

Some Early Lessons Learned in Fatherhood Program Service Delivery

Elements of Promising Practice¹

Effective Programs:

- Incorporated teaching methods and materials that were appropriate for fathers and the cultures of the populations served.
- Selected teachers or leaders who believed in the program they were implementing and then provided them with training. Programs that had well- trained instructors or facilitators had more positive outcomes.
- Had a higher staff-participant ratio.
- Used targeted curricula - program curricula that were designed around fewer core issues seemed to lead to better outcomes.
- Used theoretical approaches that have been effective in influencing parenting behaviors in other context; developed logic models based on these theoretical frameworks; and designed activities related to inputs, outputs and outcomes.
- Employed a variety of teaching methods designed to focus on the fathers as individuals, and thereby personalized the information.
- Lasted a sufficient amount of time to complete important core activities adequately.
- Had staff who engaged in one-on-one relationships with fathers.
- Encouraged the use of an incentive to fathers and or their families.
- Replicated their curricula with fidelity.

Ten Key Findings²

1. Low-income fathers and mothers face similar and significant barriers.
2. Recruitment and enrollment are key challenges.
3. Being a good father is important to nonresident fathers.
4. Programs had difficulty establishing employment services that improved how nonresident fathers fared in the labor market.
5. Child support–related services are a critical program component.
6. Child support orders are often set at levels above what nonresident fathers can reasonably be expected to pay.
7. Child support enforcement agencies need to collaborate with fatherhood programs and respond to the circumstances of low-income fathers.
8. Co-parenting issues need to be addressed.
9. Lack of long-term sustainability inhibits the development of program capacity and innovation.
10. Systemic change is difficult.

¹ Bronte-Tinkew, J., et al (2007). [Elements of promising practice for fatherhood programs](#).

² Martinson, K., & Nightingale, D. (2008). [Ten key findings from responsible fatherhood initiatives](#)