

AN EXAMINATION OF TEEN FATHERS' INVOLVEMENT
WITH THEIR PARTNERS AND CHILDREN AND THE
INFLUENCING FACTORS

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AN EXAMINATION OF
TEEN FATHERS' INVOLVEMENT WITH
THEIR PARTNERS AND CHILDREN AND
THE INFLUENCING FACTORS

by

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Abstract

In order to gain an understanding of teen fathers' perceptions of the fathering experience, six teen fathers (age 16-20 years) from Eastern Newfoundland, Canada, completed questionnaires and participated in three one-hour interview sessions. A combination of open and close-ended questions focused on the involvement of father and child, and the factors influencing this involvement.

Each participant reported feelings and demonstrations of love toward, pleasure with spending time with, and being actively involved with his child. Although the quantity of father-child interaction time varied from father to father, fathers were not satisfied and expressed a desire to spend more time with their children.

Throughout the interviews six main themes and several subthemes emerged. The teen fathers most involved with their children reported positive relationships with the teen mothers and supportive parents. All four sets of grandparents were cooperative in their sharing of child care duties and expenses. These teen fathers also had a strong support system of friends and relatives. Less involved teen fathers reported strained relationships with the teen mothers and restricted access to their children. These teen fathers' relationships with the maternal grandparents were described as either non-existent or hostile.

Five of the six participants described the lack of recognition as a parent, and the lack of involvement in the decisions concerning their children, as being the most difficult aspect of being a teenage father. The adolescent fathers further identified several factors they considered obstacles to their involvement with their children: strained relationship with the teen mother; overbearing maternal grandparents; lack of recognition of parental rights by social agencies; and, inadequate finances. If we expect teen fathers to become more involved with their children these expressed difficulties and obstacles need to be addressed.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction and Background

Teenage fatherhood is a rather new area of study. There is very little recognition of the teenage father in family and parenting literature (Robinson and Barret, 1986). Concern over teenage pregnancy and childrearing has been directed towards the mothers and to a certain extent their children. Special programs in schools and other social institutions, such as teenage clinics and birth control facilities, have been designed for teenage mothers and have excluded the fathers. Lisa Connolly (1978), summarizes this neglect, "All eyes are on the unwed mother and her baby, while the other partner stands awkwardly in the background, too often ignored or even forgotten completely" (p. 40).

The research on teenage parenting during the 1960's and early 1970's, ignored the fathers (Earls and Siegal, 1980). This changed in the 1970's, as research emerged on fathering. This trend has been referred to as the age of paternal rediscovery (Lamb, 1979), and is largely due to the increase in the number of pregnancies of unwed teenagers and single-parent families (Hanson and Bozett, 1987). Today in the United States, only 50% of the young women who have children are married (Marsh, 1991). During the 1980's, several

books on fatherhood became available and involved a wide variety of topics. Although this new direction is very positive, there is still a need for more information concerning teenage fatherhood.

Because of the difficulty in locating teenage fathers, research in this area has been less than adequate. In 1985 the National Center for Health Statistics in the United States reported that teen fathers were responsible for 18.4% (116, 145) of the births by teen mothers. (Barth, Claycomb and Loomis, 1988). There are no Canadian statistics on numbers of teen fathers.

The few statistics that are available on numbers of teen fathers are not necessarily accurate. According to Sonenstein (1986), basic demographic data on numbers of pregnancies from teenage males are incomplete at the U.S. national level. For example, in 1983, United States' birth records for teenage pregnancies showed that the age of the father was missing on 32% of the records. As well, young mothers often refuse to identify the father (Allen-Meares, 1984) and the fathers themselves, usually do not maintain contact with human service agencies. Because of this, the majority of data on teenage fathers has been inferred from populations that do not contain teenage fathers. Information has come from sources such as: teen mothers, older unmarried fathers, teenage males before they became fathers, and teenage males who are not necessarily teenage fathers (Robinson and Barret, 1986).

Difficulties with this type of data include: possible concealing or distortion of the facts; mothers cannot accurately report the feelings and thoughts of the fathers; the mother is often bitter and does not present the father in a favourable light; and, findings from studies with adult fathers cannot be applied to teenage fathers. Antecedent data collected on teenage fathers before they became fathers, is unbiased, but less helpful because this data is usually reanalysed many years later. The change in social, economic, and cultural conditions between the time of the data collection and the analysis, makes generalizations to contemporary society difficult.

Studies that include a mixture of teenage fathers and non-fathers have analyzed differences in the two groups (Robbins and Lynn, 1973; Robinson, Barret and Skeen, 1983; Redmond, 1985; Rivara, Sweeney and Henderson, 1985; 1986). Findings indicate that teenage fathers had become sexually active at an earlier age, had poor knowledge about contraceptive use, and came from an environment where teenage pregnancy was common and accepted (Rivara, Sweeney and Henderson, 1985).

Teen fathers are more likely to come from poor black families, have academic and behavioral difficulties in school, and have a pessimistic attitude about their future (Hanson, Morrison and Ginsburg, 1989). Because of the higher number of black teenage fathers compared to white teenage fathers,

many studies in the United States have been conducted with the former group (Hendricks, 1980; 1983; 1988; McCoy and Tyler, 1985; Christmon, 1990a, 1990b). Blacks at risk of becoming teenage fathers are more often involved in a steady relationship with their girlfriend, and have an accepting attitude of parenting outside of marriage (Hanson, Morrison and Ginsburg, 1989). Comparisons of married and unmarried black teenage fathers show that unmarried teenage fathers are more likely to be employed, drop out of school, and not use contraceptives (Hendricks, Robinson-Brown and Lawrence, 1984).

Studies that involved a direct sample of adolescent fathers have been considered weak in methodology. Fifty-two percent of the 21 studies found by Robinson (1988a), are descriptive in nature, use small samples and do not include a comparison group. As well, the sampling is unrepresentative. Data collected does not include subjects where parental consent to participate was denied.

In summary, the information about teenage fathers has been based on self-report data, from willing subjects, using self-administered questionnaires and fathers who are involved with the mothers and children. Furthermore, the problem of differences in self-reported behavior and actual behavior exists (Redmond, 1985). Although such difficulties must be considered when doing

this kind of research, it may be the only way to truly understand the teen fatherhood experience.

Presently, there is not a clear description of teen fathers and their involvement with their partner and child. The stereotype of teen fathers, for a long time, has been one of irresponsibility and unconcern. Contrary to this image, findings have shown that some teen fathers are indeed responsible and want to be involved with their child (Barret and Robinson, 1982b) and have emotional ties and concerns about the mother and baby (Hendricks, 1980). Many adolescent fathers maintain contact with their children and provide some financial support (Furstenburg, 1976; Lorenzi, Klerman and Jakel, 1977; Elster and Panzarine, 1983). However, these teenage fathers claim that many obstacles make involvement with the mother and child difficult. For example, obstacles include;

difficulties with the family of origin, restriction of freedom imposed by responsibility for the child, duty of providing for the child, not being able to see his child as much as he would like, problems with his girlfriend or the unwed mother, problems with various members of the unwed mother's family, and not wanting the young mother to have given birth to the baby. (Hendricks, 1983, pp. 143-144)

Hendricks (1988) found that teen fathers of different ethnic groups experienced common problems such as; lack of money; loss of freedom; and, difficulties with the unwed mother and her family. However, each ethnic group experienced a different variety of problems. The Hispanic teen fathers reported a much wider range of problems compared to white teen fathers.

Because of the variation of problems experienced by teen fathers from different cultures, the cultural factors must be carefully considered when conducting research of this nature. Generalizations from one culture to another cannot be made.

More information is required from the teen fathers regarding their attitudes and motives and the factors that are affecting their involvement with partner and child. More specifically, what are the perceptions of the teen fathers in various areas of Newfoundland, Canada?

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine, via an in-depth interview approach, teenage fathers' perceptions of their involvement with their partners and children and the factors that affect this involvement. This study examined the similarities and differences among six teenage fathers, within a variety of different regions throughout Eastern Newfoundland, Canada.

Involvement of teenage fathers. Indicators of teen father involvement were selected based on personal reflections from researching the area of teen pregnancy, and from previous studies of teen father involvement (Stack, 1974; Elster and Lamb, 1986; Hendricks, 1988; Lacey, 1992). The following ten indicators of involvement have evolved:

1. Amount of time spent with child.
2. Quality of time spent with child.
3. Feelings toward child.
4. Expression of feelings toward child.
5. Relationship of child with father's family and friends.
6. Provision of material support to mother and child.
7. Provision of emotional support to mother of child.
8. Involvement in decision-making regarding the child.
9. Existence of father's legal responsibility.
10. Interest in child's future.

Involvement does not necessarily mean marriage or living together. Marriages of pregnant teenagers are generally conflicting and often end in divorce (Card and Wise, 1978; Furstenburg, 1976), making it an unstable environment for a child. However, living apart does not mean that the father is not interested in the child nor that he does not want to play a meaningful

part in his child's life (Earls and Siegal, 1980). Teen father involvement with children can take many forms and include various levels of commitment. For the purposes of this study teenage father involvement was examined as previously stated, but definitions of involvement were not formed until the study was completed and the data analyzed.

Significance of Study

Pregnancy is not solely a female responsibility, the male's role should not be ignored. The father has emotional and legal rights of access to his child. Although many parenting programs are still not available to adolescent fathers (Klinman, Saunders, Rosen, Longo and Martinez, 1985), the rights of the unwed fathers are becoming more recognized. It is now mandatory in the Canada and the United States, for agencies to contact the putative father before a child who is born out of wedlock can be placed for adoption. In the United States, court cases have supported the teen fathers' rights to custody of their babies that the mother has put up for adoption (Pannor and Evans, 1975).

The child also has rights. The child has a right to have interaction from both biological parents, so that physical, emotional and psychological well being is enhanced.

Allen-Meares (1984), describes the isolation of the mother and the exclusion of the father as thoughtless at best and potentially destructive at worst. The father's involvement with partner and child is necessary and can be advantageous for the whole family system.

In efforts to help the teenage mother during pre and post-natal stages, the father and his family need to be involved. Furstenburg's (1976) Baltimore study showed that the presence of an effective support system (persons to assist with child rearing and provide emotional, psychological and financial assistance) was critical for the mother's adjustment. Involvement of the baby's father has also been shown to enhance a teenage mother's self-worth, sense of maternal competency, and attachment to the baby (Card and Wise, 1978). The same may possibly be true for teen fathers.

There is evidence to support positive effects of the father's involvement in child rearing. Research has shown that fathers make a significant contribution to the child's social, emotional and intellectual development (Cordell, Parke and Sawin, 1980). Factors affecting the fathers' involvement with their children require special attention, as more and more teenage mothers are keeping their babies. In the United States, during 1987 alone, 500,000 babies were delivered by women 19 years of age or younger, and 20% to 25% of the fathers were adolescents (Moore, 1989). Although specific information

on the percentage of teen fathers is not available for Canada or Newfoundland, the fertility rates for Canada in 1990, for those aged 15-19 years was 26.6 per 1000, while for Newfoundland the rate was substantially higher, 35.4 per 1000 (Statistics Canada, 1990, p. 95).

The Working Group on Adolescent Health in Newfoundland reported that mother, child and father were affected by physical, psychological, social and economic risks associated with adolescent pregnancy (Lacey, 1992). The medical risks of teenage mothers and their children are well documented. According to Orton and Rosenblatt, adolescent pregnancy has been linked with higher mortality rates, and incidence of toxemia and low birth weight (Lacey, 1992). The father's involvement in prenatal activities has been found to be associated with higher birth weights (Barth, Claycomb and Loomis, 1988). The social and economic risks for teenage mothers involve early school leaving, poverty and marital breakdown (Lacey, 1992). Eight out of ten females that have children at age 17 or under, drop out of school. This group is also underemployed (Earls and Siegal, 1980). Similar findings regarding drop out rates are reported for teenage fathers. The probability of dropping out of school for teen fathers is considerably higher than males who fathered children at 20 years of age or older (Elster and Lamb, 1986).

The seriousness and extent of adolescent pregnancy problems continues to require further research. The effect of pregnancy on adolescent females has received much attention. More information is required about the effects of pregnancy on adolescent fathers. It is known that fatherhood is a stressful experience for adults, as reports of somatic symptoms and psychiatric problems have been made by adult prospective fathers (Elster and Panzarine, 1983). Elster and Panzarine also suggested that teen fatherhood is even more stressful. This is because they have to cope with the early transition to parenthood and more conflict in their relationships (Nakashima and Camp, 1984). It is essential that more information be obtained directly from teen fathers regarding their perception of this stressful experience, because how well they cope with this crisis affects both the mother and child.

This research attempts to gain an understanding of the much neglected teenage fathers' perspectives. Profiles of teenage fathers with varying degrees of involvement with their partners and children were compared and contrasted. Information on their perceived difficulties and needs will be presented. This should be beneficial in providing future directions for programming and services for teenage fathers. With such assistance, teenage fathers may be better able to cope with the difficulties of becoming a father, and find ways to contribute to the lives of their children and partners without becoming the

victims of educational failure and economic disadvantage. The first step to understanding the teen fatherhood experience is conducting a complete review of the existing relevant literature. The following chapter provides a comprehensive summary of the research findings concerning adolescent fathers.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

Introduction

Upon review of the literature on teenage fathers, several themes have emerged. There have been many studies providing information about their background characteristics and attitudes toward marriage and childbearing; their sexual and contraceptive behavior; their psychological adjustment; and the consequences of fatherhood. It is only during the last decade that studies have emerged examining the involvement of the teenage father with his partner and child. Very few of these studies have actually examined the teen father's perspective and his view of factors that have affected his involvement. It is this last area which is most relevant to this study.

Determinants of Teenage Fatherhood

Many of the earlier studies on teenage fatherhood have attempted to isolate unique background characteristics that increase the likelihood of becoming teenage fathers. The antecedents of teenage fatherhood have been related to race and socioeconomic status; parental, adolescent and peer attitudes; school and dating experience; and sexual knowledge and behavior. Of these race and socioeconomic status have been found to be the most

significant factors. The strongest determinants of teen fatherhood have been African American ethnicity, involvement in long term relationship, and acceptance of parenting outside of marriage (Hanson et al., 1989).

Race and socioeconomic status. Studies have shown race and socioeconomic status to be strongly related to teen fatherhood. According to Robinson (1988a), adolescent males from low income and minority groups are at the highest risk of becoming teen fathers. Ethnicity alone, has also been associated with adolescent fatherhood. The high incidence of African American teenage fathers is well documented in American literature (Lerman, 1986; Marsiglio, 1987; Michael and Tuma, 1985; Robbins, Kaplan and Martin, 1985; Hanson et al., 1989; Robinson, 1988a). "Black women 15-19 years of age still have about four times as many out of wedlock births as do comparable whites" (Marsiglio, 1987, p. 241). Due to the large proportion of minority teen fathers several studies have compared different ethnic groups. Differences were found in the sexual activity and commitment to live with or marry the mother.

Black adolescent males not only tend to become sexually active at earlier ages (Marsiglio, 1986), but are also younger than whites when their first child is born (Marsiglio, 1987). Black adolescent males are more likely

to lose their virginity in a less serious dating relationship than whites (Zelnik and Shah, 1983).

In another study comparing teen fathers of different ethnic groups, whites were significantly more likely to abort pregnancy. Hispanics were more likely to have a child and marry and live together. Blacks were more likely to have a child, but not marry or live together (Buchanan and Robbins, 1990).

The results from a nationally representative longitudinal survey in the United States consisting of 12,686 male and female respondents showed that black men were more likely to be responsible for out of wedlock births than any other race. They were also much less likely to live with their child. Only 15% of blacks lived with their first child compared to 48% hispanics, 58% disadvantaged whites, and 48% non-disadvantaged whites (Marsiglio, 1987). Blacks, hispanics and those who fathered a child at 16 years of age or younger were significantly less likely to reside with their first child. "For whites living in a rural area, being relatively older at the child's birth, having been raised Catholic and having lived with both parents at age 14 are associated with an above average probability that the father will live with his child, at least initially" (Marsiglio, 1987, p. 248). Only rural residence and having been

raised Catholic were predictors of marriage. This was not true for blacks even when socioeconomic status was controlled.

In another study of 325 males from six integrated high schools throughout the United States, Marsiglio (1988) found that 48% of the respondents stated they would be at least "quite likely" to live with their child and partner if a girl they were dating for a year had become pregnant. There was no difference in white and black responses. There was no ethnic difference in the intentions of these youths. The discrepancy in the natural patterns may be explained by the parents of black males being less accepting of marriage and living together because of an unplanned pregnancy. In this same study, "blacks were more inclined than whites to indicate that their parents would have a negative attitude toward the idea that they should live with their child. Black males could therefore have intentions similar to white males but encounter more obstacles in trying to actualize their preferences" (Marsiglio, 1988, p. 437). For both whites and blacks their personal attitude toward involvement was the strongest factor influencing their intent to live with or marry his partner. The author further reports, "Teenagers who were more likely to believe that living with their child and partner would lessen their chances of obtaining their desired level of education were less likely to have a favourable attitude and intentions toward living together" (Marsiglio,

1988, p. 437). Another important factor was believing that living together would enable them to care for the daily physical needs of their child.

Hendricks (1988) found that the needs of American teen fathers of different ethnic groups varied. Hispanic fathers reported the widest range of problems which included; being told how to raise the child; responsibility of fatherhood; financial difficulties such as getting a job and finding a place to stay; and, concerns for the child's health and future. Black fathers had fewer concerns. They reported; problems with their own family; understanding the teen mother's feelings; concern on how to care for the child; and, financial problems such as getting a job. Anglo fathers reported the fewest problems. Their concerns were with the disappointment of becoming a father and difficulties with their own family. Problems held in common by all three groups of teen fathers included; lack of money; loss of freedom; problems with the unwed mother; and, problems with various members of the unwed mother's family.

In an attempt to understand the difficulties of low socioeconomic black fathers in the United States, Rivara et al. (1985) compared this group to their non-father peers. In this study, with 200 respondents, the only difference found between the two groups was that the teen fathers were more likely to have mothers who were teenage parents. Teen fathers seemed to come from

an environment in which teenage pregnancy was common, accepted and perceived to have little negative effect on their lives. Most of the African American households are headed by single mothers which present an environment where the absence of the father is accepted and almost a part of the culture. There were no differences found between the two groups concerning age at first sexual intercourse and frequency of intercourse. Both groups had little information concerning the risk of pregnancy and the effectiveness of contraceptives.

Other researchers have isolated social class as a strong determinant of teen fatherhood. Numerous reports indicate that teenage fathers are more likely to be from low income families (Card and Wise, 1978; Marsiglio, 1987; Michael and Tuma, 1985; Robbins, Kaplan and Martin, 1985; Hanson et al., 1989; Robinson, 1988a). According to the National Center for Health Statistics in the United States regardless of ethnicity, disadvantaged teens are three or four times more likely to become adolescent parents (Robinson, 1988a).

Parental, adolescent and peer attitudes. The views of friends and parents have been shown to significantly influence male adolescents' view of teen pregnancy. A study conducted by Elster and Panzarine (1983), found that the family and friends of the teen father were quite accepting of premarital

sexual activity and pregnancy. Their parents also showed a positive response to the pregnancy.

Although the peers' attitudes were more important for African American teen fathers, white teen fathers were more accepting of illegitimacy than their non-father peers. They accepted illegitimacy as a common occurrence that would have little affect on their lives (Rivara et al., 1985).

Several studies have found that the parents of teen fathers were likely to have been teen parents themselves (Robbins and Lynn, 1973; Elster and Panzarine, 1980; McCoy and Tyler, 1985; Rivara, Sweeney and Henderson, 1985; Freeman, 1989; Card, 1981). Other researchers found teen fathers were more likely to have a sibling that was an unwed parent (Robbins and Lynn, 1973; Elster and Panzarine, 1980; Hendricks, 1980). In these cases the parents and siblings acted as role models for the teen fathers.

School experience. Teen fathers have been found to have lower academic abilities, higher drop out rates, and greater discipline problems (Card and Wise, 1978; Robbins, Kaplan and Martin, 1985). In one large scale study a sample of 15,000 male sophomore students were selected from 1,100 schools throughout the United States. Students completed an initial survey which was followed by two follow-up surveys, each spaced two years apart. Results

showed that teen fathers were different from their non-father peers on many variables related to schooling. They were less likely to be attending a private school, had more discipline problems, had lower grade point averages and lower math and reading scores. No differences were found in their enrolling in sex education courses (Hanson, Morrison and Ginsburg, 1989).

Sexual and contraceptive knowledge and behavior. Earlier and frequent dating experiences have also been linked with teen pregnancy. For many teen fathers their relationship with the mother of their child has been a long and serious one. Because of the increased exposure and opportunity, adolescents who frequently date are more likely to become teen parents. Findings from one study indicated that the men who were going steady during the first survey in 1980, were 1.5 times more likely to become teen fathers (Hanson, Morrison and Ginsburg, 1989).

Studies have shown that adolescent fathers have little information about sex, sexuality and reproduction (Finkel and Finkel, 1975; Johnson and Staples, 1979; Barret and Robinson, 1982a; Brown, 1983). However, teen father's lack of knowledge about sex, pregnancy and perceived effectiveness of contraception is no different than their non-father peers (Rivara, Sweeney and

Henderson, 1985). In this study of 100 teen fathers and 100 non-father peers both groups reported having unprotected intercourse several times a month.

Several reasons for not using contraception have been reported. Many times adolescent males do not know where to get birth control (Zelnik and Shah, 1983). Or according to Meyer and Russell (1986), they are too embarrassed to buy condoms. Another reason often cited is that it would make intercourse premeditated and reduce spontaneity. Some teenage males see contraception as a female responsibility (Finkel and Finkel, 1975). The most common reason given was that the intercourse was unplanned (Zelnik, Kanter and Ford, 1981; Sonenstein, 1986).

White male teens have been found to be more likely to use condoms than either black or hispanic teens (Finkel and Finkel, 1983). However, another study found that both teen fathers and their non-father peers were informed about sex and contraceptive methods but did not use them (Klinman et al., 1985).

Consequences of Teenage Fatherhood

The consequences of teenage parenthood has been found to be less devastating for the teen father than for the teen mother (Card and Wise, 1978). However, there are many negative consequences for the adolescent male

experiencing fatherhood. Recent research (Elster and Panzarine 1980; Fry and Trifiletti, 1983; Robinson and Barret, 1986) has shown that teen fathers report many sources of stress and as a result experience extreme emotional difficulties. Many times the adolescent father does not have the education, training or financial resources to support himself much less a child. Not being fully mature himself, he is often ill prepared to emotionally support a child. The relationship between the teen mother and teen father is often strained. And because of the lack of childrearing skills, the teen father's child is at risk of being a victim of abuse.

Educational and economic consequences. The adolescent father's educational and career goals suffer greatly as a result of becoming a parent. Teenage fathers are much more likely to drop out of school and get poor jobs with low pay (Card and Wise, 1978; Elster and Lamb, 1982, Klinman Saunders, Rosen, Longo and Martinez, 1985; Marsiglio, 1986; Rivara et al., 1986; Christmon, 1990a).

In the Teen Parent Collaboration Project (Klinman et al., 1985), an American national two year program for teen fathers, 395 teen fathers, age 15-19 were studied. Two thirds of the participants had no high school diploma or Grade Equivalency Diploma and were unemployed. Both school enrolment

and employment was significantly related to ethnic background. Hispanics and whites were more likely to be employed or in school. Blacks and American Indians were most likely to be unemployed. A more recent study (Girard, Coll and Becco, 1991a) found more fathers age 17-21 years, did not finish school and were unemployed, compared to fathers over 21 years old.

Consequences of father-mother relationship. Generally, teen fathers have very serious and positive intentions concerning the teen mother and child. Research has shown that most teen fathers have intentions to provide emotionally and financially for the mother and child and to assist in child care (Barret and Robinson, 1982b; Fry and Trifiletti, 1983, Redmond, 1985; Westney, Cole and Munford, 1986). Evidently, teen parent relationships are not casual, however, many have been found to not endure for a long period of time. A number of studies have examined the relationship of teen fathers and mothers over various lengths of time both before and after childbirth.

Teen father involvement with the mother and child has been reported as quite high during and after childbirth. Eighty-one percent of the teen fathers in one study were reported to be still dating the mother, with 75% providing direct financial support, and 85% offering indirect financial support such as gifts and transportation (Vaz, Smolen and Miller, 1983).

Reports from 180 teen mothers indicated that although the teen fathers remained involved shortly after the pregnancy, their involvement gradually decreased. At 26 months after delivery, 46% of the teen mothers had maintained contact with teen fathers through marriage or regular or periodic visits. Less than one fourth of unmarried mothers saw the fathers on a regular basis by two years after birth. During the same period, the number of marriages gradually increased from 7% to 23% by 26 months (Lorenzi, Klerman and Jakel, 1977).

Another study with 138 unwed teenage mothers found that 50% of the participants who kept their babies dated the fathers during the infant's first year of life. Twenty percent of these eventually married the father (Nettleton and Cline, 1975).

A study of 200 teen fathers and non-teen fathers found that the majority of fathers continued to be involved in the lives of the mother and child (Rivara, Sweeney and Henderson, 1986). Only one father had no contact with his child 18 months later. Twelve percent lived with the child and 25% saw the child daily.

According to Furstenburg (1976) even as late as 36 months after birth, 55% of the mothers, in the study, were in contact with the teen fathers. After five years, two out of five teen fathers maintained a regular relationship with

20% living with the child and with 20% seeing the child at least once a week. Furstenburg (1976) described a pattern of teen father involvement where the teen father usually did not live with the teen mother until two years after the child was born. He further explained that this absence may possibly be due to the father pursuing educational training during this time.

For the 400 teen fathers who participated in a two year teen father parenting program in eight cities throughout the U.S., involvement rates were much higher. At the end of the two years, 82% had daily contact with their children, 74% provided financial support, and 90% still had a relationship with the mothers of their children. This study (Klinman et al., 1985) provides strong evidence of the positive effects and need for teen fathering programs.

Over the years marriage rates among adolescent parents have dropped. In recent times only about 10% of the pregnant teenagers marry (Robinson, 1988b). For these couples, much conflict has been reported. When compared to their non-parent peers, married teen parents have reported much more conflict in their relationships (de Lissovoy, 1973; Nakashima and Camp, 1984). More conflict was also reported when compared to teen mothers' relationships with older fathers (Nakashima and Camp, 1984). The separation or divorce rate is also higher for teen parents compared to their peers who were not teen parents (Card and Wise, 1978). The divorce rate for parents

younger than 18 is three times greater than for parents who had their first child after age 20, and is greatest for couples with premarital pregnancies than for those who conceive after marriage (Furstenburg, 1976; Robinson, 1988a).

