



# You Are the Father! Engaging Non-Custodial Black Fathers in Parenting Utilizing Critical Historical Policy Analysis and Ecological Systems Theory

Amber Cole<sup>1</sup> Allen E. Lipscomb<sup>2</sup>

**ABSTRACT:** The “Buck” or “Rapper” stereotype serves as a trope that depicts Black/African American fathers as a fearful, criminal, no good, drug slanging pimps---not as loving and engaged fathers. These historical images, narratives are further supported through policies and de facto practices that continue to create racist barriers for Black fathers to fully be involved in child rearing practices. Thus, this article will explore through a critical lens the historical policies and racist practices that continue to impact Black fathers utilizing an ecological systems theoretical framework. In addition, this article will propose a policy action plan whereby creating new policies that are just, equitable and antiracist.

**Keywords:** noncustodial, Black fathers, ecological systems theory, policy analysis



©2022 This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

“What I’ve realized is that life doesn’t count for much unless you’re willing to do your small part to leave our children — all of our children — a better world. Any fool can have a child. That doesn’t make you a father. It’s the courage to raise a child that makes you a father.”  
-Barack Obama

## Engaging Non-Custodial Black Fathers in Parenting

Paternal engagement is a fundamental determinant in the overall health of the entire family unit. The availability of social and contributory support from fathers decreases negative behavioral outcomes for school aged children while increasing the psychological wellbeing and parenting results of the mother (Jackson et al., 2015). In addition to the damaging behavioral consequences, children living in father-absent families are at an amplified risk of developing innumerable educational and developmental outcomes. In 2010, more than two thirds of Black infants were born to unmarried mothers (Lu et al., 2010). This singularity has contributed to the discontinuity of the Black family structure. Father involvement is met with many barriers.

---

<sup>1</sup>Robert Stempel College of Public Health and Social Work, Florida International University, United States  
<sup>2</sup>California State University, Northridge, United States

These barriers include slavery, mass incarceration, interpersonal (e.g., the father's relationship with the child's mother and maternal grandmother, the fathers response to the psychological needs of the mother) and intrapersonal (e.g., experience capital, gender equitable attitudes, self-image and concept), federal policy changes (e.g., "Law and Order" and the "Three Strikes Law"), cultural and societal changes (e.g., increased divorce rate, declined economic opportunities for black men/increased opportunities for black women and unemployment), and welfare policies (e.g., man in the house rule, Earned Income Tax Credit, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and child support enforcement).

The primary aim of this article is to discuss the theoretical frameworks and policy measures that attend to the disengagement of non-custodial Black fathers in parenting. The article will give an in-depth analysis of disengaged fathers, synonymously in this paper referred to as "the social problem" and, explore the targeted population affected the most. The article will then work to detail the extent of the problem while specifying why and how the problem came about. Furthermore, the article will inspect the development of the social problem plus, survey statistical data by demographic, report the underlying causes and, discuss a theoretical model that best explains the problem. The second half of this manuscript will investigate the policies used to address the detachment of non-custodial fathers and will feature a modified policy plan generated to increase overall paternal engagement. Lastly, the manuscript will note the implications of policy work for public health and social work practice.

## **Literature review**

### **Disengaged Non-Custodial Black Fathers**

A social problem is a common issue that requires attention due to its negative ramifications on a social system or group. "Disengaged black fathers" is a social problem that was formally described in the 1910 U.S. Census. The Census manuscripts state, "that compared to White women, Black women were more likely to become teenage mothers, stay single and have marriage instability. Thus, Black women were more likely to live in female-headed, single-parent home" (Morgan et. Al., 1993). For this article, disengaged Black fathers will be defined as, released of attachment or connection from child or children.

### **Population at Greatest Risk**

The United States Congress Joint Economic Committee (2020) released a Statical Process Control (SPC) report declaring that "single parenthood is experienced by two thirds of the children of mothers with less than a high school education and by eighty percent of black children". This

inequality in family stability aids to economic inequality indicating that Black fathers are less likely to live in households with their children, when compared to fathers of any other race. While children growing up in single-mother households is trending amongst many cultural demographics, it is important to note that single parent households are established through barriers often systematic in nature.

