



A STATE OF THE UNION DECLARATION AND REVISITING THE MOYNIHAN REPORT

By Kenneth Braswell

Executive Director, Fathers Incorporated

Stacey Bouchet, Ph.D.



In President Obama's State of the Union address, he declared:

// I'm reaching out to some of America's leading foundations and corporations on a new initiative to help more young men of color facing especially tough odds stay on track and reach their full potential.

The audience was silent; there was no applause, but my wife and I were cheering in our living room. I've been working with the Obama Administration for several years to support its profound efforts to strengthen life outcomes and opportunities for boys and men of color, as well as responsible fatherhood.

-Kenneth Braswell

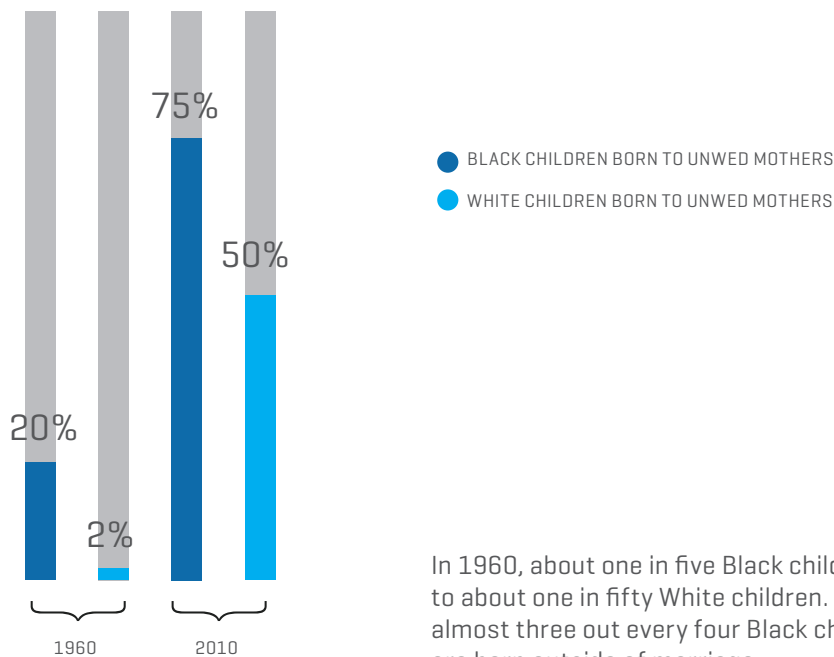


Last year, Fathers Incorporated in collaboration with the Urban Institute and the Open Society Foundations' Campaign for Black Male Achievement, revisited the 1965 U.S. Department of Labor "Moynihan Report." The controversial report argued that progress against poverty required strengthening families and especially Black Men.

Almost five decades after the release of the Moynihan Report, our analysis of national data indicated that little progress has been made on the key issues Moynihan identified. Further, many of the issues he identified for Black families are now worse and prevalent among other families, particularly in the areas of Family Stability, Employment, Education, and the Criminal Justice System.

The lesson we've learned is that supporting responsible fatherhood is critically connected to the success of young men of color and their current and/or future children.

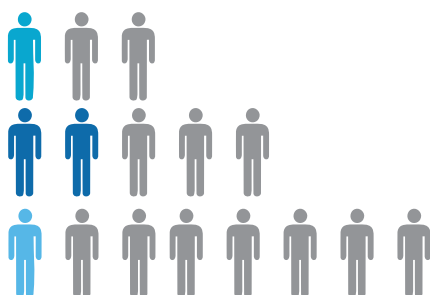
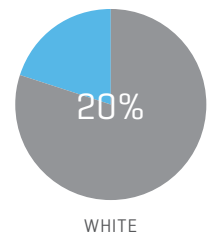
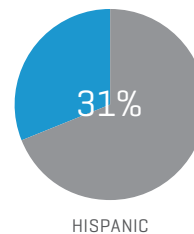
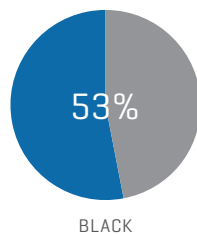
FAMILY STABILITY



In 1960, about one in five Black children were born to unwed mothers as compared to about one in fifty White children. By 2010, non-marital births skyrocketed so that almost three out every four Black children and one out of every two White children are born outside of marriage.

The share of children living in households without their biological fathers more than doubled for Blacks, Whites, and Hispanics between 1960 and 2010, but the gaps between groups remain large.

53 percent of Black children, 31 percent of Hispanic children, and 20 percent of White children lived in mother-only families in 2010.

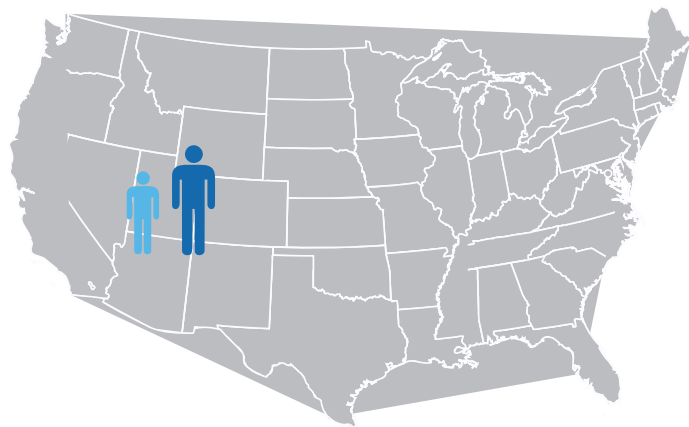
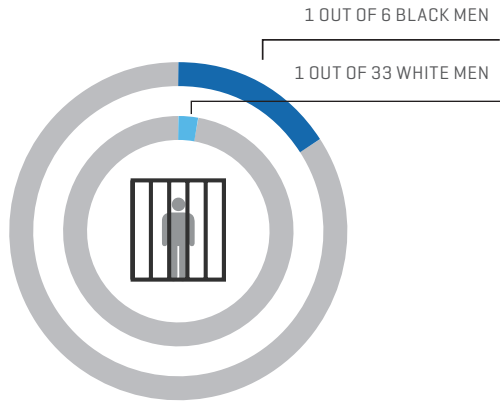


