

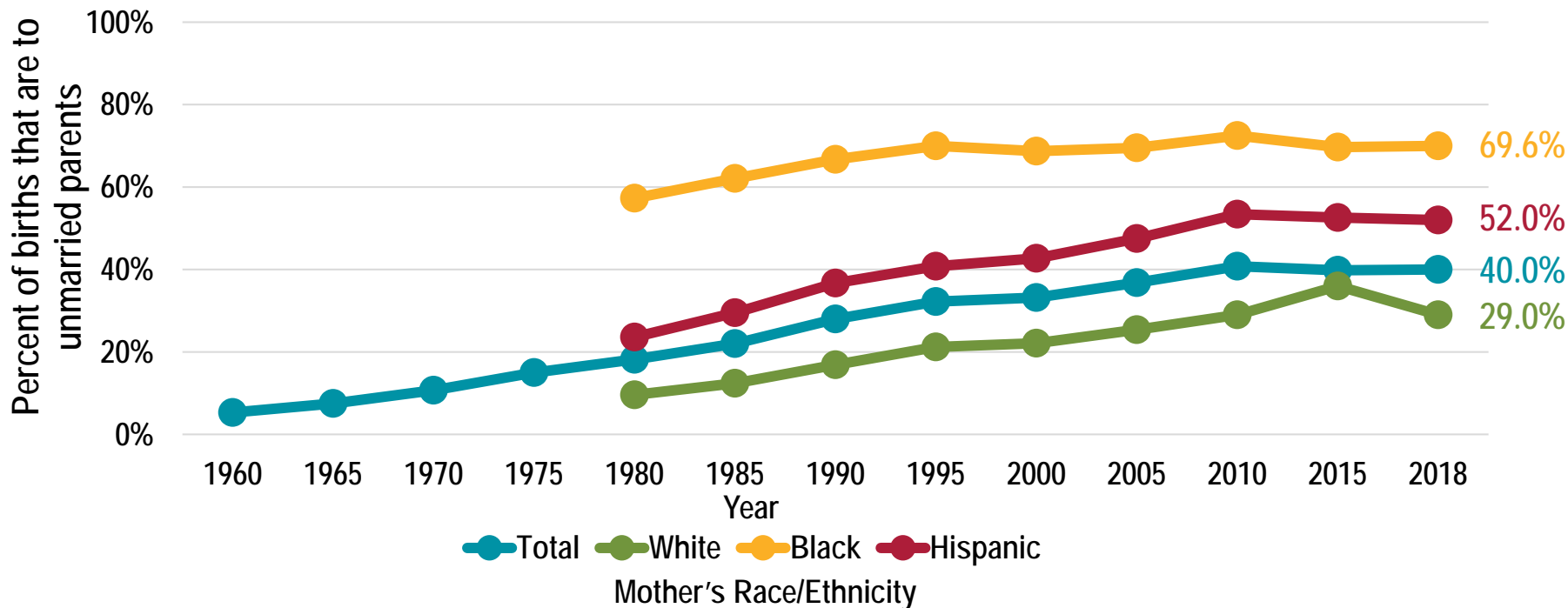
FATHERS FROM THE START