### **Why is Disengaged Fatherhood a Problem?**

Father's play an essential role in the development of a child. Research suggest that lack of paternal engagement can start at conception and hinder development into adulthood. Children who grow up in a two-parent household are more likely to do better than children who do not. Children who have a positive relationship with their fathers are much less likely to experience "physical, emotional or sexual abuse" (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families, 2003). They also have "better health, exhibit less aggression, are less likely to engage in delinquent behavior, have greater educational achievement, and earn more as adults" (Lerman & Wilcox, 2014). According to the Children's Bureau (2018), children who feel a closeness to their father are "75% less likely to have a teen birth, 80% less likely to spend time in jail, and half as likely to experience multiple depression symptoms". In addition, the Children's Bureau (2018) reports that children with actively involved fathers are "43% more likely to earn A's in school and 33% less likely to repeat a grade". Finally, children who live in a single parent home are more likely to live in poverty while at risk of "developing learning disabilities, suffering from migraines, asthma, high cholesterol, depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, and homelessness" (Children's Bureau, 2018"). Fathers play a large role in our development. They influence our self-confidence and guide social norms that lead to the development of sexuality, masculinity, and personal identity. Fathers also inspire our relationships, personal achievements, values, and beliefs (Franzoso, 2018). While the statistics display a great amount of concern for children in single parent-led homes, the even greater concern must lie with the disproportionate amount of risk factors that only increase the development of disease, poverty, and threat to self-efficacy in the Black community.

### **The Start of Disengagement Amongst Black Fathers and Further Identifications**

Slavery is the major barrier that led to the first citing of disengagement amongst Black fathers in America. Addressed nationally in 1965, "Black Matriarchy" was a term used to further explain the paternal disengagement of Black males.

## **Slavery**

The Atlantic slave trade originated in the late 1400's. It was during this time that Europeans infiltrated the cultural norms, values, and structural practices of African families. W.E.B Du Bois (1908) writes "slavery had a crippling effect on the slave father". Deficient in authority to govern or protect his family, slave men were forced to cope with the loss of their family unit. Slave masters had "absolute authority to punish with impunity, separate the family, and to reward a family member – theoretically making parental authority and marriage rights meaningless" (Rembis, 2013). Furthermore, enslaved men and women could not legally marry as laws declared these individuals as property.

Separation of the African family occurred on and off the plantation. Some men and women were allowed to work as house servants while others were made to work as field hands. This separation created a subculture. Du Bois (1908), further details that house servants were more likely to live a monogamous two-parent lifestyle while field hands were seen as the un-wed mother. Further driving the separation of families were the sexual assaults of Black women. "children of the plantation" was a term used to categorize the descendants of enslaved Black women raped by White men. Said offspring created further separation due to the anti-Black and colorist agenda created through colonization. Creating laws and social norms for centuries, slavery and racism serve and continue to create instability within the Black family structure.

## **Black Matriarchy**

Black Matriarch is a term that was coined by politician, sociologist, and diplomat, Daniel Moynihan. As a member of the Democratic Party, Moynihan released the "Moynihan Report" (1965) through the Office of "Policy Planning and Research, U.S. Department of Labor. It was in this report that the New York State Senator described the African American family as the "fundamental source of weakness" in the black community. He went on to detail that the white family had achieved a high degree of stability while being able to maintain said stability. On the contrary of his first notion, Senator Moynihan declared that "the structure of the lower-class Negroes\* is highly unstable, and in many urban communities are approaching complete breakdown". Moynihan used the term "Black Matriarch" to describe a Black family commonly led by women.

### **Historical Context and Current Barriers Aiding in Paternal Disengagement**

Disengagement can occur in a relationship for many reasons. The disengagement between father and child unfortunately at times is circumstantial. Generational occurrences have aided in the disengagement of Black men for over a century (Morgan et. Al., 1993). While the damaging effects of paternal disengagement are lifelong, there are at least eight contributing factors that aid in the designment of Black Fathers.

