

# **Young Fathers Relationship with the Mother of their Child and its Impact on Parenting**

Data Archive - 'Following Young Fathers'

**BY**

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## **Introduction**

Interest in young fathers is at an all-time high yet research into this group is limited in comparison to young mothers. The roles fathers take are multiply determined (Parke, 1996); the following research focuses on how their relationship with the mother of their child influences young men's fathering, by investigating how this impacts aspects of their parenting in terms of the father-child relationship, responsibilities, and negotiation.

Early entry into parenthood is considered a non-normative event, which leads to stereotypes of uncaring, irresponsible teenage fathers. However, it is crucial to acknowledge variations among early fathers (Parke, 1996), as a non-homogenous group, with different degrees of involvement and differing reasons for their parental situations.

To establish our research, existing literature surrounding young fathers was examined, regarding dynamics which comprise father involvement, such as financial and emotional support. Specific relationships are considered; the fathers relationships with the mothers of their children, and the father-child relationships. Maternal gatekeeping is defined followed by different negotiation strategies which parents employ. Our research objectives are stated, aiming to contribute to this field of study.

Following this is an exploration into the methodology utilised for our project. Secondary data analysis enabled access to rich data investigating an understudied group, young fathers. The process is explained including our purposive sampling and thematic analysis. Issues are identified, relating to time-consuming tasks and confusions which arose. Ethical considerations are also highlighted. Overall, we analysed interview transcripts with four young fathers in relationships with, and four separated from, the mothers of their children. Comparative analyses were employed to investigate if relationship status influenced aspects of parenthood.

Findings were analysed according to themes; we find the fathers two relationships, with the child and with the mother of the child are strongly interlinked. Ultimately, father-child relationships are stronger for young fathers in relationships with the mothers. Consensus is reached regarding the positive nature of being a young parent, allowing

fathers to be active with the child. Finance was the major parental responsibility cited by participants, although, other responsibilities are acknowledged too, such as a fathers presence and 'growing up'. A gender dynamic appears as participants attribute different responsibilities to themselves and the child's mother. Inspection into parental negotiation finds fathers employ implicit approaches within relationships, compared to those separated who utilise explicit decision making. Concerns emerge when a power imbalance is found between the parents, as mothers are cited as having more power and control over decision making regarding the child.

We conclude by stating how co-parental relationships have profound impacts on father-child relationships and how fathers fulfil their responsibilities. Advantages of being a young father are noted in an attempt to lessen the harsh stigmatisation of young parenthood. Overall, policy suggestions revolve around giving fathers more power to provide a balanced co-parental relationship and a consistent, positive environment for children.

### **Literature Review**

With one of the highest rates of teenage pregnancy in Europe, young parenthood has long been a concern in UK social policy, yet much of this support tends to neglect young fathers (Neale and Lau-Clayton, 2014). While policy makers state that children fare better when raised in intact families, this contentious view of parenting neglects the possibilities for negotiating parental roles in other ways. Therefore, it is important to assess the evidence relating to how different couples adapt to their situations and their abilities to parent in their preferred way within varied relationships. Literature relating to the impact of parental relationships on father involvement, perceptions regarding paternal roles and responsibilities, along with the impact of parental negotiation within their relationship, will be considered.

Father involvement and its importance to child development, both financially and emotionally, have been widely considered since the 1970s (Jaffe et al., 2001). Current literature explores aspects such as providing emotional support, teaching, protection and assuming responsibility as vital aspects of father involvement (Lemay et al., 2010; Gavin et al., 2002). However, it has been determined that young fathers themselves consider financial and material provision the most important dimension (Neale and Lau-Clayton, 2011), aligning with traditional 'breadwinner' roles. Distinguished roles between mothers and fathers are also widely discussed; Berger and Langton (2011) found that young fathers are regularly responsible for leisure activities whereas mothers take on caring tasks. This illustrates gendered differences in perceptions regarding parental roles and how these structure parent-child relationships.

