

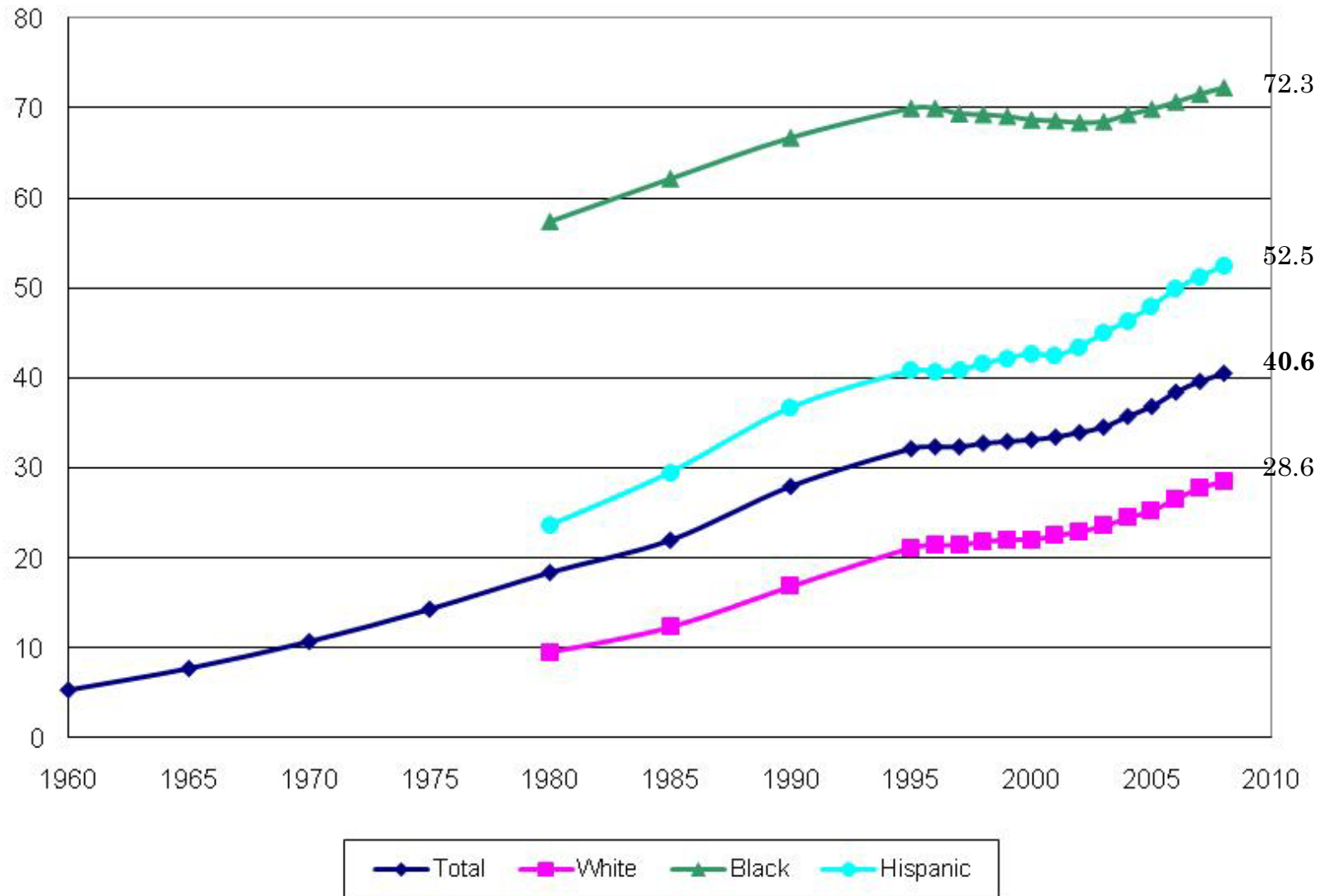
"Fragile Families"

A Special Issue of The Future of Children

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Unmarried Births as a Percent of All U.S. Births

