Fatherhood

In

Child Welfare

Workshop Handouts

Presented by:
Linda Metsger, Butler Institute for Families, University of Denver

Developed by:
University of Kansas School of Social Welfare Child Welfare Resource Network
FathersPlace is a two-part experience featuring a simulation and workshop that highlight fathers’ experiences with community-based services and foundations for effective child welfare practice involving fathers. The simulation takes place in the morning with the workshop occurring in the afternoon after lunch.

8:30 – 12:00  FathersPlace Simulation

12:00 – 1:00  LUNCH

1:00 – 1:30  About This Training & Introductions
             Generalizations & Stereotypes

1:30 – 2:30  Dedicated Not Deadbeat (Fatherhood USA)
             Video & Discussion

2:30 – 2:40  BREAK

2:40 – 3:40  Categorically Fathers

3:40 – 4:10  Exploring Barriers

4:10 – 4:20  Action Planning

4:20 – 4:30  Summary & Evaluations
Participants will be…

**Competency 1:** Able to support the involvement of fathers in the lives of their children.

- **Learning Objective 1.1:** Able to identify the kinds of supports, services, and partnerships that are available or could be developed in child welfare for fathers.
- **Learning Objective 1.2:** Able to identify strategies for helping mothers understand the important role fathers play in the lives of their children.
- **Learning Objective 1.3:** Able to identify strategies for engaging non-custodial or absent fathers.
- **Learning Objective 1.4:** Able to identify strategies for involving non-custodial or absent fathers.

**Competency 2:** Able to negotiate and utilize agency or system strengths to involve fathers.

- **Learning Objective 2.1:** Able to identify child welfare and partner’s policies and practices that support or impede father involvement.
- **Learning Objective 2.2:** Able to articulate three strategies for making agencies more father-friendly.

**Competency 3:** Able to understand how personal experience and values about fathers impact work with families.

- **Learning Objective 3.1:** Able to explore personal values and feelings about working with fathers in the child welfare system.
Quotes on Fatherhood

Fathers’ Emotional Development

Erikson argued that our pre-occupation with the responsibility of adults for children’s development has blinded us to a full appreciation of how children stimulate adult development. Speaking of fathers, Erikson says, “Mature man needs to be needed, and maturity needs guidance as well as encouragement from what has been proceeds and must be taken care of.”

Erik Erikson
*Childhood and Society*

“Father is not only a person; he can also be a quest, a kind of prize in a treasure hunt where someone has to lay the clues for the child. When clients talk about father, I sometimes become aware of a substream of thought and feeling where image seems to exercise at least as much power as the repetitive patterns of interacting with father over the years.”

Josie McDonald, MFT
*Father Power: Now You See it; Now You Don’t*
http://www.opendoors.com/au/FatherPower/FatherPower.htm

Children, in effect, give meaning to the lives of their fathers. How that meaning is constructed or shaped has a lot to do not only with relationships between fathers and children, but also the place given to fatherhood in our society.

Levine & Pitt
*New Expectations: Community Strategies For Responsible Fatherhood*
SELF REFLECTION – FATHERS IN CHILD WELFARE
INVOLVING FATHERS IN PERMANENCY PLANNING

First, write your first name or initials at the top of Column B.

Second, thoughtfully consider each statement in Column B & rank yourself “almost never” to “almost always” in Column C.

Third, provide an example that demonstrates the reason you ranked yourself as you did. Providing the example will link the item to your experience and then to consider it at a future date to identify changes to support on-going self reflection and action planning.

When you’re ready for action planning, refer to Column E, review your comments and select two or three areas for action planning. Under each create an action step and “do date” to guide your continued insight, learning and skill building.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>ATTITUDE, KNOWLEDGE, OR SKILL</th>
<th>ALMOST NEVER</th>
<th>ALMOST ALWAYS</th>
<th>DESCRIBE A SITUATION OR GIVE AN EXAMPLE TO SUPPORT THE NUMBER THAT YOU SELECTED.</th>
<th>ACTION PLANNING AND “DO DATE”</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>001A</td>
<td>I think about the ways my personal family experiences influence my work with fathers.</td>
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<td>002A</td>
<td>I seek to understand the stereotypes and biases that I may have and how those affect my work with fathers.</td>
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<td>003A</td>
<td>I counsel children whose fathers are not involved in their lives to adjust and move on. I think that is best.</td>
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<td>004A</td>
<td>I feel relieved when I learn that the bio-dads are absent and won’t be involved in a case.</td>
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<td>005A</td>
<td>I believe that the mother’s role and continued presence is far more important than the father’s.</td>
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<td>006A</td>
<td>I believe that it is important for children to have some connection to non custodial fathers even if they are incarcerated.</td>
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<td>007K</td>
<td>I am familiar with the statistics regarding the incidence of abuse and neglect perpetrated by fathers.</td>
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<td>008K</td>
<td>I make decisions about when and how to nurture relationships between absent fathers and children based on research and best practice rather than assumption and stereotypes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ITEM</td>
<td>YOUR NAME: ATTITUDE, KNOWLEDGE, OR SKILL</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
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<td>009K</td>
<td>I understand that fathers parent differently than mothers.</td>
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<td>010K</td>
<td>I can articulate the legal requirements for and best practice benefits of establishing paternity at birth.</td>
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<td>011K</td>
<td>I know which resources and services in my community are father-friendly.</td>
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<td>012K</td>
<td>I can articulate agency and institutional barriers that prevent fathers from remaining involved in children’s lives.</td>
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<td>013K</td>
<td>I can list several strategies that qualify as “diligent search” when it comes to locating absent fathers.</td>
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<td>014S</td>
<td>I seek out education, consultation and training to improve my effectiveness in working with fathers.</td>
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<td>015S</td>
<td>I know how to communicate with mothers so that they share accurate information about absent fathers and I help them to understand the importance of fathers in the lives of their children.</td>
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<td>016S</td>
<td>I use different skills to engage fathers than I use to engage mothers.</td>
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<td>017S</td>
<td>I assist fathers in negotiating system barriers.</td>
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<td>018S</td>
<td>I advocate for changes which will better serve fathers and their families.</td>
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<td>019S</td>
<td>I educate the fathers with whom I work regarding the child welfare system, goals, expectations and legal rights.</td>
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<td>020S</td>
<td>I facilitate the involvement of extended family and fictive kin in case planning regardless of whether a father is incarcerated, remote or otherwise removed.</td>
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<td>Common Perceptions About Fathers</td>
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### Viewing Matrix:

