

# Fanning the Fatherhood **FIRE**:

A National Fatherhood Summit  
June 4-6, 2019 | Nashville, Tennessee



Family-focused  Interconnected  
Resilient  Essential

## T2 Fathers and The Family: Engaging Fathers in Family-Focused Service Provision

**Presenters:**

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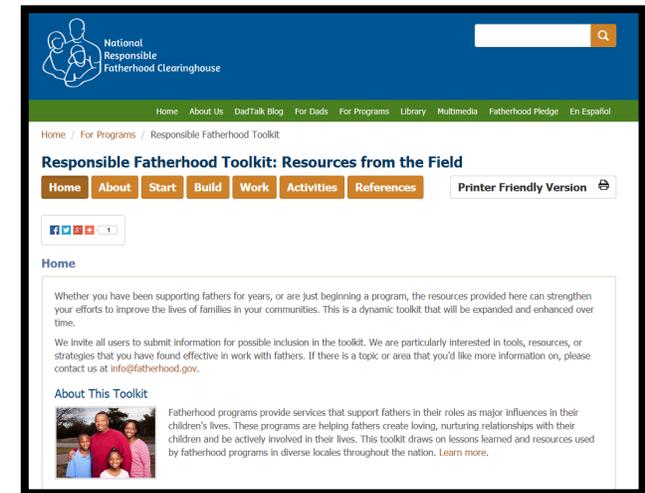
# Notable Quotes

1. "Remember that children, marriages, and flower gardens reflect the kind of care they get." H. Jackson Brown Jr., *A Father's Book of Wisdom*, 2000
2. "Father-child relationships ... have profound and wide-ranging impacts on children." MenCare, *State of the World's Fathers*, 2015
3. "Caseworkers who received training were more likely to locate fathers than workers who did not receive training." What About the Dads?, 2006 (DHHS/ASPE research study)
4. "Many non-resident fathers feel like no one is hearing them." Bringing Back the Dads, *Protecting Children*, Vol. 26, No. 2, 2011



# Today's Goals

- Discuss strategies to improve outcomes for families and children with a focus on:
  - Recruiting and engaging fathers.
  - Hiring, training, and supporting staff.
  - Delivering effective services.
- Share tips from the NRFC's Responsible Fatherhood Toolkit – [www.fatherhood.gov/toolkit](http://www.fatherhood.gov/toolkit).
- Help you connect and share information on promising practices.



# Recruiting and Engaging Fathers

- What are some barriers to engaging fathers in your family-focused service?
- How have you overcome (or tried to overcome) those barriers?
- What are some general tips for recruiting and engaging fathers?



# Some typical barriers\*

- Agency policy/practices not welcoming of fathers.
- Caseworkers with negative or dismissive attitudes towards fathers.
- Caseload size / Not enough male staff.
- Lack of resources/services to refer fathers to.
- Gatekeeping by mothers/reluctance when history of domestic violence.
- Lack of interest of fathers.

\* NRFC Toolkit; Minnesota Fathers and Families Network (2011), Linking fathers: Child welfare sector analysis.



# Overcoming Barriers to Recruit and Engage Dads

- Ensure agency decision makers agree with the need to serve Dads.
  - Frame the issue from a maternal and child well-being perspective.
  - Share information on the benefits of father involvement.
- Provide “father-friendly” training for all staff.
- Find community partners to help provide services for fathers.
- Include the word “father” on printed materials.
- Have high expectations of fathers – expect them to be involved.



# Making the Case: The Benefits of Father Involvement

Fathers' active participation and emotional engagement leads to improved outcomes for their children throughout their lives:

- Cognitively, behaviorally, emotionally, and physically.

Father engagement in child welfare cases:

- Decreases recurrence of maltreatment allegations.
- Leads to more reunifications and fewer adoptions.

Sarkadi, Kristiansson, Oberklaid and Bremberg (2008); NRFC Webinar (July 2017) Working with Child Welfare Agencies to Improve Outcomes for Fathers



# Making the case: Tip Cards for Dads (sample)

When dads are involved as supportive partners during pregnancy, it is good for their babies, good for moms, and good for dads.

When dads are very involved from birth, their children:

- Develop higher IQs.
- Form better friendships.
- Are less likely to get into trouble as teenagers.

[www.fatherhood.gov/content/nrfc-tips-dads](http://www.fatherhood.gov/content/nrfc-tips-dads)



# “Father-Friendly” Training Can Help Staff:

- Understand internal biases they might have about fathers.
- See the desire of many fathers to be better providers for their children.
- Identify and examine barriers fathers confront.
- Develop effective strategies to overcome barriers to father engagement.
- Refer fathers to resources and services to help meet their needs.

NRFC Toolkit; Cherry, K., & Brown, C. (2009). Helping child welfare workers better understand and engage non-resident fathers. *Protecting Children*, 24(2), 66-75.



# Example of Training Activity

## “What’s It Been Like?”

Share with someone near you. If possible, talk with someone you have not met before. Questions to consider:

- What was your relationship with your father like when you were growing up?
- What is it like today or, if he has passed, what was it like during his later years.
- How has this relationship impacted your personal life? And your professional life?



# Hiring, Training, and Supporting Staff.

- Employ staff who understand fathers and what's important to them.
- Provide ongoing training and support to:
  - Reinforce direct service skills.
  - Help staff members deal with difficult issues.
  - Ensure they understand program policies, procedures, and strategies.
- Training that includes interactive components is most effective.
  - Carrying out the same activities that participants experience encourages staff to engage in their own self-improvement process.



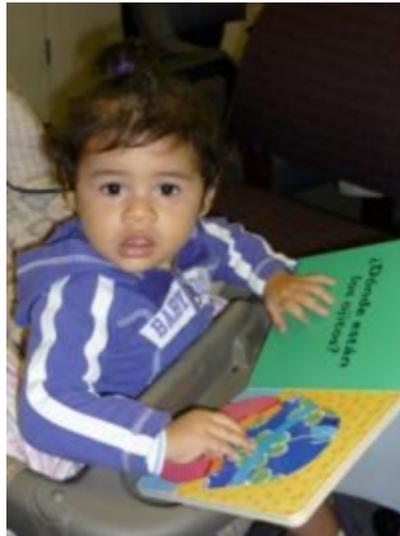
# Delivering Effective Services

- Ensure that fathers are treated with respect.
- Create a safe space where they can:
  - Feel comfortable and free from criticism.
  - Talk openly without fear of it being used against them.
  - Share things and know it is confidential.
- Develop Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) to strengthen partnerships.
- Evaluate outcomes to adjust program delivery, ensure you are meeting needs of clients, and enhance fundraising and sustainability.



# Reflection

- Something I learned is ...
- One thing I'll do differently as a result of this workshop is ...



# Summary of Key Points

- Develop agency policies and practices that are welcoming of fathers and recognize the importance of father involvement.
- Ensure that fathers are treated with respect.
- Have high expectations of fathers – expect them to be involved.
- Provide ongoing training and support for staff.
- Monitor program outcomes and adjust services as needed to ensure positive outcomes for families and children.



# Questions and Answers



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## Stay in touch with us!

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