

MY BROTHER'S KEEPER



# UNDERSTANDING SINGLE-PARENT HOMES

2018 - 2019

MBK SACRAMENTO  
YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

THIS POLICY BRIEF WAS DEVELOPED IN COLLABORATION WITH  
THE CENTER AT SIERRA HEALTH FOUNDATION



THE CENTER  
at Sierra Health Foundation

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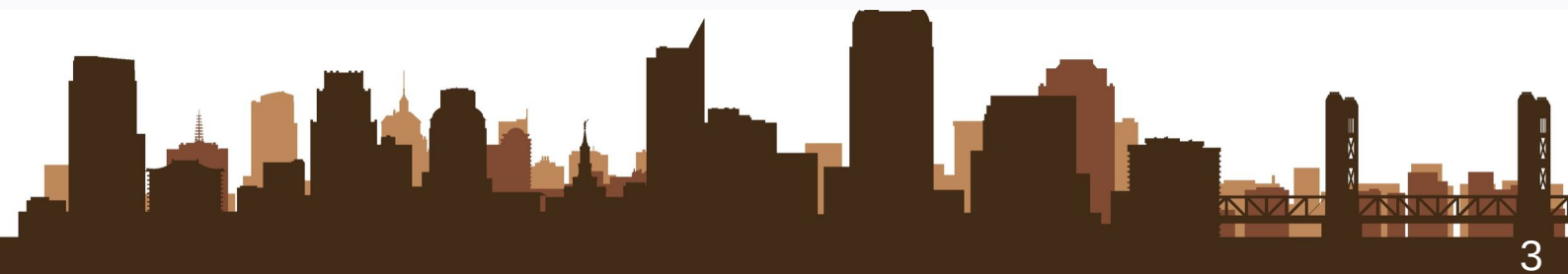
**20** RECOMMENDATIONS

**THE FOCUS**

# **SINGLE- PARENT HOMES**

## **A SACRAMENTO STUDY**

This year, the MBK Youth Fellowship 2018-2019 cohort decided to focus on studying single-parent homes. More than 50% of the youth in this cohort come from single-parent homes. The goal was to study a phenomenon that was impacting the young men as well as the community.



# METHODOLOGY

This year we decided to construct an online survey.

The survey had a total of 26 questions.

We launched our survey in classrooms at our high schools and some community colleges throughout Sacramento County.

We targeted young people from the ages of 13-22



**TO SEE OUR SURVEY, GO TO  
[HTTPS://WWW.SURVEYMONKEY.COM/R/BDJ8HG6](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BDJ8HG6)**

# SURVEY QUESTIONS

- Are you a child of a single-parent home?
- As a child of a single-parent home, what do you need that could benefit you?
- As a parent of a single-parent home, what do you need that could benefit you?
- Who were you raised by?
- How did being the child of a single parent affect you?
- Has being a child of a single parent forced you into anything negative?
- Are there any benefits to being a child of a single parent?
- Are there any downsides to being a child of a single parent?
- Do you think your life at home could be improved?
- How much time do you spend interacting at home with your parent?
- Do you need someone to talk to?
- Do you need a mentor?
- Do you need support for transportation?
- Do you need support for after-school programs?
- How would you rate the safety in your home?
- Would you benefit from having a male role model?
- Would you benefit from having a female role model?
- How would you rate your home environment?
- Do you have any conflicts with your parent's partner?
- Have you experienced physical abuse because of your parent's partner?
- Have you experienced mental abuse because of your parent's partner?
- Do you feel unsafe at home because of your parent's partner?





# LITERATURE REVIEW

## INVESTIGATING OTHER DATA SOURCES

In California, 18% of homes are led by single mothers. (kidsdata.org)

**Sacramento, CA** is above the state average with 20% of its homes run by single mothers. (kidsdata.org)

### HOW ARE FAMILIES OF DIFFERENT RACES AFFECTED BY SEPARATION AND DIVORCE?

California	Percent
African American/Black	37.9%
Asian/Pacific Islander	11.4%
Hispanic/Latina	29.5%
White	36.7%
California - All	29.6%

The graph above highlights the racial disparities in trends of separation and divorce.

### WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF LIVING IN A SINGLE-PARENT HOME?

- There are no significant effects on children's educational achievement; however, there are impacts on access to educational opportunities like extracurricular activities (Amato, Patterson, and Beattie, 2015)
- There is a lack of time spent between children and their single parents (usually mothers) because of extra time spent at work (Kunz, 2014)
- Children and families in single-parent homes headed by women have statistically lower socio-economic status in comparison to two-parent homes (USBS, 2018)
- There are emotional consequences that children face, especially in cases where single-parent homes are made from situations of trauma like death, divorce, incarceration or forced separation (Eck, 2018)
- Children from single-parent homes have higher risk of engaging in delinquent behaviors due to the lack of supervision in the household (Singh & Kiran, 2012)

# OUR RESEARCH DATA

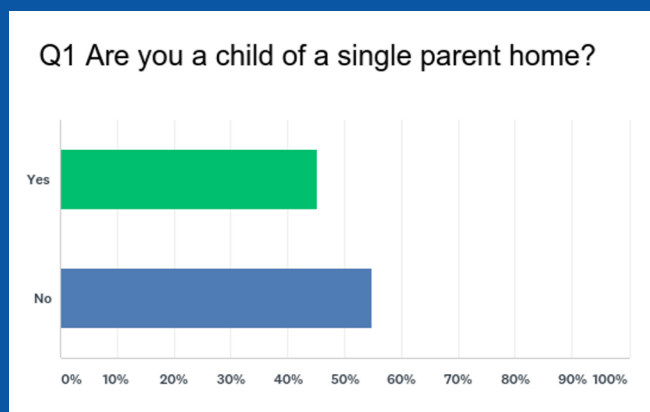
"We just want to let our brothers and sisters know that they are not alone. The point of our research is to try to find ways to support all of them."

# Respondents from a single-parent home

# 45.2%

**The number of respondents from a single-parent home for our survey was 25.2% higher than the Sacramento County average.**

## Survey Question 1

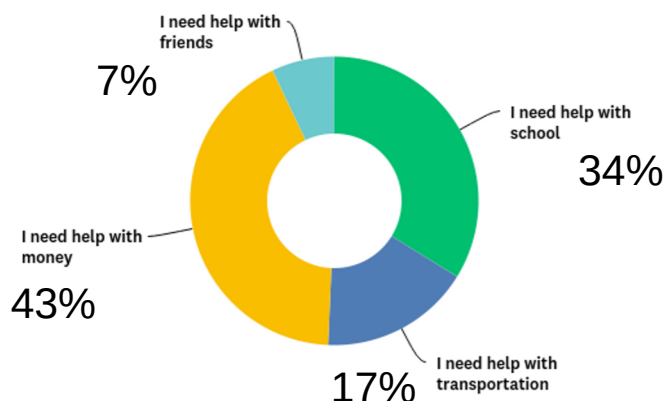




when we asked  
children from  
single-parent  
homes what  
could benefit  
them...

