

Strengthening Families

Virginia Commission on Youth

November 17, 2003

Leah Hamaker



Authority for Study

- Commission on Youth was asked to:
 - Assess and identify elements that strengthen families;
 - Analyze measures other states are taking, as well as various federal initiatives to strengthen families;
 - Determine strategies to strengthen family service systems; and
 - Formulate recommendations that strengthen families and support marriage.
- Preliminary research to be conducted in the first year and more intense study activities to occur during second year.

Study Issues

Review systemic and economic impact of:

- Marriage/Divorce
- Non-Marital births
- Single parent families
- Fatherless families
- Welfare reform and impact upon the family
- Child support enforcement
- Increase of high-risk behaviors by youth

Presentation Outline

- Study Focus
 - Study Issues
 - Study Activities
- Overview of Virginia's Families
 - Demographics of Families/Children
 - Non-Marital Births
 - Marriage/Divorce
 - Economic Statistics
- Federal Legislation Impacting Families
- Initiatives in Other States
- Preliminary Findings and Recommendations

Study Issues

- What partnerships and best practices can strengthen Virginia's families?
- How do strong families improve Virginia's economy?
- Is the institution of marriage beneficial not only to families but to the Commonwealth?
- Evaluate issues by systemic and economic impact

Study Activities

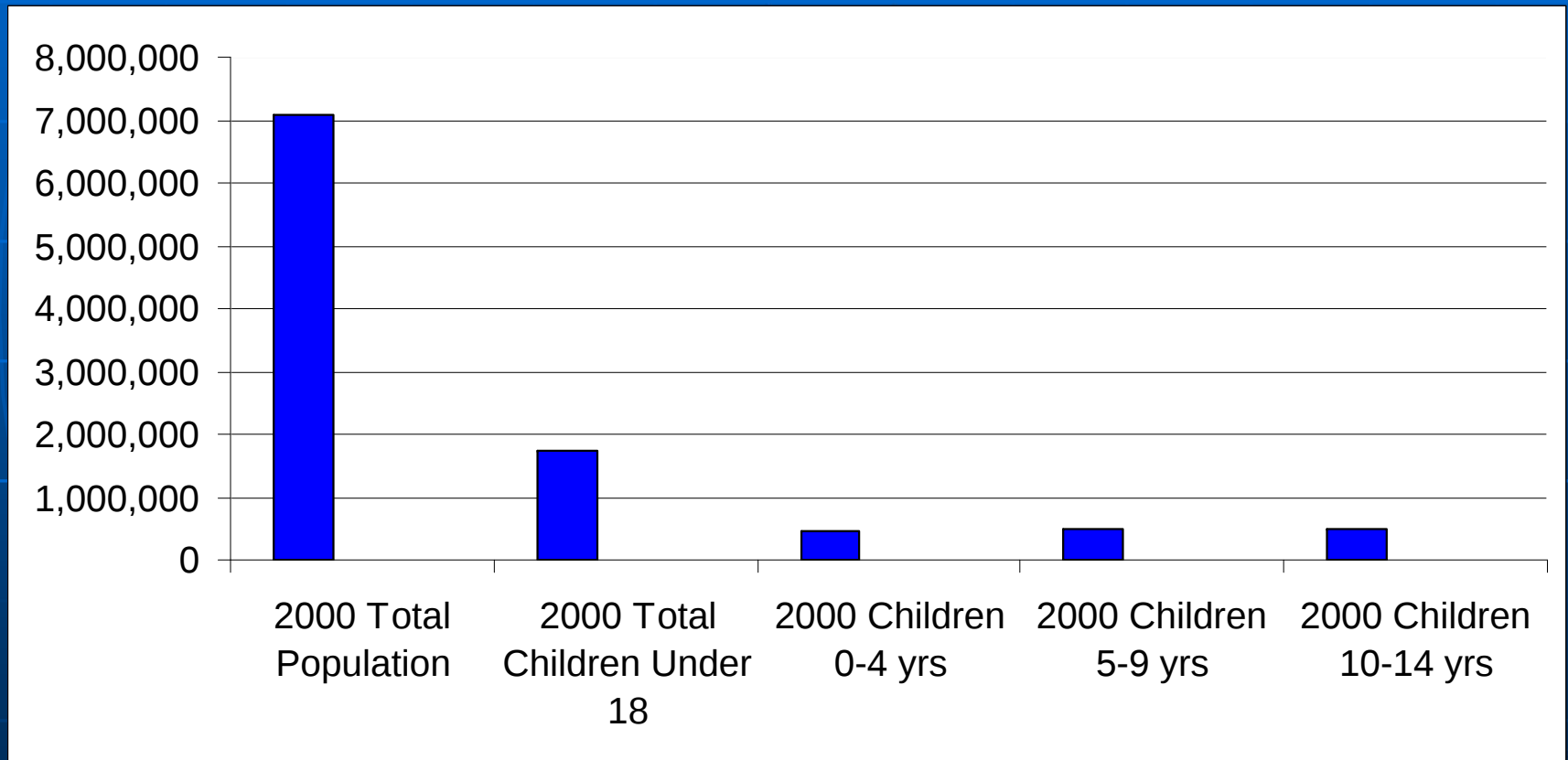
- Coordinate with various agencies to ascertain specific services/programs for children and families;
- Identify data sources and analyze data;
- Ascertain what Virginia families look like; and
- Make recommendations for next steps.

