A young man with a shaved head, wearing a blue t-shirt, is shown in profile from the chest up, hugging a young girl from behind. The girl has dark hair and is wearing a light blue dress. They are standing outdoors, with a wooden railing in front of them and a background of dense green foliage. The lighting is soft and natural.

Young Fathers

Video and Workshop Guide

Handbook

By Chelsea Farley and Pam Wilson

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Ventures

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Public/Private Ventures is a national nonprofit organization that seeks to improve the effectiveness of social policies and programs. P/PV designs, tests and studies initiatives that increase supports, skills and opportunities of residents of low-income communities; works with policymakers to see that the lessons and evidence produced are reflected in policy; and provides training, technical assistance and learning opportunities to practitioners based on documented effective practices.

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Developers, Writers and Funders

We are grateful to all those who contributed to the publication of the *Young Fathers Video and Workshop Guide*.

Pam Wilson authored the discussion guides and lesson plans, crafted the activities and provided critical counsel on the structure of the CD-Rom.

David Mehlman and Justin Schein directed and produced the accompanying film, which so ably depicts the struggles and triumphs of young low-income fathers. Daniel Polin served as executive producer. The video was produced by Great Services Film Company, Inc., in association with Shadowbox Films, Inc.

Various P/PV staff contributed to the project. Chelsea Farley coauthored the handbook and directed the design, programming and production process with Malish & Pagonis and ImageMachine. Carol Clymer provided suggestions on content and field-testing of the guide, Shayne Spaulding gave feedback on early drafts and Dee Wallace coordinated field-testing and provided overall project management. Mark Elliott conceived of the idea for the film and workshop guide and, in addition to producing the film, provided strong advice on the development of the DVD.

The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation made this work possible through its support of the Fathers at Work Initiative. In particular, Loren Harris and Neal Hegarty provided encouragement and assistance throughout the project.

The Fathers at Work programs in the film, particularly staff members Gil Rodriguez and Tani Mills at the Center for Employment Opportunities and Anthony Flores at Vocational Foundation, Inc., opened their doors to the filmmakers and made it possible for us to meet their participants.

Most important, to the young fathers in the film, we extend our deepest appreciation for their willingness to share their lives with us.

Other Acknowledgments

The practitioners listed below field-tested the guide; these individuals, together with colleagues from their organizations and participants in their programs, provided essential input.

Anthony Cummings
*Total Action Against
Poverty
Roanoke, Virginia*

Gail Thompson
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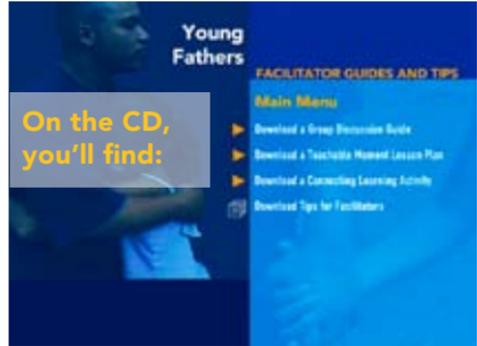
Working Ventures seeks to improve the performance of the workforce development field by providing practitioners and policymakers with the knowledge and tools needed to operate effective employment programs. We support the field by documenting effective employment strategies and practices, convening practitioner workshops and providing resources to encourage program innovation.

GETTING STARTED

This handbook is designed to help you navigate your *Young Fathers Video and Workshop Guide*.



- ▶ Tips for getting started with the DVD.
- ▶ The *Young Fathers* documentary (28 minutes) and 7 Teachable Moment clips from the film (1 to 7 minutes each).
- ▶ Information about the Fathers at Work initiative and the *Young Fathers* film.



- ▶ 7 Group Discussion Guides for use with different audiences.
- ▶ 7 Teachable Moment Lesson Plans to use with clips from the film.
- ▶ 9 Connecting Learning Activities with accompanying facilitator resources (handouts, etc.)
- ▶ A list of general tips for group facilitators.

About the Guide

The *Young Fathers Video and Workshop Guide* was created for programs that serve young parents or teens who are not yet parents; it can be used with program participants or program staff. The DVD features the *Young Fathers* documentary and seven short Teachable Moment clips from the film, highlighting key issues, such as the challenges of early parenthood, the role of fathers in their children's lives, the need to build solid co-parenting relationships, and attitudes about child support and marriage. The CD features downloadable discussion guides, lesson plans and activities that can be used with a range of different audiences and settings.