Gavin et al. (2002) highlight further parental distinction through recognising that fathers generally view their relationship with their child as distinct from their relationship with the child's mother, while mothers view them as interconnected (Beers and Hollow, 2009). With the mother unable to separate the two relationships, her likelihood of creating additional barriers for the father may increase, relating to maternal gatekeeping in which mothers often determine father's access to their children. It was also evidenced that mother's remained central in childcare processes; while young fathers were found to want

inclusion in pregnancy and upbringing, but felt stigmatized by health practitioners and teachers (Duncan et al., 2010; Neale and Lau-Clayton, 2011).

As previously acknowledged, literature refers to mother's acting as a gatekeeper, demonstrating how their willingness to facilitate involvement can profoundly impact how effectively the father is able to contribute to child-rearing (Carlson et al., 2008). This is particularly relevant for parents who live apart, as the mother typically retains custody of children, making a fathers' ability to access them largely dependent on maternal approval (Carlson et al., 2008). Berger and Langton (2011) express the limitations of gatekeeping, not only for reinforcing negativity between parents but, significantly, impacting the relationship between the father and his child. In relation to this study, the literature expresses the importance of parents' relationship in determining subsequent father involvement. While romantic relationships are considered to have the most constructive outcomes, maternal perceptions of the father are also seen to be more favourable if the father provides ongoing financial support (Beers and Hollow, 2009).

Research also highlights that the relationship young fathers have with the child's mother strongly predicts how actively involved they will be in the child's upbringing (Carlson et al., 2008), impacting their ability to fulfil desired parental roles. Gavin et al's (2002) research examining paternal involvement amongst young fathers, ultimately finds involvement to be strongly predicted by the quality of the parents' romantic relationship. While Beers and Hollow (2009) agree a romantic relationship often increases paternal involvement, their quality of association outside this also predicts paternal contribution. The ability to co-parent positively is determined to be inherent to father involvement, regardless of romantic association (Carlson et al., 2008).

In light of this, parental negotiation is also found to determine the extent to which young fathers' are involved with their children, as the relationship with the child's mother will affect how access and parental roles are established (Finch and Mason, 1993). The concept of negotiation resonates within the following research regarding how those in romantic relationships and those separated may enact either explicit, open discussions or implicit negotiations where commitments gradually develop over time, almost unnoticed (Finch and Mason, 1993).

Negotiation is crucial as it leads to effective co-parenting. Parent's ability to work together positively impacts how connected a non-resident father remains with his children, regardless of romantic involvement with the child's mother. In contrast, ineffective cooperation regularly leads to discouragement of father involvement from the child's mother (Carlson et al., 2008). This illustrates that although individuals have a certain amount of agency; negotiation can often be tightly constrained or controlled (Finch and Mason, 1993). As well as this, power imbalances are still evident in families and relationships even though responsibilities are negotiated.

### **Research Aims and Objectives**

Through consideration of existing research, it has been noted that exploration of the relationship between young fathers and the mother of their child is limited, particularly regarding how this effects the involvement and relationship between young fathers and their children. It is hoped the following research will help uncover varying perceptions of fatherhood identity, paternal involvement, and father-child relationships, through considering the boundaries and limitations that a positive or complicated relationship can propose for parenting. Therefore, our research will comparatively analyse different dynamics of young fathers' parental life between fathers who are in relationships with, or separated from, the mothers of their children. To explore these aspects, the following questions will be considered:

- How do young fathers perceive their responsibilities as a parent?
- Does the relationship with the mother of the child impact how effectively young fathers carry out their perceived responsibilities?
- How do young fathers negotiate their relationship with the child's mother?



## **Methodology**

The rationale behind using the *Following Young Fathers* dataset came from recognising that research into young fathers is underrepresented compared with young motherhood. Irwin and Winterton (2011), highlight that secondary analysis provides further consideration of data on hard to reach populations. This was particularly the case for our sample population. This makes this research incredibly exciting, as it enabled us to work with rich data which would previously have been unattainable for undergraduates.

