

Fatherhood EFFECT Evaluation Final Report:
*A Comprehensive Plan for Supporting
Texas Fathers and Families*

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview and Background

Father involvement has increased dramatically over the past several decades, and simultaneously, the role of fathers in their families has evolved from conceptions of fathers as distant breadwinners to a more holistic recognition that fathers are equal co-parents. Accompanying these changes has been a growing interest among researchers in studying the role that fathers play in the lives of their children. Findings from these studies overwhelmingly show that children with involved fathers fare better across a wide range of domains compared to children without an involved father.

Federal and state investments in promoting the positive impact fathers have on their children and families continue to increase, but are occurring within a context of dramatic change for American families. Many men are becoming fathers in particularly disadvantageous situations. Young, unmarried, and lacking in education, these men face a multitude of barriers to being the fathers they want to be, from poor employment prospects and high incarceration rates, to juggling multiple parenting roles among the children they live with and the ones with whom they do not.

The state of Texas recognizes the important role that fathers play in the lives of their children and families, and also how challenging it can be for some fathers to be involved. The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Prevention and Early Intervention Division (PEI) developed the Educating Fathers for Empowering Children Tomorrow (EFFECT) Program to support fathers and strengthen families through evidence-based fatherhood programs across the state. EFFECT aims to improve children's wellbeing by helping fathers become more involved, responsible, and committed to their children through parent education skills, guidance, and support systems. Additionally, EFFECT aims to increase protective factors—family functioning and resilience, social support, knowledge of parenting and child development, concrete support, and nurturing and attachment—to reduce the risk of child maltreatment and to promote positive family wellbeing.

At present, most efforts to support fathers have been through father-specific programs designed to increase fathers' economic self-sufficiency and improve their parenting knowledge and skills, but the evidence for the effectiveness of these programs is limited. In addition to investing in fatherhood programs through EFFECT, Texas is committed to considering a broader system of supports for fathers. This broader agenda includes gathering key stakeholders, such as program providers, researchers, and state agencies, to assess the state of fatherhood in Texas, convening state agency leaders to identify gaps in service provision and opportunities for collaboration across agencies, and championing the use of a father-inclusive lens in programs and services for families and the general public.

Using a mixed-methods approach that relied on administrative and survey data collected from fathers participating in the EFFECT Program, literature reviews, and interviews with key fatherhood stakeholders, program administrators and staff, and fathers, the Child and Family Research Partnership (CFRP) organized its evaluation of PEI's efforts to support fathers into three tiers. In the first tier, CFRP conducted both an implementation and outcomes evaluation to assess PEI's current investments in Texas fathers through the EFFECT Program. In the second tier, CFRP identified the investments that state agencies and localities have made in fatherhood, and developed an inventory of programs in Texas. In the third tier, CFRP identified innovative programs and policies in other states and highlighted best practices for supporting family inclusiveness. The findings from this evaluation inform a comprehensive plan to support Texas fathers that is described in the final chapter.

Current Investments in Texas Fathers

CFRP conducted an implementation evaluation of the four EFFECT Program contractors: BCFS in Cameron and Taylor counties, the Child Crisis Center of El Paso in El Paso County, NewDay Services in Denton and Tarrant counties, and Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston in Fort Bend County. CFRP found that recruiting fathers to participate in the program is a challenge for a number of reasons. Fathers often do not recognize that they need the program, or are not ready for change; work schedules limit fathers' ability to attend classes in the evenings and on weekends; the lack of transportation options makes it difficult for fathers to attend classes regularly; and the voluntary nature of the programs means that programs must find ways to motivate fathers to attend.

Fathers who do attend the programs find great value in them. The support they find among other fathers, the guidance they receive from the program facilitators, and the community resources and supports that they access keep fathers coming back. Additionally, fathers report knowing how to communicate better with their children and the mother(s) of their children, and having an increased sense of confidence and efficacy as a father, because of their participation in the class.

Importantly, this evaluation highlighted the need for better measures to evaluate program outcomes. The two most common measures in EFFECT are the Protective Factors Survey (PFS), which is required for all four EFFECT contractors, and the 24/7 Dad Fathering Skills Survey used by three of the four EFFECT contractors. Although fathers in EFFECT demonstrated significant increases on both measures, neither measure sufficiently identifies the range of positive outcomes that fathers report or that the curriculum claims to impact.

CFRP found that fathers' needs are diverse. Fathers, particularly fathers who do not live with their children, have many needs ranging from basic (e.g., housing) to mental health (e.g., substance abuse, depression) to legal (e.g., child support and custody) that exceed the capacity of classroom-based programming. Programs and policies for supporting the entire family, including fathers, must take these needs into account.

The State of Fatherhood in Texas

Texas is committed to serving fathers and their families through an array of programs including ones funded by state agencies and others that are the product of local initiatives and efforts. Several divisions within the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) including PEI and Child Protective Services (CPS) have launched programs specific to fathers. The Department of State Health Services (DSHS), the Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD), and the Office of the Attorney General Child Support Division have also led the way in providing supports for fathers. Additionally, Texas recognizes the importance of cross-agency coordination and collaboration for meeting fathers' varying needs and brings stakeholders together through annual Texas Fatherhood Summits and the Texas Fatherhood Interagency Council. In total, over 70 programs are offered across the state by federal, state, and local funding sources to support fathers and their families. These programs typically operate in isolation, and could benefit from more coordination and opportunities to learn from one another.

What Texas Can Learn from Others

One of the primary benefits of participating in the EFFECT Program for fathers is the connections these programs facilitate between fathers and other community resources. These connections are particularly salient given the needs that were voiced by fathers and service providers. The availability of resources in the community and subsequent eligibility requirements can be barriers to fathers' access to those resources. The federal government and many states, including Texas, recognize the needs fathers have and the barriers to meeting those needs, and they are investing in comprehensive supports for fathers. Picking up where states leave off, many cities and counties have also taken the initiative to develop innovative fatherhood programming. In addition to large, comprehensive approaches to supporting fathers, states and communities can take small but meaningful steps to be more inclusive of the whole family by including fathers in their programs, services, and policies, to better meet the needs of families today. Texas can learn best practices for serving fathers and their families from the work of other states and adapt the structures and strategies used in other states to meet the needs of Texas families.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings from CFRP's evaluation of Texas' efforts to support fathers inform our recommendations for a comprehensive plan to support Texas fathers. Fatherhood programs in particular can be strengthened by targeting those fathers who may benefit most, including teenage or young fathers, fathers reentering society from the criminal justice system, and fathers in the Child Welfare system, among others. In particular, policymakers and funders should work with programs to identify early intervention points to reach fathers before they reach crisis points. The state can also take a larger role in fostering communication and sharing between fatherhood programs by establishing and supporting regional collaboratives that bring together fatherhood programs, local community organizations, and local representatives from

state agencies. These forums can allow fatherhood program providers to share fathers' feedback about the programs: when feasible, the state and program providers should make efforts to incorporate fathers' feedback into the programs and services they offer. In particular, fathers have shared barriers to participation, such as transportation issues, as well as a need for more referral sources for assistance with child care, housing, and the child support system. PEI can support program providers in collecting and sharing these needs through regional collaboratives or other venues, and foster connections between organizations and agencies to meet these needs. Finally, PEI should identify instruments that better capture its desired program outcomes of improving children's outcomes by helping fathers become more involved and committed to their children.

In addition to offering specific strategies to strengthen fatherhood programming, CFRP suggests that the state formalize the Texas Fatherhood Interagency Council (TFIC) and authorize it to develop and lead the state's comprehensive plan. The TFIC can support fatherhood program staff by collecting and disseminating information on fatherhood programs through an online inventory or portal; this tool could also facilitate networking among fatherhood stakeholders. The TFIC can further support the adoption of father-inclusive and whole-family practices and policies by promoting family-inclusive campaigns and hosting regional collaboratives and annual fatherhood summits at which fatherhood stakeholders—program providers, policymakers, and agency representatives—can share best practices and lessons learned, identify areas for collaboration, and pilot new strategies to support families. Importantly, any approach to serving fathers cannot be truly comprehensive unless it also addresses systemic issues, particularly those regarding the labor market, child support and custody, and incarceration. The TFIC can lead the creation of a comprehensive plan by developing a mechanism to identify parents—particularly fathers—in programs across the state, allowing the state to better identify and prioritize areas for intervention. By serving fathers and the whole family, Texas can support parents' healthy involvement with their children, and thus contribute to improving their wellbeing.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Purpose and Objectives

Over the past several decades, father involvement in the United States has increased dramatically.¹ Since 1965, fathers have nearly tripled the time they spend with their children.² The rise in paternal involvement has been accompanied by an evolving notion of fatherhood, as old conceptions of the father as “distant breadwinner” or male “role model” have given way to a more holistic rendering of the father as “equal co-parent.”³ Alongside these demographic changes, researchers and academics have devoted a growing interest in studying the role that fathers play in the lives of their children. Findings from these studies overwhelmingly show that children with involved fathers fare better across a wide range of domains when compared to children without an involved father.⁴

Programs designed specifically to support fathers in their role as parents are relatively new to the policy landscape. Originally emerging as an outgrowth of welfare reform and stronger child support enforcement in the 1990s, fatherhood programs have since evolved from a narrow focus on financial stability and support to a more balanced agenda that emphasizes healthy relationships, parenting skills, and father involvement. Though fatherhood programs take a variety of approaches towards achieving these ends, they share the common goal of ensuring that fathers are positively involved in their children’s lives. Despite state and federal funding for these programs now numbering in the hundreds of millions of dollars per year, few fatherhood programs have undergone rigorous evaluation. As a result, policymakers and program administrators have a limited understanding of their effectiveness.

Recognizing this gap in knowledge, the Texas Department of Family Protective Services, Prevention and Early Intervention Division (PEI) contracted with the Child and Family Research Partnership (CFRP) at UT Austin’s LBJ School of Public Affairs to undertake a number of initiatives aimed at building knowledge and raising awareness of the state of Texas fatherhood programs. As part of this effort to gain a better understanding of the implementation and efficacy of fatherhood programs in Texas, CFRP was charged with evaluating the Fatherhood EFFECT Program, designed by PEI to support fathers and strengthen families through evidence-based fatherhood programming. Contracted through PEI and funded through the Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) program, the Fatherhood EFFECT Program promotes father involvement and protective factors—family functioning and resilience, social support, knowledge of parenting and child development, concrete support, and nurturing and attachment—to ensure that children remain safe from abuse and neglect.

In addition to investing in evidence-based fatherhood programs through EFFECT, Texas is committed to investing in a broader system of supports for fathers. This broader investment includes gathering key stakeholders, such as program providers, researchers, and state agencies to assess the state of fatherhood in Texas, convening state agency leaders to identify gaps in

service provision and opportunities for collaboration across agencies, and championing the use of a family-centered lens in programs and services for families and the general public.

The overall purpose of this report is twofold: 1) present the findings from our three-tiered evaluation of PEI's efforts to support fathers and increase the role of fathers in their children's lives; and 2) develop a comprehensive proposal for supporting Texas fathers. First, CFRP presents findings from the outcome and implementation evaluations of the EFFECT Program. These evaluations examine how the Fatherhood EFFECT Program serves fathers across six counties in Texas, how effectively each site achieves the targeted outcomes of the evidence-based curriculum being implemented, and how closely those outcomes are aligned with PEI's desired outcomes for families. CFRP provides recommendations for how the EFFECT Program should evolve moving forward. Second, CFRP shares conclusions from an extensive review of the research on effective fatherhood programs, an overview of fatherhood programs and initiatives within Texas, and highlights from other states. Third, CFRP examines the changing dynamics of families and fathers to assess fathers' most critical needs and identify best practices for family inclusiveness, thus laying the groundwork for going beyond father-specific classroom-based programming. Finally, conclusions from each of the three components of the evaluation inform a comprehensive and evidence-based policy approach to fatherhood programming in Texas.

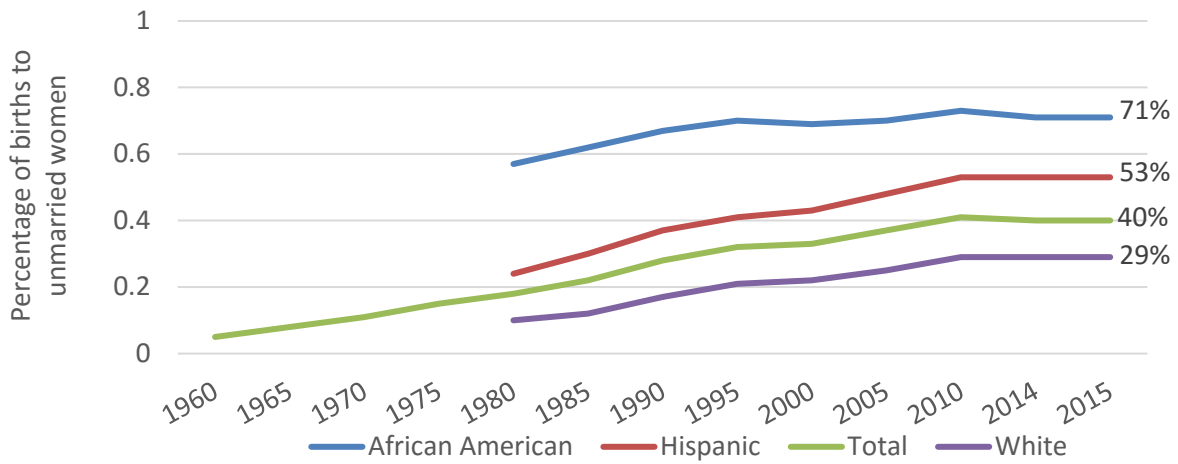
This chapter sets the stage for understanding the findings presented in this report. As already mentioned, the last several decades have brought about significant change in the role fathers play in their families, the level of their involvement, and the interest among researchers and policymakers to understand and increase the positive impact of fathers on their families, particularly through father-specific programming. These trends are detailed below. Importantly, these changes have occurred within a larger context of systemic changes in family structure, the labor market, and incarceration rates. These shifts are summarized first.

Changing Dynamics of Men and Fathers

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES IN FAMILY STRUCTURE

Beginning in the 1960s, several social and demographic trends emerged that undermined the nuclear family structure, defined as two married parents and their children.⁵ Today, men have looser emotional and legal connections to their children. As shown in Figure 1, between 1960 and 2014, the rate of nonmarital births increased from five percent of all births to 40 percent of all births.⁶ The rate of nonmarital births varies substantially by race and ethnicity, mother's age, and education level. Nonmarital births are the majority of births among minorities: they represent more than half of births for Hispanic women and more than two-thirds of births for African-American women.⁷

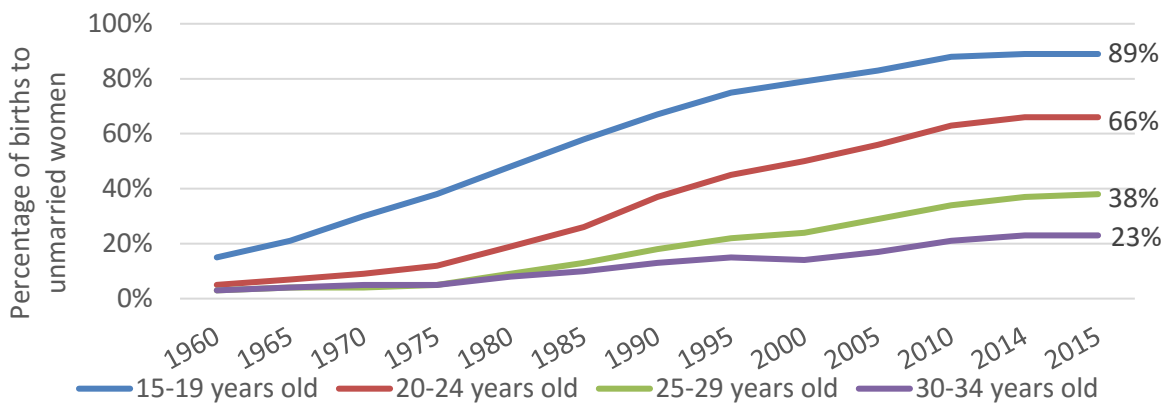
Figure 1. Rising rates of nonmarital births by mother's race/ethnicity



Source: Child Trends, Current Population Survey, 2014.⁸ Center for Disease Control and Prevention, National Vital Statistics Reports, 2017.⁹

Unmarried mothers also tend to be younger than their married counterparts.¹⁰ Nearly two-thirds of births to women between the ages of 20 and 24 are nonmarital, compared to less than one-quarter of births for women between the ages of 30 and 34 (Figure 2). These younger mothers are more likely to have lower levels of education: 62 percent of women with a high school degree or less become mothers by the age of 24, as compared to 26 percent of women with a bachelor's degree.¹¹ Similarly, less-educated men are more likely to become fathers at a young age: 70 percent of men who do not complete high school are fathers by age 24, compared to only 15 percent of men with a bachelor's degree or more.¹² Moreover, these young fathers are less likely to pursue further education, thus limiting their employment possibilities and potential income.¹³

Figure 2. Rising rates of nonmarital births by mother's age at first child's birth



Source: Child Trends, Current Population Survey, 2014.¹⁴ Center for Disease Control and Prevention, National Vital Statistics Reports, 2017.¹⁵

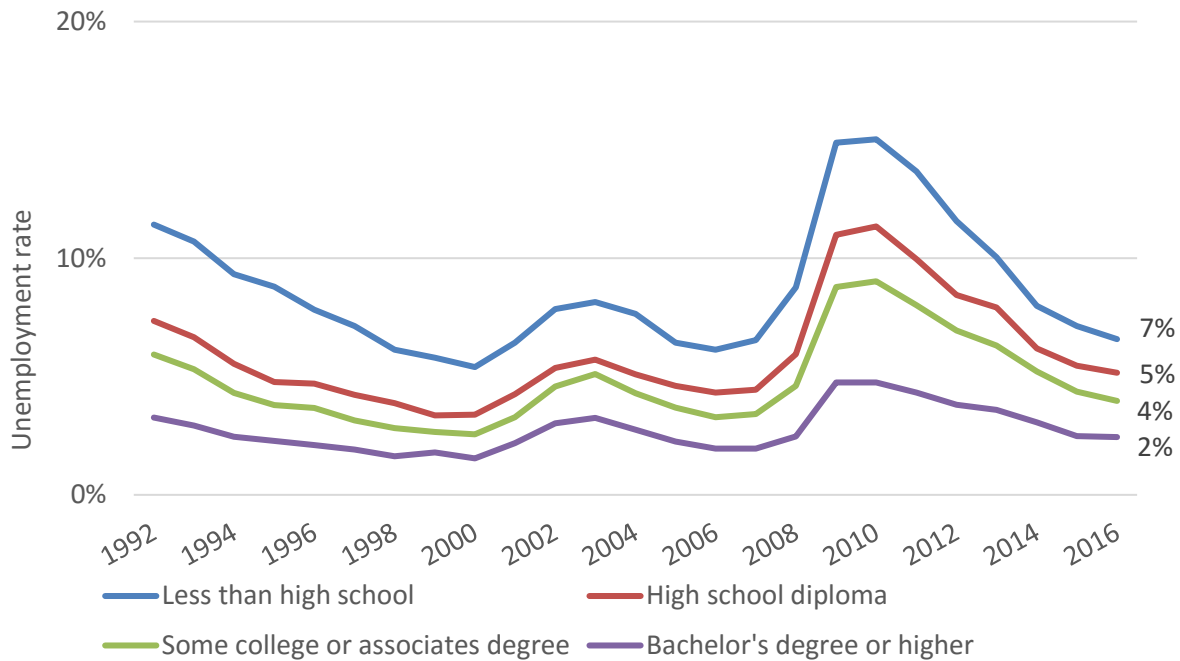
Supporting findings from other states, data from a CFRP study of unmarried births in Texas show that births to unmarried parents are not necessarily births to single parents.¹⁶ Four out of five nonmarital births in the Texas study were to unmarried couples who were in relationships, and more than half of these couples were living together (cohabiting).¹⁷ Couples reported considering the pregnancy as an opportunity to strengthen their relationship, with many moving in together before the birth, or in the year after the birth, and they reported high hopes for marrying one another.¹⁸

Despite expectations of stability, cohabiting parents' relationships are much less stable than those of married parents.¹⁹ The vast majority (87%) of children born to married women experience zero partner transitions by the time they are three years old. In contrast, half of children born to cohabiting women experience their parents' separation during the same time period.²⁰ When unmarried parents break up, almost half of fathers do not see or have subsequent contact with their children.²¹

These unstable relationships often lead to multipartner fertility, in which parents have children with more than one partner. Fathers who were cohabiting with their child's mother at the child's birth are twice as likely as married fathers to have children with more than one partner.²² Men who have children with more than one partner tend to be more disadvantaged than men who have children with only one partner. More than two-thirds of men experiencing multipartner fertility have a high school diploma or less, and poor men are twice as likely as non-poor men to have children with more than one partner.²³ Multipartner fertility also impacts future relationship stability: fathers with children from previous relationships are less likely to marry.²⁴ In these complex families, fathers must spread their already limited resources even more thinly, as they juggle the needs of their current and former partners, and their children. When fathers have children with new partners, fathers provide less financial support and make fewer visits to their nonresidential children and are also less intensively involved with the children with whom they do live.²⁵

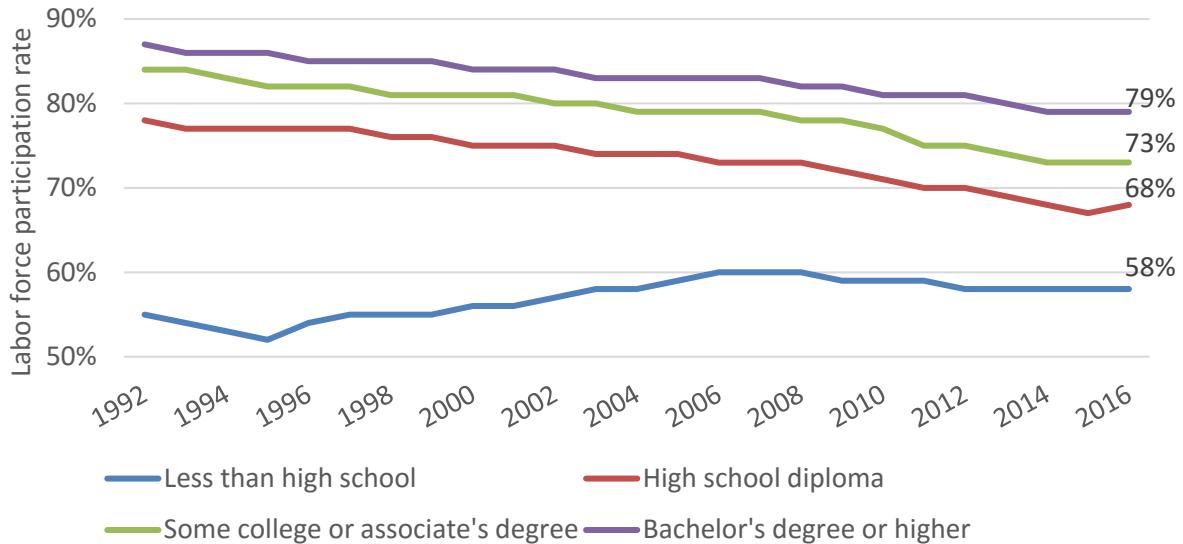
LABOR MARKETS

Shifts in the labor markets have left many young fathers under- or unemployed, and unable to sufficiently support their children and families in the way fathers would like. It is difficult for fathers to be involved and engaged parents when they do not have the financial resources necessary to invest in their children and families. Fathers can invest in their children in non-financial ways, such as spending time with them, being accessible when needed, and actively participating in their upbringing, but even these investments are difficult if fathers are under- or unemployed.²⁶ Young, less-educated men have experienced declines in employment (Figures 3 and 4) and wage growth (Figure 5) that leave them with poor earnings prospects, thus perpetuating the cycle of poverty and contributing to greater income inequality.