Equipment

To use your *Young Fathers Video and Workshop Guide*, you will need:

- A computer with a CD-ROM drive and Adobe Acrobat software (to download materials).
- A standard DVD player and TV, OR you can view the DVD on your computer (PC or Mac). To view it on your computer, you will need video and sound cards, a monitor, 128 MB of system RAM or greater and DVD software, such as VLC Media Player or Apple DVD Player.
- A printer (to print out lesson plans, discussion guides, etc.).

About Fathers at Work



Fathers at Work was a national demonstration designed to help young low-income noncustodial fathers increase their earnings from employment, become more involved in their children's lives and provide more substantial child support. Funded by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, Fathers at Work was launched in 2001 in five cities around the country, where community-based organizations provided employment preparation and training, job placement and retention services, case management, support groups and child support services (provided through formal partnerships with local child support enforcement agencies). For more information about the initiative, please visit www.ppv.org.

Before You Use the DVD...

- 1) Before showing the *Young Fathers* video to a group, make sure you preview it. Watch it all the way through at least once.
- 2) Assess your own reactions. What do you think of the main characters? Do they defy or reinforce stereotypes about noncustodial fathers? How do they compare with young people in your program or classroom? Does the film bring about strong emotions? If so, what are they?
- 3) Come back to this handbook, and read through it. Decide how you want to use the video with your group. When ready, download and print the appropriate materials from your *Young Fathers* CD—this may be a Group Discussion Guide, a Teachable Moment Lesson Plan or a Connecting Learning Activity. Make sure you carefully review the materials ahead of time. Solid preparation will help your class or workshop go smoothly.

How to Use the *Young Fathers* Video and Workshop Guide

There are a number of ways you can use the guide:

- Show the video and facilitate a lively discussion using one of the targeted Group Discussion Guides;
- Show a Teachable Moment clip and use a Teachable Moment Lesson Plan to construct a dynamic, interactive session;
- Show the video and follow up with one of our Connecting Learning Activities; or
- Combine the materials to create a larger workshop series.

One-Time Group Discussions

Watch the entire video with your group, and use one of the Group Discussion Guides to facilitate an exploration of the issues presented. The General Discussion Guide can be used with any program audience. The other six guides have been tailored for specific groups. *For more information, see page 9.*

Teachable Moments from the Video

Focus on a particular issue by using a *Young Fathers* Teachable Moment. This approach allows you to select from a list of brief excerpts, each with a lesson plan designed to help explore a key issue with your group:

- What Is a Father?
- Understanding Child Support
- Anthony's Story
- What About Marriage?
- Parenting as a Team
- Programs for Young Fathers
- Baby-Mama Drama

For more information, see page 10.

Connecting Learning Activities

After showing the video or a video clip, extend your group's learning with one of these thought-provoking classroom exercises. Detailed instructions and materials are provided for each Connecting Learning Activity.

- The Myth-Information Game
- Decision-Making: The Card Game
- Ground Rules for Co-Parenting
- Talking about Prevention
- Making Commitments
- Values Voting
- Who's Responsible for This Pregnancy?
- Working Together as Co-Parents: The IALAC Story
- Considering Marriage

For more information, see page 11.

Building a Workshop Series

You can launch a larger workshop series by mixing and matching different elements from the *Young Fathers Video and Workshop Guide*. Start with an initial viewing and discussion of the video; then follow up with Teachable Moments and/or Connecting Learning Activities. *For more information, see page 14.*

Whatever approach you decide to use with your group, there are basic facilitation strategies that can help you lead a productive discussion. The Tips for Facilitators section on page 5 presents some of these strategies (this list also appears on the *Young Fathers* CD).

About the Young Fathers Film

In 2003, P/PV produced a documentary about the Fathers at Work initiative, in association with Great Projects Film Company, Inc., and Shadowbox Films, Inc. The award-winning short film focuses on two young fathers, Dupree and Anthony, providing an intimate portrait of their daily struggles, especially in their relationships with their children. Anthony's and Dupree's experiences highlight the needs and circumstances of many low-income fathers, including those who have been involved with the criminal justice system—an experience shared by three quarters of the participants in the Fathers at Work demonstration.

Viewers of the *Young Fathers* video learn about the challenges these men face as they try to be responsible fathers; they observe the men's experiences with the Fathers at Work program; and they have the opportunity to reflect on various issues that concern young parents, including employment, child support and co-parenting.