#### ***Mass Incarceration***

While the U.S. incarcerates its citizens as a form of punishment and rehabilitation, incarceration rates in America are higher than any other nation in the world. Unjustifiably, America's criminal justice system is filled with racial prejudice attributing to the greater number of arrest and probation sentences for people of color. Identified as the "New Jim Crow", author, lawyer and civil rights advocate Michelle Alexander links mass incarceration to the "separate but equal" ideology. While the 1964 Civil Rights Act outlawed racial segregation, Alexander (2010) suggest that mass incarceration was America's new way to exclude Black men from exercising their civil liberties. Alexander goes on to detail those civil liberties such as voting and participating in jury selection; all while facing discrimination via housing, employment and public service laws (e.g., right to apply for grants, SSI, food stamps and more) are likely contributors to the disengagement of Black fathers.

1 in 9 black children have a parent in prison compared to only 1 in 57 white children. The mass incarceration of Black men is a risk factor of disengagement in parenting. While 13 percent of America's population is African American, 43.9 percent of all incarcerated parents are black (Adalist-Estrin, 2014). Furthermore, if mass incarceration continues, one and every three black children born today are expected to go to prison at least once in their lifetimes (Mauer, 2011).

#### ***Out of Wedlock Birth Rate***

While the 13<sup>th</sup> century term "wedlock" is used to describe a legally binding relationship, the term "nuclear family" also describes a family comprised of both a mother, father, and their dependent children. Increasingly, nuclear families are less prevalent and out of wedlock marriages have contributed to the disengagement of fathers. In 1965, the out-of-wedlock birth rate was 25% among blacks (Moynihan Report, 1965) In 1991, 68% of black children were born outside of marriage (National Review, 1994). In 2011, 72% of black babies were born to unmarried mothers (Washington, 2010). In 2015, 77% of black babies were born to unmarried mothers (Camarota, 2017). Lastly, as mentioned above, in 2020, 80 percent of black children were born to unmarried

mothers. (The United States Congress Joint Economic Committee, 2020). The increasing number of out of wedlock marriages is a major contributor to the disengagement of Black fathers.

### ***Interpersonal Factors***

Interpersonal factors such as the way a Black man connects to his relationships or communicates with his partners are all influences in the disengagement of Black fathers. A father's relationship with the child's mother and the maternal grandmother are also strong indicators of whether or not a father will be positively engaged with his children (Lu et al., 2010). Just as likely that a father is in fact involved with the child's mother, his responsiveness to the psychological needs of the mother is a lasting indicator that the father's engagement with his child is too, positive (Lu et al., 2010). Lastly, while the ability to maintain a co-parenting relationship is a distressing task for divorced or divorcing's individuals, non-custodial fathers face challenges adhering to a custody agreement which legally dictates how a father can build a relationship with his child(ren).

### ***Intrapersonal Factors***

An individual with high intrapersonal intelligence works well to address their strengths and weaknesses. The beliefs that one holds about themselves is a major contribution to paternal engagement. A father's education, employment status and feelings of shame and disrespect parallel the father's self-concept, or the way he perceives himself due to the reactions of others. A father's attitudes and beliefs about being a father also play a role in determining involvement. Fathers with a stronger commitment to parenting coupled with "seeing" the role of father as integral to their self-image, show stronger indicators of involvement. A father's support across all community levels is essential to the overall involvement he may have with his family. A father with more gender equitable attitudes (e.g., willingness to share in household responsibilities) tend to be more "active, warm and involved with their children" when compared to those with less gender-equitable values (Lu et al., 2010).

### ***Federal Policy Changes***

Government-led initiatives played a large role in the dismantling of the African American Family Structure. Aims to stop illegal drug use, trade and distribution created a prejudicial system where African Americans were criminally penalized at a harsher rate. This "same crime, more time" scenario encouraged longer prison sentences for Black males when compared with their white male counterparts. There were at least three major U.S. presidents who passed legislation impacting the engagement of Black Fathers.