**A Video from Fatherhood USA**

Lipschutz, M. & Rosenblatt, R. Producers & Directors  
Produced by Cine Qua Non, Inc. and the Fatherhood Project at The Families and Work Institute

| Based on Jeremy’s description of how he first became a parent and his reaction to fatherhood, what predictions would you have made about his success as a father? | Which of the above negative stereotypes that you listed applied to Jeremy?  
Which of the above positive stereotypes that you listed applied to Jeremy? | How important to Jeremy’s success is his employment? |
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<tr>
<td>If Vicky had come to you for services after giving birth to her first child, and had described Jeremy to you (including his criminal record) how hard do you believe you would have worked to involve Jeremy in case planning?</td>
<td>Jeremy and Vicky face some ongoing challenges in their communication. Is the quality of their communication directly related to their ability to co-parent?</td>
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<td>Throughout the video, peer counseling is used to support men’s effort to be better fathers. What makes this a good model for working with fathers?</td>
<td>What are the differences between Jeremy's and Vicky’s parenting styles. Think about the differences and the implications for services?</td>
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<td>How does Jeremy’s relationship with his own father impact who he is as a father?</td>
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</table>
When your group's eco-map is finished, please place a big star on the three most important resources that helped Jeremy and his family. If those resources exist in your communities – if Jeremy could have accessed similar resources, mark those with a double star.
Nothing but the Facts Ma’am

1. Approximately 1 in 3 children live apart from a biological parent. What percentage of these children live apart from their biological father?

   A. 18%
   B. 41%
   C. 63%
   D. 83%

2. ___% of children in foster care receives financial support from their non custodial fathers?

   A. 16%
   B. 33%
   C. 45%
   D. 52%

3. What percentage of men incarcerated in Federal prisons are fathers of children under the age of 18?

   A. 29%
   B. 58%
   C. 63%
   D. 72%

4. Paternity is known but not necessarily established in about 80% percent of child welfare cases?

   A. 39%
   B. 58%
   C. 69%
   D. 80%

5. Approximately what percentage of children placed by child welfare come from single parent, mother head of household families?

   A. 40%
   B. 50%
   C. 60%
   D. 70%
CASEWORKER OUTREACH TO BIRTHFATHER’S

6. In studying caseworkers outreach to birth parents it has been found that fathers have to demonstrate their connection to their children whereas a mother’s connection to her children is taken from granted.

   A. True  
   B. False

7. When fathers are considered as a discharge resource for children, the level of outreach activity from caseworkers increases to a level equal to the outreach activity to mothers.

   A. True  
   B. False

8. Male caseworkers consider fathers a better target for intervention than do female caseworkers.

   A. True  
   B. False

9. When caseworkers have lower caseloads they tend to outreach to fathers as much as they do to mothers.

   A. True  
   B. False

WHAT ABOUT DADS?

10. Research indicates that the Federal Parent Locator Service is routinely used by caseworkers to locate absent fathers.

    A. True  
    B. False

11. The recent Children and Family Services Reviews have shown that workers have little contact with fathers even when the fathers are involved with the family.

    A. True  
    B. False

12. In data collected on 1,958 child welfare cases in four states, what percentage of fathers had visited their child while he or she was in foster care?

    A. 10%  
    B. 30%  
    C. 50%  
    D. 70%
13. Caseworkers are more likely to have constructive contact with fathers on a case if there is only one father rather than multiple fathers.

   A. True   B. False

14. Workers are more likely to use a records search to locate non-resident mothers than when trying to locate non-resident fathers.

   A. True   B. False

YOU WANT ME TO DO WHAT?????

15. In order to increase father involvement, one of the most effective interventions is to:

   A. Hold a case planning meeting at Auto Zone
   B. Include/invite fathers to the case planning meeting
   C. Publish a notice in Sports Illustrated
   D. Do a case plan/Texas Hold’m night

16. Because unemployment is often a major obstacle to father involvement, one critical service to increase father involvement is:

   A. Group therapy
   B. Parenting classes
   C. Employment services
   D. Family therapy

17. One of the first steps a caseworker should do to increase father involvement is to help mothers to understand the importance of father involvement in the lives of their children.

