

Information Exchange

**An Example of a
Successful Research Proposal:
Part I**

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The following is a successful research proposal funded by the National Institute of Nursing Research. The application was submitted in 2002 and funding began in 2003. Research applications submitted to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) receive a scientific review by a Center for Scientific Review study section. The scientific review is summarized, and

Constance M. Dallas is a family nurse practitioner, whose research focus is on the African American adolescent childbearing family, particularly the roles and perspectives of the baby's father. Currently, she is directing a multidisciplinary, descriptive, longitudinal study of paternal involvement of the kinship systems of low-income, unmarried, African American adolescent fathers. This cultural and developmentally appropriate approach to adolescent parenting and the use of the paternal and maternal families as the basic unit of analysis is an innovative contribution to knowledge of paternal involvement among low-income, unmarried, African American adolescent fathers and their families. She recently completed a fellowship in Family Research Consortium III Postdoctoral Training with Dr. Linda Burton of Pennsylvania State University; *Kathleen Norr*, Ph.D., College of Nursing, University of Illinois at Chicago; *Barbara Dancy*, Ph.D., R.N., College of Nursing, University of Illinois at Chicago; *Karen Kavanaugh*, Ph.D., R.N., College of Nursing, University of Illinois at Chicago; *Linda Cassata*, Ph.D., R.N., College of Nursing, University of Illinois at Chicago..

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comments are provided to applicants. The summary statement of review comments that were sent to Dr. Dallas is printed following the research proposal (in Part II, to appear in the next issue of *WJNR*). Research proposal applications may be resubmitted as amended applications for subsequent review when not funded on the initial submission. This is a common path to funding. Dr. Dallas's proposal is an amended application.

All of the content is exactly as prepared by Dr. Dallas and her colleagues. *Western Journal of Nursing Research* was unable to print the entire document because of space limitations. Content not printed includes introductory comments specific to the amended application, budget considerations, material regarding coinvestigators preliminary research, human participants information, references, and tables and figures originally included in the application. For example, human participants content about adolescent fathers requires special consideration because they fall into a unique category. They are not adults but they also do not fall into the same category as pregnant adolescent mothers. Interested readers are encouraged to contact Dr. Dallas for further information.

Funded proposals vary greatly in content and style. This proposal should be viewed as an outstanding example of a proposed study that is consistent with the research purpose and the substantive area. The proposal should not be used as a model for other proposals. Each proposal is reviewed for several important NIH criteria (significance, approach, investigator, environment, and innovation) in relationship to the specific study topic. The proposal is offered as an example of what has been funded in the recent past by the National Institute of Nursing Research.

A. SPECIFIC AIMS

African American men, particularly those in poverty, are more than twice as likely than either Whites or Latinos to experience fatherhood during adolescence. These young fathers face a number of barriers to positive and consistent involvement with their children. Despite these considerable barriers, unmarried, low-income, African American adolescent fathers are more successful at remaining involved with their children over time than either Latino or White adolescent fathers. The flexible family structures and roles characteristic of the history and culture of low-income African American families may play an important role in paternal involvement of unmarried, low-income, African American adolescent fathers.

Past research suggests that when unmarried adolescent fathers are positively and consistently involved, their children benefit socially and academically. However, most of these studies have been cross-sectional or retrospective and relied primarily on maternal reports of the unmarried adolescent father's behaviors. In addition, data on the unmarried adolescent fathers' families are rarely included in studies of adolescent pregnancy and parenting. As such, little is known about the involvement of unmarried, low-income, African American adolescent fathers with their children and how this involvement is negotiated with his family unit and with the adolescent girl's family unit. This qualitative exploratory descriptive longitudinal study builds on an earlier qualitative cross-sectional study of kinship system of unmarried, low-income, African American adolescent fathers that documented strong expectations for the adolescent fatherhood role. Longitudinal data are needed to develop culturally and developmentally appropriate clinical assessments, teaching strategies, and public policies to strengthen kinship systems and enhance positive father involvement.

The kinscripts conceptual framework, a culturally sensitive conceptualization of minority families, guides the examination of the paternal-maternal kinship system surrounding unmarried, low-income, African American adolescent fatherhood. The paternal-maternal kinship system consists of the paternal family unit—the adolescent father and his parents—and the maternal family unit—the adolescent mother and her parents. For the purpose of this study, a *parent* is defined as a biological parent or an adult living in the household of that adolescent parent who, in the opinion of either the adolescent or the adolescent's resident parent, is acting in a parenting role for the adolescent, hereafter referred to as a grandparent. The three kinscripts concepts, kin-work, kin-time, and kin-scription, provide a dynamic depiction of (a) the work that the kinship systems need to accomplish to ensure the survival of the baby (kin-work), specifically, the behaviors expected of unmarried, low-income, African American adolescent fathers, a determination of who actually performs those behaviors, and the paternal-maternal kinship system members' satisfaction with those behaviors; (b) the paternal-maternal kinship system's shared understandings about the appropriate sequence of role transitions into parenthood and grandparenthood (kin-time); and (c) the process of socializing kinship system members to kin-work (kin-scription), specifically what and who facilitates and hinders the kin-work of these adolescent fathers.

