**PURPOSE:** To explore the co-parenting experiences of residential & nonresidential African American fathers of preadolescent sons (8-12) at-risk for depressive symptoms & aggressive behaviors.

**METHOD:**
- Individual interviews (1-1.5 hrs)
- Age: 28-60 yrs old; \( X = 40.67 \) (SD=8.66)
- Residential (R; 19)
- Nonresidential (NR; 11)
- Grounded theory
- Inter-rater reliability 75%

**RESULTS:** See table.

**CONCLUSIONS:** Collectively, fathers viewed mothers as permissive & identified fathers’ unique contributions to childrearing. R fathers described supportive co-parenting behaviors, & the ability to compromise & assess each parents’ strengths & weaknesses. Some NR fathers discussed frustrations with co-parenting, & desires for more involvement in & control over childrearing. Despite frustrations, fathers’ value of family & their son’s best interest were the motivation for continued involvement. These findings challenge negative perceptions of African American fathers & highlight modifiable factors (e.g., communication) relevant for interventions.

### Themes

#### Perceptions of mothers

- **Permissive/Spoiling***
  - NR
  - R
  - Examples:
    - “He stays with her and she got a lot to do with the way he act out because she give him his way….So it’s more like she’s an enabler to him; he’s never wrong.” –NR father
    - “as a father you’re trying to have your son to grow up to be strong; and sometimes mothers kind of smother or kind of coddle them so that it’s kind of you got two opposing things working.” -R Father

- **Nurturer**
  - NR
  - R

#### Contributions of fathers

- **Manage aggression***
  - NR
  - R
  - Examples:
    - “I’m of that opinion that boys need men in their lives. There’s things or experiences that a young boy, I don’t think he would go to his mom about….or could look to his mom for that example on how to deal with certain situations, especially the bullying thing with the boy.” -R Father

- **Navigate race/gender**
  - NR
  - R

#### Discipline

- **Supportive behavior***
  - NR
  - R
  - Examples:
    - “Because I think it’s important that he understand that, no matter what I respect his mom and she respects me.” –NR Father

- **Undermining behaviors**
  - NR
  - R
  - Examples:
    - “She call me to lay down the law. Then when he get to doing it 2-3 days later, she breaks it.... Like he’ll go to school and he’ll do good for about 3 weeks, don’t hear nothing, she’ll go back doing the same thing until it’s again.” -NR Father

- **Differing approaches**
  - NR
  - R

- **Compromise**
  - NR
  - R

- **Assessment of strengths*** & weaknesses
  - NR
  - R
  - Examples:
    - “So my wife is very good in her area, and that’s why I back off. There’re some things I’m not good as far as when it comes to [my son] and when it comes to the physical thing or the confrontations with another guy or girl, I leave that to the wife.” –R Father

#### Communication

- **Positive**
  - NR
  - R
  - Examples:
    - “Only time you call me is when you want me to go to school or his report card ain’t good, or he done did something around the house to his sister or something like that. But just to pick up the phone and say, ‘You know, [your son] is really doing good.’ You don’t call me.” -NR Father

- **Negative**
  - NR
  - R

- **Selective**
  - NR
  - R

- **Avoidance**
  - NR
  - R

*NR = Nonresidential, R = Residential

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**RESULTS:** See table.