   A. True   B. False

18. This service has been shown to be very effective in increasing father involvement in case planning as well as increasing involvement of paternal relatives.

   A. Foster care placement
   B. Family Group Meetings
   C. Termination of parental rights
   D. There is no service that can get fathers more involved
WHY FATHERHOOD IN CHILD WELFARE?


Some studies indicate that more than half of the children in foster care come from single, female-headed households. And, while many of these children are already living apart from their fathers at the time of removal, they have even less contact with their dads after placement.

Studies have also shown that fathers and their families contribute to children’s financial and family stability as well as healthy development.

“Just 54% of these foster children had contact with their fathers in the past year compared with 66% of comparable children served by child welfare agencies and 72% of those in the general population.”

The National Center on Fathers and Families adopted seven Core Learnings to guide research, practice and policy. (From: State Policy Series on Family Support & Father Involvement: A Summary of Activities and Issues in the States. National Center on Fathers and Families. Philadelphia: Graduate School of Education, University of Pennsylvania.) They are:

- Fathers care – even if that caring is not shown in conventional ways.
- Father presence matters – in terms of economic well-being, social support, and child development.
- Joblessness is a major impediment to family formation and father involvement.
- Existing approaches to public benefits, child support enforcement & paternity establishment often create systemic barriers and even encourage “underground fathers,” or men who acknowledge paternity but do not participate in formal systems.
- More and more, young fathers and mothers require additional support to develop the skills to share parenting responsibilities.
- The transition from biological father to committed parent has significant development implications for young fathers.
- The behaviors of young parents, both fathers and mothers are influenced significantly by intergenerational beliefs and practices within families of origin.
Child Welfare Agencies’ Efforts to Identify, Locate and Involve Nonresident Fathers

Administrative & Organizational Resources
- Organizational structure
- Interagency collaboration
- Funding
- Staffing
- Training

Policies & Practices Affecting Process
- Kinship care preference
- Use of Family Group Decision Making
- Concurrent case planning
- Visitation & connection
- Use of TANF funded kinship care
- Efforts to recoup foster care expenses
- Diligent search
- Worker attitudes & beliefs
- Training
- Worker characteristics
- Insistent support from administrators for involving fathers

Characteristics of Program Participants
- Age & gender of children
- Type of abuse, placement
- Wishes of child, mother and father regarding father’s involvement
- Prior father involvement
- Ability of father to contribute

Locate → Involve

Potential Outcomes for Child
- Greater ties to father & paternal relatives
- Financial resources
- Reduced time in foster care
- Adoptions facilitated
- Knowledge of medical/genetic history
- Gender identity
- Responsible sexuality

Potential Outcomes for Father
- Maintain or develop ties to children
- Incarcerated dads less likely to reoffend
- Satisfaction of participating in permanency decisions
- Help child with emotional and/or abandonment issues
- Improved social interactions and connections

Potential Outcomes for Agency
- Clearer picture from concurrent case planning
- Option for relinquishment vs. termination
- Facilitates termination, reduces court costs
- Recoup foster care expenses
- Connect child to insurance, veterans, other benefits to reduce public support
- Peer support from successful fathers


FathersPlace: Fatherhood in Child Welfare
Identify, Locate & Involve Fathers
Adapted by KU School of Social Welfare & Butler Institute for Families
February 2008
BARRIERS TO FATHER INVOLVEMENT

SYSTEM BIAS AGAINST FATHER INVOLVEMENT – GROUP ONE

1. Laws are not standard in every state creating much confusion.

2. Definition of “diligent search” not consistent in every court.

3. Neglectful mothers are provided range of services to maintain custody; fathers not eligible for same services.

4. Laws requiring paternity be legally established prior to substantial child welfare involvement limit putative (assumed) fathers’ participation as well as paternal relatives consideration for placement and support.

5. Kinship services offered to custodial, but not to non-custodial parent.

6. Lack of financial programs/supports to pay for services of fathers who do not have the child(ren) living with them (TANF and other community programs seldom will offer any form of financial or Medicaid services to fathers.) There are programs such as WIC but no programs like FIC.

SYSTEM BIAS AGAINST FATHER INVOLVEMENT – GROUP TWO

7. Visitation not balanced between custodial and non-custodial parents.

8. Primary caretaker preference standard used in many jurisdictions.

9. Lack of training about father involvement and heavy workloads in general.

10. Multiple fathers require further increasing workload.

11. System geared to separate maltreating fathers from families and using coercive measures to ensure limited access. May be necessary for protection, but contributes to child’s paradox of wanting to belong, but wanting violence to end.

12. Outdated research assumptions often inform practice. The American Psychological Association recently concluded that fathers are still dramatically under-represented in clinical and child adolescent research and that some research assumptions are based on outdated society norms.
BARRIERS TO FATHER INVOLVEMENT

WORKER BIAS AGAINST FATHER INVOLVEMENT – GROUP ONE

1. Generally see three views of fathers:
   a. Fathers as perpetrators of abuse or neglect
   b. Fathers who are missing and needed to support family members, and
2. Some assume that low-income, non-custodial fathers who are absent are
   uninvolved or uncaring. A recent study showed that many such fathers have an
   ongoing “underground” relationships with their children.
3. Research shows a primary orientation of services toward mothers.
   a. True regardless of gender of worker.
4. Family services field is largely staffed by women. If they have been abandoned,
   abused or otherwise hurt by men, they bring a legacy of personal experience that
   often shapes their professional attitudes and behavior. The difference in what their
   hearts and their heads tell them can undermine their best intentions.
5. Fathers have to demonstrate connection to child whereas mothers’ are assumed.
6. Workers with positive values and attitudes toward bio parents have greater levels of
   activities with parents.