Figure 3. Unemployment rate for men by education level

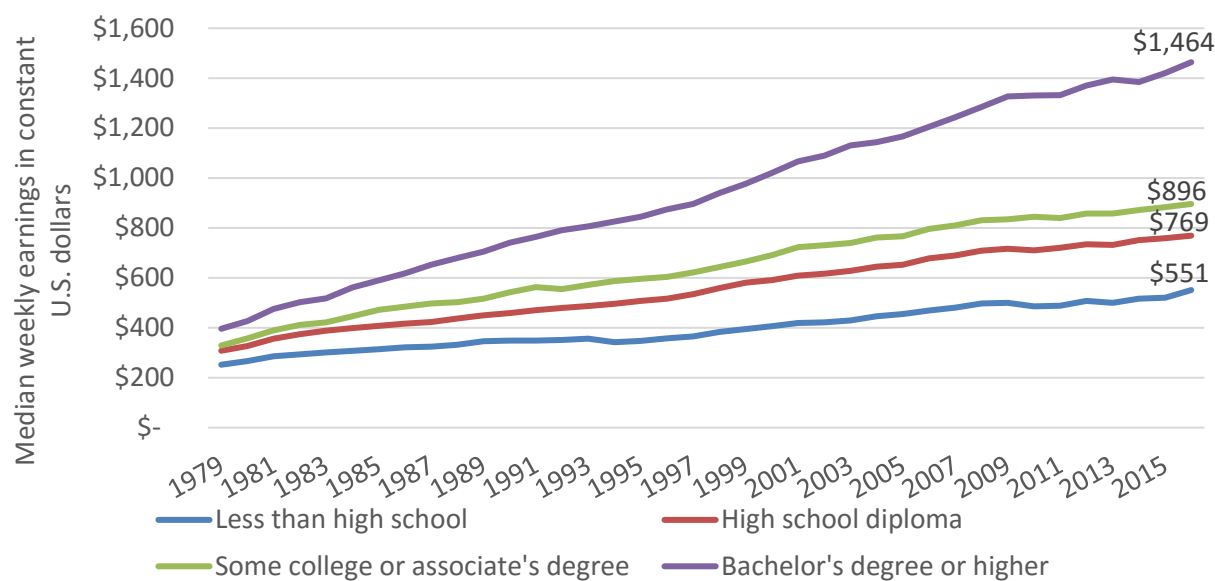
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, 1992-2016.²⁷

The structure of the economy has changed rapidly over the past decades, penalizing workers with limited education and skills for the new types of work needed.²⁸ Young, less-educated men are particularly vulnerable. Although the Great Recession of 2007-2009 affected the entire workforce, young, minority, and less-educated men were hit the hardest.²⁹ Young men's employment rates fell to levels not seen since World War II; in the first six months of 2009, only 65 percent of men between the ages of 20 and 24 were employed.³⁰ Unemployment rates measure the number of people who do not have a job but are actively seeking work, as a percentage of the labor force, the total number of people who are employed and unemployed.³¹ High unemployment rates, particularly among less-educated men, signify that many young men are losing out on the opportunity to gain work experience and professional connections (Figure 3).³² Previous unemployment is one of the best predictors of future unemployment; young men's high unemployment rates put their future employment and economic stability in jeopardy.³³

Figure 4. Labor force participation rate for men ages 25 and older by education level

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, 1992-2016.³⁴

Less-educated men have had a consistently lower labor force participation rate compared to more highly educated men. Currently, only 58 percent of men ages 25 and older with less than a high school education are in the labor force, compared to nearly 80 percent of men ages 25 and older with a bachelor's degree or higher (Figure 4). Less-educated men are also far more likely to be incarcerated compared to their more highly educated peers, and this is particularly true for young, African-American men.³⁵ The lower demand for less-educated labor is driven by several factors, including: men's reduced competitiveness for jobs due to men's falling educational attainment levels relative to women; the "mismatch" between workers' expectations of the jobs they traditionally had access to and those available; technological changes and automation; and globalization and offshoring.³⁶ This drop in demand for less-educated workers can lead to a decline in wages, which can further disincentivize less-educated workers to enter into or remain in the work force.³⁷

Figure 5. Men's median weekly earnings by education level^a

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, 1979-2016.³⁸

Compared to more highly-educated men, less-educated men have also seen lower wages when they are employed. Figure 5 shows the change in median weekly earnings since 1979 in nominal terms (not taking inflation into account), where the gap can also be seen: men with less than a high school degree experienced a doubling of their nominal median weekly earnings, compared to the more than tripling of nominal median weekly earnings for men with a bachelor's degree or higher.³⁹ This gap between more and less-educated men is primarily due to the overall decline in opportunity and availability of middle-class jobs that used to be available for men with lower education levels, such as manufacturing, that have been displaced due to technological advances.⁴⁰

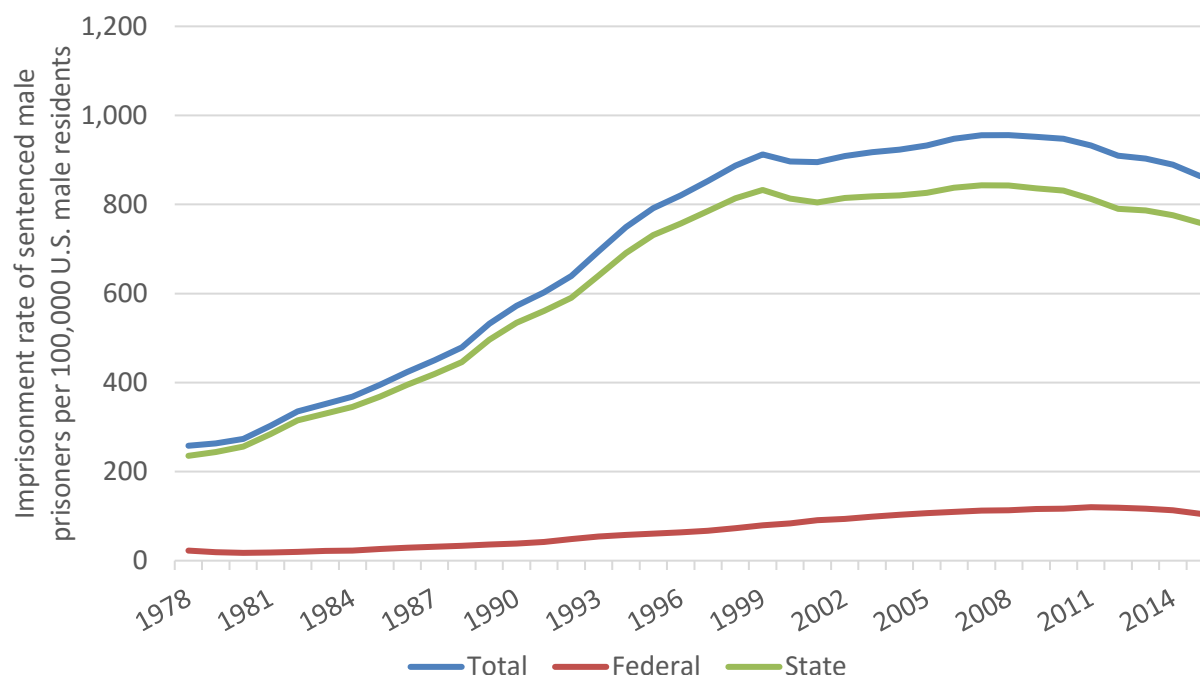
Economic standing and prospects strongly affect couples' relationships. Men's marriage prospects rise with their education level and incomes.⁴¹ Disadvantaged men's poor employment prospects and low wages make them less attractive marriage candidates, and couples may either break up or choose to further delay marriage.⁴²

INCARCERATION AND REENTRY

Another barrier preventing some fathers from engaging and being more involved with their families is the rise in incarceration rates. Beginning in the 1970s, as harsher crime and sentencing policies were put in place, incarceration rates skyrocketed (Figure 6), from 0.3 percent of people in 1978 to a peak of nearly one percent in 2007. In 2015, the incarceration rate was 0.9 percent.⁴³

^a The Bureau of Labor Statistics uses the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) to convert current weekly earnings to constant (1982-1984) dollars.

Figure 6. Imprisonment rate of sentenced male prisoners under the jurisdiction of state or federal correctional authorities per 100,000 U.S. male residents



Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, *National Prisoner Statistics, 1978-2015*.⁴⁴

Although all men have seen a growth in the cumulative risk of imprisonment, younger, less-educated, and minority men experience higher imprisonment rates and have seen a much greater increase of institutionalization rates than their older, more educated, white counterparts have over the same time.⁴⁵ On average, persons who have been incarcerated at least once have 2.3 fewer years of education than those who have never been incarcerated.⁴⁶ The majority of incarcerated men are also young: more than half of offenders are under the age of 30, and 21 percent of all offenders are under the age of 20.⁴⁷ In particular, African-American and Hispanic men are much more likely to be incarcerated than white men. In 2008, eight percent of African-American men and almost three percent of Hispanic men were incarcerated, compared to just over one percent of white men.⁴⁸ African American men who do not obtain a high school degree have a 60 to 70 percent chance of going to prison, a trend that has persisted since the 1960s.⁴⁹

Parents have not been immune to rising incarceration rates. The number of parents in federal and state prisons grew by 79 percent between 1991 and mid-2007.⁵⁰ The vast majority of these parents—92 percent—are fathers.⁵¹ Moreover, the majority of men in prison are fathers: 63 percent of male inmates in federal prisons and 51 percent of male inmates in state prisons reported being a parent to a child under the age of 18.⁵²

When fathers are in prison, they are not only unable to contribute financially to their families, but their engagement and involvement with their children are also limited.⁵³ In addition, their

relationships with their children's mothers are affected; mothers face additional stress supporting their children financially and emotionally without their partner.⁵⁴ As a result, fathers' reunions with their families can be fraught with emotional difficulties. On a practical level, reuniting with families can also be logistically complicated: approximately 80 percent of survey respondents from the National Multifamily Housing Council reported that they use criminal background information to screen residents for rental properties, impeding the ability of families to live under the same roof.⁵⁵

Criminal records hamper men's efforts to reintegrate into society and become productive citizens. Approximately nine in ten employers use criminal background checks on some or all of their job postings; because many employers are averse to hiring employees with criminal records, it is more difficult for men reentering society to obtain stable employment and support their families.⁵⁶ These men are further hindered from obtaining the education and skills necessary to obtain higher-paying jobs: two-thirds (66%) of colleges and universities collect criminal background information, and 62 percent of all colleges and universities use criminal justice information in their admissions process.⁵⁷ States also restrict rights or ban access to services for those with criminal records, including voting rights, safety net programs such as TANF and SNAP, and occupational licensure. The last is particularly salient because one-quarter of all employed workers over the age of 16 currently hold some kind of occupational license or certification.⁵⁸ Holding credentials is also linked to earning higher incomes, particularly for people with lower education levels.⁵⁹

Although it is difficult to unpack the causality of formerly incarcerated men's poor earnings trajectories given that many factors that hinder their advancement pre-dated and may have contributed to their incarceration, incarceration is associated with lower earnings in adulthood. According to a report by the Brookings Institute Hamilton Project, by the age of 45, individuals who have never been incarcerated have a median annual income \$41,000 higher than those who have been incarcerated at some point in their lives.⁶⁰ Facing poor employment prospects, fractured family relationships, and multiple barriers to starting over, formerly incarcerated men often fall back to criminal behaviors: more than three-quarters of released male prisoners are arrested again within five years of release.⁶¹

The Changing Role of Fathers in Families

Concomitant with shifts in family demographics, the labor market, and incarceration rates have been shifts in the role fathers play in their families and in the programs designed to support fathers. Historically, the concept of paternal involvement has been narrowly conceived, with the sole function of breadwinning defining a father's role in the family. However, in the last few decades, the father's role has evolved to include nearly every aspect of parenting, from spending leisure time with his child, to nurturing and caregiving, to providing moral guidance, discipline, and support.⁶² This participation in childrearing carries significant implications for a child's welfare. Involved fatherhood has been linked to better outcomes on nearly every

measure of child wellbeing, from cognitive development and educational achievement to self-esteem and pro-social behavior.⁶³

A number of factors influence the nature of a father's involvement in his child's life. For example, a substantial body of research supports the notion that when parents get along, both the quantity and quality of father involvement are higher.⁶⁴ Fathers who are romantically involved with their child's mother are consistently more likely to be involved with the child across a wide range of demographic, economic, and residential domains.⁶⁵ In fact, some scholars identify the quality of parents' romantic relationship as the strongest predictor of paternal involvement.⁶⁶

Cohabitation plays a similarly outsized role in influencing father involvement.⁶⁷ Though many unmarried fathers are involved and living with the family shortly after the child's birth, a large number transition to non-cohabiting relationships within just a few years.⁶⁸ Some nonresident fathers sustain regular involvement, but many others become gradually less involved.⁶⁹ Overall, fathers who live with the family are typically more involved with their children than nonresident fathers. Nonresident fathers also tend to interact with their children in different ways, with nonresident father involvement more likely to be characterized by leisure and play than discipline or cognitive support.⁷⁰ Research shows, however, that even when parents do not live together and are not in a romantic relationship, their ability to cooperate and engage in positive co-parenting can have a strong influence on paternal involvement.⁷¹

A number of characteristics unique to the father may also affect his ability to maintain positive involvement with his child. Several studies, for example, connect a father's education, income, and employment to supportive parenting and frequency of father-child contact.⁷² Not all studies have been able to make a conclusive link between father involvement and human capital, but research is more decisive on the topic of antisocial behavior.⁷³ Fathers with a history of incarceration, abusive behavior, or drug and alcohol problems pose a high risk to positive interaction and are less likely to maintain contact with their children over time.⁷⁴

Nearly all of the risk factors associated with attenuated involvement shortly after birth—fragile relationships, low human capital, and destructive antisocial behaviors—remain salient in the years following. New barriers to involvement may also arise over time. Fathers who have children with new partners, for example, often shift their time and economic resources such that new children benefit from somewhat higher levels of involvement and support than prior children.⁷⁵

Overall, the literature on involvement suggests that unmarried fathers play an important role in the development of their children—but that role is delicate. A web of interpersonal and environmental factors exercises significant influence over a father's involvement in his child's life. Fatherhood programs face the challenge of untangling this web to help fathers overcome the particular barriers they face. The programs approach this challenge in a variety of ways but with one goal in common: to help fathers become the parents they want to be.

History of Fatherhood Programs

The proliferation of programs targeted specifically at fathers is relatively new. Historically, social programs aimed at poverty alleviation, health, and nutrition have almost exclusively targeted mothers and children.⁷⁶ Programs for fathers, by contrast, have traditionally sought to increase fathers' financial contributions to the family, with little attention given to their broader role in the family.⁷⁷ This limited view of fatherhood was typified in programs such as child support, which over time has come to include services for employment, job training, and paternity establishment.⁷⁸ These supplementary services, much like child support itself, have the underlying goal of facilitating fathers' financial contributions.

In 1996, Congress passed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), otherwise known as welfare reform. The welfare reform law strengthened the child support program and authorized the use of Child Support Enforcement funds to promote access and visitation programs, rather than fathers' economic contributions alone.⁷⁹ With this authorization, the welfare reform law became one of the first federal efforts to acknowledge the broader role that fathers play in the lives of their children.⁸⁰ Welfare reform also set out a number of goals congruent with the goals of many fatherhood programs. These goals included efforts to end welfare dependence through employment and marriage, reduce nonmarital births, and promote the formation of stable two-parent families.⁸¹ Further, the 1996 welfare reform law emphasized marriage as the foundation of a successful society—especially with regard to the interests of children.⁸²

FEDERALLY-FUNDED RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD PROGRAMS ARE BORN

Following PRWORA, some states began to devote increased resources, including TANF dollars, to pro-marriage initiatives. Though these efforts sent federal dollars to programs associated with fatherhood, the focus remained on marriage promotion.⁸³ Several years later, Responsible Fatherhood programs received their first dose of federal funding when Congress appropriated a total of \$4 million to the National Fatherhood Initiative and the Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization.⁸⁴

Despite various efforts to spotlight fatherhood as a public policy issue, it was not until 2005 that fatherhood programs received appreciable attention on the national stage. This attention came in the form of the Deficit Reduction Act (DRA) of 2005, which in addition to reauthorizing the welfare reform law, also included \$150 million in federal funding each year for five years to support both healthy marriage and responsible fatherhood programs.⁸⁵ During this five-year period from FY2006 to FY2010, grants for Healthy Marriage (\$100 million) were funded at twice the level as those for Responsible Fatherhood (\$50 million). Beginning in FY2011, however, funding for the two grants was equalized, with \$75 million going to each grant program per year.⁸⁶

Responsible Fatherhood programs serve all types of fathers, including noncustodial parents and fathers returning to their communities from prison. The three primary goals of Responsible

Fatherhood programs are to 1) improve fathers' relationships with their spouses, significant others, and/or mothers of their children, 2) help fathers become better parents, and 3) help fathers contribute to the financial wellbeing of their children through job training and employment support services that can help fathers obtain employment and higher wages.⁸⁷

In addition to the federal funding provided for Responsible Fatherhood programming, several other sources of federal money are available for programs and services aimed at fathers. These include TANF, TANF state maintenance of effort (MOE) funding, Child Support Enforcement (CSE) funds, Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) grants, and the Social Services Block Grant (Title XX).⁸⁸ Fatherhood programs also receive financial support from state and local governments, private foundations, and nonprofit organizations.⁸⁹

What Do Fatherhood Programs Do?

Fatherhood programs take a variety of approaches to improving paternal involvement. Most programs are educational in nature and focus on well-defined areas of parenting competence. Some fatherhood programs, however, concentrate primarily on peer support or counseling, and others work with communities more broadly through awareness campaigns. The following sections provide an overview of the issue areas generally addressed by fatherhood programs and a review of the different approaches they take.