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory descriptive longitudinal study is to systematically describe the influence of the paternal-maternal kinship system on unmarried, low-income, African American adolescent fatherhood

over time (from late pregnancy until 2 years after birth). The specific aims of this study are to describe over time the perceptions of kinship system members (adolescent fathers, adolescent mothers, paternal grandparents, and maternal grandparents) regarding

- the expectations of the paternal-maternal kinship system members for the adolescent father's kin-time and kin-work
- the kin-scription mechanisms used by the paternal-maternal kinship system members and health care professionals that facilitate or inhibit the adolescent father's kin-work
- the actual kin-work performed by adolescent father or other paternal-maternal kinship system members
- The degree of the paternal-maternal kinship system members' satisfaction with the adolescent fathers' performance of kin-work.

Findings from this study will be used to develop culturally and developmentally appropriate clinical assessments and teaching strategies and to influence public policies to enhance positive involvement for African American adolescent fathers and their families.

B. BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

African American Adolescents Have High Rates of Early and Unmarried Fatherhood

The incidence of unmarried adolescent fatherhood among low-income African American boys is substantial and may be increasing. Precise estimates of the number of adolescent fathers are unavailable because of inconsistent reporting of father's age on birth certificates, especially by adolescent mothers. Some researchers estimate that a majority of the fathers of children born to adolescent mothers are adults, whereas others estimate that the majority are adolescents. In either case, it is clear that a substantial number of the 800,000 births to adolescent mothers annually also involve an adolescent biological father. Almost two thirds (64%) of all adolescent females, age 15 to 17 years report that their partners are within 2 years of their own age. Another 29% of adolescent mothers report that their partners are fewer than 5 years older than their own age. Because 80% of adolescent mothers are unwed at the time of delivery, nearly all adolescent fathers must also be unmarried fathers.

Positive and consistent paternal involvement has a positive effect: The growing body of research on primarily adult White fathers in the past 20 years has established that fatherhood is complex and multidimensional with direct and indirect influences on child outcomes. Most studies have found that the involvement of the biological father in the child's life is generally a positive influence on the child's current status and later outcomes. Most research with fathers identifies financial support, coresidence (often measured indirectly as marital status), and paternal involvement as important components of the father role. The classic study by Acock and Demo comparing child outcomes for children living with always-married, divorced, remarried, and always-single mothers found that quality of father involvement was more important than physical residence for all child outcomes. In part, this reflects the relatively low level of parenting activities by many married fathers, so that the difference in fathering involvement between residential and nonresidential fathers was not as great as might be expected. In addition, many of the negative effects correlated with residence reflected substantial differences in father and mother income, so that these effects disappeared or diminished greatly when differences in income were controlled. In contrast to father's residence with the child, financial support was consistently related to better child outcomes, especially academic achievements for nonresidential fathers.

Paternal involvement is often defined as including three components: the father's direct interaction with the child, the father's accessibility or availability to the child, and the father's acceptance of responsibility for the care of the child. Furstenberg and Harris found that interrupted contact with the father had more negative consequences in middle childhood than either continuous contact or no contact at all. The quality of the relationship was also important. A meta-analysis of 63 studies of nonresidential fathers found that frequency of contact was not related to child outcomes. The effect for authoritative parenting was the highest of all four measures of father involvement: financial support, contact, closeness, and authoritative parenting. The effect size was greater for quality of parenting than for financial support. Fathers who felt close to their children and provided authoritative parenting (guidance, limit setting, and role modeling) had children with higher academic achievement and fewer externalizing and internalizing problems.

The strongest demographic predictors of father residence and involvement are his income and employment, with higher rates of residence also related to older maternal age at birth. Paternal involvement for custodial and non-custodial fathers also relates to his parenting attitudes, personality, and

support for his parent role by his relatives and peers. Acock and Demo also found that several aspects of the biological father's relationship with the mother affected child outcomes in all types of father-absent families, at least in part because the mother-father relationship influences father involvement.

There have been relatively few studies specific to African American fathers. African American low-income men have very low rates of marriage and cohabitation, related to their more limited educational and job opportunities, economic instability, and higher rates of incarceration and/or early death. However, nonresidential African American fathers tend to remain involved with their children over time more than White or Hispanic men, substantially diminishing differences by ethnicity in actual father-child contact.

Being a Father Is Difficult for African American Adolescents

Developmental immaturity, lack of education, financial dependence, and painful or conflicted relationships with their own fathers are barriers to successful fatherhood for unmarried, low-income, African American adolescent fathers. Adolescence, the transition into adulthood, is a time of biological, emotional, and social changes that shape the child's future. Early adolescence occurs around ages 10 to 13 and involves the physical changes of puberty, concern over body image and sexual anatomy and physiology, independence-seeking behavior, increased attachment to peers, reduced impulse control, concrete thinking, and difficulty recognizing consequences of behaviors. Middle adolescence, age 14 to 17 years, brings increased body-image comfort, growing peer involvement, continued struggles for independence, greater ability to reason abstractly and to discuss feelings but also higher risk-taking behaviors due to feelings of invulnerability. In late adolescence, between age 17 and 21 years, the adolescent demonstrates an interdependent relationship with family and is less bound by the peer value system. During each of the phases of adolescence, parental guidance and acceptance are extremely important. Thus, readiness for fathering is affected by developmental stage, and adolescents who are more mature are more capable of more positive and consistent fathering.