**Table 1: Legislation that Increased Paternal Disengagement**

| <b>President/Administration Chart 1</b> | <b>Year</b> | <b>Summary of Legislation</b>   | <b>Citation</b> |
|---|-------------|---|-----------------|
| Lyndon B. Johnson                       | 1965        | Johnson called for a "war on crime", The approval of the Law Enforcement Assistance Act of 1965 and the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968  |                 |
| Richard Nixon                           | 1971        | Nixon declared a "war on drugs" that would be directed toward eradication, interdiction, and incarceration.   | (Payan, 2013).  |
| President Bill Clinton                  | 1994        | Clinton worked to expand the federal death penalty, while banning firearms for additional classes. The "Crime Bill" defined and added new crimes (including those gang related) and imposed mandatory life sentences for those with three or more felonies. |                 |

### **Cultural and Societal Changes**

The divorce rate is about 10 percent higher for Black women who are college graduates. The divorce rate increases to 19 percent for Black women with two years or more of graduate school (Aughinbaugh et al., 2013). Black women also have increased opportunities for employment when compared to Black men. This dissimilarity is caused by the effects of deindustrialization, suburbanization, and the globalization of jobs. Lack of employment opportunities in the inner cities rendered black men "less marriageable" despite Black women becoming increasingly financially independent. Economic disadvantages such as unfair banking practices and institutionalized and/or systematic racism are additional elements that aid in the disengagement of Black Fathers.

According to the Economic Policy Institute (2020), African American workers (in the first quarter of 2020) had the highest unemployment rate nationally; at 6.3%. Included in the risk factors of paternal disengagement, unemployment has been an increasingly difficult topic for African American Males since deindustrialization in 1965. The Fragile Families study found only "46 employed African American male per 100 females in comparison to 80 employed males per 100 Hispanic and White Females" (Fragile Families Research Brief, 2004).

### **Welfare Policies**

Cash welfare expansion and welfare policies that discouraged marriage are additional risk factors that contribute to the disengagement of Black fathers. Marriage penalties and outdated child support laws also work to influence paternal detachment. The welfare policies listed in chart 2 similarly contribute(d) to the disengagement of Black fathers.

**Chart 2: Summary of Policies that Increased Paternal Disengagement**

| <b>Name</b>                             | <b>Summary of Policies</b>   | <b>Citation</b>                                  |
|---|--|--|
| Man in the House Rule"                  | Under the man-in-the-house rule, children in need of welfare benefits were denied access if the child's mother lived with another man (married or single). |  |
| Earned Income Tax Credit                | In 2019, "the EITC boosted the incomes of 9 million women of color, who disproportionately benefit from the tax credit"                                    | (Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, 2019). |
| Temporary Assistance for Needy Families | Recipients of TANF may face financial "incentives and disincentives for the noncustodial parent to join the household" where the children reside           | (Congressional Research Service, 2014).          |
| Child Support Enforcement               | Failure to pay child support often leads to a large amount of arrears, penalties and possibly incarceration.   |  |

**Past Measures Addressing Paternal Disengagement**

In the attempt to rectify the negative consequences of paternal disengagement, legislators passed several Act's. The four major pieces of legislation are listed below.

**Chart 3: Programs /Acts that Increased Paternal Disengagement**

| <b>Name</b>   | <b>Year</b> | <b>Summary of Laws/Programs used to Increase Engagement</b>  | <b>Citation (if necessary)</b>                   |
|---|-------------|--|--|
| Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)                  | 1935        | A grant program that "enabled states to provide cash welfare payments for needy children who had been deprived of parental support."   | (Hansan, 2016).                                  |
| The Social Security Act   | 1975        | Made the federal government a "party" in the efforts to collect support from noncustodial fathers. This Act set up the Child Support Enforcement (CSE) program.  |  |
| Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act | 1996        | One of its four goals was to "encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families".<br><br>Created a block grant for states to provide time-limited cash assistance for needy families.     | (Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, 2020). |
| Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood Act                 | 2005        | Congress authorized \$150 million of grants that offered a voluntary program that helped individuals and couples build skills and knowledge to help foster stable, healthy relationships and marriages | Congressional Research Service, 2014).           |



## **Theoretical Models**

A theory is a carefully crafted idea with intent to explain a notion based on scientific principles. A theoretical framework describes the variables that explain the causes of the problem and why? Theoretical frameworks give researchers a direction with a set of boundaries. To tackle the social problem of disengagement, researchers would benefit to use the Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory.

