

## Recent Developments: Becoming a Caregiver

This study illustrates how family traditions, role models, and shared expectations influence adult children and grandchildren to take on caregiving roles to aging parents and grandparents. The authors interviewed 43 white adults from 15 families in the southeastern United States; all were caregivers for a person 65+ with at least one impairment in activities of daily living. Factors that affected the decision to take on the caregiver role were

- expectations, including the caregiver's expectations as well as those of other family members;
- family rules such as honoring one's elders, or putting family first;
- religious beliefs promoting an ethic of care (38 people mentioned specific scriptural texts or religious experiences as an influence);
- role modeling (all respondents in 11 families said that family members and friends providing care to other older adults motivated them to follow suit);
- role making, i.e., negotiating and building the caregiving role with others in the family as situations changed.

**Source:** Piercy, K.W. and J.G. Chapman. 2001. Adopting the caregiver role: A family legacy. *Family Relations* 50:386-393.

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### Healthy Births

A decade of data on eight measures of healthy births for each state and the nation's 50 largest cities is now on-line. Some of the national findings include

- There was a small but significant increase in the percentage of low birthweight and preterm births over the decade. New research indicates that both conditions are strongly associated with long-term developmental problems.
- The percentage of births to mothers receiving late or no prenatal care also declined dramatically during the 1990s.
- Overall, birth outcomes in large cities continue to lag behind the rest of the nation, but that gap is closing as cities improved more than the rest of the country during the 1990s.
- Birth outcomes for black infants were worse throughout the decade than were outcomes for either Hispanic or white babies.

This special on-line report can be accessed on-line <http://www.aecf.org/kidscount/rightstart2002>.

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