Contrary to this, Lamb and Elster (1985) found no difference in reported marital conflict between different aged fathers. Fathers aged 19.5 to 29.9 completed questionnaires and were observed at home interacting with their children. There were no differences found between the groups in their interaction with their infants, reported stress or social support. After interviewing 227 adult fathers, Heath and McKenry (1993) found the negative relationships associated with adolescent fatherhood were more the result of poor education, low income and lack of resources than the actual early fatherhood experience.

Consequences for children of teenage parents. Many medical risks to children of teen mothers have been recognized. Nye and Lamberts found that teen mothers have high rates of premature and low weight births, birth defects, mental retardation and other health problems that often result in death during the first year (Robinson, 1988a). These difficulties may not only be attributed to the young age and biological immaturity of the mother, but also to poor diet and limited prenatal care (Robinson, 1988b). Other difficulties

reported include emotional and behavioral problems and lower achievement compared to those children born to older mothers (Welcher, 1982).

More recent studies have not found any differences in these children. Children of adolescent parents showed no evidence of more neurological or developmental problems. This has led to the conclusion that difficulties of children of teen parents may not be solely the result of age, but more of socioeconomic status. The disadvantages of low economic status may be more responsible for the negative outcomes among children born to adolescent parents (Lamb and Elster, 1985; Trussell, 1988). According to Furstenburg, Brooks-Gunn and Chase-Lansdale (1989), "Teenage mothers are generally more likely to be poor and less educated, and their children are likely to grow up in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, attend low-quality schools, and experience high rates of family instability...it all definitely contributes to the likelihood of unfavourable outcomes" (p. 316).

Teen parents have also been found to be lacking in parenting skills. Both fathers and mothers have unrealistic childrearing attitudes and misunderstanding of children's developmental milestones (de Lissovoy, 1973; Rivara, Sweeney and Henderson, 1986). In one study (Rivara, Sweeney and Henderson, 1986), at 18 months after childbirth, fewer adolescent fathers compared to non-fathers, knew the normal development and diets of a

newborn. The authors explained this lack of knowledge may make the fathers place pressure on children to perform certain tasks before they are ready.

In the de Lissoy (1973) study, 48 adolescent married fathers and mothers were interviewed. These parents were found to be emotionally and intellectually unprepared for parenthood. They had unrealistic expectations of their children and showed impatience and intolerance which frequently resulted in physical means of disciplining their children. Kinard and Klerman (1980) found the infants of teen parents were at higher risk of being abused.

Although Elster and Lamb (1982) found no difference in father child interactions between teenage fathers and older fathers. They did conclude that because of the stressors of teen fatherhood, those young men were at risk for parenting failure. The authors described the factors affecting the ability of a teen father to have a positive effect on the mother and child include: educational set backs, low job satisfaction, economic stress, inadequate knowledge of childbearing, and potential relationship conflicts (or marital instability).

Other researchers have also concluded that adolescent fathers are not ready for fatherhood. Hendricks (1982) found that on average only 20% to 23% of the teen fathers studied described themselves as being "very ready" for fatherhood prenatally and postnatally. Rothstein (1978) also concluded that

even though teenage fathers typically have stable personalities, they are not psychologically ready for fatherhood.

Fathering influences. Research has shown that the father's involvement with his children has a positive effect on his children's social and cognitive development (Robinson and Barret, 1986). These positive effects have been seen directly by the child and indirectly through the relationship with the mother (Parke, Power and Fisher, 1980).

In the parenting role, fathers have been found to play a very different role than the mother. Although the father typically does not share the care-giving duties such as feeding, he is just as responsive to the needs of his child. Fathers may not perform such duties because of feeling less competent than the mother. The father is not only more involved in play activities than the mother but also play differently. The father is more likely to play physical games such as rocking and bouncing compared to the mother who uses more toys (Parke, Power and Fisher, 1980). This type of regular child-father interaction has been found to improve the child's social development. In Furstenburg's (1976) study, the social development of preschool children of single adolescent parents was compared to preschool children of married adolescent parents. The children who had regular contact with the father were

better adjusted. Children from father-absent homes scored lower on measures of efficacy, trust and self-esteem. Furstenburg (1976) also administered the Bailey Mental Test to these children and found cognitive performance or pre-schoolers was positively associated with the regularity of relationship between the father and his child. This did not necessarily include marriage. More specifically, Clarke-Stewart (1978) found different father-child interactions predicted cognitive development: play with infant son and verbal interaction with infant daughter.

Teen fathers may indirectly affect their children by offering social-emotional, physical and financial support (Parke, Power and Fisher, 1980). A number of studies (Rubin, 1970; Card and Wise, 1978) have shown that the baby's father enhances a teenage mother's sense of self-worth, sense of maternal competency, and attachment to the child. Although, few studies of parental behavior have been completed with teen fathers, the long term effects on their children have not been established.

Psychological Variables

Some teen fathers have shown extreme emotional difficulties such as guilt, depression, emotional disturbance, and psychosomatic symptoms (Girard, Coll and Becco, 1991b). Teen fathers have reported a range of

emotion from empathy and elation to depression (Robinson and Barret, 1986). Other studies show opposite results whereby unwed teenage fathers have been found to be no different in measures of psychological functioning, than other males (Pauker, 1971; Robinson and Barret, 1987). Their reactions to fatherhood have been found to be similar to that of the mothers (Robinson and Barret, 1986). Studies now show that most teenage fathers do not "have it all together" and are just as confused, afraid and anxious as the young women they impregnate.

Personality and locus of control. Few psychological differences have been found between teen fathers and their non-father contemporaries. Pauker (1971) attempted to explain the emotional difficulties of teen fathers as either psychological differences or differences because of the pregnancies. He conducted a study with 94 teenage males before they fathered a child and 94 teenage males who never fathered a child. He administered intelligence tests and a personality inventory. The two groups scored similarly on the standardized intelligence tests. The only difference found on the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory was unwed teenage fathers were more active and less controlled than the non-fathers, but this difference was not significant.

Other studies have found no difference in inner control between teen fathers and non-fathers (McCoy and Tyler, 1985; Robinson, Barret and Skeen, 1983). Here, 20 teen fathers and 20 non-fathers completed the Nowicki-Strickland Locus of Control Scale. No differences in the cores of these two groups were found. The authors concluded that teen fathers did not differ psychologically from their non-father age mates in their ability to control their sexual urges or outcomes in their lives. McCoy and Tyler's study compared 24 unwed teen fathers and 27 unwed adolescent non-fathers who completed the Rotter Internal-External Locus of Control Scale. Again, no differences were found in their sense of personal control and responsibility for their own lives.

When 12 teen fathers and 12 adult fathers completed the Personal Attribute Inventory and Strait Trait Anxiety Scale, no differences in self-concept were found (Robinson and Barret, 1987). Here again, no findings support teen fathers being psychologically different.

Stress. The stress experienced by teen fathers is found to be attributed to both developmental and social factors such as role transition, self-identity and psychological immaturity (Elster and Lamb, 1982). Becoming a parent is stressful enough, but when it is unplanned and occurs prematurely at a time that is not accepted socially, it is much more difficult. Many studies have

shown that teen fathers have great psychological conflict when trying to cope with the dual role of adolescent and father (Elster and Panzarine, 1980, 1983; Fry and Trifiletti, 1983; Robinson and Barret, 1986). Teenage fathers have other developmental needs that must be met. They are continuing to grow psychologically and are struggling to find their own identity. This psychological immaturity is stressful and also limits their ability to handle stress.

In addition to developmental concerns teen fathers are faced with fathering concerns, such as decisions regarding the child and the relationship with the mother. Elster and Panzarine (1983) found that the stressors on these young fathers changed in intensity throughout pregnancy and the early postnatal period. But because of their ages and disrupted schooling, all the young fathers worried that they were not financially able to support a family. This concern remained throughout each interview. The greatest concern at the third trimester interview was vocational-educational concerns, expressed by 100% of the teens, followed by health concerns for 94%. Relationship concerns followed (76%) and parenting concerns were cited as the least stressful (35%).

In another study (Rivara, Sweeney and Henderson, 1986), the most commonly mentioned sources of problems for teen fathers were finances,

finding a job, not being able to see the child often enough, and difficulties in the relationships with the mother of the child.

Hendricks (1980) also reported that the 20 African American unwed teen fathers in his study worried about financial responsibilities, parenting skills, education, employment, transportation, relationship with girlfriends, and facing life, in general.

To compound the difficult situation of teen fathers is the isolation and rejection they experience from their peers and girlfriend's parents. As in one study (Fry and Trifiletti, 1983), teen fathers reported feelings of rejection from the girlfriend's mother and very little support from peers when he tried to talk about his problems. Hendricks (1983) also found 55% of the subjects in his study indicated difficulties with the girlfriend and her family, and not having free access to the child. These same teen fathers also reported other problems such as; difficulties with the family of origin; loss of freedom; the duty of providing for the child; and, not agreeing to the mother giving birth to the baby.

Regardless of the willingness of teen fathers to become involved with the decisions regarding their child, they are often not included in the decision-making. Many times teen fathers are not informed when their children have been adopted or given to foster care (Robinson and Barret, 1986). Fry and

Trifiletti (1983) found the most intense feelings of rejection by teen fathers were experienced when the babies were given up for adoption. The feelings of helplessness and frustration with being excluded from the planning of their children's life is described in the work of Robinson and Barret (1986).

Coping strategies. Responses of teenage fathers to parenthood have been found to vary. In a study comprising 20 married teen fathers, Elster and Panzarine (1983) identified 10 distinct coping strategies used in their transition to fatherhood. The following list is a summary of these coping strategies:

- 100% looked to improve the financial situation;
- 90% helped buy items for baby;
- 70% talked to others about their role and responsibility as a father;
- 20% observed and evaluated other's coping strategies with parenthood;
- 20% read material on fatherhood and child care;
- 60% thought about their future with the child;
- 35% thought about own childhood and their own parent's parenting skills;
- 35% settled down and spent more time with married peers;

- 10% turned to alcohol abuse;
- 15% denied the idea they were a father.

The adolescent father's family has been shown to be the most significant source of social support during this stressful time (Hendricks, 1980, 1983, 1988; Robinson and Barret, 1986). "Between 65 % and 85% of pregnant and parenting teenagers live with their families and it is their families who provide them with the majority of material and psychological support" (Hanson, 1992, p. 303).

In a large scale study, Klinman et al. (1985) found that 73% of the young teen fathers reported their parents to be helpful in their adjustment to fatherhood. The parents provided financial and emotional support.

Hendricks (1980) found that of the 20 black unmarried teen fathers he interviewed, 95% said they would go to their family for help with a problem and that it would more likely be their mothers they would approach. Only one subject in this study said he would confide in a friend.

The relationship between the teen father and his family of origin has been found to have a significant effect on his involvement with his child. From interviews with 43 unmarried African American adolescent fathers, Christmon (1990b) found those teen fathers who had close, expressive family relationships with little conflict were more involved in child care activities.

The adolescent fathers' perceptions of their mothers' attitude towards their parenting behavior also significantly affected their parenting behavior. The perceived expectations for parenting behavior of the fathers of these adolescents did not have the same effect.

Obstacles to Teen Father Involvement

Financial instability. At the time of pregnancy, many teenage fathers are not financially equipped to support a child as they are still in school or have dropped out and are not working. Most of the teen fathers in Hendrick's (1983) study were concerned about being able to financially provide for their partners and children. Lack of money and unemployment were great sources of stress for these teen fathers. This has been cited as one of the main reasons for not living with or supporting the child (de Lissovoy, 1973; Rivara, Sweeney and Henderson, 1986). For more than 25% of the African American teen mothers in the Baltimore study (Furstenburg, 1976), the inability for the father to support the family was the major cause of the marriage break-up.

Legal rights and decision-making. In 1972 a U.S. court case set precedent in recognition of father's rights with the ruling that unmarried biological fathers were entitled to equal protection under the law and involvement in child custody decisions (Pannor and Evans, 1975). The

unmarried teenage father's rights were further clarified in 1979 during another American court case. As a result of the *Cauban versus Mohammed* case, it was ruled that illegitimate fathers can only "earn rights" as parents by showing an interest and supporting their child. The paternity of fathers who take no initiative, who are unemployed, or who are minors would not be established. They were, however, responsible to the children and for child support payments (Schroeder, 1991). Similar precedents were set in Canada in 1988, when the Divisional Court of Ontario ruled that putative fathers qualified as parents to the child if they had provided support to the mother and child (Sachdev, 1991).

With the exception of financial responsibility, teen fathers' rights in the decisions concerning their children are generally ignored (Johnson and Staples, 1979). Not only are teen fathers excluded from planning for their children; but many times, as mentioned earlier, they are not even informed when the child has been adopted or given to foster care (Robinson and Barret, 1986).

The lack of Canadian research regarding the legal rights of teen fathers has lead to the following information being based on an interview with social services personnel located in the Eastern Region of Newfoundland (R. Ryder, personal communication, 1995). From the perspective of this agency, biological fathers and mothers have equal rights regardless of documentation of

paternity. It is recognized that naming of the father on a birth certificate is voluntary and therefore not a necessity of proof of paternity. Any father who has difficulty with access to his child or who wishes to influence the custody or placement of his child has the right to present his case in court. According to the social worker interviewed, there has been an increase in the number of these kinds of cases over the last few years. The Adoption of Children's Act has recently given fathers more consideration. They now have to be notified of any adoption procedures, for both parents are required to consent to an adoption. In Newfoundland, child support payments may be requested by the mother if the father is 19 years of age or more, and she may file for legal actions if the father does not comply.

Lack of knowledge about legal rights and exclusion from planning and involvement in decisions concerning the child are other explanations for uninvolvement of the teenage fathers.

Teenage fathers have been found to want to be involved in the planning for their children, but succumb to the mother's decisions. Redmond (1985) administered a questionnaire to 74 adolescent males, in the Kitchener-Waterloo area, and found that they would be involved in decision-making but would cooperate with another outcome to the pregnancy, made by the girlfriend, even if they did not accept it.

In another study (Hendricks, 1988) with anglo, black and hispanic unmarried teenage fathers, the subjects tended to not attempt to influence the mothers' decisions on the choice of pregnancy alternatives, such as putting the child up for adoption or having an abortion.

Conflicts with partner and her family. According to Cervera (1991), the most understudied and possibly underestimated factor in the fathers' involvement with their children is the relationship between him and the mother and her family. Problems with the girlfriend and or her family were cited as concerns by teen fathers in many studies (Elster and Panzarine, 1983; Hendricks, 1983; Rivara et al., 1986). Many times the same fathers also complained of not being able to see their children enough (Hendricks, 1983; Rivara et al., 1986). Sullivan found that teen fathers often reported difficulties getting along with the mother and denied access to the child if they did not provide financially or help with child care (Lawson and Rhode, 1993).

Although Barret and Robinson (1982a) found their 26 black respondents perceived their girlfriends' families viewed them positively, this was not always the case. Other studies found the teen fathers experienced more hostile feelings from their partners' families (Hendricks, 1980; Robinson and Barret, 1986).

This hostility may result from the possibility that the maternal grandparents will become responsible for the child (Furstenburg, 1980). Furstenburg's examination of 15 families found that the maternal grandmothers tended to provide financially for the child and may have actually controlled the amount of time the baby's father spent with the teen mother. Competing loyalties, interests and needs may also cause the mother's family to exclude the teen father (Furstenburg, 1980; Robinson and Barret, 1986).

Cervera (1991) conducted a study of 15 families of unmarried teen pregnancy and found the teen mothers' parents continued to be very distant towards the babies' fathers, regardless of the fathers' involvement. Teen fathers were described as unpredictable and immature and they preferred to remain distant towards him. Connolly (1978) goes as far as to say that in many cases maternal grandparents prevent the teen father from being involved with the teen mother and child. Allen Meares (1984) found barriers were set by both maternal and paternal grandparents, each putting blame on the other. Teen fathers indicated the maternal grandmother as the most disagreeable person in the mother's family (Klinman et al., 1985). Most dissatisfaction was found with "not being able to support mother and child and live as a family." Less frequently complaints included; "overprotectedness of the young mother; and undue influence exerted by child's maternal grandmother" (p. 56). In the

same study the relationship between the young man and his female partner again was significantly related to the frequency with which he saw (or planned to see) his child.

Although many difficulties have been reported by teen fathers, little has been done to alleviate the problems. The programs and services designed for teen mothers often exclude the teen fathers. A more recent study has shown that progress in the area of adolescent fatherhood is slow. After examining the information from 119 different youth agencies, Kiselica and Sturmer (1993) found that there were significantly fewer services available to teen fathers compared to teen mothers.

Teen fathers themselves, have suggested areas of possible intervention (Hendricks and Solomon, 1987; Kiselica, Stroud, Stroud and Rotzien, 1992). They suggest relationship counselling to help get along with partners and their families; financial guidance concerning housing and employment; educational information and job training; child care and financial planning; health care for children; and, emotional support.

Summary. Although research in the area of adolescent fatherhood has improved, in that data is more often collected from the teen fathers, themselves, the subjects have predominately been African American. Much as

been reported on the sexual and parenting attitudes and behavior of this ethnic group. The consequences of adolescent fatherhood has also been well researched. The devastating educational and economic outcomes for teen fathers are made quite clear. Many studies have examined teen fathers' involvement with their children and found that even though more fathers are spending time with their children, there is a trend for this involvement to decrease over time. The dynamics of teen father involvement with their children and the influencing factors require much more attention. Teen fathers, although not psychologically different from other males, have been found to experience a great deal of stress. They are expected to financially support their partner and child and maintain a cooperative relationship with their partner and her family, while at the same time are not accepted by these people. Throughout this experience, it is the teen father's family that has been shown to be the most supportive.

This study is most concerned with defining the dynamics of teen father involvement with child and identifying the factors that either contribute to or inhibit their involvement. The next chapter will present the Methodology of the study and will be followed by five chapters highlighting interviews showing the personal views of six teen fathers from various rural and urban areas of Eastern Newfoundland. These chapters are designed to provide an in-

depth presentation of individual teen father experiences. The areas explored in these interviews were: time spent with child; father-child relationship; decision-making and legal rights; sources of material and emotional support; and, aspirations and concerns.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

The purpose of this section is to present a rationale for the design of the study and describe the procedures used in conducting the research.

Subjective Reality

In order to understand teen fathers, we must gain access to their thoughts, that is, to their subjective reality. These realities may be seen as socially constructed as a result of individual perceptions and meanings given to their social and interpersonal environment (Thoresen, 1978; Cohen and Manion, 1991). Although subjective realities influence behavior, thoughts cannot be observed, as such. Many times individuals' thoughts and their behavior are different. Ideally, in order to get a full understanding of their lives we would want to become part of their lives for a while, and possibly live with them. A combination of observing behavior and probing thoughts through questioning may be seen as the most desirable ways to gain an understanding of how a person is experiencing his/her environment. However, such research strategies are not always possible or necessary. For the purposes at hand, the author gained an understanding of teen fathers' subjective realities through in-depth and semi-formal interviews. Such

interviews allowed the teen fathers to describe their lives in relation to their children, thereby revealing their subjective realities as parents.

In-depth Interviews

Six in-depth interviews were conducted. The interview technique examined what was happening in the life of the person at that time and the problems they were experiencing. They provided the opportunity for the researcher to broaden his/her perspective by gaining more in-depth information and uncover new aspects of the topic as perceived by the participant (Burgess, 1982). The questions asked allowed the teen fathers to share their views of involvement with their children and the factors that have affected this involvement. In order to probe the teen father's experiences relating to the ten areas of focus in this study, a combination of open and close ended questions were used. A number of guideline questions were developed (Appendix B). While the intent was to cover all of these questions, other questions arose from the responses of the interviewee. The closed ended questions were designed to obtain demographic and related characteristics of the teen parent (Appendix A).

Sample Selection

The six participants identified and selected were fathers who were still adolescents and had children ranging approximately from one to three years of age. One participant selected was resident of a large metropolitan area (St. John's, Newfoundland, population of 95,770), and five were residents of smaller towns and communities located in Eastern Newfoundland, Canada (populations less than 5,000) (Statistics Canada, 1992). Because of the difficulties with locating teen fathers, the participants were identified by word of mouth and selected according to availability and willingness.

Participation in the study was voluntary. Potential subjects were contacted by telephone. They were informed of the participation requirements, purpose of the research, and the benefits expected. The subjects were told they could refuse to answer any of the questions and discontinue the interview at any time. A fee of \$50.00 was paid to participants as an incentive for their time and effort.

Permission for participating in this study was obtained and consent forms signed to have all sessions either videotaped or audiotaped (see Appendix D). In the case of minors (those under 18 years of age), informed consent of parents or guardians was obtained (see Appendix D). Participants' rights to confidentiality and anonymity was explained. Identity was protected

by not using any identifying information in the data collection and reporting process.

Data Collection

Data collection involved the use of individual interviews and questionnaires, conducted by an adult female interviewer/researcher in a face-to-face private location, such as a room on the university campus or the home of the interviewer.

Social-demographic information was obtained in the form of a questionnaire (Appendix A), with closed questions, which was helpful for condensing and analyzing information. Social-demographic information collected included; age; marital status; living arrangements; educational status; employment status; family history; social history; relationship with mother of child; and, fatherhood experience.

Each participant was individually interviewed in three sessions, each approximately one hour in duration. Borg and Gall's (1989), guidelines for interviewing in qualitative research were followed. The first interview was more formal as respondents completed a questionnaire and responded orally to a combination of open and closed questions. Session two involved respondents answering both open and closed questions. As a validity check, some topics

were brought up a second time. All inconsistencies in participant responses were readdressed in a nonobtrusive and indirect way. These two sessions were structured in that there was a set schedule, and fixed order and form of questions. Session three was less structured, but controlled, and involved open-ended questions pursuing issues presented in the first two sessions. It included any aspect of the topic participants wanted to discuss that they felt was important and/or had not been included in previous interviews. The interviewer encouraged each participant to recall experiences that were relevant to the research topic by promoting free expression, making comments and asking occasional questions. As illustrated in Appendix H, the subjects varied in their elaboration of responses. The questions asked in these interviews related to the ten previously stated areas of child involvement and the influencing factors. A schedule of interview questions may be found in Appendix B.

The sessions were spaced at least two days apart allowing the interviewer time to review the data to find areas for follow-up.

Data Analysis

The method of research conducted can be considered theoretical sampling and is described as "the process of data collection for generating

theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes and analyzes data, and decides where to find them in order to develop his theory as it emerges" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p. 455). This continues until no new concepts emerge. It is at this point conclusions may be drawn. In order to accomplish this, the following procedures were followed.

Following each interview, the researcher reviewed the tapes and recorded personal notes including; tentative emerging themes; areas needing clarification; critique of interview style; and, observations of factors that may have affected the interview process.

After the interviews had been completed, the interviews were transcribed by either the interviewer or an assistant, who was not informed of the identity of the interviewee or the intent of the study. Then the researcher coded each response by participant number, interview session number, and conceptual category. The accuracy of the transcriptions were checked by Dr. W. Martin (Memorial University of Newfoundland), who randomly selected three audio-cassettes for review. All stages of data analysis, including coding and categorizing was checked by thesis co-supervisors, Dr. Martin and Dr. Garlie.

Analysis of data followed procedures set by Miles and Huberman (1984). They suggest analysis involves the concurrent use of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

Data reduction is described as "the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting and transforming raw data that appear in written-up field notes" (Miles and Huberman, 1984, p. 21). At all stages of the research, the data are being reduced by organizing related information. This may be accomplished by writing summaries, coding responses, finding themes, making clusters, and writing memos.

Analysis also involves data display. A system of display is necessary to organize the tremendous amount of unstructured qualitative data, so that information is in compact form and easily accessible. The use of matrices, graphs, networks and charts for data display, is recommended.

Conclusion drawing is another part of analysis that begins with data collection. The researcher is continuously deciding, "what things mean, is noting irregularities, patterns, explanations, possible configurations, causal flows and propositions" (Miles and Huberman, 1984, p. 22). All conclusions are temporary until the data collection is finished. Final conclusions are verified by the supporting data. Some findings will be less conclusive than others, and may be better described as suggestions and/or observations.

This continuous and simultaneous use of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing allows for similarities and differences of content to be noted and for conceptual categories, their properties, and the interrelationships

to be discovered. In the final analysis of the data in this study, a summary of the social-demographic data of the individual teen fathers themselves and their backgrounds is reported (see Appendices E, F and G). Also, the shared themes, commonalities in the meanings expressed, and individual descriptions of situations and events, and teen father's perceptions related to the ten areas of involvement are reported.

Commonalities and differences of responses are presented as well as relating research findings. Results were based on both findings that have evolved from this study alone and those that were supported by the review of previous research. Presentation of results include commonalities but preserve the originality of data.

Limitations

There are limitations in the design of this study, and as a result conclusions must be drawn carefully and generalizations stated in a tentative fashion. Specific limitations that bias the data include the following:

1. Because of the difficulty with locating teenage fathers, the sample was small and not representative of all adolescent fathers.

2. Participants were selected in a non-probability manner, making any generalizations of the results difficult.
3. All six participants were paid volunteers who were willing to share their experiences with others, distinguishing them from non-participants who may have been more negative towards partner and child.
4. By using self-reports, participants may have presented themselves in a favourable light.
5. By using a single-method qualitative design the biased effects of the researcher's observations were difficult to control. However, detailed analysis procedures were used.
6. Because the researcher was the interviewer, analysis of data and reporting will not be completely objective.
7. Because the interviewer was female, participants may not have answered questions honestly, or adjusted their responses to reflect what they think the interviewer wanted to hear.

Even with these limitations, the information gathered should add to the understanding of teenage fathers in similar situations. Since so little information now exists in this area, the results should contribute to the slowly growing data base.

Analysis and Reporting

The participant responses were grouped along five lines of questions: time spent with child; father-child relationship; decision-making and legal rights; sources of material and emotional support; and, aspirations and concerns. Within each grouping themes were identified and these themes became the subheadings of the subsequent chapters. These themes and subthemes are illustrated with verbatim comments from the fathers. In each case the researcher presents a brief summary of their observations and how it relates to the literature. In summary, the researcher inductively drew conclusions from the data and compared them to other reported research findings.

CHAPTER IV

Time Spent With Child

By way of focusing on the time which the teenager fathers, in this study, spent with their children, the present study looked at the visitation patterns of the fathers, play activities which they pursued while with their children, the ways they met the basic needs of their children, and the highlights of their fatherhood experiences. As background to this discussion of the different dimensions of the time spent with children, the geographical proximity of each father to his child is noted.

