting that fathers do not really have to be involved in child care.

Fathers with special needs children are one of the many groups of at-risk fathers. The unique needs of these children call for higher levels of responsible father involvement. Fathers with handicapped or chronically ill children frequently report less parental stress than mothers do, largely because they provide less childcare than their wives or partners (Lamb & Billings, 1997). The added stress on mothers is likely a result of the additional childcare needs of handicapped children. Although fairly little is known about the involvement of these fathers (Dollahite, 2001), researchers have found that they are interested in the support that can be provided by social service organizations (Hadadian & Merbler, 1995).

Residential fathers in all socioeconomic groups have also had to adapt to a new set of expectations for men in families. They have had to adapt to: (1) Changing expectations, such as doing more housework and caring for children; (2) The realities of women becoming financially self-sufficient; and (3) Expectations for more equality and sharing in relationships with wives and partners. We think that these changes are very healthy and desirable, but we do not want to underplay the challenge that many men have had to make in such adaptations. For example, researchers have noted that fathers have been slow to change their behavior in families, despite the changing culture of gender relations (LaRossa, 1988).

Nonresidential Fathers

At-risk, nonresidential fathers represent a widely diverse group, comprised of non-custodial fathers who are either divorced or unmarried. Divorced fathers are represented in all racial and economic groups and vary from those who remain very active in their children's lives to those with no contact. Unmarried fathers represent an even more diverse group, which stems in part from their relationship with the biological mother. Some unmarried relationships appear a lot like marriages, while others have little or no resemblance to marriage (Cohen, 1999). An unmarried father could be deeply committed to his partner, and the couple may consider themselves married without the formal sanctions. Such a couple may plan ahead, often with the utmost care, to have an offspring, and both may become actively involved in parenting their child. In contrast, unmarried relationships can be short-lived and without commitments. Some unmarried fathers have no intentions of becoming involved parents. They may be a casual acquaintance of the biological mother, or they may not even know the biological mother. In many cases, these fathers may be providing a favor to a female friend who wants to get pregnant, or they may be selling or donating their sperm to a sperm bank. Blankenhorn (1995), with some obvious contempt, refers to them as "a one-act dad," or "sperm fathers." Sperm fathers may represent as many as 30 percent of all fathers of small children.

Racial and ethnic differences are evident across these groups of nonresidential fathers - divorced and unmarried. It might be surprising to some readers that most children from all ethnic groups were raised in husband-wife marriages in 1960. Before the 1960s, for example, African American families with both parents present were as high as 75 percent (Billingsley, 1968; National Research Council, 1989). In 1991, the fraction of out-of-wedlock babies had increased to 22 percent for whites, 38 percent for Latinos, and 68 percent for African Americans (National Center for Health Statistics,

1993). Furstenberg (1995) draws attention to this pattern by stating that parenting apart has become a "standard practice" for most African Americans, Puerto Ricans, and low-income whites in the inner cities in recent years. This translates into enormous numbers of children, particularly from racial minority and poor families, growing up without their father in their home.

Two pivotal challenges, in particular, are likely to impact the parental role of nonresidential fathers (Dudley & Stone, 2001). First, these fathers are faced with an enormous challenge because they live physically separate from their children. A separate living arrangement can make it very difficult for a father, both psychologically and physically, to stay involved with his children. Efforts to adjust to a separate living arrangement can be quite troublesome and sometimes bewildering because the father is "out of the loop" on most happenings revolving around the children. Furthermore, someone else is serving in his parental role, whether it is the mother or another man. There is a tendency for others to perceive fathers in this situation as relatively unimportant to the survival of their children, regardless of their prior importance. As many nonresidential fathers have stated, this secondary parental status offers little in legal rights and minimal sympathy and support from most judges and attorneys in times of trouble (Emery, 1994).

A second pivotal challenge for most nonresidential fathers is the difficulty they often have in arranging quality time with their children because they must depend upon a cooperative relationship with the biological mother. The possibility of conflict arising after the uncoupling of an intimate relationship is obvious. Such conflicts, if not managed well, could easily interfere with efforts to arrange quality time between a father and his children. Many factors can influence these conflicts, such as the extent to which both parents are committed to continuing co-parenting, and how well they can cooperate, support each other, and resolve their conflicts. The biological mother's attitude toward, and expectations of, the father are also important; the greater the animosity, the more challenges to be faced by the father.

Introduction to Articles in this Issue

The articles in this special issue are richly varied and informative. They reflect a range of types of writings, including research reports, conceptual contributions, historical analyses, literature reviews, case studies, and personal narratives. They also vary in their focus, giving attention to policy reform, program development and implementation, clinical interventions, funding and management issues, social action, and advocacy.

The first article by Sean Brotherson and Joseph White discusses federal and state policy initiatives intended to strengthen fatherhood in the United States. In addition to presenting a review of current fatherhood policies, they also describe the history of fatherhood policy and implications for practitioners working with fathers and families.

In the second article, Stan Meloy shares his experiences of working directly with nonresidential fathers. Meloy, the Executive Director of a local Fatherhood Initiative in a rural county of North Carolina, describes his trials and tribulations in setting up programs to help non-custodial and teen dads, and fathers who are non-compliant in paying their child support.

Next, Kathy Clark and Randy Leite describe a case study of how one state, Ohio, conducted a reform of its family laws to promote greater involvement by fathers after divorce. This article is written from the perspective of the Director of the Task Force conducting this reform effort. Clark and Leite also delineate the multiple roles social workers should assume in policy reform work.

Glenn Stone focuses on unmarried nonresidential fathers, a diverse and largely unexplored group of dads. Stone's article acquaints the reader with what the practice and research community know about unmarried fathers, including their personal and cultural characteristics and parenting patterns.

In addition, Stone describes some of the special sensitivities that are needed and program initiatives that are important in reaching these fathers.

The final paper by Waldo Johnson discusses findings from in-depth interviews conducted with unwed fathers and mothers at six-week and three-month interval points, following the baby's birth. The focus of the study is on paternal involvement within the couple relationship context. This study has important implications for practitioners working with young unmarried couples with children.

We conclude the issue with a list of websites of fatherhood organizations for readers who wish to obtain more information on this topic. Reviews of two recently published books on fatherhood are also reported in the Appendix.

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