Emotional barriers are related to the pain and unresolved conflict associated with adolescent fathers' relationships with their own biological fathers. Many lack the opportunity to observe their own biological fathers as paternal role models. Financial barriers are exacerbated because most have not completed school and few have adequate income to support themselves,

much less a family. Adolescent fathers also experience social stigma for their so-called off-time fatherhood, as well as grieving for their loss of childhood. As adults, they may experience despondency and failure because of their failure to fulfill their financial responsibilities to their families.

Involvement of Adolescent Fathers Varies

Some African American adolescent fathers break off contact during pregnancy or maintain early contact with their children that diminishes over time. However, others continue their involvement throughout the lives of their children. Coley and Chase-Landsdale interviewed 135 urban African American mothers with 3-year-old children regarding the biological father's current and past paternal involvement. Although the adolescent unmarried fathers were not reported separately, only 12% of the fathers lived with the mother, and 64% were under age 20 years at the child's birth. Relatively few fathers were reported by the mother to be supportive during pregnancy; however, about one half of the fathers were involved at birth, during infancy, and at age 3 years. Of the fathers, 60% demonstrated stable levels of involvement; however, 23% became less involved, and 18% increased their involvement from birth to age 3 years. In this study, factors related to continued or increased father involvement included father education and employment, cohabitation, and quality of relationship with the mother, which was more important than cohabitation and mediated its effect. It is important to note, neither the mother's involvement with a new partner nor continued involvement of the grandmother inhibited father involvement. The small amount of research on adolescent fatherhood suggests that positive and consistent involvement of unmarried adolescent fathers' benefits their children at least as much as involvement of adult fathers. In summary, adolescent father involvement benefits their children. Although adolescent fathers seldom marry or live with their child's mother, the limited evidence suggests relatively high but unstable involvement in fathering. In addition, father involvement may be encouraged by the paternal-maternal kinship system.

African American Family Flexibility Can Facilitate Adolescent Fatherhood

Unlike the less flexible traditional family structures and roles of Latino and White families that force unmarried fathers to choose either marriage or total noninvolvement with their children, the flexibility of the African

American family structure allows low-income, African American families the latitude to select from a continuum of responses to adolescent fatherhood. Thus African American paternal and maternal grandmothers can choose one of the following roles: (a) surrogate parenting, in which the grandmothers assume the primary caretaking role; (b) coparenting, when grandmothers support their children's parenting roles; and (c) individualized interpretations of the grandmother role. These roles are consistent with low-income, African American families' historical need to structure the family around the needs of children rather than along the traditional, nuclear family structure. This deviation from the traditional, nuclear family structure is viewed as adaptive, not pathological.

In this flexible structure, family membership is determined by reciprocity, the commitment to collective cooperation. Persons participating in reciprocity agree to participate in the mutual arrangement of providing and receiving support from the family unit. These persons become part of the kinship network and are considered family members regardless of whether they live within the same household. Joining one kinship network to another similar kinship network represents the family unit's commitment to assume part of the responsibility for the survival needs of the other kinship network. As such, the communal nature of African American households permits family boundaries to extend beyond the limits of a single household. Moreover, who you are or your biological relationship means less than what you do for the kinship network. The adolescent father-child relationship is determined by the paternal behavior performed by an adolescent father or by his family unit. He is granted kinship status if he or his family unit performs parenting behaviors for his biological child.

Joining the paternal and maternal family units to create a new extended kinship system represents the commitment of both family units to assume shared responsibility for the survival needs of the child. Their negotiations to assume responsibility and to shape the adolescent father's role are complex and require the cooperation of both family units. However, the lack of a socially constructed script for unmarried parents complicates the negotiation of responsibilities for paternal and maternal grandparents. In the United States, with its attendant traditions and ceremonies, marriage provides a socially developed script to incorporate new family members. Because no script exists for unmarried African American fathers, the complex negotiations of paternal involvement for families of unmarried, low-income, African American adolescent parents have to be individually developed for each kinship system and situation.

Kinscripts Conceptual Framework

Health care providers can view the flexible family structure of low-income African American families from a cultural relativism or ethnocentrism framework. Those health care providers adopting a cultural relativism framework tend to perceive the family structure as adaptive and functional and as "a resilient and adaptive institution reflecting the most basic values, hopes, and aspirations of the descendant of African people in America" (p. 17). On the other hand, those adopting an ethnocentrism framework will view African American families from their own personal and cultural values and beliefs about life, and esteem the married couple as the ideal model for parents. This ideal model, often demonstrated on television, fails to recognize kinship system members who are not linked together by marriage and disregards contributions of unmarried adolescent fathers as well as those of his family unit. When all of the multiple caregivers of African American children are not included, health care providers develop health care programs, educational programs, and clinical interventions that do not adequately address the needs of either the paternal or maternal family unit and thus the needs of the child.

The kinscripts conceptual framework uses a cultural relativism approach to guide this qualitative exploratory descriptive longitudinal study of the paternal-maternal kinship system surrounding unmarried, low-income, African American adolescent fatherhood. The kinscripts framework was developed from more than 20 years of ethnographic research of African American extended families and is based on the assumptions that the life course of individuals and their families are interdependent and are shaped within social, cultural, and historical contexts. The kinscripts conceptual framework describes the reciprocal relationship existing within and between family units in terms of kin-time, kin-work, and kin-scription, the culturally defined concepts that capture the interdependent nature of family-role transition over time as well as the process of family norms transmission and negotiation within and between family units. This framework uses an ecological life course approach within the ideology of the cultural variant school of thought. The ecological life course approach focuses on individual developmental, cultural, and sociological perspectives that provide the opportunity to explore family structure and family function within the family's socioenvironmental context. The socioenvironmental context influences the degree to which kinship systems are integrated into the educational, employment, and community systems. The level of integration facilitates and/or hinders the ability of the kinship system to achieve their kin-work. For the paternal-maternal kinship system, key socioenvironmental

contextual factors shown to affect parenting and child outcomes include level of income and economic resources, supportive and/or conflictual relations with community organizations and neighbors, and neighborhood factors such as level of poverty, crime, and access to transportation, health facilities services, and other services.