WORKER BIAS AGAINST FATHER INVOLVEMENT – GROUP TWO

7. Characteristics of non-custodial fathers contribute to situation
   a. Incarceration
   b. Homeless
   c. Significant impairment by substance abuse
   d. Unable to provide financial support to mother and children
8. Unable to provide emotional support to mother and children. Professionals
   sometimes do not hold fathers accountable for their responsibilities or afford them
   their rights. The social norms governing both the economic obligations of
   nonresident fathers and fathers’ rights are weak. Most states do not actively
   enforce a father’s right to spend time with his child nor do they prevent mothers
   from moving out of state. Some social service professionals may discourage
   fathers from maintaining contact with the child if they believe that contact will lead to
   conflict between the parents.
9. White caseworker values and cultural competency can influence work with African
   American and Hispanic fathers despite reports of higher rates of shared child care
   responsibility in families.
10. Statistical realities of abuse create reluctance: female perpetrators neglect (87% vs.
    43% males) and male perpetrators abuse (67% vs. 40% by females); male
    perpetrators abuse sexually (89% of all cases); father surrogates (mothers’
    boyfriends) increase likelihood of child maltreatment.
BARRIERS TO FATHER INVOLVEMENT

MOTHER’S BIAS AGAINST FATHER INVOLVEMENT – GROUP ONE

1. Mothers may fail to identify fathers initially or may downplay his importance in the child’s life.
2. Casework around engaging the mother in terms of accepting treatment and services may cause workers to hesitate to push the mother or to reach out to the father if they think the mother may be hostile.
3. Where domestic violence is a factor, mothers may be reluctant to reveal a father’s identity in fear about safety.
4. The opinion of the child, depending on his/her age may be considered making balancing the mother’s and child’s opinions with the requirements of policy and practice challenging.
5. Mothers may act as “gatekeepers” either facilitating or blocking access to the father.
6. The relationship between the mother and father may already affect the frequency of involvement of the non-custodial father in his child’s life.
7. Mothers may protect absent fathers in fear of his getting in trouble with the law because he has outstanding child support payments, is an undocumented immigrant or has outstanding arrest warrants.
8. Mothers and family members may be reluctant to cooperate due to fear of repercussions.

FATHER’S BIAS AGAINST REMAINING INVOLVED – GROUP TWO

1. The system will not help me anyway so why try.
2. I should not be responsible for the child since she divorced me.
3. Children are always better off with their mother.
4. Child welfare is female dominated profession and I do not like working with “them.
5. I never get credit for what I do anyway, so why try.
6. I was raised the same way and I turned out fine.
7. I haven’t had a job for over a year and I can’t pay my child support, so they’ll just throw me in jail anyway.
8. Qualitative studies with white, Hispanic, and African-American men found that most ‘care deeply about their children; they suffer because of separation from them; and they are often bewildered about how to deal with being noncustodial parents.
A FathersPlace Toolbox
Fostering Involvement of Fathers with Children

While having a job keeps many middle- and upper-income men disconnected from their children, not having a job is what keeps many lower-income men disconnected.

Rather than assuming that men will be uninvolved or accepting it when they are, professionals can increase the involvement of men by expecting and encouraging it, best practice that is proven with fathers of all backgrounds.

Peer support is a critical factor in successful programs for fathers regardless of setting, auspices, socio-economic status or marital status of the fathers.

Knowing your state’s paternity establishment, custody and visitation laws supports father involvement. Fathers bring legal issues and need answers to questions.

Acknowledge and address the lack of fathers’ involvement that often stems from adversarial relationships between fathers and mothers or from the lack of mediating skills on the part of both.

Look for “reachable moments,” particularly around times of transition. Take advantage of opportunities around such events as childbirth, out of home placement or concurrent case planning.
CHILD WELFARE POLICIES & PRACTICES AFFECTING INVOLVEMENT OF NON-CUSTODIAL FATHERS

ASFA – Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997
✓ Reduction in time required for permanency decisions from 18 to 12 months
✓ Allowance for and encouragement of the use of the Federal Parent Locator Service (PFLS) used by child support enforcement programs for diligent search
✓ Assessment of non-custodial parent desired early in case in the event of termination of rights; putative (alleged) fathers must be located to resolve paternity issues to avoid court delays later
✓ Identifying paternal relatives as possible resources in permanency planning
✓ Courts support locating putative fathers and establishment of paternity as quickly as possible
✓ Supporting adoption by identifying and contacting birth fathers to obtain paternal background and medical history

Concurrent Case Planning
✓ Pursuing more than one goal for the child and locating non-custodial father to support permanency options other than reunification
✓ Identifying fathers’ relatives as placement resources

