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# Doing the Best I Can: Fatherhood in the Inner City

*Kathryn Edin, Timothy J. Nelson*

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**Doing the Best I Can: Fatherhood in the Inner City** Kathryn Edin, Timothy J. Nelson
Across the political spectrum, unwed fatherhood is denounced as one of the leading social problems of today. *Doing the Best I Can* is a strikingly rich, paradigm-shifting look at fatherhood among inner-city men often dismissed as “deadbeat dads.” Kathryn Edin and Timothy J. Nelson examine how couples in challenging straits come together and get pregnant so quickly—without planning. The authors chronicle the high hopes for forging lasting family bonds that pregnancy inspires, and pinpoint the fatal flaws that often lead to the relationship’s demise. They offer keen insight into a radical redefinition of family life where the father-child bond is central and parental ties are peripheral.

Drawing on years of fieldwork, *Doing the Best I Can* shows how mammoth economic and cultural changes have transformed the meaning of fatherhood among the urban poor. Intimate interviews with more than 100 fathers make real the significant obstacles faced by low-income men at every step in the familial process: from the difficulties of romantic relationships, to decision-making dilemmas at conception, to the often celebratory moment of birth, and finally to the hardships that accompany the early years of the child's life, and beyond.

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