

Complete Guide to Father Involvement

Resources, Models, and Steps to Implement Father Involvement Programs



National Family
Preservation Network

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Introduction

Ten years have passed since the National Family Preservation Network (NFPN) published the *Fatherhood Training Curriculum*. The manual was the first-of-its-kind training for practitioners and is still today the only widely available curriculum for practitioners, along with NFPN's *Advanced Training Curriculum*. But, much has changed in the field of father involvement over the past 10 years and NFPN is now pleased to present the *Complete Guide to Father Involvement*.

The Guide is not a curriculum manual but a repository for the latest research, resources, and models of father involvement programs. It contains:

- ◆ Foreword by Elena Cohen, an early pioneer of father involvement
- ◆ The Foundations of the fatherhood movement
 - The Disappearing, Reappearing, and Integrated Father
 - Accomplishments of the past decade
- ◆ Contributions of national organizations to father involvement
- ◆ Working with challenging fathers
- ◆ Recent research on father involvement

- ◆ Military fathers
- ◆ A statewide model for father involvement programs
- ◆ Stories of emerging father leaders
- ◆ Funding for father involvement programs
- ◆ Steps to implement father involvement programs in your community
- ◆ Principles for achieving integrated father involvement programs
- ◆ A glimpse at 2020 and beyond

- ◆ Evidence-based curricula for father involvement programs
- ◆ Over 30 resources that include curricula, models, technical assistance, training, research-to-practice findings, and tips for implementing father involvement

Please note that while father involvement is applicable to all families, this Guide focuses more on vulnerable families, meaning those families where the biological father is a peripheral member of the family or absent. Vulnerable families may appear in the child welfare, juvenile justice, and criminal justice systems, among other systems. Vulnerable families that begin when a child is born outside marriage are referred to as fragile families (McLanahan, et al, 2010).

NFPN believes that you will refer to this Guide over and over again as you endeavor to establish and improve father involvement programs. We are grateful for the opportunity to partner with you on behalf of fathers and families.

Priscilla Martens, Executive Director
National Family Preservation Network
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Foreword

By Elena Cohen, Early Pioneer of Father Involvement

The message of the *Complete Guide to Father Involvement* is clear—fathers make a critical difference in the lives of our children. Research has demonstrated the impact on children, families, and communities that result when fathers abandon their responsibilities to their children. Statistics show that children who grow up without fathers are more likely to drop out of school and wind up in prison. They're more likely to have substance abuse problems, run away from home, and become teenage parents themselves.

The field of father involvement has come a long way...

Many changes have occurred during the last decade. This document describes federal and national organizations that are currently supporting and reflecting the critical role that fathers play in building strong, successful families and communities as well as promoting the well-being of children. Highlighted are father involvement programs that focus on providing opportunities designed to attract and engage fathers in the education, care, and support of their children. These opportunities may concentrate on strengthening the father–child relationship by encouraging fathers to spend time in the classroom, participate in father–child activities, read to their children at home, while

other opportunities may involve strengthening the fathers' parenting skills by encouraging them to participate in relationship or parenting classes. Other opportunities may address the individual needs of fathers by providing job training or sponsoring fatherhood workshops or discussion groups.

The involvement of fathers is now promoted in the child protection system. Child protection agencies know that involving the father in services can tip the balance in the system's ability to successfully execute the treatment plan and desired goals.

...but it still has a long way to go.

Several programs exist and more are being developed as the need for and the value of the involvement of fathers becomes apparent. However, in most cases programs do not address the unique perspectives men have as parents or the social stigmas or attitudes associated with their role in child development. Fathers—particularly those from urban and low income backgrounds—are all too often mistakenly dismissed as disengaged and irrelevant, and as a result no explicit effort is made to involve them in services.

Neglecting fathers is all the more striking when contrasted with the recent census statistics that one in three children grow up without fathers. For low-income families, that percentage is even greater.

If you are an administrator in a public or private organization at any level, a frontline provider, an interested citizen, or a father wishing to find out about services available in your community, I encourage you to become aware of father involvement programs, engage in broad-based coalitions for implementing them, or start a program in your community—even while researchers continue to expand the knowledge base. Your efforts to collaborate will contribute to the expansion of the development, dissemination, implementation, and evaluation of such programs. It will also build a workforce capable of involving fathers in a meaningful way which will ensure the greatest success for your program.



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Foundations of the Fatherhood Movement

Foundations of the Fatherhood Movement

Concern about father absence entered the nation's consciousness in the early 1990s. The '90s could be characterized as the **Decade of the Disappearing Father** as evidenced by David Blankenhorn's seminal book *Fatherless America*, published in 1995. Other pioneers concerned about father absence included Charles A. Ballard, Wade Horn, Ron Mincy, David Popenoe, Ken Canfield, and Ron Clark. Deserving special mention are two female pioneers, Theodora Ooms and Elena Cohen.

The male pioneers established national and state initiatives and organizations on fatherhood but provided little in the way of written guidance for replication in terms of organizational structure, programs, curricula, funding sources, and sustainability. That work was initially undertaken by the female pioneers and then others who followed in the first decade of the new millennium of 2000, the **Decade of the Reappearing Father**.

One of the earliest descriptions of policies and programs for father-involvement appeared in the Federal Family Impact Seminar Report of 1995. Titled *Disconnected Dads: Strategies to Promote Responsible Fatherhood* (Ooms, Cohen, and Hutchins. https://www.purdue.edu/hhs/hdfs/fii/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/pf_fis36report.pdf)

report provided examples of innovative programs and initiatives to encourage responsible fatherhood, included key contact information, and remains highly recommended reading on the early history of father involvement. However, the report was self-described as focused mostly on programs for inner city, African–American fathers and did not address fathers involved in systems such as child welfare, juvenile justice, and substance abuse.

The past Decade of the Reappearing Father has arguably witnessed more focus, initiatives, organizations, programs, curricula, funding, and research targeted to father involvement than at any other time in history. The following is a brief overview of the accomplishments of the past 10 years:

- ◆ First manual on father involvement for practitioners published in 2001 by NFPN with comprehensive basic and advanced fatherhood training curricula packages provided in 2003–2005
- ◆ Publication of federally commissioned *What About the Dads?* This report is credited with leading to the establishment of the National Quality Improvement Center on Non-Resident Fathers and the Child Welfare System in 2006.
- ◆ Development of numerous curricula for fatherhood support groups
- ◆ Responsible Fatherhood grants awarded by the federal government in 2006 with funding of \$50 million annually for 5 years for 94 programs nationwide

- ◆ A one-year, \$150 million extension of the Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood Grants program passed by Congress in 2010
- ◆ Research and evaluation on father involvement including fragile families, non-resident fathers, practitioners' engagement of fathers, and implementation of the Responsible Fatherhood grants

And, the work continues. The current decade might be termed the **Decade of the Integrated Father** in which the father's role and value is acknowledged and he becomes a fully integrated member of the family. But the gap between the Reappearing Father and the Integrated Father is large and how to bridge that gap is addressed in the remainder of this guide.



