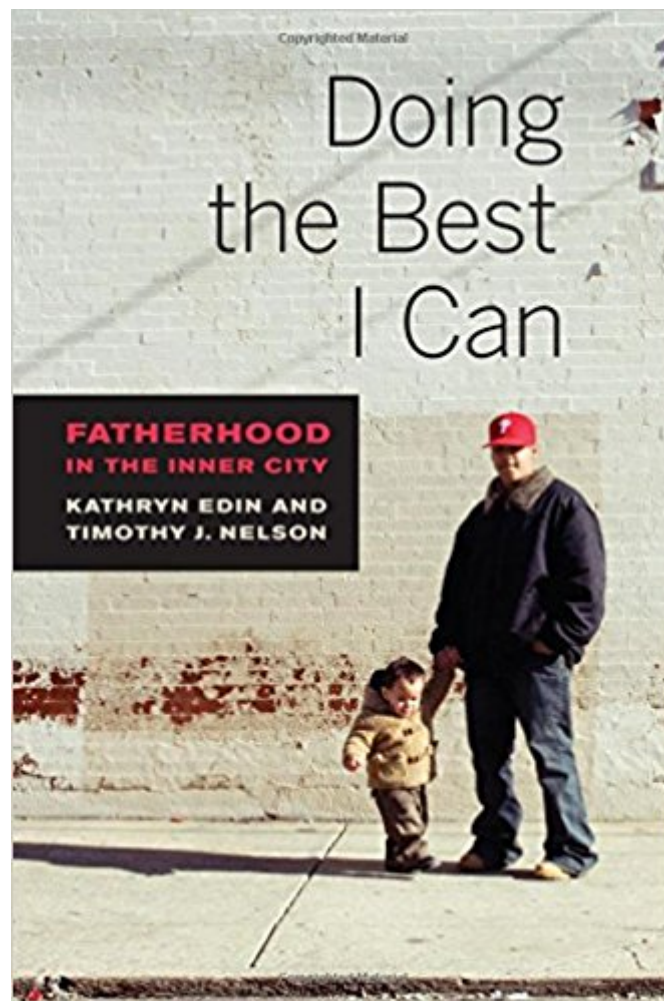


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Doing The Best I Can: Fatherhood In The Inner City



Synopsis

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.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

An insightful highly important book: "Doing The Best I Can: Fatherhood in the Inner City" examines poor urban fatherhood in the areas of low income and impoverished neighborhoods of the Philadelphia, PA, and Camden, NJ areas. The book is expertly researched and written by sociologist Kathryn Edin and author Timothy J. Nelson, who lived in the neighborhoods studied.

Edin is known for her expertise in poverty studies and the co-author of "Promises I Can Keep" (2005) which examines the plight of poor single motherhood in the neighborhoods mentioned above. The one thing that particularly stands out is the high value and importance poor families place on their children and family life. Many of these out-of-wedlock births were unintended, unplanned and the use of contraception was questionable at best. Moving up the economic ladder and attending college and earning a higher standard of living wasn't always an option or consideration of these young impoverished parents. These fathers were usually very happy when they found out their girlfriends were pregnant, and attempted to establish a stable relationship, caring for the mother and their child, at least while the child was smaller, the parents may or may not have planned to marry. Edin pointed out that often fathers didn't have a father themselves, had limited resources, job and income prospects, and may have had problems with alcohol and substance, and/or lack the maturity to remain faithful. Sometimes there was the possibility of incarceration due to illegal and criminal activity. Other complex problems of these fathers may have included multiple fertility- fathering children by different women.

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