The relationship among the three concepts of the kinscripts conceptual framework, kin-work, kin-time, and kin-scription, is reciprocal with each influencing and being influenced by the other concepts. Kin-time is the kinship system's shared understanding about when and in what sequence kin-work and role transitions are to occur. The role transitions of interest to this study are adolescents' transition to parenthood and their parents' transition to grandparenthood. How do kinship systems respond when kin-time is not adhered to, that is, when parenthood occurs outside of the kinship system's scheduled time frame? Kinship systems may respond differently when parenthood during adolescence is consistent with kinship system's scheduled time frame. Kin-work is the work that kinship system members within and between the family units need to accomplish to assure the physical and emotional survival of the baby. What kin-work is expected and is actually performed by the adolescent father and other kinship system members and what is the satisfaction of the paternal-maternal kinship system regarding the performance of kin-work? Kin-scription is the behavior exerted by members within and between family units that enhances or hinders the unmarried, low-income, African American adolescent father's kin-work. Specifically, what strategies, mechanisms of socialization, are used to enhance or hinder his kin-work? Initially, during dating and pregnancy the paternal family unit and the maternal family unit function with separate and distinct kinscripts. With the arrival of the baby, the paternal and maternal kinship system begins to merge.

Significance of Proposed Research

No published studies exist on the evolution of the father role for unmarried, low-income, African American adolescent fathers, even though the incidence of unmarried adolescent fatherhood among low-income African Americans is twice that of other ethnic groups. As such, clinicians lack culturally and developmentally appropriate information to assist these fathers and their families. As a result, clinicians typically ignore the adolescent father and his family unit even when the paternal family unit plays a prominent role in child rearing. A strength of this study is that the systematic

investigations of the unmarried, low-income, African American adolescent father role will be guided by the use of a theoretical framework specifically developed to study low-income, African American families. This research information will fill the knowledge gap concerning the evolution of the roles of adolescent fatherhood within the culturally and developmentally appropriate context of the paternal-maternal kinship systems. This study will help develop research-based culturally and developmentally appropriate guidelines to assess kinship systems. This study will help develop research-based culturally and developmentally appropriate guidelines to assess and enhance father involvement among this population. Studying the perspectives of two generations, adolescent parents and grandparents, will provide a more comprehensive description of paternal involvement in this population. Findings can help identify key aspects that promote or inhibit paternal involvement in this population.

C. PRELIMINARY STUDIES

This bigender, interdisciplinary and interracial investigative team brings together the substantive and technical expertise required to conduct the proposed study. The investigator team all have extensive research experience with low-income, African American families and familiarity with Chicago low-income communities and health facilities. Each investigator also brings special strengths to this study. Dr. Dallas has done prior qualitative work identifying the role and negotiation of adolescent fatherhood from the perspectives of adolescent fathers and other paternal-maternal system members. Dr. Cassata has conducted qualitative research with pregnant adolescents and nurses who work with them. Dr. Dancy, a nurse and clinical psychologist, has conducted a series of research projects among low-income, African American families with adolescents and has developed a culturally relevant HIV intervention for low-income, African American mothers and daughters. Dr. Dancy also has training and clinical experience working with families and family therapy. Dr. Kavanaugh contributes special expertise in interviewing on sensitive topics and qualitative comparative case studies using within-, and cross-case analyses. Dr. Norr has conducted longitudinal research from pregnancy through age 2 years after birth with low-income African American mothers and babies. In this section, we summarize the principal investigator's and coinvestigators relevant research experience and then describe a secondary analysis and pilot study.

C2: LONGITUDINAL INVOLVEMENT OF ADOLESCENT FATHERS: SECONDARY ANALYSIS

Dallas, Norr and Crittenden (in review) examined the involvement of adolescent fathers reported by mothers over the first 1 year after the baby's birth. Data for this secondary analysis of African American adolescent mothers with unmarried adolescent partners ($n = 80$) were taken from the Norr et al. longitudinal study of low-income mother-infant dyads described above. Mothers discussed the involvement of fathers in three areas: continued contact with the mother (including cohabitation), financial contribution to mother or child, and direct involvement with the child, including visits, child care, and outings with the child. Most mothers reported continued contact with adolescent fathers. Less frequently reported were financial contributions and direct involvement with their child. By 24 months, at least one half of the adolescent fathers remained in contact with the mothers (including cohabitation), provided some financial support, and were involved with their children. Limitations of this secondary analysis are the lack of detailed information about the nature and intensity of father involvement and dependence on the solely maternal report. In this study we will explore adolescent fatherhood from the multiple perspectives of the kinship system.

C3: NEGOTIATING AFRICAN AMERICAN ADOLESCENT FATHER ROLE PILOT

Dallas, CM, Norr, K., Dancy, B., Kavanaugh, K., & Cassata, L. University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) Great Cities and College of Nursing Dean's Fund, \$15,000.