### ***Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System Theory (Ecological Systems Model)***

Bronfenbrenner believed that children grew according to the context of their environment. This idea suggests that there are "multiple influences on a father's behavior. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological model helps to identify factors (e.g., person or situational characteristics) and strategies (e.g., tactics of service provision) that impact paternal intent to enroll, retain and produce across ecological levels (e.g., individual, family, service provider, program, community, and policy strategies). Furthermore, the attention to individual and contextual factors can influence engagement in services and enhance CPS efforts to meet the needs of families (McCurdy & Daro, 2001).

The ecological model is key in creating suitable legislation geared towards increasing paternal engagement. The model could also help implement evidenced based interventions. For example, when a researcher looks at the primary influences of an individual, retention rates should increase. According to Kwok and Li (2015), Systems Theory also suggest that father engagement is dependent on microsystemic factors such as spousal capital (including parenting alliance and marital/relationship satisfaction). The model also suggests that onto-genic factors such as fathering self-efficacy and stress contribute to disengagement. Utilizing a theory can help scientist develop the appropriate hypothesis for essential research questions.

## **Policy Action Plan**

### **PURPOSE**

**A.** This policy will amend the "Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act" (PRWORA). This policy establishes an effective, accountable and transparent framework utilized by social scientist known as the Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory. The overall purpose of this policy is to address and redirect the disengagement of fathers. More specifically, fathers who fight many barriers to engagement through systematic and oppressive influences (e.g., minority Black males). The outcomes of this policy will increase the capacity for fathers to support and protect their children.

**B.** The intended outcomes for this policy are: (i) increased capacity for fathers to support their child(ren's) overall health outcomes; (ii) employment, training and rehabilitation programs that assist the father in finding steady employment; (iii) child support assistance; (iv) co-parenting initiatives (decreasing (ex)partner conflict); (v) strengthening of the National Clearinghouse on Fatherhood (providing current research information on fatherhood).

#### **SCOPE**

**A.** The policy will address communities of disengaged fathers who contribute to the negative health outcomes of their children. Working to build the family structure and overall rates of two-parent households, this policy will provide services for non-custodial parents. To be effective in implementation, this policy will: (i) share a strong orientation toward prevention, rather than remediation or treatment; (ii) provide social support (information, guidance, practical assistance, and emotional and peer support) to families working to settle child support arrears; (iii) ensure policies are tailored to the culture of the families who find difficulty in co-parenting; and (iv) establish a reciprocal agreement to ensure work and training programs; especially important for felons in the form of rehabilitation. (The Policy Institute for Family Impact Seminars, 1995, p. 26).

#### **POLICY STATEMENT: PRWORA**

**A.** The broad principles and standards of expected action include the review and amendment of the PRWORA. Efforts and procedures will remain to (i) end dependence while promoting two-parent families (providing services to non-custodial parents increasing the support of their children) (ii) increase minimum work requirements: (creating block grants for states to provide time-limited cash assistance for needy families, with work requirements); (iii) increase teenage pregnancy prevention (funding abstinence and safe sex-educational activities); (iv) create strong child support enforcement measures and; (v) reorganize and strengthen paternity establishment (making it easier and faster to establish paternity).

#### **CHANGES TO EXISTING POLICY**

Changes to the PRWORA will include three important modifications. To promote two-parent families, the policy will focus on a collaborative co-parenting and preventive intervention, child support reduction strategies and finally, increased opportunities for employment, training and rehabilitation for felons.