Increasing Use of Kinship Placements
✓ Some states hold “first placement priority” is home of non-custodial parent or home of suitable relative
✓ Others require ruling out non-custodial parent first
✓ Non-kin foster placement options have not kept pace with the number of children requiring out of care
✓ Locating kin early on to reduce the number of moves a child may experience
✓ Policies allowing kin to receive payment for care provided

Family Group Decision-Making in Case Planning
✓ FGDM model emphasizes including wide range of immediate and extended family members
✓ Absent family members re-involved in status of family in preparation
✓ Information about absent family members obtained in extensive preparation
INCLUDING FAMILIES IN FAMILY-CENTERED CHILD WELFARE SERVICES


ENGAGEMENT Caseworkers encourage mothers to identify fathers early in the case. If mothers fail to cooperate, caseworkers use alternative means to identify and locate fathers (interview relatives and family friends, access TANF and child support information, or use the court if necessary). Caseworkers make every effort to gain the support of mothers and reduce any barriers the mother has established that prevents a father’s engagement.

ASSESSMENT Comprehensive assessments include all family members; therefore, fathers and paternal family members are an active part in the ongoing assessment process. Initial assessments include the strengths, needs, resources/assets, and supports of the father and the paternal family. Services and/or supports needed by the father are also identified. Assessments explore fathers’ and paternal family members’ willingness and ability to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child. The assessment process is ongoing, and information is continually gathered and regularly updated.

SAFETY PLANNING Fathers and paternal family members are actively involved in the development of a safety plan based on information and support of team members. Fathers and paternal family members should be considered as informal service providers in the safety plan, for example, as relative (kinship) placement providers or to supervise visits between child and parent(s).

OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT Before placing a child in an unrelated home, fathers’ and paternal family members’ homes are assessed for placement. Fathers are included in the discussion and in determining the best placement for the child. Foster parents, group home staff, residential treatment staff, hospital staff, and adoptive parents are encouraged and supported to build and maintain partnerships with birth or adoptive fathers. The child welfare agency provides services and supports to establish and maintain father-child relations through telephone and mail contact, visitation, and case planning activities.

IMPLEMENTATION OF SERVICE PLAN Fathers are actively involved in setting goals, and they are encouraged to express their opinions, concerns, requests, or questions about the services needed. Services are created and provided to meet the individualized needs of the father and/or paternal family members. Services must be accessible to working fathers. Father support groups address issues related to fatherhood such as empowering men to take an active role in parenting, emotional issues, child development, and developing key skills such as active listening, anger management, positive discipline, and basic parenting techniques. Service providers emphasize the importance of child relationships with both mother and father.
RE-EVALUATION OF SERVICE PLAN   Fathers are included in the sharing of information between other family members, children, support teams, and service providers to ensure that intervention strategies can be modified as needed to support positive outcomes. Fathers help monitor service provision and provide continuous feedback to the team so progress and modifications to services are made.

PERMANENCY PLANNING   Fathers are involved in all reviews of the service plan and in the development of the child’s permanency plan. Caseworkers ensure that fathers have a clear understanding of the permanency plan and emphasize the importance of their role in the development and implementation of the plan. Fathers not only receive court notices regarding permanency hearing, but are also contacted by their caseworker to discuss the hearing and the agency’s recommendations to the court. During this discussion caseworkers encourage fathers to attend all hearings. The time line for the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) is discussed and fathers are informed of key decision points along the way.
INCLUDING FATHERS IN FAMILY-CENTERED CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

Father involvement depends on recognizing the fragility of fatherhood. Nonresidential fathers in child welfare are at very high risk for noninvolvement with their children. It does not necessarily reflect a father’s lack of interest.

Father involvement focuses on the influence of families of origin. Grandparents and extended families have significant influence on father involvement. The mother’s parents and kin influence access to children. Her parents’ acceptance or rejection of the father can be critical to sustaining, rebuilding or eliminating a father’s role.

Father involvement relies on integrating an employment dimension into child welfare as well as a solid understanding of the challenges of balancing work and family, especially when poverty is prevalent as it is within child welfare.

Father involvement requires assistance in building relationships with community systems including the courts, child support agencies, social/health/mental health services and schools. Stress regarding interactions with these institutions can affect a father’s relationship with his family.

Father involvement is closely connected to the relationship to the mother. In fact, the father’s relationship with the mother is the single greatest determinant of significant and successful father involvement. Mediation and negotiation to promote the advantages of fathers’ involvement are important tools as are team parenting or family group decision making models.

Father involvement requires understanding and using life transitions. Many fathers have difficulty sustaining emotional ties and social commitments when they experience other risk factors that are often characteristics of child welfare: substance abuse, poverty, mental health issues or unemployment. Many times life transitions such as pregnancy, birth or rearing a child provide important change opportunities.