The purpose of this pilot study was to test the kinscripts conceptual framework, establish the feasibility of recruitment and retention procedures, and refine interview and analysis procedures. Three paternal-maternal kinship systems were recruited from UIC prenatal clinics and interviewed in the last trimester of pregnancy and at 1 month after birth, a total of 26 interviews. Because of the exploratory nature of the pilot and the potential sensitivity of the study topic, the principal investigator and coinvestigators performed all of the interviews. Below we summarize lessons learned and preliminary findings. Lessons learned regarding procedures included the following:

1. Recruitment: Our pilot taught us two lessons about recruitment. The first is that we need to recruit during the adolescent mother's second trimester to develop a relationship with the grandmothers and gain access to kinship

members. Second, we approached five family units to recruit three kinship systems, so we anticipate that we will have to approach at least 50 family units to recruit 30 paternal-maternal kinship systems. Therefore, we need to use a variety of recruitment strategies that reach a large audience of potential participants.

2. **Retention:** We learned that retention was a time-intensive activity. We developed forms and procedures to obtain contact information for tracking and for logging in phone calls. We learned the value of recruiting during the adolescent mother's 2nd semester to allow adequate time to schedule interviews with all paternal-maternal kinship system members. The pilot reinforced the great importance of establishing trust and rapport with kinship system members to maintain participation. One way that research team members established trust and rapport was by reviewing the written consent forms with all family unit members in a group setting. This provided a safe place for family unit members to ask questions and to consult with each other and with the research team. All family unit members simultaneously received the same ground rules about trust; for example, that we would not share interview data from one member of the paternal-maternal kinship system with any other member and informing them that we had assigned the same research team member for both interviews. This strategy was repeated at the 1-month interview to remind participants of the purpose of the interview, confidentiality safeguards, and their rights and responsibilities. Participants demonstrated their trust of the research team and commitment to the study by initiating contact with us for the 1-month interview. During the interview, they proudly introduced their babies. Furthermore, 6 months after their initial interview we made telephone contact with all kinship systems to request their input on the revised interview guide and to elicit their comments on pilot study findings. What this means is that we were able to stay in contact with these families for as long as 9 months after their initial recruitment.
3. **Study Site:** We learned that the interviews in the home and the office settings were richly detailed, and we were unable to discern any differences in the quality of the data or in the respondents' body language, rapport, and level of disclosure. We also learned that it is helpful to allow family units to choose their interview sites.
4. **Interview:** The pilot study taught us that open-ended approaches elicited more comprehensive and context-specific information from kinship system members. Therefore, we replaced the Household Hardship questionnaire and the table of closed-ended questions with open-ended questions in the interview guide. We have added explicit questions near the end of each interview guide asking how participation in the study may have affected them and other participants.
5. **Analysis:** The pilot provided an opportunity to refine our data analysis procedures (see Section D5). Analysis began with the development of codes based on intensive reading of individual interviews guided by the concepts of the kinscripts framework. Each interview was coded and double coded to establish intercoder reliability. We learned that we were able to establish high initial intercoder reliability. Analyses of the overall processes within each case were then blended for an aggregate picture of the three kinship systems. Constructing a within-case family unit profile was a helpful first step in developing

broad themes across kinship systems. We then developed within-case kinship system profiles. Below is a description of across-case comparisons of the three paternal-maternal kinship systems. We also learned that the N5 computer software was useful in managing large data sets.

Preliminary Findings

The findings are presented within the kinscripts conceptual framework and, for kin-time and kin-work, within the time dimensions of the prenatal and 1-month interviews.

Kin-time. During pregnancy, dealing with issues of parenting during adolescence dominated the prenatal period. Despite statistically high risks of pregnancy during adolescence for low-income, African American fathers, having a child during pregnancy was seen as off-time parenting in two of the three kinship systems. There were concerns that early parenting would disrupt the timely achievement of expected educational achievements, interfere with family unit dreams of upward mobility, and lock the adolescent into life-long poverty. Members of the third kinship system differed in their perceptions of how other kinship system members responded to pregnancy during adolescence.

After the birth of the baby, there was little acknowledgement of the time constraints and competing interests, such as school and work, faced by these adolescent fathers. Adolescent mothers and grandmothers expressed the need for accelerated maturity for adolescent fathers, and adolescent fathers reported having less time to accomplish their long-term goals. Adolescent fathers also reported feeling a sense of having lost their childhood, being pushed to assume adult father's role, and feeling family unit priorities shift from themselves to their babies.

Kin-work. All three paternal-maternal kinship systems clearly expected the adolescent father to establish a strong emotional bond with his child. They also shared the belief that other members of the kinship system could not assume this adolescent father's emotional bond with his child. However, other kinship system members could assume all other expected kin-work. Prior to the pregnancy, expected and actual kin-work focused on survival of the family unit by preparing adolescents to raise the status of the family unit through education and often helping adult children and grandchildren within or outside the house. During pregnancy, the pregnant adolescent was viewed as being fragile and in need of extra support. Prenatal kin-work was often

considered indicative of the adolescent father's commitment after the birth of the baby. After the birth, expectations for kin-work increased and became more clearly defined. Despite increased actual kin-work, there were greater discrepancies between expected and actual kin-work and consequently less reported satisfaction with kin-work than during pregnancy. The adolescent father's kin-work competes with and interrupts the family unit's overall kin-work. Because no script exists for unmarried African American fathers, the complex negotiations of paternal involvement have to be individually developed for each kinship system. Adolescent fathers were expected to provide material resources, spend time with the baby, do at least some physical care, and provide love and guidance.

