

# Fanning the Fatherhood **FIRE**:

A National Fatherhood Summit  
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Family-focused  Interconnected  
Resilient  Essential

# **W1** Supporting Children Through Co-Parenting Strategies

## Presenters:

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# CoParenting Personas



- **Coparenting is:** an enterprise undertaken by one or more adults who together take on the care and upbringing of children for whom they share responsibility (McHale 2011)."
- **Coparents can be:**
  - Divorced parents
  - Foster parents
  - Grand parents
  - Extended family member
  - Any other caregivers



**In order to foster healthy emotional growth very young children coparenting adults must *collaborate* to create a steadfast framework**

**McaHale and Irace (2011)**

*Support and solidarity* between themselves

*Consistency and predictability* in the approaches they take in guiding the child's development

*Security and integrity of the family's home base* (regardless of whether that home base is a single domicile or spans multiple residences).

*Accurate attunement* to the young child's fears, needs, wishes and sensibilities



# Co-Parenting Focus



- Co-parenting is more associated with outcomes than marital/relationship satisfaction.
- Co-parenting relationships are distinct from intimate relationships!
- Parents will be co-parents no matter what happens to their intimate relationship.



# Benefits of Positive Coparenting

- Coparenting influences relationship satisfaction (McHale, 1995; Van Egeren, 2004).
- Better psychosocial and behavioral outcomes for children (Lamela & Figueiredo, 2016; Martin et al., 2017).
- Improves outcomes for children even in families with a history of IPV/conflict (Fainsilber Katz & Low, 2004).
- Coparenting and IPV are modestly correlated with higher coparenting conflict and less support in families with IPV (Fainsilber Katz and Low, 2004).



# CoParenting Interventions & Resources

- Common Vision
- Communication
- Collaboration

- Story
- Resources:
  - Podcasts
  - Apps
  - Books
  - Rule poster(s)
- Workshops & Event(s)
- Coaching, Mentoring
- Journaling & Reflection



# Decisions About Raising Children



- Teaching children
  - Morals
  - Good behavior
- Decisions & Approach
  - Ways to respond to children's emotional needs
  - Discipline decisions
  - Educational decisions
  - Safety
  - Division of Labor
  - Family Management



# Common Vision Family Management

*How do you help Parents in:*

- Managing the household
- Finances
- Transportation



# Communication

## Ex: Division of Labor

### Case Study: RUBY

- 6 year old diagnosed with ADHD
- Dad is reluctant to give her meds
- Dad is an artist
- Mom is an alcoholic who left the family and shows up erratically
- Dad still has feelings for her
- Ruby has a younger brother enrolled in head start program
- Ruby is unruly in the classroom
- Ruby's behavior deteriorates after mom "visits" and leaves

*If you are the Head Start Provider for Ruby's brother, or the after school mentoring program for Ruby . . .*

- How do you help Ruby's parents manage the division of labor? How do they communicate these differences?
- Who does what when it comes to parenting the kids? How do you help them explain the differences in expectations?
- How does each coparent contribute to caring for and parenting the child?



# Collaboration

## How do You Help Parents Be Supportive?

How do you Help Parents be supportive of one another?

- Personal Responsibility
  - *Ask: How you support the parenting of your child's other coparent?*
- Appreciate the Others Contribution
  - *Ask: How does your child's other coparent support you?*
- Collaboration
  - *Prescribe: When one coparent falls behind, does the other pick up the slack?*



# Focused Coparenting Consultation (FCC)

**Stage 1: Heighten consciousness**

**Stage 2: Selective skill building**

**Stage 3: Guided enactments**



# Coparenting Consultation Topics

## Consciousness Building

- Psychoeducation:
  - What is coparenting?
  - Why is coparenting important?
  - Where did we learn to coparent?
  - Why are fathers important? (Show your Love Video)

## Skill Building:

- Focusing on Positive Communication
  - Giving compliments
- Communication Skills
  - Making "I" Statements
  - Active Listening



# Coparenting Guided Enactment

- Coparenting Problem Solving
  - Examining a 24 hour day or area of coparenting difficulty (e.g. child exchange)
  - Problem solving difficulties in:
    - Support
    - Family Management
    - Division of Labor
    - Opinions about how to raise your children



# Can Focused Coparenting Consultation work with:

- Fathers with history of domestic violence?
- Fathers with substance use problems?
- Fathers who are incarcerated?



# Summary of Key Points about Coparenting

- Important for child development
- Possible in all family types
- Agencies and programs can provide information and skill building
- Remember the 3 C's
  - Common Vision
  - Communication
  - Collaboration





# Questions and Answers

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## Stay in touch with us!

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