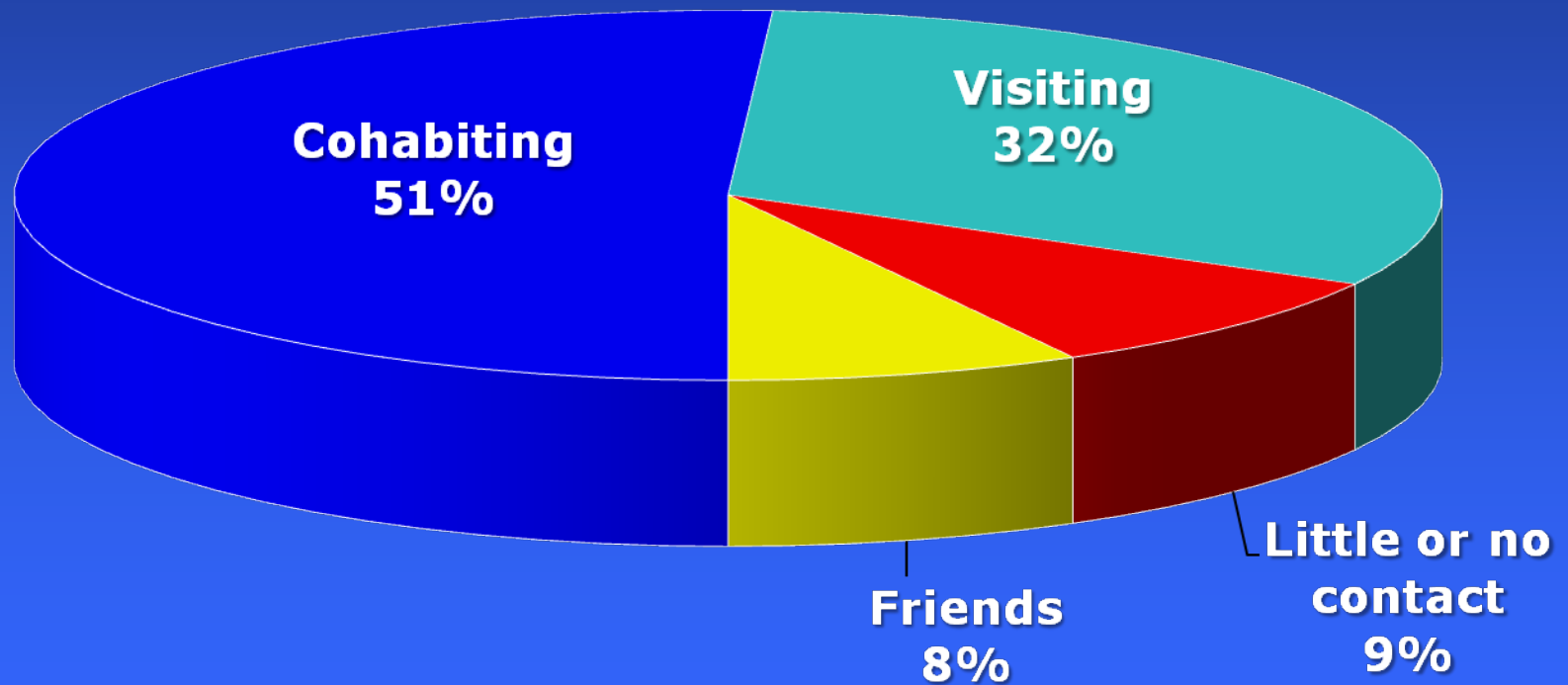




Chapter Summaries

- Parental Relationships – *Mclanahan and Beck*
- Mothers' Economic Conditions and Resources – *Kalil and Ryan*
- Fathers' Capabilities and Contributions – *Lerman*
- Child Wellbeing – *Waldfoegel, Cragie & Brooks-Gunn*
- Race and Ethnicity – *Hummer and Hamilton*
- An Once of Prevention – *Sawhill, Thomas & Monea*
- Incarceration – *Wildeman and Western*
- Unmarried Parents in College – *Goldrick-Rab & Sorensen*
- Marriage and Fatherhood programs – *Cowan, Cowan & Knox*