Kin-scription. Among all three paternal-maternal kinship systems, conflictual relationships within and between family units affected the degree to which they communicated their desires and expectations of one another. The degree of communication within the kinship system may have been associated with the level of satisfaction with the adolescent father's actual kin-work at the 1-month interview. At the 1-month interview, each of the three paternal-maternal kinship systems was struggling to incorporate the new baby, as well as deciding whether and how to incorporate the baby's other biological adolescent parent.

Socioenvironmental contexts may have contributed to the wide variations in kinship systems attempts to accomplish kin-work. Despite an incidence of physical abuse during pregnancy, for the first kinship system, this kinship system was successful in kin-scripting the adolescent father to fatherhood, at least at 1 month. This adolescent father adapted his long-term goals, and all kinship system members shared his kin-work. Kinship system members reported being satisfied with the adolescent father's kin-work 1 month after his child's birth. Each member of the second kinship system also acknowledged the importance of the adolescent father's involvement and shared the adolescent father's kin-work during pregnancy and after birth. However, the degree of conflict within the kinship system, already high before and during pregnancy, increased after the birth of the child. These conflicts blocked the development of working relationships that would support kin-scription of the adolescent father and shared kin-work. At the 1-month interview, all members of the paternal-maternal kinship system expressed dissatisfaction with the adolescent father's kin-work and uncertainty about his future involvement. Both family units requested referrals for family counseling at the second interview. The third paternal-

maternal kinship system reported discrepancies in their views of the quality of relationships within the kinship system and in their expectations for the adolescent father's kin-work before and after the baby's birth. Conflicting kin-scription efforts directed toward the adolescent father resulted in his inability to make decisions about long-term goals such as whether to attend college on a football scholarship or enter military service. Members expressed satisfaction with the adolescent father's kin-work; however, all were dissatisfied at the 1-month interview when their expectations for kin-work became more specific.

The kinship systems shared similar views about what the adolescent father should do, perhaps reflecting the idealized fatherhood role provided by television and by the wider society. Our preliminary analysis based on three cases during pregnancy and at 1 month after birth shows that paternal-maternal kinship systems face many challenges in dealing with adolescent fatherhood. However, five major themes emerged: (a) paternal-maternal kinship system members consistently expressed the desire that the adolescent father remain involved with his child; (b) kinship systems differed on how to accomplish this goal and generally lacked specific plans or strategies to socialize adolescent fathers to their new roles, particularly after birth when expectations for kin-work became more specific; (c) conflicting goals, conflicts in relationships, and differing expectations inhibited kin-work; (d) factors that facilitated kin-work included positive relationships, shared expectations, valuing the biological father, sharing the adolescent father's kin-work, adequate financial resources, and willingness to adapt the family unit's kin-work to meet the new demands of the paternal-maternal kinship system; and (e) the adolescent father's kin-work competes with and interrupts the family unit's overall kin-work so that joining the paternal and maternal family units to create a new kinship system represents the commitment of both family units to assume shared responsibility for the survival needs of the child. Because no script exists for unmarried African American fathers, the complex negotiations of paternal involvement have to be individually developed for each kinship system.

On our follow-up phone calls, the five family units expressed pleasure in talking with us again and supported the credibility of our findings. Each of the family units agreed that the five themes listed above were true for their kinship system. One maternal grandmother told us that talking with us during the pilot study helped them problem solve, particularly because they felt unable to talk with the paternal family unit.

Summary

This pilot study demonstrates that comparative case analysis, guided by the concepts of the kin-scription conceptual framework, can generate insights into the negotiation of the adolescent father role over time by low-income, African American paternal-maternal kinship systems. Based on the framework, we theorized that joining the paternal and maternal family units to create a new kinship system represents the commitment of both family units to assume shared responsibility for the survival needs of the child. In the absence of shared expectations about the appropriate times and amount of kin-work, even actual kin-work may not be acknowledged or valued. Following more kinship systems composed of a variety of family structures over a longer period of time will permit us to better describe how kin-scription strategies influence kin-work over time.

D. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

D1. Design

The goal of this qualitative collective case study research is to describe the evolution of the adolescent father's paternal role within the context of the kinship system. Thus, the kinship system will be the unit of analysis. In collective case studies detailed, in-depth data are collected from multiple sources of information from different situations, thus providing a rich contextual flavor. This design also provides the flexibility to explore unanticipated patterns that emerge during data collection. In this study, multiple individuals within each kinship system will be interviewed at six different time points. Data will be collected about socioenvironmental contexts for each kinship system.

The timing of interviews has been designed to capture the process of role development of the adolescent father from late pregnancy until his child's 24th month. The last trimester of pregnancy and the 1st month after birth are times of rapid transition as the paternal-maternal kinship system responds to the impending and actual adolescent birth. Subsequent interviews capture important developmental stages of the infant that require shifts in the parenting role, while maintaining the advantage of equal time intervals between interviews. Interviews during the last trimester of pregnancy and at 1, 6, 12, 18, and 24 months postbirth capture the negotiations of the

adolescent father's role in response to the challenges of early infancy (1 to 6 months), crawling and increasing social responsiveness (6 to 12 months), walking and early language (12 to 18 months), and the emerging self-awareness and defiance of the 2-year-old. Interviewing through age 24 months is especially important because there is a sharp decline in unmarried adolescent father participation during the 2nd year.