Virginia Demographic Information - Children

- Approximately 6.8 million people live in 2.7 million households in Virginia.
- There are approximately 1.75 million children in Virginia under age 18, approximately 25 % of the total Virginia population.
- This number has increased 16 % from 1990.
- The number of children in urban areas increased 27 %.
- Virginia has 530,930 children under age six which accounts for 6.5 % of the population.
- Children under age 6 in paid child care while parents work was 34 % in 2000.
- Almost 1.5 million of the age 3 through high school population is in an educational setting.
- 8 % of youth 16-19 are not attending school or working.

Source: 2000 U.S. Census and Kids Count, 2003.

Virginia Demographic Information - Children



Source: 2000 U.S. Census and National Child Care Information Center

Virginia Demographic Information - Families

- In 2000, the number of households headed by males with no spouse present and containing own children under 18 jumped by 78 %.
- In 1990 there were just over 28,000 of these households; by 2000 the number had increased to 49,800.
- There were more single-mom than single-dad households—133,300 in 1990 and 186,600 in 2000.
- The increase in both kinds of households reveals that a fourth of all Virginia households that contained parents and their children were headed by a single parent.
- The actual proportion, 27 %, was the same in both metro and non-metro areas but these numbers did vary by country and locality.

Virginia Demographic Information - Families

- Cities had the highest proportions of single-parent households, 37 %, while the non-metro counties, had the lowest proportion, 21 %.
- The highest proportions of single-parent households—a third of all households that contain children—are concentrated in the eastern part of Southside, the Eastern Shore, and both large and small cities throughout the state. The very highest proportions are in Petersburg, Richmond, and Hopewell, where over half of all households containing parents and children are single-parent households.

Virginia Demographic Information - Families

- Married-couple households proportions are declining but accounted for 73 % of all households containing "own children."
- In 2000, 26 % more people live alone than in 1990, almost a third of them are age 65 or over.
- The proportion of households containing unmarried partners, measured for the first time in 2000, averages only 5 % statewide, ranging from 2 % in Lexington to 8 % in Manassas.

Non-Marital Births (NMB)

National Statistics

- Nearly a third of all births in U.S. occur to parents who are not legally married.
- In U.S. about 25% of unwed parents are cohabitating.
- The number of births to unmarried women increased by 1% in 2002
- Births to unmarried teenagers declined by 4%, for 4th consecutive year.
- Overall teenage birth rate dropped 28% between 1990 and 2002.

Source: Princeton University Center for Research on Child Wellbeing Working Paper #98-12, 1999

Non-Marital Births (NMB)