ISSUE AREAS

In broad terms, fatherhood programs are designed to focus on three key issue areas: healthy relationships, responsible parenting, and economic stability. These three activities are required of all fatherhood programs funded through the Administration for Children and Families' (ACF) Responsible Fatherhood grants.⁹⁰ More specifically, fatherhood programs tend to focus on improving efficacy in one or more domains, such as parenting skills, employment/financial stability, healthy relationships and co-parenting, violence prevention, incarceration and reentry support, and child support or paternity establishment. Because quality of paternal involvement is as important to child wellbeing as quantity, initiatives generally attempt to address deficits in both. For noncustodial fathers, fathers who are temporarily or periodically absent, or fathers who struggle to set time aside for parenting, a programmatic focus on finding ways to increase the amount of time participants spend with their children can be especially important. Fatherhood programs also benefit participants who are already engaged in their children's lives, providing meaningful support for the development of positive parenting skills and achievement of economic self-sufficiency.

PROGRAMMATIC APPROACHES

Across focus areas, educational courses or classes are the most common method of delivery for fatherhood programming. Most programs consist of a weekly class that fathers attend consistently for a certain number of weeks or months. The specific topics covered and the

educational approaches vary by program. Some programs develop their own curricula, whereas others use curricula developed by an outside organization specifically for the purpose of promoting responsible fatherhood.

Alternatively, fatherhood programs often deliver similar educational material through standalone workshops and seminars. This approach is convenient for fathers who are looking for information only on specific topics, such as child support or co-parenting, rather than the full range covered in a long-term course. Frequently programs offer both workshops and a long-term course, with the workshops either supplementing the course or providing an alternate option for fathers whose schedules do not accommodate an ongoing commitment.

Other programs concentrate on providing emotional support for fathers. Peer support groups give participants an opportunity to share their experiences and struggles with one another, meet positive role models, and offer advice to peers. Support groups provide an outlet for fathers to express the frustrations and difficulties they encounter and to find productive ways to cope by talking with professionals and other fathers in similar situations.

Some programs offer counseling and mentoring services to provide a more personalized form of assistance. Counseling for individuals, as well as couples, can be effective in helping parents work through difficulties, such as problems with communication, which hinder father involvement. Other individualized services include case management and home visiting, which can similarly help fathers with decision-making skills and interactions with children.

Do Fatherhood Programs Work?

Though fatherhood programs have garnered increased funding and participation over the last decade, little research has been done on their effectiveness. The first round of fatherhood funding from the federal government in 2005 did not include a rigorous evaluation requirement. Fortunately, this changed in the most recent round of funding from ACF. ACF is currently funding several large, rigorous evaluations of fatherhood programs. These studies are outlined in detail in CFRP's 2016 review of fatherhood research.⁹¹ Another review of the literature on evaluations of programs targeting low-income fathers found a limited number of rigorous studies (i.e. those including a control or comparison group).⁹² A number of other reviews have identified "model" or "promising" programs, all of which we draw upon for our review.

Most studies on fatherhood have been conducted less rigorously with a very small number of participants (i.e. 30 or under) using a pre-post design to look for changes in the participants' parenting practices. These studies also use populations that suggest who participates in programs—and evaluations—may be largely a matter of accessibility. Specifically, a number of programs focus on incarcerated fathers, teenage fathers, or Head Start fathers. The common element in all these groups is their ability to be found through a single institution (respectively, prisons, schools, and Head Start programs). The programs in question typically include curriculum

targeted toward the specific challenges faced by incarcerated fathers or young fathers. However, it would be valuable to see more rigorous evaluations of programs focused on the general population of fathers as recruitment and retention are two important areas that are likely more difficult with the general population, given men's lack of common ties to an institution.

In this section we examine more rigorous studies of fatherhood programs, all of which are briefly described in Appendix A: Fatherhood Program Evaluations. We begin our review by examining studies identified by previous reviews of the field as model or promising programs.⁹³ We also searched for programs providing services in at least one of the three ACF focus areas (i.e., healthy relationships, responsible parenting, and economic stability), or child abuse and neglect prevention. All of the studies included in this review are either randomized control trials or quasi-experimental evaluations. Randomized control trials (RCTs) are experiments that allocate participants randomly to either a treatment group (e.g., receiving the fatherhood program) or control group (e.g., not receiving the fatherhood program), and are the gold standard for research. Quasi-experimental studies are similar to RCTs in that they assign participants to a treatment or control group, but do not do so randomly; this makes it more difficult to prove causality. The studies included also aim to affect at least one of four domains (father involvement, economic stability, healthy relationships, and child abuse prevention) for all fathers regardless of residential status, residential fathers only, or nonresidential fathers only. If no indication is provided in the study with regard to residential status, programs are assumed to serve all fathers. If the population is noncustodial parents, the program is classified as serving nonresidential fathers. Note that programs may have effects in more than one focus area. Programs were assigned to one of the three ACF focus areas or child abuse and neglect based on the program model's intended outcomes. The distinctions between the focus areas are mostly theoretical; in reality, programs that intend to impact one domain tend to have impacts in other domains as well.

FATHER INVOLVEMENT

By far the majority of programs focus on some aspect of father involvement. Programs aim to increase fathers' involvement with their children by improving parenting skills and knowledge of fathering and child development. Parenting skills include parenting attitudes, techniques, and roles. Fathering knowledge is quite similar and includes topics such as responsible fathering and father-child relationships. Of the 36 studies included in our review (see Appendix A for full details), 24 aimed to influence father involvement among their participants. Of these, 13 were for all fathers, nine targeted only nonresidential fathers, and two were only for residential fathers. Several studies have shown an impact on father involvement, and the impacts varied depending on whether fathers were living with their children or not.

Programs serving all fathers, regardless of residential status, used and implemented a variety of program curricula and policies. These curricula ranged from Information and Insights about Infants to 24/7 Dad, and the policies ranged from the Healthy State Program to a child support earnings disregard policy. Some of the programs specifically targeted fathers of children enrolled

in Head Start or first-time fathers during the prenatal period or young fathers. Of the 12 studies showing an impact on father involvement, all but two were randomized control trials.

Broadly, programs targeting all fathers improved outcomes on several aspects of father involvement. A number of programs increased involvement by improving the quality of the father's relationship with his child.^b Participants also improved their attitudes about fatherhood or parenting^c and increased their share of parenting.^d

Programs specifically for nonresidential fathers also used a variety of curricula, but many programs focused on incarcerated fathers (four of the nine programs were for incarcerated fathers). Given that a number of the programs that focus on nonresidential fathers were for incarcerated fathers, it is not surprising that more of these programs worked to improve knowledge and attitudes towards fatherhood and child development, rather than direct interaction with children, as compared to programs for all fathers. Programs for nonresidential fathers generally improved father involvement by increasing fathering/parenting knowledge^e and changing attitudes about parenting.^f There were fewer significant effects on direct interaction with children among these programs.

Four programs were open only to residential dads. One of these, the Parenting Together Project, focused not only on the fathers' relationship with their children, but with the mother as well (including co-parenting and parental cooperation).⁹⁴ Couples, rather than individuals, were included in this study. The other study required fathers to be filmed interacting with their children in the family home.⁹⁵ Both father-child relationship quality and father accessibility increased in these two programs.

Small sample size is a limitation of most of the reviewed studies. Among the 13 programs that target all fathers, six of them showed significant, positive effects for father involvement, but had a sample size of 67 or less (i.e., 34 or fewer fathers receiving treatment).

^b For specific program information, please see the following references in Appendix A: Fatherhood Program Evaluations: Bronte-Tinkew, Burkhauser, & Metz (2012); Duggan et al. (2004); Fagan & Iglesias (1999); Lewin-Bizan (2015); Mazza (2002); McBride (1990).

^c For specific program information, please see the following references in Appendix A: Fatherhood Program Evaluations: Fagan & Stevenson (2002); Lewin-Bizan (2015); McBride (1990).

^d For specific program information, please see the following references in Appendix A: Fatherhood Program Evaluations: Cowan et al. (2009); Duggan et al. (2004); Fagan & Iglesias (1990); Lewin-Bizan - (2015); McBride (1990).

^e For specific program information, please see the following references in Appendix A: Fatherhood Program Evaluations: Block et al. (2014); Robbers (2015); Westney, Cole, & Munford (1988); Wilczak & Markstrom (1999).

^f For specific program information, please see the following references in Appendix CA Fatherhood Program Evaluations: Harrison (1997); Landreth & Lobaugh (1998); Robbers (2005).

ECONOMIC STABILITY

Originating with child support payments, economic stability now includes professional skill-building, job search assistance, and more. We examined eight studies that aimed to impact economic stability for fathers and their families. These programs served both residential and nonresidential fathers, and all but two studies were randomized control trials. Curricula for economic stability programs typically included a variety of services such as employment assistance, help addressing child support orders, educational training, mentoring, or case management. Generally, the outcomes positively affected by fatherhood programs in the economic arena include better employment rates and payment of child support orders.

Economic stability programs open to all dads increased employment rates in the treatment groups, but each program had a different way of doing so.^g For example, the Center for Employment Opportunities Program in New York aimed to help fathers who were ex-offenders transition into permanent employment, reduce recidivism, and improve the father-child relationship.⁹⁶ The Young Dads program provided tailored, comprehensive services to fathers (counseling, referrals for employment, housing, legal advocacy, parenting skills training, etc.). Both programs increased employment rates among participating fathers.⁹⁷

Several of the programs and policies that focus on economic stability for nonresidential fathers provided services specifically to noncustodial parents. All of these programs aimed at improving fathers' ability to pay child support and the collection of those funds; program outcomes included improved employment rates and payment of formal child support orders.^h Project Bootstrap, a statewide project in Texas to improve community-based services for young fathers, including employment assistance, help with child support orders, peer support groups, and more, showed that program participants were employed for a higher percentage of time than the comparison group (65 percent versus 51 percent), but earned \$85 per month less, on average.⁹⁸ Participants also made child support payments 12 percent more often and more consistently than the comparison group (35 percent versus 25 percent, measured by the proportion of times collections were made in two months out of every three-month period).⁹⁹

Another Texas program, Noncustodial Parent (NCP) Choices, is a partnership between the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) Child Support Division and the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC). NCP Choices links child support courts (also known as IV-D courts, after Part D of Title IV of the federal Social Security Act that explains states' requirements in setting up child support processes), OAG child support, and local workforce development boards.¹⁰⁰ NCP Choices ties employment services to court-imposed sanctions, providing employment services

^g For specific program information, please see the following references in Appendix A: Fatherhood Program Evaluations: Bloom, Redcross, Zweig, & Azurdia (2007); Mazza (2002).

^h For specific program information, please see the following references in Appendix A: Fatherhood Program Evaluations: Bloom et al. (2000); Knox & Redcross (2000); Schroder & Boughty (2009); Schroeder, Looney, & Schexnayder (2004).

and enhanced child support compliance monitoring services for unemployed or underemployed noncustodial parents who owe child support. Services include career planning and counseling, job search assistance, work clothing, transportation, and GED or ESL classes. In some areas, it also includes parenting classes. Over the course of one year, 71 percent of participating parents entered employment and 77 percent of those who entered employment remained employed for at least six months.¹⁰¹

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Building on healthy marriage initiatives, fatherhood programs recognize that parents do not have to be romantically involved for a healthy co-parenting relationship to be important for their child's wellbeing. To that end, fatherhood programs cover topics such as co-parenting, violence prevention, conflict resolution, and self-improvement. Of the 36 programs reviewed, 18 aimed to impact healthy relationships among their participants. These 18 included programs that focused on healthy relationships with one's co-parent and with one's self. Both within and separate from healthy relationships, self-improvement topics such as emotional coaching and self-care have been covered in these fatherhood programs.

Programs that serve all fathers have shown significant improvements on a number of outcomes for participating fathers, including the quality of the relationship with the mother,ⁱ reduced stress or anxiety,^j and levels of support.^k For example, the STEP-UP program in Phoenix, Arizona provides mentoring, counseling, case management, and educational support to young fathers, with the goal of helping them achieve self-sufficiency and take responsibility for their families.¹⁰² Fifty-three percent of mentored fathers and 42 percent of non-mentored fathers (who received other services but no mentoring) strengthened their relationships with their spouse or significant other.¹⁰³

Although a number of programs produced positive outcomes, they sometimes did not have the anticipated effect. For example, the Parents as Teachers program did not see any significant effects for fathers on parenting knowledge, attitudes, or stress, and fathers' levels of parenting satisfaction actually decreased over time in the program.¹⁰⁴ Nor did the Supporting Father Involvement-Fathers Only program see any difference between treatment and comparison groups on measures of parenting stress levels, authoritarian parenting beliefs, fathers' share of parenting, conflict about discipline, or relationship satisfaction.¹⁰⁵

As with the other focus areas, a number of the programs for all fathers specifically target young fathers. The Minnesota Early Learning Design aimed to improve young fathers' (age 16 to 25)

ⁱ For specific program information, please see the following references in Appendix A: Fatherhood Program Evaluations: Bronte-Tinkew (2007); Fagan (2008).

^j For specific program information, please see the following references in Appendix A: Fatherhood Program Evaluations: Bronte-Tinkew (2007); Cowan et al. (2009).

^k For specific program information, please see the following references in Appendix A: Fatherhood Program Evaluations: Dinkmeyer & McKay (1982); Lewin-Bizan (2015); Mazza (2002).

co-parenting by helping them share parenting responsibilities regardless of their relationship status, reducing their isolation, and providing positive role models over the course of five sessions.¹⁰⁶ The program positively impacted fathers', but not mothers', reports of communication and parenting alliance.

The six nonresidential father programs we reviewed aimed to help incarcerated fathers, recently divorced fathers, and noncustodial fathers.¹⁰⁷ All but two of these studies were randomized control trials. Whereas four programs, three of which were evaluated with RCTs, reported no significant improvements in regards to healthy relationship aims, others aiming to affect healthy relationships among nonresidential fathers improved outcomes for fathers' attitudes towards their own self-worth^l and fathers' relationship with their co-parent.^m The Parents' Education about Children's Emotions (PEACE) Program in Ohio, for example, was designed to help divorcing parents and their children and to reduce post-divorce litigation. After completing the 2.5-hour session, parents participating in the program reported that negative behaviors from the co-parent had "decreased" and "stopped completely" because of the program.¹⁰⁸

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT PREVENTION

Child abuse and neglect is a complex social problem with myriad conditions, stressors, behaviors, and perpetrators. The U.S. Children's Bureau reported nearly 700,000 children were identified as victims of abuse in 2013 alone; this abuse includes all forms of neglect, physical abuse, psychological maltreatment, and sexual abuse involving a child.¹⁰⁹ The risk factors for child abuse are varied and can range from the internal (parental competency) to the external (stress or isolation) or the contextual (lack of social networks, community violence, or poverty).¹¹⁰ A perpetrator of child abuse and maltreatment is someone who has knowingly harmed a child in their care; a perpetrator may be a caregiver (e.g. relatives, babysitters, and foster parents) or a parent.¹¹¹

The purpose of child abuse prevention programs has traditionally been to attempt to mitigate risk factors associated with the likelihood of child abuse, because research shows that the presence of multiple risk factors in a family increases the probability of child maltreatment at home.¹¹² However, current child abuse prevention programs tend to focus on protective factors rather than risk factors.¹¹³ The aim of this approach is to reduce child abuse in families by building protective factors through positive parenting skills, appropriate discipline, effective communication, emotional support, and stress management.

The U.S. Children's Bureau has identified protective factors for families associated with lower incidences of child abuse, including: nurturing and attachment within families; knowledge of

^l For specific program information, please see the following references in Appendix A: Fatherhood Program Evaluations: Block et al. (2014).

^m For specific program information, please see the following references in Appendix A: Fatherhood Program Evaluations: Cookston, Braver, Griffin, Deluse, & Miles (2006); McKerny, Clark, & Stone (1999).

parenting and child development; parental emotional resilience; connection to social support; concrete support in the form of adequate food, housing, and other essential services; and social and emotional competence for children.¹¹⁴ The focus on protective factors is intended to help parents with risk factors for abuse and neglect learn effective parenting skills, thereby reducing the likelihood for child maltreatment at home. By strengthening these factors, prevention programs have shifted from a punitive approach to one that attempts to increase child and family wellbeing by empowering parents to effectively care for their children.

The majority of child abuse cases in the United States are perpetrated by parents. According to the U.S. Children's Bureau, in 2013 one or both parents were responsible for 91.4 percent of cases of maltreated children.¹¹⁵ Of those parents identified as perpetrators of child abuse, fathers were solely responsible for reported child maltreatment cases 20.3 percent of the time.¹¹⁶ Though fathers are more likely to be involved in moderate to severe abuse cases, the majority of child maltreatment cases (63.2%) involve only the mother or both parents.¹¹⁷ Mothers are involved in more cases of child maltreatment (most often, cases of neglect), but fathers are disproportionately represented among the perpetrator population based on the amount of time they spend providing direct care to their children because mothers tend to take on a larger share of parenting duties and head more single-family households than fathers.¹¹⁸ Consequently, the majority of child abuse prevention programs are directed to both parents.

One example of a parent-focused proactive intervention is the evidence-based Healthy Families America (HFA) home visiting program. HFA aims to improve parent-child interactions and child wellbeing, thereby reducing child abuse. Though current evaluations of HFA report no effect on preventing serious forms of child abuse and neglect, studies of HFA programs in Hawaii and New York report positive outcomes for reducing corporal punishment, physiological or physical aggression, and the frequency of mild physical assault among families.¹¹⁹

Another program, SafeCare, is a reactive home visiting program targeting families with a young child and a history of child maltreatment or risk for child maltreatment. Similar to HFA, the SafeCare model does not distinguish between mothers and fathers in the family. Multiple evaluations of the program show significant reductions in child abuse recidivism.¹²⁰ For example, a 2002 study of the SafeCare program in California reported participating families were 15 percent less likely to have a recurrence of child maltreatment (15%) compared to families in the control group (44%) over three years.¹²¹

Perhaps one of the most promising of parent-focused proactive child abuse prevention programs is Triple P Positive Parenting Practices. This program has been shown to slow rates of child abuse, reduce foster care placements, and decrease hospitalizations from child abuse injuries. A robust randomized control trial evaluating the program across 18 counties in the United States reported large effect sizes for decreases in substantiated child maltreatment, child out-of-home placements, and child maltreatment injuries.¹²²

Although most child abuse prevention programs target the entire family, a few programs focus exclusively on fathers. Unfortunately, existing father-focused programs are less likely to have been rigorously evaluated for overall effectiveness compared to parent-focused programs. The Boot Camp for New Dads Program is one example of a program targeting fathers that has not yet been evaluated for impact. This program is a community-based program for fathers of all economic levels, cultures, and ages. The program facilitates engagement between experienced and new fathers to promote involvement with their children and build confidence as a new father. The curriculum for the Boot Camp for Dads program directly addresses Shaken Baby Syndrome, but long-term outcomes are focused on general family and child wellbeing.

Emerging evidence suggests that family interventions to reduce child maltreatment are less effective when the mother experiences reoccurring domestic violence.¹²³ A promising child abuse prevention program targeting fathers and addressing this particular issue is the Caring Dads: Helping Fathers Value their Children program. This program is an intervention targeting fathers who have abused or neglected their children, exposed them to abuse of their mothers, or are determined to be high-risk for future child maltreatment. Researchers have published multiple studies citing the need for this type of program; however, a rigorous evaluation of the program has not yet been conducted.¹²⁴

Whereas programs such as the ones discussed above show promise, most child abuse prevention programs still focus on both parents. The reason for the low number of father-focused programs is likely twofold. First, as mentioned earlier, support for fatherhood programs is relatively new to family policy initiatives. Most existing programs targeting fathers prioritize increasing father involvement through teaching positive parenting skills, self-efficacy, and the like. Consequently, child abuse prevention is often a secondary, longer-term, or implicit outcome for fatherhood programs. Second, most child abuse prevention programs focus on building safe and healthy relationships and environments within entire families.

EVIDENCE-BASED CURRICULA FOR EFFECT

PEI identified four evidence-based fatherhood curricula and required each EFFECT provider to select one of the four programs to implement in their communities: 24/7 Dad, the Becoming Parents Program, the Nurturing Fathers Program, or the Supporting Fathers' Involvement Program. Three providers decided to implement 24/7 Dad and one chose to implement Nurturing Fathers. We describe those two programs, including their evidence base, in the next chapter. All four programs, as well as other evidence-based fatherhood programs, are described in Appendix B.

Summary

Fatherhood programs have come a long way since their inception several decades ago. An array of programs now serves many thousands of fathers annually, and federal and state efforts to support these programs have proliferated greatly in recent years. Despite the rapid growth in fatherhood programming, the research on the effectiveness of these initiatives remains limited. Some have shown promise in small-scale studies and others have registered impacts under more rigorous evaluation designs. Several large, rigorous evaluations of fatherhood programs are currently underway, which are described in greater detail in CFRP's comprehensive review of the fatherhood research.¹²⁵ The findings from these projects will go a long way to fill in the gaps left by the research to date.

Fatherhood programs, including the four programs that PEI identified as eligible for implementation in EFFECT, generally aim to increase the quantity and quality of fathers' involvement with their children, support economic stability, and/or promote healthy co-parenting relationships. Findings from evaluations of these programs show promise at supporting these goals across studies of varying rigor and targeted populations.