The remaining sections of the methodology are D2. Sample and Setting, D3. Data Collection Measures, D4. Procedure, D5. Data Management and Analysis, D6. Timetable, and D7. Strengths and Limitations. Modifications to the initial submission based on reviewers' critique and our pilot study experiences have been incorporated into the methods based on the research team's experience with qualitative and longitudinal research involving low-income, African American families.

D2. Sample and Setting

D2a. Sample selection criteria. The inclusion criteria for each paternal-maternal kinship system are the following:

- an unmarried African American mother, age 13 to 19 years, in her 2nd or 3rd trimester of pregnancy
- an unmarried, low-income, African American father age 13 to 19 years identified as the father of her baby
- Both adolescent parents must want the adolescent father to be involved with the baby.
- This must be the first full-term pregnancy regardless of previous history of miscarriages or abortions for either adolescent parent so that we can learn about the first potential for experience of paternal involvement.
- Both adolescent parents report that they do not plan to marry prior to the birth of the baby regardless of plans to marry afterward.
- The paternal and maternal family unit heads report incomes of below 200% of the poverty threshold based on the U.S. Department of Commerce poverty thresholds by family size.
- The adolescent father and at least one parent or parent figure and the adolescent mother and at least one parent or parent figure must all agree verbally to participate in the study. For the purpose of this study, a *parent* is defined as a biological parent or an adult living in the household of that adolescent parent who, in the opinion of either the adolescent or the adolescent's resident parent, is acting in a parenting role for the adolescent. In some family units, the adolescent will have only one parent or parent figure, whereas in other family units there may be two or more parents or parent figures.

Specific exclusion criteria and the rationale for each kinship system are (a) adolescent parents who report having other biological children; (b) adolescent mothers who report a current high-risk pregnancy or a previous catastrophic pregnancy outcome (e.g., intrauterine fetal death) after the 1st trimester, because of the high risk of fetal or neonatal demise. Mothers who deliver babies who are premature or seriously ill may continue because of the continued potential for paternal involvement; (c) adolescent parents in foster care because of the high risk that their family residence may be transitory; and (d) adolescent parents who intend to give their baby up for adoption because that will eliminate the potential to examine the paternal role. We will not exclude adolescent parents who marry during the study, regardless of whom they marry.

D2b. Recruitment. Recruitment for this study of paternal-maternal kinship systems involves three stages: (a) initially identifying of at least one member of a potentially suitable paternal-maternal kinship system, (b) obtaining verbal agreement and verifying eligibility from at least four key members of the kinship system, and (c) obtaining formal signed consent of all participants in the paternal-maternal kinship system. We plan to recruit 30 paternal-maternal kinship systems, approximately three kinship systems per month from Months 3 through 12 in Year 1. An additional 2 months are allowed if the recruitment of 30 kinship systems has not yet been reached. The initial wave of interviews will occur during the adolescent mother's third trimester; however, recruitment will occur during the 2nd or very early 3rd trimester.

The first stage of recruitment of 30 kinship systems is the initial identification of at least one member of a potentially eligible paternal-maternal kinship system. This stage will involve two different recruitment strategies: (a) recruitment of adolescent attendees at urban prenatal clinics and community agencies with adolescent pregnancy programs and (b) advertisements in local predominantly African American newspapers and two radio stations.

Recruitment strategies for this study will cover the greater Chicago metropolitan area and will include (a) distributing flyers in clinics and to agencies with adolescent pregnancy programs, (b) obtaining face-to-face recruitment in the clinics, and (c) placing ads in local newspapers and on radio stations. In those cases where the initial contact is with either adolescent parent, we will provide a detailed description of the study, encourage questions, and address all questions. If the adolescent is in agreement, we will ask for a telephone number to speak with parents and give the adolescent copies of the recruitment flyer for other members of the kinship system that contains

the researcher's name, a 1-800 telephone number, and a brief description of the study. We plan to continue to recruit at two University of Illinois Medical Center (UIMC) clinics: the Women's Care Clinic (WCC) and Mile Square Health Center (MSHC) both of which serve low-income, African American communities. Nurse midwives at UIMC provided care to approximately 320 new prenatal patients during 2001; 30% of those visits were from adolescent mothers; 90% of the adolescents were African American. We will also return to a community agency, Westside Holistic Family Services, which assisted with recruitment during our pilot study and in an earlier study with the principal investigator. Westside Holistic Family Services provides case management and other services to low-income, African American urban families.

To recruit a wider group of potential participants, we plan to use newspaper and radio advertisements. *Indigo* is a local free newspaper with a weekly circulation of over 112,000 and reported readership of 500,000 distributed primarily on Chicago's predominantly African American South Side. We also plan to recruit adolescent parents and grandparents by advertising on WGCI-FM (hip-hop and rhythm and blues music) and WGCI-AM (gospel music), two local stations that broadcast to predominantly African American audiences. Details about the number and types of listeners are in a letter from Chris Augmon, WGCI senior account executive. This strategy is costly but opens access to the study to a much wider group of adolescent fathers and their kinship systems than is possible through recruitment in a small number of clinics and community agencies.

