RELATIONSHIP QUALITY AND PARENTING AMONG GRANDPARENT CAREGIVERS AND TEENS

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CURRENTLY

- Increasing numbers of children are being raised by their grandparents (Kreider, 2008)
- Almost 1.6 million children in 2008 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008)
- Teenage years may be particularly challenging

GOALS

- To better understand a family type that defies easy classification
- Focus on relationship quality and parenting
- Use research to inform policies and programs

PROCEDURE

- In-person interviews with 59 grandparent/teen pairs from across New York state

THREE COMPONENTS OF STUDY

- Surveys (computer for youth, face-to-face for grandparent)
- Videotaped discussions developed to probe for key issues
- Audio-taped interviews of grandparents

RELATIONSHIP TO YOUTH (percent)

- Maternal grandmother
- Maternal grandfather
- Paternal grandmother
- Great-grandmother
- Step-grandfather

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS AVERAGE

- Grandparent Age: 63 years
- Youth Age: 15 years
- Percent African-American: 29%
- Percent Hispanic: 7%
- Percent White: 68%
- Length of time youth has lived with grandparent: 10 years
- Youth has sibling(s) outside of household: 80%
- Youth has sibling(s) in household: 35%
- Grandparent married: 47%
- Grandparent years of education: 12 years
- Grandparent employed: 24%
- Grandparent has disability: 34%
- Youth has a health condition: 51%
- Average income of Census tract: $34,801.17

CODING QUALITATIVE DATA

- Look for quotes on specific themes such as:
  - Youth and grandparent view of parents
  - Positive and negative aspects
  - Role of grandparent
  - Parenting behavior and style of the grandparent

ANALYSES

- Bring together videotape data, open-ended data, and survey data to develop measures of relationship quality, parenting behaviors, and youth well-being and examine how parental involvement is related to these measures

RESULTS

Relationship with Parents Influences Grandparent/Teen Relationship

1. When youth have positive contact with parent(s), relationship with grandparent can be:
   - Very close; Evolving; Marked by parental interference

2. When youth have little to no contact with parent but want to, relationship with grandparent can be:
   - Stressful for grandparent

3. When youth have little to no contact with parent but do not want to, relationship with grandparent can be:
   - Warm, but often a work in progress; Increased grandparent engagement; Additional “parenting” challenges

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References: