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RESEARCH NOTE

How Old Are U.S. Fathers?

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One in every six U.S. birth certificates have no information on the age of the baby's father; for more than four in 10 babies born to adolescent women, no data are available on the father's age. Information from mothers aged 15-49 who had babies in 1988 and were surveyed in the National Maternal and Infant Health Survey indicates that fathers for whom age is not reported on the birth certificate are considerably younger than other fathers. In 1988, 5% of fathers were under age 20, and 20% were aged 20-24. Fathers typically are older than mothers, especially when the mothers are teenagers. Fathers who are unmarried, black or partners of lower income women are younger than other fathers.

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