**MONEY AND HELP WITH SCHOOL  
WERE THE LARGEST NEEDS**

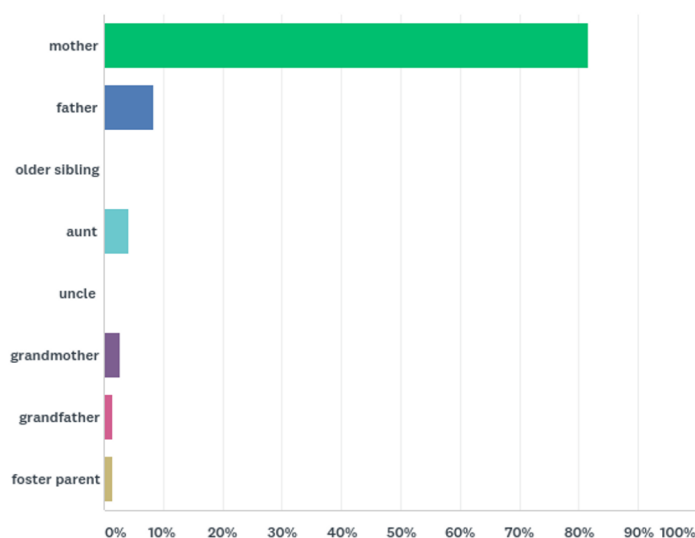
Q2 As a child of a single-parent home, what do you need that could benefit you?





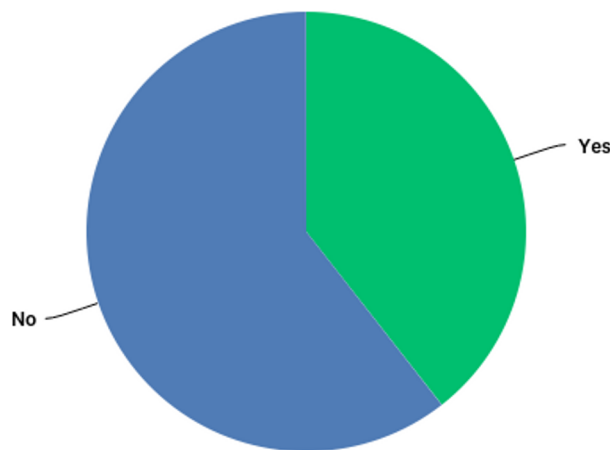
**82% of respondents of single-parent homes were raised by a **single mother**.**

Q4 Who were you raised by?



# About 40% of respondents said that being a child of a single parent forced them into something negative

Q6 Has being a child of a single parent forced you into anything negative?



## **The following statements were shared by respondents when explaining the negative things they were forced into.**

- "Doing odd jobs for money."
- "Poverty, and struggling from a self owned business."
- "Moving between places made me feel like I didn't have a home and haven't been able to feel at home anywhere since."
- "Drugs and alcohol."
- "I believe promiscuity may have resulted from not having a father figure teach me of my value as a young woman."
- "I have trust and relationship problems."
- "Family problems."
- "My dad wasn't the best example and there was a time when I was younger I acted out and got in trouble for things I know he did to get his attention. I grew and realized that wasn't doing any good and made a whole 180. I just really wanted him to notice me but he's still a mess and I'm 21 so it's his loss at this point."
- "Emotionally as well as seeing other peers with both parent figures in their life."
- "Being un-cared for and my basic human needs were not met."
- "Well, I come from a house that started off as two parents, and then my father died when I was a teenager. I was kind of raised by a lot of people since my mom worked full time. I started experimenting with drugs and alcohol. But that could have just been because I was depressed. I was forced to stay at home a lot with my supervisor. Couldn't really go out and be with my friends which made me rebel."
- "I would steal food."
- "Depression."
- "Depression and anxiety."
- "Doing illegal things for money."
- "I didn't have as much supervision since my mom worked a lot and I tended to get into trouble."
- "Trauma."
- "Having difficulty understanding how a two parent home works."
- "Not having enough/proper guidance for school and college."
- "I sold drugs to have money to buy food because there wasn't enough income."
- "Poor choices with relationships."

