



FATHER-FRIENDLINESS ORGANIZATIONAL SELF-ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING TOOL

This self-assessment package can help Head Start and other family service programs assess their organization's readiness to provide services to fathers and father figures. It was developed by:

**The National Center for Strategic Nonprofit Planning and Community
Leadership (NPCL)**

In Partnership With

**The National Head Start Association (NHS A)
The U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services Administration for Children
and Families, Region V
The Illinois Department of Public Aid, Division of Child Support
Enforcement**

There are three parts to the self-assessment package:

- ◆ Organizational Self-Assessment
- ◆ Action Plan for Becoming More Father Friendly
- ◆ Feedback on Usefulness of Tool.

NHS A and NPCL are FATHERHOOD PARTNERS

We are working in partnership to develop and enhance the provision of fatherhood services by Head Start agencies. The goal is to create an environment where staff, mothers, and fathers respect each other's roles, work together, and collaborate with other community organizations to ensure the availability of comprehensive services that support the role of fathers in the lives of their children. We do this in order to promote and enhance the well-being of every child.

For more information, contact:

**Nigel Vann, NPCL's Director of Partnership Development, at (202) 822-6725
JoAnn Nelson-Hooks, NHS A's Fatherhood Coordinator, at (703) 739-7560.**



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Directions:

- ◆ Select a team or committee to complete the self-assessment. Ideally this team will include at least one decision-maker, various staff levels, and mothers and fathers of children in the program.
- ◆ The team will consider seven categories — Organizational Support; Position and Reputation in the Community; Agency Policies and Procedures; Staffing/Human Resources; Program Services; Physical Environment; and Communication and Interaction. Use the following scale to rate your organization for each of the statements included in the assessment:

1 = Haven't even thought about this/completely disagree with statement.
2 = We've started to think about this but haven't made much progress.
3 = We've made some good efforts but still have some work to do.
4 = We have successfully completed this step/completely agree with statement.
- ◆ After completing the assessment, use the action plan to identify the steps that need to be taken for your agency to be more fully ready to serve fathers and father figures.
- ◆ If you have any questions about use of the self-assessment tool or need any technical assistance or staff development training to help implement your action plan, you can contact Nigel Vann, NPCL's Director of Partnership Development, at (202) 822-6725, or JoAnn Nelson-Hooks, NHS A's Fatherhood Coordinator, at (703) 739-7560.
- ◆ After completing the self-assessment process, please complete the Feedback Form and return it to NPCL, attention of Nigel Vann. This will help us assess the usefulness of the tool and make any necessary adaptations.



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Use the following scale to rate your organization for each of the statements included in the assessment:

- 1 = Haven't even thought about this/completely disagree with statement.*
- 2 = We've started to think about this but haven't made much progress.*
- 3 = We've made some good efforts but still have some work to do.*
- 4 = We have successfully completed this step/completely agree with statement.*

1. ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

How much support is there in your organization for providing services to fathers/father figures?

- The organization's documented mission is inclusive of serving fathers.
- The board of directors, policy council, and policy committee are committed to serving fathers and father figures.
- The board of directors, council, and/or committees have members who are fathers with children in the program.
- Literature and publicity about the organization reflect a commitment to serving fathers.
- Funding for serving fathers is consistent and ongoing.

2. POSITION AND REPUTATION IN THE COMMUNITY

How does the community view the organization with respect to serving fathers/father figures?

- The organization is recognized by community partners as a good resource for fathers.
- The organization participates in community partnerships and collaborations concerned with providing services to fathers and families.
- Fathers in the community view the organization as a place they can come to for assistance.
- The organization is called on by the media or others for information about fathers.



3. AGENCY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Are the organization's policies and procedures uniformly inclusive of fathers?

- Agency procedures have been assessed to determine if the interests of fathers are uniformly represented.
- Intake and other data collection methods are standardized for both parents rather than just modified from the forms for mothers.
- Program hours are scheduled to accommodate the time constraints of working fathers.
- Policies that make it harder for fathers to be involved in the agency have been changed.
- Policies have been instituted to facilitate male involvement. For example, instead of simply encouraging father involvement, the agency establishes a clear expectation that fathers of children should and will participate.
- Agency policy allows services to be provided to both parents, regardless of how the other parent feels about that involvement (except in cases of domestic violence).
- Personnel policies are friendly to both parents (for example, paternity leave and medical leave to care for sick children).

4. STAFFING/HUMAN RESOURCES

How prepared are staff to provide services to fathers?

General Staff:

- The entire staff has received training on the issue of working with men, in general, and on fatherhood specifically.
- Staff time and resources have been allocated for recruitment and outreach to fathers.
- Staff are aware of issues faced by low-income fathers.
- The majority of front-line program staff is open and receptive to the idea of providing services to fathers.
- Staff working with fathers are fully integrated into the overall agency (for example, staff meetings, communication, decision-making, and socializing).
- The ability to provide services to fathers is included on performance appraisals of all key staff.
- Staff meet with other organizations serving fathers on a regular basis to enable cross learning about the most effective strategies for engaging and retraining fathers in parent involvement programs.