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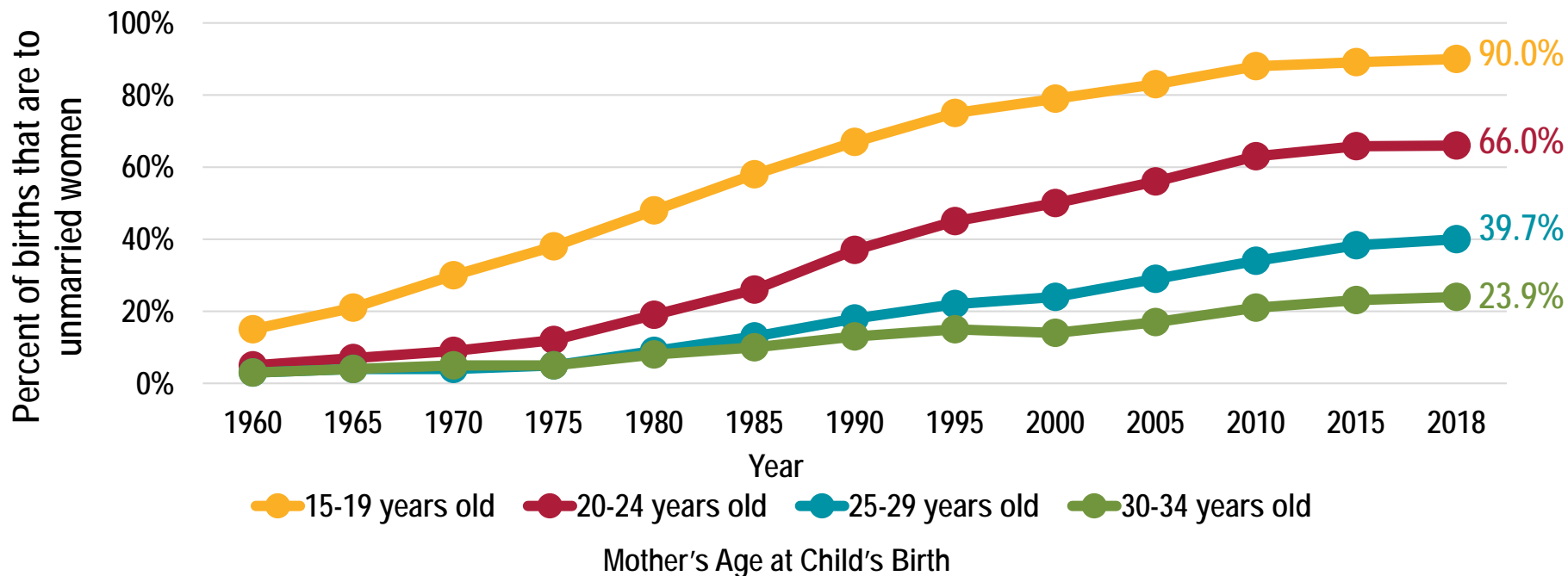


