

**Adolescent Family Life Research Awards**  
FY 1982 – 2002

**Adoption**

**Orientation of Pregnancy Counselors Toward Adoption**

Principal Investigator:  
Edmund Mech, Ph.D.  
School of Social Work  
University of Illinois  
1207 West Oregon  
Urbana, IL 61801

Project Period: 10/1/82 - 9/30/83

Summary: This study investigated the orientations of pregnancy counselors toward adoption and to determine the extent to which adoption is presented to pregnant adolescents as a plausible alternative. A random sample of 100 counselors on the staffs of social programs and health facilities in Illinois are studied with regard to 1) beliefs/values about adoption, 2) factual information about adoption, and 3) perceived counselor influence on decisions made by pregnant adolescents.

**Adoption and Parenting Decision-Making Among Adolescent Females**

Principal Investigator:  
Jane D. Bose  
Program Director  
Children's Home Society of Minnesota  
D136 Mayo Memorial Bldg.  
420 Delaware St. S.E.  
St. Paul, Minnesota

Project Period: 1/1/83 - 12/31/84

Summary: This research on decision-making about adoption or parenting posed five research topics the relationship between psychological development and adoption-parenting decisions; family, peer, and male partner influence on decisions to place or keep a child; socio-demographic attributes correlated with parenting-adoption decisions; critical incidents in the adolescent's past that impact on parenting-adoption decision; and how agency or institutional policy influences parenting adoption decisions.

## **Adoption Decision-Making in Pregnant Minority Youth**

Principal Investigator:  
Byron R. Egeland, Ph.D.  
Department of Educational Psychology  
University of Minnesota  
7548 Elliott Hall  
75 E. River Rd.  
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Project Period: 10/1/83 - 3/31/85

Summary: For this study, interviews were conducted with a sample of recently delivered black adolescent mothers. Information was obtained about the factors which influenced the mother's decision to care for the child herself in an independent household or put the child in the care of relatives or friends.

## **Adoption Behavior and the Propensity to Adopt in the U.S.**

Principal Investigator:  
Dudley L. Poston, Jr., Ph.D.  
The University of Texas at Austin  
Population Research Center  
Austin, TX 78712

Project Period: 10/1/83 - 6/30/86

Summary: Data from national fertility studies conducted in 1955, 1973, 1976 and 1982 were used to describe trends in the characteristics of women who adopted children, or indicated a desire to adopt children. The study also investigated the relationship between having adopted a child and the later fertility of women.

## **Adoption Decisions: Personal and Social Context**

Principal Investigator:  
David J. Kallen, Ph.D.  
Department of Pediatrics and Human Development  
3240 Life Science Bldg.  
Michigan State University  
East Lansing, MI 48824

Project Period: 1/1/84 - 6/30/87

Summary: This was a study of the process by which adolescent mothers decide to keep their child or place it for adoption. Data were collected by means of interviews and questionnaires from a sample of adolescent mothers, their parents, the fathers of the children, and professional care providers who serve adolescent mothers. An assessment was made of the extent and nature of the influence exerted by each of these major factors in the decision-making process.

### **The Consequences of the Adoption Decision**

Principal Investigator:  
Steven D. McLaughlin, Ph.D.  
Battelle Human Affairs Research Center  
Health and Population Study Center  
4000 N.E. 41st St.  
Seattle, WA 98105

Project Period: 10/1/84 - 9/30/86

Summary: This research project examined the consequences for teen mothers who chose an adoption plan and adolescents who decided to raise their infants. The two groups were compared on a series of outcomes including educational attainment, marriage, subsequent fertility, earned income and public sector support.

### **Consequences of the Relinquish Versus Parent Decision**

Principal Investigator:  
Steven D. McLaughlin, Ph.D.  
Battelle Human Affairs Research Center  
Health and Population Study Center  
4000 N.E. 41st St.  
Seattle, WA 98105

Project Period: 10/1/86 - 9/30/89

Summary: The objective of the proposed study was to determine the consequences of an adolescent's decision either to relinquish a first birth for adoption or parent the child herself. The consequences which were examined included subsequent educational attainment, marriage, subsequent pregnancies and fertility, labor force participation, earned income, welfare dependency, and global life satisfaction. Panel data was collected from all adolescents who received pregnancy counseling services from the Options for Pregnancy Program of the Adoption Services of the Western Association of Concerned Adoptive Parents (WACAP) and who resolved the pregnancy with a live birth.

## **Openness in Adoption: Outcomes for the Adoption Triad**

Principal Investigator:  
Ruth G. McRoy, Ph.D.  
University of Texas at Austin  
School of Social Work  
2609 University Ave.  
Austin, TX 78712

Project Period: 6/1/87 - 5/31/90

Summary: The goal of this study was to assess the consequences of the varying degrees of openness in adoption for the members of the adoption triad: the birth mother, adopted child, and adoptive parents. Three degrees of openness were examined: traditional adoption, in which little information is shared at placement and no contact of any kind is permitted between adoptive and birth parents; semi-open adoption, in which some non-identified communication between parties may exist but is typically mediated by the adoption agency; and fully disclosed open adoption, in which the adoptive family and birth mother have ongoing face-to-face contact.