##### **A. Co-Parenting Initiatives**

"Family" is the second level of influence in the Ecological Systems Model. Strong co-

parenting efforts can strengthen the family system including, increasing the overall mental health of the unit while reinforcing the entire structure. Co-parenting initiatives will work to curb mismanaged parental conflict which in return increases the psychological and parenting outcomes of the custodial mother and decreases the negative effects of parental discontent amongst the child(ren).

**B. Implementation of an Evidenced Based Preventive Intervention**

Evidenced based preventive interventions specifically for fathers work to (i) establish the overall characteristics of each member in the family; (ii) provide room to examine three generations of interrelated parenting traumas, mishaps or negative patterns; (iii) improve the overall quality of the parent-child relationship; (iv) increase the quality of the maternal and paternal relationship and, (v) balance the stressors of life while learning the importance of community support.

**C. Child Support Arrearage Reduction Strategies**

Fathers who have a large arrears may be discouraged to contact the Office of the State Attorney in order to repair or modify existing child support orders. This policy will address ways to promote regular payment of current support, even if it means “compromising” uncollected child support arrearage to assist the father with a regular payment schedule. The policy will also look at creating state ran systems that work with fathers to update child support guidelines with their current and consistent ability to pay.

**D. Employment and Training/ Felon Rehabilitation**

Lack of employment, training and harmful economic consequences for felons have impacted a father’s ability to provide. This policy will deliver programs that will help felons to obtain assistance in finding employment. This policy will also create state ran programs organized to increase the overall high school graduation rates in inner city or underdeveloped neighborhoods. These centers will provide opportunities for career development and offer possibilities to choose a trade.

**STAKEHOLDERS AND ADDITIONAL SUPPORT**

- A.** The stakeholders involved include: (i) the Federal Government; (ii) individual States (tasked to allocate funding to underserved areas in need of facilities to establish and promote preventive and evidenced based programs; (iii) District Family Courts (working in conjunction with the State Attorney’s Office to ensure fathers are supported and given opportunities to modify and amend child support orders, as needed; (iv) The State

Attorney's Office (working as a member of the a multi-disciplinary team ensuring fathers are paying their fair share of child support;(v) employment and training programs and lastly, (vi) felon rehabilitation programs.

#### **CHALLENGES/ WHO WILL OPPOSE?**

**A.** While increasing paternal engagement is a non-partisan issue, stakeholders maybe opposed to this modification due to the increased workload and demands placed on an already overburdened system(s). Welfare programs who are due money from the non-custodial parent may be less inclined to expand upon the PRWORA. Individual State Attorney Offices may acquire initial pushback as employees are often over worked. Said offices also deal with a lack of funding and may feel less acute in re-creating and forgiving child support arrears.

#### **Implications and Recommendations for Social Work and Public Health**

The five major determinants of health are known as economic stability, education, social and community context, access to health care, and lasty, neighborhood and environmental safety. Other determinants include, personal health practices, one's ability to cope, healthy child development and social support networks. These determinates of health help to determine the overall livelihood of a person. When a child grows up with a disengaged father, research suggest that they likely suffer consequences within each of these determinants of health. Working to increase paternal engagement among the black family will not only strengthen the family structure but it would reinforce the physical, emotional, and sexual health of Black women and men. (Office of Research of Planning and Evaluation, 2010). Paternal Engagement research could help redirect the barriers influencing child outcomes such as, aggression, delinquent behavior, poor academic achievement, and lack of financial income (Lerman & Wilcox, 2014).

Broader application for researchers includes the opportunity for practitioners seeking input regarding preventive interventions. As the profession of social work continues to address social problems, working to understand the intersectionality of race and systems will assist in targeted practice outcomes. Furthermore, social workers have the distinguished skill set to work across all systems. Social workers stand at the forefront of determining the barriers of care to influence public policy. Lastly, social work research centered on the disengagement of fathers could help practitioners to implement evidenced based programs that assist fathers in their custodial duties. Further work must be done to address the impact of a father's criminal record on the families over all well-being (e.g., income, assets, education, housing, family strength and

stability) (Joiner, 2016).