Our project employed secondary data analysis, researching data collected by others, rather than being involved in the original data collection processes (Bryman, 2016). Our absence during the research process suggested possible decreases in the validity and understanding of our data, due to our inability to be part of original participant interaction. While some regard primary interaction as crucial in qualitative analysis (Gillies and Edwards, 2005), Hammersley (2010) dismisses this, arguing that qualitative data can be used and re-used because of the socially constructed nature of social analysis, making our subjective analysis just as valid as original researchers.

Equally, when approaching the analysis of secondary data, familiarisation was necessary (Hofferth, 2005) which proved to be time-consuming (Bryman, 2004), due to having to detect relevant data from a significant volume of transcriptions. However, the efficiency of conducting the research was increased by the fact that accepting terms and conditions of use allowed straightforward access to online archives, available to download for no cost (Bryman, 2004).

To begin the research process, transcript outlines were read to form a basis for an overall research title and objectives. Due to the use of secondary analysis, we had to consider the threat of a mismatch between research questions and the data-set, resulting in what Hofferth (2005) calls data mining, where the data determines the study, rather than prior objectives. After initially considering the data it was clear that the extensive transcripts needed to be refined and reduced, which was completed by applying a stratified purposive sampling method (Onwuegbuzie and Collins, 2007; Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). We required a sample with an even amount of participants who were in relationships with, and separated

from, the mothers of their children. Through this sampling technique, we were able to consider the effects the relationship between the parents had on paternal involvement with their child, within the sample population of young fathers (Onwuegbuzie and Collins, 2007). We each downloaded five participants' transcripts from the *Timescapes* archive, resulting in twenty transcripts overall. These contained coverage of relevant topics within the interviews such as relations with the mother of the child and fatherhood roles. Each participant's entire transcript was read thoroughly to select those most appropriate for our analysis. Extensive topic areas were identified and discussed by the participants in considerable detail. While time was consistently an overarching factor, we felt significant pressure for this not to affect our sample size and quality of analysis (Bryman, 2008).

Once this task was complete, we selected four participants who were in relationships with the mother of their child, and four who were separated, forming our subgroups and allowing for comparisons (Onwuegbuzie and Collins, 2007: see Appendix 1). Determining an appropriate sample size was vital to ensure a sufficient amount of data for in-depth analysis, while not being too large as to prevent the thorough level of scrutiny required. Ritchie and Lewis (2003: 83) suggest using large numbers of participants in qualitative analysis doesn't further the findings of the research, with phenomena arising only once within data contributing to research findings and analysis.

We conducted our analysis of the participants using a thematic framework (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003), initially using a simple coding frame as evidenced in Appendix 2. These themes were devised from the literature review and structured the 'parent' codes. Differing understandings of the meanings of themes within our group caused initial confusion, possibly leading to difficulties in internal reliability (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003) as we acknowledged that concepts of families and identities can change overtime (Gillies and Edwards, 2005). However, consensus was reached allowing progression with coherent coding. Once the transcripts had been coded, appropriate statements which referenced the relevant themes were congregated into four word documents (see Appendix 3), providing the ability for more succinct analysis of data in relation to each theme.

It must be noted that with secondary analysis, we had to consider the ethical dimensions of the research. Secondary analysis is often undertaken assuming that ethical issues were overcome during the primary research process (Morrow et al., 2014), but

important ethical considerations were recognised during this research. It is acknowledged that other than what Irwin (2013) terms as 'generic statements', there is little to no consent gained about the uses of participants provided data in the future. Therefore, in accordance with Morrow et al. (2014), this research was conducted with significant consideration given to the context and situation of participants, hoping to prevent issues concerning misinterpretation or misrepresentation of the data they provided. Furthermore, to ensure no ethical disputes we were also careful not to make assumptions regarding the content or details of what we were analysing, instead interpreting the meanings behind data with as much prior knowledge as possible (Morrow et al., 2014).