Geographical Proximity

With one exception, it is noted that each teenager father was a neighbour to the mother of his child. The exception was that one father lived in a community five to six kilometres from that of the mother. Given the fact that the families of these two people had been in each of these communities for many years, they were not unfamiliar to each other. In the case of two couples, their families lived within a ½ kilometre of each other. In each case the teenage father and the mother of his child, were life long friends. In fact, their families had grown up in either the same neighbourhood or community.

Visitation Pattern

First of all it should be noted that none of the fathers in this study shared a residence with the mother of their children. While there were considerable variations in the visiting patterns which the teenager fathers had with their children, certain grouping of patterns were seen in the visitation patterns which the six fathers in the present study had with their respective children. They reported patterns that range from monthly visits of two hour duration to spending almost all of each and every day with the child. It should be noted that in three of the six cases, the child lived with the mother and the maternal grandparents or step grandparents.

Four of the fathers interviewed saw their children every day. Each father described having a positive relationship with the mother and considered himself and the child's mother to be "a couple." They reported that they and their families were free to see the child as often as they wanted. To illustrate, Bob visited his child three to four hours every day at the mother's home. Sometimes his parents brought the child to his home for an hour or two, but the child did not stay overnight. For example, Bob reported that his father, that is the child's grandfather, "comes up and gets him once in a while (pause) comes up and gets him every now and then."

Both Jim and Bill also spent time with their children each day. Each of these fathers also had his child stay overnight on a regular basis. In each case, both father and mother had the child an equal amount of time at their respective homes.

Kevin reported being with the mother and child at her apartment, "...all the time...", leaving only for school and work. He did not sleep at the apartment because it would mean a loss of the mother's financial support from social services.

However, two of the fathers told of much smaller amounts of visiting time. Melvin visited his daughter once a month, for an hour or two each visit. He usually phoned the mother in advance to arrange a visit. He would either visit the child at the mother's home or take her back to his home.

Sam visited his daughter once a week, for three hours. He also phoned the mother ahead of time to set a visiting time, which was usually Saturdays. He then picked the child up and either took her for an outing or back to his home.

Both of these fathers describe a negative relationship with the mother. They do not consider themselves to be couples. They describe difficulty with arranging child visitation times with the mother. Sam explained how he once

had to get permission from the mother for his child to stay longer at her own birthday party. He stated:

I threw a little birthday party for her. Like, I couldn't leave at 5:00 cause everybody was there and stuff like that, right. I couldn't just say to everybody I'll be right back. They were saying why don't you phone and ask her if you can have her an extra hour. So, I did.

Melvin described how he missed seeing his daughter on a special occasion;

I wasn't home. I was in school, right. Then Sandra brought her up one evening and I think they went to town or something. And then I come home and they said that Susan, she was there and she's gone again now.

Only one of the six fathers was content with the length of time he could spend with his child. The other five fathers expressed a preference to spend more time with their children. In fact, both Sam and Melvin during the time of this study, were in the process of seeking legal counsel in order to increase contact time with their child. Bill would prefer if he and the mother would be less dependent on their parents and do more for the child themselves. Kevin would like to stay overnight at the mother's apartment, and live with the

mother and his child. Jim would really like to have his son to himself. In other words, all of these teen fathers were very interested in spending time with their child, but some were restricted by conditions set by the mother.

Play Activities

Without questioning whether or not teenager fathers' meanings of play correspond to any operational definition of this concept, the present research accepted their view concerning their involvement in play activities with their children. The aim here is to illustrate the extent and nature of this involvement.

Each father reported spending time playing with his child. Although all fathers interviewed, when asked, replied that they did enjoy spending time with their children, four of the fathers reported spending a considerable amount of time involved with play activities.

A play activity common to all four fathers was taking their child for a walk in the community. Other outings were also reported. Three of these fathers took his child to the park or playground. Two fathers stated they took their child to the shopping mall. Two of the fathers had their child go with them on a regular basis. Jim stated, "I usually take him with me a lot of time

when I'm going somewhere." Sam also reported similar behavior, "...usually takes her places where I goes..."; "...takes her wherever she wants to go...."

Playing games was also reported by all four fathers. While Bill reported that he played "peek-a-boo" and "wiggles his cheeks" as play activities with his four month old son, Sam simply stated that he, "plays games and stuff" with his 1½ year old daughter. Kevin described how he, "takes her for a ride on bike," and regularly plays with his 1½ year old daughter. He said, "I probably goes in the room, plays with her, right." One father, Jim, showed a strong liking for playing games with his two year old son.

I mean, you know, it's like you're growing up all over again, you know. That's the way I feel cause (pause), I went down the other day and I bought a water gun for him. And I said to myself, I said (pause), I might as well get one too, you know. Well, if he's gonna have a water gun, then I'm going to need to have one too, to squirt him. So, I got a water gun and me and him squirting one another. And I mean, it's like you're growing up all over again, you know.

When I grew up, I never had that stuff, you know. So it's just like I'm growing up again. You know, I gets another chance at

life, type thing. When you're with him, you don't think about life. You don't even think about how old you are or nothing.

It's just like you're back in your childhood days, you know.

Jim reported other play activities as well, such as swimming and setting up a tent in the backyard.

Unlike the above cases, Melvin and Bob only played with their child on rare occasions. When asked to identify the sorts of things they did with their children, they replied in general terms rather than identifying any specific play activity. For example, Melvin's response to this question was, "I plays with her, takes her up in my arms and walks around with her. That's about it." Bob replied, "Yeah," when asked if he played with his son. And while he reported that his son had "some toys," he appeared not to assist or give any direction to his son when playing with him.

The children of three of the four fathers who were more active in play activities, were older, (ranging in age from 1½ years to 2 years old), than the child of the other father. Melvin's child was younger, being nine months old and Bob's child being only eight months old. Difficulty knowing how to play with an infant was reported by one participant. Bill was asked if adjusting to fatherhood was getting easier with time. He replied:

Yeah, it's getting easier and it's more fun now, too. It is cause you can do more things. He's at the age where (pause), like I always liked children. I likes them every age, but like when they're young, I'm afraid to touch him. But when they gets older now, it's like you can make them laugh and stuff like that. I loves doing that (laugh).

Some teen fathers may have more knowledge of or familiarity with play activities for toddlers, who are more mobile and independent. The type of play activities exhibited, however, are consistent with another study (Parke, Power and Fisher, 1980) which found that mothers and fathers play differently with their children. Fathers tended to play more physical games such as bouncing and rocking while the mothers used more toys.

Basic Child Care Needs

Aside from the extent to which teen fathers reported participating in play activities with their children, the researcher sought to identify teen fathers' responses in connection with the basic child care need of feeding, changing and dressing. The teen fathers reported the learning of all these new experiences to be positive and of little difficulty. It is evident by Sam's

statements, that he learned these child care skills rather quickly; "Five or ten minutes and I was feeding her and changing her and everything, that's all."

However, Bill expressed some concern about his competence in this area; "Some of it is just a little bit confusing. Yes, because you're trying to do your best and you're not used to it. But it's fun too. It's a challenge. That's the way I looks at it."

Although all participants thought their learning of basic child care was relatively easy, not all six father participated in these activities. Five of the fathers reported feeding, changing and dressing their children. The exception, Bob stated he regularly feeds his son, but did not perform other duties, and went on to explain that he did not like to do the other things.

When the subjects were asked, "Are you doing a good job?" or words to that effect, all but one of the fathers stated they were. Sam used his daughter's happiness as an indicator of his performance; "I guess so. As long as she's happy. It makes me feel good, like to know that she's having a good time. And next time I take her out, she'll want to come with me and stuff." Jim also reported a positive self evaluation in this area stating, "Well, I don't think I'm doing too bad, you know. I can't say I'm perfect because, you know. But I wouldn't say it's too bad." Kevin reported being very pleased with his efforts and that he was as good as any parent:

Yeah (pause), I gives her a bath every day and I changes her when she needs to be changed, puts clothes on her and dresses her (pause), looks after her and takes her places. Not just indoors and in bed all the time (pause), plays with her and you know, just pays attention to her. So, I think I takes good care of her, so. Just as good as anybody else could.

Although all of these teen fathers reported some involvement with child care, only one father described having as much responsibility in this area as the mother. Bill reported an equal sharing of responsibility in child care. Other teen fathers, no matter how involved in these activities, believed that child care was more the role of the mother. This was especially the case when the fathers spent more time working outside of the home. The tendency of fathers to undertake child care duties to a lesser extent than mothers has been previously reported and further explained by the possible lack of confidence of fathers in the area of child care (Parke, Power and Fisher, 1980).

Highlights of Fatherhood

By way of attempting to identify the highlights of a teenager experiencing the role of father, the interviewer asked a number of questions which on occasions were phrased slightly differently, depending on the

response, or lack thereof. These questions included; "What has been the most exciting part of becoming a father? What has been the best part? What is the most interesting thing about being a father?"

A number of things were identified by teenagers in response to these questions. For Melvin, "Spending time with here, being down there with her, you know, watching her and looking at her," was the highlight.

Observing the child, just looking at the child was also noted as an important part of Bill's experience with his child. At one point in an interview, Bill told about the change from just looking without getting any response from him to the time when the child is seen to be reacting to him; "...it's like first all you could do was sit down and look at him, but now you can make him laugh. And when he laughs, it's like me and Cathy looks at each other and notices."

Sam also identified the highlight of fatherhood to be watching his daughter, especially at times when she seems to be enjoying herself. He especially liked, "Taking her out and watching her smile and having fun and stuff."

Time spent alone with the child was also reported as the most special part of becoming a father. Jim enthusiastically stated, "When you've got him to yourself, that's the best thing I likes."

One participant felt very proud of the responsibility he took on as a father and enjoyed the recognition and respect he got from others. To illustrate this, Kevin reported:

Most exciting (pause), it's people like recognize Kevy. Like people listen, always, like they looks up to me more, I don't know. I think it's where I didn't leave Kevy by herself and let Alice take the baby.

So, I think the most excitement I had is when people praise me up and say like, you know, 'you did a good job and took good care of Kevy and stuff.'

In contrast to the other five teen fathers, Bob did not report any particular exciting part of fatherhood. Although the interviewer did not directly ask this subject about the highlights of fatherhood, at no time during the interviews did the subject show enthusiasm about his experience. With one exception, these teen fathers undoubtedly got great pleasure from spending time with their children. Whether or not the positive feelings these teen fathers had for their children is consistent with other findings cannot be stated for no literature in this area was found. The research in the area of teen father involvement with their children varies. Trends have been reported in that teen

father involvement with their children has tended to decrease over the first couple years of the child's life, while marriages tended to gradually increase over this period of time (Lorenzi, Klerman and Jakel, 1977). Two studies found that approximately 20% of the teenage couples eventually married (Nettleton and Cline, 1975; Lorenzi, Klerman and Jakel, 1977). Furstenburg and Crawford (1978) found that after five years, 40% of the teen fathers maintained a regular relationship with the child. He also found that many of these teen fathers did not live with the child until two years after the birth. He explained this pattern of absence might possibly be due to career pursuits. Recent studies include more positive reports of teen father involvement. Rivara, Sweeney and Henderson (1986), found that the majority of teen fathers remained in contact with their children after 18 months. Teen fathers who were involved in teen parenting programs were found to be much more involved with their children. Eighty-two percent of the participants in these parenting programs had daily contact with the child after two years (Klinman, Saunders, Rosen, Longo and Martinez, 1985). Although this study supported the positive findings of teen father involvement with 100% teen father involvement with child and 67% maintaining regular daily contact, a longitudinal study of this group is necessary to examine suggested patterns of involvement over time.

CHAPTER V

Father-Child Relationship

Role of Father

In an attempt to gain an understanding of the subjects' perceptions of their role as fathers, the interviewer presented several questions concerning their duties as fathers and the differences in the roles of mother and father. At this time, childhood memories of their relationship with each of their parents were also described.

For many of the teen fathers, the expected duties described fit the traditional role of the father, in that their perceived duties were similar to their own fathers. The roles described by the six teen fathers were very similar and may reflect views that are generally held in rural Newfoundland. In these cases the father was considered a helper to the mother in looking after the child. But, primarily his main role was that of a financial provider and disciplinarian.

All of the fathers reported the mothers being the primary parent. They believed the mother and the child should not be separated. No matter how much they wanted to spend time with their children, they reportedly would never take the children from their mothers on a permanent basis.

Discipline was regarded as a significant part of the father's role by three of the teen fathers. Although Bob reported there was "no difference in what the mother and father does," he then went on and said that the, "father would do more disciplining."

Like Bob, Sam also reported that there was not much of a difference in the role of mother and father, but that, "...a mother is more close to the child," and that the father was more a disciplinarian. Sam further explained that he wanted to guide and support his child, at all times:

I think they should be there for the child, when a child is crying and stuff like that. And does something that's wrong, like you know, send him to his room and something like that. And try to talk to him about it and stuff, right. And if child's in trouble try to stand by him...

Jim reported his role in parenting was disciplining. This varied from the mother's role as he further explained, "...disciplining is my role as such, because she's the mother. She's the loving side of the family, you say, you know...." Jim described his role as a father was very important because he was a guide. He reported not wanting his child growing up without his influence. He listed his responsibilities as a father to teach the child many

things including; right from wrong, good manners, responsibility, social skills, and how to have fun.

In contrast, Bill was the only father that stated the mother's and father's duties should be shared equally. His role as a father was described as a guide who was supportive at all times, especially difficult ones:

Well, I got to take care of the baby not to let him get into trouble, help him in as many ways as I can, help with his ups and downs as he gets older and older.

Well, everybody goes through different things, problems and stuff like that. I always wants to be the one there to talk to. I always wants to have a good relationship with him. I knows there's always going to be some hard times because there always is, right. I'll always be there for him like that, right. And set a good example for him, no swearing or nothing like that around the house or....

When asked what the role of a father involved, three of the subjects reported the duty of providing financial support. Although Bob stated he was dependent on his parents for finances for his child, he did want to buy things for the child, such as "milk" and "clothing."

Contrary to Bob's situation, Kevin reported working and already providing financially for his child and the mother. He described his main role as:

Well, I tries to help Alice along and go to work and do whatever I can for Alice (pause), gives her as much money as I possibly can. Well, I gives her whatever I gets, right. We shares our money. And try to finish school, if I can finish school and get my course, so I can get a good job. Well, that's most of what I does, helps her take care of the baby, do whatever I can for her.

Melvin was the only teen father that reported not having any responsibility at all. He said:

I don't see how I got any responsibility really. I'm just the father, that's all. I'm the father, but I'm not the father, you know what I mean.

I don't play a role as a father, like support or whatever, right. Melvin reported this lack of involvement was imposed on him as he stated he was, "...shoved out of the picture, altogether." He did explain that his role so

far has been to protect his daughter and look after her best interests. He described how he did this by preventing her from being put up for adoption:

Stick up for her, feel like they wants her to be put up for adoption with Sandra, right. But I don't want that, right, because I thinks that Susan won't like it when she gets older. Like it's not that often that a child is adopted by the grandmother and her parents still alive. So, It seems kind of weird, right. That's what I thinks. I went up to talk to the counsellor about it. I feel that's the best role I ever took yet in sticking up for her, right, cause I'm concerned about her too, right (pause), how'd she feel.

All of these teen fathers report an active role in their children's lives. They are either providing emotionally and/or financially and offering support and guidance. If they are not providing for their children in these ways, they have reported a desire to do so, but are limited by obstacles such as visitation restrictions and lack of income.

Expression of Affection

The interviewer attempted to gain an understanding of the affection the teen fathers had for their children, by questioning their feelings for the child

and affectionate behavior shown towards child. Each participant was asked what feelings he had towards his child and how he showed these feelings. Some subjects were asked directly if they hugged and kissed their children.

Without exception, all the teenage fathers in the study stated they did love their children. In most cases these feelings were further substantiated by reports of affectionate behavior such as hugging and kissing the child. Two of the fathers described very strong feelings of love for their children and an open display of affection. Jim described his feelings for his son as:

I loves him. That's basically it, I mean, you know. I wouldn't do anything to hurt him. I never would,

Oh, I loves him (pause), you know. He's the top of my list.

He's my first priority. Before anything else, he comes first.

Jim described showing these feelings to his son by; "Every night, before I goes to bed, I hug and kiss unless he's down at her house. So then it's, I just calls him and talks to him on the phone, (pause), tells him I loves him and whatever."

Kevin also described feelings of love for his child and regular displays of affection; "I love Kevy a lot. I wouldn't want nothing to happen to her. Like, I wouldn't give her up. That's why I got her to down, right. I hugs and

kisses her a lot, right." Kevin further described how he taught his daughter to show affection by making a game of it:

I think I was the one who taught her how to kiss (pause), cause I used to be kissing her all the time. Now, when she sees a baby in the book or something I'll say kiss the baby and she'll kiss the baby and stuff. Or I'll say kiss to go outdoors and she'll kiss me on the cheek or whatever. I'll kiss her on the cheek and let her go outdoors (pause), just to show her, right.

Bill also expressed a concern and caring for his son. In one interview he described having a lot of experience with children as he grew up and how he enjoyed it. He said, "Oh, I loves children." At no one time did Bill state he loves his child, but his feelings for his son were evident in the concern expressed for him; "Um, like when he's crying, he's hurting cause he's getting his teeth now too, right. He's crying and that's the hardest, seeing him crying and that. Sometimes you can't stop him crying, just keeps crying."

Bill also did not report actually hugging and kissing his child but did describe affectionate behavior such as cuddling him and rocking him to sleep.

Sam and Melvin, the two fathers that spent the least amount of time with their children, reported affectionate feelings and behavior towards their

children. These fathers also claimed they wanted to spend more time with their children but that their access was restricted.

Sam shared his feelings towards his daughter by saying, "I think the world of her, right. I want to spend time with her and take her places." Sam described how his daughter wanted to play and be active rather than kiss, but did say, "On the way home, we usually hug and I tell her I love her and see her next time...."

Melvin reported similar feelings towards his daughter and stated, "Well, I love her and everything. I wish she'd come up more." Melvin described affectionate behavior such as cuddling his child and responded, "Sometimes, yeah," when asked if he hugged and kissed her.

One father was less articulate throughout all the interviews and was not open with his feelings toward his child. He had great difficulty describing how he felt towards his child, but responded, "yeah," when asked if he loved him. When asked directly Bob also said he hugged and kissed his child "every now and then."

Undoubtedly all the teen fathers interviewed had loving feelings towards their child and to different degrees did demonstrate this through affectionate behavior.

Understanding of Child

All subjects in the study were asked to describe their children. They were further probed as to the physical and personality traits they saw. This information was thought to illustrate the father's knowledge of familiarity of their children.

Four of the teenage fathers provided very elaborate physical descriptions of their children, often stating the children's resemblance either to themselves or another family member. Bill had stated his child had physical features similar to both himself and his girlfriend's brother. He described his son in relation to normative growth stages, demonstrating his knowledge of childhood development:

He's big for four months old. He's (pause), when you gets one year old, you're supposed to be 22 pounds and he's 19 now, 19 pounds. He's almost the size of a one year old, already. He's really bright. Doctors said he was right bright and stuff, he's strong. Almost crawls away now and eats a lot. Oh, he's real healthy, yeah.

Jim also stated that his son looked like him when he was younger, but now resembled another family member; "He's big. Physically, he's big. Yeah, he's really strong. He's going to be like my uncle. I used to have an uncle

that was really huge. And he's going to be just like him." Sam had so closely examined his child's features and described his daughter has having a combination of both her mother and father's looks; "She's short. Well, she looks like kind a me and kind a like her mother. It's hard to tell."

Like Bill, Kevin described the growth of his daughter to other children and concluded that she was tall for her age. Kevin also described his daughter as 'looking "exactly" like him:

She's got a (laugh), she looks a lot, everybody says she looks exactly like me. But looks, she's got blonde hair and she got blue eyes. And she's sort of chubby, but she's tall too for her age, cause there's this girl, Alice's uncle's little girl. She's two months older than Kevy and Kevy is about, I'd say about half a foot taller than she is. So, I'd say she's quite tall. And ah pretty too (laugh).

The other two fathers provided less information about their children. Melvin did not provide any physical description and Bob contradicted his statements. During one interview Bob stated his son had brown hair and green eyes. At a later time, he then said the baby had dirty blonde hair and blue eyes. When asked if the child looked like him, Bob responded, "Yeah, that's

what everyone says, anyways." Both of these fathers lacked information concerning a physical description of their children.

The four fathers that provided the elaborate physical description of their children also provided an extensive description of the children's personality. Bill shared his amazement of his child's exploratory behavior and how much his child appeared to understand him:

Oh yeah, he notices everything. He's always looking around everywhere, looking at lights. He likes lights and colourful things. He's always, like you to talk to him and sometimes he doesn't even hear you. Sometimes he sits down in front of the TV and laughs at the cartoons. Like, I don't know if he understands it or not, but he likes it. For some reason he tries to grab pictures and books and stuff like that. That's alert for a four month old baby. That's really alert. He rolls over and....

He's like, can't explain, he laughs a lot. He don't cry very much but he just sits down and looks like he's observing, like he wants to know everything, like, you know. Like I feels like he understands me sometimes when I talks to him. He's unbelievable, right. I can't explain it. That's the way he is.

He just sits down and looks around, noticing everything. He notices every movement.

Jim described his son as being hyperactive and identified this with his own behavior as a child:

He's almost like he's hyper, a hyper child, but I mean he listens...pickiness and that, he's just like me. That's the way I've always been when I was a child. I used to pick and pick and pick. They put me in the hospital one time. And I had to be out in a wheelchair, cause I had double pneumonia and I couldn't walk or nothing like that. And I used to chase the nurses around the hospital. They had to take the wheelchair away from me. So, I was really hyper. He turns after me for that. He's very hyper.

Jim also identified his son's strengths:

He's real good with numbers. He can count. He's happy. There's not very often is he down or anything like that. He don't really cry often. And he's really tough. If he runs into something, he'll just look back at it and go on and laugh and that's it, you know....

Jim showed no hesitation thinking of an area that his son might have difficulty with:

He don't really have good balance and things like this. Like, he almost seems like he got an inner ear problem cause he don't have a lot of balance. He's just, you know, like he'll be running along and every now and then he'll just lose his balance and fall down or something....

Sam stated his child resembled her mother and saw her strength as being, "She likes being always moving and doing things, so she's not just sitting down and doing nothing." He then went on to describe a detailed episode of his daughter's excitable behavior; "Gets her on video camera and stuff like that. And like she's a little angel and when you plays it back she's watching herself. She's on the couch and jumping on the couch. She gets right wild."

Kevin showed a good understanding of his daughter's personality describing her as a very pleasant and active child. He gave a detailed description of her daily behavior:

Well, she's quite funny (laugh). She don't do a lot of crying. She don't cry much unless something don't go her way. That's about the only time she cries, but she usually plays. She can

play by herself and she's not, you know, always wanting to go here and there. She'll go in the room and sit down and play. She can go out by the door and spend hours out by the door. And you don't even have to worry about her cause she only goes out and she'll stand around and play with her bike and plays with this and that, right. And she sleeps through the night. We don't have any problems with her sleeping in the night, like she was never like that. She's quite active too, like she's always running about, liking to play with stuff and stuff. And she tries to, like whatever you does, she likes to do it. Like, she sees Alice cleaning, she'll try to go over and get a cloth. She wants to clean too. That's the way she is. Or Alice is trying to vacuum the floor and she'll go over and try to grab the vacuum from Alice and then to do it herself. She's catching on pretty quick.

Kevin also identified his daughter's sulking behavior when she doesn't get her way, as a weakness of hers:

...she gets contrary if stuff don't go her way. Like if you, like today when it was raining and she wanted to go outdoors and that, and we didn't let her go out. And she got like, you know,

crying and stuff to go outdoors, right, so. She gets quite contrary sometimes, but other than that, she's pretty good.

Unlike the previously described four fathers, Melvin and Bob had few comments on this topic. Both fathers stated their children were pleasant in temperament. Melvin added a description of his daughter that he had heard from others; "...the nurses used to say that she's really smart for her age. I don't know if it's true or not. I don't know where she'd get that to (laugh). But they said she's good for her age." He also stated his child's weakness may be that, "she's kind of shy."

Four of the teenage fathers interviewed demonstrated a familiarity and a clear understanding of their children, which could only result from regular interaction. The other two fathers appeared to be much less familiar with their children.

Community Identity

The father presenting himself and his child to the community, by taking the child out in the community and talking about his child, allows him to have a public identity as a father. This sharing of the fatherhood experience indicates a willingness and pride in taking on the role of a father. The father and child's exposure to the community was examined by questions relating to

where the father took the child, who he talked to about the child and what he said about the child.

One father reported no involvement whatsoever with his child outside of the home. In fact, he described the few times with his child were always accompanied by the mother. Melvin stated, "They wouldn't let me take her out anyway" and further explained that the mother and her parents did not see him as responsible enough to take the child somewhere. When asked why this was so, he said, "...afraid she'd get the flu or something, I suppose." Although Melvin's friends were aware he had a child, they never saw her. He also said he seldom talks to his friends about his daughter and did not see their involvement as important. He agreed that he could be considered a part-time father. When others ask about his daughter, Melvin said he has little to tell them because he "doesn't see her enough to know...."

Although Bob had full access to his child, his community identity is somewhat like Melvin's. The maternal grandparents were very involved as Bob explained, "...the girlfriend's mother and father takes him almost everywhere they goes." He did say he took the child, "...down around the harbour...." Although his friends saw his child, "...every now and then," he did not talk to his friends about his child. When others ask about his son, Bob said he tells them what the child is doing and learning.

The remaining four fathers reported a high profile in the community, where many acquaintances and friends were regularly exposed to the child. Bill reported taking his child many places including walks around the community, in a stroller and to the shopping mall. He described his friends as being very involved with his child and quite supportive:

Oh yeah, we got some really good friends, two of us. Yes they comes, every time they come down to Cathy's for me, come down for me or something, they come in to see him and that. Like people still come to see him that never seen him before. Gee, we got (pause), Cathy's room is filled with stuff, like baby stuff from my friends, closets full with baby stuff, right.

Bill also explained the importance of his friend's involvement as a way of being accepted, himself:

Well, it makes me feel that he's more important then, too. Like, he's more accepted and he'll never be lonely and stuff like that. There'll always be someone there for him. If me and Cathy is not there, or something like that. It makes me feel good, too. It lets me know I got friends, stuff like that, too.

Although Sam only saw his daughter once a week, he described frequently taking her to the park and back to his home with his friends. Many

people in his neighbourhood saw the child, but close friends saw his child often:

It's my best friend, the godfather, so he usually comes down and sees her so, he plays with her.

Yes, I have a lot of friends on the street, my best friend is godfather, and like everybody around knows her and stuff. I go to my other friend's house and show her off to his mother and stuff like that.

When talking to others about his child, Sam said he would often describe what she was learning; "Shows how she can walk and how she won't go anywhere without me. Like, if someone sang out to her, she looks at me for approval if to go to that person or whatever."