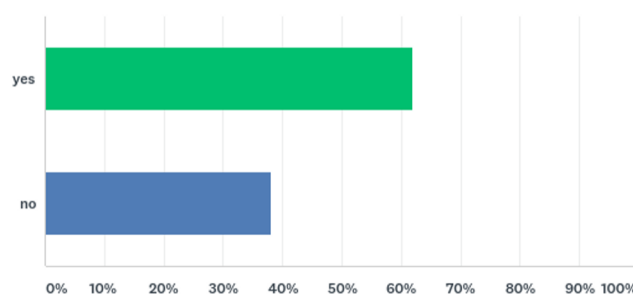
## **The following statements were shared by respondents when explaining the "downsides" of being a child from a single-parent home.**

- "You don't know where you belong in life, lots of underestimating yourself, taking on things that you shouldn't have to."
- "Watch your parent struggle , and you miss your other parent."
- "More of a struggle."
- "Questioning your worth."
- "Not as much support."
- "The concept of a relationship isn't present in the household. Communication between both parents is extremely difficult going back and forth with phone calls and playing messenger."
- "Hard raising both kids by herself."
- "income and stability."
- "You don't have the other parent's perspective or influence. You are left to fill that void."
- "I have completely cut off my communication with my father."
- "Less money, become a "man of the house" at a very young age and mature at a really young age."
- "Losing connection to family."
- "saw how parent suffered and how to manage time differently."
- "Can be hard seeing other kids with bigger families. Plus financial struggles of paying for a child as they grow up."
- "Growing up is already hard enough but having to do it so fast only makes it harder. I struggled with school work a lot because usually my mom was too busy to help. Also sometimes missed out on things at school, if my mom couldn't take me I couldn't go. "
- "It's hard to get the attention you need while your parent is full time worker."
- "Your possibilities for help is greatly diminished.."
- "with only one breadwinner, I often felt alone, and sometimes my mother couldn't be there when I needed her."
- "Makes life harder for everyone usually impacting emotional wellbeing and stress levels."
- "Sometimes when I am bugging my mother to much I often feel bad because she is already drained from work and now us. My mom doesn't really take care of herself because she is providing for us."
- "Social pressure of wanting a "normal family."
- "It makes me feel weird when my friends talk about their parents."
- "Being a child of divorce puts a strain on your relationships with both your mom and dad."
- "Not having the love and support of two parents."



About 62% of respondents said that there were some benefits to being a child from a single-parent home.

Q8 are there any benefits to being a child of a single parent?



## **The following statements were shared by respondents when explaining the benefits of being a child from a single-parent home.**

"You gain a sense of independence and protection over your other siblings."

"Your one parent is the only one to support you."

"Builds independence."

"You learn at a young age that not everyone can be trusted."

"Learn to be resourceful."

"It makes you stronger, independent, and you create higher standards."

"I have a closer relationship to my grandparents and my sibling since they took care of me."

"Being raised by someone who knows right from wrong while the one that left didn't."

"You have a closer bond to that parent."

"I feel it builds character having to go through parents divorcing."

"I'm being taught how to be a young man by my mom and what life is like in the real world."

"I believe having a heightened sense of compassion and patience. And a stronger relationship with the one parent."

"Learn independence and how to have a good support system."

"Single parents can give you the same/better experience growing up than two parent. They work hard to support you."

"Growing up in a single parent home you learn how to take care of yourself and your sibling fast. If I wasn't so young with so many responsibilities I had I wouldn't be who I am today. I feel I'm very mature and advanced compared to my peers who are 21 and that's because I grew up so fast."

"Seeing how to grind that much harder."

"Motivation to work 10x harder."

"While in foster care, you only get negative comments and abuse from one parent instead of 2."

"You learn how to work hard. Everything is on you at that point. It made me responsible."

"Teaches you to be self sufficient."

"Can empathize with people going through similar situations who might not handle it as well as I do, also we got rid of my toxic father so that was a plus"

"I learned how to overcome struggle and how to work with my family for the things we needed."

"That parent becomes your closest friend."

"In my situation my mother was able to focus on work and my siblings and I. My mother was able to instill in us that we are valuable and our education is a right of passage."

"Understanding struggle and having to come together as a family to make bills. Not being entitled and working for what I have."