Young Fathers: Who Are They?

Myths and stereotypes about young fathers, especially those from low-income urban areas, are common. Often they are derided as “deadbeat dads”—men who can support their children but refuse to do so. Some people assume that these men enjoy making babies but care little about spending time with their children or helping to raise them. But what do we really know about these men?

It’s true that nearly 11 million American fathers do not live with their children, and two thirds of them do not pay formal child support.¹ But there is much diversity within this group. Some fathers are poor themselves, which limits their ability to provide financial support for their children. Of the 2.5 million low-income fathers who did not pay child support in 1997:²

- A full 30 percent were incarcerated;
- More than 40 percent had less than a high school education; and
- Just 7 percent had any education beyond high school.

Not surprisingly, employment rates and earnings for these men were low:

- Only 43 percent had worked during the previous 12 months; and
- Their average annual earnings were just over \$5,600.³

In keeping with these statistics, P/PV found that participants in Fathers at Work faced significant barriers to getting the kinds of jobs that could help them provide for their families.⁴ Upon entering the program:

- Fewer than half possessed a high school diploma or GED;
- For 30 percent, six months was the longest they had ever held a full-time job, and 14 percent had never worked full time;
- One third had been homeless;
- Two thirds had been incarcerated; and
- Three quarters had been convicted of a crime.

Despite these difficulties, Fathers at Work participants expressed deep concern for their children’s well-being. When they enrolled in the program, 77 percent said they wanted to spend more time with their children.

A significant percentage of low-income young fathers grew up in single-parent households—leaving them without a real-life script for being a responsible dad. Programs that help these men find jobs, model caring adult relationships and provide hands-on opportunities to learn parenting skills may start breaking the cycle many low-income families experience.

As with any group, it is impossible to generalize about all young low-income noncustodial fathers. Many such fathers defy stereotypes—they love their children and want to be more involved in their lives. Given a livable wage, these fathers could also do much more to support their families. Programs like Fathers at Work may be crucial in helping young fathers realize their potential as responsible parents and members of the community.

1 Sorensen and Zibman, *Poor Dads Who Do Not Pay Child Support: Deadbeats or Disadvantaged?*

Series B, No B-30, The Urban Institute, April 2001.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid. Employment rates and earnings are only for men who were not institutionalized.

4 Data cited are from the sample of 785 participants who were enrolled by October 2004.

TIPS FOR FACILITATORS

Whether you are using the video as a one-time, stand-alone teaching tool or as part of a larger workshop series, the role of the facilitator is extremely important. The facilitator guides the conversation, helps everyone have an opportunity to participate and ensures that the discussion is focused and productive. The Group Discussion Guides, Teachable Moment Lesson Plans and Connecting Learning Activities on your CD contain detailed instructions for facilitators. Before you get started with any classroom activity, please consider the following tips, which should be useful in all settings:

Be prepared. Review the Group Discussion Guide, Teachable Moment Lesson Plan or Connecting Learning Activity guidelines before the session. Make sure you have the necessary materials (including relevant print-outs from the CD) and an appropriate space. It is always good to make sure the TV and DVD player are working before the session begins.

Keep the needs of your group in mind. When using the Group Discussion Guides, select the questions you believe are most appropriate for the needs and interests of your group. In most cases we have included too many questions to ask in one session. Consider your audience and your specific objectives, and then, depending on the size of your group and the time available, choose 8 to 12 questions to guide your discussion. If appropriate, rephrase some of the questions. When using the Connecting Learning Activities, feel free to adapt them so the activities become “yours” and are specifically relevant to your group. Sometimes we offer specific ideas for adaptations.

Create a safe and comfortable learning environment.

The video can lead to discussions of sensitive and controversial issues, such as sexuality, early parenthood, male/female relationships, paternity, domestic violence and so on. Consider taking some of the following steps to create an atmosphere where individuals can participate freely:

- Establish rapport (introduce yourself, be friendly and

The Young Fathers Guide in Action (Denver)

Mi Casa Resource Center for Women used the Young Mothers Group Discussion Guide during its computer-literacy class. With a partner from the Denver Mayor’s Office of Workforce Development, Mi Casa’s lead case manager co-facilitated a three-hour session with women from the class—primarily TANF recipients. Mi Casa created an additional homework assignment that the participants could complete for extra credit: a one- to two-page paper reflecting on their challenges as single parents and their children’s relationships with their fathers.