Sam stated this support from his friends was very important to him.

Jim also reported having his child involved in the community, taking him to the playground and swimming. All of his friends were aware of his child. In fact, he had a picture of his son up in a locker at school. Jim described how many students would then come up and ask questions about his child. He showed great pride remembering what he told his friends:

Tell them how old he is and he's talking or he's walking. When he first walked, I told everybody, just about. And all that, you know, just the kind of things that he does. How he's big, cause he's really big child, like....

Kevin reported taking his daughter to the park, the shopping mall, and around the community either in car or on bicycle. He described these outings with his child as very pleasurable. Kevin very much enjoyed talking about his daughter during these activities, and would often say:

Oh, Dad's baby and stuff like that. Saying how cute she is and how much she looks like Dad. And, just saying, like Dad's little girl and she's only Dad's and on one else's, and stuff like that. Just joking around with people, cause yesterday we went up to the mall and got, brought her up to the mall and carrying her around. A lot of people didn't know I had her, cause, there's a couple of people, they knew I had a baby, but they hadn't seen her before. A lot of people said she looked a lot like me and she was cute and stuff, so.

Kevin also stated that his friends cared very much about his child and would help with child care if needed:

Oh, they can't get over her, they likes her a lot, they don't mind, like if we wanted them. Sometimes they babysit too, right. If we ever went anywhere, they said they's babysit, too, said they'd take care of her, they'd look after her, too.

Although all of the teen fathers interviewed cared very much for their children and demonstrated this in affectionate behavior and community involvement, the frequency of their visits with the child did not necessarily coincide with their understanding of or activity with the child. To further illustrate this point, the teen father who saw his child weekly showed an exceptional understanding of the child and had a lot of involvement in the community with the child, while one of the teen fathers who saw his child daily showed little understanding of the child and had little involvement in the community with the child.

All of the above personal reflections provide insight into the quality of the relationships between teen fathers and their children. This is often lacking in the literature on teen father involvement. An examination of teen father's involvement with their children cannot simply be a figure indicating the number of father-child visits for as illustrated above, this information may be very misleading.

CHAPTER VI

Decision-Making and Legal Rights

The two major topics of this chapter are decision-making concerning pregnancy and child care and the legal rights of teenage fathers. The chapter concludes with teenager fathers reports of their most difficult experiences.

Decision-Making and Teenage Fathers

The focus of this section is on the nature and extent to which teenager fathers were involved in the decision-making relating to pregnancy, before it occurred, and on matters relating to child care after the child was born.

Decisions Concerning Pregnancy

The interviewer sought to gain an understanding of the teen fathers' inclusion in the decision-making process both immediately prior to and after the pregnancy. The father's role in planning and using contraceptives, as well as his involvement in the decision to keep the baby was examined. Although all of the teen fathers were aware of contraceptives, where to get them, and had used them at times, only two of the young men had showed some planning by discussing the use of contraceptives with their partners. One partner had been taking oral contraceptives for months before the pregnancy, but had not

taken them properly. Another partner was planning to use oral contraceptives and had seen a doctor, but was advised not to at that time because of a medical problem. Shortly after this, she became pregnant.

One teen father claimed that although he had used a condom on occasion, both he and his partner discussed having a child. He stated that the pregnancy was planned. The other participants in this study had not discussed using protection with their partners. Two of them had used condoms during their dating period, but the use was not consistent. Both fathers believed pregnancy would not happen to them. The other father had not planned to be sexually active and said he only had intercourse once. He had not used a condom and his partner became pregnant. Unplanned sexual intercourse has been cited as the most common reason teen fathers give for not using condoms (Sonenstein, 1986; Zelnik, Kanter and Ford, 1981).

With the exception of Sam, the teen father who planned to have a child, all the teen fathers in this study, were not involved in the decision to keep the child. They all reported supporting the mothers' decision, but that the decision was already made. For two of these fathers, the mothers were five to seven months pregnant when they learned of the pregnancy. One father, Melvin described how he not only had no input into the decision to

keep the child, but how the mother did not either. He explained that it was the maternal grandmother who had made these decisions for the two of them:

Well, the day we found out she was pregnant, Sandra had me in the car. She was telling me everything she was going to do, right, (pause) like she had the plan already laid out. Like basically what she said, she said she's not getting an abortion and she's not quitting school and all this kind of stuff, right. And I'll (Sandra) take the baby and everything else.

It is evident that even in these early stages of fatherhood, the teen fathers in this study, had very little input into the decisions regarding what was going to happen to their children. The exclusion of the teen father is well documented in the literature. Robinson and Barret (1986) found that many times the teen father was not informed when his child had been adopted or placed in foster care. Other researchers found that adolescent males who would want to be involved in these early decision would agree with the mother's decisions (Redmond, 1985). Unmarried hispanic teen fathers reported they would go along with the mothers' decisions even if it meant adoption or abortion (Hendricks, 1988). The fact that teen fathers have been found to not interfere with the mothers' decisions concerning the outcome of pregnancy, leads one to

inquire about the extent to which teenage fathers participate in decisions concerning the child after it is born.

Decisions Concerning the Child

The involvement of the subjects in the decision concerning their children was questioned. Their perspective of the level of involvement, being either actively involved, informed after the decision, or not informed at all was identified by each of the participants.

All of the teen fathers were directly asked if they felt they were included in the decisions regarding their children. Three of the fathers interviewed reported not having any input whatsoever in the choices made for their children. Not surprisingly, two of these fathers also reported having difficulty seeing their children. Melvin said that not only was he not involved, but also that, "I don't think they want me involved in it at all." When Sam was asked about his involvement he replied, "Not really, cause I'm not there all the time, stuff like that. So, she has more say about that."

Contrary to Melvin and Sam's situation, Jim had free access to his child, but still felt he was not involved in most of the decisions. He described his frustration with not being included:

No, not really. No, that's one of the things I get a little bit frustrated about, now. Like when things come up about it, right you know. I say, I never knew nothing about the decision, so, right. And it makes you feel like (pause), like you're not that important. Like you're a distant person, you know.

Even though only half of the teen fathers in this study reported being excluded from these decisions, all but one teen father stated that the mothers had the final say regarding the child. Both Bill and Kevin described being quite comfortable with their involvement in the decisions concerning their children and believed their opinions were considered. Even with this being the case, Kevin, however, reported that the mother would usually make the final decision. Kevin described his involvement:

I usually leaves it up to Alice, right. It's like, the baby lives with Alice. I don't live there, right. I lives at home, so Alice usually makes the decisions. But I tells her, gives her advice on what to do. She usually has the last say, right, sort of.

In one case, as was with Melvin, both the mother and father were reportedly excluded from involvement in the decisions concerning their daughter. The decisions were made solely by the maternal grandmother:

Yeah, as soon as they found out Molly was pregnant, Sandra took right over. I never had no say at all. Molly had a bit, I suppose, not that much.

Molly haven't even got that much to say as far as I'm concerned.

The teen fathers that reported being excluded from the decisions concerning their children also stated they were many times even not informed of these decisions after the fact. Jim described his disappointment with this lack of regard for his role as the father. He said:

Yeah, there was about, many decisions that were made that (pause), like you know, they were made without me knowing. And even, you know, later down the road, I find out. Well, you know, you made the decision. You never come to me about it, right. And I'm not saying I would have disagreed with the decision or anything. I mean, but even just to let me know, you know. Just give you that little extra. Let you know you're important, you know, that type of think, right. Even if she went ahead with the thing, I didn't want her to do, letting me know, right.

Both Melvin and Sam described how they were not even informed of decisions concerning the health of their children. Melvin said that there were times when his child was taken to the hospital without him knowing. He then went on and provided a detailed example of this:

I remember one time, Susan had a rash on her face and I was down the road on bike, right. I was just down for a ride and they came along and went on. After a while they stopped right, and came back. And they told me, right. I looked in the car and seen Susan there with a little rash on her face. And other than that, they wouldn't have (pause), I don't think they would have told me, right.

Sam reported how he would only be informed of his child's health if it affected his visitation. There were also times that the mother casually mentioned the child's illness at a later date. He said that, "She might mention it and say she was down a couple of nights ago, ear infection or something like that." Again, the exclusion for the teen father from the planning for his child continues after birth (Robinson and Barret, 1986).

When the fathers were asked what decision they did make involving their children, a common response was choosing the children's names. Even Melvin and Sam had participated in this decision, as at that time, they were

still involved with the mother, and had a positive relationship. Later, for both of these fathers, the conflicting relationship with the mother strongly impacted on their ability to be involved in the decisions concerning their children.

Problems getting along with the teen mothers have been reported by teen fathers in numerous studies (Rivara et al., 1986; Elster and Panzarine, 1983; Hendricks, 1983). Many of these same teen fathers also complained of limited access to their children (Hendricks, 1983; Rivara et al., 1986). Clearly there is a link between the teen father's relationship with the teen mother and his involvement with his child. Cervera (1991) stated the influence of the teen parents' relationship has been much underestimated and requires more study.

Involvement of Grandparents

As reported by the teenage fathers who participated in this study, grandparents played a significant role in the decisions that were made concerning the children. The fathers described the extent of the grandparents' involvement, or the amount of control the grandparents had over the situation. How this amount of guidance was received by the fathers was also questioned. The interviewer was interested in whether the grandparents involvement or lack thereof, had a positive or negative affect on the teen father.

Four of the subjects interviewed, described a very positive and supportive relationship with both maternal and paternal grandparents. All of these grandparents were fully involved in the decision-making concerning their grandchildren, but their guidance was well appreciated by the teen fathers. For example, Bill acknowledged not only his appreciation for the grandparents' guidance, but also his need for it:

Yeah, it's, I mean sometimes we had to get help with our decisions cause, I mean (pause), we're getting used to it now, like. It's not so bad any more. First, like we read stuff, we read about *involve*s and stuff. We went to pre-natal classes and everything like that. We still need help from our parents. Someone to help us make decisions.

Kevin reported an imbalance of involvement of the grandparents. He stated that his parents were more involved than the mother's parents, since the mother moved away from home to live next to him. He further explained this:

I think if Alice's parents were here, there might have been some stuff and Alice would have done different, right (pause), cause her parents would have been here and probably shown her, you know, probably told her not to do it different. But where her parents were away and she's only talking to her parents

probably once every two weeks or once every three weeks, right.

Yeah, they (father's parents) gives me a good idea, like what to do, how to make decisions, and what's right from wrong. But, I don't know about making decisions for me, but I think most of it's up to me, I think.

Although Bob described all four of the grandparents as very helpful in contributing to the decisions made concerning his child, he felt the maternal grandparents had more control than his parents.

Like Bob, Jim described a similar situation of more control by the maternal grandparents. He, however, had some difficulty with this. He described his feelings of frustration but tolerant behavior as:

Well, it's not with my parents. It's with the mother's parents cause they're a little bit different, I guess. Where it's their daughter that had the child, they feel more responsible, I guess, more like, you know. They own the kid, you know cause on many occasions her mother had said, you know, she owns the kid because she had to put up with everything and all that. You know, but she don't do any more than my parents does.

But they do have more control where she's the daughter. You know, she's their daughter. And, you know, she do have more control than I do because there is nothing I can do about that. But we usually work things out together instead of her making the decisions and that's it.

Melvin also reported having great difficulty with the control the maternal grandmother had not only over his child, but also the mother of his child. He described the maternal grandmother as "dominant" and her controlling behavior as the following; "I think Sandra and Fred is got Molly brainwashed myself cause, you know Sandra always said, (pause), she used to say when I was there, Susan is never leaving this house and everything else, right." At this time, the child lived with her maternal grandparents, alone, while the mother lived with her grandparents. Like Melvin, the paternal grandparents were excluded from any decision-making concerning the child. However, Melvin's parents were more accepting of this situation and advised him not to interfere; "They think I should have more to say about her but Mom and Dad told me not to interfere, right, cause they said, if I was looking after her (his child), I would have more to say, but I'm not."

In Sam's case, he had little information about any of the grandparents. He rarely saw his mother, but was aware that she did visit the child on

occasion. He had no contact with the maternal grandmother and step grandfather, but the mother and child did live with them. It would be expected that the mother's parents had more input into the child's life than his mother.

In summary, four of the teen fathers in this study described more involvement in decisions concerning the child, by the maternal grandparents than the paternal grandparents. For three of these cases, the involvement was seen as overbearing and inappropriate. The fathers believed they should be making more of these decisions. Although the teen fathers in Barret and Robinson's study (1982a) reported positive relations with the maternal grandparents, teen fathers in another study reported more hostile relations (Hendricks, 1980; Robinson and Barret, 1986). Cervera (1991) found that the maternal grandparents' negativity towards the teen fathers was not dependent on his involvement with the mother and child. In fact, the maternal grandparents have been found to at times prevent the teen father from being involved with the teen mother and child (Connolly, 1978). Teen fathers more often identified the maternal grandmother to be the most difficult person to deal with (Klinman et al., 1985). Here, complaints included overprotectiveness and undue influence. Several researchers have attempted to explain the negativity and exclusion experienced by teen fathers. Some of the

maternal grandparents' hostility may be caused by the financial and emotional responsibility put on them by the early parenthood of their daughters (Furstenburg, 1980). There may also be some competition between the teen fathers and the maternal grandparents concerning the loyalties, interests and needs of the teen mother (Furstenburg, 1980; Robinson and Barret, 1986). The difficulties are not only with the maternal grandparents, for Allen-Meares (1984) found that both the maternal and paternal grandparents blamed the other teenager.

Legal Rights of Teenage Fathers

The legal rights of the teen fathers in this study are presented from their personal perspectives, mainly as a result of the experiences they had with legal agencies and social services. The fathers were also questioned concerning their recognition as fathers on legal documents such as birth certificates, baptism certificates and adoption papers.

Four of the six teen fathers interviewed reported being listed as the father on the birth certificate. One father did not know if he was listed and the other father, Kevin, had consulted with the mother and both had decided not to have the father's name on the birth certificate. They decided this would be best for the child in case they did not stay together as this is what had

happened to Kevin. He carried his mother's surname because his biological father left shortly after he was born. Kevin further explained his reasons for this choice:

No, we decided not to, just in case, (pause) down the road or so, we break up, right. The baby won't be in my name. But if we ever do get married, right, we can always switch it over. And that is what my aunt did too, right. She switched the baby's name over when she got married. So, we decided to put it in Alice's name, just in case. That was both our ideas, like (pause), I decided that's what we'd do. That's the best thing to do.

For the same reasons Kevin did not have the child baptized in his name:

So, we christened the baby in her name, cause I'm christened in my parent's name, right, my mother's name. And my father, he weren't, like they broke up after a while, so I would, if I got christened in his name, I would've had to get my name changed over, right. So, we decided that's what we'll do.

For two of the fathers, having the children baptized in the mothers' name, was not their decision and something they did not want. In Melvin's case, the maternal grandmother decided on baptizing the child in the mother's

name. He said, "They wanted her baptized--(mother's surname), right, I mean, no way is she going to be baptized--(father's surname), right."

Bill also had difficulty having his child baptized in his name. In this case the church did not recognize him as the father. He described the particular minister's response as, "The minister said he wouldn't do it cause we weren't married. He's not allowed to do it or something."

Many of the subjects in this study were unsure of their legal rights as fathers. In two cases, the teen fathers did not have a reason to question their legal rights. In both Bob's and Melvin's cases, they had no need to approach social or legal services for assistance. Both of these young men had full support from both families and all involved were very cooperative. The grandparents were sharing the responsibility of child care, financially and emotionally.

The other four teen fathers were more experienced with the legal system as they all approached one agency or another (family court, social services, educational institutions), in an attempt to gain assistance. In all cases the fathers reported difficulties. For instance, Bill had applied for a student loan as a single parent but was denied because he did not have the appropriate documentation stating he was the father. His name was not on the birth certificate and the minister would not write his name on the baptism

certificate. In this case, the mother was free to apply for a student loan as a single parent. However, to do this she had to claim sole custody of the child. Bill shared his feeling of injustice with this lack of recognition of his rights as a father:

Yeah, and that's not one bit fair, that's not, cause I mean there's two. That's her baby now and if she wanted to, I wouldn't be allowed to interfere, if I wanted to. If something happened to us, she could go on with the baby and I couldn't do nothing about it (pause), cause it's in the mother's name, right.

Kevin also required some financial assistance for his training. He reported that there appeared to be more support for the mother and father if they were not living together as a couple. For instance, the mother would only get assistance from social services if she lived on her own. His financial assistance would be cut if he lived with the mother. This situation actually made it more difficult for Kevin to act as a father to his child. Kevin felt this was quite unfair as he said, "It's probably my child too, so why should she get all that, right."

Sam shared his experience with the legal system. He and the mother had met with a counsellor to discuss visitation times. Sam had wanted more

time with his daughter, but felt the only way to do this was to question the mother's ability to care for her child:

...the only way for it to go to court out of it is if like I said she was a bad mother or something. Then they would do something. That's the way it would seem. Like they were always trying to (pause), trying to put her down. Asked if she hit her and stuff like that and questions like that.

He then went on to describe how he finally gave up on family court:

...because we kind of worked it out, like we. I always gets her on Saturdays. I, so I wanted her on Saturdays and Sundays, then I was just happy to get her. There was like three months that I didn't see my daughter. She wouldn't even talk to me or anything. So, I think that's why I didn't get a lawyer.

As a result of his experience, Sam stated he was not treated equally as a parent by legal services. He said the court "don't think that probably you would do a good job."

Melvin's experience with social services was more promising. The mother had filed to have her parents adopt the child. The counsellor involved had contacted Melvin by letter informing him of this. After meeting with the counsellor, Melvin described her as hopeful. She had insisted, "It's time for

you and Molly talks, right, cause it is your child, right." According to Melvin the counsellor was positive and did recognize his rights as the father. However, he was told that there was a possibility the maternal grandparents could adopt his child if it went to court. The incident he described left him confused and uncertain of his legal rights; "...yeah, but she said, you know, like they probably could have , well made it, right, if they went up in front of a judge or something. Like probably go ahead with the adoption or whatever without my permission, right."

The testimony of the teen fathers in this study indicate their confusion and doubts concerning their legal rights as fathers. Upon consultation with social services, their policies regarding parental rights were explained. Although teen fathers are considered to have equal parental rights, the parent having physical care of the child has control of that child until deemed otherwise by the court. Regardless of which parent has the child, social services cannot intervene on issues of access, custody or placement. Only recently, the Adoption of Children's Act has allowed for the father to be considered in adoption procedures. Adoption now requires the consent of both parents. It appears that although fathers do have rights they often have to take legal measures to practice these rights. From the perspective of social services, all single parents age 18 years or over, are eligible to apply for

financial assistance, regardless of their present living situation. Exceptions have also been made for younger teen parents.

Most Difficult Experiences

All research participants were asked to describe the most difficult or disappointing part of the fatherhood experience. With only one exception, the fathers described the difficulty they had with the lack of recognition they received as parents of their children. They were not as involved in the decisions concerning their children, as they would like to be. In two cases they were excluded from all the decisions and any involvement with the child at all was limited.

Both Sam and Melvin complained of visitation limitations that were placed on them by the mothers and counsellors that did not help the situation. Melvin's disappointment is evident in the following statements; "Ah (pause), not having any say over her, probably. Not have the right to, you know. The most disappointing part was like getting shoved out of the picture altogether cause that's what's happening now, right."

Like Melvin, Sam reported similar difficulties with the mother in his attempts to see his daughter:

She's (the mother) being difficult. It's like she's playing a game or something and stuff like that. Like if she let me take her, spend more time with her and stuff, it was benefit her and it would benefit me and Sally too, right. She won't let that happen.

Sam also stated the most difficult part of his fatherhood experience was, "trying to get my daughter, seeing her and stuff, going with her and stuff."

Kevin's difficulties were also with spending time with his child, but in his case the problems were not with the mother but with social services. He described how both his and the mother's social assistance would be reduced if he lived with the mother and child:

Ah (pause), well something disappointing is that I always, I was going to see if I could stay with Kevy and live with Alice, but I don't think we can because where I lived with Alice, might have her checks cut off or something because I'm not supposed to be staying there. And if I do, where I'm going to school, they might, I might not get as much money. Like my unemployment might be cut of a bit and stuff like this. I wouldn't get the money and I probably wouldn't afford to be allowed to go to school, right. So, I really can't live with her, right. That's the

worst part. I'd love to be able to stay there, and that's it, be able to help Alice, take over, right, but I can't. My unemployment would be cut off, probably wouldn't get my seat in school, whatever right cause social services would take so much or cut my check by 25 percent or something like that. So, I wouldn't be able to afford to go to school. So, that's the most disappointing.

In Jim's case, he wanted himself and the mother to have all the control over their child. At the time of the interviews, he reported an extensive involvement of the maternal grandparents and preferred that they were less involved with the decisions regarding his son. He said, "I wish I had all the control, me. Well, not only me. I mean, me and the mother, right."

Bob described being most disappointed with people who had very low expectations of him as a teen father or those who did not recognize his rights as a parent. He reported having difficulty with the following:

People who says like, I don't know, that's a sin or something like that, talking about Cathy or something like that. Says like, you ain't got no good or something like that. You can't go out no where or something, people negative and stuff like that.

...I'd like to be realized just as much a parent as Cathy do.

And like I says to Cathy, do you want to go out and stuff like that. I don't want everyone else to think I'm going out all the time and Cathy's staying home, stuff like that. I goes out and goes to sports and stuff like that. But I gives Cathy just as much opportunities and stuff like that, but she don't always take it, right. Like, not everyone realizes.

Bob was the only teen father in this study that did not report having difficulties with being included in decision-making and being recognized as a parent. Instead, he described having the most difficulty with the demands of having a new born child. He said, "It was hard to adjust first when he was born."

Involvement, control and recognition were all common issues for this group of teenage fathers. They are problems that are probably part of the design of single parenthood. They are also issues that are very much tied together. If a teen father has no control, he has no involvement with the decisions regarding his child and therefore is not recognized as a responsible parent. These issues of involvement and control have been found to be concerns of other teen fathers as well. Access to the child was reported to be one of the most common problems for teen fathers (Rivara, Sweeney and

Henderson, 1986). Teen fathers have described the feelings of helplessness and frustration with being excluded from the planning for their children (Barret and Robinson, 1982b). Fry and Trifiletti (1983) found that the most intense feelings of rejection were reported by teen fathers who had their babies adopted. Teen fathers' difficulties with the public's perception or expectation of less involved teen fathers was not as evident in the literature. Special attention must be given to these particular areas of difficulty for they are considered by the teen fathers to be the most distressing and they are far from being solved.

CHAPTER VII

Sources of Material and Emotional Support

Given the financial situation of most teenage fathers, it is not surprising that the need for material support for the newborn is an important part of their view of their circumstances. Also, experiencing such a change in their identity, that is becoming a father at such a young age, the need for emotional support becomes a critical dimension of their new experiences. The support received by the teenager father was thought to be an important factor affecting his ability to cope with the fatherhood experience. The present chapter presents their views of the material and emotional support teenage fathers received during this time in their lives. All the subjects in this study were questioned as to the sources of financial and emotional support for them. The responses included numerous sources of assistance including friends, grandparents, the teen mothers and most frequently their own parents. The public at large is also a part of the emotional environment of teen fathers. Hence, this section on their perceptions of the views of the public is included in this chapter.

Support of Family

Given the teen perception of the paramount importance of his family in giving financial and emotional support, each of these dimensions of support are discussed here.

Material support. When examining the financial contributions of the teen father to the mother and child, the father's particular situation must be considered. At the time of the pregnancies all the teen fathers in this study were attending high school. During the interview period, five of the six fathers were continuing in their educational programs, being either in high school or post-secondary school. One teen father had completed a community college program but was not employed.

In all cases, the subjects were financially dependent on their parents, or in Sam's case, social services. Due to the teen fathers' situations, their financial contributions to the mothers and children were limited.

Only two of the subjects had part-time employment at the time of interviewing. Kevin worked part-time and received unemployment benefits, while going to school. He reported sharing all of his income with the mother of his child. He described his financial contributions as:

Oh yeah, I, well I furnished all the apartment for her, right.

Even before she came down. Whatever I gets, everything I gives her, right. Like, I don't (pause) we shares our money, right. So, I shares whatever I gets with her, right.

Unlike Kevin, Jim spends most of his money earned from work, on himself for school supplies and clothes. As he explained any extra money may be spent on the child if necessary:

Well, I (pause), I don't know, I make sure, like my school aspect is taken care of, like clothes and school supplies and all that stuff. And if I got any left, I put it in his bank account, right. I don't usually go splurging on him, unless there is something that he needs, right, so.

Even with some income, both Kevin and Jim rely on financial support for themselves and their children from their parents. This is also the case for Bob and Bill. In all four instances, much of the financial support for the mother and child is provided by the coordinated efforts of the grandparents of the children.

In Jim's case, the financial support was divided evenly between the sets of grandparents. Jim explained how this was usually done; "Both parents, like both of our parents, like her parents and my parents, they go half. Like if we

buy him a swing or anything like that, we'll pay half and they'll pay half of it, you know."

Bill reported a similar situation where all grandparents contributed fairly equally:

Yeah, well this morning, like Cathy's mother and father babysit this morning cause Mom and Dad is working this summer. Like I said, now this winter Mom and Dad will be babysitting, cause Cathy's mother and father. It all depends on the job. Who got time, right.

Yeah, like Mom and Dad go out and this week and probably buy two boxes of pampers and two boxes of milk and stuff, right. Same, well it's equal.

Bob described how his parents contributed by buying the necessary items. He said his parents, "buys milk and that kind of stuff, buy clothes for him." He also said that they give him money to buy items for the child.

Although, the mother of Kevin's child received assistance from social services, both sets of grandparents contributed significantly. In fact, it was Kevin's father that went with the mother to arrange for the assistance. Kevin's

parents also helped furnish the mother's apartment. Kevin described his parents' assistance with much appreciation:

Oh yeah, well they're always, like whatever we needs we can't afford to get it, they always buys it. Or if we need something, like a (pause), well Dad, they helped me furnish the apartment for her. They give, Mom give us a lot of stuff, right, Mom and Dad. They're after giving us quite a bit and like if we need a ride to pick up our groceries, Dad got a car and he'll come pick her up, right cause I haven't got my licence, yet. So, he'll come and pick her up.

In Sam's case, the mother was also receiving assistance from social services. Sam had grown up in orphanages and foster homes and now resided in a boarding house. He received no financial assistance from his parents. He did not make any payments to the mother of his child, but did report giving the child gifts on special occasions. To the best of Sam's knowledge, the mother's boyfriend and her parents help her out with the child financially,.