### Analysis

Through comparative analysis of young fathers together with, or separated from, the mothers of their children, it was firstly considered how this impacted their relationship with their child. We found a clear disparity between the relationships the young fathers had with their children, dependent on if they were still with the mother of the child or not. All fathers in relationships with the child's mother spoke optimistically when considering their relationships with their child "we've got a really good...trusting relationship" (Zane). However those who were separated from the mother of the child generally saw their children for more limited periods, and the result was a weaker connection with them, "say if I see him today I don't think he's recognise me" (Jed). Despite this, many expressed remorse at the situation, "I have a better bond with my nephews...that shouldn't be the case" (Trevor). Therefore, it appears the father-child relationship, is strongly interlinked with the relationship they have with the child's mother. Jed highlights these difficulties further by stating, "now my ex partner has stopped me from seeing him...so... I am missing out in a bit of his life" (Jed); this supports previous research by Carlson et al. (2008), where mothers act as gatekeepers deeply impacting fathers contribution to child-rearing.

Expanding on the relationship with the child, it was clear the majority of participants acknowledged the positives of being a young father and the role it played in their relationship with their child, in terms of "being a hands on parent because you're so young" (Zane). This abides by others discussions regarding age, "a younger father can do more...I'm always running around with @@son## and playing football" (Darren); therefore challenging the stigmatisation that young parents are often faced with, which Duncan et al. (2010) found. This work found young parents often identified being subjected to negative experiences and critique on their parenting by others, such as health practitioners and teachers. However, such stereotyping doesn't accurately reflect these young fathers parenting abilities, as our research found generally positive father-child relationships, and where such relationships were less positive, participants expressed sorrow and were often attempting to strengthen their relationship.

Drawing on this, an overarching variable of comparison influencing father-child relationships, the relationship with the mother of the child, was further examined. The general state of this relationship was found to greatly impact the quality and extent of desired paternal involvement, and it was also noted to be of great importance to young fathers, regardless of any romantic association. While maintaining at least a basic level of association with the mothers was not deemed a necessity by most young fathers, all accepted this was preferable to maintain a more comfortable and stable relationship with their child. Even in situations where conflict and hostility characterised a mother-father relationship, participants recognised if there was a possibility of having strong and supportive association, this would be the preferred situation to parent in their desired way; “you don’t have to be friends, but it would be nice to be friends” (Jed) . This supports that stated above and also coincides with Carlson et al’s (2008) recognition that the quality of this relationship will predict how actively a father is involved in their child’s upbringing.

There was general unity among young fathers, regardless of their relationship status, that having a child improved the relationship they had with their child’s mother, creating the “common goal” (Zane) of effective parenting. For those who remained romantically involved, the relationship was noted to have become stronger and even for those who had separated, the introduction of a child was said to reduce arguing. Jax concludes a general recognition throughout the participants that “if you’ve got a good relationship with the mother of your child, you’ll have a better relationship with your child”. Whether or not the relationship manifested romantically, this positively impacted on young fathers’ ability to maintain at least a satisfactory relationship with their child, while also improving the quality of communication and consensus regarding issues of parenting. This aligns with Beers and Hollow’s (2009) findings that any positive association, whether romantic or otherwise, between parents can be predictive of increased paternal involvement.

For those who were separated from the child’s mother and had not maintained a positive relationship, they recognised that this added to the challenges of young fatherhood. In all cases, it was accepted that in this situation, the mother had taken the primary role in caring for the child and had become responsible for organisation of paternal access, often leaving young fathers frustrated with a perceived lack of power and ability to negotiate with the mother in these circumstances, which will be further explored later on.

This links to previous research in which mothers are recognised to take 'gatekeeping' roles within separated parents, with their willingness to facilitate fathers' involvement influencing the extent of father contribution to parenting (Carlson et al., 2008).

Moving away from the specifics of relationship dynamics, we now consider how, and what, young fathers perceive as their fatherhood responsibilities. A common responsibility which the participants cited as their fathering role related to finance, supporting Neale and Lau-Clayton (2011). However, frequently the young fathers were unable to provide for their child because of unemployment and education boundaries. In most cases, they were receiving financial help from the state, which regularly caused feelings of disappointment, as they were not succeeding in their perceived fatherhood role as a provider (Teti and Lamb, 1986). Another aspect causing frustration was the idea of relying on the child's mother for financial support, as it again goes against their perceived role; this opinion was expressed by both Jax and Senwe. Zane summarised this perception, explaining that he perceives financial provision to create pressure on the fatherhood identity. He believes fathers have to "prove themselves" and that society in general rejects men who cannot independently provide for their child (Beers and Hollow, 2009; Teti and Lamb, 1986). This was determined as a significant primary concern for young fathers who have remained with the mother of their child, as they appeared to negotiate their identity within the relationship.