Increase in nonmarital childbirth



CHILD & FAMILY
RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP

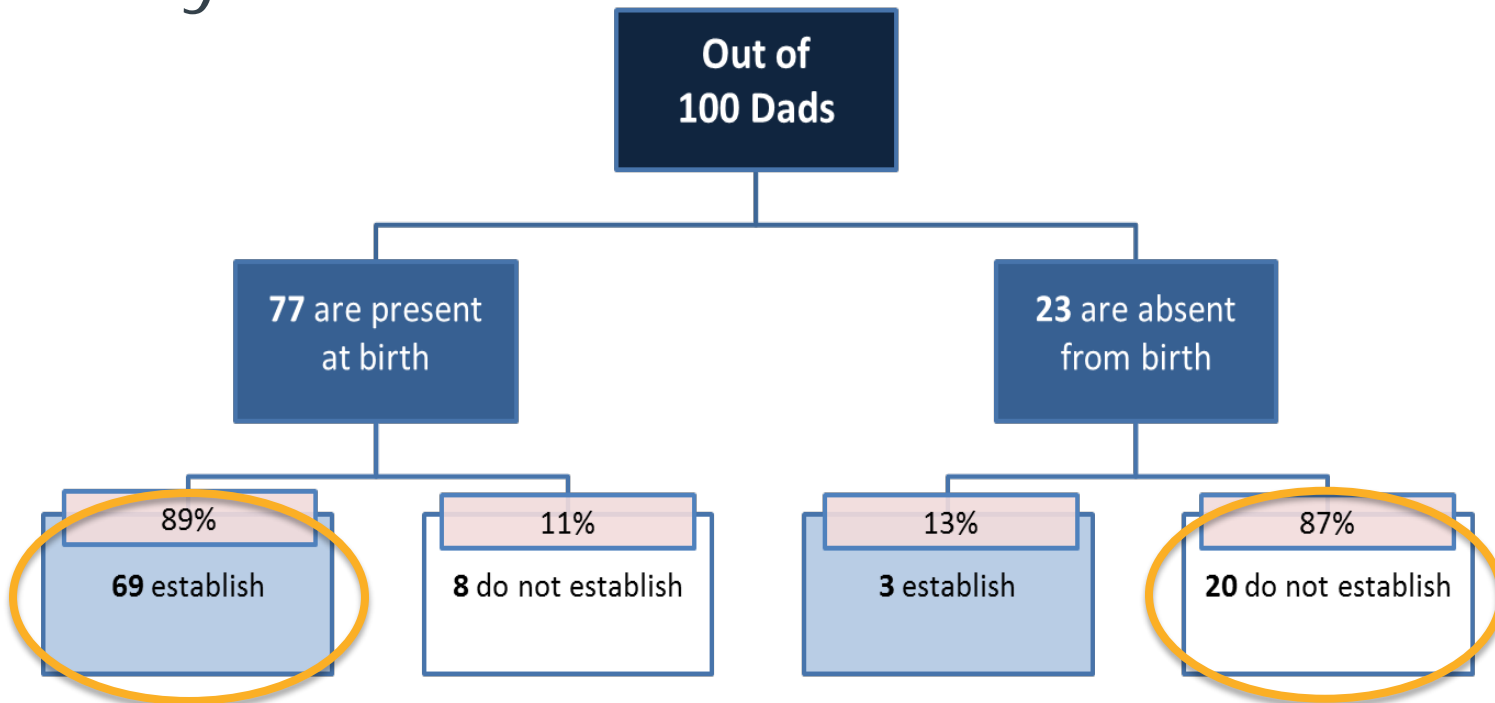
Nonmarital childbearing is the norm for younger parents



Unmarried, biological fathers are NOT legal fathers, until paternity is established

- Children born to unmarried parents **do not** have a legal father until paternity is established – about 75% establish paternity in the hospital at the child’s birth.
- Paternity establishment confers certain rights and responsibilities – including adding the father’s name to the birth certificate.
- In research predicting in-hospital paternity establishment, we found that paternity establishment is **highly** correlated with birth presence.
 - Most fathers establish paternity in the hospital at the birth