Father involvement has increased dramatically over the past several decades, and simultaneously, the role of fathers in their families has evolved from conceptions of fathers as distant breadwinners to a more holistic recognition that fathers are equal co-parents. Federal and state investments in promoting the positive impact fathers have on their children and families continue to increase, but are occurring within a context of dramatic change for American families. Many men are becoming fathers in particularly disadvantageous situations: young, unmarried, and lacking in education, they face a multitude of barriers to being the fathers they want to be, from poor employment prospects and high incarceration rates, to juggling multiple parenting roles among the children they live with and the ones they do not.

The findings from our evaluation, which are presented over the next several chapters, must be considered within this broader context. This evaluation aimed to identify how the Fatherhood EFFECT Program serves fathers, how the state of Texas can better serve fathers who often have varying and significant challenges or needs, and given the changing demographic and economic landscape, what steps beyond programming Texas might take to support fathers across the state.

CHAPTER 2: EVALUATION OVERVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

The Texas Fatherhood EFFECT Program

The Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) program is a federally-funded program authorized through Title II of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act. In Texas, the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) was appointed by the Governor as the lead agency for administering the CBCAP funds through its division of Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI). In recent years, DFPS has used CBCAP funding to launch two iterations of the *Fatherhood Educating Fathers for Empowering Children Tomorrow* (EFFECT) program: EFFECT I in El Paso, Taylor, and Cameron counties and EFFECT II in Tarrant, Denton, and Fort Bend counties.

The EFFECT Program sites are implementing evidence-based parent education programs which target biological, adoptive, and social fathers to increase protective factors in families considered to be at risk for child abuse and neglect.¹²⁶ Eligible participants are primary caregivers, defined as a “father, father figure, or a male caregiver that plays a significant role in the target child’s life.”¹²⁷ EFFECT sites are required to implement an evidence-based fatherhood program with fidelity to the model, and to provide ancillary services to clients, including support groups, booster sessions, child care, resources and referrals, transportation, or other supports.¹²⁸

EFFECT I AND II SITES

DFPS prioritized serving Texas counties with a five-year average rate of abuse per one thousand children that was equal to or above the five-year statewide average rate of abuse of 10.1 per thousand. The first round of EFFECT (EFFECT I), launched in 2013, administered funds to two providers: BCFS Health and Human Services in Cameron and Taylor counties and the Child Crisis Center of El Paso in El Paso County. The second round of EFFECT (EFFECT II), launched in 2015, administered funds to an additional two providers: NewDay Services in Denton and Tarrant counties, and Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston in Fort Bend County. The four contractors are described in more detail below.

BCFS Health and Human Services (BCFS)

BCFS Health and Human Services provides the EFFECT Program in Taylor and Cameron counties and aims to serve 300 fathers each year across the two sites. BCFS has served an increasing number of fathers each year: it served 231 fathers in FY15, and 293 fathers in FY16.¹²⁹ The Fatherhood Parent Educator in each county recruits fathers, facilitates the curriculum sessions, and provides referrals for additional services. Occasionally, a co-facilitator or volunteer who has completed the program will assist the Fatherhood Parent Educator with the curriculum.¹³⁰ BCFS uses the 24/7 Dad A.M. curriculum, which is designed to be administered as a two-hour weekly session over a span of 12 weeks. The classes range in size from three to 12 fathers.¹³¹ BCFS offers the 24/7 Dad program at multiple sites in both counties, including adult and juvenile detention centers and transition centers, housing authorities, faith-based organizations, substance abuse residential treatment centers, and social service organizations, such as the

Harlingen Outreach Center and the Abilene Transition Center. The majority of their EFFECT participants come from detention centers or substance abuse residential treatment centers.¹³²

Child Crisis Center of El Paso (CCCEP)

The Child Crisis Center of El Paso implements the EFFECT Program in El Paso County; their goal is to serve 140 fathers each year. In both FY 15 and FY16, CCCEP exceeded its performance target and served over 200 fathers and 180 fathers, respectively.¹³³ CCCEP uses both the 24/7 Dad A.M. and P.M. curriculum. Both programs are designed to be administered as a two-hour weekly session over a span of 12 weeks, although CCCEP has worked with PEI and the National Fatherhood Initiative, the 24/7 Dad program developer, to modify the 24/7 Dad P.M. program duration to seven weeks to increase retention.¹³⁴ Not all fathers who participate in the A.M. class continue on to the P.M. class; CCCEP uses an invitation-only model for particularly engaged dads who are dedicated to the program. Program sessions are held at the CCCEP offices, as well as partner sites throughout the county, including schools, churches, detention centers, the county probation office, a local job-training program, the Domestic Relations Office (DRO), a recreation center, and local nonprofits and social services organizations.¹³⁵ Some sites host only one class, whereas others can host up to three classes over the same time period. Class sizes range from two to three fathers in community settings, and up to 20 fathers in one of the detention centers. Most classes have nine or ten fathers; Parent Educators facilitate the classes, and co-facilitators—who are sometimes program graduates—assist in the larger classes. In addition to the 24/7 Dad curriculum, CCCEP offers other services to meet participants' basic needs, including assisting with case management, counseling, respite services, and emergency shelter services. CCCEP also offers a 24/7 emergency crisis line, and offers additional parent education and training programs, ESL classes, social events, and support groups.

NewDay Services (NDS)

In Tarrant and Denton counties, NewDay Services uses the Nurturing Fathers Program (NF) curriculum to implement the EFFECT Program. The Nurturing Fathers Program is a 13-week curriculum intended to be delivered over 13 two-and-a-half-hour-long classes.¹³⁶ NewDay Services expects to serve 75 fathers in the first year and 120 fathers in subsequent years, at multiple sites throughout Denton and Tarrant counties. As of March 2017, NewDay Services had enrolled 73 fathers in EFFECT. Partners who host program sessions include local nonprofits and a collaboration between the Fort Worth Independent School District and private foundations. Participants are referred to or recruited by the program from a variety of locations, including: CPS Alternative Response and Investigative Units; housing authorities; a local community college; a school district's family support center; veterans courts; barber shops; youth sports organizations such as the YMCA; child care facilities; and neighborhood groups.¹³⁷ Classes are implemented in cohorts to build camaraderie; each class ranges from 12 to 20 fathers with one facilitator. As well as the Nurturing Fathers Program, NDS offers EFFECT fathers additional services through the Mentor Navigator model. As part of this model, fathers receive intensive support, guidance, and referrals from their Mentor Navigators for four to six months, beginning concurrently with the NF curriculum.¹³⁸

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston (CCGH)

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston implements the EFFECT Program in Fort Bend County using the 24/7 Dad A.M. curriculum. CCGH aims to serve 100 fathers each year, operating out of the Catholic Charities' hub in Fort Bend County.¹³⁹ As of March 2017, CCCEP had enrolled 57 fathers. Two male facilitators lead four sessions for fathers at the CCGH site, in addition to other sites in the area, including a local prison and workforce development board. CCGH's female program director facilitated classes before the two male facilitators were hired. Currently, class sizes range from four to six fathers.¹⁴⁰ CCGH recruits fathers from local faith organizations, community outreach organizations, workforce development boards, pregnancy centers, and is working to establish a formal partnership with their local school district.¹⁴¹

EVIDENCE-BASED CURRICULA

As mentioned in Chapter 1, PEI identified four evidence-based fatherhood programs and required each EFFECT provider to select one of the four fatherhood programs to implement. The sites could select from 24/7 Dad, the Becoming Parents Program, the Nurturing Fathers Program, or the Supporting Fathers' Involvement Program. Three providers chose to implement 24/7 Dad, and one provider chose Nurturing Fathers, both of which are highlighted here.

24/7 Dad

The flagship program of the National Fatherhood Initiative, 24/7 Dad supports the growth and development of five characteristics for fathers: fathering skills, relationship skills, parenting skills, self-awareness, and caring for self. The 24/7 Dad program addresses topics including family history, discipline, co-parenting, showing emotions, anger management, and communication skills.¹⁴² Specific program outcomes include:

- *Increase in pro-fathering knowledge, skills, and attitudes;*
- *Increase in father's frequency of and healthy interaction with children;*
- *Increase in healthy interaction with the mother of father's children;*
- *Decrease in anti-fathering knowledge, skills, and attitudes; and*
- *Decrease in the social, emotional, and physical ills of father's children.*¹⁴³

The program focuses on developing fathers' self-awareness, compassion, and sense of responsibility as men and parents. Designed for fathers with children age 18 or younger, 24/7 Dad has been adapted to meet the needs of noncustodial, unemployed, or underemployed fathers.¹⁴⁴ 24/7 Dad is structured as two complementary programs: 1) 24/7 Dad A.M., which is designed for first-time fathers or fathers in need of improving vital parenting skills, knowledge, and attitudes; and 2) 24/7 Dad P.M., the follow-up to the basic version that addresses more in-depth information for experienced fathers.¹⁴⁵ Each program is designed to be administered as a two-hour weekly session over a span of 12 weeks.¹⁴⁶

The evidence base for 24/7 Dad includes one study with an experimental design conducted in Hawaii. In the 24/7 Dad A.M. and P.M. Hawaii evaluation (N=48), fathers randomly assigned to

the treatment group showed significant, positive improvement in knowledge and skills (based on scores on the 24/7 Dad Fathering Skills Survey [FSS]), father involvement (based on scores on the Inventory of Father Involvement¹⁴⁷), and the quality of the father-child relationship (assessed with two single-item questions).¹⁴⁸ Findings from an experimental study conducted in Hawaii, however, may not be generalizable to the Texas father population.

The findings from descriptive evaluations of 24/7 Dad are consistent with the Hawaii evaluation.¹⁴⁹ Single, African-American fathers participating in the 24/7 Dad A.M. program showed improved self-efficacyⁿ and lower stress levels^o compared to fathers in the comparison group in a small (N=60 fathers) quasi-experimental study.¹⁵⁰ Among a mostly Hispanic sample of fathers living in New York, fathers in 24/7 Dad^p showed positive improvement in parenting knowledge, communication knowledge, parenting attitudes, co-parenting/relationship attitudes, and gender attitudes between the pre-test and post-test.¹⁵¹ Similar findings also emerged in a small study of fathers who participated in 24/7 Dad A.M. as a part of a Prisoner Reentry Program in Iowa.¹⁵² Fathers showed improvement in the self-awareness, caring for self, parenting skills, and fathering skills characteristics on the FSS, and they became less traditional in their perceptions of male roles after their participation in the program (assessed using the 24/7 Dad Fathering Inventory).

Together these findings suggest that although participation in 24/7 Dad is associated with a range of positive outcomes for fathers, the evidence base does not entirely align with the intended outcomes stated in the program goals. Participation in 24/7 Dad is consistently associated with increases in fathering skills and knowledge across studies of varying rigor and populations, but there is far less support for the other specific program outcomes (e.g., healthy interactions with children and the children's mother, and a decrease in the social, emotional, and physical ills of the father's children).¹⁵³

Additionally, several of the studies suffered from high rates of attrition over the course of the program, which may bias the results. In the Iowa study, of the 132 participants, only 48 had both pre- and post-test data. In another study of 24/7 Dad in Missouri, 192 fathers participated in at least one session, but on average, fathers participated for only two weeks.¹⁵⁴ Fathers who complete the program may differ in certain ways from fathers who exit early, and those traits may be related to positive outcomes, compromising the ability to causally associate positive outcomes to participation in the program.

ⁿ The TOPSE is a tool developed by public health nurses in the UK to assess the outcomes of their parenting programs. It is comprised of 48 items that measure six areas of parenting: emotion and affection, play and enjoyment, empathy and understanding, control, discipline and boundary setting, pressures of parenting, self-acceptance, and learning and knowledge.

^o The PSI-SF is a derivative of the Parenting Stress Index full-length test. It is comprised of 26 items that measure total stress on scales of parent distress, parent-child dysfunctional interaction, and difficulty of child.

^p From the evaluation, it is unclear if fathers took the 24/7 Dad A.M. program only, or if they also completed the 24/7 Dad P.M. program.

Nurturing Fathers Program

The Nurturing Fathers Program (NF) was designed to teach parenting and nurturing skills to fathers. The Nurturing Fathers Program is a 13-week curriculum intended to be delivered over 13 two-and-a-half-hour-long classes.¹⁵⁵ In the program, participants explore their experiences with their own fathers, and learn about their children's needs and how to meet them. The program covers developing attitudes and skills for male nurturance, healthy family relationships, and child development. Emphasis is also placed on maintaining a positive and supportive co-parenting relationship with the child(ren)'s mother, whether the parents are together or separated. Specific program goals include teaching fathers:

- *How to create safe, loving, stable, and nurtured families;*
- *Positive discipline tools taught through a father-friendly method for child behavior management;*
- *Family communication techniques to strengthen father-child and father-mother relationships;*
- *How to stop fighting and arguing by using strategies for conflict resolution and problem solving; and*
- *How to achieve cooperation and teamwork in family life.*¹⁵⁶

The evidence base for NF is driven by an evaluation study with approximately 1,000 participants living in Florida. The study used the Adult and Adolescent Parenting Inventory-2 (AAPI-2) to assess parenting and child-rearing attitudes of adult and adolescent parent and pre-parent populations.¹⁵⁷ After participating in the program, fathers showed improvement in several parenting attitudes and behaviors, including expectations, empathy, corporal punishment, role reversal, and power/independence. Importantly, fathers who were more educated, younger, and married showed greater gains compared to fathers who were less educated, older, or separated/divorced.¹⁵⁸

OUTCOMES

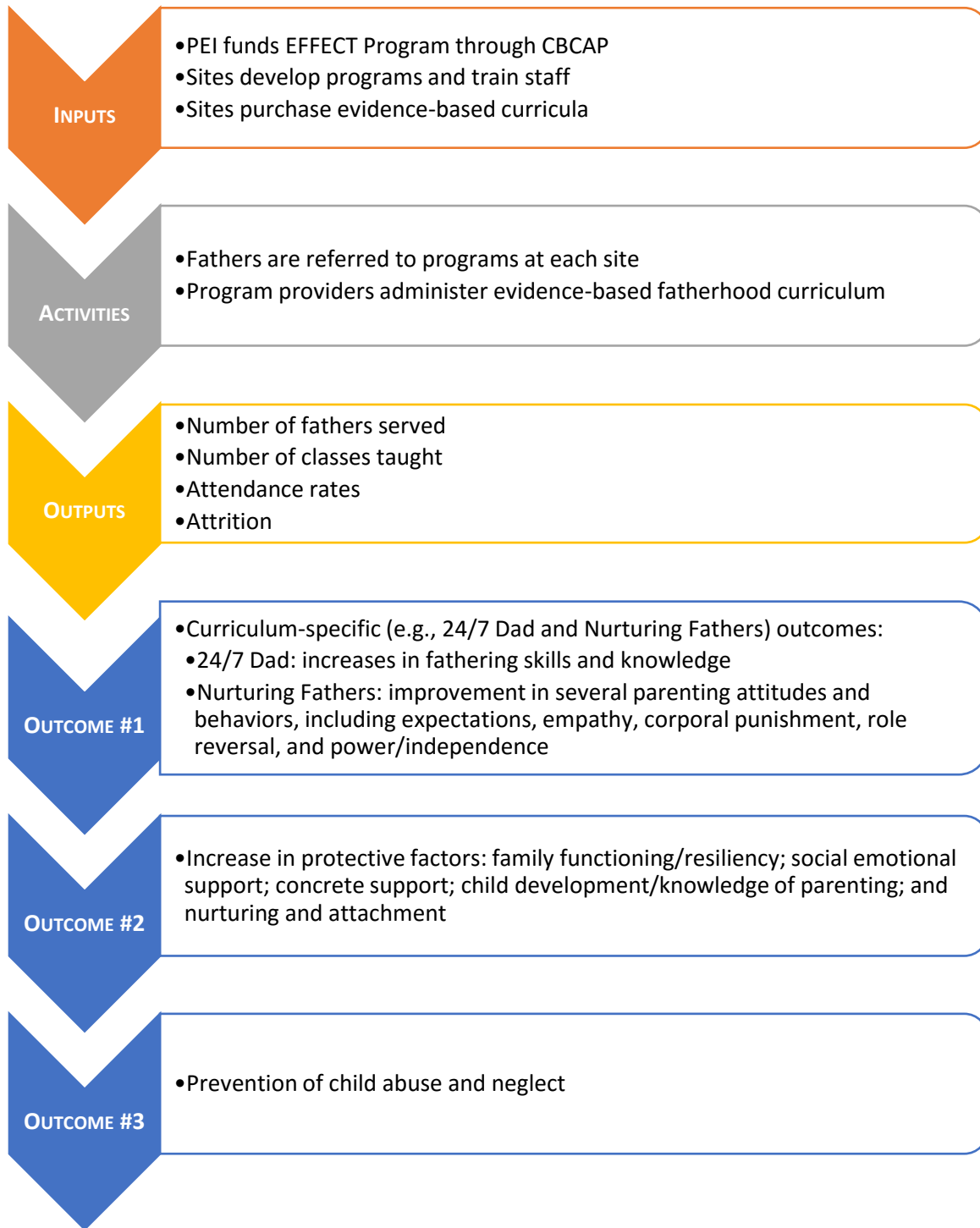
In addition to achieving the goals specific to the selected evidence-based curriculum, PEI also required each EFFECT site to meet three performance measures:

1. At least 75 percent of primary caregivers report an absolute increase in the score for a minimum of one protective factor on the Protective Factors Survey;
2. 100 percent of families for whom a primary caregiver is being served do not report the primary caregiver as a designated perpetrator for an incident of child abuse or neglect while registered in and receiving services; and
3. At least 80 percent of Satisfaction Survey Questionnaires completed by primary caregivers report average scores of five or higher out of seven for the first five items.¹⁵⁹

To measure absolute increases in at least one protective factor, PEI required all contractors to administer the Protective Factors Survey (PFS) to primary caregivers participating in the EFFECT Program twice—once before primary caregivers began the program (the pre-survey) and once again after primary caregivers completed the program (the post-survey). The PFS is designed as a pre/post survey to assess multiple protective factors against child abuse and neglect; these factors include: family functioning/resiliency, social support, concrete support, nurturing and attachment, and knowledge of parenting/child development.¹⁶⁰ The PFS is designed to provide agencies with a snapshot of families receiving services, capture changes to protective factors, and isolate areas of focus for increasing individual family protective factors.¹⁶¹ More information about the PFS is provided in the section on Evaluation Methods and Instruments later in this chapter.

A logic model depicting the theory of change for the Fatherhood EFFECT Program is provided in Figure 7. The logic model depicts the program inputs and activities, and links them to the program outputs and three outcomes.

Figure 7. Logic Model for the EFFECT Program



Evaluation Research Aims

CFRP organized its evaluation of PEI's efforts to support fathers and increase their involvement in their children's lives into three tiers. In the first tier, CFRP evaluated PEI's current investments in Texas fathers through the EFFECT Program in an implementation and an outcomes evaluation. In the second tier, CFRP identified the investments state agencies and localities are making in fatherhood and created an inventory of programs in Texas. In the third tier, CFRP identified innovative programs and policies in other states and highlighted best practices for family inclusiveness. Recommendations to work toward a comprehensive, systems-level plan to serve fathers are included in the conclusion. The specific research questions within each of these three tiers are detailed below.

CURRENT INVESTMENTS IN TEXAS FATHERS

The state of Texas recognizes the important role that fathers play in the lives of their children and families. In the first tier of the evaluation, CFRP examined one of the state's current investments in fathers—the Fatherhood EFFECT Program—through an implementation and outcomes evaluation. Specific to this tier of the evaluation are four research questions:

1. Why do fathers participate in the EFFECT Program?
 - a. Why are fathers drawn to evidence-based fatherhood programs?
 - b. Why do fathers become and remain engaged with the programs?
2. Does the EFFECT Program effectively serve fathers?
 - a. What do fathers gain from their participation in these programs?
 - b. Do the program sites achieve the outcomes targeted by their curricula (e.g., 24/7 Dad or Nurturing Fathers)?
 - c. Do the program participants achieve an increase in protective factors?
 - d. Are EFFECT participants designated perpetrators of child abuse or neglect?
3. What are the successes and challenges to implementation across program sites?
4. What are fathers' broader needs, beyond fatherhood programming?

THE STATE OF FATHERHOOD IN TEXAS

In addition to a close examination of the Fatherhood EFFECT Program in Texas, CFRP reviewed the current state of fatherhood programming and policies in Texas. This second tier of the evaluation is guided by two research questions:

1. What policies and programs do state agencies have in place for Texas fathers?
2. What is the reach of programs serving fathers in Texas, beyond the EFFECT Program?

WHAT TEXAS CAN LEARN FROM OTHERS

This third tier of the evaluation includes two research questions:

1. What are innovative practices in other states and localities?
2. How can existing services and programming for families be more inclusive of the whole family, including fathers?