The Young Fathers Guide in Action (Virginia)

A group of male and female residents in Total Action Against Poverty's Transitional Living Center used the Considering Marriage Activity for one of the community-action agency's twice-weekly self-sufficiency support groups. The residents, who participated in groups for the duration of their stay in the center, invited the coordinator of the agency's fatherhood program to facilitate the session.



nonthreatening, use appropriate humor, find out what the group already knows and thinks about your topic).

- Conduct a warm-up activity, if necessary.
- Create and enforce ground rules (be respectful, do not make judgments or put-downs, avoid making assumptions, maintain confidentiality, turn off cell phones, share the talk time, etc.).
- Distribute and/or review your agenda for the session.

Maintain eye contact with all participants. Pick up on group members' nonverbal cues to determine if they are bored, angry, interested, etc.

Know your participants. Use their names, and reference their comments when appropriate.

Share leadership with the group. While you have prepared to guide the discussion in a particular fashion, it is important for participants to have input into the process and to feel a sense of ownership during the session. You probably will have strong opinions about what you see in the video, but your role as the facilitator is to keep the conversation moving and ensure a good discussion for everyone. Limit your talk time. The discussion will be impeded if you do too much "telling" or "advising."

Be as dynamic as possible. Speak in a voice that is loud enough to be heard and that contains inflection. Avoid monotones. Also, pay attention to your body language. Use gestures that accentuate your verbal messages and connect with visual learners.

Be nonjudgmental and approachable. Demonstrate by your words, facial expressions, tone of voice and gestures that you accept participants as they are and are open to their ideas and opinions.

Ask open-ended questions. The purpose of a discussion is to expand knowledge and understanding rather than to reduce it to short, simple statements. Ask questions that open possibilities, ideas and thinking.

Good open-ended questions:

- Cannot be answered with a simple “yes” or “no”;
- Are aimed at the objectives for the session;
- Go from the general to the specific;
- Are thought-provoking and interesting to answer; and
- Do not attempt to lead participants to a prescribed right or wrong answer.

Take steps to increase participation, if necessary.

For example, use the “round robin” technique (ask all participants to provide a brief answer to a question), poll the group, manage the monopolizers (ask to hear from people who have not spoken yet, avoid eye contact with monopolizers, remind people about sharing the time, etc.), call on quieter people by name (but give them the right to pass) and put people in pairs or small groups of three or four to answer a question or engage in a dialogue about an issue.

Maintain a lively pace. Keep the agenda moving along, and avoid “dead” time in the group when participants don’t know what’s going on or they’re waiting for instructions or direction. You can minimize this by being organized and prepared. It is also a good idea to have a few energizers up your sleeve just in case you notice that people are dragging and you need to get them moving for a minute or two. Simply changing the format of the group—for example, placing people in small groups or using the “round robin” technique mentioned above—can increase the energy level.

Keep the group on task respectfully. Try to stick to the agenda and timetable even if the group seems to be straying off the topic. Everyone will appreciate your keeping the discussion moving. Do not hesitate to interrupt people or ask that they wrap up their comments. If someone is long-winded, repetitive or straying off topic, the rest of the group will appreciate your redirecting the conversation to allow others to speak. Being gracious is the key.





Use moments of disagreement to prompt further thinking.

When people in the group disagree—for example, mothers and fathers in the same group who might see these issues very differently—don't assume you have to move quickly

to consensus. Establish a ground rule that participants will engage in dialogue rather than debate. If you observe someone trying to debate another person's point of view, stop him or her and acknowledge the validity of differing viewpoints. Ask people who disagree to summarize one another's position to ensure that each fully understands the other's perspective.

Use personal disclosure sparingly. It can be beneficial to share appropriate personal stories or anecdotes, for example, to demonstrate a point, to model something you want participants to do or to increase your connection with the group. However, many facilitators share too much personal information and sometimes do it for the wrong reason—because they like talking about themselves or are working out their own issues. Please share only when it will serve a purpose for the group.

Know your own limitations. This is education—not counseling. However, the issues are powerful, so be prepared for some participants to have strong responses. Do your homework to make sure you have good referral sources. If someone seems troubled and you believe he or she needs counseling or some other support, speak with that person after the session, make appropriate referrals and follow up.

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDES

Your *Young Fathers* CD contains detailed discussion guides for different audiences. These are in PDF form, so you'll need Adobe Acrobat to view and print the material.