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Contributions of National Organizations to Father Involvement

Contributions of National Organizations to Father Involvement

As the fatherhood movement matured, there was increased focus on developing programs and curricula that could be replicated and used with vulnerable families in various systems and cultures.

Here's a look at some of the national organizations and their contributions to promoting father involvement:

National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse

<https://www.fatherhood.gov/>

A federally funded resource whose goals are to provide, facilitate, and disseminate current research, and proven and innovative strategies that will encourage and strengthen fathers and families, and providers of services.

National Fatherhood Initiative

<http://www.fatherhood.org>

Training, technical assistance, and curricula for father support programs.

NFI's curricula, the most widely used curricula by Responsible Father grantees, include *24/7 Dad* and *InsideOut Dad*, the latter used in prisoner reentry programs.

National Center for Fathering

<http://www.fathers.com>

School essay contests on fathers and the Watch D.O.G.S. program at schools that offers fathers an opportunity to serve as role models for students and to assist with ensuring school security.

Native American Fatherhood and Families Association

<https://www.nativeamericanfathers.org/>

Fatherhood and Motherhood Program implemented in 55 tribes and 7 urban centers.

National Family Preservation Network

<http://www.nfpn.org>

Basic and advanced fatherhood training curricula and other resources for practitioners in the child welfare and other systems.

Now let's take a look at what resources are available for working with the most challenging fathers.



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Working with Challenging Fathers

Working with Challenging Fathers

The previously segregated fields of marriage strengthening, responsible fatherhood, and domestic violence were melded together in 2006 with the federal funding of Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood programs. Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood grantees were required to consult with Domestic Violence experts. The Center on Violence Against Women & Children at Rutgers School of Social Work has an excellent summary on collaborative efforts available here:

<https://socialwork.rutgers.edu/centers/center-violence-against-women-and-children/research-and-evaluation/evaluating-domestic-violence-liaison-program>

David Mandel and Associates, located in Connecticut, offer curricula for those who work with batterers and a curriculum for working with fathers. The goal is to help batterers understand their pattern of abuse, its effect on their families, rethink their sense of entitlement, and develop practical plans for stopping abuse behavior. The organization has done a great deal of research and work

in the combined areas of domestic violence and child protection. An overview of the Safe and Together Model is located at: <http://endingviolence.com/our-programs/safe-together/safe-together-overview/>

Another evidence-based curriculum on domestic violence is the Duluth Model in Minnesota. Information on a curriculum for batterers is available at: <https://app.etapestry.com/cart/DomesticAbuseInterventionPr/default/category.php?ref=4031.0.17007655>

For incarcerated fathers, the most widely-used curriculum, Inside/Out Dad, is in 22 states and used by some of the federally-funded responsible fatherhood programs. Information on the curriculum is available at: <https://store.fatherhood.org/insideout-dad-programs/>

There are few evidence-based programs that have been identified for fathers who are substance abusers. Recent findings from the Supporting Father Involvement Program <http://supportingfatherinvolvementsfi.com/> indicate that fathers participating in a couples' group curriculum showed a decrease in substance abuse.



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Military Fathers

Military Fathers

The Sloan Work and Family Research Network has prepared Fact Sheets that provide brief answers to some important questions about work–family and work–life issues. This Fact Sheet includes statistics about military families such as:

“Almost half of the spouses surveyed (49%) reported their oldest child is coping or has coped very well/well with the Soldier spouse being deployed and away from home. One-fifth (20%) reported their oldest child is coping or has coped poorly/very poorly.”

For more information, view the Fact Sheets at:

<http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/pdfs/militaryfamilies.pdf>

The Sloan Network also offers resources for military families:

<http://wfnetwork.bc.edu/topic.php?id=38>

Deployment is a critical issue with military fathers and families. The entire family experiences pre-deployment, survival, and reunion stages. A good resource for military couples is the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families.

Center. The Center identifies factors that result in successful stages of deployment, including family cohesion, strong social support systems, marital stability, adequate finances, and frequent communication. Marriage education programs with findings of effectiveness are discussed. Premarital counseling is also recommended. For more information on resources for military families, visit:

<https://www.healthymarriageandfamilies.org/library-resource/military-and-veteran-families-and-children-policies-and-programs-health-maintenance>

Stronger Families (<http://www.strongerfamilies.org>), a faith-based organization, offers seminars to military couples to strengthen their relationship and work on tough issues in a way that is fun and non-threatening. For more information about the seminars, visit:

<https://www.strongerfamilies.com/military-uso/>

We look next at the growing body of research on many types of fathers.



What Does the Research Tell Us About Father Involvement?

What Does the Research Tell Us About Father Involvement?

Early research focused on father absence and has been widely disseminated. This Guide will focus on research within the past decade.

In order to engage fathers in vulnerable families that may be involved in social service systems and in which the father may be absent from the home, the father must first be identified and located. Hospitals are on the frontline for identification because fathers are frequently present at a child's birth. As children become older, the identity and location of the father may be provided by the mother, relatives, or the child support system.

Research is currently underway on the Responsible Fatherhood grants, many of which target unmarried couples. A GAO report issued in 2008 found problems with implementation including recruitment of participants and compliance with grant requirements. Program evaluations are not currently available.

Building Strong Families, a federally funded project that is focused on fragile families, provided group sessions on relationship skills to over 5,000 unmarried couples expecting babies or with infants less than 3 months old. Mathematica Policy Research measured progress at 15 months following the couples random assignment to group sessions or no group sessions. Of all of the programs in 8 different states, only one program in Oklahoma showed positive outcomes for couples. There were improvements in the overall quality of the couple's relationship and there were also gains in father involvement as the father was more likely to reside with the family and provide substantial financial support. The researchers hypothesized that the program in Oklahoma may have been successful because it offered a shorter, more flexible curriculum, more financial incentives for attendance, and included married couples in the group sessions.

Another long-term study that included the gold standard of random assignment is *The Supporting Father Involvement Program*. It has been in existence in California since 2003. In Phase 1, low income families, two-thirds Mexican American consisting of mostly married couples, were followed for 18 months. Parents with at least one child age 7 or younger were randomly assigned to a 16-week group for couples, a 16-week group for fathers, or a 3-hour group session for both parents. Couples were

not eligible if there was an open child welfare case or spousal violence or child abuse within the past year. Trained male/female pairs of professionals led the groups with the 32-hour curricula for both couples' and fathers' groups being almost identical. All couples were assigned a case manager who referred the family for any needed assistance. Here are the findings taken directly from the researchers' summary:

The one-session control group produced no significant positive changes over 18 months while the couples in the other two groups experienced significant benefits:

- ◆ Men and their partners in the *fathers* groups did not show the same increase in stress and anxiety over time that the control couples did, and their children did not show increases in problem behaviors as the control couples' children did, according to the parents themselves.
- ◆ Parents in the *couples* groups showed (1) significantly increased father involvement in childcare and psychological involvement, (2) couple satisfaction maintained over time (when it normally declines), (3) lower parenting stress, (4) lower personal distress, and (5) no increases in their children's problem behavior (aggression or hyperactivity) compared to children of parents in the control condition, who were described by their parents as exhibiting more problem behavior over the same period.