Evaluation Methods and Instruments

CFRP used a mixed-methods approach, collecting and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data, to provide PEI with a comprehensive evaluation of the EFFECT Program. CFRP collected data directly from EFFECT sites, and from the Protection and Early Intervention Services (PEIS) database, to which the sites upload administrative and programmatic data, including the pre- and post-PFS. CFRP relied on two survey instruments to collect information from program participants: the pre-/post-Protective Factors Surveys (PFS), which was required by PEI and used by each EFFECT site, and the pre-/post-24/7 Dad A.M. Fathering Skills Survey used by two of the EFFECT sites.

CFRP conducted interviews with EFFECT Program providers and focus groups with fathers participating in the programs, and reviewed Quarterly and Annual Reports submitted by each of the sites. To gain a more complete picture of fathers' broader needs and current services provided to fathers, CFRP designed two original survey instruments: one to collect information from providers on the greatest needs of fathers in their communities; and one to canvass state agencies on their current efforts to work with fathers. Finally, CFRP conducted an extensive literature review of fatherhood programs and father-inclusive policies in Texas and across the country.

The findings presented in this report draw from analyses of the qualitative and quantitative data collected by CFRP. Researchers coded the qualitative data collected from focus groups, staff interviews, reviews of Quarterly and Annual Reports, and the literature reviews with themes and sub-themes, where appropriate. The evaluators also conducted descriptive analyses of the survey data, and examined changes in fathers' scores over time in the pre- and post-program surveys for respondents for whom data from the Protective Factors Survey and 24/7 Dad program-specific survey were available.

DATA

The data sources used for the evaluation of the EFFECT Program are described in more detail in this section, including information about the data collection instruments and timing.

Qualitative Instruments

CFRP collected qualitative data from two main sources: program participants and program providers (Table 1). CFRP staff conducted site visits to three of the four EFFECT sites—Child

Crisis Center of El Paso in El Paso County, BCFS in Cameron County, and NewDay Services in Tarrant County—in June and July of 2016 to hold focus groups with participating fathers. CFRP staff returned to two of the EFFECT sites, NewDay Services and Child Crisis Center, in February and March of 2017 to conduct additional interviews with fathers, excerpts of which were shared at the second Texas Fatherhood Summit in March 2017.¹⁶² The focus groups provided information on why fathers chose to participate in the EFFECT Program, the influence of the program on father involvement, their perceptions of fatherhood and protective factors, as well as the benefits and shortcomings of the program.

Table 1. Qualitative Data Sources

Data Source	What We Learn from the Data
Program Staff Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How recruitment is handled at each site • Source of referrals into the program • Where program participants are referred for additional services • Successes and challenges to implementation • Model fidelity • Challenges to retention
Father Focus Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits and shortcomings of the program • Value of the program and gains from participation
Quarterly Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievements and challenges during implementation of program in preceding quarter
Annual Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of the program’s achievements and challenges during the last fiscal year

CFRP also spoke with program staff at several points during the evaluation. CFRP staff conducted formal interviews with program staff at the Child Crisis Center, BCFS, and NewDay Services during the site visits in June and July of 2016, and with program staff at the Child Crisis Center and NewDay Services during the site visits in February and March of 2017. In addition, CFRP held phone interviews with staff at multiple points throughout the evaluation. The staff interviews provided insight on the selected curriculum, fidelity to the program model, capacity of the program providers, recruitment and referral sources, and successes and challenges at each site, as well as staff perspectives on program benefits, program implementation, and factors that may add to or detract from the effectiveness of the program model, such as differences in staff, program adaptations, and differences in class times.

In addition, program staff from each EFFECT Program site are required to submit a Quarterly Report to PEI to “provide ongoing information regarding achievements and challenges in implementing the Fatherhood EFFECT Program during the preceding quarter.”¹⁶³ EFFECT Program staff must also submit an Annual Report to PEI that includes a “summary of the achievements and challenges of the full contract year, and plans for program changes in the upcoming fiscal year.”¹⁶⁴ These reports allow CFRP to examine cross-site differences in performance indicators, partnerships, and implementation challenges.

Quantitative Instruments

CFRP collected quantitative data from three main sources: the 24/7 Dad A.M. Fathering Skills Survey (FSS), which was sent to CFRP directly by the EFFECT sites; PEIS Database reports, which included administrative data and the Protective Factors Survey responses uploaded by the EFFECT sites; and the IMPACT database from CPS. The instruments are described in more detail below.

24/7 Dad A.M. Fathering Skills Survey

The 24/7 Dad A.M. Fathering Skills Survey (FSS) is a 22-question pre-/post-survey administered to fathers who participate in the 24/7 Dad A.M. curriculum. The FSS is designed to assess how much fathers have learned from the 24/7 Dad A.M. curriculum during the program about five specific areas: fathering skills, relationship skills, parenting skills, self-awareness, and caring for self, which align with some, but not all of the five 24/7 Dad program outcomes described earlier:

- *Increase in pro-fathering knowledge, skills, and attitudes;*
- *Increase in father's frequency of and healthy interaction with children;*
- *Increase in healthy interaction with the mother of father's children;*
- *Decrease in anti-fathering knowledge, skills, and attitudes; and*
- *Decrease in the social, emotional, and physical ills of father's children.*¹⁶⁵

The pre-survey is administered at the beginning of the first class session, and the post-survey is administered at the end of the eleventh session (the twelfth session is a graduation party). Each question has a correct answer, based on the information shared in the curriculum. In a quasi-experimental study with a sample size of 40 fathers, fathers showed statistically significant changes in seven of the 22 items across each of the five characteristics on an older version of the FSS. According to the study, three of the items were related to parenting skills (about discipline and family rules); one was about caring for self (about male expectations and self-care); one item pertained to relationship skills (about marriage); one was about the characteristic of self-awareness (about feelings and grief); and one was about fathering skills (regarding the role of fathers beyond providing).¹⁶⁶

In the impact evaluation of the 24/7 Dad program conducted in Hawaii, however, fathers showed statistically significant change in only two items on the current version of the FSS:

- 1) "Can a dad have all the traits of the 'Ideal Father'?" ("No. Even if he tries hard enough, he can still only have some of the traits.")
- 2) "Which of the following statements is true about how well children do in school?" (Children with involved Dads do better whether or not their Dads live with them.)¹⁶⁷

The model developers provided information regarding which FSS questions pertain to which characteristic; this map is included in Appendix E. The 24/7 Dad Hawaii evaluation used five other measures to capture additional outcomes: the Inventory of Father Involvement, the Self-Perception of Parental Role measure, the Parenting Alliance Inventory, and two single-item

measures about the quality of relationship with child and the degree of happiness about being a parent.¹⁶⁸ None of these additional measures are being used by the EFFECT sites.

The FSS captures changes in knowledge specific to the 24/7 Dad A.M. curriculum, rather than changes in fathers' personal behaviors or attitudes, or parenting knowledge more broadly. Additionally, the survey does not measure the outcomes fathers described in focus groups, such as increased confidence and self-efficacy as a father, improved communication, and reduced conflict with their co-parent. The FSS also does not capture all outcomes of interest to Responsible Fatherhood programming, including increases in father involvement and engagement, improvements in co-parenting, and economic stability. Even when paired with the Protective Factors Survey (PFS), described below, the FSS is likely insufficient at measuring the range of outcomes that PEI and the individual programs want to capture.

The Protective Factors Survey

The Protective Factors Survey (PFS) is a 20-item instrument administered to parents or caregivers enrolled in child maltreatment prevention services. The PFS was developed in 2005 by the FRIENDS National Resource Center in collaboration with the University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research and with the input from a working group of Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) program grantees, parents, researchers, administrators, workers, and experts in the field.¹⁶⁹ The PFS was designed to be used by CBCAP programs in the assessment of multiple protective and risk factors associated with child abuse and neglect. Other tools exist to measure individual protective factors, such as the Coping Health Inventory for Parents (CHIP), Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale (FACES), and the Family Environment Scale (FES), but until the PFS, there was no single evaluation tool available to measure multiple protective factors.¹⁷⁰

The PFS is a pre-/post-survey to assess multiple protective factors against child abuse and neglect including: family functioning/resiliency, social support, concrete support, nurturing and attachment, and knowledge of parenting/child development.¹⁷¹ The PFS provides agencies with a snapshot of families receiving services, captures changes in protective factors over time, and identifies areas of focus for increasing individual family protective factors. It is not intended to be used for individual assessment, placement, or diagnostic purposes.¹⁷² The five protective factors captured in the PFS are described in more detail below (Table 2). Questions are grouped into five subscales, one for each protective factor: family functioning/resiliency; social emotional support; concrete support; child development/knowledge of parenting; and nurturing and attachment.¹⁷³ In the survey, parents self-report the frequency that the PFS statements are true for their family—for family functioning/resiliency, child development/knowledge of parenting, and nurturing and attachment—or their level of agreement with the PFS statements—for social emotional support, concrete support, and child development/knowledge of parenting—using a seven-point scale.¹⁷⁴ A higher subscale score—that is, the closer it is to seven—indicates the presence of the protective factor.

Table 2. Protective Factors

Protective Factors in the PFS ¹⁷⁵	Definition
Family Functioning/ Resiliency	Having adaptive skills and strategies to persevere in times of crisis. Family’s ability to openly share positive and negative experiences and mobilize to accept, solve, and manage problems.
Social Emotional Support	Perceived informal support (from family, friends, and neighbors) that helps provide for emotional needs.
Concrete Support	Perceived access to tangible goods and services to help families cope with stress, particularly in times of crisis or intensified need.
Child Development/ Knowledge of Parenting	Understanding and using effective child management techniques and having age-appropriate expectations for children’s abilities.
Nurturing and Attachment	The emotional tie along with a pattern of positive interaction between the parent and child that develops over time.

Source: FRIENDS National Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention, Protective Factors Survey Overview.

PEI required EFFECT Program staff to administer the PFS to each EFFECT father at least twice: once shortly before or at the beginning of the first class (the pre-survey), and then again (the post-survey), “when the family meets the timeframe for completing per the performance measure.”¹⁷⁶ For most fathers, the post-survey was administered on the last day of curriculum delivery. Some fathers continued to receive services, either choosing to take the second part of the 24/7 Dad curriculum—24/7 Dad P.M.—or to continue to receive ancillary services through the EFFECT Program. These fathers could complete an additional PFS when they began and/or completed the next curriculum or stopped receiving services. The PFS can be administered in English or Spanish depending on which language a father prefers.

One of PEI’s outcome measures for the EFFECT Programs is that at least 75 percent of primary caregivers report an absolute increase for a minimum of one factor between the pre- and post-PFS.¹⁷⁷ EFFECT Program staff enter participants’ responses on the pre- and post-PFS into the PEIS administrative database.

The PFS presents certain challenges for measuring program outcomes. Although the survey includes some measures for father engagement (“I spend time with my child doing what he/she likes to do”), it does not have a way to capture changes in father involvement, such as frequency of contact or frequency of partaking in parental activities such as feeding, bathing, reading to, or helping the child.¹⁷⁸ The PFS also lacks the ability to show changes in the co-parenting relationship and economic stability, two of the main programmatic focuses of responsible fatherhood programs, because questions do not specifically address co-parenting or job readiness and stability.¹⁷⁹

In addition, because the PFS is a self-reported survey, EFFECT providers reported that survey takers often rated themselves too highly on the pre-survey, either because they did not understand the concepts fully or because they wanted to present themselves in a better light. Some fathers gave themselves the highest possible rating, meaning they could not show any improvement over time. At the post-survey, after receiving the curriculum, it is possible that fathers were more willing to be honest in their responses because they felt more comfortable with the EFFECT staff and/or because the fathers had a better understanding of the protective factors. As a result, it is possible that the fathers rated themselves more accurately, which meant that their scores often stayed the same or even decreased. EFFECT staff reported that the issue was minimized somewhat after receiving additional training on PFS administration and they provided clear instructions to program participants on the survey. In reports to PEI, EFFECT staff shared their new procedures for PFS administration, in which EFFECT staff discussed the expected outcomes of the program with participants, and emphasized the importance of being honest. It is possible that these instructions could unintentionally coach EFFECT fathers into ranking themselves lower at the pre-test than they otherwise might be able to demonstrate a change in outcomes. Despite aligning with PEI outcome measures, EFFECT staff still highlighted that they saw the PFS as a problematic tool.

EFFECT staff further noted that many of the fathers who participated in the program did not consider themselves to be the primary caregiver. As a result, fathers did not feel comfortable completing the PFS. Often, they were estranged or physically separated from their families and were taking the program to improve their relationship with them. Many fathers needed more time to work on themselves prior to reaching out to their child(ren), or were still working on building a relationship with their co-parent to be able to contact their child(ren). Because these processes could be lengthy, the timeline of the EFFECT Program and PFS administration—approximately three months—limits the ability to capture this change.

PEI Administrative Data and Reports

All EFFECT Program sites are required to collect and enter administrative data, such as demographic and personal information, services provided, and survey responses (the pre- and post-Protective Factors Surveys and a DFPS Satisfaction Survey) for each EFFECT Program participant into the Protection and Early Intervention Services (PEIS) database (Table 3). Each EFFECT participant is assigned a unique Client ID, which is used to track his demographic characteristics, program attendance, services received, and pre- and post-PFS data over time. CFRP analyzed the administrative data to provide a descriptive analysis of the EFFECT Program. Satisfaction Surveys highlight fathers' perspectives on the services they receive.

Table 3. PEIS Database Quantitative Data Sources

Data Source within PEIS Database	What We Learn from the Data
DFPS Registration Form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fathers’ demographic information
Service Dosage Aggregate Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services provided to fathers Number of sessions/activities attended by fathers Retention rates
Service Dosage Client Detail Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services provided to fathers Number of sessions/activities attended by fathers Retention rates
Services Provided Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services provided to fathers Number of sessions/activities attended by fathers Retention rates
Satisfaction Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fathers’ level of satisfaction with the fatherhood program

Sources: Texas Health and Human Services Commission Department of Family and Protective Services. (2015). Request for Proposals (RFP): Fatherhood: Educating Fathers for Empowering Children Tomorrow (Fatherhood EFFECT) RFP No. 530-16-0004; Texas Health and Human Services Commission. (2013). Request for Proposals (RFP): Fatherhood: Educating Fathers for Empowering Children Tomorrow (Fatherhood EFFECT) RFP No. 530-14-0008.

The DFPS IMPACT Database

CFRP also used data collected from “Information Management Protecting Adults and Children in Texas” (IMPACT), DFPS’s database for collecting and storing information about the children and adults the agency protects.¹⁸⁰ One of PEI’s primary goals with the EFFECT Program is to prevent child abuse and neglect within participating families. To examine the association between program participation and subsequent child abuse or neglect, CFRP analyzed data from IMPACT and the PEIS Database to identify recorded instances of child abuse or neglect for EFFECT Program participants during the program, and at three, six, 12, and 24 months after program completion.⁹

SAMPLE

Analyses were limited to data from the three EFFECT I sites, BCFS in Taylor and Cameron counties, and the Child Crisis Center of El Paso (CCCEP). Very few fathers have completed services at the EFFECT II sites, NewDay Services (NDS) and Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston (CCGH)—16 and nine fathers to date, respectively.

Additionally, at NDS, EFFECT participants from March 2016 to October 2016 received ancillary program services prior to beginning the program and completing the pre-PFS and pre-Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS), the instrument selected by NewDay Services as a pre-/post-measurement (the Nurturing Fathers curriculum does not have its own pre-/post-

⁹ More recent program participants may have fewer subsequent record reviews.

instrument). The timing of the pre-surveys compromised the ability to capture fathers' true pre-program states because fathers had already received some EFFECT Program services.

Pre- and post-PFS data were available from the PEIS database for most participants, and BCFS and the Child Crisis Center of El Paso securely provided paper copies of the 24/7 Dad A.M. pre- and post-Fathering Skills Surveys (FSS) directly to CFRP. Sites were unable, however, to provide complete (pre- and post-) FSS data on all participants. Some of the surveys were missing pages, and program attrition meant that some fathers completed pre-surveys, but not post-surveys. As a result, CFRP relied on two analytic samples: 1) the FSS sample, which included data from fathers who completed the pre-FSS and the post-FSS; and 2) the PFS sample, which included data from fathers who completed the pre-PFS and the post-PFS. Both samples included only fathers who enrolled prior to November 28, 2016, and had completed post assessments by January 10, 2017. The FSS sample was further limited to fathers who had responses for 16 or more of the 22 questions (73 percent of the survey), such that they had completed more than two-thirds of the survey.

The BCFS and CCCEP sites defined program completion differently, and these definitions came from discussions between the site leads and PEI. Although the full 24/7 Dad A.M. program consists of 12 classes, BCFS defined the minimum and optimum dosage as seven classes. CCCEP defined minimum dosage as completing at least 12 classes, and the optimal dosage as the full 24/7 Dad program (24 classes, i.e. both the 24/7 Dad A.M. and 24/7 Dad P.M. programs). Of the 1,060 fathers who enrolled in the BCFS and CCCEP EFFECT Program sites and completed the pre-PFS, only 56 percent (595) attended the minimum number of classes, and only 61 percent (645) of fathers completed the post-PFS.¹⁸¹

CFRP found significant differences across age, race/ethnicity, marital status, their relationship to the child, and primary language between participants who began the program and took a pre-survey (PFS or FSS), but did not take the corresponding post-survey and participants who completed both pre- and post-surveys. For both the PFS and the FSS, fathers who completed both surveys were more likely to be older, married, Hispanic, Spanish-speaking, and biological fathers compared to fathers who only took the pre-PFS and pre-FSS.

Demographic characteristics are presented for two groups of fathers: 1) fathers who completed the pre-FSS and post-FSS (the FSS sample); and 2) fathers who completed the pre-PFS and the post-PFS (the PFS sample; Table 4). Participants in the FSS and PFS samples did not vary from one another by age, marital status, their relationship to the child, primary language, or education level. Across samples, most reported being the biological father of the target child. The majority of fathers were Hispanic, age 34 or younger, identified their primary language as English, and had earned a high school diploma or less. Although more than one-quarter of fathers had never married, nearly half were married.

Table 4. Demographic Characteristics of EFFECT Participants

	Pre-/Post-FSS (N = 584)	Pre-/Post-PFS (N = 645)
Race/Ethnicity		
Hispanic	66%	71%
White	21%	19%
African-American/Black	7%	9%
Other	1%	1%
Missing	5%	0%
Age		
<24	20%	22%
25-34	33%	33%
35-44	26%	25%
45+	16%	15%
Missing	5%	5%
Marital Status		
Single, Never Married	28%	30%
Married	43%	45%
Separated, Divorced	18%	17%
Other	1%	2%
Unknown/Missing	10%	6%
Relationship to Child		
Biological Father	78%	84%
Step Father	3%	3%
Other	14%	13%
Missing	5%	0%
Program Language		
English	77%	77%
Spanish	23%	21%
Missing	0%	2%
Education		
Less than HS	40%	43%
HS Graduation/GED	25%	28%
Some College	19%	18%
College Graduate	7%	6%
Other	2%	2%
Missing	7%	3%

Source: PFS data come from the PEIS Database; FSS data were collected by sites and sent to CFRP for data entry.

Note: A smaller sample (N=458) completed all four surveys (pre-FSS, post-FSS, pre-PFS, and post-PFS).

In the IMPACT database, EFFECT fathers were identified using their name, birthdate, and Social Security Number. Not all EFFECT fathers were in the IMPACT database; to be in the IMPACT database, fathers must have an open or closed CPS investigation, an intake form for a CPS investigation, or be referenced in a CPS investigation. Of the 1,060 EFFECT fathers who completed a pre-PFS, 803 fathers were identified in the IMPACT database. Although the percentage of EFFECT fathers who are in the IMPACT database is high, the majority of these fathers were not listed as the perpetrator. Additionally, the high percentage suggests that the EFFECT Program is reaching high-risk families.

ANALYTIC STRATEGY

All qualitative data collected through interviews and focus groups were analyzed through an iterative process with multiple researchers coding the data and conducting thematic analyses. Using open-coding, CFRP developed a coding scheme including both key themes and subtopics. Multiple researchers reviewed the materials, notes, and transcripts from interviews and focus groups to conduct the coding process. The researchers met periodically throughout the coding process to reconcile discrepancies in the codes and ensure agreement in the coding process. CFRP used a qualitative data analysis software package, MAXQDA 11, to categorize all of the qualitative data collected.

CFRP relied on a one-group pre-/post-test design to determine how fathers participating in the EFFECT Program changed over the course of the program. CFRP measured the change and degree of change in outcomes in fathers between the beginning of programming/services and the conclusion of programming/services, through two pre-/post-surveys: the Protective Factors Survey (PFS) and the 24/7 Dad A.M. Fathering Skills Survey (FSS). For the FSS, CFRP calculated the overall scores for each survey, and pre-post difference in the scores to determine if fathers had absolute increases in their scores. Although multiple characteristics (e.g., fathering skills, caring for self) are assessed in the FSS, the FSS does not have subscales that align with those characteristics. Only overall scores are calculated. CFRP did examine change on specific items to determine whether fathers in EFFECT showed the same change as fathers in the 24/7 Dad impact study. For the PFS, CFRP calculated pre-post differences in each subscale—family functioning/resiliency, social support, concrete support, nurturing and attachment, and confidence in parenting—to learn which protective factors are most influenced by participation in the program, paying particular attention to family functioning and resiliency, because this factor is of key interest to the PEI division. CFRP also determined the number of protective factors for which each father demonstrated an absolute increase.