## **Decision-Making Regarding Adoption and Parenting**

Principal Investigator:  
Pearla B. Namerow, Ph.D.  
Center for Population and Family Health  
Columbia University  
60 Haven Ave.  
New York, NY 10032

Project Period: 10/1/87 - 9/30/90

Summary: The specific aims of this study were (1) to describe young women's values and attitudes toward both parenting and adoption; (2) to test the utility of an expectancy-value model in predicting pregnancy resolution decision-making; (3) to identify the determinants of women's pregnancy resolution decisions; (4) to investigate why a sizeable minority of young women who actively consider the adoption option eventually choose instead to parent their babies; and (5) to assess the consequences of parenting and adoption for pregnant young women.

## **Evaluating the Adoption Components of AFL Care Projects**

Principal Investigator:  
Steven D. McLaughlin, Ph.D.  
Battelle Memorial Institute  
Human Affairs Research Centers  
Seattle, WA

Project Period: 9/15/87 - 9/14/90

Summary: The primary objective of this study was to investigate whether the characteristics and practices of Adolescent Family Life pregnancy counseling programs influence the likelihood that pregnant adolescent clients place their child for adoption after controlling for the characteristics of the clients and the communities within which they live.

### **To Parent or Relinquish: Consequences Two Years Later**

Principal Investigator:  
Steven D. McLaughlin, Ph.D.  
Battelle Memorial Institute  
Human Affairs Research Centers  
4000 N.E. 41st St.  
Seattle, WA 98105

Project Period: 7/1/88 - 6/30/91

Summary: This study investigated the long-term consequences of the adolescent mother's decision to either parent the child herself or relinquish the child for adoption. It examined the impact of the parent versus relinquish decision on subsequent educational attainment, marriage subsequent pregnancies and fertility, labor force participation, household income, and social and psychological well-being 26-month after the birth of the child.

### **Openness in Adoption: Birth Mother Adjustment Patterns**

Principal Investigator:  
Ruth G. McRoy, Ph.D.  
University of Texas at Austin  
School of Social Work  
2609 University Ave.  
Austin, TX 78712

Project Period: 8/1/90 - 7/31/92

Summary: The goal of this project was to conduct four studies on developmental patterns of birth mothers participating in confidential, semi-open, and fully-disclosed adoptions. Study one tested predicted outcomes in both the self-concept and relational domains for birth mothers who have placed their children in varying degrees of open adoptions. Study two was designed to develop a predictive model of birth mother adjustment by examining personal and social background factors that influence post-placement adjustment. Study three compared teen birth mothers and adult birth mothers on the factors which led to their choice of openness, satisfaction with their choice and adjustment factors as measured by identity and intimacy development, subsequent fertility and health

problems. Study four intensively explored the links between birth mothers' close relationships with peers and with the adoptive family.

### **Consequences of the Adoption Decision: 5-Year Follow-up**

Principal Investigator:  
Steven D. McLaughlin, Ph.D.  
Battelle Memorial Institute  
Human Affairs Research Centers  
4000 N.E. 41st St.  
Seattle, WA 98105

Project Period: 5/1/91 - 4/30/94

Summary: The objective of this study was to examine the consequences of the decision to either parent or relinquish a child through adoption for the well-being of the adolescent mother five years after the birth. The specific outcomes that were examined included: educational attainment; subsequent pregnancies and their resolution; marriage and living arrangements; marital dissolution; and economic and social-psychological well-being.

### **Adoption Versus Parenting: Consequences for Young Women**

Principal Investigator:  
Pearla B. Namerow, Ph.D.  
Center for Population and Family Health  
Columbia University  
60 Haven Ave.  
New York, NY 10032

Project Period: 3/1/92 - 2/28/95

Summary: This study compared young women who parent with those who relinquish their children four years after they made their decision. It examined the consequences of parenting versus placing a child for adoption. Parenting and placing mothers were compared on a series of outcomes related to education, occupation, fertility, marital and economic status, and on a series of social psychological and psychological outcomes including comfort with the pregnancy resolution decision, life satisfaction, future outlook, self-esteem and other measures of psychological well-being.

### **Adoption Openness: Longitudinal Birth Mother Outcomes**

Principal Investigator:  
Ruth G. McRoy, Ph.D.  
University of Texas at Austin  
Austin, TX

Project Period: 11/1/97 - 10/31/00

Summary: The aim of this project is to investigate the long-term adjustment outcomes for birth mothers participating in four types of adoption options: confidential adoptions, in which no information is shared between birth and adoptive parents after 6 months post-placement; time-limited mediated adoptions in which information exchange is mediated by the adoption agency for a specified period of time; or indefinite sharing, ongoing mediated adoptions; and fully disclosed adoptions, in which direct sharing of information occurs between adoptive and birth family member(s) and is usually accompanied by face-to-face meetings. This research is a longitudinal follow-up of McRoy's study of 169 birth mothers who placed children for adoption four to twelve years earlier. At the time of placement, the birth mothers ranged in age from 14 to 36 years and approximately two-thirds were adolescents.