Father involvement depends on fathers working with fathers, often the fence holding successful programs together. Caseworkers who are male and have the knowledge and skills can make a difference in safety planning. Dads supporting dads within community partnerships can tip the scales toward improved fathering.
Services to Families - Strategies for Assisting Low Income Fathers

- Employ comprehensive intake/assessment form that is male focused.
- Help fathers to identify their individual and family strengths
- Begin by focusing on his strengths, not his deficits
- Help fathers assess and strengthen their coping skills. What works and what does not work for each?
- Allow fathers to identify major sources of family stress and ways to reduce or relieve the stress factors
- Recruit and use culture-specific resources that are sensitive to needs of fathers
- Ask fathers to list their informal support networks (cultural, religious/spiritual, school, neighborhood, family, work, etc.)
- Offer or locate activities or services that enhance father-child relationships
- Model desired behaviors that you expect of fathers
- Create opportunities for fathers to gain information and learn new skills (parenting classes, mentoring, dad’s support groups)
- Offer space and materials that fathers can use with their children
Services to Families - Strategies That Encourage Mothers to Support Father Involvement

Developed by Neil Tift for NPNFF, Washington DC. (651) 351-2776 or (800) 346-7633

- Solicit female staff to sensitize mothers to critical importance of father involvement
- Develop and sponsor father-child activities.
- Offer information on importance of father involvement in child development - in articles, brochures, books, and videos. Provide for lending libraries and staff use.
- Generate a list of co-parenting resources in your area.
- Encourage use of mediation services.
- Refer dads to family law clinics that help them access legal info and to establish paternity.
- Promote win/win opportunities & exercises in classes and groups.
- Display positive photos, posters and brochures of dads, mothers and children.
- Sponsor mothers’ support groups and parenting courses that address shared parenting opportunities.
- Recruit moms and dads who have overcome major family conflicts to speak to your clients and in the community (Add to your multicultural Speakers’ Bureau).
- Explore relationship enhancement workshops to increase positive communication between the mother and the father.
- Offer or locate educational workshops on relevant topics of interest, such as male-female communication, co-parenting, custody options, visitation, maternal and paternal parenting styles, parent-child communication, and conflict resolution.
- Refer clients to anger management classes and relationship groups, as appropriate.
CHILD WELFARE WORKER TOOLS & STRENGTHS

- Developing and refining worker skills to support interactions with maltreating and at-risk fathers. This is critical since the population often faces barriers that may appear as interference.

- A thorough knowledge of the issues of child welfare & domestic violence service interventions.

- Knowledge of community resources and services geared towards fathers.

- Uses communication skills that allow confrontation and engagement with fathers who may be hostile, have limited communication skills and/or familiar with the use of intimidation, power and control tactics to achieve their personal goals.

- Values the critical role that father’s and his family members have in a child’s life.

- Demonstrates knowledge of state and federal laws regarding our responsibility to search for and include fathers

- Knows when diligent search is required for reasonable efforts.

- Utilizes the following techniques to involve fathers:
  - Family group decision making
  - Kinship placement
  - Multi-ethnic placement in resource or adoptive families
  - Termination of parental rights
  - Adoption
  - Understands legal resources, paternity laws, and resources for assisting fathers with legal difficulties
Instructions for FathersPlace Action Plan

Your Action Plan may be printed on NCR paper at the back of your folder or it is the handout following these instructions. Included in these instructions is a menu of actions you may use to guide your action planning.

Please complete the form before leaving the training. Write legibly and press hard enough to go through to the third copy (if printed on NCR paper). Give the top two copies to the trainer (if printed on NCR paper) and keep the third copy for your files. In approximately three months, you will be asked to participate in a brief telephone survey on the implementation of your plan.

To develop realistic plans, ask yourself the following questions:

✓ How much time will the action take and do I have that time to commit?

✓ Are the skills, materials, and other resources I need available to accomplish the action?

✓ Will this action require the cooperation of, or affect, other individuals?

✓ Is this something I need to discuss with my colleagues, supervisor, administrator, or advisory committee?

Remember to review your self-assessment and any notes you might have taken when completing your Action Plan.
### IDEAS FOR BUILDING STRENGTHS IN MY PRACTICE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Idea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P. 1</td>
<td>Read and discuss an article or website about fathers and their importance in children’s lives.</td>
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<tr>
<td>P. 2</td>
<td>Identify your own experience with fathers and the significance it plays in your own life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. 3</td>
<td>Write about or discuss ways in which the beliefs and values from your own experience demonstrate respect for other cultures or family structures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. 4</td>
<td>Define five of your own family traits and write about or discuss ways in which they influence your work with fathers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. 5</td>
<td>Journal or discuss similarities and differences in the ways you respond to fathers and to mothers and the ways they may respond differently to each other in a child welfare setting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. 6</td>
<td>Journal or discuss similarities &amp; differences in the ways you are most likely to solve problems &amp; ways in which fathers and mothers involved in child welfare may do so.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. 7</td>
<td>Journal or discuss the ways in which your cultural and life experiences may affect your views of law enforcement, government, the education system and service agencies. How might those of fathers and mothers differ or are they similar?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. 8</td>
<td>Journal or discuss your religious beliefs and the impact of them on your relationship with the families you serve and/or with colleagues?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. 9</td>
<td>Journal or discuss strategies for helping dads reconcile with children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. 10</td>
<td>Journal or discuss your own views of what forms of discipline and parenting practices are acceptable for your family, what practices are acceptable in general, and what practices are unacceptable regardless of culture and ethnicity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>P. 11</td>
<td>Journal or discuss a time where you were judged on something other than merit.</td>
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<td>P. 12</td>
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<td>P. 14</td>
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<td>P. 15</td>
<td>Journal or discuss any emotional reactions you may have based on stereotypes you may have about working with dads in child welfare.</td>
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<tr>
<td>P. 16</td>
<td>Consult with a male colleague to increase personal insight and improve your practice with fathers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. 17</td>
<td>Journal or discuss your communication style with older &amp; younger clients and the ways those may be similar or different from the ways mothers and fathers may communicate across generations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. 18</td>
<td>Journal or write about five barriers to working effectively with incarcerated fathers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. 19</td>
<td>Research the legal issues facing divorced or separated fathers in the U.S. today.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. 20</td>
<td>Define &amp; discuss ways in which fathers might help their families without going through or using formalized services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. 21</td>
<td>Maintain an active referral list and continuously seek new referrals relevant to different needs of clients. (Make sure client understands referrals are made because of agency limitations not the limitations of the client).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. 22</td>
<td>Journal or discuss some strategies for communicating with a father who does not speak your preferred language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. 23</td>
<td>Read a book about a dad’s experience growing up compared to his experience as a dad.</td>
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<tr>
<td>P. 24</td>
<td>Find out five common characteristics of the immigrant population in your service area. For example: Country &amp; region of origin? Common religious practices? Traditions? Reasons for immigrating? How they support or sponsor others from their country of origin?</td>
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<td>P. 25</td>
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<td>P. 26</td>
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# IDEAS FOR BUILDING STRENGTHS IN MY AGENCY’S POLICIES AND PRACTICE WITH FATHERS