Although finance is mentioned frequently, it doesn't exclusively comprise the fathering role for participants, with aspects such as love and being there for the child also thought of as important (Pederson, 2012). Andrew expresses his mother's admiration of him for him for "sticking around" for his child, a view widely expressed by fathers in relationships with the mother of their child, appearing to provide them with a sense of pride in their responsibilities. However, in many cases where the young fathers are separated from the child's mother, they fail to provide this desired support; exemplified by participants Jed and Trevor, who have no contact with their children. When participants reflect on what they do and would like to do with their child, more often than not, leisure activities were the main focus. Although mentioning they bathed, fed, and changed the nappies of their children, these tasks were predominantly viewed as a mothers' responsibility. This supports Berger et al. (2011), as all participants express a desire to bond with the child through days out and playing activities. Zane expresses a need to have the

same interests as your child, or show an interest in their hobbies, believing this differentiates a “responsible father” and a “good father”, abiding by Pederson’s (2012) findings. This aspect was mentioned briefly by all the other participants as the most enjoyable part of fatherhood.

The gendered dynamic of the responsibilities were also mentioned. Although most participants expressed there being no difference in the roles mothers and fathers should adopt, paradoxically, Jax and Trevor express fundamental dissimilarities. Jax professed to doing the “man stuff” such as “fixing things” while his partner took care of the “woman’s stuff”, such as caring for the child. Though this view wasn’t outwardly expressed by other participants, it was however insinuated. Dominic partially disagrees with this aspect, stating traditional male and female roles should only be followed if it is financially viable, supporting Pederson (2012), who found views of being a good father were often in relation to what the mother could and couldn’t do, vital when considering separated parents. Dominic’s example is if the mother has a “better” job than the father, the father should then do more caring tasks, such as night feeds, and vice versa, demonstrating relationship negotiation as discussed later. Dominic continues to assert his lack of desire to be a “masculine type dad”, which he perceives as “regimented” and unemotional. This view was often expressed by participants in relationships with the mother of their child.

Occasionally behavioural responsibilities of the father were mentioned. Many young fathers expressed their need to ‘grow up’ and behave when their child arrived, often distancing themselves from troublesome friends, however Stouthamer-Leober and Wei (1998) found young fathers were twice as likely to be delinquent than non fathers and that delinquency did not decrease after becoming a father. Jax, Dominic, Trevor and Jed all mention discipline as a main aspect of childcare, believing their transformation from antisocial behaviour to responsible fathers would help them teach their children right from wrong. The idea of being role models for their children was vital; Trevor, in particular, believed this to be exclusively a fathering role as he perceived fathers as having “rough exterior”, constituting the “backbone” of the parental partnership, despite being separated from the mother of his child.

Relationships with the mother of the child, and the fulfilment of fathering responsibilities, highlighted a further dynamic of young parents’ relationships in negotiation.

The transcript analysis compared how young fathers together with, and separated from, the mothers of their children negotiated different aspects of their parenting relationships. It became readily apparent that young fathers could be distinguished by the two forms of negotiation cited previously, by Finch and Mason (1993) in the literature review; explicit and implicit. Perhaps unsurprisingly, those fathers who were in relationships with the mothers of their children largely employed implicit styles of negotiation, when talking about their different parental roles. Jax states "I don't think they got assigned...@@mother of the child## just looks after @@daughter## and I just do everything else", therefore suggesting there was no direct, candid discussion about who would do what for the child, but that roles were taken instinctively. Opposing this type of commonplace agreements are explicit strategies which were found to be evident among young fathers who had separated from their child's mother. It may seem clear that such negotiation would be further utilised by separated couples, for instance in arranging contact times with the child, "I...take him one week, you the other" (Dominic). Often the negotiation was necessary and required prior planning to ensure both parties were clear on the arrangements.