At the time of the interviews, neither Melvin or his parents contributed financially for the child. Melvin explained that he did buy the child, "clothes and things like that," he didn't buy anything anymore because he believed the maternal grandparents did not want anything. From Melvin's understanding, it

was the mother's grandfather that was providing the funds for the child. Other studies support this finding in that the teen fathers' parents were significant sources of financial support (Furstenburg, 1976; Klinman et al., 1985).

Other family members were also identified as financially supportive in that they brought the child gifts. The teen fathers' aunts, uncles, grandparents, and siblings were known to frequently do this.

Emotional support. The interviewer sought to gain an understanding of the emotional support the teenage fathers in this study received from their families. Recollections of specific encounters with family members throughout the fatherhood experience were gathered.

Although the teen father's parents learned of the pregnancies in a variety of ways (told by relative, uncle, maternal grandmother, teen father), their reactions were quite similar. Their reactions were usually of shock and disappointment at first, but then acceptance of the situation. The following statements illustrate the similarity of the parents' reactions:

Mom was a bit mad the first few minutes and wasn't so bad after. I didn't tell Dad. Mom told Dad.

Oh yeah, yes (were upset). Yeah (accepted it).

They react good cause Mom said that's not true, that's not true, like that, shock. She never got upset or nothing cause Mom and Dad went through it and they understands it easily happens, right. So they understood.

My mother was upset at first and stuff. So she didn't like it too much, but then after she had a chance to get used to it.

Well, they were disappointed in me because (pause), I've always been you know, safe, as they say. And they trusted me. And they used to always bring me to her house and things like that, right. And they just, they were disappointed, but they knew there was nothing they could do. They certainly wasn't going to abort the baby, you know. They weren't having no part in it, right. They were fully prepared to take the baby themselves, right, and let me get my education.

They were alright. They didn't get mad at me or nothing or get. Mom was a bit upset, but Dad, Dad took it pretty good. And after it was all over, they were (pause), couldn't wait to see her, couldn't wait to have her, right. But, after the smoked

cleared, if there is such a thing, right, it was pretty good. It was excellent.

In half of the cases, the teen fathers explained the parents' acceptance of the children was due to the fact that they were also teenagers when they were parents and they could relate to the experience. A fourth teen father had also said that his mother was "around 20" when she was pregnant with him. The likelihood of teen fathers having parents that had also been teen parents is well documented in the literature (Robbins and Lynn, 1973; Elster and Panzarine, 1980; Card, 1981, McCoy and Tyler, 1985; Rivara, Sweeney and Henderson, 1985; Freeman, 1989). Possible explanations of this consistent finding include the teen parents acting as role models for their adolescent sons, who show an accepting attitude towards teen pregnancy.

The subjects were then questioned as to the most helpful factor in their adjustment to fatherhood. Of the five individual who responded, they all indicated it was their parents. In these cases, the parents were not only financial providers but also a source of great emotional support. The following responses to this question illustrate the importance of the parents in their adjustment:

Well, I mean my family was pretty supportive, right. They used to talk to me about it and that.

If mother and father never helped out and that, it'd be difficult.

It's parents and Cathy, too. Has a good attitude about everything. But I mean, it's not all good as that, you know. It's nothing major, right. It's no major (pause), but I's real happy. Happy as anybody else.

My parents cause whenever I wanted to go see him, they'd take me there, you know. Whatever I had to do to get there, my parents would help me do it, you know. So, I'd say my parents.

Sam had not responded to this question, but it would be expected that in the absence of his family, he received little emotional support from them. He received more emotional support from his friends.

Extended family members were also reported as being supportive in that they accepted the child and visited often. It was Kevin's grandfather who first learned of the pregnancy and as Kevin recalled was very supportive. He said, "it's not the first time it happened and not going to be the last time." Jim has also first confided in a relative. He had told a favourite uncle about the pregnancy and it was this uncle who told his parents. Bill, Bob, Kevin and

Jim had all described aunts, uncles and grandparents that were supportive and accepting of the child. They would visit the child often and bring gifts. Even Sam was aware of visits his family members had made to the child. Kevin was very surprised by his younger brother's response to the child, for he would help out in looking after her and often bought things for her. The family members were a significant source of emotional support for these fathers. The tremendous emotional support demonstrated by the teen fathers' families is a common finding (Hendricks, 1983; 1988; Robinson and Barret, 1986) and not a surprising one since 65%-85% of pregnant and parenting teens live with their families (Hanson, 1992). Seventy-three percent of the teen fathers in one study reported their parents to be helpful (Klinman et al., 1985). Another study found 95% of the unmarried black teen fathers would go to their family for help (Hendricks, 1980).

Relationship With the Teen Mother

The teen father relationship with the teen mother was reported to be a significant factor affecting the father's involvement with the child. For the teenager fathers in this study, emotional support and cooperation from the mother played a major role in the amount of time they spent with their children. In two cases, a lack of cooperation from the mother interfered with

the father's involvement with the child. Both Sam and Melvin complained of mothers being uncooperative and restricting of visitation times. For both of these fathers, the relationship with the mother ended shortly after the child was born. Melvin stated that he and the mother had planned to raise the child themselves, but that the mother's parents had blamed him for pregnancy and then "brainwashed" their daughter. At the time of the interviews, he explained he had no communication with the mother. He described their relationship as; "Molly broke up with me a couple of months ago and I haven't been talking to her in months. She brought the baby up and she didn't even speak to me, right."

Sam also reported having difficulties getting along with the mother. At the time of the pregnancy, they had planned to be married. He had even taken the child to the doctor for needles on several occasions. But then they broke up. Sam explained the break up by the fact that he was still in school and couldn't afford to support the child; "She broke up with me. I don't know. I thinks it's because of I'm in school and I couldn't pay support and stuff like that, I wasn't there."

Although Bob and Jim were very involved in their children's lives, and hope to continue to do so, their relationships with the mothers are unsure. Bob reported his relationship with the mother to have improved since the baby

was born. He said, "we talk about things and that" and that they "spend more time together."

In contrast, Jim described a much more strained relationship with the mother since the baby was born. He said he did not confide in the mother, but instead at many times argued with her. They had many disagreements about the child and the spending of money. Jim described his relationship with the mother as:

Well, things are more tense, I mean, you know. Like before the baby came along, we were perfect. Like, well not perfect. We still had arguments and things that normally happen. But you know, the arguments have become more intense after the baby, you know. There is a lot of stress. You just get fed up with certain things, I mean.

Both of these fathers described an uncertainty about the stability of the relationship with the mothers. However, they also stated having a commitment to their children regardless of the relationship with the mothers.

The remaining two fathers described very close relationships with the mothers where they felt fully committed. Bill and Kevin reported having very positive relationships where the mothers were cooperative. There were few disagreements concerning the children. Both fathers said they felt they

communicated well with the mothers and worked out the problems together. Even though Kevin described his commitment to the mother was the "same as being married," both he and Bill stated they hoped to get married after they finished school. These two fathers also have free access to their children and do spend most of their free time with them.

Although having a positive relationship with the mother does not guarantee teen father involvement with the child, a negative relationship with the mother certainly inhibits this involvement. In this study, all the teen fathers who had free access to their children had cooperative relationships with the teen mothers, while the two teen fathers who had restricted access had negative relationships with the teen mothers. Difficulties getting along with the teen mothers and having access to the children have been reported by teen fathers in many studies (Hendricks, 1983; Rivara et al., 1986; Elster and Panzarine, 1983). Several of these studies have found that the same teen fathers who reported problems with the teen mother also had difficulties arranging time to spend with their children (Hendricks, 1983; Rivara et al., 1986).

Support of Friends

Half of the teenager fathers interviewed reported their friends to have been very supportive all throughout their fatherhood experience. They were there to talk to during the pregnancy and after the child was born. They visited and played with the child often. Upon hearing of the pregnancy, Bill reported his friends were at first very happy it was not them, but as time went on they were excited about the pregnancy and when the child was born, they would not mind having a baby themselves. They became very involved with the child:

Yes, they comes, every time they come down to Cathy's for me, come down for me or something, they come in to see him and that. Like people still come to see him that never seen him before. Gee, we got (pause), Cathy's room is filled with stuff, like baby stuff from my friends, closets full with baby stuff, right.

Kevin said his friends joked and teased him at first, but were then very helpful giving the mother rides and checking on her at her apartment. They also spent a lot of time with the child:

Yeah, a lot of my friends, like they (pause), I'll probably take three or four of my friends, we're doing something, I'll bring

them over with me, right to see Kevy. And sometimes I'm there, they'll come looking for me. They'll come up just to see what we're doing. My friends, my girlfriend's friends too, right. My friends and their girlfriends, they'll come over too, right, get together and watch a movie or something at her house, right, at her apartment, so.

Sam's friends were described as especially helpful since he had little communication with his family. His friends took an active part in the child's christening and were present during Sam's visits with his child on Saturdays. They were very supportive, giving Sam advice about the difficulties he was having with the mother concerning visitation. These friends seemed to take the place of family for Sam.

Although Bob's friends had some contact with his child, they did not discuss the child. At first they teased him about being a father. He did not confide in them. Bob's friends were really not emotionally supportive.

Like Bob, Melvin and Jim did not discuss their children with their friends. At the time of the pregnancy, Melvin said he confided in his close friends, and they were helpful; "Well, saying that it's not that bad, right, and everything else, right. Trying to make me feel better and all this, right." As

Melvin lost contact with his child, he stopped talking about the child to his friends. They also had no contact with the child.

Unlike all the other subjects, Jim reported not having any close friends to confide in. He regretfully said; "No, I don't (pause), nobody to tell secrets to. I don't trust anybody, not any of the friends I do have, or so called friends, you know." Friends were definitely not a source of support for Jim. He did, however, casually talk to his friends about his son. He had a picture of the child posted in his locker at school and had the child to the school for a visit. At times, he has taken his friends with him when he took his child for a walk around the community.

Those teen fathers that had shared their experiences with friends found that they did not give advice as to what to do. The one exception was Sam, who did not have contact with family members. His friends took on a family role and often advised him on how to deal with conflicts with the mother.

Three of the teen fathers had been aware of other teen fathers in the area, but only one had talked to another father. Bill said he did not get a chance to talk to him. Kevin said the father was older and not in school. Bob, however, did meet the other teen father that happened to be in the same school. He reported the experience was very helpful. Generally, friends have not been found to be significant sources of support for teen fathers. Of the 20

black unmarried teen fathers that Hendricks (1980) interviewed, only one teen father said he would confide in a friend. Friends were also found not to be very helpful when teen fathers tried to talk about their problems (Fry and Trifiletti, 1983).

Support of School

Five of the teenager fathers interviewed commented on the response they received from the school population. Three fathers stated that most people at school had known about the pregnancy. Two of these teen fathers reported that the students and staff had acted normally. In Bob's case, the students and staff did not talk to him much about the pregnancy. Bill told of how the teachers would ask about the child and wish him well:

They were pretty much the same. Like treating us the same as anybody else. That was the best part about it all. All the teachers would ask us how the little one was doing and stuff like that. Good luck right, and stuff like that.

In Kevin's case, both the students and the instructor joked and teased him about being a father. These same students, however, were very helpful with the child:

Ah, they just, they were just teasing me and bugging me for awhile. They used to say father and calling me father and stuff and Dad and stuff, just joking around. But, they lived, when Alice lived up in the other building, they all lived downstairs. So, when I used to be there in daytime and when I'd get out of school and come down to see Kevy and Alice, they used to come up too, right, see her and stuff. And used to take Kevy down there for a walk or something in the evenings before I'd go home. I used to take her down for a walk and stuff, like bring her down to their apartment, they'd see her. They seen her lots of times.

Jim reported that a lot of the students did not know about the pregnancy, at first. He believed the teachers had "pity" on him. They did give the child attention when he was brought to the school:

Oh well, the teachers were you know, you know how they would be. You know, sorry for me in a way, but happy. I mean, we had him up to school. A few days before school ended I had him up to the school and taking him around. And teachers gave him balloons and stuff, you know.

Sam received the most support from school. He had participated in a teen parenting support group which was conducted by a teacher and held during school lunch hours. It offered the teen parents information on parenting skills and supporting agencies. The members could also share their experiences with each other. Sam stated he found he could "relate" to a lot of the experiences and that it was very helpful:

It (the parenting group) was pretty good. Things to learn to do.
So, I learned something.

Where I wasn't with Sally like growing up every day, it was like they'd be talking about, like her little son or daughter, you know, come in their rooms with bottle of something or throwing cereal and breakout (pause), you know, stuff like that. Like late at night and stuff like this. And I felt like this is what I'm missing, you know. I could guess, I could relate to that stuff, like....

Most of the teen fathers in this study described the school as a place of difficulty rather than a place of support. The one successful school based parenting program described clearly illustrates the need for such structured teen parenting programs in the schools.

Views of General Public

The teenage fathers in this study were asked to share the experiences they had with the public or public agencies. They were also requested to present their views of how society and particular social agencies view teenage fathers in relation to teenage mothers. Of the four subjects who responded to these questions, all felt that in general teen mothers and teen fathers were treated differently. Melvin reported, from his experience with social services, that fathers "don't have any say in raising the baby." He further explained that this was due to the fact that they were not seen as responsible as the mothers. He found people thought, "...you don't know how to look after the baby...."

Kevin shared a hope that he would be treated fairly by social services, but expected that they would, "...offer more to the mother." He also added that in his experience, people are generally surprised to see the father so involved:

...where he's so young, they thinks (pause), now you're not growed up and you can't take on that responsibility of a youngster, but sometimes they're wrong. There's just some people, I think there's a lot of people that can take on the responsibility. There's just some people that don't want to

because they're used to different ways. They don't think they can adapt, but I think a lot of people can. If they really tried they can. I knows I did. I knows when I took on Kevy, there was some stuff I had to do different. I said I had to do it. And that's it, I did it. I had no other choice but to, so. A lot of people can if they really try.

Bill also reported that people, in general, were surprised to see him involved with his son:

And when I'm home, down to Cathy's or something and someone will phone and they hears me tormenting him and making him squeal or something like that. They like, they're almost surprised or something like that. You know, when they hears like I'm babysitting the baby or something like that, it's like yes boy, something like that. They says, gee you got, you got a good boyfriend to do that for you, right. Like, they thinks no other boys does it, right. It's, I don't know, that's unbelievable, that is (laugh).

Bill stated his belief that people thought the "teen mothers were a lot more involved" and how this was really "not fair." He found the mother of his

child even had this expectation where he could go out while she stayed home with the child:

I almost finds Cathy does it sometimes. It's like, I says, well you can go out tonight sure, I'll stay home with the baby and you can go out for a little while with your friends and stuff like that, get out for a little while anyway. And she's like, she don't want to go out, right. It's like, it's strange. Like if she said, I went out and told her off and I'd stay home with the baby. You'd think I'd be thinking something about she, like what's wrong with you like, to do something like that.

From his experience with the legal system, Sam stated the courts were "more on the mother's side." He thought this was because the fathers would not do as good a job. He stated his belief that society was more sympathetic with the mother.

All the teenage fathers who commented on this topic, reported an unrealistic and unfair portrayal of the teen father. Society had different expectations of them as parents because of their gender. The teen fathers in this study took offense to the inequality and injustice of this perception.

Other Sources of Support

Bill reported his involvement in pre-natal classes to be helpful. The information he received there was particularly enlightening; "Oh yeah, that's the best thing we ever did. And it really helped out too, during the pregnancy cause we knew what to expect, like. I knew she was going to be upset sometimes easy and stuff like that."

Studies have confirmed the positive effects of teen father involvement in various parenting programs. One study found that teen fathers who had received parenting education were more knowledgeable regarding pregnancy, prenatal care, infant development and child care, than the control group. They were also more supportive of the mother and child (Westney, Cole and Munford, 1988). Another supportive finding (Barth, Claycomb and Loomis, 1988), included teen fathers who participated in parenting programs were more involved with prenatal activities. The infants of these teen fathers had higher birth weights. This was even the case if they did not live with the mother. The benefits to the mother and child that result from teen father involvement in parenting programs is evident from these studies.

CHAPTER VIII

Aspirations and Concerns

All the teen fathers interviewed were requested to look ahead in time and describe how they expected their futures to unfold. They expressed their hopes and dreams, as well as their worries. Their own personal goals of career aspirations were also stated. The anticipated relationships with both the mothers and children were presented. They shared their hopes and concerns for their children as well as strategies they would use to prevent their children from becoming teen parents.

Career Aspirations

The effect of teenage fatherhood on career aspirations was very much a concern of the researcher. Of particular concern was how specific career goals and the method of achieving them were affected. School performance during the year of the pregnancy was also examined. In this case, attendance and numerical grades received were a measure of the effect of teen pregnancy.

Half of the teenage fathers interviewed reported that the pregnancy affected their school performance. They explained that their difficulties were mainly due to time constraints. Although only one father in this study missed

actual time from classes, time for study was reported as a problem by three subjects. Jim explained how his missing class was sometimes unavoidable:

Yeah, a scattered time, maybe. I would have to because, like Mom and Dad work and her Mom did work, right. So, like every now and then it would happen my Mom had to work same as her Mom. So, I would have to stay home or she would have to stay home. Or like it wouldn't, it was only occasionally, probably twice a month or so, you know.

Both Bill and Kevin managed to complete their evening study but found there was little time left for themselves. Bill described how these problems were expected and could be overcome.

Finding time for study was even more difficult for Kevin, who held a part-time job. He described how he had organized his time to fit in studying:

Ah, I had some difficult times going to school and (pause, well, I used to be going to school last year, right and trying to help Alice with the baby as much as I can. And working too, I used to be working, helping Alice with the baby and going to school, like three things in one day. So, the end of the day, I was pretty well beat. Get up the next day and have to do it again. Especially, after I used to go to school 7:00 in the morning, do

my homework and usually do studies even before I started classes. And after classes I'd go down and usually see Alice for an hour or so and the baby. Then I's have to go to work for a couple of hours in the evening. And then come home again at night and not get a chance to do my homework until morning. So, that was the difficult....

Surprisingly, the fathers who reported the interference of the pregnancy with school performance, were the higher achievers, obtaining grade point averages of 65, 80 and 80. The other three teen fathers claimed the pregnancy did not affect their school performance even though they only achieved grade point averages of 55, 60 and 60. One of these fathers even reported his grades dropping suddenly during this year and failing some of his courses. These findings are not supported by the literature, whereby teenage fatherhood has been found to have devastating effects on the adolescents' education, making them more likely than their non-father peers to drop out of school (Card and Wise, 1978; Elster and Lamb, 1982; Klinman et al., 1985; Marsiglio, 1986; Rivara et al., 1986; Christmon, 1990a). Of 395 teen fathers in a national two year parenting program, two-thirds had no high school diploma. The African American and American Indian teen fathers were more likely than the white

and hispanic teen fathers to have dropped out of school (Klinman, et al., 1985).

Concerning future career goals, only one subject had actually changed his choice of career. Kevin said he had always planned to attend university, but chose a completely different career at a local community college so that he could be close to the mother and child. Kevin described how the pregnancy affected his career plans:

A bit, yeah because before I got out to, before I got out of school, before I found out Alice was pregnant, I was on my way to university, sort of, right. I was gonna go to university, but because of the pregnancy and stuff, I didn't want to go away first year. I was gonna get them to come down and I didn't want to go away to university first year, so. What I did, I just said I'll go to community college up here and I took the best course they offered there. So I took that course. But sort of, it did sort of because I'd probably be going to second year university this year instead of second year college, right. So I think it did a bit.

The remaining five subjects were certain that their career choice had not been altered by their becoming a father. Melvin had completed a college program that he said he would have done anyway.

The other four teen fathers had not yet begun their post-secondary training but had, to varying degrees some educational plans. Both Sam and Jim had not altered their plans to complete specified college programs. Sam wished to begin a commercial art program and showed interest in a computer program. Bill's plans to complete a university physical education program remained unchanged. At the time of interviewing Bob was uncertain of a specific program that interest him, although he was sure it would be a college program.

Although Jim had not changed the specific career he wanted, he did alter his career plans by postponing his program for a year. As Jim explained having a child has made it necessary for him to stay home with the mother and child for a year, instead of beginning college:

I'm going to take one year off to be with my son because she'll, my girlfriend still gonna be in school and it's going to be his first year in school. So, I want to be with them that first year, just to, you know. I might need a year off anyway, just to get

everything straight because I'm not positively sure what I want to do yet.

The rest of the teen fathers interviewed had begun or were planning to begin their post-secondary education immediately after high school graduation. Again, this finding conflicts with the literature, for teen fathers have been found to be more likely to be unemployed. Two-thirds of the teen fathers in the Klinman (1985) study who had dropped out of high school were also unemployed. Those who had found employment tended to get poor jobs with low pay. This was especially the case for the African American and American Indian teen fathers (Card and Wise, 1978; Elster and Lamb, 1982; Klinman et al., 1985; Rivara et al., 1986; Marsiglio, 1988; Christmon, 1990a). These findings suggest teen fathers generally do not continue with post-secondary education.

The ability of these teen fathers to continue with their education has yet to be seen. However, the relative ease of which the fathers have completed their courses up to this point in time, may be explained by the examining of their living situation. None of the teen fathers in this study resided with the child. Some of the teen fathers were not involved with the child on a regular basis and those that were involved had received tremendous support from their families, especially their parents.

Relationship With Teen Mother

Although all the teenage fathers interviewed stated a desire to have future relationships with their children, the mothers were not necessarily included. As a matter of fact, two of the fathers were certain they did not want romantic relationships with the mothers. Two fathers indicated a definite certainty of marriage to the mothers in the future and the other two fathers were tentative about their future involvement with the mothers.

Both Sam and Melvin reported that the many conflicts they had with the mothers made them wary of any future involvement. From the fathers' point of view, the mothers were seen as links to their children and for that reason alone it was a necessity to have contact with them.

The tentative fathers, Bob and Jim, stated that the possibilities were numerous and that marriage was one of them. Bob stated that after graduation, he might leave the community, find work and then return to get the mother and child to take with him.

Jim was also uncertain of his future relationship with the mother, but did include her in his future plans. He explained how he and the mother would go away to continue with their education; "If, we might have to take the baby with us and just have him put in a day care centre or something. Of course he'll go to school in there anyway, so."

Both Bill and Kevin were more certain and committed to future relationships with the mothers. At the time of the interviews they were considered marriage once they had completed their educational training. Although Kevin stated the commitment he already has is the same as marriage, he would wait to get married because of the high cost involved; "We're hoping to get married some time down the road, when I gets out of school, anyways. Try to finish school first cause it costs a lot, right. So, until I finish school. Hopefully, when I finish school."

Bill's future plans to remain with his child and the mother and act as a family are evident in the following statements; "Oh yeah, it's too early to make decisions like big decisions yet, marriage. We'd rather wait till we gets through university, gets good job and something like that. There's no plans or nothing like that. It's just, you know.

In each of these cases, the expected future relationships with the mothers are quite unique. These teenage fathers did not state the belief that they must have a relationship with the mothers in order to have a relationship with their children.

Relationship With Child

All of the subjects in this study stated a hope to be involved in their children's lives on a permanent basis. Those already highly involved with their children wished it would continue. Those more limited in involvement hoped the future would bring more involvement. As well, they all reported a commitment to be more financially supportive, in the future.

Melvin and Sam both expressed desires to have their visiting time increased. Although they showed no interest in having full custody of their children, visits for the week-end were welcomed. Melvin stated that his daughter may better understand his situation when she is older. He said, "I hopes to have one later with Susan, right. When she gets old enough to understand, right. She don't understand nothing now, anyways."

Sam also stated week-ends would be a good time for him to see his daughter. He described several activities he would like to do with her such as camping and fishing.

The other four fathers expected to remain fully involved in their children's lives. They discuss their future in terms of families rather than themselves as individuals. Bob expected to leave his community upon high school graduation, but to return to the mother and child once he found work. He then stated they would possibly leave with him. Jim described how he

would stay home for a year after high school graduation to support the mothers and child. He was concerned that this would be a difficult time for them because both the mother and child would be attending school:

I'm going to take one year off to be with my son because she'll, my girlfriend, still gonna be in school and it's going to be his first year in school. So, I want to be with them that first year, just to, you know.

Both Kevin and Bill explained that their motive to obtain a career was not entirely for themselves but also for the benefit of their children. They said that they would then be in a better position to financially support their children, provide more opportunities for their children and be a good role model for them. Bill explained how his education would benefit his son:

Well, I mean that is the best thing for the child too, you know. When he gets older it's gonna help him out. Got a good job paying money, he can do stuff that other children couldn't do because their parents never got their education. There's nothing else to do now. You need your education, so you got to do it.

Kevin also clearly stated his belief in the importance of education as a way to support his family:

...education is a big thing, factor now. That's because it's good to have an education.

Well, I gives her (mother) whatever I gets, right. We shares our money. And try to finish school and get my course so I can get a good job. So, I can get a good job. Well, that's most of what I does (pause), helps her take care of the baby, do whatever I can for her.

Without exception, the participants all expressed a desire to financially support their children in the future, when they were working. Sam, however, stated that he would like to have some guarantee that the money was spent exclusively for the child:

No, I'd like to make payments, but put it in a trust fund and buy her clothes for that month or whatever else she needed. But I don't want to give it to her (mother) cause she turn around and buy something else out of it. I'd rather make sure it's going to Sally. Buy her a bike, clothes or dolls (pause), get a car.

Jim not only expected to be financially responsible for his son in the future, but was already planning for his child's education. He described how he was paying into an educational trust fund; "...for regards for school, for

university, we got that, basically that's all covered anyway cause we got Children's Educational Trust Fund took out for him, right. We're paying that every month, \$63.00 we pay.

All of the teenage fathers interviewed shared a desire to have a continuous relationship with their children in the future and to be financially supportive.

Hopes for Child

The research participants being relatively new fathers had little time to consider the future of their children. They did, however, have some comments on their hopes for their children. Their statements were often general but frequently included education and moral values.

Without exception all the teen fathers studies expressed their understanding of the importance of education. They all hoped their children would have a good education. Kevin, Melvin and Bob shared the opinion that it was extremely important for their children to "finish school" and to "get a good education." Jim had indicated his hope for his child to have an education by already paying into an educational trust fund for him. Bill and Sam had both stated they hoped their children could be whatever they wanted to be.

They did not want to direct their choices but did want them to have as many options as possible, implying the necessity of education.

Having good moral values was also considered important for Melvin and Jim. Melvin worried about his daughter being influenced by the maternal grandparents because he wanted her to have "good moral values." Jim was more elaborate in his description of the moral values he would like his son to have:

I never really thought about, you know. I just like day by day. But, you know I want him to be respected. I don't want him to be known as a fellow that lies or is ignorant or anything like that. I wants him to, not perfect, I mean everybody got a flaw or two. But I wants him to know when he does something wrong. You know, I don't want it to become a habit like swearing or something. For most kids today that's just a habit.

So, I'd like for him to be a lot like me. You know, I'm not bad. Now there's things I wouldn't want him to do, but. Yeah, you know grow up with a lot of respect for his elders and know his family and know that whatever they day do, except for

things that don't make sense or is out of whack or something.

But, you know, know what's right and what's wrong.

Bill reported that having friends was very important. He said, "You need friends. So, I hope he got a lot of friends cause you really need them."

Sam wanted his daughter to have good health and to make good decisions in life. He stated, "I just hope she's healthy (pause), she has a good head of her shoulders. That's the main thing."

All these fathers have very reasonable hopes for their children, wishing them a life of health, happiness and success.

Concerns for Child

All the participants were questioned as to the concerns or worries they had about their children's futures. The various responses included: drug use, being unsuccessful, health problems, loss of contact with the father, and teen pregnancy.

Both Bill and Bob shared the concern of their children succumbing to peer pressure and becoming involved in illegal drugs. As Bob said, he didn't want his son to "get into no dope." Bill also said that he, "worries about how he's going to react to things like drugs..."

Jim and Kevin were worried that their children may not lead productive lives. They both hoped their children would be successful. Jim's fear of his son not living to his full potential is evident in the following statements:

I guess I just don't want him to be another statistic, like other kids that just grow up. I want him to be something, like you know something important and stuff like that. You know, everybody is important. But I just want him to be a little bit extra, like you know.

Melvin stated a concern about the influence of the maternal grandparents on his child. At the time of interviewing, the child lived with these grandparents. He feared that with time they might turn his daughter against him.

The children's health was a concern of Kevin and Sam. They hoped their children would have generally good health. Both these fathers were also concerned about their daughters becoming teen mothers. They were fearful that their children would repeat the same mistakes they had made in life. Sam said that he, "hope she don't turn out like me having a child at a young age. I hope she has more sense." Kevin also did not want his daughter to be restricted by teen pregnancy as he had:

(laugh) That the same thing might happen to her when she gets older, that happened to Alice, so (pause), that's happened to me and Alice, so. So, I hope it don't happen cause it interferes a bit, quite a bit sometimes. So, I just hope she becomes successful, anyways.

Plans for Preventing Child's Teenage Pregnancy

Although only two of the participants in this study stated that teen pregnancy was a concern they had for their children, they all had some thoughts about how they would deal with the matter. All the subjects reflected on their own experience and the efforts their parents had made. While only one of the teenage fathers stated he could do no more than what his parents did, others believed they could improve on these preventative actions.

All teen fathers in this study said they would sit down with their children and talk to them about being sexually active. They would share with the children information they believed they had not received. Melvin said he would let his daughter make her own decisions about being sexually active. He would, however, tell her about precautions she would need to take if she chose to become sexually active. He would make sure that she knew how to use the contraceptive properly. Melvin was not sure if his daughter would

feel comfortable about talking to him about this and believed that the mother may be the better person to initiate this discussion.

Sam also stated that it might be helpful to his daughter if someone showed her specifically how to use protection.

Bill also said he would talk to his son about sexual activity. He was very vague in his explanation, but did say he wanted this discussion to take place when his son was between 13 and 15 years of age.

Both Jim and Kevin reported little communication about sexuality in their homes. They both hoped to have more open discussions on this topic with their children. They wanted to explain to their children the devastating effects teen pregnancy had on their lives. As a matter of fact, Jim stated that because of his experience as a teen parent, he may be better able to prevent his son from becoming one. He described how his own insight may be helpful to his son:

I mean, maybe I'll be able to deal with it a bit better than anyone that had not had this problem. Maybe, that'll be the strong point then in his life and mine, too right, cause you learn through mistakes. I mean it was a mistake. I mean, I don't regret it now any more than before, but it was a mistake.

Jim also reported that he would be more strict with his son than his parents were with him. For instance, he would set more rules for him. Other things that he would do differently include:

But you know, I wouldn't want my son to be out that early, you know, that young. And, I mean, the sexual aspect too, needs to be talked about. I remember one time, that would never be talked about in the house....

Bill was the only teen father who believed his parents did everything that could have been done. He would not change a thing and take the same approach with his son:

Well, I suppose I can only do what Mom and Dad done for me. Sit down and talk to me about it. You got to let your child go out and have a good time and stuff like that, you know what I mean. Like you can't keep him home, like try to keep him away from all this. That's all you can do, sit down and talk to him about birth control and stuff like that.

I don't think I'll say anything different. Like they told me everything that was possible, right. There's nothing else they could have said.

All the subjects in this study reported that open communication about sexual activity was important. Today's teenagers needed detailed information about contraceptives especially concerning proper usage. Only future study of these teen fathers will determine how successful they were in carrying out their plans and achieving their goals. According to patterns found in the literature, all these subjects will not complete their education and find employment. Nor will the entire group have regular visitation with their children. The discrepancies between the teen fathers' present and future plans of active involvement in their children's lives and the reality of the present and possible future lack of involvement requires much examination. The factors that affect the positive intentions of these teen fathers need to be addressed. It is these factors that influence the teen fathers' involvement with their children, that this research has attempted to illuminate. Only when teen fathers are assisted in overcoming these obstacles will they be able to carry out their well intended plans of involvement.

CHAPTER IX

Summary and Recommendations

Summary and Results

Distinct to this study is the rural environment setting. Five of the six teenage couples lived in rural communities. Most of the teenage fathers and teenage mothers lived in the same community, with the furthest distance apart being five to six kilometres. The responses of these teenagers' parents, peers and community members may be influenced by their familiarity with each other.

Time with child. Although all the teen fathers lived with their parents or guardians and in close proximity to their children, their visitation time varied. None of the teen fathers had sole custody of their children, but instead half of the children lived with the mother and maternal grandparents or step-grandparents. In two cases the child was shared between the two different residences of the teen mother and the teen father. In one case the child resided with the teen mother alone. Visitation patterns ranged from monthly visits of two to three hours to daily visits of 24 hours.

Only one of the six adolescent fathers was content with the length of time he had with his child. The other teen fathers expressed a preference for

more visitation time. The two teen fathers who only had weekly or monthly visits were very disappointed with the arrangement and actively sought to gain more visitation time.

Role of father. Although there was much variety in the descriptions of father-child interactions, all teen fathers reported play activity with their children. Five teen fathers described how they performed basic child care activities such as feeding, changing and dressing. All subjects said it was a rather easy adjustment to child care even though only one teen father felt he was as equally involved as the mother. All participants described the pleasure they got from spending time with their children. For five of them, this was the highlight of the fatherhood experience.

Without exception the perceived role of the father was a traditional one of financial provider and disciplinarian. They were ultimately less responsible for the children than the mothers. The four teen fathers who saw their children daily, reported themselves to be actively involved with their children. The teen fathers who saw their children weekly or monthly reported desires to be more involved but stated there were obstacles in their way. These obstacles included an uncooperative teen mother who restricted their visitation and inadequate finances to support the child. The four more involved teen fathers

showed a strong familiarity with their children, describing their children's physical and personality traits with great detail. Most of the teen fathers had a high profile in the community and had great pride in taking on the role of a father. For the most part they got positive feedback from the community. One less involved teen father explained that he did not know his daughter well because he did not see her enough. Another teen father had difficulty describing his son because he was so young and did not have a lot of interaction. Both of these teen fathers had little contact with the child in the community. Regardless, of the amount of involvement with the child, all of the participants in this study reported feelings of love for their children and demonstrations of affectionate behavior such as hugging and kissing their children.

Decision-making. Although all of the teen fathers had knowledge about contraceptives and where to get them, they were rarely used. With the exception of two teen couples, there was no discussion about sexual intercourse or contraceptive planning. Sometimes time was not taken to use a condom. Many times the teen couples did not have condoms. The embarrassment of having to purchase condoms was given for the main reason for their lack of use. Other than choosing a name for the child, the teen

fathers were not involved in any of the main decisions concerning the child. Only one of the participants in this study was involved in the decision to keep the child. After the child was born, half of the teen fathers reported having no input in decisions concerning the child. Many times these same teen fathers were not informed even after the decisions were made. With one exception, the teen fathers said the teen mothers had the final say concerning the child. The teen fathers' involvement in the decisions concerning the child were reported to be influenced by several factors, most prominently the responses of the teen mothers and the maternal grandparents. The two less involved teen fathers reported strained relationships with the teen mothers and that the teen mothers often prevented them from seeing their children. For one teen father this led to a breakdown in communication with the teen mother. In both of these cases, the teen fathers unsuccessfully sought legal help to practice their rights as the biological fathers and increase their visitation time. The remaining four teen fathers had positive cooperative relationships with the teen mothers and said they had no difficulty seeing their children.

The maternal grandparents were reported as a significant factor affecting the involvement of the teen fathers in decisions concerning their children. The two teen fathers who had difficulty seeing their children and

problems with the teen mothers, also felt they were blamed for the pregnancy by the maternal grandparents. Even the other teen fathers who received much help from the maternal grandparents believed there was an imbalance in the grandparents' involvement and that the maternal grandparents had more control. For three of these teen fathers, the involvement of the maternal grandparents was overbearing.

Recognition of legal rights. Another obstacle to the teen fathers' involvement with their children was the lack of recognition of their legal rights as biological fathers. Contact with social and legal agencies left these teen fathers with much confusion regarding their rights as parents. In some cases educational financial support for the teen fathers was denied if his name was not on a birth certificate or reduced if he wished to reside with the mother and child. Another teen father was contacted by a social worker when the teen mother attempted to have their child adopted, but was also informed that the child may possibly be adopted without his consent if the case went to court. A visit to family court left another teen father unsatisfied and frustrated as a counsellor would not intervene and require the teen mother to be more cooperative in arranging visitation times. This lack of recognition received as parents and the lack of involvement and control in the decisions concerning

their children was reported to be the most difficult experience of fatherhood by five of the teen fathers interviewed.

Sources of support. Sources of material and emotional support for these teen fathers included friends, grandparents, the teen mothers and most frequently their own parents. With the exception of one teen father who was estranged from his parents and received social aid, all the teen fathers were financially dependent on their parents. With their help they were able to continue in school. For the four most involved teen fathers, their parents contributed most significantly, supporting the children. Even though two of the teen fathers held part-time jobs, it was not enough income to support a child. For one teen father, the parents did not help support his child because he was denied access to the child. He felt the teen mother and her family did not want his contributions.

Although the teen fathers' parents initially reacted to the pregnancy with shock and disappointment, they very quickly accepted the situation. Four of the teen fathers explained that their parents were then quite understanding because they too had been teen parents [< or = 20 years of age at the time of pregnancy], and could relate to the experience. The teen fathers' parents

were reported to be the most significant source of support during the fatherhood experience by five participants.

The teen mothers themselves were cited as sources of emotional support for three of the teen fathers. These teen fathers described how their relationships actually improved after the child was born. These couples tended to talk more and spend more time together.

Friends were also reported to be helpful for half of the participants. For these teen fathers, the friends had a lot of contact with the children, playing with them and bringing them gifts. The friends were there since the onset of the pregnancy, to not give advice but to offer support.

Generally, school personnel were not reported to be significant sources of support except for one teen father who participated in a teen parenting support group. He stated the sharing of experiences among groups members and the information received from the group facilitator was very helpful. Another teen father who participated in pre-natal classes reported the information received to be extremely helpful. Both of these teen fathers benefited tremendously from being included in these parenting programs.

All teen fathers interviewed said they were not perceived as a responsible parent by the general public. Often people did not expect them to

be as responsible for child care as the teen mother and were very surprised when they were.

Future plans and aspirations. Although the subjects in this study had not formed clear plans for their future, they did report some general aspirations and concerns they had. Surprisingly, the career goals of most of these teen fathers were unaffected by the pregnancy. Only one teen father actually changed his choice of career. One teen father postponed his program for a year. The rest of the subjects pursued or are pursuing the careers they had originally planned. Half of the teen fathers reported the pregnancy affected their school performance, in that they had less time for studying. Only one teen father said his grades actually dropped because of the pregnancy.

There was notable variety in the teen fathers' expectations of future involvement with the teen mothers. Two of the teen fathers did not expect to have any involvement with the mothers except as a link to their children. Two teen fathers were tentative about their future commitment to the mothers. The other two teen fathers seriously expected to marry the teen mothers once they completed their education. The teen fathers in this study held the belief that

they, as the biological fathers, did not need to have a romantic relationship with the teen mothers in order to have a relationship with their children.

Without exception all the teen fathers definitely wished for a future relationship with their children. They were committed to provide more financial support in the future. Four of these fathers expected to remain fully involved with their children, while the remaining two expected weekend visits. The participants understood the relationship between getting their educational and providing for their children. They held the belief that furthering their education would benefit their children in the long run by allowing them to be in a better position to provide financial support, more opportunities, as well as being a positive role model. Their hopes for their children were vague, but reasonable and realistic ones for health, happiness and success. The teen fathers hoped their children would obtain an education and have sound moral values. Their concerns for the future of their children included difficulties with health, involvement with drugs and anything else that might interfere with their success. They also were concerned about loss of contact with their children. Teen pregnancy was another concern they had for their children. They expressed some ideas on preventative actions they might take such as talking openly to their children about pregnancy and contraceptives and providing detailed information about proper usage of contraceptives.

In summary, the participants in this study very much deviate from the stereotype of uncaring negligent teen fathers. In contrast, these adolescents showed great concern for their children and involvement in their children's lives. They have explained the many factors that have inhibited their involvement as well as those that have enhanced it. Their very personal reflections have helped us develop a wider perspective and deeper understanding of the teen fatherhood experience.

Discussion and Conclusions

Upon close examination of the circumstances and perceptions of the teen fathers in this study, it is clear that their involvement with their children is a very complex matter and not merely a matter of following their desires. The dynamics of teen father involvement with child is complicated by situational, attitudinal, and interpersonal factors that either enhance or inhibit involvement. It is these factors that need to be understood and addressed.

Dynamics of teen father involvement. Teen father involvement with his child may take many forms and occur at various levels. For instance, the most involved father would be one with the highest level of commitment, being married to the mother or having legal acknowledgement of paternity. He would provide financially and emotionally for the mother and child. The

father would also have continuous daily contact with the child with various forms of interaction including: child care; play; affectionate behavior. None of the teen fathers in this study demonstrated this level of involvement. There were however, several teen fathers who informally acknowledged paternity by publicly taking on the role of a parent and being involved in the community with the child. They also had regular daily contact with the mother and child and provided emotionally and financially (via their parents) for the mother and child. They performed various duties such as child care, play activities and displays of affection.

One teen father had a lesser degree of involvement even though he had the same amount of time with the child. He had little community identity as a parent for he did not take his child out much in the community. He had little interaction with the child, not performing child care duties or playing often.

The two remaining teen fathers did not provide any financial support for the child, or emotional support for the mother. They had very infrequent and irregular visits with the child. However, the time spent with the child was of high quality, and took various forms. Their parental behavior included play, child care and much affectionate behavior. These profiles of parental involvement demonstrates the difficulty of measuring teen father involvement with the child and indicates that the time spent with the child is not an accurate

measure of father involvement. A much more detailed analysis of teen father parental behavior is required.

Role of paternal grandparents. Considering the support capacity of teen fathers who are pursuing their education and are unemployed, it is not surprising that most of them reside with their parents and are financially dependent on them. Therefore, the teen fathers' financial contributions to his children are very much dependent on his parents' willingness to contribute, financially. The teen fathers' emotional support for the child and mother also depends on his parents' willingness to share in child care duties and other responsibilities, so that he may continue with his education. The teen father's parents also play a significant part in setting expectations of teen father involvement. Teen fathers' parents who expect their sons to take responsibility as a parent and encourage and support their involvement, make it much easier for teen fathers to become involved. This was the case for the four more involved teen fathers studied. In the other two cases, the teen fathers' parents were either absent or indifferent. The teen mothers' expectations for her sons' involvement were especially important for they were the parents the sons confided in.

Relationship with teen mother and her parents. One of the most influential factors affecting the participation of teen fathers in the lives of their children is the relationship with the teen mothers and her parents. There appears to be a continuous struggle for control by all parties, each fighting for rights to make decisions in the planning for the child. The teen father is at a disadvantage right from the beginning because of his lack of parenting knowledge and dire financial situation. Consequently, he is often not included in the decisions concerning his child. The more experienced maternal grandparents often are more involved in the decision-making. Many times they reject the teen father as he is blamed for the pregnancy. The teen mother who is not receiving financial support or direction with child care, further alienates the teen father. This rejection leads to a decrease in teen father involvement and in return denied access to the child by the teen mother and her parents. The rejection and uninvolved nature take on a cyclic nature, each reinforcing the other.

This was the case for the two less involved teen fathers in this study. From their perspective, they were denied access to the child because they did not provide financial support and were not getting along with the teen mother. Even the more involved teen fathers reported difficulties with the excess of control the maternal grandparents had over their children. Fortunately,

however, the teen mothers were cooperative and there was no problem with access to their children.

Expectations for teen fathers. The most underestimated aspect of teen father involvement is their desire to be recognized as parents and allowed some control over their children. The teen fathers interviewed showed great disappointment with the negative expectations the public had for teen fathers and the lack of recognition social and legal agencies gave to teen fathers. These subjects believed they were not being treated equally as a parent. People within the community did not question two teen fathers about their lack of involvement with the child, but were surprised by the actions of the more involved fathers. The message being sent to the teen father is that he is not expected to take on parental responsibility. The lack of assistance received from social and legal agencies left these teen fathers disappointed and confused. In two cases, teen fathers could find no way to increase their access to their children. The system, itself puts total control in the hands of the teen mother and offers no direction for the teen fathers to change the situation. This leaves very few alternatives but to resign to the teen mothers' control. Social services was also not supportive of involved teen fathers who resided with the mother and child. In most cases financial assistance was only

provided for single parents. There appears to be little in the way of support for involved teen fathers. Society has made significant advances in addressing the needs of single teen mothers, but now needs to address the rest of the equation, the teen fathers.

Suggestions for improvement. It is clear from this study that these teen fathers care very much for their children and have good intentions of involvement with their children. From their stories, we have gained insight into the difficulties they have experienced. It is these difficulties that may more accurately direct teen father programs and support groups. The following needs and suggestions were indicated by the participants in this study: public expectations of involvement of teen fathers; recognition of legal rights of teen fathers by social and legal agencies; counselling for teen mothers and teen fathers; legal intervention in cases of denied access to child; financial educational support for teen fathers who reside with the mother and child; inclusion in prenatal and parenting programs; and, support groups for teen fathers.

Although five of the six subjects were from rural areas, these problems are not exclusive to them. If anything, the teen father in the urban environment had more access to parenting services and programs. He had

been the only teen father involved in a teen parenting support group. However, he also had difficulty getting assistance with access to his child. He received no support from family members, but instead from a couple of friends. The major difference in locality was that the teen fathers in the smaller communities tended to have a strong network of support from family and friends. They knew most of the community members well and received much support from them, rather than a more formal program. Because of the small, non random sample used in this study it is difficult to make comparisons between urban and rural teen fathers, or to generalize at all. However, research of this nature, that provides detailed examination of personal experiences is necessary to guide future programming and research.

Recommendations

It is the consensus of researchers in this field of study that both research and programs for teenage fathers are sadly lacking. The suggestions made here are intended mainly to direct programming for teenage fathers and are based on information from this data base as well as current literature. The recommendations fall into five overlapping groups: sex education; family life; legal information; career development; and, delivery of programs.

Sex education. (1) In order to be sexually responsible, today's teenagers not only need to be educated about sexuality, but also must have developed value systems and high levels of self-esteem. They need factual information concerning sexual development, reproduction and the responsibilities associated with each.

(2) Special attention must be given to dispelling the myths of pregnancy prevention. Participants in this study stated a need for detailed information about contraceptive use.

(3) Adolescents also require contraceptive counselling. They need to be made aware of all of their alternatives and the possible outcomes of each so they can make knowledgeable decisions regarding sexual activity.

(4) Easier access to contraceptives is also important. Buying condoms at local drugstores was reported to be embarrassing by many teen fathers. Installing condom machines in high schools would provide an easier access.

Family life. (1) It is necessary that the primary goal of teen father programs is to employ "intervention strategies that reintegrate the teenage father into the mother-child relationship" (Watson, Row and Jones, 1989, p. 126). All six teen fathers interviewed stated a desire to be involved with their children. They want the same recognition, rights and responsibility as a parent.

(2) It is of utmost importance that teenage fathers be included in the decisions concerning their children. One consistently reported obstacle to this was the mother's parents. Some mediation between the teen fathers and the mother's parents may be needed. Counselling sessions for these individuals might include information about the importance of the father's involvement with his child, and strategies to communicate more effectively and deal with disagreements.

(3) It is suggested that the teen mother and teen father attend counselling together and learn how to deal with the stress of parenthood and how to work together, communicate effectively and consult on decisions. For less involved fathers, both parents need to understand the importance of cooperation especially when setting visitation times.

(4) Parenting skills training classes should be made available for both teen parents. Child care information would provide the competence and confidence needed by many teen fathers. One participant from this study had found his involvement in pre-natal classes very helpful. It is important to include the teen father and keep him informed during all stages of parenthood.

(5) Teen parent support groups would provide great emotional assistance (Elster and Lamb, 1982). Members would be able to share and learn from their experiences. One teen father in this study had found this type

of support very helpful. Another participant said just talking to another teen father had helped. Emotional support could take the form of organized support groups, or casually linking one teen father to another, or providing teen fathers contact with adult successful fathers who could be role models. The main objective is for teenage fathers to have someone to talk to that they feel they can relate to their experience.

Legal information. (1) Given the complexity of legal issues, common rights and responsibilities related to parenting and given the growing significance of these dimensions in the community, all social services and other counselling agencies must make sure such information is available to teen fathers. The guidance counsellor must take a specific role in advising where to find these resources.

(2) There is a need for policies and programs that increase teen father responsibility. A legal link between childbearing and childrearing might include the legal establishment or paternity as soon as the child is born and a financial support requirements that are flexible with some future orientation.

(3) Society must also take responsibility to improve the stereotype of teen fathers and change expectations. A public awareness program focusing on the legal rights and responsibilities of teen fathers, is necessary.

(4) Legal and social agencies can greatly improve the circumstances of teen fathers if they give them the individual attention they have given to teen mothers. Teen fathers require legal representation for paternity and child support issues, and intervention with access issues. Social services personnel could assess and monitor teen parent families and intervene when necessary.

Career development. (1) With the additional responsibilities of child care, teen fathers have more time restrictions. They need assistance with time management and a flexible and supportive school staff that can arrange alternate programs and services such as night classes, grade equivalency degree courses and peer tutoring at home.

(2) The unique circumstances of teen fathers requires the attention of guidance counsellors, especially in the area of high school drop out prevention.

(3) It is necessary for the high schools, a place of daily attendance for teen fathers, to be more equipped with support resource material such as the text, Coping with School Age Fatherhood by Michael Pennetti (1987). The author, once a teenage father himself describes how he overcame obstacles and became a successful father, husband and employee.

Delivery of programs. (1) Most teen father studies have been conducted in urban areas. This study is unique in being a rural study

involving special family situations. All teenage parents in this study share a history of living together in the same community or within close proximity. Because of the relatedness of the families in these rural areas, development of micro programs would be helpful. Community initiatives might involve the coordination of counsellors drawing together resources for the families. Such outreach services might include family counselling, support groups and parent skills training programs.

(2) Due to the dispersed population of this province, reaching all teen fathers would require an organized long distance delivery program. A teleconference counselling program which is now available for teen mothers in this province (Camcry Project), could be expanded to include teenage fathers thereby giving them an equal opportunity to be socialized into the parenting role.

(3) In line with happenings in the United States, consideration should be given toward developing provincial wide programs to enable teen fathers to participate in support groups, receive individual counselling and parent skills training while continuing with their schooling. This type of organized effort is needed for teenage fathers.

Suggestions for Future Research

With the limited amount of research in the area of teenage fatherhood, there has been little information to direct intervention. The effectiveness of any programming without a theoretical foundation is questionable. According to Watson, Row and Jones (1989), "Programs are not effective because little is known about the father's beliefs, values and behaviors." He suggests a need to "assess the knowledge and responsibilities of fathers" (p. 126).

An important contribution of this study is that teen fathers were free to share any thoughts and feelings they had concerning their past and present experiences of teenage fatherhood. This included highly personal perspectives where their values, rationales for behavior and related childhood experiences were all shared.

Based on the findings from this study and the review of the literature, the following recommendations for future research are made.

Perceptions and attitudes of teen fathers. (1) Longitudinal studies of teenage father involvement with their children are necessary. This would involve in-depth follow up interviews focusing on the following areas: relationship with child; relationship with mother; perceptions of stress; coping strategies; and, educational and career gains.

(2) Future research should examine the general attitude towards teen fathers, more specifically the messages the media is sending to the public. These messages and the effects on the adolescent population need to be analyzed.

Interpersonal relationships. (1) There is a need for a closer examination of the role the grandparents play in the involvement of teen fathers. The attitudes the maternal grandparents have towards the teen fathers, and the expectations the paternal grandparents have for their son's parenting behavior, may have a significant impact on the teen fathers' involvement.

(2) The quality of the relationship between the teen mother and teen father is known to strongly influence the father-child relationship. More information is needed to understand the specific difficulties they experience, and perceptions and expectations they have for each other.

Causes of teen fatherhood. (1) Research into the situational factors influencing teen parenthood, is necessary. The incidence of teen parents with mothers and fathers who were also teen parents requires further study. Possibly a comparison could be done between teen parents whose children became involved in a pregnancy and those teen parents whose children did not.

(2) To be able to take a proactive stance against teen pregnancy, more studies involving teen father's accounts of childhood sexuality related experiences are necessary. The amount and value of information received by teen fathers during their youth needs to be assessed.

Policies and programs. (1) Study of the effectiveness of specific adolescent father intervention strategies, is required (i.e., support groups, family counselling, sex education and contraceptive counselling, vocational counselling, legal counselling, and parenting skills training).

(2) Because of teen fathers' misconceptions of their legal rights as parents clarification of laws and policies is required. There is a need for a full examination of the Canadian laws and policies pertaining to adolescent fatherhood. An inventory and assessment of the present services and programs available to teen fathers in Newfoundland would also be helpful.