- ◆ The intervention effects reported above held across ethnic group membership, income level, and marital status, and were maintained 2.5 years after entering the study.
- ◆ During the first year, the agencies housing the SFI Project showed a significant improvement in their reputation for serving fathers, father-inclusive policies and procedures, the staff's preparation to provide services to fathers, and programs for fathers. These positive changes were maintained over the next three years.

Both intervention groups reduced risk factors that research shows are directly related to child abuse and neglect. (For more information on SFI research visit: <http://supportingfatherinvolvementsfi.com/>)

While there are an increasing number of studies on support groups for fathers, there are few studies on practitioners who work with fathers. One demonstration project was conducted at two child welfare agencies during 2002–2005. Following training on father engagement, workers did increase their efforts to identify and locate fathers and to involve the father and

the father's family in case planning and placements (English, Brummel, & Martens, 2009). The agencies also improved on measures of father-friendliness and workers' attitudes toward fathers showed positive changes.

An overview of the current research on father involvement now leads to specific measures on how to bridge the gap between the Reappearing Father and the Integrated Father. To accomplish that goal, we will look at a statewide model in Kansas.

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file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/BSF_36month_impact_fnlrpt.pdf



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Statewide Model for Father Involvement

Kansas: Statewide Model for Father Involvement

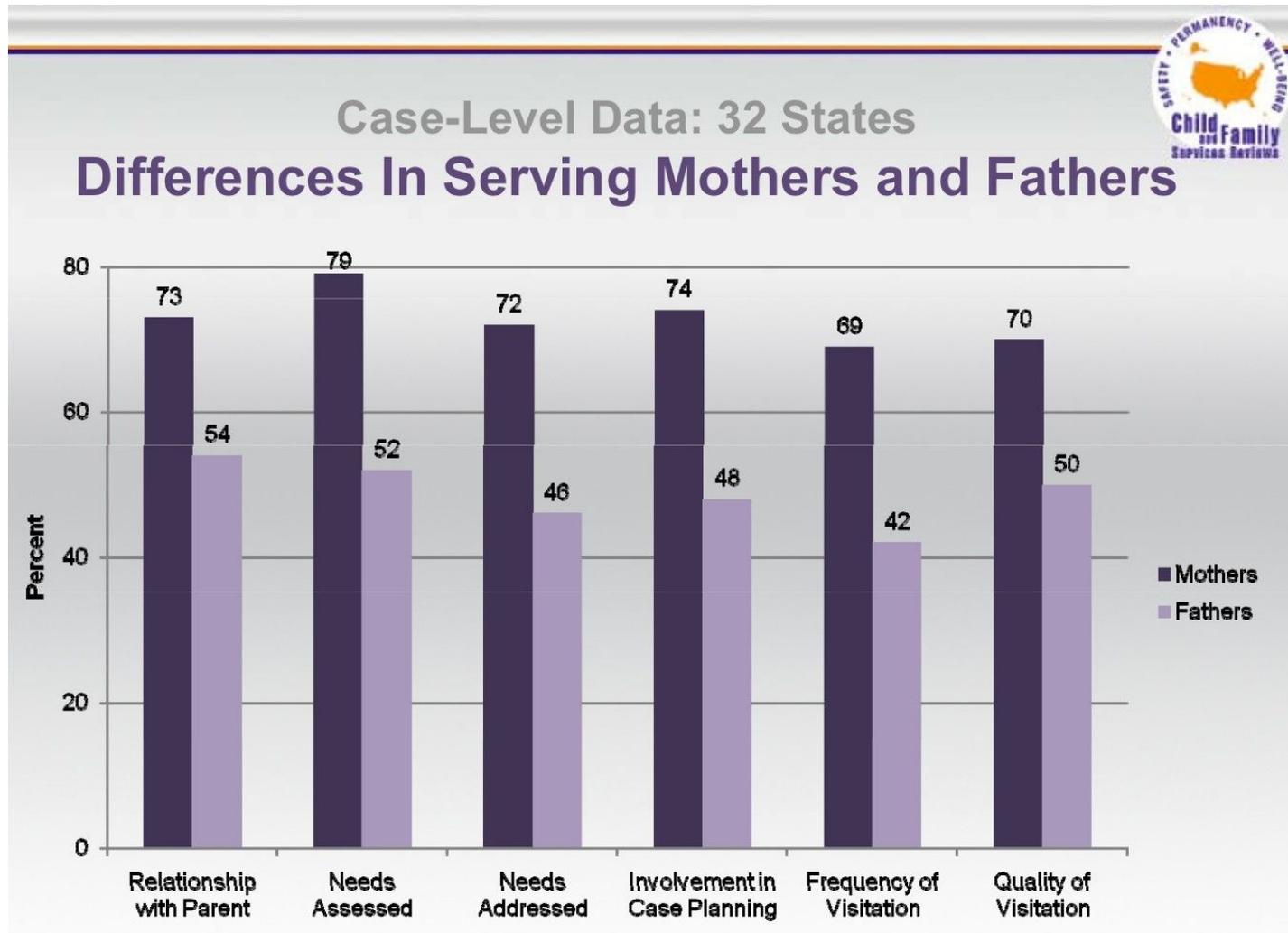
It seems appropriate to select the heartland state of Kansas as a model for father involvement with its location in the center of the nation and the portrayal of its people in books, theater, and movies as quintessentially American. But Kansas has earned its role as a statewide model for father involvement. Let's see how as we begin by looking at the child welfare system in Kansas where the most vulnerable families are found.

Kansas Children and Family Services

The Kansas Children and Family Services (CFS) is the state child welfare agency. Kansas has privatized child welfare services, meaning that all services related to families with abused and neglected children are contracted out to private providers, with the exception of investigation of complaints of child abuse or neglect. There is a statewide Fatherhood Coalition in Kansas whose vision is “fathers in Kansas communities engage in healthy and positive relationships with children.” CFS participates in the Fatherhood Coalition along with representatives from other organizations including, among others, Head Start, Health Care, and the University of Kansas. This is the approach that CFS took to engage fathers in its system:

All states are required to participate in the federal Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR) that measure outcomes in child welfare agencies. States fared poorly on father involvement in the first round of the reviews and fared even worse in the second round of reviews.