If an adolescent parent is the initial contact at a clinic or agency, the clinician or case manager will provide a brief description of the study from the flyer, ask if this is a first pregnancy, determine if the father of the baby is younger than 20 years of age, request a telephone number, and ask if the research team may call them with additional information. This next stage in recruitment requires obtaining at least verbal agreement to participate from at least one adolescent parent and one grandparent in the paternal and maternal family units (for a minimum of four key members of the kinship system) and verifying their eligibility. The research team will perform the actual screening for eligibility only after adolescent parents expresses interest in the study. If at least four key members of the paternal-maternal kinship system express interest in participating, we will mail copies of the consent form to their homes prior to their initial interviews. Our experiences during the pilot demonstrated that much of our relationship with study participants was established during recruitment telephone calls prior to the initial interview. Each potential participant requested multiple callbacks because of bad

timing, lack of opportunities to discuss the study with other kinship system members, and, in some cases, general conversation to evaluate the motivation and purpose of the researchers. Each of our potential study participants requested that we call numerous times before scheduling the initial interview. The repeated calls provided multiple opportunities for adults and adolescents to safely ask questions about the research prior to sharing any personal information.

Human participant issues such as procedures to obtain formal written permission, assent, and consent are presented in greater detail in the Human Participants section (Section E). Interviews will be scheduled in the family unit's home unless they prefer not to do so.

D2c. Sample size and retention. For this study, a convenience sample of 30 paternal-maternal kinship systems will be recruited to achieve a sample of at least 20 completed cases at 24 months. This sample size of at least 20 completed cases will enable an in-depth examination of the adolescent father's role within a variety of kinship system structures and is consistent with recommendations for this type of qualitative designs.

Based on our success with the pilot study and on the coinvestigators' prior research, we conservatively expect to obtain complete cases for at least 67% of our kinship systems (or a total 20) for the duration of the study. A case will be considered complete if all kinship system members miss no more than one interview each. We retained 100% of our pilot study sample over a 6-month period beginning at recruitment during the adolescent mothers' 2nd trimester and ending 1 month after the births of their babies. Furthermore, each adolescent mother initiated telephone contact with the researchers to inform us of the birth of their babies and to schedule their 1-month follow-up interview. Dr. Norr retained 77% of mothers followed from pregnancy through 2 years. Dr. Dancy retained 70% of 280 low-income, African American women for the 9-month follow-up data collection. These prior successes, our substantial experience in interviewing low-income, African-American families, and our retention strategies (described below), strongly indicate that we will achieve at least this level of success.

Retention is challenging in longitudinal studies, particularly in studies with low-income, African American populations. This will be an exploratory study to describe the process of paternal involvement within the context of the paternal-maternal kinship system using the kinship system as the unit of analysis. We will continue to retain kinship systems in the study even after individual members miss interviews because we will continue to collect information about the entire kinship system. These kinship systems will

not be counted as complete cases. Agreeing to continue to participate in the research does not imply continued father involvement; we will continue to interview kinship systems regardless of whether the adolescent father remains involved. This distinction will be emphasized during the consent process.

We will use a variety of strategies to enhance retention and decrease attrition that have been successful in other studies and in the coinvestigators' longitudinal studies involving low-income African Americans: (a) emphasize study significance: We will emphasize the significance of our study. In our pilot study, we found that participants consistently reported being glad that they participated in the study and considered the research highly important to families such as theirs. Many of the adult participants of our pilot reported that our interview questions triggered them to reevaluate their relationship with the other adolescent parent and family; (b) use a participant tracking base: We have developed forms and procedures to obtain contact information for tracking contacts and for logging in phone calls. At the time of initial consent, the investigators will obtain telephone numbers, mailing addresses, and contact information for at least two additional friends or family members; (c) maintain between-interview contacts: After each interview, each participant will be given a brightly colored reminder card with a toll-free number to call to inform the research team of any changes in their address or telephone number. We will call at least 4 weeks ahead of the next scheduled interview to confirm or change the time, and a reminder call will be made at 1 week and again 1 day before the interview. If we are unable to contact kinship system members by telephone, we will send letters and make brief home visits to leave a note in the mailbox prior to using contact information for tracking contacts; (d) provide meaningful incentives: Each participant will receive \$50, the same amount as the pilot, as partial compensation for their time at the conclusion of each interview. Additional incentives to promote retention for this study include small gifts for the baby at each follow-up interview and bus passes for transportation to the interview site, as needed. In our pilot study, we provided 1-day bus passes and baby pictures. When we solicited participants' comments on our study themes and on the interview guide for this proposed study, we provided \$5 gift certificates for a nationwide food chain; (e) provide continuity of follow-up and interpersonal skill training for project staff members: The same research team members will interview kinship system members for the duration of the study to promote trust. In addition, research team members will receive culturally appropriate training, such as the importance of using last names and titles with all adult participants unless given specific permission to use

their first names, which is particularly important with low-income African American populations; (f) individualize data collection: Research team members will receive intensive training to ensure appropriate interviewing skills (explained further in Section 4a).

D2d. Study setting. Whenever possible we will, therefore, interview kinship system members in their own homes. Although the quality of the interview itself did not appear to differ by location, in terms of degree of rapport, participant disclosure of sensitive information, or length, during the pilot study we learned much about the socioenvironmental context of families by going to their homes. However, some low-income, African American families live in settings where lack of privacy may be a significant concern, and they may request that interviews take place at our research office. We will interview on campus rather than lose participants.