### Conclusion

The social problem of disengagement amongst Black fathers has been notated since the 1910 U.S. Census. Established during slavery, paternal disengagement began and continued to grow amongst Black families. This phenomenon was and still is created by mass incarceration, out of wedlock marriages, interpersonal and intrapersonal factors, federal policy changes, cultural and societal changes and welfare policies. Policies addressing (co)-parenting initiatives, felon rehabilitation, employment and training, and child support reduction strategies could aid in the decrease of single-parent homes within the Black community. Utilizing theoretical models when creating public policy may help overturn the negative health determinates forecasted for nearly 80 percent of America's current Black children. Black fathers are instrumental in the overall development of the family unit. A Black father's presence is required to aid in the development of positive health. Family structure provides an important framework in which fathers enact their roles and substantially influence child outcomes. While there are many barriers to paternal engagement amongst Black fathers, policies were created to help relieve the consequences of disengagement. Although controversial, welfare programs have worked to supplement the financial obligation of the father. More needs to be done to re-develop the Black family structure. Utilizing the ecological perspective, policies can be created to decrease the number of disengaged fathers. This effort would work to redirect the negative health outcomes of Americas Black identified children.

### References

- Aughinbaugh, A., Robles, O., & Sun, H. (2013). Marriage and divorce: patterns by gender, race, and educational attainment. *Monthly Lab. Rev.*, 136, 1.
- Adalist-Estrin, A. (2014). Children and families of the incarcerated fact sheet, National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated, Rutgers University. *National Resource Center on Children & Families of the Incarcerated, ed. Camden, NJ: Rutgers University.*
- Camarota, Y Steven A. *Births to Unmarried Mothers by Nativity and Education*. (n.d.). CIS.Org. Retrieved December 02, 2020, from <https://cis.org/Camarota/Births-Unmarried-Mothers-Nativity-and-Education>
- Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. (2020, February 13). Retrieved December 02, 2020, from <https://www.cbpp.org/research/family-income-support/temporary-assistance-for-needy-families>

- Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Women of Color Especially Benefit From Working Family Tax Credits. (2019, September 09). Retrieved December 01, 2020, from <https://www.cbpp.org/research/federal-tax/women-of-color-especially-benefit-from-working-family-tax-credits>
- Children's Bureau. (2018, August 21). A Father's Impact on Child Development: Child Abuse Prevention, Treatment & Welfare Services: Children's Bureau. Retrieved December 01, 2020, from <https://www.all4kids.org/news/blog/a-fathers-impact-on-child-development/>
- Congressional Research Service. (2014, January 28). Fatherhood Initiatives: Connecting Fathers to Their Children. Retrieved from [https://greenbook-waysandmeans.house.gov/sites/greenbook.waysandmeans.house.gov/files/RL31025\\_gb.pdf](https://greenbook-waysandmeans.house.gov/sites/greenbook.waysandmeans.house.gov/files/RL31025_gb.pdf)
- Daniel P. Moynihan, *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*, Washington, D.C., Office of Policy Planning and Research, U.S. Department of Labor, 1965.
- Du Bois, W. E. B. (Ed.). (1909). *The Negro American Family: Report of a Social Study made principally by the College Classes of 1909 and 1910 of Atlanta University, under the patronage of the Trustees of the John F. Slater Fund; together with the Proceedings of the 13th Annual Conference for the Study of the Negro Problems, held at Atlanta University on Tuesday, May the 26th, 1908* (No. 13). Atlanta University Press. O
- Economic Policy Institute. (2020, August). 2020Q1-Q2: State unemployment by race and ethnicity. Retrieved December 05, 2020, from <https://www.epi.org/indicators/state-unemployment-race-ethnicity/>
- Fourth National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect (NIS-4): Report to Congress*. (n.d.). Office of Planning, Research & Evaluation | ACF. Retrieved November 30, 2020, from <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/fourth-national-incidence-study-of-child-abuse-and-neglect-nis-4-report-to>
- Fragile Families Research Brief. (2004, July). Racial and Ethnic Differences in Marriage among New, Unwed Parents. Retrieved from <https://fragilefamilies.princeton.edu/sites/fragilefamilies/files/researchbrief25.pdf>
- Franzoso. (2018, July 10). Types of Damaging Fathers and How They Influence Who We Are. Retrieved December 01, 2020, from <https://www.elisabettafranzoso.com/articles/types-of-damaging-fathers-how-they-influence-who-we-are>
- Hansan E. J., *Public Welfare: Aid for Dependent Children*. (2012, February 3). Social Welfare