Negotiation appeared to be more problematic for young fathers who had separated from the mothers of their children, which could be attributed to the fact that their situations simply required more planning than parents who were living together. For example, one participant discussed an entire lack of negotiation, which led to him not seeing his child for sustained periods of time; he describes how the mother and the child moved areas, without letting him know, "she's moved out of @@City1##...so it's...hard for me to get in contact" (Jed). Therefore, all such analysis appears to support the stated literature, heightening the importance that a young father's relationship with the mother of his child will have on the negotiating abilities in terms of seeing, and caring for, their child (Finch and Mason, 1993).

Investigating further into the dynamics of parental negotiations, power imbalances were palpable. The majority of young fathers, regardless of their relationship status, stated that the mothers of their children often had "all the powers" (Dominic) in terms of the children, which supports Duncan et al. (2010) who state fathers having only minimal negotiation and slight input in decision making. Often participants explained, "@@mother of the child## does have more say" (Jax), therefore suggesting that although negotiations were apparent



in most arrangements, mothers primarily have the potential to lead or direct such negotiation, regardless of their relationship status. This finding abides by Parke (1996) who emphasises mothers' ambivalence about giving up their sense of control in terms of care-giving, as well as Ryan (2000), who states that mothers remain responsible for organising any increases in the caring role of fathers. This therefore suggests, in co-parental relationships and negotiation, mothers capture the largest degrees of influence and power.

### Conclusion

The relationship between young fathers and the mothers of their children was found to have profound impact on the relationship the father was subsequently able to navigate with his child. This emanated especially regarding the possibility of carrying out their perceived responsibilities, in the way they professed to want to. Considering this, our study concludes that the relationship between fathers and mothers does impact a fathers' ability to parent in his preferred style, highlighting the significant interaction and dependency between paternal parenting and mother-father association.

The importance of parenting relationships was highlighted throughout this research. For those who had remained together, it was found there was a higher rate of negotiation regarding allocating parenting roles and establishing the most effective methods to do this. However, this was also evident for those who had not remained together, but had retained an amicable relationship, highlighting that relationship status is not the sole contributor to allowing young father's to parent effectively. Young fathers who had separated from the mothers of their children, and had failed to maintain a positive relationship, were seen to have less of a voice in parenting, often having limited to no involvement with their children. In light of these findings, the preceding research can be considered to have made significant headway in achieving objectives related to determining the extent to which a stable relationship between parents can improve the extent of father involvement.

It's important to acknowledge the successes of young fathers. This research illustrates that participants used their age to their advantage. It enabled them to be hands on and support their children throughout their childhood. An immense advantage of this research is that it has allowed us to see relationships with the fathers and their children flourish, even when negotiating their other associations. Ultimately, young fathers shouldn't have to endure the stigma they are often met with as previous literature and our research has demonstrated.

This study reveals the importance of further research into young father involvement with their children. In an age where fathers are deemed to be more influential than ever regarding parenting, the mother is still explicitly analysed enforcing ideology of them being

the primary caregiver and most central parent in determining paternal responsibility. It is clear from the results of this research that the majority of young father's operate under the assumption that their primary obligation is to provide financially for their children, aligning with the traditional fatherhood identity. No significant differences were detected between the young father's in this study and those in previous research with regards to perceptions of parental responsibilities. Reasons behind this consider that for many, navigating how to become more involved in their children's lives is largely undertaken without the recognition owed to mothers. It is clear that policy makers would benefit from recognising the lack of support given to fathers having difficulties seeking more consistent involvement with their child, and how preference is generally given to the child's mother in these situations. At a more general level, the findings within the research may highlight the significant desire among young father's to be able to parent more effectively, and do so while being recognised as an equally important counterpart in the upbringing of the child.

*Timescapes* is a ground-breaking way of researching niche and often hard to reach demographics. But, by highlighting some of the limitations of this study, it is recognised that this provides space for ongoing research. In hoping to provide more knowledge of the positions of young father's within their parenting relationships, it is necessary to draw from this research the recognition that studying young fatherhood requires consideration of how alternative external contributors may also limit or facilitate parental involvement, for example by looking at their relationships with their own parents, or their lifestyle choices. These are valuable realms to explore in relation to the determinants of young father involvement.