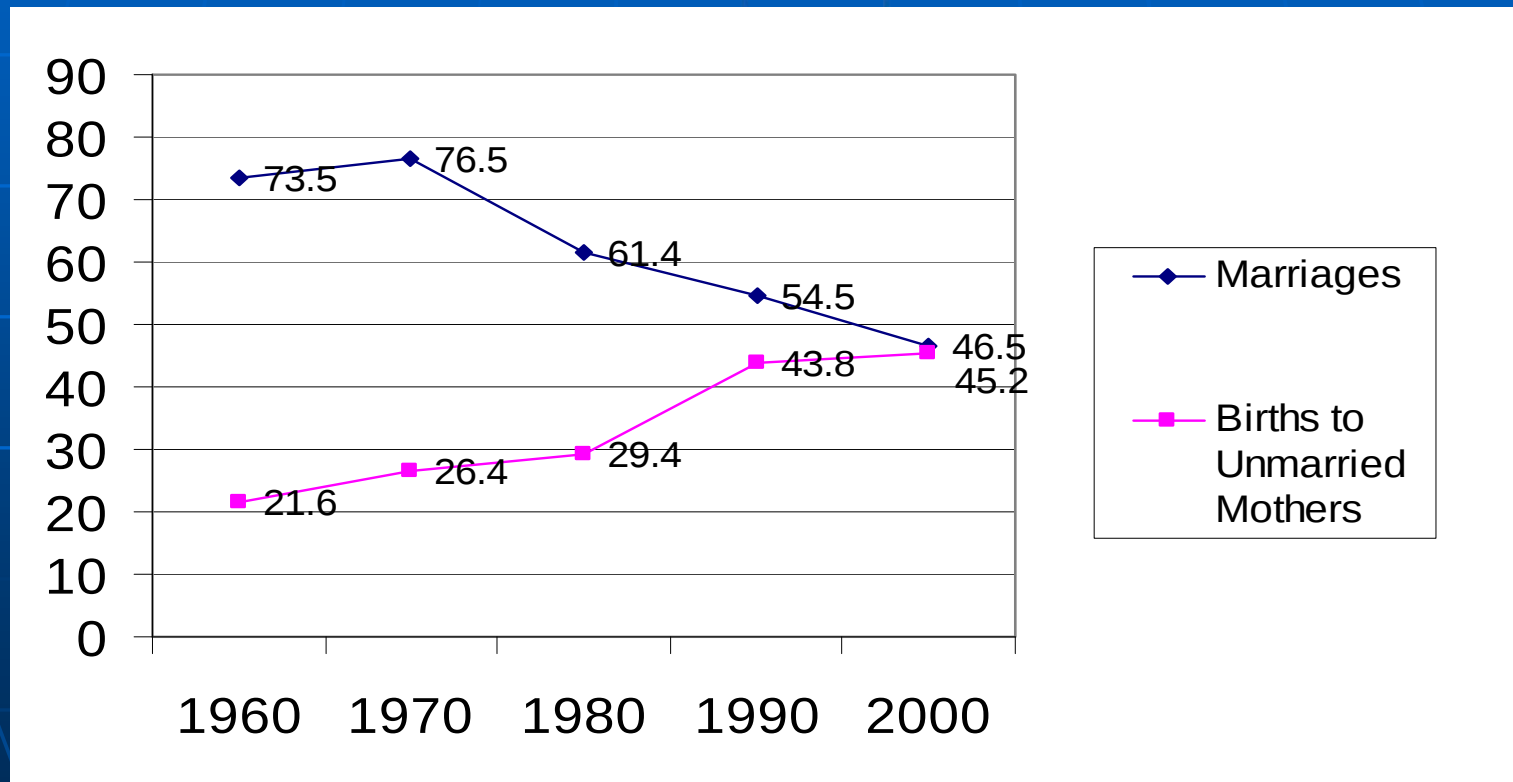
National Statistics

- The teen birth rate – the number of births for every 1,000 young women age 15-19 has fallen significantly since the early 1990s.
- After peaking at 62% in 1991, the rate steadily declined to 48.7.
- The black teen birth rate fell by 20% from 110% in the first half of the 1990s to 88% in the second.
- The non-marital birth rate — the number of births for every 1,000 unmarried women of childbearing age — also declined.
- The non-marital birth rate increased from 43% in 1990 to 47% in 1994, but then declined in each subsequent year, except 1998. By 1999, the rate had returned to its 1990.
- In the late 1990s, the % of children, particularly low-income children, living in two-parent families increased while the % living in single-parent families fell.



Non-Marital Births (NMB)

National Non-Marital Births (Per 1,000 Women)



Non-Marital Births (NMB)

Virginia

- Virginia has remained below the U.S. average since 1986.
- In 2002 in Virginia, there were 99,235 NMB.
- In 2002, Virginia ranked 17th in the U.S. in NMB as % of total births.
- In 1998, Virginia ranked 34th in the U.S. in NMB.
- In 1998, NMB as % of total births was 29.8.
- In 1999, % was 28.7.
- In 2000, the % was 29.9.