The following is a chart of 32 states from the second round of reviews showing the differences between fathers and mothers in caseworkers' efforts to involve parents:



ACF/CB 2010 Policy to Practice Dialogue presentation by Esther Sherrard on October 5, 2010

The state of Kansas is one of the few states that received a rating of strength on areas reflecting father involvement in the first round of the CFSR. However, Kansas did not fare as well in the second round of the CFSR and the state child welfare agency included father engagement in its 2008 Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). The measures for improvement included:

- ◆ Increased engagement with fathers in case planning and worker contact practices
- ◆ Changing the word “parent” to the phrase “mother and father” in the CFS policy manual to encourage workers to identify and locate fathers and involve the father and his family in case planning
- ◆ Contracting with the Kansas Children’s Alliance to provide Training of Trainers on the *Basic and Advanced Fatherhood Training Curricula* (<http://www.nfpn.org>). Contracted providers will now offer this training to their workers twice each year.
- ◆ Strengthening requirements for contacting relatives, including paternal relatives, for placement of children
- ◆ Contracted providers have all developed tools to track and ensure father involvement. The following is a tool that can be used to track father involvement:

Assessing Father Involvement

1. Has paternity been established?

- Yes No

If no, what efforts have been made or are underway to establish paternity?

2. Is the father's location known?

- Yes No

If no, has child support enforcement been contacted for assistance in locating the father?

- Yes No

Check any of the following that apply to the father's location, if known:

- Lives in same general area as the child
- Lives too far away for frequent face-to-face contact with the child
- In jail or prison
- Deceased

3. Is the father the alleged perpetrator of abusing or neglecting the child?

- Yes No

4. Does the father currently have any contact with the child?

- Yes No

If yes, what is the frequency of contact?

- Daily
 Weekly Bi-
 weekly
 Monthly
 Other (please specify) _____

If the father has no current contact, has a visitation schedule been established?

- Yes No

If no, what is the reason? _____

If yes, what is the frequency of visitation?

- Daily
 Weekly Bi-
 weekly
 Monthly
 Other (please specify) _____

5. Do any of the father's extended family members have any contact with the child?

Yes No

If yes, list the person(s) and relationship to the father/child:

What is the frequency of contact? _____

If no contacts, what are the barriers? _____

6. Does the father provide direct care for the child?

Yes No

If yes, list the type of care provided:

Child stays at father's home on regular basis

Father baby-sits child

Father takes child to activities

Other _____

7. Does the father appropriately discipline the child?

Yes No Don't know

8. Do the child's mother and father communicate regularly about the child?

- Yes No

Describe the type of interaction between the child's mother and father:

9. Is the father employed?

- Yes No

If yes, list the type of employment:

- Occasional or seasonal
 Part time
 Full time

If the father has less than full time employment, has he been referred to an employment program?

- Yes No

10. Does the father provide financial support for the child?

- Yes No

If yes, list the type of support:

- Child support payments made on regular basis
 Occasional child support
 Occasional gifts or cash

11. Is the father involved in the child's case plan?

Yes No

If yes, are there specific requirements for the father to fulfill?

Yes No

12. Have services been offered to the father?

Yes No

If yes, list the services offered:

The next section deals with how one contracted provider addressed and achieved improvements in father involvement.

DCCCA Quality Improvement in Services to Fathers

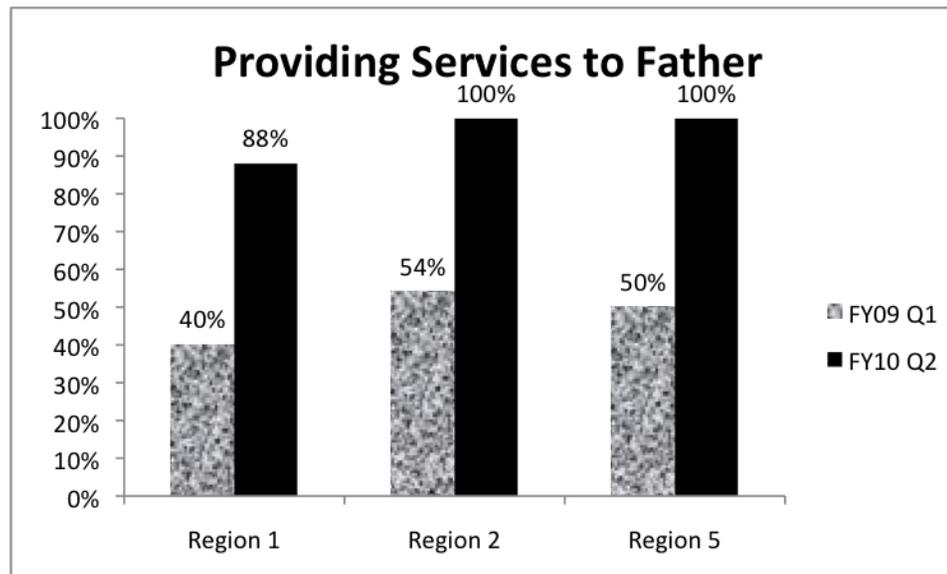
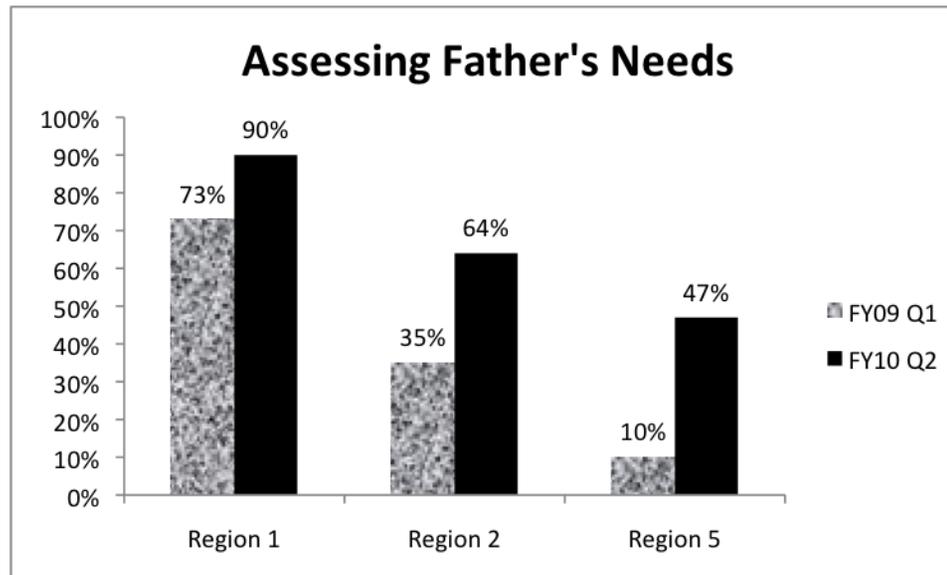
Each year the Council on Accreditation (COA) requires the DCCCA agency to pursue a quality improvement project. DCCCA's quality improvement goal was to improve services and case involvement with fathers in the Family Preservation Services Program. These were key areas of deficiency for the State of Kansas in the second round of the federal Children and Family Services Review (CFSR) conducted in 2007.