History Project. <https://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/public-welfare/public-welfare-aid-for-dependent-children/>

- Jackson, A. P., Jeong-Kyun Choi, & Preston, K. S. J. (2015). Nonresident Fathers' Involvement with Young Black Children: A Replication and Extension of a Mediational Model. *Social Work Research, 39*(4), 245.
- Joiner, N. L. (2016, February 03). How Families Pay the Never-Ending Price of a Criminal Record. Retrieved December 01, 2020, from <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/12/how-families-pay-the-never-ending-price-of-a-criminal-record/433641/>
- Kwok, S. Y., & Li, B. K. (2015). A mediation model of father involvement with preschool children in Hong Kong. *Social Indicators Research, 122*(3), 905-923.
- Mauer, M. (2011). Addressing racial disparities in incarceration. *The Prison Journal, 91*(3\_suppl), 87S-101S.
- McCurdy, K., & Daro, D. (2001). Parent involvement in family support programs: An integrated theory. *Family Relations, 50*(2), 113-121.
- Morgan, S. P., McDaniel, A., Miller, A. T., & Preston, S. H. (1993). Racial Differences in Household and Family Structure at the Turn of the Century. *American Journal of Sociology, 98*(4), 799-828. <https://doi.org/10.1086/230090>
- National Review, April 4, 1994, p. 24.
- Payan, Tony (2013). *A War that Can't Be Won*. Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona Press.
- Lerman, R. I., & Wilcox, W. B. (2014). For richer, for poorer: How family structures economic success in America. *AEI Paper & Studies*.
- Lu, M. C., Jones, L., Bond, M. J., Wright, K., Pumpuang, M., Maidenberg, M., ... & Rowley, D. L. (2010). Where is the Fin MCH? Father involvement in African American families. *Ethnicity & disease, 20*, S2-49.
- Rembis, M. A. (2013). Slave culture. In G. Misiroglu (Ed.), *American countercultures: an encyclopedia of nonconformists, alternative lifestyles, and radical ideas in U.S. history*. Routledge. Credo Reference: <http://ezproxy.fiu.edu/login?url=https://search>
- The Policy Institute for Family Impact Seminars. (1995). *Disconnected Dads: Strategies for Promoting Responsible Fatherhood*. Retrieved November 20, 2020, from [https://www.purdue.edu/hhs/hdfs/fii/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/pf\\_fis36report.pdf](https://www.purdue.edu/hhs/hdfs/fii/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/pf_fis36report.pdf)

The United States Congress Joint Economic Committee (2020, July 23). The Demise of the Happy Two-Parent Home. Retrieved December 01, 2020, from [https://www.jec.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/republicans/2020/7/the-demise-of-the-happy-two-parent-home?fbclid=IwAR1jCsk4L\\_\\_ydljFo3UKpGLJVeF1fCgpWefU6EPc27NUZAXMqnwxnl-hL4A](https://www.jec.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/republicans/2020/7/the-demise-of-the-happy-two-parent-home?fbclid=IwAR1jCsk4L__ydljFo3UKpGLJVeF1fCgpWefU6EPc27NUZAXMqnwxnl-hL4A)

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families. (2003). A Coordinated Response to Child Abuse and Neglect: The Foundation for Practice. Retrieved from <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/foundation.pdf>