Sources: National Center for Health Statistics, 1976-2000 & Virginia Center for Health Statistics, 1976-2000

Non-Marital Births (NMB)

1999 Profile of Virginia NMB - Age

- 55.8% mothers are 20-29 year olds; 28.5% are 10-19.*
- NBM for teenage mothers (age 10-19) has increased from 60% in 1976 to over 80% in 1996.*
- In Richmond typical unmarried father is in his 20s. On average, fathers are 3.2 yrs older than their children's mother.*
- 70% of teen mothers in Richmond had partners who were within 4 yrs of their own age, while 14% had partners 8 or more years older.* *

Non-Marital Births (NMB)

1999 Profile of Virginia NMB - Other Indicators

- In 2000 in VA 18.6% of teen mothers were already mothers.
- In City of Richmond, of 258 participants in study on NMB, 62 mothers (23%) & 58 fathers (22%) reported having other children. **
- 44.6% are HS graduates; 65.7% have either HS or college education. ***
- 31.7% have less than h.s. education. ***
- Race - 50% white; 43.3% African American; 3.7% Asian; 1.4% ****
- Of 29,635 NMB in Virginia in 2000, 50% were paid by Medicaid; 37%, private insurance.

Sources: *Kids Count & **Princeton Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, Richmond, 9/18/2000, ****National National Center for Health Statistics 1976-2000 & Virginia Center for Health Statistics 1976-2000 and ****Virginia Center for Health Statistics, 2000

Marriage/Divorce

- The U.S. has the highest divorce in the world and half of all U.S. marriages can be expected to end in divorce.
- The % of families headed by a single parent has more than tripled and the divorce rate has more than doubled since 1960.

Marriage/Divorce

National

- 43% of first marriages in U.S. end in separation or divorce within 15 years.
- 1 in 3 end within 10 years; 1 in 5 end within 5 years.

Virginia

- Approximately 3 million of the state's population of approximately 5.5 million (15 years and over) are married.
- 500,000 Virginians of the state's population of approximately 5.5 million (15 years and over), are divorced. An additional 163,500 are separated.
- Approximately 30,000 divorces were awarded in Virginia in 2001, up 10% from 1990.
- Approximately 63,500 marriages were held in Virginia in 2001, compared to 71,043 in 1990, a 12% decrease.

Marriage / Divorce

Effects of Divorce - Children

- Children who experience parental divorce, compared with children in continuously intact two-parent families, exhibit more conduct problems, more symptoms of psychological maladjustment, lower academic achievement, more social difficulties and poorer self-concepts.
- “Divorce is associated with higher rates of mortality, more health problems and more risky behaviors such as increased alcohol use.”

Source: The Index of Leading Cultural Indicators, as cited in House Document 43, 1995 and direct quote, CEC Director Jeffrey Koplan, 5/24/01.

Marriage/Divorce

Effects of Divorce - Adults

- Adults who experienced parental divorce as children, compared with adults in intact two-parent families, score lower on a variety of indicators of psychological, interpersonal, and socioeconomic well-being.

Source: “Life-Span Adjustment of Children to Their Parents Divorce”, as cited in House Document 43, 1995.

Marriage/Divorce

Effects of Divorce - Economic

- A recent study revealed annual U.S. divorce costs to be at \$33.3 billion or \$312 per household.
- The study estimates that the direct and indirect costs of an average divorce to state and federal government is \$30,000.
- The costs of divorce were divided into three categories in the report:
 - direct costs to the state, including child support enforcement, Medicaid and Temporary Assistance to Need Families (TANF) funds;
 - direct costs to the federal government, such as food stamps and public housing; and
 - indirect costs to the state and federal governments, which included a host of social problems caused by divorce, such as unwed childbearing and child delinquency.

Marriage/Divorce

Effects of Divorce - Economic

- Utah, which had a total of 9,735 divorces in 2001, the direct and indirect costs of divorce were estimated to be over \$300 million for the state and federal government.
- Based on data from 2000, the report estimates the total costs of the 36,889 divorces in North Carolina to be about \$1 billion that year.
- This does not account for intangible costs such as losing access to relatives and other emotional consequences.

Economic Statistics

Virginia

- Population (2001) - 7,187,734
- Population, Children Under 18 (2000) - 1,738,262
- Poverty Rate (2001) - 7.2% (down from 9.6% in 1999)
- Poverty Rate, Children Under 18 (2001) - 7.9%
- Poverty Rate, Children Ages 5–17 (2001) - 7.4%



Economic Statistics

Virginia 2003

- Children Under 6 Living With Working Parents – 62%
- Children Ages 6-17 Living With Working Parents – 71%

Source: Administration for Children in Families, 2003.