PEI's overarching goal for the EFFECT Program is that children remain safe. Specifically, one of PEI's outcome measures is that 100 percent of primary caregivers served by the EFFECT Program are not identified as "designated perpetrators" while they are registered in and receiving services from EFFECT, and up to three months after the completion of services through the EFFECT Program. CFRP analyzed data from IMPACT (the DFPS data system that includes information on child abuse and neglect) and the PEIS Database to identify EFFECT

participants who are designated perpetrators of child abuse or neglect for EFFECT Program participants during the program, and at three, six, 12, and 24 months after program completion, depending on the participant's program completion date. CFRP's analysis of the IMPACT data, presented in the next chapter, is solely descriptive and does not imply causality.

CHAPTER 3: CURRENT INVESTMENTS IN TEXAS FATHERS

One of the state’s primary investments in fathers is through the Fatherhood EFFECT Program. CFRP assessed the outcomes of the EFFECT Program among participants at the aggregate level, and conducted an implementation evaluation to learn more about the challenges and successes of the program at each site. The results of both the implementation and outcome evaluations are presented in this chapter.

To guide the implementation and outcome evaluations of the Fatherhood EFFECT Program, CFRP used a mixed-methods approach that relied on administrative and survey data collected from fathers participating in the EFFECT Program, and interviews with key fatherhood stakeholders, program administrators and staff, and fathers. Specifically, program staff and fathers were asked why fathers chose to come to the programs, how and why fathers became engaged with the programs, and what fathers gained from their participation. CFRP analyzed data collected by the sites—the pre-/post-Protective Factors Survey (PFS) and the pre-/post-24/7 Dad A.M. Fathering Skills Survey (FSS)—to determine if the program sites achieved the outcomes targeted by the curriculum, if those program outcomes translated to an increase in protective factors, and if participants had any reported incidents of child abuse and neglect while enrolled in the program or during the two-year period after completing the program. CFRP interviewed EFFECT Program staff and analyzed Quarterly and Annual Reports, as well as the PEI Satisfaction Surveys to learn about the successes and challenges to program implementation, and to study the variation in implementation among the sites. CFRP also studied the broader needs of fathers participating in these programs by collecting information from fathers during focus groups, in addition to surveying registrants for the 2017 Texas Fatherhood Summit on the needs of the fathers they served.

Why Do Fathers Participate in EFFECT?

WHY ARE FATHERS INITIALLY DRAWN TO FATHERHOOD PROGRAMS?

Fathers participate because they want to be better fathers

The primary reason that fathers cited for participating in the EFFECT Program was to become better fathers to their children. Fathers hoped the program would help them to strengthen relationships with their children, especially those with whom they do not live. One father observed, “I’m pretty sure everybody sitting here right now must really love their children to want to come in here and try to find a better way to be a better person for their child.” Another said, “I wanted to see what the program was about, do something to help my child out, help raise all of them.”¹⁸² A third described the program as “a general gathering of a group of men that want to better themselves, whether it be the relationship with the child, or put themselves in a position to be a better provider for the child.”¹⁸³ Contrary to the idea that these men had given up on being fathers, they were very much determined to be there for their children: “I told my probation officer, I know that I’m going to learn something [at the program]. I don’t

know what, but I know and I will do that, and I will cross fire, water, whatever, I will do anything for [my daughter].”¹⁸⁴

Fathers also talked about wanting to be a role model and be a better father than their own fathers had been. When asked about their own fathers, EFFECT participants often described absent fathers who worked all the time or who were in prison. They also described fathers who did not talk with their children or share their feelings with them. As one father noted, “I don’t hold a grudge against him, but that makes me want to be a better father knowing that my father wasn’t there and how sad it made me; I don’t want my kids to feel that same thing.”¹⁸⁵ When participants became fathers themselves, they were scared and overwhelmed by the experience, and felt they did not have any resources or support. “Becoming a father is frightening,” one father explained, “not only do I have to worry about me, but I got a whole other person that’s life is dependent on what I do.”¹⁸⁶ Many were eager to find a resource for parenting assistance, particularly resources directed toward fathers specifically. Another father with adult children shared, “I’m just trying to learn how to teach my sons how to be better fathers than I was to them. So that the cycle doesn’t continue.”¹⁸⁷ EFFECT participants wanted to be better fathers not just for their own children, but for future generations of their families.

Fathers hope the program can help them gain access to their children

Fathers also hoped that their participation in the program could help them gain access to their children, either by improving their relationship with the child(ren)’s mother or by swaying the family court judge or probation officer. Fathers viewed their participation in the program as tangible proof of their commitment to their children. One father going through a divorce noted, “I hope it improves my chances and outlook with my judge.”¹⁸⁸ Others shared that they were strongly encouraged to take the class by their probation officers or as part of their drug treatment plans.

WHY DO FATHERS BECOME AND REMAIN ENGAGED WITH THE PROGRAMS?

The facilitator-father relationship keeps fathers coming back

Although program staff believed that it took several sessions before fathers would stay with the program, many fathers said that they were hooked after the first class. Fathers emphasized the importance of a reliable and positive voice in their life, explaining that most of their daily interactions make them feel beaten down and discouraged. Having a facilitator who they felt cared about them and was invested in helping them to be better fathers was crucial to keeping fathers in the program. “You just have to get them in for that first day. Like he said, have a good instructor. Just bring them in.”¹⁸⁹

Fathers emphasized that, although the facilitator did not have to be a man, he or she needed to be a parent to be a credible guide. Moreover, fathers said that they felt a personal connection with the program facilitators because facilitators personalized the curriculum with experiences from their own lives. EFFECT participants noted that, although they appreciated the curriculum,

the curriculum alone was insufficient—the facilitator was crucial to making the curriculum meaningful. “It’s not really the book; it’s also the instructor,” one father explained.¹⁹⁰ Another father added, “The book’s a good thing...[but] the instructor is what shows, well yeah, because anybody can read, but you also gotta have someone to push you, like the military. The instructors pushed you.”¹⁹¹

In addition to sharing their own perspectives and challenging fathers to apply the curriculum to their own lives, the facilitators created a safe space for fathers to feel comfortable and open up. One father shared, “By the way I was explaining my story... [the facilitator] read me, and he knew me. Like I knew him forever...I was comfortable with saying stuff I wouldn’t be comfortable saying around someone I’ve known for months.”¹⁹² The facilitators brought the curriculum to life by guiding discussions to allow fathers to share their stories with one another, being careful to steer the class away from becoming solely a venting session. This structure created a support group for fathers to feel less isolated. One father explained, “you sit down and talk to [another participant], you’re like, damn, I thought I was the only one going through this.”¹⁹³ Another said, “every story does open your eyes a little bit more, I’m not the only one going through this...everybody has a different story, at least I know I’m not crazy.”¹⁹⁴

Fathers spoke highly of having program facilitators who could provide a regular positive and supportive check-in, in comparison to the frequent negative interactions they have in their daily lives. Fathers said they enter a court room or an organization and are treated like they are “dead-beat” dads.¹⁹⁵ They appreciated that the facilitators would listen and respond in a supportive and understanding way to the daily issues they face. One father explained, “We’re beat up all day long. At home, at work, no matter where we go. We hear negativity in our ear all day long. Just to have a positive voice to say ‘What’s up? What you doing?’ It makes a lot of difference.”¹⁹⁶ Another father appreciated having an “understanding voice and helping hand even through my difficult time,” adding, “he let me know he is in my corner,” which “gave me hope.”¹⁹⁷ Analyses of open-ended responses on the Satisfaction Surveys, which EFFECT participants completed after the program, further highlight the salience of the facilitators for the fathers. Fathers reported liking the program because they were treated with respect and because they felt that they were being listened to.

Fathers knew that the facilitators were “just a phone call away,” not only because the facilitators told them so, but also because the facilitators were proactive and persistent about reaching out to them.¹⁹⁸ “He calls me like clockwork once or twice a week,” said one father. Another said, “when he don’t hear from [you], he gonna let you know. He gonna keep calling. It’s something you can appreciate that you get the feeling that he’s not just doing this because it’s his job. He’s doing it because he wants you to progress.”¹⁹⁹ The father added, that the facilitators are “willing to go far beyond, as long as they see you willing to participate in your own progression. [They’re] not just going to hand it to you, you got to put forth your effort. That’s something I can really appreciate.”²⁰⁰ Facilitators served as important partners in helping EFFECT participants overcome their challenges to become the fathers they wanted to be.

The programs provide a positive and safe space to share and connect

Hearing from other fathers not only gave fathers perspective on their own situations, but it also created a safe space where they could open up with one another. “You amongst other men who you can tell our stories to and confide in, and it helps you through whatever situation,” explained one father.²⁰¹ Another added, “It helps take the heavy load of the situation off--just being able to talk about it. Well, before I felt like it was the end of the world, but talking with these fellas, I can push on. It’s hard, but I can make it through.”²⁰² Fathers described how the structure of the program, in which all fathers would read their responses during activities, made them feel like they were all participating in the group. One of the most common themes in the Satisfaction Surveys was how much fathers appreciated interacting with other fathers, sharing their personal stories, engaging in lively discussions, and gaining insight and perspective from one another.

Not only did the discussions allow them to learn from one another, but they also made the fathers feel less isolated and alone. The program provided “fellowship about our problems, our situation...at least we were able to get whatever week we had, good or bad, off our chest.”²⁰³ Some fathers compared the experience to group therapy and felt like they could share feelings and emotions with the group that they would not be able to outside of it. Fathers appreciated the fact that they did not have friends or family members with them at the program, because it was easier to open up to people who did not previously know them. At the program where they were among fathers like themselves, EFFECT participants did not have to worry about “butting heads” or feel concern about being judged for crying or being sensitive. The Satisfaction Surveys confirmed this: “I like how I can come to this class and just be open about anything! And the guys won’t judge me!”²⁰⁴ As one of the participants stated, “Whatever’s said in class, stays in class.”²⁰⁵

Fathers also expressed that they appreciated having a supportive facilitator and supportive men to provide positive interactions. Fathers felt that most of their interactions at work, with other men, their families, and with organizations designed to help them were usually alienating; they often felt like the court system and the social welfare system devalued them as fathers, especially if they were not able to provide adequate financial support for their children. “You can come...and express how you feel. You ain’t got to worry about that backlash, or being judged, or somebody telling you, ‘You a man. Suck it up.’ You get tired of hearing that.”²⁰⁶ Instead, at the EFFECT Program, fathers noted, “I leave with a positive peace of mind,” and “there’s no negativity; it’s all positive.”²⁰⁷

Fathers especially appreciated the “only-for-dads” approach to the program. They reported feeling ostracized from government systems that catered to mothers and excluded or devalued fathers. Fathers appreciated having a space to share and commiserate with other fathers about their feelings and experiences so they felt less isolated in the problems they were working through as fathers. EFFECT participants said that although they all had different things to say, they were able to relate to and learn from each other. Many fathers noted that they returned to class because “it’s a place you can go to teach...you might have information [that] you know that this man or this man didn’t know anything about.”²⁰⁸ Another father put it this way: “You

want to hear how your friend's doing, how everybody doing. Did they recover [from] whatever situation they were going through the week before? Could you pass on any information, a tip, or an idea to help them out? That's why you go, because it's growth."²⁰⁹

What Do Fathers Gain from Participating in the EFFECT Program?

CFRP used both quantitative and qualitative data sources to assess how fathers benefit from their participation in the EFFECT Program.

FATHERS' REPORTS

CFRP analyzed qualitative data provided by fathers through focus groups and Satisfaction Surveys from the PEIS database to learn what fathers thought they gained from participating in the EFFECT Program. Although fathers in the focus groups had been exposed to different curricula—24/7 Dad in the BCFS and Child Crisis Center of El Paso sites and Nurturing Fathers in the NewDay Services sites—their reports of gains were consistent across programs. The EFFECT fathers' stories are shared below.

EFFECT participants develop parenting skills and confidence as fathers

Fathers predominantly reported increased parenting skills, self-efficacy, and confidence from their participation in the EFFECT Program. Some fathers felt that even if they already knew how to be fathers, they still learned valuable skills or gained advice on issues other fathers had experienced in the past. One father explained that he did not think he needed to participate in the program, but that coming to the program “opened my eyes a lot to different things...I want to change this or that.”²¹⁰ Another father added, “I felt like I was a good father to begin with, and [the facilitator] just expanded my creativity.”²¹¹ In the Satisfaction Surveys, one father wrote, “I learned things I thought I already knew.”²¹²

Many participants, however, expressed that they were glad to learn about fatherhood and parenting skills, either because their own father had been absent, or because they felt that they were repeating a cycle of the way their fathers had raised them: “This program has really helped us out to be the father that we want to be. Don't be that father that we never had or, hey, you did it like this, well I don't want to do it like that.”²¹³ Another father explained, “I was raised with my dad. [He] was real strict, working, nothing but work and he taught me your life is work, work all the time,” but that the program helped him “give my son some more slack...give my son play time, have fun with him...spend more time talking to your children.”²¹⁴

Fathers also appreciated learning different ways to interact with their children. Whereas before the program they thought of the role of the father as the provider, after the program, one father said, “We can be more involved in [the child's] life, in their school.”²¹⁵ Several fathers mentioned that they were learning how to communicate better with their children: “I learned how to talk with her...what they like, dislike, how they really feel.”²¹⁶ A second father noted, “I

talk to [my son] more. It was just work, work, and work and not even talk to him that much. Now I talk to him more.”²¹⁷

Fathers also learned about child development and alternatives to spanking and physical punishment for discipline. One father shared that the curriculum taught him to adapt his tone, behavior, and communication style because “your children are just like a mirror, they see what you see.” He added that he had learned about age-appropriate expectations, and counseled family members to “watch your tone, lower your voice....He’s five years old. He does not know. It’s basically like, your kids, I react off of your reactions, and your children will do the same thing.”²¹⁸ Learning age-appropriate expectations also helped many fathers to slow down. “For me, I was always in a hurry, trying to do everything fast, everything. Now that I’ve taken this class, I’ve taken more time, slow down, for them,” shared one father.²¹⁹ He added, “[You] gotta understand they’re kids...It’s an eye opener because it showed me that while they’re kids they’re going to make mistakes and we have to be patient with them. And I wasn’t that patient with them.”²²⁰ The program encouraged fathers to talk to their children, play with them, and support them in ways beyond financial provision. Fathers said that they were more involved in their children’s school lives and felt more prepared to deal with issues that children might bring to them regarding drugs, relationships, and bullies.

Fathers learn skills to improve their co-parenting relationships

Many fathers described how the program provided them with skills to help them in their relationships with their children’s mother(s). Several participants noted that the class “helps you be a better father, husband, [and] boyfriend.”²²¹ Fathers described learning to see things from the mothers’ viewpoint, which helped fathers understand mothers better.²²² Fathers also shared that they needed to be open to compromising with mothers during a disagreement: “You have to be fifty-fifty...meet your spouse halfway.”²²³

In addition, fathers explained that the program helped them to realize that how they fight with their children’s mother can negatively affect their children.²²⁴ One father explained, “Our kids are with us 24/7, so if we’re arguing with our partner all the time, they inherit that behavior.”²²⁵ As a result of the class, he was taking care to be “more respectful” and mindful of the way he communicated with his wife, especially in front of their children.²²⁶ Another father shared, “If you want your children to be successful you have to show them the right way. You have to be right with the mother, you can’t argue with her all the time. The kids are gonna see that. [The program] shows you, it helps.”²²⁷ One father described how he was able to get a court order to see his daughter more because he decided to focus his efforts on improving his relationship with his daughter instead of blaming the mother.

Fathers gain a new perspective and mindset on their families and life

EFFECT participants also explained that the program helped them realize how much they valued their families. One father explained that the program, “puts it into perspective. How much you cherish your family.”²²⁸ Another added, “This program is going to help. It’s going to change a

person's attitude. Be able to give your family the respect they need."²²⁹ Fathers credited the program with providing them a new mindset, as well as the skills, support, and resources to make healthy changes in their lives. A father who was going through a difficult period explained that the program helped him realize "it was about changing my perspective. I couldn't keep bringing negative into a situation, but once I was able to change that light just to talk with everybody, I was able to feel better. And when I felt better, I thought better."²³⁰

They also felt that the program showed them that they had choices and control over some areas of their lives. One father gave a hypothetical example in which he described running out of gas on a highway. He could get mad and kick the gas tank, or he could realize that the problem already existed and approach the immediate problem with a cool head. For fathers who were going through difficult times, the program gave them hope. By helping fathers to see what they could control, the program helped fathers to move beyond what they could not change and focus on the things they could change.

Fathers described reevaluating the way they were living their lives and considering that they might lose their children if they did not change their ways: "I was doing badly for the past year and a half, selling drugs, doing drugs, living the fast life. Not involved in my kid's life, my son's life, I was selfish. But now I got, I don't know, my mindset is totally different now. I'm different now. I noticed a change."²³¹ One father noted that after he got involved with drugs and went to prison, he lost connection with his family. After the program, his family has now reconnected with him because they see that he is moving in a positive direction with his life.

One father's description of the program best captured how fathers described the program's impact on their lives:²³²

"This class is really, it's not putting Band-Aids on your boat. It's helping you a build a brand new boat...a stronger boat, able to deal with different waves of life. That first boat, you tore it up because you built it yourself; you didn't have a blueprint. Now you have a foundation you know you can build off of. Go back out there; you can withstand a lot more. You have that support of everybody else. You got people in your corner; you got mentors to reach out to. Whenever it's getting down, we learning different aspects from this book, and it's broken down into a way not just in that context. It's applied to each and every one of our perspectives. We can understand it." –EFFECT Program Participant

Fathers also gained confidence, integrity, awareness, and self-respect, which made them more confident to help other fathers and to be better fathers in their children's lives. One father said that by being more involved in his child's life, he was also more proactive and positive in his own life. Another shared in his Satisfaction Survey, "I like that I see myself as a father instead of a nobody."²³³ Fathers found hope that they could be good fathers and take back some control over their lives instead of dwelling in the hopelessness they experienced otherwise in social

services programs and the judicial system. Military fathers talked about how their devotion to the military ended their marriages and made it difficult to feel anything for their children. The program provided structure and guidance that helped active military and veterans to reconnect with their families. One military father said that he was able to promote the program to other fathers and was better equipped to see fathers who were in need of these services.

Analyses of the Satisfaction Surveys confirmed our findings from the focus groups. Fathers expressed that they had learned how to be better fathers, and gained communication and parenting skills from the class. They also noted that they felt they understood their children better, and became more involved with their families. Many fathers shared that they learned how to be a better co-parent and husband. The program provided them with the tools to become better men and gave them new perspectives on their families and roles as fathers.

DO THE PROGRAM SITES ACHIEVE THE OUTCOMES TARGETED BY THEIR CURRICULA?

The three sites for whom data were available (BCFS's sites in Cameron and Taylor counties and CCCEP in El Paso County) each implemented the 24/7 Dad A.M. program. Our analyses examining whether the sites achieved program curriculum outcomes focused on changes in scores in the 24/7 Dad A.M. Father Skills Survey (FSS) from pre-test to post-test. Analyses were limited to the 584 fathers who completed both the pre-FSS and the post-FSS (the FSS sample). As described in the last chapter, the fathers who completed the program—and the pre- and post-surveys—differ from the fathers who do not complete the program and the post-surveys. The differences between these two groups of fathers may be associated with the program outcomes.

Consistent with the evidence base for 24/7 Dad, overall, fathers scored significantly higher on the post-FSS compared to the pre-FSS ($p < .001$), indicating that fathers made significant gains in knowledge and skills over the course of the program.²³⁴ On average, fathers answered 63 percent of items correctly on the post-test compared to 40 percent on the pre-test. There were no differences in improvement across race/ethnicity, marital status, education, or language. Younger fathers (ages 18 to 24), however, were significantly more likely to demonstrate improvement compared to older fathers ($p < .01$).

CFRP also examined whether increases in the FSS were tied to program dosage, or how much of the program fathers received. Fathers who received at least the minimum dosage of classes improved their FSS scores by 4.5 percentage points more than fathers who did not ($p < .05$).

As discussed earlier, the FSS assesses fathers across five characteristics (fathering skills, relationship skills, parenting skills, self-awareness, and caring for self) that do not entirely align with the intended program outcomes. Moreover, the most rigorous study of 24/7 Dad, the Hawaii randomized control trial study, showed that significant impact on fathering skills and knowledge was limited to two questions:

- 1) "Can a dad have all the traits of the 'Ideal Father'?" ("No. Even if he tries hard enough, he can still only have some of the traits.")
- 2) "Which of the following statements is true about how well children do in school?" (Children with involved Dads do better whether or not their Dads live with them.)²³⁵

CFRP examined increases among EFFECT fathers on the FSS for each of the 22 items (Table 5). Fathers in EFFECT demonstrated significant increases on each of the FSS items, including the same two items as the Hawaii evaluation, items 12 and 18 ($p < .001$). This means that fathers experienced increases in each of the five characteristics: self-awareness, caring for self, fathering skills, parenting skills, and relationship skills. The relationship between the survey items and the domains can be found in Appendix E. Although the gains were significant, the percentage of correct answers is still fairly low on most questions, with only six questions receiving 75 percent or higher correct responses.