You can use the General Discussion Guide with any program audience. The other six guides have been specifically tailored for use with:

- Young Fathers
- Young Mothers
- Groups with Mothers and Fathers Together
- Coed Groups of High School Youth Who Are Not Yet Parents
- Program Staff
- Child Support Enforcement Staff

Each guide provides a list of objectives and proposed discussion questions. Many different questions have been included to give you various options for guiding the discussion. When you plan your session, review the questions with your specific goals and the needs of your group in mind. Pick the questions that would be most appropriate for your group, and reword any that do not fit with your speaking style.

We recommend that you allot at least one hour for viewing the video and leading a group discussion. (The video itself is 28 minutes long. If you have less than a full hour, you will need to limit the number of discussion questions you tackle.)



TEACHABLE MOMENTS FROM THE VIDEO

The *Young Fathers* Guide in Action (New York City)

The New York City Office of Child Support Enforcement used the *Young Fathers* video for staff training sessions. Staff members viewed the video and then used the Child Support Enforcement Staff Discussion Guide; they commented on its value, especially for staff who have contact with the public.

The *Young Fathers* DVD contains seven short Teachable Moment clips that can be used to provoke thought and trigger discussion about particular issues. The clips range from about one minute to about seven minutes in length. Preview the Teachable Moments to determine which one(s) would be most useful in your current setting.

- **What Is a Father?**—A look at the role of fathers in their children's lives.
- **Parenting as a Team**—A look at the challenges of co-parenting.
- **Understanding Child Support**—An exploration of different experiences with child support enforcement.
- **Programs for Young Fathers**—A discussion about fatherhood programs and services.
- **Anthony's Story**—A formerly incarcerated father's experience with a fatherhood program, work and child support.
- **Baby-Mama Drama**—A look at conflict in co-parenting relationships.
- **What About Marriage?**—An examination of attitudes about marriage.

The accompanying CD provides a detailed lesson plan for each Teachable Moment clip.

Please note that while each clip is very short, the lesson plans call for 30 minutes to one hour of group time.



CONNECTING LEARNING ACTIVITIES

The *Young Fathers* CD provides an array of Connecting Learning Activities that complement video-related sessions. These activities can be effective with a variety of audiences—with program participants, students or program staff. If you are working with staff, you might conduct the activities to help them gain important knowledge, attitudes and skills—or you might model activities so staff learn to use them with program participants.

Instructions and facilitator resources are provided for:

- Connecting Learning Activity #1: The Myth-Information Game—Participants form teams and compete to find out which team knows the facts about a given issue (includes materials for “paternity and child support” and “fatherhood” versions of the game).
- Connecting Learning Activity #2: Values Voting—Participants move to a position in the room to indicate their agreement or disagreement with controversial statements (topics include “roles of fathers and mothers,” “co-parenting,” “relationships and marriage,” “sexual behavior” and “employment”).
- Connecting Learning Activity #3: Decision-Making: The Card Game—Participants assume the role of a young person facing a difficult decision; they make the decision that they think is right and then draw cards to discover the consequences.
- Connecting Learning Activity #4: Who’s Responsible for This Pregnancy?—After hearing a story about two teenagers who experience an unplanned pregnancy, participants rank the story’s characters in terms of their responsibility for the unplanned pregnancy.

The *Young Fathers* Guide in Action (Chicago)

The Safer Foundation in Chicago, one of the country’s largest providers of reentry services for people with criminal records, incorporated Connecting Learning Activities into its four-week Parents About Change for Our Youth Program. Safer’s prevention specialist conducted Ground Rules for Co-Parenting and Working Together as Co-Parents: The IALAC Story during the twice-weekly program.



- Connecting Learning Activity #5: Talking about Prevention—Participants create role-plays to practice ways that couples can initiate conversations about sex and the prevention of pregnancy and disease.
- Connecting Learning Activity #6: Working Together as Co-Parents: The IALAC Story—Participants discuss a story about a child who is negatively affected by conflict between his young parents and other key people in his life.
- Connecting Learning Activity #7: Ground Rules for Co-Parenting—Participants brainstorm reasons why young mothers and fathers often find it difficult to work together as parents and identify ground rules to keep co-parenting relationships healthy.
- Connecting Learning Activity #8: Considering Marriage—Participants take turns answering questions about commitment and marriage, shifting to a new discussion partner for each question.
- Connecting Learning Activity #9: Making Commitments—Participants explore issues related to “commitment,” in small- and large-group discussions.