Although child poverty rates have fallen since the 1960s, the rates are much higher for Black and Hispanic children than for Whites. Almost two out five Black children and one out of three Hispanic children were poor in 2010 as compared with about one out of eight White children.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE, UNEMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION

Since the Moynihan report was released, another major social trend has put further strains on Black families—the mass incarceration of Black men.

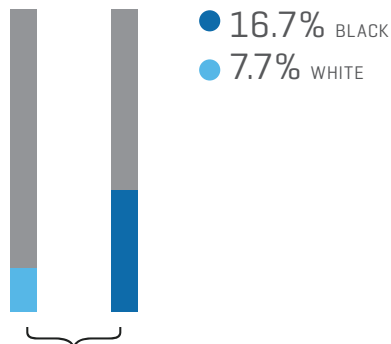
By 2010, about one out of every six Black men had spent some time in prison as compared with about one out of thirty three White men.



According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, in 2007 an estimated 744,200 state and federal prisoners in the United States were fathers to 1,599,200 children under the age of 18. Over 50% of these fathers report that they were the primary source of income for their children prior to incarceration.

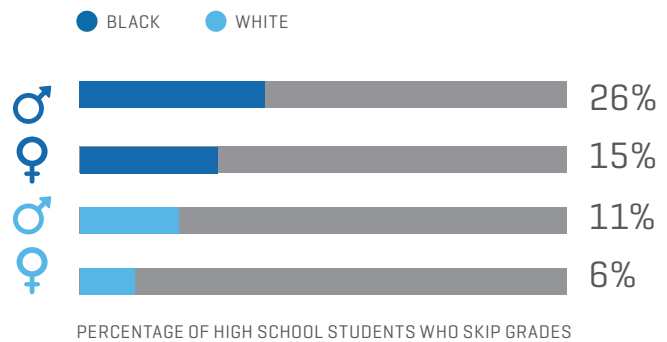
Countless numbers of young men involved in the Juvenile Justice system are already parents themselves.

● 744,200 Prisoners ● Fathers to Children 1,599,200



2011 - UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

In 2011, the unemployment rate for Black men was more than twice that for White men, 16.7 percent compared with 7.7 percent.



School experiences are notably different by race and ethnicity, especially for Black boys. For example, 26 percent of Black boys had repeated a grade in school in 2007, compared with 11 percent of White boys, 15 percent of Black girls, and 6 percent of White girls.

Further, among junior high and high school students, 50 percent of Black boys have been suspended compared with 21 percent of White boys.

Moynihan argued that reversing the decline of the traditional two-married-parent family was the key to improving outcomes for Black families. However, rising rates of nonmarital births and divorce among all racial and ethnic groups means that we have to figure out how we keep fathers connected to and supporting their children in the face of changing and complex family structures.

Revisiting the Moynihan Report has re-energized and focused FI's attention to the important work that still needs to be done. We cannot keep expecting single mothers to fill-the-gap for fathers; therefore, next month, we will be launching the Moynihan Research Institute for Families and Children.

Moynihan Research Institute for Families and Children

The Institute will be devoted to several efforts inline with the goals President Obama outlined in his State of the Union Address:

Service Equity: The Moynihan Research Institute will seek to proactively modify programs that were designed to serve primarily mothers and children, where appropriate, to explicitly include fathers and strengthen their involvement with their children, and to also include evidence of father involvement and participation in measuring the success of programs.

Family Stability: Children, on average, have the best developmental outcomes when they are raised in two biological or adoptive parent families, so increasing the share of two-income parent households with stable, healthy relationships is always a worthy goal. When that isn't possible, it is still essential to put supports in place that will help parents cooperatively get along. To this end, the Moynihan Research Institute will research and test best practices for cooperative co-parenting and keeping non-residential fathers connected to their children and part of the family equation.

Improve the Capacity of Fathers: There is a need to help non-custodial fathers support their children financially and emotionally by improving educational opportunities, and by helping them obtain good jobs that build wealth and a career path. The Moynihan Research Institute will continue to address these issues and continue the innovative work the Administration has started in the area of addressing the child support debt of low-income fathers.

FI is grateful to President Obama for his leadership, action and outreach to young men and fathers of color.





This blog and research was compiled by Stacey Bouchet, Ph.D.; the co-lead investigator [along with Dr. Jeffery Shears] for the forthcoming Moynihan Research Institute for Families and Children.

For more information visit www.fathersincorporated.com.



Address

Fathers Incorporated
307A Consaul Road
Albany, New York 12205

Phone [518] 713-4755

Email fathersincorporated@gmail.com

Website www.fathersincorporated.com

Twitter @fathersincorp