Table 5. Improvement in Fathering Skills Survey (FSS)

FSS Item	Pre-Survey Correct Response Rate	Post-Survey Correct Response Rate
1. The 24/7 Dad has which of the five following traits:	41%	76%
2. When the 24/7 Dad uses his fathering skills, he knows:	51%	73%
3. Today's culture does not link body image and what it means to be a man.	49%	75%
4. People learn what it means to be a man mostly through:	32%	43%
5. A good way for men to handle their feelings is:	58%	75%
6. Grieving is:	40%	64%
7. Which of the following is not a healthy way to handle stress?	33%	54%
8. Most men don't like to visit the doctor because:	34%	66%
9. Which of the following is not a communication style?	7%	40%
10. Two good ways to talk with my children are:	34%	66%
11. Married men, on average, live fuller, happier lives than unmarried men.	36%	75%
12. Can a Dad have all of the traits of the Ideal Father?	11%	36%
13. Which of the following statements best describes the purpose of Family Rules?	34%	44%
14. Which statement is true?	46%	71%
15. What is the best definition of self-worth?	38%	59%
16. Nature has more to do with how children turn out than how their parents raise them.	25%	46%
17. A Dad without custody and little or no access to his children can't create a plan to increase his involvement in their lives.	44%	66%
18. Which of the following statements is true about how well children do in school.	63%	79%
19. Which of the following is not true about problems between parents in raising their children?	19%	44%
20. What is the most important thing to keep in mind when you try to work out differences with your children's mother in raising your children?	54%	70%
21. A Dad mostly provides for his family in which of the following ways?	77%	86%
22. Which of the following statements is true about balancing work and family?	46%	63%

Source: FFS data come from the EFFECT sites; N=584. Note: The increase in correct responses from pre-survey to post-survey is significant for all 22 items ($p < .001$).

DO THE PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS ACHIEVE AN INCREASE IN PROTECTIVE FACTORS?

The next set of analyses examined whether fathers increased their protective factors over the course of the program. In previous studies of 24/7 Dad, fathers showed increases in self-efficacy and parenting knowledge, and decreases in stress, which align somewhat with the two protective factors (family functioning/resiliency and child development/knowledge of parenting) assessed on the PFS.²³⁶

Analyses of the PFS sample (N=645) show that, on average, fathers significantly improved their overall scores on the PFS from pre-test to post-test. More than two-thirds of fathers, (71%) saw an absolute increase in their overall PFS scores: the scores of 23 percent of fathers fell, and the scores of the remaining six percent remained constant from the pre- to the post-assessment. The PFS is scored on a scale of zero to seven; the overall score is the average of each subscale score, which ranges from zero to seven, with a higher score indicating more protection. EFFECT fathers' average scores increased from 5.1 to 5.6 ($p<.01$). Fathers' protective factors, with the exception of concrete support, significantly increased between the pre- and post-assessments (Table 6).

Table 6. Average Protective Factors Survey (PFS) Subscale Changes among EFFECT Participants

PFS	Average Score on Pre-PFS	Average Score on Post-PFS
Overall	5.1	5.6***
Family Functioning/Resiliency	4.5	5.3***
Social Support	5.0	5.5***
Concrete Support	5.2	5.4
Child Development/Knowledge of Parenting	5.3	5.6***
Nurturing and Attachment	5.7	6.0***

Source: PFS data come from the PEIS Database; N=645.

Note: * $p<.05$, ** $p<.01$, *** $p<.001$.

One of PEI's EFFECT performance measures is that at least 75 percent of EFFECT participants who took a pre- and post-PFS demonstrate an absolute increase in at least one protective factor. The absolute score is calculated by subtracting the score of the protective factor subscale on the pre-PFS from the corresponding score on the post-PFS. We found that 91 percent of fathers showed improvement in at least one protective factor subscale; 14 percent of fathers showed improvement in all five subscales.

The percentage of EFFECT fathers who improved their scores on each of the individual protective factors: family functioning/resilience, social support, concrete support, child development/knowledge of parenting, and nurturing and attachment is provided in Table 7. Fathers were most likely to improve on family functioning and resiliency, but over half of

fathers improved on social support, child development/knowledge of parenting, and nurturing and attachment.

Table 7. Improvement on Individual PFS Subscales

Protective Factors Survey Subscale	Percent of Fathers who Demonstrated Absolute Improvement
Family Functioning/Resiliency	69%
Social Support	57%
Concrete Support	43%
Child Development/Knowledge of Parenting	57%
Nurturing and Attachment	51%

Source: PFS data come from the PEIS Database; N=645.

CFRP examined increases in overall scores on the PFS and on specific protective factors across multiple demographic characteristics. All fathers, regardless of age, marital status, education level, and relationship to child, showed significant increases in the PFS. Hispanic fathers, however, demonstrated significantly greater increases on the PFS compared to African-American fathers. Additional analyses examining increases in PFS scores by dosage indicate that the total number of classes ($p < .001$) and the total number of services a father received ($p < .001$) were positively related to small increases on the PFS for the pre-/post-PFS sample. In addition to the classes, CCCEP offered its fathers respite care, basic needs support, booster sessions, case management, and crisis intervention. BCFS offered fathers resources and referrals, basic needs support, child care, and transportation. For each additional service he received (which included classes), a father's PFS score increased by 0.04 points.

ARE EFFECT PARTICIPANTS DESIGNATED PERPETRATORS OF CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT?

The overall purpose of PEI's Fatherhood EFFECT Program is to support families and keep children safe by preventing incidents of child abuse and neglect. PEI defines keeping children safe as 100 percent of children in EFFECT families have a father (EFFECT participant) who has not been identified as a "designated perpetrator" for an incident of child abuse or neglect while receiving EFFECT Program services, and up to three months after services end.²³⁷ To assess if EFFECT participants were designated perpetrators during and after they participated in the EFFECT Program, CFRP analyzed matched data from PEI's IMPACT database on EFFECT fathers.

Analyses of lifetime incidence of child maltreatment among fathers participating in EFFECT (as of December 2016) indicate that, of the 1,060 fathers who enrolled in EFFECT through BCFS or CCCEP and took the pre-PFS, a total of 110 (10%) are identified as designated perpetrators in the IMPACT database. Only seven fathers, however, were identified as designated perpetrators **after** they began the EFFECT Program (0.7% of all EFFECT participants, and 6% of EFFECT participants who were identified as designated perpetrators in the IMPACT database); an

additional father had two open investigations when he began the program, in which he was later determined to be a designated perpetrator.^f

Of the seven fathers who were identified as designated perpetrators after beginning EFFECT, three completed the program;⁵ the other four did not. All three of the fathers who completed the program and were identified as designated perpetrators, were identified as a designated perpetrator for an incident of child abuse or neglect over a year after completing the program. One of these fathers had a history as a designated perpetrator prior to entering the EFFECT Program. Two of the four fathers who were identified as designated perpetrators, but did not complete the program were identified within three months of enrolling in the EFFECT Program. The other two fathers were identified within six months of enrolling. Of these four fathers, two had histories of CPS cases in which they had also been identified as the designated perpetrator prior to enrolling in the EFFECT Program.

Child maltreatment prevention programs aim to provide resources and increase protective factors among parents. Most fathers do not and will not abuse their children, regardless of their participation in a preventive program. One challenge is that it is not always possible to determine which fathers are in the greatest need of a preventive program. In the EFFECT Program, 106 fathers were identified as designated perpetrators of child maltreatment prior to enrolling in the program, and only three of the 106 recidivated. Moreover, only four fathers were identified as designated perpetrators for the first time after completing the EFFECT Program. Because the rate of child maltreatment is low among parents and fathers, it is not possible to make a casual claim that the EFFECT Program alone prevented incidents of child abuse or neglect. CFRP does find, however, that the EFFECT Program is associated with increases in protective factors and that fathers gain valuable skills and knowledge, both of which are associated with wellbeing for children and families.

What Are the Successes and Challenges to Implementation?

The implementation evaluation of the EFFECT Program relied on phone and in-person interviews with EFFECT staff, focus groups with fathers during site visits, and the Quarterly and Annual Reports submitted by EFFECT staff to PEI. The programs faced a number of challenges during implementation including difficulties with recruitment, retention, the additional services

^f According to the EFFECT I RFP: “Families with an open or substantiated Child Protective Services (CPS) case cannot be served under CBCAP programs. Contractors must ask families if they have an open or substantiated CPS case. If a contractor receives information indicating that a CPS case has been opened concerning a family who is already receiving CBCAP services, Contractor’s CBCAP services can continue during the investigation. Contractors must make a good faith effort to determine the disposition or determination of the case (such as requesting the formal CPS letter from the client). If the open case is referred to Family Based Support Services or other services offered by CPS, or if the child is removed, CBCAP services must be terminated. Continuation of services during and/or after investigation (to meet the conditions noted above) is allowable if such continuation does not compromise fidelity to the evidence-based model.”

⁵ We used the post-PFS as a proxy for program completion.

and supports fathers needed that were often beyond the scope of the program, among others. These challenges and the many ways the programs overcame them are highlighted below.

RECRUITMENT

Young fathers do not think they need the program

EFFECT providers highlighted that many fathers who could benefit from the program did not attend because they did not think they needed the program.²³⁸ One father shared, “[If I were on my feet] I don’t think I’d go...If you just came out here and offered it, I wouldn’t go.”²³⁹ Fathers sometimes miss the value of the program as a preventative resource. Many fathers also misjudge their own needs. As one provider explained, “There is so much that the program can offer, but not if they don’t know they need help. It’s hard to see them drowning and they don’t know they need help.”²⁴⁰ Young fathers and first-time fathers in particular may not think that they need help, or may not be seeking a fatherhood program specifically. Many older EFFECT participants stated that they wished they had been able to access the program when they were younger, but admitted they likely would not have been interested or realized that they needed it. EFFECT staff agreed, noting that young fathers, particularly teenage fathers, may not understand the impact their actions can have on their children, or see the value the program can add to their own lives. Staff found that it was difficult to convince and motivate young fathers to attend the program.

Intervention is too late for many

Although some fathers lived with their children and co-parents, and participated in the program because they saw it as a learning opportunity, they were not the majority of the fathers served by EFFECT. Instead, many fathers came to the program when they had no other recourse: “We are their last shot.”²⁴¹ One EFFECT staff member summarized, “Dads come to us broken.”²⁴² Across sites, many fathers were incarcerated or had criminal histories, some were in drug treatment or rehabilitation centers, and a few were homeless. Many fathers had children with more than one co-parent, and played several parenting roles simultaneously: nonresidential biological father, residential biological father, and residential stepfather. One site estimated that only about one-quarter of their fathers lived with their children, and many fathers were estranged from their families and struggling to reconnect and rebuild relationships with them. “Most are struggling,” one EFFECT staff member stated.²⁴³ Another added, “When [fathers] get to us, they’re traumatized.”²⁴⁴ Fathers have often faced many challenges by the time they come to the program; they may have lost contact with their children, owe child support, and be under- or unemployed. Often, these challenges compound one another: co-parents may refuse visitation without child support, which cannot be paid without a job. Consequently few, if any, changes in these men’s outcomes, such as changes in income or increased contact with their children, can occur (or be detected) in the short term (the timeline for data collection for the performance measures).

Fathers' misconceptions about fatherhood programs make recruitment challenging

Other fathers were not interested in the EFFECT Program because they had misconceptions about parenting programs in general. EFFECT staff found that parenting education programs were often perceived negatively. People thought the “classes are only for ‘bad’ parents and fail[ed] to realize the value they can provide to any father.”²⁴⁵ EFFECT sites also are aware that many fathers need an ultimatum to push them to attend the programs: “No curriculum is going to get a dad in the door. It may keep them there, but it won’t get them there. It’s going to be a court order or a relationship [with the facilitator].”²⁴⁶ CFRP found that some fathers were “strongly encouraged” to attend the program by parole officers or child support officials.

Another recruitment challenge was the lack of knowledge or awareness of programs such as EFFECT. Several of the sites mentioned that both fathers and organizations were surprised to learn that a program for fathers existed. Many of the fathers CFRP spoke with reported being skeptical of the program in the beginning. One father initially thought the program might be a “set up” or a way for the Attorney General to put fathers in jail for not paying child support.²⁴⁷ Others were confused, because most parenting programs and services are directed towards mothers. One father thought the program would be a waste of time, because most parenting classes are focused on mothers or on the couple, instead of addressing the specific needs and concerns of fathers.

Making a direct connection has the biggest impact

Despite the challenges in engaging or reaching those fathers who most needed the program, EFFECT staff found that making a direct connection with fathers led to successful recruitment. One site noted that they had more success with recruitment when they could speak directly to the fathers. Another site described needing to establish a bond with the father: “We don’t say ‘Hi, I’m going to talk to you about the EFFECT Program,’ and hand over some paperwork. [We say,] ‘What’s your story, and where are we going?’”²⁴⁸ Opening the conversation by asking “where are we going,” shows fathers that EFFECT staff are working alongside them on their journey to become better fathers. Fathers opened up more when they thought about their children. “Even the most angry dad; the sooner I can get the conversation to their child, the sooner I can get them in the class,” explained one EFFECT staffer. “They know we care about their kid.”²⁴⁹ EFFECT sites also tweaked their recruitment strategies to bring in different populations. For example, to bring more working professional fathers, one site created a group program for fathers and children, in which fathers engaged in community service activities with their children, such as working at a food pantry, and then received the class while the children continued to do community service under supervision.

EFFECT staff also shared the belief that program graduates were one of the best recruitment sources they could have. Not only could fathers connect EFFECT staff to their communities, such as the Hispanic or military community, but they also served as credible, living testaments of the program’s impact to fathers who were being recruited for the program. Some sites noted that they could work with program graduates or encourage participants to recommend the

program to friends or family members. Speaking with fathers, we found that some of them had heard about the program through word-of-mouth from other trusted fathers in the community.

Strategic relationship-building is key to developing productive partnerships

Reviews of Quarterly and Annual Reports revealed that EFFECT Program staff's recruitment and outreach efforts were extensive. Below are examples of the community partners and organizations reached out to by EFFECT staff: not all EFFECT sites reached out to all of these partners, nor did they form similar relationships. Staff reached out to traditional social services organizations such as United Way, Goodwill, and the YMCA; and community organizations including the Boy Scouts, the faith community; and schools and community colleges. Staff also sought out housing authorities, barber shops, medical centers and hospitals, residential treatment and rehabilitation centers, homeless shelters, domestic violence organizations, organizations for persons with disabilities, public libraries, police departments, local sport teams, military installations, veterans organizations, local home visiting programs, early childhood education and child care centers, job skills and employment referral organizations, probation and parole offices, child support offices, Domestic Relations Offices (DRO), Child Protective Services (CPS) and Alternative Relations (AR), and family courts. Two sites recruited fathers by reaching out to mothers, either at housing authorities or at pregnancy centers, taking care to communicate that the program was directed to fathers and explaining the benefits to their families of increased father involvement. Staff noted that mothers and grandmothers could be very persuasive in getting fathers to attend the program. EFFECT staff also took proactive roles in their communities by participating in fatherhood coalitions or early childhood collaboratives.

Although EFFECT providers know that they must reach out to a large number of fathers and organizations to achieve their enrollment goals, staff are strategic and thoughtful about their recruitment. Staff at one of the sites explained, "We first had to decide where we were NOT going to fish or spend our resources."²⁵⁰ For example, two EFFECT sites found great success partnering with local detention centers and working with fathers who were approaching parole and release. Other EFFECT sites consciously chose not to work with the incarcerated population because they were concerned about retaining fathers in the program. EFFECT providers at another site shared, "one of the ways not to market is the broad marketing spectrum. We did open houses and carnivals at schools, but it's too many people passing through, and [we] don't get concrete commitment."²⁵¹ Similarly, EFFECT sites took different tacks on serving homeless populations: some sites actively pursued relationships with local homeless shelters, whereas others elected not to focus recruitment on this population because their higher needs and housing instability made retention a real challenge. Sometimes EFFECT staff learned by doing: "Try everything once, and find out what works or doesn't."²⁵² EFFECT staff at different sites were often working in isolation from one another; contractors could benefit from structured collaboration opportunities to share their ideas, experiences, and lessons learned.

Once program staff decided which partnerships or strategies could work, EFFECT staff targeted the organizations and institutions that they perceived would provide fruitful referrals or reach the largest number of potential fathers, and staff worked hard to build relationships and trust with these organizations. Several of the sites mentioned that both fathers and organizations were surprised to learn that a program for fathers existed because most services are typically for mothers. Moreover, some potential partner organizations struggled to understand that most fathers were eligible to participate, because most social service programs have several eligibility requirements, including income level, child support cases or arrears, open CPS investigations, domestic violence allegations, or others. The eligibility form for EFFECT states that parents must possess at least one risk factor from a list, including high general stress and nontraditional family structures. Because these risks are so pervasive, most men are eligible to participate in the EFFECT Program who might not be otherwise eligible to participate in other programs.²⁵³ EFFECT sites shared, “[Agencies] are surprised that anyone cares about dad and that it’s free, and it’s not about child support or anti-battery.”²⁵⁴

EFFECT staff found that they needed to reach out to and meet with potential partners more than once to make an impression. Building trust with potential partners was important: not only did site leaders need to develop a relationship, but staff needed to show that the program was a worthwhile referral. EFFECT staff shared, “[Community agencies will] send you one referral and see how it goes before they send another.”²⁵⁵ In addition, EFFECT providers found that turnover at partner organizations could open doors that had previously been closed, and vice versa. New staff at partner organizations often were willing to work with EFFECT and pursue a partnership.

CFRP found that what worked in some counties did not work in every county. Some EFFECT sites were able to work with their local school districts to host events for fathers and receive referrals of fathers whose children had disciplinary issues at school, whereas other sites were unable to get their foot in the door with school districts. Faith organizations led to fruitful partnerships in some communities but were nonstarters in other counties.

Recruitment must be wide and ongoing

To address recruitment challenges, EFFECT staff needed to cast a wide net and recruit constantly. One site anticipated that 50 percent of fathers they recruited would start the program, and that 50 percent of those who participated in the program would go on to graduate. Once program staff started recruiting, they realized their estimates had been optimistic: out of 267 fathers the EFFECT staff met with one-on-one, 93 said they were interested—a 35 percent success rate. Of those 93 fathers, 88 percent then went on to enroll in the program and are currently enrolled.²⁵⁶ EFFECT staff spent substantial time reaching out to fathers, community organizations, and partner agencies to provide information about the EFFECT Program. At one point, one site estimated that it spent 50 to 60 percent of its time on outreach alone: “We’ve gone into the community some 800 times. You gotta put a lot of hooks

in the water.”²⁵⁷ Another described their outreach effort this way: “We are everywhere...We travel. If you have a captive audience, we will come to you.”²⁵⁸

Recruitment efforts can burden staff

Recruitment and outreach efforts often place a heavy burden on staff. EFFECT sites noted that, particularly when the programs were first launching, staff were spending 50 to 60 percent of their time on outreach activities. EFFECT sites struggled to balance conducting the necessary amount of outreach with operating the program itself: facilitating the curriculum sessions, providing ancillary services, traveling to sites, and keeping up with documentation and data entry responsibilities. To keep up with their workloads, Parent Educators often worked overtime. These time constraints sometimes led sites to rely more on recruitment from one or two sources, such as a detention center, which made the program vulnerable to any changes in the recruitment source. EFFECT staff, however, also found that their outreach efforts could pay off when people in the community began to recognize the EFFECT Program: “We’ve been branding, and just twice in the last month, folks say they know us. Our folks are out all over, all the time about the EFFECT Program.”²⁵⁹ Similar to branding, maintaining a consistent message about EFFECT through the use of talking points was described as a helpful strategy for recruitment.

RETENTION

Fathers’ commitments make it difficult to stay in the program

Getting fathers into the door of the EFFECT Program is one challenge; keeping them there is another. Approximately 56 percent of fathers who enroll in the program achieve the minimum dosage, and fewer than two-thirds of fathers (61%) complete the post-PFS survey.

All sites described retention as a critical issue, both in their Quarterly and Annual Reports, and in conversations with CFRP. Fathers’ work schedules were one of the leading causes of program attrition or missed classes: some fathers began working during the program, whereas others needed to receive training or had frequent schedule changes. One site described having to shift their program sessions to weekends, because fathers were unable to ask for time off from work for a program that was not mandatory or did not pose legal consequences for non-attendance. Other fathers had unstable living situations, particularly those who were homeless or living in halfway houses. For some fathers, transportation posed a barrier to attending the sessions. EFFECT participants who were in detention centers faced additional challenges, because they could be released before the program ended, or were kept from attending an EFFECT session due to disciplinary issues. Fathers also had personal or family obligations which could keep them from attending the sessions. Some EFFECT participants who were on parole or had court orders could not attend sessions due to mandated activities.

