



AgEcon SEARCH
RESEARCH IN AGRICULTURAL & APPLIED ECONOMICS

The World's Largest Open Access Agricultural & Applied Economics Digital Library

This document is discoverable and free to researchers across the globe due to the work of AgEcon Search.

Help ensure our sustainability.

Give to AgEcon Search

AgEcon Search
<http://ageconsearch.umn.edu>
aesearch@umn.edu

*Papers downloaded from **AgEcon Search** may be used for non-commercial purposes and personal study only. No other use, including posting to another Internet site, is permitted without permission from the copyright owner (not AgEcon Search), or as allowed under the provisions of Fair Use, U.S. Copyright Act, Title 17 U.S.C.*

THE IMPACT OF WELFARE REFORM ON LOCAL COMMUNITIES-- SUMMARY OF REMARKS

Wendell Primus
Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

In many ways, the child support program is a more important program than federal Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). By age 16, 60 percent of the children in the United States do not live with one or more of their natural parents. As a reference, AFDC covers about 10-13 percent of the child population, and food stamps and medicaid each cover about 25 percent of the child population.

We who study welfare have generally focused on the mother. We expect the mother to be the parent, the caretaker and the breadwinner. This focus on the mother is misdirected—she may have three or more children. We should be focusing more on the father. All we have required of the father in the child support program is just to pay child support. I believe that the child support program must undergo a transformation just like the AFDC program. We must be more concerned about getting the father into the labor force and establishing a better relationship between the father and his children.

There is a quiet revolution going on in this country. We are establishing greater legal connections between children and their parents. Roughly one-third of our children are born out of wedlock. We have not been very concerned about establishing a legal connection between these children and their parents. As a result, these children did not have any inheritance, and they had no access to the safety nets which came through the parents' employer, such as health insurance. These children were not eligible for social insurance benefits, such as Social Security benefits from the death or disability of a parent, or unemployment insurance. We are now establishing paternity in many more instances.

There are many community-based efforts to make fathers better parents and there is an increasing focus on getting fathers better employment. About 60-70 percent of the fathers whose children are on AFDC have prison records and are difficult to employ. As part of welfare reform, we are building stronger relationships between fathers and their children and increasing the effectiveness of child support.

***Accountability of Extension in a
Devolution Context***