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APPENDIX A
TEEN FATHER INVOLVEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Teen Father Involvement Questionnaire

1. Name _____
2. Date of Birth _____ (age at time of your child's birth) _____
3. Marital Status _____
4. Current Living Arrangements _____
5. Educational Status
 - a) number of school years completed _____
 - b) presently attending school (yes) _____ (no) _____
 - c) if no, last grade completed _____
 - d) average G. P. A. _____
 - e) learning problems in school (yes) _____ (no) _____
describe _____
 - f) behavior problems in school (yes) _____ (no) _____
describe _____
 - g) plans to graduate (yes) _____ (no) _____
 - h) vocational plans _____
6. Employment Status
 - a) presently employed (yes) _____ (no) _____
If yes, where _____ How long _____
If no, are you presently looking for work _____
 - b) employed in the past (yes) _____ (no) _____
If yes, where _____ How long _____
How many hours per week _____

7. Family History

a) parents' marital status _____

b) Age Occupation Education Pregnancy prior to age 18
(yes or no)

Father _____

Mother _____

Stepfather _____

Stepmother _____

Siblings _____

(denote M or F) _____

8. Social History

a) religious preference _____ (active) ____ (inactive) ____

b) relationship with peers _____

c) age began dating _____

d) age of onset of sexual activity _____

e) use of contraceptives (yes) ____ (no) ____

f) other pregnancies (yes) ____ (no) ____

If yes, outcome _____

9. Relationship with mother of the child

a) length of time dating _____

b) describe level of commitment in relationship _____

10. Fatherhood experience

a) number of child(ren) _____

b) age(s) of child(ren) _____

c) sex of child(ren) _____

d) general health of child(ren) _____

e) relationship with child(ren) _____

APPENDIX B
SCHEDULE OF INTERVIEW GUIDELINE QUESTIONS

Schedule of Interview Guideline Questions

Amount of time spent with child:

1. How often do you see your child?
2. When do you see your child?
3. How long are the visits?
4. How do you manage to find the time to spend with your child?
5. Is it difficult to find this time?
6. How do you feel about giving this much time to your child?
7. How would you like to change the amount of time you spend with your child?

Quality of time spent with child:

1. What do you do when you and your child are together?
2. Do you play when you are together?
3. Do you enjoy the time you spent with your child?
4. Is your child happy to see you?
5. Do you praise your child?
6. What do you see as your role as a father?
7. Do you feel capable of fulfilling this role?
8. What are some of the difficulties you are experiencing in this role?
9. Do you feel competent in the skills and knowledge of child rearing?
10. What are your strengths and weaknesses in this area?

Feelings toward child:

1. How do you feel towards your child?
2. What do you think about when you look at your child?
3. How would you describe your child?
4. What are your child's strengths and weaknesses?

Expression of feelings toward child:

1. Do you talk much about your child?
2. Who do you usually talk to?
3. What do you tell others about your child?
4. Do you take your child to public places?
5. Do you carry a picture of your child with you?
6. What do you tell your child about your feelings towards him/her?
7. Do you show your child affection? If so, how?
8. What was your relationship with your father like?

Relationship of child and father's family and friends:

1. Who of your friends see your child? And how often?
2. What do you, your child, and your friends do together?
3. What relatives see your child?
4. What do your relatives and your child do together?
5. How do they get along?
6. Is it important for your child to spend time with your family and friends? And why?
7. How did your family and friends respond to the pregnancy?

Providing material support:

1. Do you feel you provide financially for your child and how?
2. Do you make regular payments of child support to the mother?
3. Do you pay for medical bills or health insurance?
4. Do you buy gifts for our child and when?
5. Has it been difficult to provide financially in this way?
6. Would you like to see your financial support change and how?
7. Do you expect this to change in the future?

Providing emotional support to the mother:

1. How do you get along with the mother?
2. Did you support the mother during pregnancy? Were you with her for doctor's appointments or the delivery?
3. Are you concerned about the mother's influence on your child?
4. How do you help the mother care for and raise the child?

Involvement in decision-making, regarding child:

1. What decisions concerning your child, have you been involved with?
2. Describe your involvement.
3. Who else was involved?
4. Who do you talk with when making decisions about your child?
5. Were you involved with the decision to have and keep your child?
6. Tell me about that time.
7. Do you feel you have input into these decisions and control concerning your child's future?

Legal responsibility:

1. Are you recognized as the father on your child's birth record.
2. Have you adopted your child?
3. Has your child been given your first or last name?
4. Are you notified if something important happens to your child?

Interest in child's future:

1. Have you thought about your child's future?
2. What do you hope for your child?
3. What are you doing or planning to do to make sure these goals are met?
4. What in your child's future are you worried about most?
5. How do these expectations for your child affect your own goals?

Other

1. What has most strongly affected your involvement with your child?
2. What has been the most and least helpful in your adjustment to fatherhood?
3. What other comments would you like to make concerning this experience?

APPENDIX C
APPROVAL OF STUDY FROM ETHICS COMMITTEE
AT MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY



Memorial

University of Newfoundland

Faculty of Education

July 19, 1993.

To: Ms. Sharon Spurrell c/o Drs. W. Martin & N. Garlie
From: Dr. Walter C. Okshevsky, Chair, Ethics Review Committee
Subject: Thesis proposal

=====

I am pleased to inform you that the Committee has approved your proposal subject to the following conditions.

- 1) All subjects of your study are either already known by you personally or you are already familiar with the subjects through their families.
- 2) All Letters of Consent should include in the body of the text the name of the researcher and the Supervisor(s) involved.

Please find enclosed your Certificate Of Approval. On behalf of the Committee I wish you the best of success in your study.

Committee members: Drs. Singh, Sharpe, Lehr, Canning, Okshevsky

(

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Memorial University of Newfoundland

Faculty Committee for Ethical Review of
Research Involving Human Subjects

Certificate of Approval

Investigator: Ms. Sharon Spurrall


Investigator's Workplace: Faculty of Education, Memorial University,

Supervisor: Dr. Wilt Martin & Dr. Norm Gurlie

Title of Research: "An examination of teen fathers' involvement
with their partners and children and the
Approval Date: influencing factors.

July 19, 1992

The Ethics Review Committee has reviewed the protocol and procedures as described in this research proposal and we conclude that they conform to the University's guidelines for research involving human subjects.



Dr. Walter Okshevsky
Chairperson
Ethics Review Committee

Members: Dr. Ron Lehr
Dr. Walter Okshevsky
Dr. Dennis Sharpe
Dr. Amarjit Singh
Dr. Patricia Canning

APPENDIX D
CONSENT FORMS

**Sample Consent Form
Teen Father Study
Informed Consent Form for Research Subjects**

I, the undersigned, understand that this research is being conducted by a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University of Newfoundland, and that this study has been approved by the Faculty of Education's Ethics Review Committee.

I understand that the purpose of this research is to gather information about teen fathers that affect their level of involvement with their partner and child. The type of information gathered will include perceptions concerning attitudes, relationships, availability of social support, education and careers, psychological readiness and reaction to becoming a father.

I understand that all interview sessions will be recorded and later transcribed. I agree to have my interviews either audiotaped or videotaped and transcribed.

I understand that all information collected from me will be kept confidential; an identification number will be used and all identifying material will be stored in a place accessible only to the interviewer and will be destroyed when the study is completed. The information collected from me will be used with similar information collected from five other teen fathers and will be reported without names or other identifying information.

I understand that there will be no risk to me resulting from my acceptance or refusal to participate in this study. My consent is voluntary and I may choose to not answer any of the questions and withdraw from the interview at any time. I understand that in appreciation for my contribution to this study, I will receive a payment of \$50.00 at the completion of the interviews.

I agree to participate in the research study by being interviewed at a later date, to be agreed upon by myself and the interviewer.

I _____ (participant) hereby give my consent to participate in the study on teenage fathers undertaken by _____. I understand that participation is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study at any time. All information is strictly confidential and no individual will be identified.

Date

Participant's Signature
Contact # _____

Witness's Signature

Sample Consent Form
Teen Father Study
Informed Consent Form for Parents of Research Subjects

Dear Parent or Guardian:

I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University of Newfoundland. I am conducting interviews with teenage fathers, to gain an understanding of their perceptions of fatherhood. I am requesting your permission for your son to participate in this study.

Your son's participation will include answering questions related to his involvement with his partner and child and will address topics such as: relationships, social support, educational and career expectations, psychological readiness and immediate reactions. The sessions will be either audiotaped or videotaped. This will take approximately three hours (three--one hour sessions) of your son's time. Your child will be asked to participate in these interviews and will be told he can refrain from answering any of the questions or withdraw from the interview at any time. At the completion of the interviews your son will be paid \$50.00 for his contributions.

All information gathered in this study is strictly confidential and individuals will at no time be identified. Participation is voluntary and you may withdraw your son from this study at any time. There is no risk to your or your son resulting from your acceptance or refusal to have your child participate in this study.

This study has been approved by the Faculty of Education's Ethics Review Committee. If you agree to have your son participate in this study, please sign below and return it to me by _____. For your own records, an additional copy of this form will be provided for you. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at 466-7452.

Thank you for considering this request.

Yours sincerely,

I _____ (parent/guardian) hereby give permission for my son to take part in a study on teenage fathers' perceptions undertaken by _____. I understand that participation is entirely voluntary and that my son and/or I can withdraw permission at any time. All information is strictly confidential and no individual will be identified.

Date

Parent's/Guardian's Signature

Witness's Signature

APPENDIX E
TEEN FATHERS: A DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Table 1: Age and Educational Characteristics of Teen Fathers

Subject	Age	Age at Child's Birth	Number of School Years Completed	Attending School Presently	G.P.A.	Behavior Problems	Learning Problems
1	20	19	12	No*	60	No	No
2	16	16	11	Yes	60	No	Yes
3	18	18	12	Yes	80	No	No
4	19	18	11	Yes	55	No	Yes
5	17	15	11	Yes	65	No	No
6	18	17	13	Yes**	80	No	No

All reports were self-defined.

All teen fathers interviewed were single.

* Completed a one year community college program.

** Presently completed one year of community college and will be returning for second year.

APPENDIX F
FAMILY BACKGROUND OF TEEN FATHERS

Table 1. Parents of Teen Fathers

Subject	Marital Status*	Age	Completed High School	Presently Employed	Parent When a Teenager
1					
Father	M	60	Yes	Yes	No
Mother	M	56	Yes	Yes	No
2					
Father	M	33	No	No	Yes
Mother	M	32	Yes	No	Yes
3					
Father	M	36	No	Yes	Yes
Mother	M	35	No	Yes	Yes
4					
Father	D	50	Yes	No	No
Mother	D	40	No	No	No**
5					
Father	M	40	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mother	M	41	No	No	Yes
6					
Father	M	38	Yes	Yes	No
Mother	M	39	No	No	No

* M = Married; S = Single; D = Divorced.

** Mother was reported to be "around" 20 years old when she had child.

Subject #1 was adopted. His biological parents were teen parents.

Subject #6 was raised by mother and stepfather. His mother was never married to his biological father.

Consistent with the literature (Robbins & Lynn, 1973; Elster & Panzarine, 1980; Card, 1981; Hanson et al., 1989; McCoy & Tyler, 1985; Rivara, Sweeney & Henderson, 1985), these teen fathers were more likely to have parents that had been teen parents themselves.

Table 2. Siblings of Teen Fathers

Subject	Number of Siblings	Age of Siblings	Number Who Became Parents as Teens	Number Who Completed High School	Number Who are Employed
1	6	21-38	0	6	2
2	2	3 & 9	--	--	--
3	0	--	--	--	--
4	0	--	--	--	--
5	1	23	0	0	0
6	1	14	0	--	--

APPENDIX G
DATING PATTERN OF TEEN FATHERS

Table 1. Dating Patterns and Sexual Activity of Teen Fathers

Subject	Age Began Dating	Length of Time Dating Mother (years)	Age of First Sexual Activity	Use of Contraceptives	Type of Contraceptives
1	17	3	18	Yes	Pill*****
2	13	2	15	Yes	Condom*
3	13	1.5	15	Yes	Condom*
4	15	3	16	Yes	Condom**
5	11	5	10***	Yes
6	13	3	15	Yes	Condom*

In all cases no other pregnancies were reported.

* Subjects reported irregular use of contraceptives.

** Subject reported pregnancy was planned although contraceptives were used.

*** Subject reported first incident of sexual intercourse was not considered a "date" because there was only the one meeting.

**** Subject reported no use of contraceptives and partner became pregnant with first sexual intercourse.

***** Subject reported mother misunderstood directions for using contraceptive.

Consistent with the literature (Hanson et al., 1989), these teen fathers tended to have a history of early dating experiences and a long-term relationship with the mother.

APPENDIX H
INTERVIEW SAMPLES

(Script 5b)

Int.: Um...I want to talk a little bit about your relationship with your mom and dad growing up. What sorts of things did you do with your mom, for instance? What are some of the things that you do together?

Jim: We're...mom was always there when I got home from school and things like that you know....Ah...with Mom alone, you know, not a lot, right. It would usually be all of us together, right.

Int.: Usually the family did things together.

Jim: Yeah...like we wouldn't usually...like if dad was working we would have to wait 'til dad got home and we'd go...so.

Int.: Okay...There was no activities in particular that...

Jim: No

Int.: What about your dad?

Jim: Yeah we used to go in the woods a lot together and things like that, you know. You know just walk around the shores...go for a walk around the beach, right. Does that...Goes to the park together...that's about it.

Int.: Did you ever work together?

Jim: Oh yeah work together in the woods. That's yeah and dad's like a construction worker, or contractor....So like when he was building houses and that kind of thing I used to be with him all the time, all the time that I could besides being in school, so....we worked together.

Int.: Did your mom work?

Jim: Well no...She don't work now and like as I was growing up. She never worked. She only started work last year or something. The year before and like it was a night time job. She'd go there during the night, right, 'til the next morning and then she'd be home in the morning, right...So...That never took a long time away from the family as such, right.

Int.: So she was home most of the time with you and your brother?

Jim: Yeah, well, my brother was gone away for 16 years, so. Well, not the whole 16 years. He used to come home off and on, right.

Int.: On holiday and....

Jim: Uh, uh. Any every now and then he'd come home for the week-end, things like that, right.

Int.: So, do you see a difference in the mother's role and the father's role?

Jim: What do you mean a difference, like?

Int.: Do they have different responsibilities or do different things?

Jim: Well, usually like let's say I was going to ask for something...If it meant a debate between one another, they would usually go in the room or something and talk about it, so I would see them, you know. And usually, it's dad, whatever dad says it's right, whatever goes....So that's you know as far as being responsible for me goes, Dad who's responsible for me and my brother, so.

Int.: So he has the final say?

Jim: Yeah.

Int.: Has that influenced the way you would like to have your own family run?

Jim: Well, not really, I mean I'd like to have it the same way cause I mean, I think it's good and ah, I don't think I'm a bad person, you know, so, it worked for me, as such, so. Why wouldn't it work for my son?....Yeah, I'd like for it to be that way. Now there's a few things I'd like different.

Int.: One thing you said that the girlfriend's family was different, in that they didn't show as much affection as yours. Do you show that much affection to your child?

Jim: Oh yeah.

Int.: So, that's something you want to bring into your family?

Jim: Yeah. Like if he needs a lacing or something, I won't take him and lace him in front of a crowd of people or anything. I'll just take him in the room, aside, just tell him what he done wrong...and just tell him I got to do it, you know give him a lacing or whatever you know, not beat him or anything. Just to show him...I mean, I don't have to do it anymore...cause he knows now. All I got to do is speak to him and you know, that's it. I mean, now I don't have to touch him.

Int.: So as far as showing affection, what do you do with your child?

Jim: Oh I...I was out today with him, with the water guns...me and him squirting one another, so...you know, plays with him when he's around, gives him attention, and that's basically what kids always want is attention, I mean you know. The minute that they feel nobody is watching them or and that...tha't's when they get a bit out of hand, right....So you know, they want attention and this.

Int.: Do you hug him, kiss him?

Jim: Oh yes, every night, before I goes to bed, I hug and kiss unless he's down to her house. So then it's, I just calls him and talks to him on the phone...tells him I loves him and...whatever.

Int.: So you're very open with your feelings?

Jim: Oh yeah....And like anytime, like I was down there then right, I just dropped him off...took him to her house. And I give him a hug and a kiss before I go home...things like that, you know.

Int.: Is your girlfriend the same way?....Where her family was a bit different...is she as affectionate with your son?

Jim: Yeah, I think she knows our family is a bit different than hers. And I think she likes the way we are. So I think she...and she sees what I does with him, so, you know. She does the same thing, so, right.

Int.: You did say that there was some disagreements on how to raise the child. What are some examples of that?

Jim: Okay. We got a trust fund for him see. And, I man, usually he....What I said I wanted to do was give all the family allowance, right, into the trust fund, you know, which was a hundred and something. I'm not sure, exactly. And she...she didn't want to. Because she figured she'd want some for him, you know, or whatever he needed then, we could get for him anyway. And we just disagreed, I man, we ended up settling it, giving \$63.00 a month, so. And I didn't like the idea, but, so.

Int.: What was that, about half?

Jim: Well, yeah...a little bit better than half. Yeah a little tiny bit, so.

Int.: What else?

Jim: Ah...okay. What kind of, like what...you know, like...let's say a high chair or something...like she wanted a good high chair or the most expensive high chair. But I mean, you know, he don't, he never used the high chair that long so, I mean, if I can get one from one of my friends or something, I think it would be a lot better to get one from one of my friends than instead of going buying one that you'll only end up lying around somewhere or giving away to someone else anyway. So, we disagreed on that and many things like that, you know. Like she wanted to buy new stuff. And then I, if I could get a loan of it or something, that'd just, you know. Unless it was something he could use for, you know, a number of years. Like toys or something...you can easily keep them, you know, a lifetime, kind of thing. If you give him a toy, you don't really want another kid to end up with it later down the road, so...just things like that...a gate like a gate swing so he don't fall over the stairs or things like that or go somewhere you don't want. She'd always want new gate, you know, no such thing as getting a used gate off someone else that didn't use it, right, so....We got into a few arguments over that, but it worked out.

Int.: So, some of the arguments were about money and where you spend the money and how much you spend?

Jim: Yeah, mostly about money...of course that's what most everything else was about, so.

Int.: Does she receive any support from social services or anything?

Jim: No for from...no, she'd have to be living on her own for her to get something. Where she's living with her parents, it's kind of up to her parents and me to support the child. My parents don't even have to do anything, you know, to a point. Morally, well they would, but....

Int.: So legally, they don't have to?

Jim: No, legally my parents don't have to...you know, because that's just the way it is. I'm supposed to pay in so much monthly...like it I was...if we was to take it to court or something, you know, I would have to pay her so much a month. And like whatever else like her parents would have to look out to her, where she, right.

Int.: So legally, you would be the one responsible, financially?

Jim: Yeah.

Int.: I was a little confused at our last meeting about which environment you think is better for your child. Do you feel it's your family's environment or hers?

Jim: Well, I mean, it's not a matter of which is better or not, it's just, you know. It's a matter of opinion that is cause I guess to her, her environment is better and to me, mine is and it isn't. Cause I like my house environment the environment in my house is better than hers to me. And it is better. And I'm not just saying it, because I'd like for him to live with me. But it is better because nobody drinks or smokes in my house, or swears.

My family is a Christian family and they go to church every Sunday and like, you know. And her parents are cursing and swearing and drinking, smoking, you know...so. And, I mean, the only thing about where I live is the kids that's up there...are you know, they're a bit...think they're a lot older than they really are and they're out 'till 11, 12 o'clock at night...little kids, 8 or 9 years old. So I wouldn't want Brad (child) to be like that. So, down her house, in that respect the kids down there are, got a little bit of a stronger hand on them you know what I mean. Like they're not out 'till after 6, like most of them. And they're all his age, so....So it's better in that respect, but I'd much rather he'd be at my house.

Int.: And how did you find your friends, the children growing up?...Were you out with them and mixing with the neighbour's children?

Jim: No, I'm not a social person. Like I mean, you know socially I don't. Like we goes away to a camp, right. There's this Christian camp, you know. Like my parents ask me and I don't really want to go because I know what happens when I go....We go away and I ends up staying with my parents. I don't want to go out with the younger people, my age, right. Cause I'm just not like a social person.

Int.: Were you like that all along though, growing up?

Jim: Yeah, pretty well all my life, you know....I used to go out and go around with the people I knew, like you know. And I wouldn't spend a lot of time out, then. But when I was younger, like 12 or 13, 14 years old, I used to spend a lot of time with people probably a bit older than me, you know, so.

Int.: But you don't do it as much now as you did when you were 13?

Jim: Well since the baby, you know, you can't...technically I do have more freedom than Nancy. That's the parent, right...the other parent. And technically I do have more freedom, cause I mean...she chose to keep the baby. I mean I wanted it. I wanted him not it...but she chose it....So technically she chose all the responsibility of the child, so I can go out more often than she can, but I don't think it's fair. So, I don't usually go out without taking her with me. Sometimes like now, I'm going to go up to _____ (town), shopping for myself. So, I'm gonna go myself. I'm not gonna...right...cause I do have to do things on my own, right. It's just the kind of person I am. I don't want her with me all the time...might sound cruel or something but, you know.

Int.: How does she feel about that, the fact that you've got more freedom?

Jim: Well, she wants to spend every second of her time with me because she knows I goes places when she's not around. So...you know. But she can't spend every second with me, right. I mean, what happens later, on, down the road if I...when I gets out of school. I got a full time job. I'm going to be gone all day and she's going to be home or else she's going to be gone all day and I'm going to be home, so. But she's not going at that, I don't think so.

Int.: Is she planning on going back to school or...?

Jim: Oh yeah.

Int.: She's going to school in September?

Jim: Yup...yeah, I don't think she'd leave school for anything...I don't think. That's almost just as important to her as the child. She knows as well as I know that everyone needs an education, so, that's it.

Int.: Does she have a career in mind, yet?

Jim: Well, I suppose not as much. She wants to be a nurse, I guess or some kind of a nurse or a doctor or something. She likes helping people I guess. I don't know. We don't usually talk about that much.

Int.: That's a ways down the road?

Jim: Yeah and I mean, usually we have other problems to talk about rather than things like that, so. But we did talk about it among ourselves every now and then, not much, but sometimes.

Int.: What's mostly the topic?

Jim: The child, you know. What's good for the child is usually....And sometimes we get into little arguments over, you know, where I spend the money cause she thinks she owns my money, as such, you know. So like, you know, if I want to go buy myself something she probably get a bit mad or something....We has a little argument about that (laugh). But that's nothing. That's why I'm going over shopping now, by myself (laugh).

Int.: So, you don't have to explain it?

Jim: No, that's right. Once I buy it, that's it, throw away the tags.

Int.: You can't take it back?

Jim: Yeah.

Int.: Is it important to you, for your family and friends to spend time with your child? Do you see that as important?

Jim: I think it's important to spend a lot of time around kids, his age, because he could grown up like me...cause technically, like I'm not a social person right. Like, you know, parties and things like that, dances, I don't like that, you know. It's not my cake, as such. So I just, you know, but I would like for him to be a social person. You know, get out and talk to people, you know.

Int.: You think you'd be happier if you had a circle of friends?

- Jim: Yeah, I mean I got no one that I talks to. Nobody, not even Nancy, I tells anything to, you know. I'd like for him to have someone he can trust, right?
- Int.: What about family? Is it important for him to have contact with his family?
- Jim: Oh yeah. Yeah...you know, it's nice and all but it's not that important. you know, he'd get to see them eventually. But it's not something that you know that you put on a schedule. Like you know, I got to go see Aunt someone this today and next day go see another Aunt. I mean it's not that important, you know. It's all a part of growing up. He got to get to know his family as well as anyone, right.
- Int.: You were talking about legal responsibility. You said you were legally, could be, are legally responsible for your child. Is your name on the child's birth certificate?
- Jim: An...no, I don't think so.
- Int.: Is anybody listed as the father or is it just not listed?
- Jim: No, I don't think it's listed.
- Int.: Okay...is there a reason for that?
- Jim: Ah well....
- Int.: Did you decide not to put it there or did you just not bother?

Jim: The decision was never give to me. I was never asked about it, so. I don't know.

Int.: You don't know if it is or not, do you?

Jim: No, I don't know...worth checking out, though (laugh).

Int.: And has the child been given any of your names?

Jim: Oh yeah, he got my name _____. His name is _____ right. And his name is _____, right. And I chose both, well I chose _____ cause I got a little cousin. And I mean, he's like almost as important to me as my son, almost. I mean, I don't spend as much time with him as I do with my son. But, you know, he's really important to me. I takes him with me, every now and then, when I goes somewhere or something...so...well that's due to the fact, his parents is split up and I thought the world of him. And he haven't had the best kind of life, so...I just tries to help him out a bit, you know. And they gave him my name, so I didn't want it. Jim (father) is not a guy's name, you know. I don't like my name. I would change it, but...It's not that important.

Int.: So you'd rather it was your son's second name?

Jim: Rather than his first name, yes.

Int.: Ah, you said there were a lot of changes when you became a father, in as far as time, and not being able to spend as much time with friends. Also, a change in your relationship with your girlfriend?

Jim: Well, with respect to the friends, I mean, in a lot of cases, like when you're...before the child came along, my friends would call me up and say are you going out here and are you going out there. But after the child came, they...I guess they just thought if they called me up I wouldn't be able to go....But I mean, they did call me up a couple of times and I did have to say that I couldn't. But, you know they usually, most of them would give up calling and ask me to go out...cause they figured, like you know...where I wouldn't be able to go or something. So, it's not a whole lot the baby took away from me but....Like the baby don't really take a lot of time away from me you know, cause usually the baby is gone to bed 6:30 in the day anyway, so, I mean, not very many people goes out earlier than that anyway, around with their buddies, unless they go swimming or something like that. Even then we can go 9:30 or 10:00 o'clock in the night. Not really a whole lot of time taken away, I guess, but it's the stress of it, you know. You think of it. You know your child is home, somebody is looking out to it. You know, you don't really. You know, I'd much

rather be home with him than out somewhere wondering about what he's at, now, right.

Int.: You're not as comfortable in that way of doing things? How is your relationship with your girlfriend?

Jim: Well, things are more tense, I mean, you know. Like before the baby came along, we were perfect. Like, well not perfect. We still had arguments and things that normally happen. But you know, the arguments have become more intense after the baby, you know. There is a lot of stress. You know, you just get fed up with certain things, I mean. Something, you know like waking up every morning 6:30, 7:00 to a baby, I mean. And having to go to 6:30, 7:00 sometimes even 9, 10, 11:00 at night with him. It's not really comfortable after. There's a sudden change, I mean, it just don't gradually happen. I mean, the day that he is born, from then on...I mean you just gotta change. You know, it's not a gradual change or anything, you know. Unless you begin to prepare yourself as you're growing up, I mean, you know. It's not many people has a chance to do that, so. It's just something that happens overnight, you know. Now the pregnancy takes 9 months, but in those 9 months you don't do a lot of preparing, I mean. You worry about the parent but you're not worried, you know about things

that's going to happen, later on. Some families with lots of money, maybe, might do up a room for their child and stuff like that. Usually people like us, me, not us, me, we don't really thing about those things. So it brings out a lot of stuff you know stress...I don't think about it. You know all together, it's just stress. And that makes the conversation between one another, you know, more intense and you know. Whatever the problems, is doubled by another problem that probably went on that day, you know.