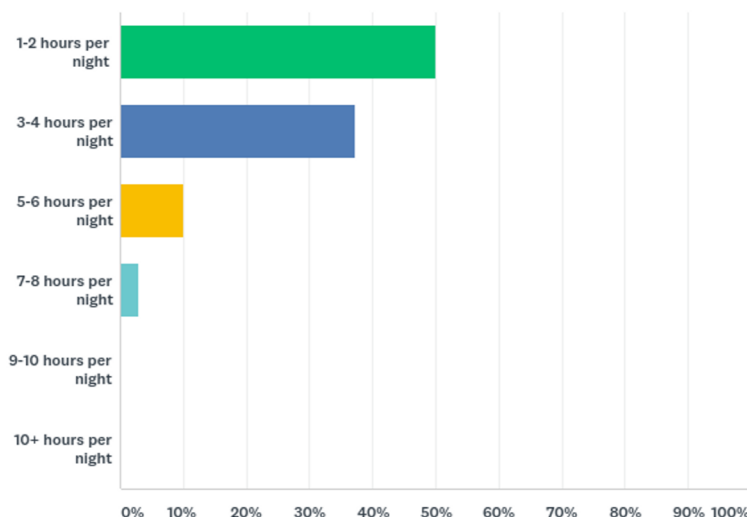
"Allowed me to face adversities and mature quicker than other peers."



**ABOUT 50% OF  
RESPONDENTS  
SPEND ONLY 1-2  
HOURS A NIGHT  
WITH THEIR PARENT**



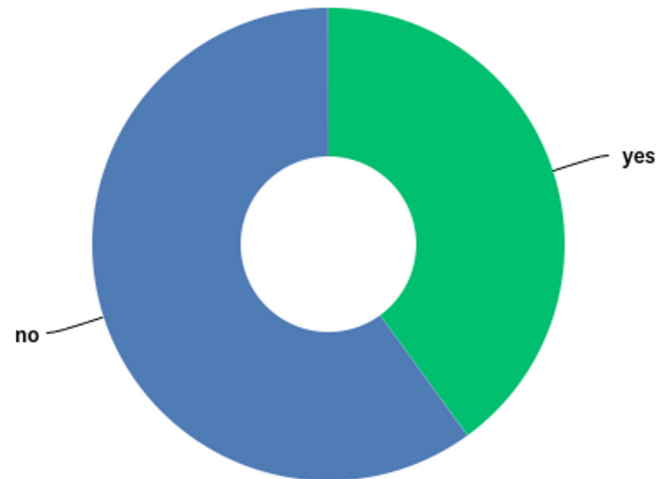
Q13 How much time do you spend interacting at home with your parent?





Q15 Do you need a mentor?

# 40%



of respondents reported that  
they needed a mentor





**43% of respondents said they needed help with transportation**



**36% of respondents said they needed help with after-school programs**



**36% of respondents said they needed someone to talk to**

# 20%

of respondents reported  
having some type of conflict  
with their parent's partner

## 10%

REPORTED SOME TYPE OF  
PHYSICAL ABUSE

## 15%

REPORTED SOME TYPE OF  
MENTAL ABUSE



# POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- CREATE MORE AFTER-SCHOOL SUPPORT OUTLETS LIKE THE MBK YOUTH FELLOWSHIP IN AREAS WHERE SINGLE-PARENT HOMES ARE MORE PREVALENT
- IDENTIFY YOUTH FROM SINGLE-PARENT HOMES AT SCHOOL SITES TO PROVIDE EXTRA MENTAL HEALTH AND SCHOOL SUPPORTS
- CREATE PEER MENTORSHIP AND BUDDY PROGRAMS BETWEEN OLDER SINGLE-PARENT HOME YOUTH IN HIGH SCHOOL AND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL YOUTH





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Creating impactful systems change for Sacramento BMOC requires the commitment of an entire community. For more information on how you can be involved in supporting the efforts of the MBK Sacramento Collaborative, or for upcoming meeting dates and progress updates, please visit

[www.shfcenter.org/mbk-sac](http://www.shfcenter.org/mbk-sac).