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**Appendix 1**

Table showing the participant profiles of those used for the final analysis.

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Waves</b>	<b>Relationship Status</b>	<b>Contact with the Child</b>	<b>Employed</b>	<b>Living with Mother of the Child</b>
Jax	1,2	Together	YES	NO	YES
Senwe	1,4,5	Separated	YES	YES	NO
Dominic	1,2,3,4,5	Separated	YES	YES	NO
Andrew	1, 2, 3, 4	Together	YES	NO	NO
Jed	1, 2	Separated	NO	NO	NO
Darren	1,2,3,4,5	Together	YES	NO	YES
Zane	1,2	Together	YES	YES	YES
Trevor	1,2	Separated	NO	NO	NO

**Appendix 2**

## Coding Frame

<b>THEME</b>	<b>SUBGROUPS</b>
Negotiation	Contact with child
	Arrangements and decision making
	Living arrangements
Relationship with the mother of the child	Emotional attachment
	Communication
	Support
Relationship with child	Emotional attachment
	Contact with child
Responsibilities	Fatherhood roles
	Motherhood roles
	Desired activities
	Finance



### Appendix 3

Coded transcripts

KEY: I = Interviewer

S = Participant (Jax)

#### **Jax – In a relationship with mother of his child.**

**I: Yeah. So you said some people might think parenting's hard. So what, what do you think about parenting that could be seen as hard then?**

S: But, but I don't know. I think, I think it's cause me and @@Girlfriend## are both there and it's not like, it's not like neither of us don't do anything. We both, we both, we both do it. So obviously I think that's why I think it can be easy really because, just cause we're both there and we're both to do it. But I think doing it by yourself, I can imagine how that, that would be proper hard yeah.

**I: I mean what do you think a good father does then? Like what would a good father have to do?**

S: I don't know. Just obviously just be there. But obviously it's some, some, some dads can't be. I mean cause originally I got sentenced to eighteen month. And I've obviously, as soon as I got that I thought, you know what I mean, 'I'm going to miss my daughter's birth'. But then, but then like I got, I got it knocked down to seven. So I thought, you know what I mean, I were proper lucky there. And...but yeah I mean just to be a good dad, all you need to be, I don't even know. Just be there for your kid. And it's like how would you be a good mum? Just look after your baby. And I mean love it. Give it, give it attention. Give it whatever it wants. Play, go, go to park and that. Cause obviously it's not just, it's not just feeding a baby. It's looking after it. Obviously it needs love and that don't you.

**I: Yeah.**

S: Take it out in places, stuff like that. Well that's my, that's my idea of being a good dad anyway.

**I: What sort of relationship would you like with @@Daughter##?**

S: With @@Daughter##. Just, just one, just one, just where she could like just, where she could like tell me anything. Just like if she had a problem she could come and tell me. Cause I wouldn't want her to like, if she got pregnant at a young age, I wouldn't want her to, don't get me wrong. But there's nothing I could say about it. And...but...I just want her to be able to tell me stuff and that. And just, I don't know, just to have a proper relationship with her. Just for her to be my daughter and not just someone who lives in the house with me. So, I don't know, I mean I hope she thinks she could tell me anything. But you just, you just don't know. She gets older, she might...you don't know what she's going to end up like do you.

**I: Has the, like from being parents, can that put a strain on the relationship in any way?**

S: I thought it would me. I, I thought it would. I were convinced that were going to split up and that. But I think it's made us better in a way. In a lot of ways I think it's made us a lot stronger relationship. Cause before our relationship were, just plain and simply were partying and sex. That were our relationship.

**I: Yeah.**

S: And like now obviously I love her. So it's not, it's not just about that now. Instead of just having sex we, we'd cuddle up on the sofa and watch a film.

**I: Yeah.**

S: So it's, it's, I don't know, yeah I think it's made our relationship a lot stronger than it were