Fathers presence at birth strongly predicts paternity establishment

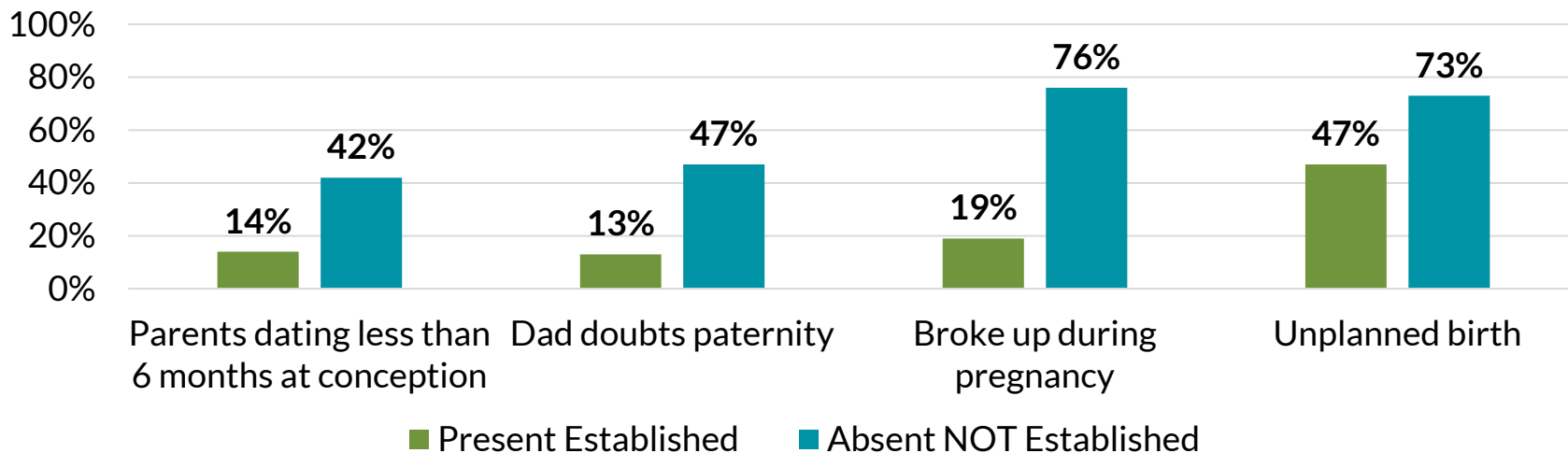


Some fathers are not involved from the start

- More than one-fifth of fathers are not present at their child's birth
- Father's absence at his child's birth signals risk for the mother and the baby
 - Mothers and children with birth-absent fathers may need financial, instrumental, and social supports

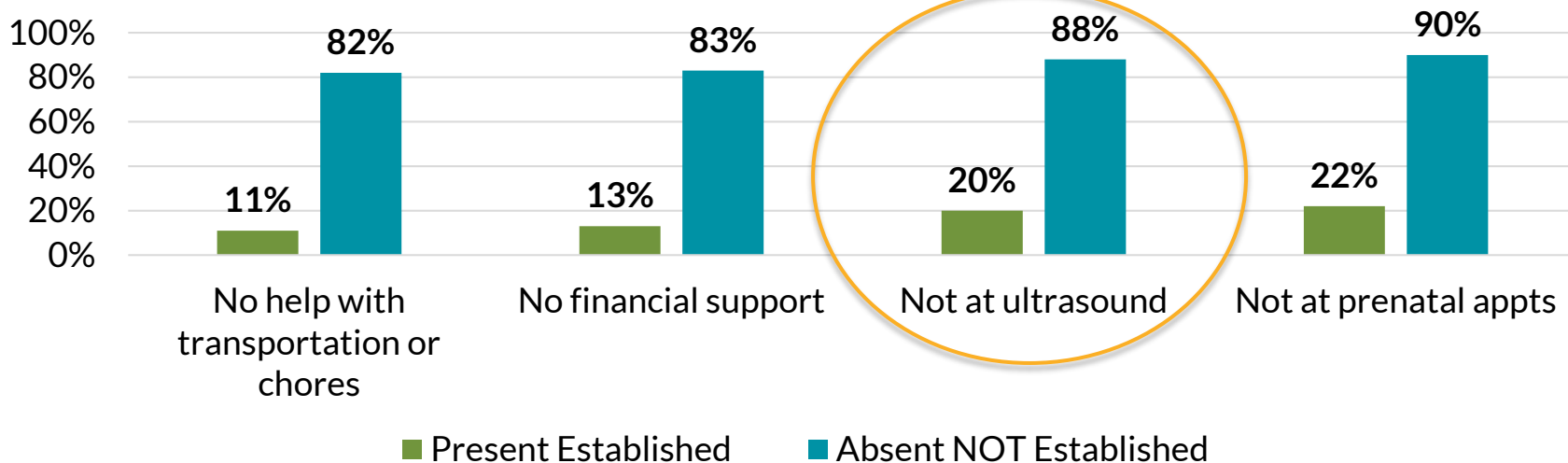
Birth-absence is a signal of short, troubled relationships