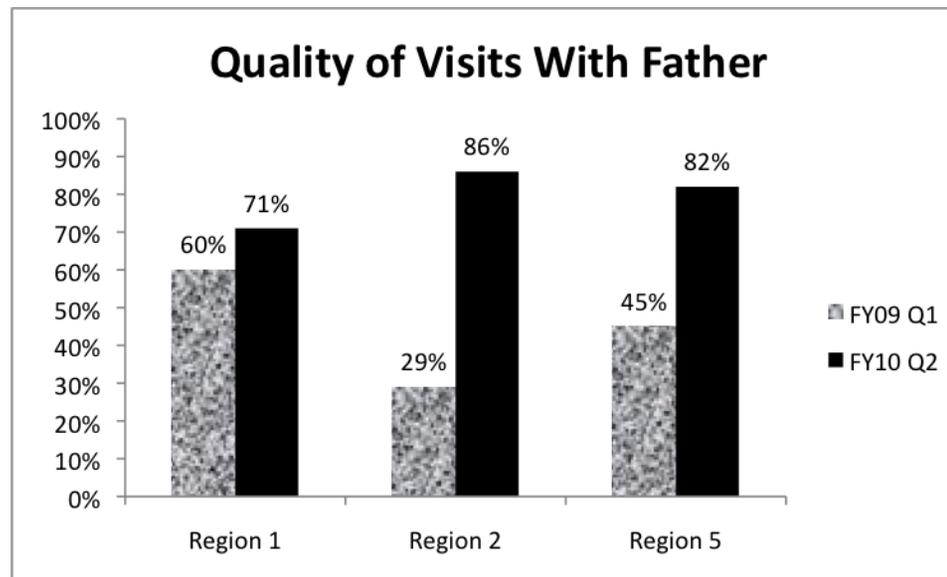
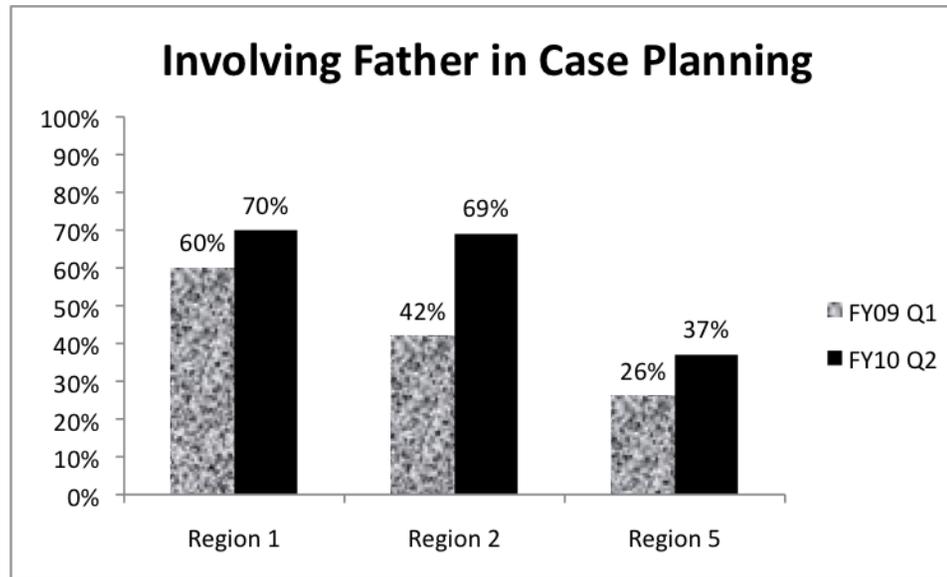
DCCCA's goal was to improve performance in on-site case audits of five key items as measured in quarterly case reviews through:

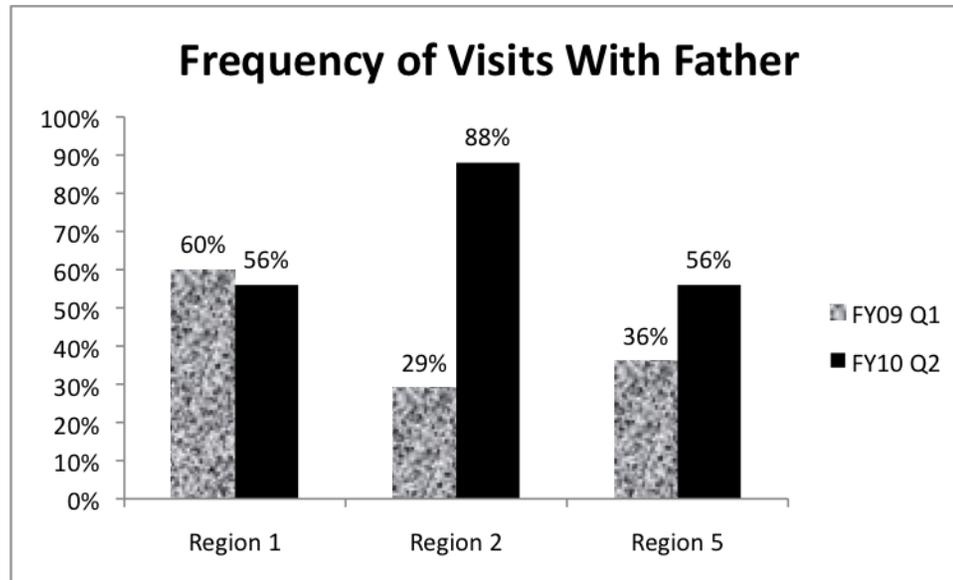
1. Initial comprehensive assessment of the father's needs
2. Provision of appropriate services to the father to address identified needs
3. Active involvement by the father in the case planning process
4. Quality of the visits between the caseworker and the father
5. Frequency of the visits between the caseworker and the father

DCCCA measured improvement by comparing statewide performance levels on each item from the first quarter of FY09 to the performance level on these same items in the second quarter of FY10. State auditors randomly selected sample cases for review from each of DCCCA's three Family Preservation Regions. DCCCA served 2,125 Family Preservation families during the audit period. State auditors reviewed approximately 100 case files during each of the six quarterly audit reviews.

Workers received training on NFPN's fatherhood training curricula.
Here are the results:







That's how practitioners are improving father involvement in Kansas. Now, here's a look at how an agency in Kansas is reaching out to fathers in the context of parenting.

The Inclusion of the Parent Leadership Model into the Kansas Father Involvement Initiative

In the state of Kansas, Father Involvement and the Parent Leadership Models complement each other in helping to strengthen families and ensure the well-being of children. The Kansas Fatherhood Initiative is funded through Circle of Parents®. Circle of Parents® received a five-year grant award from the U. S.

Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance, for Responsible Fatherhood targeted to father involvement in early home visitation programs.