Economic Statistics

Virginia

- Students approved for free or reduced-price school lunch program 1994 was 30% (number not available) and in 1999 was 344,853 (31.4%).
- Children receiving TANF (was AFDC) in 1994 was 132,659 (82.8 per 1,000) and in 1999 was 64,274 (40.2 per 1,000).
- Unemployment rate was 166,459 in 1994 (4.9%) and 97,964 in 1999 (2.8%).
- Average per capita income was \$23,174 in 1994 and \$28,063 in 1999.

Source: Kids Count 2001.



Federal Legislation Impacting Families

- The 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) authorized the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. PRWORA stated four broad goals for TANF:
 - Provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of their relatives;
 - End the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage;
 - Prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and establish annual numerical goals for preventing and reducing the incidence of these pregnancies; and
 - Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.



Federal Legislation Impacting Families

- These goals reflect a large body of evidence that documents negative consequences for children of non-marital unions and single-parent households.
- Although there are exceptions, children raised in single-parent families are at greater risk of living in poverty and of developing social, behavioral, and academic problems than are children raised in married-parent families.



Federal Legislation Impacting Families

- The Commonwealth receives an annual TANF block grant of \$158.3 million.
- These monies may be used for assistance or services that meet one of the four purposes of TANF.
- In September, 2003, there were 32,880 families receiving cash assistance in Virginia. Average payment is \$269 per month.
- Under PRWORA, states with waivers approved prior to enactment of TANF were allowed to continue to operate their TANF programs. Virginia's waiver expired on July 1, 2003.



Federal Legislation Impacting Families

Personal Responsibility, Work, and Family Promotion Act of 2003

- This legislation proposes federal funding for healthy marriage education activities is included in the welfare reauthorization bill, which is pending in Congress.
- Funds provided can support:
- Public advertising campaigns on the value of marriage and stability.
- Education in high schools on the value of marriage.
- Marriage education, marriage skills, and relationship skills programs for non-married pregnant women and non-married expectant fathers as well as engaged couples.
- Marriage enhancement and marriage skills training programs for married couples.
- Divorce reduction programs.
- Marriage mentoring programs in at-risk communities.
- Programs to reduce the disincentives to marriage in means-tested aid programs.



Other States' Initiatives to Promote Marriage and Family

- Utah has established a Commission on Marriage.
- Four states have undertaken or proposed state-wide campaigns, which include media projects that promote the virtue of marriage and seek to curb divorce rates.
 - Arkansas and Oklahoma launched campaigns to reduce the state divorce rate by one-third or more.
 - Oklahoma also launched a media campaign to highlight marriage building skills.
 - Arizona and New Mexico proposed legislation to create similar media campaigns to promote marriage.



Other States' Initiatives to Promote Marriage and Family

- Several states have established commissions charged with implementing specific policies.
 - Arizona established a commission to train married couples, or those considering marriage, in communication and relationship skills.
 - South Carolina, Utah, Louisiana, and Michigan have also formed commissions charged with evaluating state marriage policies and programs.
- Two states (North Carolina and Utah) have issued proclamations recognizing the importance of marriage as a public good.
- Louisiana issued a proclamation which reaffirms marriage as the foundation for healthy families.
- Louisiana and Utah also proclaimed National Marriage Day (2/14/99) and Marriage Awareness Week (9-15-99).



Other States' Initiatives to Promote Marriage and Family

- Some states have also proposed or implemented policies to change divorce laws or procedures.
- Covenant marriage laws have been passed in three states: Louisiana (1997), Arizona (1998), and Arkansas (2001).
- In each state couples have the option of a regular or covenant marriage.
- Twenty-five other states have introduced one or more covenant marriage bills.
- Virginia also has similar legislation introduced (HB 2794 – 2003).



Other States' Initiatives to Promote Marriage and Family

- Nineteen states have enacted laws that mandate education for divorcing couples.
- Florida enacted the “Marriage Preparation and Preservation Act of 1998”.
- One component of this marriage education law authorized programs to meet state requirements for lower marriage license fees and speedy processing.
- Graduates of approved courses save \$32.50 on the cost of their license, which is valid immediately.