Prenatal Commitment



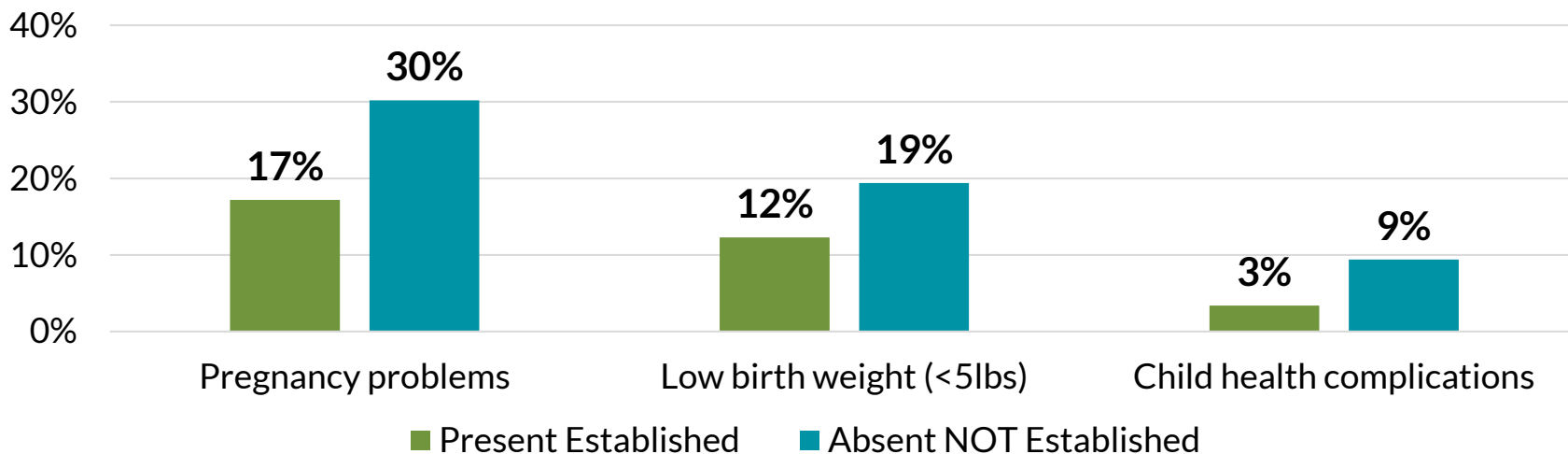
Birth-absence is a signal of parental disengagement