Each year, five states were selected for funding through the Circle of Parents® “Partners for Kids-United Hands Make the Best Families—Responsible Fatherhood.” Kansas Children’s Service League (KCSL), as the Circle of Parents® Kansas Chapter, was selected in Kansas as the lead agency for the Fatherhood funding. A brief description of the KCSL Parent Leadership model follows:

Parent Leadership is viewed by KCSL as a high priority in strengthening families. Through Parent Leadership Summits, communities come together to share information on the principles and benefits of parent leadership. Parents and Practitioners, as a team, are offered Parents as Leaders Ambassador Training. Developed by the FRIENDS National Resource Center, the training helps parents and practitioners view each other as equal partners. Parent cafes are then initiated to bring together parents to discuss issues, concerns, insights, and successes regarding programs and services. KCSL provides support groups for parents, provides technical assistance in developing Parent Leadership Advisory Councils and plays a key role in the annual Kansas Parent Leadership Conference which is

attended by over 250 parents and practitioners. KCSL also offers Parent Leadership training to parents which includes leadership and advocacy training.

Many Parent Leadership concepts have been incorporated into the fatherhood initiative and the implementation steps follow.

Implementation Steps for the Fatherhood Initiative in Kansas

Nationwide, over half of the fathers involved in Circle of Parents® programs are low income and unmarried, non-resident, separated, or divorced.

Fatherhood Summit Meeting

A community meeting which creates community awareness and embracement of Fatherhood involvement by providing valuable information and sharing of the principles and benefits of Fatherhood involvement.

- ◆ Community invitation to the Fatherhood Summit Meeting.
- ◆ Overview of the benefits of Fatherhood involvement in agency programs and services.
- ◆ Overview of the Fatherhood Model in the community setting.
- ◆ Information gathering and sharing.

“Conscious Fathering” Classes

“Conscious Fathering” is three-hour training for prenatal fathers and fathers of a baby up to one year of age. It covers topics such as caring for the baby, developing a healthy relationship and providing support for the mother of the baby, and how to care for a baby experiencing the “period of purple crying” to avoid shaken baby syndrome. Fifty-eight birth hospitals in Kansas have implemented the Period of Purple Crying Program, an evidence-based model for shaken baby syndrome prevention. For more information, visit:

<http://www.purplecrying.info>

Steps for successful implementation of the Conscious Fathering classes include:

- ◆ Provide information on the “Conscious Fathering” classes to community partners who will be referring fathers to the classes and act as sponsors to offer the classes in their facility.
- ◆ Recruit, hire, and train facilitators to conduct the classes.
- ◆ Provide classes in the community.
- ◆ Conduct surveys with the fathers participating in the classes.
- ◆ Compile survey results.

To learn more about the Conscious Fathering program visit:
<http://www.parenttrust.org/index.php?page=consciousfathering>

Circle of Parents® Fatherhood Support Groups

The Circle of Parents® Fatherhood support groups are a network of support groups which are father led and father directed. Based on an evidence-based mutual self-help support group model, the support group is an opportunity for fathers to meet, discuss issues and concerns, and share information and network. The steps to implement a successful Fatherhood support group are:

- ◆ Develop a sponsor and location for the support group.
- ◆ Recruit, conduct background checks, and conduct interview with potential support group facilitator (Parent Leader).

- ◆ Conduct Circle of Parents® facilitator training.
- ◆ Start-up for support group.
- ◆ Conduct marketing.
- ◆ Provide on-going support and supervision for the facilitator and support group.

To find out how to implement a Circle of Parents® support group, visit:
<http://circleofparents.disscada.com/about/join-the-network/>

Fatherhood Advisory Council

The Fatherhood Advisory Council creates sustainability for the Fatherhood Initiative in the community and provides guidance, direction and feedback to agencies and organizations that are implementing and offering Fatherhood Initiatives. The Council can be comprised of Father Parent Leaders only or can have both Father Parent Leaders and Practitioners.

In the development of the Council, initial training and implementation includes:

- ◆ Roles and responsibilities of an Advisory Council
- ◆ Development of Advisory Council officers

- ◆ Setting goals and objectives for the Advisory Council

Organizational Culture Change

KCSL as the Statewide Training and Technical Assistance Agency has:

- ◆ Made Fatherhood a priority of the Agency Strategic Plan
- ◆ Implemented Father Friendly Checklist Training through the Statewide Staff Council; each member is responsible to implement changes for their office
- ◆ Trained All Program Services Staff to recruit, engage, equip, and empower fathers
- ◆ Trained Home Visiting staff in all topic areas

Individual Home Visiting Programs and other Agency Partners in Each Community:

- ◆ Implement Father Friendly Checklist Training
- ◆ Learn how to recruit, engage, equip and empower fathers
- ◆ Are able to participate in training in all topic areas

National, state, and local organizations all play a role in implementation of a statewide father involvement model. Here is what that looks like in Kansas:

National Involvement for Fatherhood Initiatives in Kansas

Circle of Parents®

- ◆ Provides funding for the Kansas Fatherhood Initiative.
- ◆ Provides training and technical assistance.
- ◆ Provides program evaluation for the “Conscious Fathering” classes and the Circle of Parents® support groups.

State Involvement for the Fatherhood Initiatives in Kansas

- ◆ **Head Start:** member of the Kansas Fatherhood Coalition.
- ◆ **Healthy Families:** sponsors “Conscious Fathering” classes and Circle of Parents® fatherhood support groups.
- ◆ **Parents As Teachers:** sponsors “Conscious Fathering” classes and Circle of Parents® fatherhood support groups.
- ◆ **Kansas Parents Information Resource Center:** member of the Kansas Fatherhood Coalition.
- ◆ **Kansas Fatherhood Coalition:** provides a statewide Fatherhood Resource Directory, develops community awareness activities, referral resource for fatherhood activities, and hosts the fatherhood track of the Kansas Parent Leadership Conference.

- ◆ **Success by Six:** Sponsors “Conscious Fathering” classes and Circle of Parents® fatherhood support groups.
- ◆ **Kansas Social and Rehabilitation Services:** member of the Kansas Fatherhood Coalition and member of the Douglas County Fatherhood Advisory Council.
- ◆ **Kansas State University:** member of the Kansas Fatherhood Coalition.
- ◆ **Kansas University:** member of the Kansas Fatherhood Coalition and developed role-playing training for practitioners and workshops for adoptive, foster, and teen parents
- ◆ **Kansas Department of Health and Education:** member of the Kansas Fatherhood Coalition.

Local Involvement for the Fatherhood Initiative in Kansas

Provides facilitators, meeting space, food items, child care, and acts as a referral source for Circle of Parents® Fatherhood support groups and are members of local Fatherhood Advisory Councils.

- ◆ Healthy Families
- ◆ Parents As Teachers
- ◆ Head Start
- ◆ Churches

- ◆ Libraries
- ◆ Mental Health
- ◆ CBCAP Grantees
- ◆ SRS
- ◆ Success by Six
- ◆ Law Enforcement
- ◆ School Districts
- ◆ Businesses
- ◆ Fathers
- ◆ Fort Riley Military Base

The Kansas model does not yet cover the entire state of Kansas but there are plans for expansion through local foundation funding. That leads to the next section on funding for implementation, immediately following some exciting stories on emerging father leaders.