Int.: So now, you have to talk about issues, where before...the baby wasn't there yet, you didn't really have to make decisions.

Jim: Yeah, that's right. Now, the decisions got to be made. So you're kind of tied down, type of thing.

Int.: How did you prepare for the baby?

Jim: Well....We never really did. I mean you know, within a couple days before she had the baby, you know, we went and bought new clothes for him and things like that for him. But, you know, got the crib and all that. But it wouldn't iike a couple of months we did it. It was just, you know within the four or five days, right. Because up until then, I wasn't allowed to see her. Her father wouldn't let me see he, right. Up until, you know, I suppose it was two and one-half or three weeks

before she was...before she had the baby. But you know it was only within the last four or five days that we really knew that, you know, there was a baby coming and like we got to get ready for it. So we just went and got the crib and all that stuff or 2 cribs, right. We had to get double of each because it would have been kind of a pain to bring it back and forth...like where we used to bring the baby, you know, so. And usually she would go and buy the new stuff, you know. She couldn't get a loan of it off her friends or anything (laugh), you know, like her aunts or her uncles. And I would usually, just you know, get a loan of a stroller, well no not a stroller...no we both agreed to buy a stroller cause we knew that was something he was gonna need for a few years. And, ah, so we got the crib. And I got a crib off my aunt and that, so.

Int.: So that helped out a little bit or else it would have cost double, as much.

Jim: Yeah.

Int.: What would you say...what do you hope for your child...down the road?

Jim: I never really thought about it you know. I just like day by day. But, you know, I want him to be respected. I don't want him to be known as...a fellow that lies or is ignorant or anything like that. I wants him to be..., not perfect. I mean, everybody got a flaw or two. But I wants him to know when he does something wrong and that he done something wrong. You know, I don't want it to become a habit. Like swearing or something. For most kids today, that's a habit. I mean, it's not something that just happens, occasionally and you know you've done something wrong. It usually become a habit so. But I don't want things like that to become a habit. Like I mean I understand that if you get mad or if you hurt yourself, you might curse or something. I mean, I even does that and I don't swear regularly. Like that's not in my vocabulary or regular conversation. But you know, if I hurt myself or something I might curse a couple, you know. But after that, I just go on. So, I'd like for him to be a lot like me. You know, I'm not bad. Now there's things I wouldn't want him to do, but....Yeah, you know grow up with a lot of respect for his elders and know his family and know that whatever they say go, except for things that don't make sense or is out of whack or something. But, you know, know what's right and what's wrong.

Int: So you want him to grow up much like you have and learn what you have. What do you fear? What do you worry about concerning your son?

Jim: ...I don't know. I guess I just don't want him to be another statistic, like other kids that just grow up. I want him to be something like you know, something important and stuff like that. You know everybody is important, but I just want him to be a little bit extra like you know. I don't know...I guess that will come in time, I mean, you know...I don't know right now...I mean whatever he...Like right now, I don't even know what he's interested in. Well no, that's a lie. He loves backhoes and heavy equipment. I mean you know, wherever there's a backhoe to, that's it, we got to stop. That's it, we got to be there 'til we fights and scratches with him to leave. And he's, you know...he's a lot like me. That's the way I was, you know...heavy equipment. I'd pick everything, anything apart. I mean I'd pick it 'til it dropped. I scrapped our television and VCR, one time. But that was it...I fixed it though.

Int.: Do you worry that he might be involved in a pregnancy when he is young?

Jim: That's something through my experience I mean....Teenagers are going to do whether...you know...whether parents....I think that if my parents would have, you know, told me, explained to me,.... You know if you're gonna do it, use birth control and things like that. I think it's more effective. Because teenagers don't want to be told to do something, right. I mean, I hates when my parents tells me that you got to have this done and you got to have this done. You know, I mean when I wake up in the morning and my mom and dad has something for me to do, I would like for them to say. That got to be done today and this. You know, I'd like to have this done or whatever and do it around your own time, you know. Whatever they wanted me to do that day, just to tell me what to do and I'd go about it my own way, my own speed, you know. Like if I knew like that if I had something to do in the evening and if I knew I had to do something a little bit faster than normal...then I'd do it a little bit faster than normal just to get the appointment or whatever, right. So, you know.

Int.: So, it wouldn't have been helpful for them to say don't have sex?

Jim: Yeah, that's right.

Int.: What could they have said that might have helped out in your situation?

Jim: I think if they, you know, like, if they would have said, you know....If you're gonna do it, I mean you know, be careful. Use a condom or some method of birth control. I mean that....And in a lot of cases teenagers wouldn't do it at all because it was no longer a challenge to them...because I mean, it become a challenge if the parents tell them not to do it, you know.

Int.: And is that what happened in your case, that you didn't use birth control?

Jim: Well, I mean, you know, I knew about it and that. It was just while it happened, it was just spur of the moment thing. I mean, I never had no intentions of having sex with her or anything. It just, you know. I guess we were in a position where we shouldn't of been and it just happened. I mean you know, we were home with nobody home, you know.

Int.: Did you think it could happen to you that...?

Jim: No, I always thought naw that could never happen to me, you know. But as it has, it can happen to anybody, you know.

Int.: Had you talked about contraceptives with her? Was there any planning?

Jim: Yeah, after the baby...cause I mean...we only done it once, and that was it. That was all it took for me. There was like...like we never done it you know over and over...just once. And then six months down the road, I finds out that she's pregnant. And you know, when I done it, I got up and I was you know, what did I do this for, you know, this type of thing. And six, seven months down the road this is what, right. So, after that, we got a little bit close and we said, just in case something like that happens again, you know, so we used birth control. But I mean we only did it a couple of time after, you know. You know, we don't...it's not a habit type thing. Usually we're too tired anyway, (laugh) you know. So, we don't do that stuff no more. It's not an issue or anything like that. I mean, if it happens, it happens and if it don't, it don't.

Int.: So, she's using some form of protection?

Jim: Oh yeah, she's using...she's on the pill, right....Although we don't do it only once in a while...it might happen....In a way, you know, I thinks about it, sometimes I shouldn't do it, I don't know.

Int.: Do you feel guilty, is that it?

Jim: Well, not really guilty, just....

Int.: Worried that she might get pregnant?

- Jim: Well, yeah sometimes, you know. I mean, I don't...like I don't usually stay home with her alone. I usually stay out of a place like that, you know. But, I mean, I don't know. I guess it's just your manly instincts or something, I don't know.
- Int.: I noticed on the questionnaire that you said you were sexually active at the age of 10 yet you didn't have a girlfriend 'til age 11. That's a bit different.
- Jim: Yeah, well before, before you know, I never went out with the girl, I saw, I guess.
- Int.: Okay...so it was...you wouldn't consider the person your girlfriend?
- Jim: That's right...a girlfriend is someone, you know, on my scale I been with for over, you know, a couple of months or something....Like longer than a couple of months....So I didn't consider it....I was only with her for a week or so.
- Int.: So, she didn't qualify as your girlfriend?
- Jim: No, that's right...that's right (laugh).
- Int.: Anything else you'd like to add, before we finish up?

- Jim: When you said...a few minutes ago you said about feeling responsible. Did you mean responsible for the pregnancy or responsible as in for the birth control? You know, I should have been the one to take birth control or something. You said to me....you said...do you feel responsible...and I answered...I think I went...I don't remember.
- Int.: Was it about the issue of sex that you have now? Was that it?
- Jim: Yeah.
- Int.: And I said to you, do you feel....I asked you if you felt guilty. First you said no...then I asked you if you were afraid if she'd become pregnant again. Was it around there?
- Jim: And you said something, did I feel responsible?
- Int.: Okay, yeah, that's a good question. I don't think I meant it that way....
- Jim: No, you never asked it.
- Int.: ...but that's a good question (laugh).
- Jim: Yeah, I know...that's...well responsible for the pregnancy, yes. I feel that if, you know, I had of outright said no...that you know, maybe. Well I guess the pregnancy maybe could have happened because there could have been many different times that the same thing would have happened....So, I mean, I don't know. I don't know if I could just

keep saying no or if I would, you know, give in like I did in the beginning. So, I do feel responsible. I mean, you know, it is a lot of my fault. I mean, I allowed it to happen, so. And it was at my house.

Int.: Do you feel you are both equally responsible in one way or another?

Jim: Well I feel, you know, like. If she'd had said no, I wouldn't have done anything, you know. I'd adjust, you know. Alright, fine with me, that type of thing, I wouldn't say you know suck up to her or anything...say to her I loves ya....You know, I wouldn't do that to her, I mean no is no and that's just that simple. So I, you know. But I mean neither one of us said no so....So I guess it's both of our, you know. We both had some say in it so. You know, I don't...I do feel guilty because if I'd had said "no," I mean. I guess she probably feels the same way. If she'd a said "no," then it wouldn't have happened. But that's besides, you know. We both probably feel guilty. But one is no more guilty than the other one...I mean both parties...unless it was a rape or something, I mean, right so. But it definitely wasn't that.

Int.: And how are you going to deal with this issue with your son when he gets older?

- Jim: Ah...I don't know. I wonders. Every now and then I thinks about that. You know, and I dreads for him to go to school before we're married or anything...before he has the right name, you know. But that's it....You know I ain't ready to be married, yet for a few years, so...I don't know.
- Int.: You have some thinking to do about that, do you...like bring the issue up, when to bring the issue up...how old will he be or...?
- Jim: Ah, I don't know...it probably won't ever be an issue. Well, of course it will, yes...cause I even asked about myself asked my parents. You usually don't come out and say. It's usually an issue if the kid asks, you know.
- Int.: Okay, you're talking about your being a teen father, right, or not being married and this issue?
- Jim: Yeah.
- Int.: Okay, what I was talking about, what I was thinking about was, ah, how will you deal with trying to prevent him from becoming a teen father himself?

Jim: Well, I'll just, you know. I'll almost be like a chaperon....Like I won't let him...I don't know how to say this without, you know...I mean, I'm not going to stop him from dating girls or nothing like that. But you know, there will be certain rules that he will have to follow. Like, you know. But, I mean, even those rules....if he chooses to do it...I mean he's going to do it. I mean, I'd have to be with him 100 percent of the time in order to stop him. And, I mean, I ain't gonna to that...cause if he's grown up he's grown up. It's just that simple. So...it'll be most...more than I did...just his. It'll be how, you know...if I tells him, you know, if you want to do it, I mean to be safe about it, I mean. That's the way I sees it, you know.

Int.: So, do you think you would emphasize how to be safe and that you need to be safe and how easily it can happen?

Jim: Yeah...that's right, but I mean, if he's smart he'll know that he can't do it and get away with it, you know. Like maybe there has been people that done it and got away with it. But I mean, I want to teach him that like, you now...look what happened to me, I mean, you know. It happened to me, so, and my life was very limited. So, you know. I'll just tell him that you know. I mean if you want...if you expects to be anything in life...you cant' do it while you're young. I mean, you

know, it's going to be something hard to deal with. I'll only know what I'll really do, when it happens...because there could be any number of obstacles I might have to cross to get to know what I really got to do, right. I mean things change, everyone changes. Ten, twenty, thirty years ago, we wouldn't be here having this conversation now. I mean, we would be considered you now, out in outer space. Cause sex was never even an issue in my father's house. I mean that was, you know, that was all left up to you. Like whatever you do that's you know, don't talk to me about it type think, right. So...

Int.: Do you think it will be a more open issue when he gets of age?

Jim: Yeah, that's right so. I'll only know how to deal with it in the time to deal with it so....Cause you know things could change, you know, rapidly. I mean, maybe you know....Dad jokes about it and this sort of thing. Like I should of got you a chastity belt or something...hide key, you know. So, I mean, that's a little bit barbaric you know. That's only back years and years ago so (laugh)....You know, things change, so...I don't know. It's gonna be a good question.

Int.: Cause you'll have to think about what your parents did for you and how they showed you the right way and, you know, and did their best at that time. And I guess maybe think about what you could do, one step better...after it happens, right?

Jim: Yeah, that's right. I mean, maybe I'll be able to deal with it a bit better than anyone that had not had this problem. Maybe that'd be a strong point then in his life and mine too, right. Cause you learn through mistakes. I mean it was a mistake...I mean, I don't regret it now any more than before...but it was a mistake.

Int.: It would have been easier if you were older and more settled in your career and everything?

Jim: Yeah, that's right.

Int.: Did either of your parents or your girlfriend's parents...Were either of them young when they had children?

Jim: Yeah, my parents were, you know, you know...not really young...16 or 17 years old. So, yes. But back then, I mean, your career was usually picked when you were 8, 9, 10 years old anyway. Cause my dad. He worked ever since he was 9 years old. So, I mean, he never, he finished grade 11, I believe...no I think he got his grade 12, Mom got grade 9. My dad was offered many opportunities for jobs, you

know, that would have paid off now. He was offered to go to _____ (company) up in _____ (province) that construction company. But he turned it down, I mean, right now he'd be on his pension, now. So. He turned that down due to the fact that Mom was pregnant, at the time. So, you know, in his life, I guess it made things a lot difficult, very difficult. You know. It would have been much easier if Mom wouldn't have been pregnant, at the time, right. And there was other things, too, like....But I mean they were young but I mean it didn't make that much difference back then.

Int.: It was more common back then?

Jim: Well, yeah...it was...you know...it was a common thing for you to know a teenage mother and father. You know, a lot of them worked anyway. You know they weren't in school so it never affected their schooling. I mean, back then nobody cared if they went to school or not, so.

Int.: What about your girlfriend's parents?

Jim: Well no...they were more rich and up to do, you know. They were, you know...up to...I mean that type of thing. If you do end up getting pregnant and coming home here...I mean you're out. That's, you know, they were more....Like her parents had more rules and you

know. They were more higher up in the economy level too, you know. So they were put through the school. Both of them got their grade 12 and that, high and so, you know....If they came home pregnant then you know it would have been....

Int.: They didn't maybe have as much understanding of the situation as someone that's been there.

Jim: That's right.

Int.: Anything else?

Jim: No that's it (laugh), I'm just about pooped.

Int.: Alright, I'll let you go home and get a rest.

(Script 2C)

Int.: Today, I'll be sort of jumping around to different questions that I didn't get a chance to ask so far, okay? Um...your feelings towards your child...you said that you always wanted to have a relationship with your child. And even if you and your girlfriend don't continue your relationship, you still want to see your child.

Bob: Yeah.

Int.: How do you feel about your child?

Bob: What do you mean?

Int.: What sort of feelings do you have for him?

Bob: I don't know.

Int.: Do you love him?

Bob: Yeah.

Int.: Do you love him as a son?

Bob: Yeah.

Int.: How would you describe your child?

Bob: Ah...I don't know.

Int.: What does he look like? We'll start with that.

Bob:(pause)

Int.: Is he a small baby...a big baby?

Bob: No, he's not small. He's not really small.

Int.: About average?

Bob: Yeah.

Int.: And what colour hair and eyes does he have?

Bob: Blue eyes and dirty blond hair.

Int.: Who does he look like, do you think?.....Does he look like your side of the family?

Bob: Yeah.

Int.: He looks a lot like your people?

Bob: Yeah.

Int.: Does he look a lot like you?

Bob: Yeah. That's what everyone says, anyways.

Int.: And what does he act like...is he pleasant?

Bob: Yeah, most of the time.

Int.: Most of the time, so he doesn't cry very often.

Bob: No.

Int.: Does he like to play and does he like to have attention?

Bob: Yeah.

Int.: What does he like to play with?

Bob: (pause)

Int.: What sort of things does he like?

Bob: Stuff like....

Int.: Um?

Bob: Things like rattles.

Int.: He likes rattles, things that make noise. Yeah, um...who do you talk to about your child? First of all do you talk much about your child?

Bob: Yeah, every now and then.

Int.: Yeah, and who is that usually to?

Bob: I don't know...to my mother and father, grandmother, and everyone and then I talk to my friends.

Int.: And your girlfriend, you talk to her?

Bob: Yeah.

Int.: What sort of things do you talk about?

Bob: I don't know...everything.

Int.: Everything?

Bob: Yeah.

Int.: What sort of things do you tell your friends about your child?

Bob: Well, things I do and that.

Int.: What you do together?

Bob: No, what he does?

Int.: What he does?

Bob: Yeah.

Int.: Things that he's learning, and that sort of thing?

Bob: Yeah.

Int.: Do you...you said before, that you don't take him out that often this summer, because the weather hasn't been very nice. Where have you gone? What sort of places have you taken him?

Bob: I don't know...down around the harbour and that, that's all.

Int.: And is that outside or is that visiting?

Bob: Outside, yeah.

Int.: So on nice days, you do take him out around?

Bob: Yeah.

Int.: Have you taken him to stores or?

Bob: Yeah...yeah, the girlfriend's mother and father takes him almost everywhere they goes.

Int.: Okay. Do you take him anytime with your friends....If you go somewhere with your friends?

Bob: No.

Int.: But, your friends have seen him? They do down sometimes with you?

Bob: Yeah.

Int.: So, you said that you feed your child and play with him? Do you show him affection? Do you hug him and kiss him?

Bob: Yeah.

Int.: So, your parents and your grandmother see him quite often. What about other relatives...aunts and uncles?

Bob: Yeah....They see him...well not much, but they sees him...they see....

Int.: And how will they see him?

Bob: I don't know...most of them come down to Carol's house.

Int.: Okay...and do they help out with gifts and...?

Bob: Yeah, every now and then.

Int.: And you have two younger sisters.

Bob: Yeah.

Int.: How often do they get to see their nephew?

Bob: When they comes up with him...when he comes up.

Int.: So they don't go down to your girlfriend's that often.

Bob: No, not by themselves.

Int.: What do they think of him?

Bob: They're always playing with him and that.

Int.: So they're not jealous or anything like that, are they?

Bob: No.

Int.: UM...is it important to you that your family spend time with your child?...you think that's important?

Bob: Yeah.

Int.: Why is that important?

Bob: I don't know...I don't know...it's just important.

Int.: You want him to know his relatives?

Bob: Yeah.

Int.: When your girlfriend became pregnant were you involved in making the decision to keep the child?

Bob: Yeah.

Int.: Did you decide together or did she have her mind already made up?

Bob: No...she made up her mind.

Int.: And how did you feel about that decision?

Bob: Alright.

Int.: Is that the decision you would have made on your own?

Bob: Yeah.

Int.: Un...other decisions since then....Are you involved in all the decisions that are made concerning your child?

Bob: Sometimes.

Int.: Sometimes.

Bob: Yeah.

Int.: Times that you're not, what happens there?...who makes the decisions?

Bob: She does.

Int.: What about your parents and her parents? Are they involved in the decisions?

Bob: Yeah...No...most of the time.

Int.: Not most of the time?

Bob: Most of the time.

Int.: Most of the time, they are...uh..uh....Who has more control? Is it your parents or her parents?

Bob: Her parents.

Int.: Her parents...and how do you feel about that?

Bob: It's alright...it's not big deal...

Int.: Do you think most of the time, it's helpful?

Bob: Yeah.

Int.: Do you feel you have enough control about what happens to your child?

Bob: Yeah.

Int.: So let's say that your child wasn't feeling well and had to be taken to..your child wasn't feeling well, had a fever, was hot, would you be called?

Bob: Yeah.

Int.: And would you be one of the people that decided on what to do with him, whether he go see a doctor or...?

Bob: Yeah...that happened the other day. He had a fever and that...they brought him up to the hospital.

Int.: Where were you when he had the fever?

Bob: I was painting the house...they took him up to the hospital.

Int.: Did they call you or...?

Bob: No, I was in...I was in the house at the time...they were going to bring him in.

Int.: So did you know before they went that they were going to the hospital with him?

Bob: Yeah.

Int.: So they phoned you up and let you know?

Bob: No, I was there.

Int.: Oh, you were at the house. Uh..uh...Is it important to you that you have some input? Is it important that they ask you what you think?

Bob: Yeah.

Int.: You also said earlier that you feel that you and your girlfriend may even be getting along better since you've had your child?

Bob: Yeah.

Int.: Um...How do you mean better?

Bob: I don't know...we talk about things and that.

Int.: So you communicate a little better.

Bob: Yeah, we spend more time together.

Int.: Spend more time together....And concerning raising your child...do you...do you agree mainly on how to raise your child?

Bob: Yeah, most of the time.

Int.: Yeah. What happens if two of you have different opinions?

Bob: Well...I don't know....

Int.: Will you usually give in to her or will she usually go with you, or....

Bob: I usually gives in to her.

Int.: Yeah....Most of the time you make the decisions together do you, do you feel?

Bob: Yeah.

Int.: Are there any things she wants to do with him that you really...are there any things that you disagree on?

Bob: No, not really.

Int.: So the time he goes to bed and naps and this sort of thing...usually who has the say?

Bob: I don't know...well...when he goes to sleep we let's him go to sleep. He's only 8 months. He needs a lot of sleep. I know that.

Int.: Okay, say he falls asleep and you have him in your arms....Does it matter where he sleeps? Do you want to see him in his crib, do you want to see him...?

Bob: Puts him in his crib, yeah.

Int.: And then when he wakes up, does he cry?

Bob: Yeah.

Int.: And you both a....What do you do when he cries?

Bob: Takes him up.

Int.: So, there's no problem with that?

Bob: No.

Int.: Um...Who do you consult with? Who do you ask for help concerning raising your child?

Bob: (pause)

Int.: Let's say there's something that you're not sure it's quite normal or it's right?

Bob: I don't know....Ask her mother and father or my mother and father.

Int.: So you go to your parents for help.

Bob: Yeah.

Int.: And you usually take their advice, that they give?

Bob: Yeah.

Int.: I know that your child is fairly young...have you thought about...the future?

Bob: No, not yet.

Int.: Not really...you're taking it one day at a time sort of....What do you hope for him? What are some things you hope he has or he does or...?

Bob: I guess a good education.

Int.: Education. You think is important?

Bob: Yeah.

Int.: Anything else...you'd like to see happen to him?

Bob: Yeah, get out of this place.

Int.: You don't like this place?

Bob: No.

Int.: What's wrong with this place?

Bob: There ain't nothing to do.

Int.: There's not much to do?

Bob: No.

Int.: No work?

Bob: No, nothing.

Int.: No entertainment?

Bob: No.

Int.: So, you don't plan to settle here, do you?

Bob: I'm getting out of here as soon as I gets out of school.

Int.: Where are you going?

Bob: I don't know, yet.

Int.: A large centre or a city or something?

Bob: Most of my friends is leaving now, next month.

Int.: Yeah, where are they going?

Bob: _____ (mainland).

Int.: So you think they might be going that way?

Bob: Yeah, I suppose.

Int.: So you'd like to see him working and active, when he grows up?

Bob: Yeah.

Int.: What sort of things do you hope will not happen to him? What do you worry about?

Bob: ...Well I don't know.

Int.: Are there any things you really hope he doesn't do or doesn't happen to him?

Bob: Yeah.

Int.: What?

Bob: Don't get into no dope.

Int.: Don't get involved with drugs, yeah...Anything else?

Bob: No not really.

Int.: That's the main thing, get his education, sort of stay straight, get work and make a living for himself?

Bob: Yeah.

Int.: Uh..Uh...And...what do you think you can do to make sure this happens?

Bob: I don't know.

Int.: You said you don't...do you want to raise him here?...you don't want to...?

Bob: No.

Int.: No...Do you think here, that's there's no work and there's little to do, that that leads into drug use and that sort of thing?

Bob: Probably.

Int.: Yeah...Um...you said that your parents have been the most helpful in your adjusting to becoming a father. What has been the least helpful?...What has just been a pain? What's caused you a lot of problems in this?

Bob: Nothing, not much.

Int.: There is nothing that you think if it wasn't there, it would make things a lot easier?

Bob: I don't know. I can't think of nothing.

Int.: What's been most difficult?

Bob: I don't know...it was hard to adjust first when he was born.

Int.: So you think it's gotten a bit easier now, compared to when he was first born?

Bob: Yeah.

Int.: What was hard about it, when he was first born?

Bob: I don't know...wouldn't used to it. I wasn't ready....

Int.: Pardon.

Bob: I wasn't ready for it.

Int.: Yeah.

Bob: I got used to it and used to it.

Int.: What was hard about it first? Was it just the idea of you're a father and you got all this responsibility or was it...time and sacrifices you had to make? Did you have to make any sacrifices?

Bob: No, not really.

Int.: What's changed the most...since you've been a father?

Bob: I don't know...not much.

Int.: Now that he's born,...would you change anything with him? Are you happy now he's here?

Bob: Yeah.

Int.: So, the hardest part is over, you think.

Bob: Yeah.

Int.: Okay, anything else you want to add, Bob?

Bob: No.

Int.: Do you think it's any easier or harder to be a teen father here, compared to a city?....Do you think it would be any easier for someone in St. John's, for instance?

Bob: No.

Int.: You don't think that...what about raising children...Do you think it's any easier in a city, than here?

Bob: No I'd say it's easier here.

Int.: Easier here, but you don't want to stay here?

Bob: No.

Int.: Because it's boring?

Bob: Yeah.

Int.: So, is it easier when they are younger? Did you like this place when you were younger?

Bob: Yeah, alright.

Int.: Would you have rather grown up in the city?

Bob: In some, I don't know...in some ways I would, but....

Int.: Uh..Uh...As, so will you graduate next year?

Bob: Yeah, I should.

Int.: You should...you had some problems in school, mainly with....

Bob: Math...I failed math last year, I failed biology this year.

Int.: What math was that...the general?

Bob: The academic.

Int.: So did you take it over?

Bob: No.

Int.: So did you do general math instead?

Bob: No that's what I'm taking now.

Int.: You'll do your general math this year. Did you like school?

Bob: Alright...nothing to do.

Int.: So, it was only last year that you had problems with math, wasn't it...?

Bob: Yeah.

Int.: You didn't have problems in the earlier grades?

Bob: No...used to get all B's and A's but last year....

Int.: Do you think the fact that your girlfriend became pregnant and everything, last year, had anything to do with it?

Bob: No.

Int.: No...you didn't miss any time from school or anything?

Bob: No.

Int.: Wasn't it difficult to study with that on your mind?

Bob: No, never thought about it.

Int.: So once you found out your girlfriend was going to have a baby, you didn't think about it, very often?

Bob: Yeah...but I tried not to, I mean.

Int.: Okay, anything else?

Bob: No.

Int.: Well, I'd like to thank you for spending some time with me. I know it's not easy to talk about. It's sort of a sensitive subject. And I do appreciate it and I hope...I hope everything I report is very accurate, close to what you've said. Okay, thanks.