Specific Staff:

- ___ Specific staff have been designated to work with fathers, and they fully understand their roles and responsibilities.
- ___ Men are represented on the staff (paid and/or unpaid) at all levels.
- ___ Male staff are available to work with fathers, especially in the area of recruitment.
- ___ Male staff feel comfortable and respected within the agency.
- ___ Female and male staff work as a team.
- ___ Female staff (case managers, counselors, group facilitators) are comfortable working with fathers.
- ___ Fathers of children in the center serve as volunteers in the program.

5. PROGRAM SERVICES

Has a program for fathers been clearly articulated?

Approaches To Mothers:

- ___ Family goal-setting activities are inclusive of fathers.
- ___ Counseling with mothers includes a consistent focus on encouraging her to work cooperatively with the father of her child(ren).
- ___ When mothers don't want the fathers of their children involved, efforts are still made to gain her support and to work with that father (except in domestic violence and abusive situations).

Services To Fathers:

- ___ Fathers have opportunities to help design/feel ownership of the services being provided to them.
- ___ A needs and assets assessment has been completed in order to plan programs for fathers.
- ___ Program services that are clearly tied to outcomes have been planned and implemented specifically for fathers. The program involves more than just incorporating fathers into existing services for mothers.
- ___ Parenting groups for fathers have been designed with male psychological issues in mind and focus on empowering men by helping them grasp their essential role in their children's healthy development. Groups attend to beliefs and emotional issues that are barriers to active parenting. Groups address the development of key skills (listening, anger management, and positive discipline) and help fathers understand the specific needs of boys and girls at different developmental phases.
- ___ Information about community services for fathers (legal assistance, education and



- ___ employment assistance, batterers' programs, and so on) has been collected.
- ___ Relationships have been forged with key people in these agencies.
- ___ A relationship has been forged with the local child support enforcement agency.
- ___ Staff make, or are prepared to make, referrals for fathers to other agencies (domestic violence, substance abuse, employment/training, and so on).
- ___ Sufficient funding exists to provide services to fathers.
- ___ Fathers who have completed the program are to work as mentors, recruiters, group facilitators, and so forth.

6. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

How inviting and welcoming is the physical environment for men and fathers?

- ___ Focus groups or individual fathers (from the target population) have been invited to the agency to assess father-friendliness and make suggestions for making the space more welcoming to them.
- ___ The physical environment has a general feel that is inviting to men/fathers.
- ___ Positive and diverse images of men and fathers are displayed.
- ___ Literature available for parents to pick up and read is appealing to fathers and reflects services or programs that they might participate in.
- ___ There is a room or area in the agency that has been designated as a space for men/fathers (at least during designated weekly hours) that contains resources for them and provides a space for just socializing or participating in group activities.
- ___ The designated program space for mothers includes positive images of men/fathers.
- ___ Men are present and it doesn't seem like a place just for women and children.

7. COMMUNICATION AND INTERACTION

How are fathers treated and communicated with inside the agency?

Interaction With Fathers:

- ___ Fathers who drop off children are greeted warmly.
- ___ Efforts are made to interact with fathers who accompany mothers to the program even when they tend to hang back
- ___ When mothers and fathers come to the agency together, communication is directed equally to both and not primarily to the mother.
- ___ Contact information is systematically taken on the father of children regardless of the father's marital status or living arrangements.



- ___ Written announcements, newsletters, and the like are addressed to both parents if they live together and if they don't, the communication is sent to both.
- ___ Staff interact with fathers in a style that demonstrates respect, empathy, and high expectations.

Staff Attitudes:

- ___ The message is given to fathers that their role as active parents is critical to their children's development.
- ___ Input is sought from fathers about what they want and need from the agency.
- ___ Positive comments about men are expressed in both formal and informal settings.



ACTION PLAN FOR BECOMING MORE FATHER FRIENDLY

***DIRECTIONS:** Once you have completed the self-assessment tool, you will have a clearer idea of what your agency still needs to do. Turn the checklist items that received ratings of 1, 2, or 3 into action steps. Once you have completed this form, go back and put asterisks beside your top three priorities, both short-term and long-term.*

ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

Short-term action steps:

- 1.
- 2.

Long-term action steps:

- 1.
- 2.

POSITION AND REPUTATION IN COMMUNITY

Short-term action steps:

- 1.
- 2.

Long-term action steps:

- 1.
- 2.

AGENCY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Short-term action steps:

- 1.
- 2.

Long-term action steps:

- 1.
- 2.



STAFFING/HUMAN RESOURCES

Short-term action steps:

- 1.
- 2.

Long-term action steps:

- 1.
- 2.

PROGRAM SERVICES

Short-term action steps:

- 1.
- 2.

Long-term action steps:

- 1.
- 2.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Short-term action steps:

- 1.
- 2.

Long-term action steps:

- 1.
- 2.

COMMUNICATION AND INTERACTION

Short-term action steps:

- 1.
- 2.

Long-term action steps:

- 1.
- 2.

If you need Technical Assistance or Staff Development Training to help implement this plan, please contact Nigel Vann, NPCL's Director of Partnership Development, at (202) 822-6725, or



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