

## **Race/Ethnic Differences in Father Involvement with Young Children**

Sandra L. Hofferth  
Institute for Social Research  
University of Michigan  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1248  
Hofferth@umich.edu

July 27, 1999

Paper presented at the Urban Seminar on Fatherhood, April 23-24, 1999, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. Helpful comments from Joan Aldous and David Harris are gratefully acknowledged as is the research assistance of Julia Naudain.

## **ABSTRACT**

### **Race/Ethnic Differences in Father Involvement with Young Children**

This paper examines whether parental gender roles and fathering attitudes explain race/ethnic differences in fathering. It also explores how motivation, skills, and social and institutional supports affect positive paternal investments in children. Data come from the 1997 Child Development Supplement to the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, a nationally representative sample of children under age 13. Net of economic and demographic differences between race/ethnic groups, parenting differences are small, with blacks exhibiting less warmth and more monitoring and Hispanics more responsibility and less monitoring. Black-white and Hispanic-white differences in father involvement are not explained by gender role or fathering attitudes. Intergenerational influences on parenting practices, while present, are not uniformly positive. Having a positive recollection of the involvement on one's father is associated with more involvement with one's own children, but learning parenting from one's dad is associated with taking less responsibility for them. Finally, learning in formal settings plays a crucial role in key fathering behaviors.