High Hopes at Birth

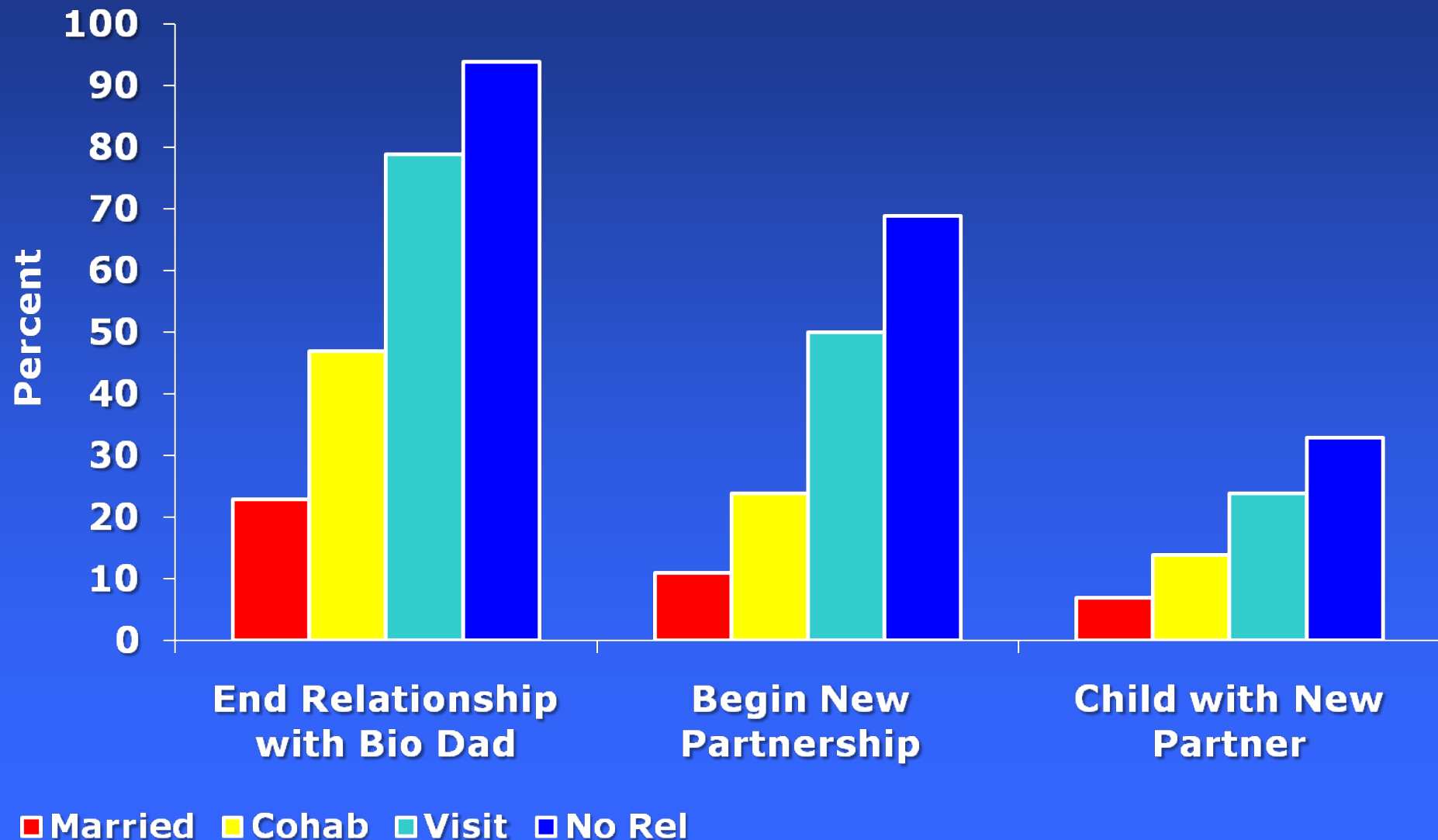




Father Involvement at Birth

	Total (%)
Gave money/bought things for child	80
Helped in another way	76
Visited baby's mother in hospital	88
Child will take father's surname	92
Father's name is on birth certificate	84
Mother says father wants to be involved	95
Mother wants father to be involved	94

High Instability and Growing Complexity by Year 5



Low Capabilities at Birth

	Mothers		Fathers	
	<i>Married</i>	<i>Unmarried</i>	<i>Married</i>	<i>Unmarried</i>
Age (mean)	29.3	23.6	31.8	26.8
Teen parent [*]	7.5	44.2	.04	25.2
Child with other partner [†]	17.7	66.6	27.1	68.2
White	48.9	21.9	50.6	17.8
Black	11.7	39.2	13.8	43.0
Hispanic	28.6	35.5	29.4	35.0
Immigrant	28.7	18.3	25.9	17.9

^{*} Conditional on first birth [†] Conditional on higher order birth

Low Capabilities cont'd

	Mothers		Fathers	
	<i>Married</i>	<i>Unmarried</i>	<i>Married</i>	<i>Unmarried</i>
<i>Education</i>				
Less than high school	17.8	44.9	18.8	41.3
High school or equivalent	25.5	36.7	21.4	37.6
Some college or higher	56.8	18.2	59.8	21.1
<i>Economic Status</i>				
Worked last year	79.3	81.4	95.7	88.4
Poverty status	14.0	42.8	13.2	33.9
Earnings (\$ mean)	25,618.9	11,114.2	38,568.5	18,801.5
<i>Health & Behavior</i>				
Health limitations	7.1	10.1	5.4	12.1
Depression	13.2	15.9	8.1	13.1
Heavy drinking	2.0	7.8	25.1	27.2
Father's past incarceration	8.0	38.5	7.3	36.4



Instability and Father Involvement

	Year 1 (%)	Year 3 (%)	Year 5 (%)
All fathers			
Lives with child	51	42	36
Non-resident fathers			
Saw child in past year	88	78	72
Saw child in past month	63	55	51

Child Wellbeing (at age 5)

Instability and Complexity Affect Children's

- Cognitive ability
 - Lower Vocabulary scores
- Health
 - More Asthma
 - More Obesity
- Mental health
 - More depression and anxiety
 - More aggressive behavior (especially boys)
 - More attention problems

Summing Up

- Children born to unmarried parents begin life with many disadvantages, and these disadvantages pile up over the first five years of their life
- Knowing that such a high fraction of the nation's children are born into fragile families and knowing that these children face many obstacles should cause serious reflection on what we mean by "equality of opportunity"



What can be Done?

- Prevention
 - Reduce early childbearing (44% of mothers)
 - Rethink incarceration policies (50% of fathers)
 - Increase opportunities for community college
- Amelioration
 - Strengthen the safety net
 - Learn from marriage and fatherhood program
 - Three Ts: treat early, treat often and treat together

Thank you