Other States' Initiatives to Promote Marriage and Family

Florida - Survey Result from One Course (PAIRS Course)

- 91% said the course made a difference in the quality of their relationship - 76% reported using the skills learned on a regular basis - 99% said they would recommend PAIRS to friends and family - 87% said they want more marriage education in the future In 4% of the cases, couples reported postponing or canceling their wedding plans after completing the course.
- Statewide, premarital education is reaching five to 10% of couples in the first year of legislation.
- Expected participation of premarital couples is estimated to exceed 25% by 2005, resulting in more than 30,000 couples completing programs each year.



Other States' Initiatives to Promote Marriage and Family

Oklahoma

- A 1998 study found a direct link between the state's high divorce rate and its slow economic growth.
- Oklahoma pursued TANF funds to promote marriage and \$10 million was set aside from TANF for the Oklahoma Marriage Initiative.
- Goals were to reduce the state's high out-of-wedlock birth and divorce rates and improve the well-being of children by strengthening marriages.
- The initiative elicited concern since the program focused low-income, single mothers. Concerns were defused by convening an advisory committee of experts.
- A education curriculum was implemented for TANF recipients and ties were forged with domestic violence groups, Head Start, and minority leaders.
- This program is the most comprehensive state effort to strengthen marriage.
- 85% of Oklahoman's support the initiative.

Preliminary Findings

- Policy-makers, professionals, and family members recognize that one of the best ways to help individuals, children and adults is to focus on their families.
- Families carry out a variety of functions critically important to society. They share resources, economically support their members, and care for the elderly, the sick, and the disabled in ways that no other institution can do or do as well.
- In recent surveys, the family emerges as the central element in the lives of most Americans.

Preliminary Findings

- Children living with two biological parents tend to have better cognitive and emotional development than children living with single parents.
- Children raised in single-parent homes are at greater risk of poverty, juvenile delinquency, teen pregnancy and may be more likely to divorce as adults.
- About 6% of children in married families were poor in 1999 compared with more than 35% in single-mother families.
- Children growing up without two married parents are:
 - twice as likely to drop out of school,
 - 50% more likely to abuse substances/alcohol,
 - have less stable relationships as adults, and
 - more than 50% likely to have a child as a teen.

Source: *The Consequences of Divorce for Adults and Children* by Paul Amato & *Growing Up with a Single Parent, What Hurts, What Helps*, Sara McLanahan and Gary Sandefur, as cited in State Legislatures, 2003.

Preliminary Findings

- 80% of children who grow up in a two-parent household never experience poverty during the first ten years of their lives. By contrast, only 27% of children living in single-parent households maintained the same high standard. (1994)
- According to the Census Bureau, children whose parents divorce are almost twice as likely to drop into poverty than they were before the marital split.
- Children from female-headed homes are five times as likely to be poor as children in two-parent families and nine times as likely to be in deep poverty. (1993)
- A child that is born out of wedlock is 30 times more likely to live in poverty than a child that was born in a marriage and whose parents stayed married.
- The average child from a non-poor family will suffer a 50 % drop in income after divorce. (1994)



Preliminary Findings

Lessons Learned from states to date:

- Initiate marriage research – utilize research, education and extension services to conduct research on marriage attitudes, divorce and marriage.
- Provide marriage skill training- state officials can identify and select a skill-based curriculum to address how teens, new parents, newly engaged couples and married couples can deal with conflict while considering relevant cultural and social factors.
- Adopt “fragile families” approach – state and local agencies can offer services to help unmarried new parents develop healthy relationships with themselves and their children. Employment, parenting skills and relationship building can also be considered.
- Identify key people to create a marriage commission or task force – include leaders from the domestic violence community, educators, religious leaders, judges, and family advocates.



Preliminary Findings

- **Essential elements of an agenda to improve child well-being and strengthen families include:**
 - a safety net that does not discriminate against two-parent families and ensures that more two-parent families who are eligible for benefits receive them,
 - a strong child support enforcement system that increases the financial well-being of children,
 - programs to help low-income fathers meet their financial and parenting responsibilities,
 - initiatives that further decrease teen pregnancies, and
 - a research agenda that would develop a knowledge base on which to build successful programs in these areas.



Recommendation

- The Virginia Commission on Youth shall convene a Task Force of experts to address the programs, partnerships, and practices that can best serve to strengthen Virginia's families. Topics to be explored shall be positive youth development, continued reduction of out-of-wedlock Births, Marriage Education, Strengthening Two-Parent Families, Positive Parenting/Strengthening Fatherhood, Motherhood and Collaboration with Community and Faith-Based Organizations. The activities and findings shall be reported to the Commission prior to the 2005 General Assembly Session.