Each activity description provides detailed information about how to facilitate the activity, the materials and time needed for it, planning notes, etc. While activities are meant to be fun and engaging, it's important to ensure that participants actually learn something in addition to having an interesting and enjoyable experience. Save five minutes at the end of each activity to wrap up the discussion: find out what participants will take away and how they plan to use that information in their lives.

BUILDING A WORKSHOP SERIES

The *Young Fathers* video and guide can be used to launch a workshop series that extends beyond one or two sessions. Mix and match Teachable Moments and Connecting Learning Activities to meet the needs of your group and the time frame of your program (note that the times listed for each activity are estimated, and, in most cases, can be increased or reduced as necessary).

The guide's resources provide tremendous flexibility. For example:

- You might decide to do a one-time half-day workshop with your staff on the topic of young fathers, using several different activities.
- You might follow this staff orientation with a five-week workshop series for participants, beginning with the video and discussion in the first session and then continuing with other related activities in the four subsequent sessions.
- If you have a two-hour block of time with participants who share a common concern (about child support, for instance, or employment issues), you could conduct a comprehensive workshop consisting of several different activities oriented around the same issue.

Several possible formats are suggested on the back of this handbook. They can be used individually or in combination, and they can be supplemented by other, outside activities to develop a broad workshop series.



Audience

Possible Workshop Format

Young Fathers <i>(three-session general series)</i>	Session 1: Show video using Young Fathers Discussion Guide—60 min. Session 2: Values Voting (roles of fathers and mothers)—45 min. Session 3: Myth-Information Game (paternity and child support)—45 min.
Young Fathers <i>(single employment-focused session)</i>	Video Clip #5: Anthony's Story—30-45 min. Decision-Making: The Card Game (situations 3-4)—40-45 min.
Young Fathers <i>(three-session paternity- and child-support-focused series)</i>	Session 1: Video Clip #3: Understanding Child Support—30-45 min. Session 2: Myth-Information Game (paternity and child support)—30-45 min. Session 3: Decision-Making: The Card Game (situation 2)—40 min.
Young Fathers <i>(three-session co-parenting-focused series)</i>	Session 1: Show video using Young Fathers Discussion Guide—60 min. Session 2: Video Clip #6: Baby-Mama Drama—30-45 min. Session 3: Working Together as Co-Parents: The IALAC Story—45 min.—and Ground Rules for Co-Parenting—30 min.
Young Fathers <i>(four-session sexuality- and pregnancy-focused series)</i>	Session 1: Show video and discuss using Young Fathers Group Discussion Guide—60 min. Session 2: Values Voting (dating, sexual behavior and pregnancy)—30-45 min. Session 3: Decision-Making: The Card Game (situation 1)—30 min. Session 4: Who's Responsible for This Pregnancy?—30-45 min. and Talking About Prevention—30 min.
Young Mothers <i>(three-session general series)</i>	Session 1: Show video and discuss using Young Mothers Group Discussion Guide—60 min. Session 2: Values Voting (roles of fathers and mothers)—30-45 min. Session 3: Myth-Information game (low-income fathers and fatherhood)—30-45 min.
Young Mothers <i>(single co-parenting-focused session)</i>	Video Clip #2: Parenting as a Team—30-45 min. Values Voting (co-parenting)—30-45 min. Ground Rules for Co-Parenting—30 min.
Young Fathers or Mothers <i>(three-session "considering marriage" series)</i>	Session 1: Video Clip #7: What About Marriage?—30-45 min. Session 2: Values Voting (relationships and marriage)—30-45 min. Session 3: Considering Marriage—30-45 min.—and Making Commitments—30 min.
Teenagers <i>(two-session prevention-focused series)</i>	Session 1: Show video and discuss using the Coed Groups of High School Youth... Group Discussion Guide—60 min. Session 2: Who's Responsible for This Pregnancy?—45 min.—and Talking About Prevention—45 min.
Groups with Mothers and Fathers Together <i>(three-session series)</i>	Session 1: Show video using the Groups with Mothers and Fathers Group Discussion Guide—60 min. Session 2: Working Together as Co-Parents: The IALAC Story—45 min. Session 3: Ground Rules for Co-Parenting—30 min. and Considering Marriage—45 min.

We hope you find the Young Fathers Video and Workshop Guide useful. For other publications from the Fathers at Work initiative—or to review the complete library of P/PV publications—please visit our website: www.ppv.org.