<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. 1</td>
<td>Share something new you learned from a web-based resource or an article with your colleagues.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A. 2</td>
<td>Conduct a physical review of your agency environment to ascertain whether it offers positive portrayals of fathers and children in photos, posters, and display materials.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A. 3</td>
<td>Assist in developing agency policy and resources to better define service policies for dads.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A. 4</td>
<td>Check to see whether there is a diaper changing deck in both the women’s and the men’s restrooms of your agency.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A. 5</td>
<td>Identify a barrier to service in your agency and work to remove it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A. 6</td>
<td>Examine agency forms and service tools to identify embedded bias and work to change the forms.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A. 7</td>
<td>Examine your agency’s policies regarding connection with incarcerated parents.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A. 8</td>
<td>Examine your agency’s policies regarding kinship and extended family networks as they include fathers’ families.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A. 9</td>
<td>Insure that fathers as well as mothers feel welcome in your agency.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A. 10</td>
<td>Make sure your agency’s policies and procedures are in compliance with state, federal, and international law regarding services to fathers as well as paternity laws.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A. 11</td>
<td>Advocate for the hiring of more men/fathers in child welfare staff.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A. 12</td>
<td>Journal or discuss the use of language that is divisive and stereotyping by gender such as identifying fathers as “babysitters” when they care for their children.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A. 13</td>
<td>Assess whether outreach workers schedule visits where fathers are comfortable.</td>
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# IDEAS FOR BUILDING STRENGTHS IN MY COMMUNITY’S POLICIES AND PRACTICE WITH FATHERS

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C.1</td>
<td>Meet and exchange contact information with someone from an agency serving fathers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.2</td>
<td>Identify &amp; discuss barriers fathers may face in accessing such services as mental health, health, child welfare, substance abuse, or domestic violence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.3</td>
<td>Identify institutional barriers that may be faced by fathers and advocate for them as they interact with partner institutions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C.4</td>
<td>Develop your own resource guide and add to it when you find agencies that serve fathers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.5</td>
<td>Develop strategies to address institutional barriers dads face in the community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C.6</td>
<td>Promote the development of a community-wide resource directory.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C.7</td>
<td>Participate in a Latino holiday, religious, or community event.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C.8</td>
<td>Read or listen to news stories on public policy issues that affect fathers and their families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.9</td>
<td>Serve on an interagency team or committee to address the language needs of the community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C.10</td>
<td>Serve on an interagency team to assess fathers’ service needs in the areas of family violence, custody, job services, sexual harassment, visitation, paternity &amp; child support.</td>
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Add your own
# Fatherhood Organizations & Resources

The National Center on Fathers & Families  
NCOFF is dedicated to research and practice that expands the knowledge base on father involvement and family development, and that informs policy designed to improve the well-being of children. [http://www.ncoff.gse.upenn.edu/](http://www.ncoff.gse.upenn.edu/)

The National Latino Fatherhood & Family Institute  
The Institute brings together nationally recognized leaders in the fields of Latino health, education, social services, and community outreach. [http://www.nlffi.org/](http://www.nlffi.org/)

Fatherhood Initiative  
The Department of Health and Human Services has developed a special initiative to support and strengthen the roles of fathers in families. The initiative follows these principles: (1) All fathers can be important contributors to the well-being of their children; (2) Parents are partners in raising their children, even when they do not live in the same household; (3) The roles fathers play in families are diverse and related to cultural and community norms; (4) Men should receive the education and support necessary to prepare them for the responsibility of parenthood; and (5) Government can encourage and promote father involvement through its programs and through its own workforce policies. [http://fatherhood.hhs.gov/index.shtml](http://fatherhood.hhs.gov/index.shtml)

American Coalition for Fathers and Children  
The members of the American Coalition for Fathers and Children dedicate ourselves and our efforts to the creation of a family law system, legislative system, and public awareness which promotes equal rights for ALL parties affected by divorce, and the breakup of a family or establishment of paternity. [www.acfc.org](http://www.acfc.org)