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Stories of Emerging Father Leaders

Stories of Emerging Father Leaders

Joe R. is a young father who has been actively involved in the Healthy Families and the Kansas Partners for Kids: United Hands Make the Best Families Fatherhood Project in Douglas County. After his recent move to Topeka, KS, Joe continues to work with the fatherhood efforts. Joe has been an inspiration to those who have had the opportunity to work with him in the Fatherhood Initiative and the Healthy Families Programs in Douglas County and Topeka.

Joe is the proud father of four children. He and his wife have been blessed with a 3-month-old little girl and a 2-year-old son. Two of Joe's daughters do not reside with him. Joe would love to spend more time with his two older daughters, but distance and time has not allowed Joe to be a constant father figure in their lives. Joe has not had contact with one of his older daughters in over three years. But just in the last month, he and his daughter have been visiting by phone. Joe is very excited about the opportunity to reconnect with his daughter and be involved in her life.

A very difficult period of life for Joe and his family was when the family was faced with being homeless. For a period of 9 months, Joe and his family

dealt with being homeless and finding a place to live until Joe could find employment which would support his family.

Joe started his involvement in Healthy Families and the Fatherhood efforts through a request of his wife. His wife was involved with the Douglas County Healthy Families Program, and she asked Joe if he would be willing to be involved in the program for the benefit of their children. Joe readily agreed to join the program, and once he was involved, he was connected to the Douglas County Fatherhood Initiative where he was one of the first Dads to become actively involved. Joe took a lead role in the Daddy/Me Play Group and Fatherhood Support Group.

Joe's experiences in being involved in Healthy Families and the Douglas County Fatherhood efforts have given him a better perspective on what the roles of a father should be, helped him to better understand his children's needs and definitely made him a more involved Dad with his children. His wife gives him a great deal of encouragement, and they spend time discussing what important information he has learned. His involvement has truly strengthened their relationship. The experience has developed more trust and love between him and his wife.

Joe believes a father should be a strong role model for his children—one they can look up to by being actively involved in the children's lives by spending

valuable quality time with them whether it be play activities, story time, or just listening to them share their ideas dreams and desires. One fathering responsibility which is very important to Joe is to let your children know you will always be there for them. A father should let their child know he will not be “walking out the door and never returning!” Joe’s father was an absent father when he was young, and it left him with a strong impression. His mother had to work three jobs to support him and his siblings. Joe discovered through this experience how important it is for a father to be in his child’s life, and to be a constant and reassuring influence.

Joe has recently stepped up into a statewide leadership role through a position on the Parent Leadership Advisory Council. In his role on the Council, Joe will be able to continue providing valuable information and insight into the importance of father involvement.

Charlie Bryan has been a gem in the local fatherhood program. He not only is an active, involved husband and father but has significantly increased the number of fathers participating in the local Dad Groups/Daddy & Me playgroups. He and his “silent partner,” Gayle Anderson, Parents as Teachers Coordinator, have successfully collaborated to build on one another’s strengths to establish a Dads group that keeps growing in size each month. Charlie has utilized social media (Facebook, Google groups, e-mail) to keep dads

informed of upcoming events and information that is relevant to them and their families. But the most important factor that has been bringing dads back is Charlie's approachable, genuine ability to engage dads and find out what activities they want to participate in with their children. These strengths have made him an ideal dad to be a facilitator for the local Dads groups/Daddy & Me playgroups.

Charlie first came into contact with the local fatherhood initiative over a year ago when he attended one of the first Conscious Fathering classes offered in his community of Lawrence, Kansas. Charlie was one of three dads in attendance. The other two dads were first time dads-to-be and came to the class with several questions, excitement and anxiety. At that time, Charlie was a first time dad of a 9-month-old. Much of the class material focused on the early care of an infant, which Charlie had already experienced with his parenting partner and wife, Jennifer. He was able to easily relate to those two new/expectant dads and did so with a humble approach of "I've been there before and things do get easier." He shared about the local community resources and other classes he and his wife had taken that proved to be very beneficial to them. He was relatively new to the area and said he hoped to meet other dads that he could relate to.

After that one-time class Charlie and his daughter, Bella, became regular attendees at the monthly Dad Group/Daddy & Me playgroup. He so easily

engaged with other dads and was confident as a father but yet willing to share areas of parenting where he felt unsure or vulnerable. Charlie is a natural learner and he wants to know everything he can about being the best dad, best parenting partner he can be.

That interest opened the door to Charlie becoming a member of the local fatherhood initiative advisory group, Dads of Douglas County. Within a few meetings the opportunity for someone to be the secretary of the group came around and Charlie willingly accepted the role. Since this role involves a 3-year commitment (will assume co-chair & then chair position), Charlie solidified his active role in the development of the fatherhood initiative in Douglas County.

He furthered that involvement when he agreed to be trained as a facilitator for the Circle of Parents groups (locally called Dads Group/Daddy and Me playgroup). Since this role was being funded by Circle of Parents, Partners for Kids: United Hands Make the Best Families Responsible Fatherhood Community Access Program, Charlie was offered payment for facilitating the classes. Charlie has refused payment and instead suggested the monies be used to reach out to other dads in the community to also become facilitators in order to reach more dads. This is why Charlie Bryan has been a gem for this initiative, but more importantly a gem for the dads in Douglas County that will positively benefit from being connected to other dads in the community.



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Funding for Father Involvement

Funding for Father Involvement

Early funding for father involvement initiatives came from private foundations including the Ford, Annie E. Casey, C.S. Mott, and Stuart Foundations.

There is currently little funding for father involvement from foundations.

The federal government began funding for fatherhood programs in FY 2001. From FY 2006-FY 2010, grants were funded for Healthy Marriage at \$100 million annually and Responsible Fatherhood at \$50 million annually. Starting in FY 2011, the funding was divided equally with \$75 million for each. In addition half of the states use some TAN-F funds for responsible fatherhood programs.

In 2015, the federal government will fund an estimated 49 programs with \$47.8 million in Responsible Fatherhood grants addressing parenting, economic stability, and healthy marriage/relationships.

A good summary of federal funding is available here:

<https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RL31025.pdf>



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Implementing Father Involvement in *Your* Community

Implementing Father Involvement in *Your Community*

Because the hardest part of implementation is getting started, let's take everything that we've learned so far and break it down into smaller steps so that you can more easily see how to implement father involvement programs in your community:

1. Get everyone together. Convene a Fatherhood Summit Meeting by inviting participants in organizations and parenting groups that are already active in your community. Head Start has emphasized father involvement for years and is thus one of the best places to find fathers to participate. Ask a local newspaper, radio, or TV station to sponsor this Summit and be sure to invite elected officials.
2. Form a Fatherhood Advisory Council from the emerging leaders of the Fatherhood Summit. Include representatives from as many community groups as possible such as early childhood programs, K–12 schools, colleges/universities, businesses, service organizations, churches, health care programs, and father support groups. Seek funding from these organizations and also from businesses targeted to males such as sports, home repair, and building trades.