Prenatal Father Involvement

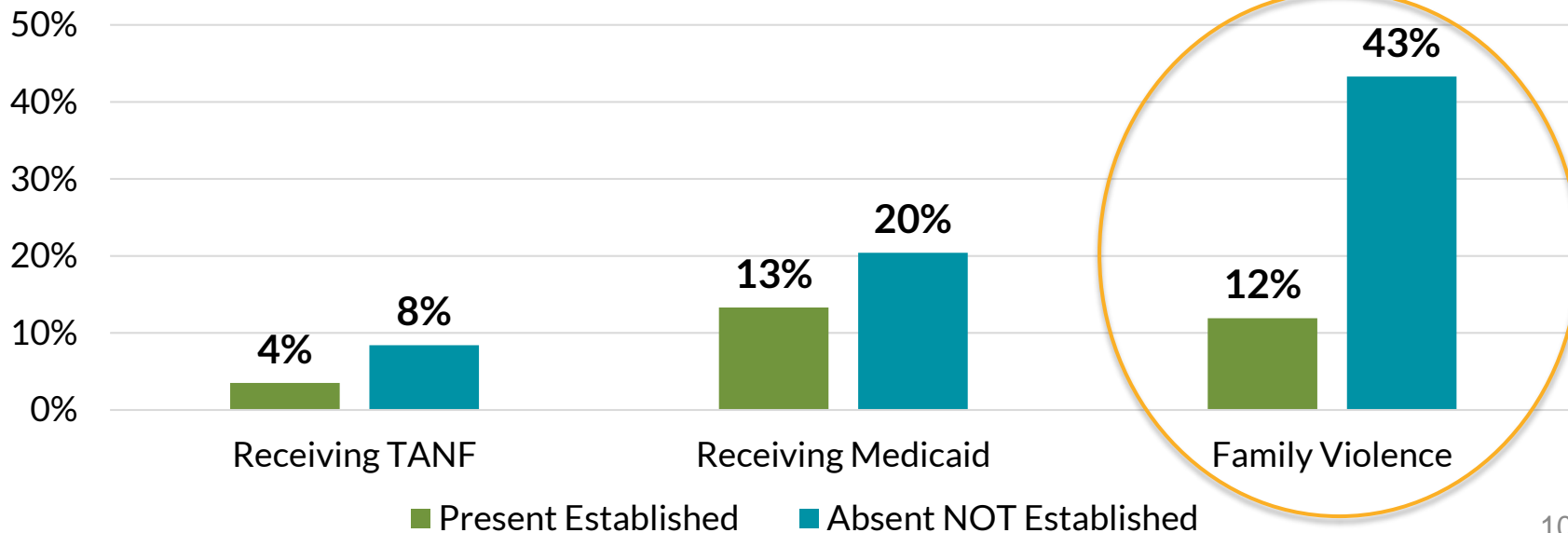


Birth-absence is correlated with mother and child health problems

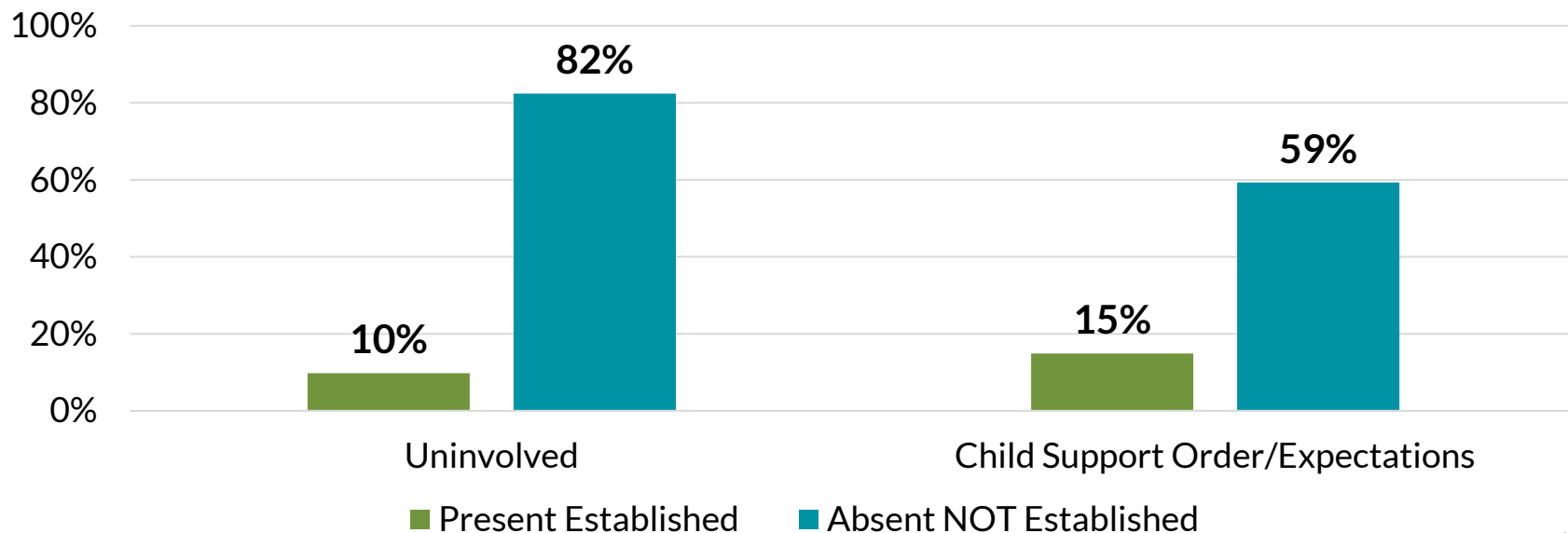
Health Problems



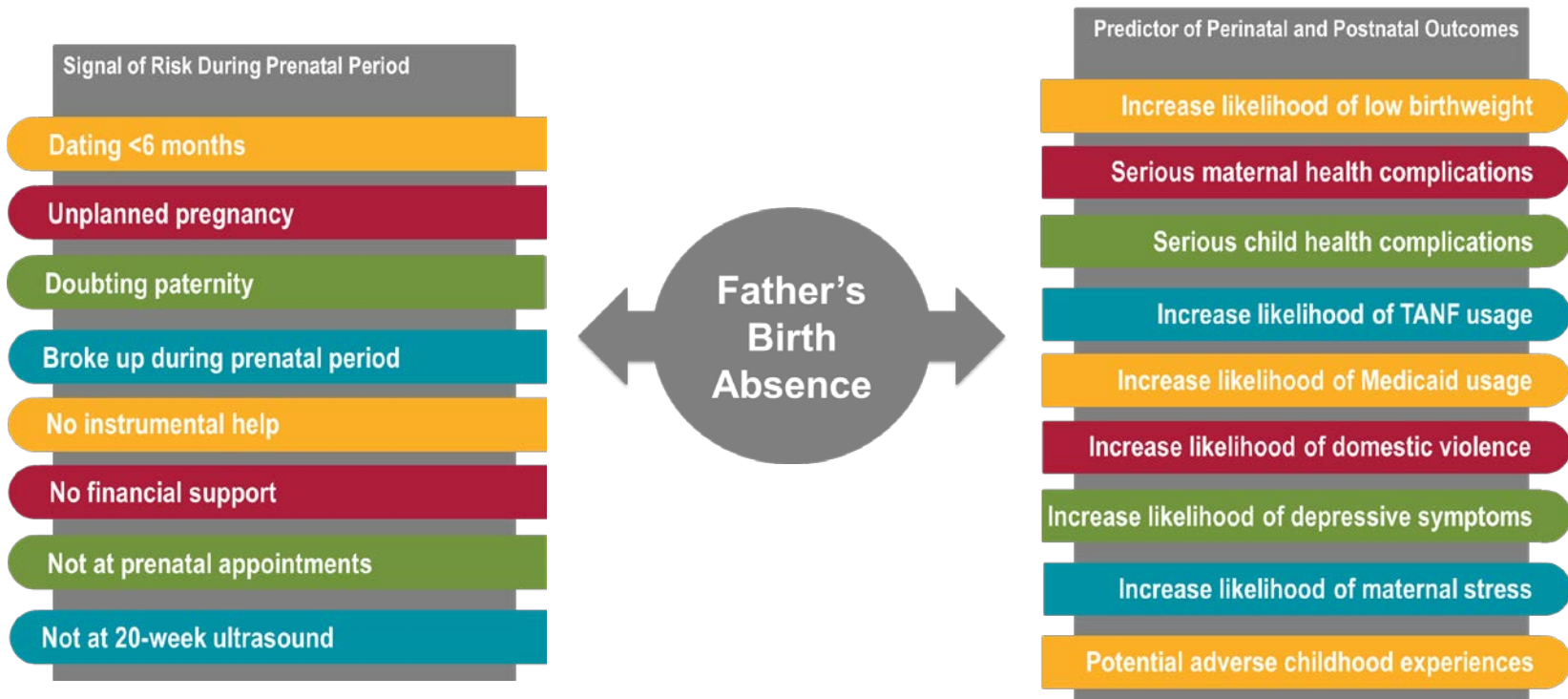
Birth-absence is correlated with more maternal need



Birth-absence correlated with less father involvement and support



If dad is absent, mom is at risk



Policy responses

- Enable couples to plan their pregnancies
- Early intervention – during prenatal period – can have positive impacts on developing fetuses
- If the father is absent from prenatal care, physicians should open dialog with the mother to determine her needs
- Refer mom to an intervention program (e.g., Nurse Family Partnership)
- Note in electronic health record (EHR) if father is absent from ultrasound; attempt to offer him services
- Screen all new moms for needs, and pay special attention if father is absent from birth; record in EHR for ob/gyn to discuss at follow-up and pediatrician to discuss at well-visit