Center on Fathers, Families and Public Policy  
(CFFPP) is a nationally-focused public policy organization conducting policy research, technical assistance, training, litigation, and public education in order to focus attention on the barriers faced by never-married, low-income fathers and their families. [http://wwwcffpp.org](http://www.cffpp.org)

Children’s Rights Council  
CRC is a national non-profit organization based in Washington, DC, that works to assure children meaningful and continuing contact with both their parents and extended family regardless of the parents’ marital status. [www.vix.com/crc/](http://www.vix.com/crc/)

Families and Work Institute  
FWI is a non-profit center for research that provides data to inform decision-making on the changing workforce, changing family and changing community. [www.familiesandwork.org](http://www.familiesandwork.org)
Children Youth & Family Consortium

CYFC’s website is a bridge to a wide range of information and resources about children and families. It connects research, teaching, policy, and community practice.  
http://www.cyfc.umn.edu/welcome.html

National Family Preservation Network

NFPN has developed a comprehensive fatherhood initiative, because fathers are an integral part of families.  http://www.nfpn.org/

Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization

The Institute’s mission is to encourage fathers to become involved in the lives of their children in a loving, compassionate, and nurturing way. The Institute now has six sites across the country.  http://fatherfamilylink.gse.upenn.edu/org/irf/mission.htm
FATHERHOOD REPORTS & ARTICLES

http://www.nfpn.org/tools/articles/fathers.php

“Face to Face with Fathers: A Report on Low-Income Fathers and Their Experience with Child Support Enforcement”
http://www.cffpp.org/publications/face_to_face.html

“Poverty Research News – A Look at Fathers”
http://www.jcpr.org/newsletters/vol4_no2/index.html

“How Men and Children Affect Each Other’s Development”
http://www.zerotothree.org/fathers.html

“What About the Dads? Child Welfare Agencies’ Efforts to Identify, Locate, and Involve Nonresident Fathers”
http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/06/CW-involve-dads/

“LONGSCAN Examines Fatherhood”
http://cbexpress.acf.hhs.gov/nonissart.cfm?issue_id=2002-04&disp_art=446

“Practice Notes: Father Involvement in Child Welfare”
http://www.practicenotes.org/vol11_no1.htm

“Fathers and Their Families: The Untapped Resource for Children Involved in the Child Welfare System”

“Getting Non-Custodial Dads Involved in the Life of Foster Children”
http://www.urban.org/publications/310944.html

“Study of Fathers’ Involvement in Permanency Planning and Child Welfare Casework”
http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/CW-dads02/

“Father Involvement: Building Strong Programs for Strong Families”
http://www.headstartinfo.org/publications/hsbulletin77/cont_77.htm

“CWLA-Father Involvement”
http://www.cwla.org/programs/r2p/cvarticlesfather0501.htm

“The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children”

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION FORM

University of Denver, Butler Institute for Families for the
Healthy Marriage and Family Formation Training Grant

Please tell us about yourself and why you are taking this class. This information will be
used to help evaluate the course, as part of the grant requirements. Your answers will be
confidential, and will not be shared with anyone. Only group averages will be reported.

1. State (circle the state where you work):
   a. Colorado
   b. Kansas
   c. Wyoming

2. Type of Organization (circle all that apply):
   a. Public
   b. Private
   c. Faith-based
   d. Military
   e. Other (please specify): __________________________

3. Primary focus of services provided (circle one only):
   a. Child Welfare
   b. Education
   c. Financial Support
   d. Parenting
   e. Employment
   f. Corrections
   g. Mental Health
   h. Legal
   i. Substance Abuse
   j. Medical/Health Care
   k. Domestic Violence
   l. Out-of-Home Care/Foster Parent
   m. Other (please specify): __________________________

4. Which best describes your main job duties? (circle one only):
   a. Work directly with children, youth, and/or families
   b. Supervise those who work directly with children, youth, and/or families
   c. Manage/administer program

5. Experience working with children, youth, and/or families: _____ years, _____ months

6. Highest educational level completed (circle one only):
   a. High School or GED
   b. Some College
   c. Associate’s Degree
   d. Bachelor’s Degree
   e. Master’s Degree
   f. Doctorate
   g. Other (please specify): __________________________
7. Degree Field (if applicable, circle one only):
   a. Social Work
   b. Psychology/Counseling
   c. Other Human Services Degree
   d. Theology
   e. Law
   f. Medicine
   g. Education
   h. Other (please specify): ______________________________________________

8. Gender (circle one only):
   a. Male
   b. Female

9. Please indicate your main reason for attending this workshop (circle one only):
   a. I heard it was interesting/fun.
   b. I was having difficulty in this area.
   c. I wanted to know more about this area.
   d. I needed the training hours.
   e. It was required.
   f. It’s time away from the office.
   g. I recently had a change in job duties/clients.
   h. Other (please specify): ______________________________________________

10. I am confident that I will use this training in my work (circle one only):
    a. Disagree
    b. Disagree Somewhat
    c. Agree Somewhat
    d. Agree
    e. Don’t Know

11. I have specific clients or situations in mind where I can use this training (circle one only):
    a. Disagree
    b. Disagree Somewhat
    c. Agree Somewhat
    d. Agree
    e. Don’t Know

    Thank You!