3. Begin programs where the most vulnerable families are found and at the earliest stages of fatherhood. Hospitals are a great starting place. Inquire if the local hospital(s) would be willing to provide the Purple Crying program, Conscious Fathering or another program for expectant fathers, and referrals to father support groups.
4. Start several father support groups and be sure to include moms to the greatest extent possible. Also include fathers who are good role models. Use male/female pairs to lead the curriculum. There are many curricula to choose from but use evidence-based ones (see Curricula section). Even if they cost more initially, they will be more effective over the long run. Seek funding from local foundations, businesses, fraternal, and service organizations. Budget \$1,500-\$3,000 per group for curricula, incentives, and refreshments. Collaborate with local social services agencies to provide case management services for vulnerable fathers and their families.
5. Train community service providers and child welfare workers on father involvement. It's critical that all those who work with fathers receive training. This training will reduce the "us vs. them" mentality and results in workers becoming advocates for father involvement programs. Seek funding from the organizations that will participate in the training, perhaps supplemented by local businesses. Plan for an initial training cost of \$2,000-\$3,000.
6. Providing events at schools linked to popular local sports will attract fathers to attend. Start a Watch D.O.G.S. program in elementary schools.

Schools may be able to provide funding for these events through their Title 1 programs. Budget \$500 per event and another \$500 to establish the Watch D.O.G.S. program.

7. Plan to evaluate every program offered. One simple no-cost method is to provide feedback forms to fathers who participate by asking them what knowledge they gained, a rating for the overall event, program, etc. and what they liked best and least about it. You cannot build support for father-involvement programs or sustainability without evaluation. Programs must demonstrate effectiveness in order to attract any source of funding and feedback from participants is a no-cost way to begin.
8. Work with local colleges and universities to develop father involvement curricula for students and for ongoing education in the community. Everyone who works with fathers should have the opportunity to receive training on father involvement both before and after earning a degree. Colleges and universities can also assist with program evaluation.
9. Always view father involvement as a shared community responsibility. The more that the responsibility and tasks are shared, the more progress and longer lasting results will be seen.

Summarizing everything thus far, what principles for father involvement are found in this guide?



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Principles for Achieving Integrated Father Involvement Programs

Principles for Achieving Integrated Father Involvement Programs

- ◆ Moms have been promoted from gatekeeper to facilitator. In the early years of father involvement, the mother was viewed as gatekeeper because she controlled the father's access to the child. But we now know that a mother's support and encouragement is critical to a father's involvement with his child. So, instead of playing a restrictive role, mothers facilitate the father's relationship with the child.
- ◆ Stand-alone father involvement programs are not sustainable. If only your agency is training workers on father involvement or if you have the only fatherhood support group in your community, this probably won't last for long. Stand-alone programs are often viewed as "one-time" by both practitioners and fathers and thus are not sustainable. You have to start somewhere but continue to build and expand the programs available in your community. Use the fatherhood advisory council to help provide direction, support, and advocacy for expanding father involvement programs.
- ◆ Use positive peer support whenever possible. Research shows that couples and fatherhood groups need participants who have demonstrated success in marriage and fathering.

- ◆ Vulnerable families need an outside support system. Education alone is not enough. The best father involvement education programs provide case managers to help families access needed services. Provide financial incentives and child care for participants who attend group sessions.
- ◆ Professionals who work with fathers also need training and support. Administrators can take the lead on father-involvement by making sure that the agency is father-friendly in environment and staffing; provide training, ongoing support, and incentives for workers to engage fathers; and establish a tracking system to measure improvements in father engagement. Offer training to practitioners at the same time that training and support is offered to fathers.
- ◆ Collaboration with other parenting programs provides support for father involvement programs and sustainability. The Kansas model has housed the father involvement program within a larger parenting program. This nested approach keeps overhead costs low for father involvement programs, provides a source of staffing for training and technical assistance, creates a built-in model for establishing and expanding programs, and links sustainability to the resources of a larger initiative.
- ◆ View fathers as valued partners for achieving the well-being of children. Offering fathers opportunities to meet informally with professionals

who work with their children allows fathers to share their perspective and concerns and makes it easier for workers to see that a child needs both parents.

Now that we know how to achieve the Integrated Father, what lies ahead for future decades?



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A Glimpse at 2020 and Beyond

A Glimpse at 2020 and Beyond

The question is raised: if fathers are integrated into families, why do we need father involvement programs? Conceivably, these programs would gradually fade away as they are no longer needed. Ideally, fathers and mothers in vulnerable families would be treated equally in all respects in the systems working with them.

Probably all of us would agree that we have a long way to go before fathers and mothers receive equal treatment. And we have only recently established programs for some of the most challenging fathers including prisoners, batterers, and substance abusers.

But great strides have been made in the past decade as fathers and mothers are now regarded as co-parents, mothers play a critical role in father involvement programs, parents are increasingly viewed as partners by practitioners, and programs for father involvement are viewed in the larger context of parenting and as a collaborative effort of many organizations.

By 2020, it's quite possible that many father involvement programs will be melded into parenting programs. But father involvement programs for vulnerable families will likely remain in existence after this decade.

Our work is not finished but the way forward is much clearer than it was for the early pioneers of the fatherhood movement. Maintaining their zeal and employing the new tools we have can accomplish a great deal in this decade and in the decades to come!



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Evidence-Based Curricula for Father Involvement Programs

Evidence-Based Curricula for Father Involvement Programs

All curricula listed below are evidence-based, with a broad range from promising practice to the gold standard of random control research. Please visit the Web sites listed for more information.

1. **The Supporting Father Involvement Program:** staff training is a prerequisite for implementation of the curriculum
<http://supportingfatherinvolvementsfi.com>

2. Circle of Parents Curriculum and Kansas statewide model: **Kansas Children's Service League**

<http://www.kcsl.org/>

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3. 24/7 Dad (all fathers), **InsideOut Dad** (for incarcerated fathers)

<http://store.fatherhood.org/24-7-dad-programs/>

<http://store.fatherhood.org/insideout-dad-programs/>

4. The Nurturing Fathers Program (all fathers)

http://nurturingfathers.com/docs/order_formflyer.pdf

5. Domestic Violence Curricula

a. Safe and Together Model

<http://endingviolence.com/our-programs/safe-together/safe-together-overview/>

b. Duluth Model

<https://app.etapestry.com/cart/DomesticAbuseInterventionPr/default/category.php?ref=4031.0.17007655>

6. Curricula for practitioners:**a. Basic and Advanced Fatherhood Training Curricula**

<http://www.nfnp.org/father-involvement1/basic-training-package.html>

7. Developmental Stages Resource**a. 40 Developmental Assets for Youth 12–18**

www.search-institute.org/content/40-developmental-assets-adolescents-ages-12-18

b. Ages and Stages of Child Development

<http://www.parentfurther.com/content/understand-ages-stages>