Program length can be a challenge for commitment

According to program staff, the program's length can be an issue for retention. Although many fathers expressed wanting the program to be even longer, EFFECT staff strongly advocated for modifying the program models to shorten the number of weeks required, either by extending the duration of each session or by holding multiple sessions in one week. These measures can reduce fathers' psychological barriers to committing to a multi-week program at the outset, as well as enable them to make short-term changes in their lives to facilitate regular program attendance. In some cases, EFFECT sites have worked with PEI to make these modifications. One of the two program models currently used by EFFECT sites could be adapted to have fewer but longer sessions. For the other program model, staff are reaching out to the program developer to see if any modifications are possible.

Creative solutions can help reduce retention barriers

The EFFECT sites tried several strategies to improve retention and meet fathers' needs. When possible, program staff worked with community partners or donors to provide bus passes, taxi rides, or transportation vouchers to the fathers. Sites also incentivized participation by providing meals (also provided by donors) and raffling off small items, such as dollar store toys, for participants to give their children. Some sites began offering an additional session each week, which fathers could attend as a makeup session if they missed the original meeting time. Both EFFECT fathers and staff mentioned that the support group atmosphere of the class also kept fathers coming back; fathers described looking forward to the class, wanting to help the other men, and needing a place where they could relax and vent.

STAFFING

Throughout our evaluation, CFRP was impressed by the level of dedication and enthusiasm shown by EFFECT staff. Facilitators, as well as programmatic and administrative staff, demonstrated passion for the program and for serving the fathers in their communities.

EFFECT staff want more training

Staff at all sites discussed the challenges of training for a new program, which includes training on both the curriculum and the documentation responsibilities. One site explained that it took them some time to determine and set program policies and procedures around enrollment and data entry, and additional time to train staff. PEI required EFFECT contractors to train staff adequately to implement the program, which often translated into training on the curriculum, as well as other areas, such as cultural competency. Training in the curriculum could also pose challenges: training was typically offered off-site, which limited the number of EFFECT staff who could travel to receive the training. When there was staff turnover, this knowledge of the curriculum was lost to the site. Given the time pressure to start a new class, new staff were unable to travel offsite to obtain training and had to rely on webinars or communication with the program developer. A third site mentioned that they wished they could have had more

training on the curriculum, noting that email communication and written manuals could not replace in-person training.

Staff turnover can slow program implementation

EFFECT sites also shared challenges with staff retention. One site lost both Parent Educators in a relatively short period of time and had to quickly find and train new staff. Another site struggled to fill a position, and went through two placements before they found the right fit. When Parent Educators or Mentor Navigators left the organizations, sites not only lost the knowledge and expertise these staffers had built, but also the relationships they had built with partner organizations. EFFECT sites also described a transition period for training new staff, as well as needing time for these new staff members to resume existing partnerships and establish new ones. Program leaders, however, shared pride and excitement describing the energy, passion, new ideas, and partnerships brought in by newer staff.

EFFECT staff balance their concern about clients with professional boundaries

EFFECT staff care deeply about their work and the fathers they serve. Their work extended beyond facilitating the curriculum sessions and providing case management services, to regularly checking in on fathers via phone or text message and providing ongoing support as needed. As described earlier, the facilitator-participant relationship is crucial to engaging fathers in the program. For many fathers, EFFECT staff were some of the few, if not the only, people in their lives who presented a positive relationship and advice they could rely on. Fathers valued the constant communication and check-ins they received from EFFECT staff, and drew comfort from knowing that they could reach out whenever they had a need, such as someone to accompany them to court. However, EFFECT staff are learning to draw boundaries around their work with fathers to both empower clients to develop resources on their own and to avoid burnout in themselves.

What Are Fathers' Broader Needs, Beyond Fatherhood Programming?

As mentioned previously, investments in promoting the positive impact fathers have on their children through fatherhood programs continue to increase, but these efforts are occurring within a context of dramatic change for American families. To provide additional insight into the needs of Texas fathers, CFRP asked EFFECT fathers about their needs and challenges. CFRP also asked service providers to respond to survey questions on their registration for the 2017 Texas Fatherhood Summit about their perceptions of the needs of the fathers they serve and the additional supports fathers require. Multiple researchers coded these data and conducted thematic analyses. Our findings were broadly consistent with findings from other evaluations, including national evaluations, such as Mathematica's PACT evaluation, and local studies, such as SUMA Social Marketing's evaluation of the EFFECT Program.²⁶⁰

EFFECT FATHERS' NEEDS

EFFECT fathers participating in focus groups in Tarrant, Cameron, and El Paso counties expressed the needs they have beyond fatherhood programming. These broad needs largely center on information and support for navigating the systems that intersect their lives, especially child support, and additional information about specific aspects of parenting.

Fathers need more information and support for navigating government and legal systems

The most consistent need voiced by fathers across EFFECT sites was for basic background information about how the government systems that affect them actually work in practice. Fathers obtained information mostly through word-of-mouth, and it was often inaccurate. This false information had dissuaded many fathers from searching for needed and available resources. Many fathers had a general distrust of the legal system, especially in regards to child support. They expressed that mothers rarely had to prove they were good parents and that the burden of proof was always on fathers to show that they could take care of their children. Fathers appreciated that the EFFECT Program had given them the knowledge to be confident as fathers, but they still felt that the court only saw them as “good” fathers if they could provide financially. Fathers felt frustrated that the mothers of their children could more easily access resources such as housing, food, and children’s items, but that fathers were generally unable to access those same things.

Fathers reported needing advocates and information targeted specifically for their situations to help them navigate these complex systems and access appropriate resources and referrals. Common areas of need included the prison and legal system, custody, parenting time and divorce, as well as programs to help veterans, active-duty military fathers, and fathers with disabilities.

EFFECT participants have trouble meeting basic needs

Other commonly cited areas of need included help with housing, managing finances, counseling, access to child care and health resources, and help with immigration and border issues. Fathers talked about trying to manage college loans and being confused about how the government determined whether they were eligible for other financial programs. EFFECT participants also talked about falling through the health care gap, in which their PTSD might be treated but not their anxiety, and not knowing where to take their children for counseling help. Other fathers faced more complex issues: some fathers talked about children with expensive chronic health needs; others faced complicated child custody disputes in which the mother may have taken the children outside of the country.

Fathers wanted additional information and support on parenting

Fathers also reported needing specific information about how to be fathers. They highlighted that young fathers, expectant fathers, and fathers with infants, daughters, and teenagers needed more information and support. Fathers mentioned that many programs and parenting classes

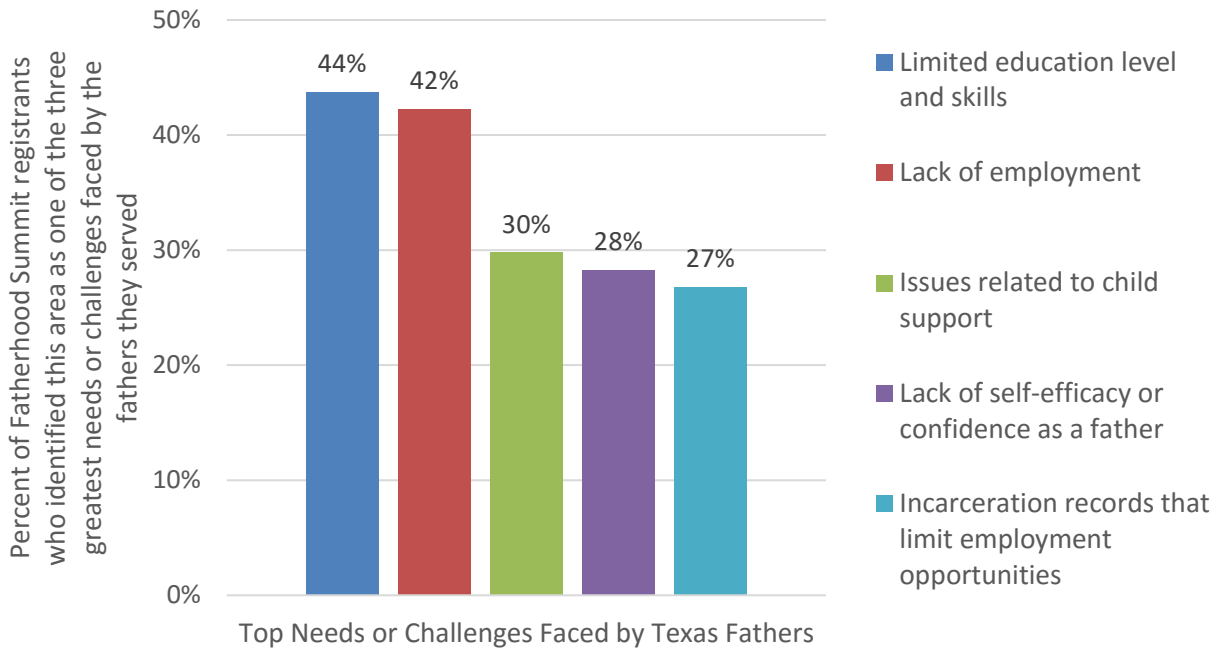
were targeted to mothers' needs and that the EFFECT Program may have been the first program trying to address fathers' anxieties about becoming parents. Fathers had questions about how to raise children in a world with easy access to the internet and social networking apps, and how to discipline and talk to their children, especially daughters. Fathers also needed specific advice about how to deal with multipartner co-parenting relationships in which their children could be vulnerable to violence in a household in which they are no longer the resident father.

CFRP FATHERHOOD NEEDS ASSESSMENT

To provide additional insight from fatherhood program providers into the needs of Texas fathers, CFRP asked registrants for the 2017 Texas Fatherhood Summit to respond to survey questions on their registration form about their perceptions of the needs of the fathers they serve and the additional supports fathers require. Registrants were asked what the three greatest needs or challenges faced by the fathers they served were and the additional supports fathers require. Options included lack of employment, incarceration records, issues related to child support, health, limited education/skills, and lack of confidence, among others. Conference registrants could also choose "other" and identify an additional need not listed. Survey respondents were also asked an open-ended question about suggestions they had for how the community and state could better support fathers. Multiple researchers coded these data and conducted thematic analyses.

Out of 333 conference registrants, 265 responded to our question about fathers' needs. The top five most commonly identified needs and challenges faced by fathers were: limited education and skills; lack of employment; issues related to child support; lack of self-efficacy or confidence as a father; and incarceration records that limit employment opportunities (Figure 8). These findings align with EFFECT fathers' reports of their needs, particularly in regards to child support and lack of confidence as a father. Moreover, fathers' reports of needing help with basic needs such as housing line up with providers' reports that fathers need education and training to obtain better employment.

Figure 8. Texas Fatherhood Summit Registration Father Needs Assessment



Source: Child & Family Research Partnership, 2017 Texas Fatherhood Summit Registration Survey, 2017 (N=265).

The top ten list was rounded out by custody and parenting time agreements (22%); no services available for fathers (20%); housing stability (12%); mental health (11%); and substance abuse problems (9%). Survey respondents also singled out additional needs ranging from issues related to immigration and racism, financial insecurity, and the need for healthy male role models.

Among those surveyed, 99 (37%) provided suggestions for how their community and state could better support fathers. Many recommendations centered on increasing access to and providing more services for fathers, and disseminating information about where fathers could access resources. Numerous respondents suggested providing more programs—parenting skills, relationship education, or support groups—specifically for fathers that would provide resources and information on the importance of father involvement, parental responsibilities, and child development. Several respondents specifically called for providing parenting and relationship education in high schools and corrective or rehabilitative settings, to prevent future child maltreatment or family instability. One respondent suggested reducing child support arrears based on participation in responsible fatherhood programs. Others recommended providing more job training, job placement, and mentoring services. Respondents noted the need to extend the reach of services to families with children with disabilities and non-English speakers. They also highlighted additional supports and services needed in the areas of mental health, child support, parental rights, combatting racism and discrimination, and increasing father engagement.

Respondents' recommendations also targeted the larger policy system. They recommended creating marketing or advertising campaigns to raise awareness of the importance of father involvement among state agencies, program providers, fathers, and the general population. Many called for efforts to increase father inclusion in social programs, specifically highlighting paternity leave and the reevaluation of eligibility requirements for social safety net programs such as SNAP, public housing, and health care. Several respondents encouraged state and local programs to be more inclusive of fathers in their services and programming and to improve collaboration across agencies and organizations to better serve fathers. One respondent singled out the need to analyze data on fathers' involvement or lack of involvement in systems, to better understand fathers' needs.

It is clear that fathers face many barriers to being the fathers they want to be. The EFFECT Program and other classroom-based responsible fatherhood programs attempt to address their need for parenting skills and knowledge, and provide support services or referrals for such things as employment training or child support arrears. EFFECT providers face challenges to obtaining referrals for certain services, such as immigration assistance or child custody lawyers. In addition, not only are nonresidential and noncustodial fathers ineligible for certain services, such as WIC and the child portion of the EITC, but also many fathers feel that they are perceived negatively by agencies, systems, and services. Consequently, fathers feel discouraged from accessing services and resources, despite their needs.

Summary

Overall, these findings indicate that despite challenges ranging from staffing, to recruitment, to retention, the EFFECT Program provides important and valued supports for participating fathers and their families. The majority of fathers who participated in the EFFECT Program showed increases in protective factors over the course of the program, and nearly all children of fathers who completed the EFFECT Program were kept safe from child maltreatment.

The findings presented here also highlight that the outcome measures currently being captured are largely insufficient at measuring the full range of outcomes generated by EFFECT. In focus groups, fathers report gaining important skills for parenting and co-parenting, in addition to confidence and self-efficacy, none of which are captured well in the current measures.

The state's investment in fathers through the EFFECT Program is one investment out of several, many of which will be discussed in the following chapters. Findings from both the implementation and outcomes evaluation of EFFECT informed several recommendations for strengthening the state's ongoing investment in evidence-based programming, which are presented in the final chapter.

CHAPTER 4: THE STATE OF FATHERHOOD IN TEXAS

Outside of the EFFECT Program, how else is Texas supporting fathers and their families? To answer this question, CFRP first discusses the work of Texas agencies in the area of fatherhood. We also describe the series of efforts and initiatives undertaken by PEI to increase awareness of fathers' roles and contributions to family wellbeing in Texas, including the Texas Fatherhood Summits and the Texas Fatherhood Interagency Council (TFIC). Finally, CFRP provides a snapshot of the fatherhood programs offered throughout the state.

State Level

At the state level, several agencies directly target programs or services to Texas fathers. CFRP collected information from Texas state agencies on the quantity and quality of services and supports that state agencies provide to Texas fathers through the CFRP-created State Agency Fatherhood Questionnaire. These data were collected via the online survey platform Qualtrics and were organized and analyzed by CFRP researchers. Our findings are provided below.

DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES (DFPS)

The Department of Family and Protective Services' mission is to protect children, people with disabilities, and the elderly from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Its five major programs are: Adult Protective Services (APS); Child Protective Services (CPS); Child Care Licensing, which regulates daycares, maternity homes, residential treatment centers, foster care, adoption agencies, and before- and after-school programs; Statewide Intake of reports of abuse, neglect, and exploitation; and Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI).²⁶¹ DFPS' efforts to engage with fathers are described in more detail below.

Child Protective Services

Child Protective Services (CPS) leads four family-based support programs: Family-Based Safety Services, Family Group Decision Making (FGDM), the Parent Collaboration Group (PCB), and Responsible Fathering. The four programs seek to work with and engage families to increase their children's safety, strengthen families, and make CPS more responsive to families.²⁶² In particular, the Responsible Fathering initiative provides information and support to fathers to help them be more involved with their children.²⁶³ The initiative provides recommendations for CPS case workers to engage with fathers and promotes changing the culture around child welfare cases to be more inclusive of fathers.²⁶⁴ The Responsible Fathering initiative shares resources and tip sheets for fathers and families, including the "Father's Toolkit," "Disciplining Children Appropriately," and "Troubleshooter's Guide to Crying Babies."²⁶⁵ Additionally, the Responsible Fathering initiative provides resources for nonresidential fathers or fathers who are seeking to reengage with their children, such as "Twenty Long-Distance Activities for Dads at a Distance," "Tips from a Father in Prison," and "Re-Connecting with Your Kids After a Long Absence." All resources are available on the CPS Fathering Initiative website.²⁶⁶ The initiative also shares information directed toward mothers on the importance of father involvement, as

well as links to online resources on father involvement, criminal justice and reentry, and the child welfare system.²⁶⁷ CPS also created the position of Fatherhood Program Specialist to provide fathers with resources and support to navigate the child welfare system.

Prevention and Early Intervention

The Prevention and Early Intervention Division (PEI) leads programs in two main areas: early childhood and youth and family. Early childhood programs, which focus on children through age five, include Help through Intervention and Prevention (HIP), Healthy Outcomes through Prevention and Supports (HOPES), Home-Visiting Education and Leadership (HEAL), Safe Babies, and Texas Home Visiting (THV); these programs provide parenting education and support to parents to increase their protective factors, and thus reduce the likelihood of abuse.²⁶⁸ Two efforts are underway in early childhood programs to work more closely with fathers. The Safe Babies project seeks to learn more about father involvement efforts by evaluating the effectiveness of providing in-hospital education to fathers or male caregivers at the baby's birth. The education components focus on postpartum mental health awareness, infant safety, abusive head trauma reduction, and father involvement.²⁶⁹ Engaging fathers or male caregivers at their child(ren)'s birth not only directly involves fathers in the lives of their child(ren) from the beginning, but it also changes the culture of labor and delivery hospitals to become more inclusive of fathers.

Similarly, for the state-commissioned evaluation of the Texas Home Visiting (THV), the state has asked CFRP to evaluate THV's efforts to increase fathers' participation in the program. CFRP has also conducted other evaluations of THV to learn more about how fathers participate in home visiting and how to better engage fathers in these programs.²⁷⁰ Findings from these evaluations show that fathers want to be involved in home visiting programs, but often feel that the programs are geared toward mothers because materials do not typically target or engage fathers. Moreover, because most home visits are scheduled during the workday, many fathers are unable to attend them if they are at work.²⁷¹ The findings also show that father participation is a key strategy for family engagement. Families in which fathers participated remained enrolled approximately seven months longer than families in which fathers did not participate. In response to these findings, many THV sites have identified ways to be more father-friendly, including hiring Father Engagement Coordinators to proactively reach out to fathers and directly inviting fathers to participate in program activities.

PEI's programs for youth (ages six to 18) and family (birth to age 18) fund and provide services and parenting education for parents and their families across the state. Some programs, such as Services to At-Risk Youth (STAR), Statewide Youth Services Network (SYSN), and Community Youth Development (CYD) target families and communities at risk of crisis or juvenile delinquency.²⁷² Other programs provide parenting education services. For example, the Texas Families: Together and Safe (TFTS) program funds evidence-based parent education programs. PEI offers parenting education and support for designated groups of families including military and veteran families through the Military and Veteran Families Pilot Prevention (MFVPP)

program, and families investigated by CPS who were designated as low priority, considered low-risk cases, or not found to have confirmed allegations of child maltreatment through the Community-Based Faith Services (CBFS) program.²⁷³ PEI's Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) Fatherhood EFFECT Program, which is described in the previous chapters, is one of the only father-specific programs offered for Texas fathers at the state level.²⁷⁴

PEI has also prioritized learning about the experiences of fathers participating in all PEI programs. It commissioned a qualitative evaluation of its programs from SUMA Social Marketing to learn more about men's knowledge and perceptions of fatherhood, the ways they learn about being a father, and their experiences in PEI programs.²⁷⁵

DEPARTMENT OF STATE HEALTH SERVICES

The Texas Department of State Health Services' (DSHS) mission is "to improve the health, safety, and wellbeing of Texans through good stewardship of public resources, and a focus on core public health functions."²⁷⁶ DSHS' Family and Community Health Division (FCH), which provides oversight, monitoring, and strategic direction for programs that increase access to health care through community collaboration, oversees the offices of Community Health, Specialized Health, Nutrition Services for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Title V Maternal & Child Health (MCH), and Family Health.²⁷⁷ Although it does not call out fathers by name, DSHS has created several policies and programs to engage fathers and promote their involvement with their families.

As part of the Office of MCH's Texas Healthy Baby Initiative, developed to decrease infant mortality across the state, DSHS created material explicitly designed to reach out to and educate fathers. For example, Someday Starts Now (SSN), the Texas Healthy Baby Initiative public awareness campaign, offers information to mothers and fathers about pre- and inter-conception health, partner involvement, informed decision-making prior to and during pregnancy, and injury during a baby's first year. SSN also emphasizes the important role that men and fathers-to-be play in the health of their children, and provides resources specifically designed to support fathers.²⁷⁸ It provides online educational material for fathers on how to maintain a healthier lifestyle before becoming fathers, how to be supportive of their pregnant partners, and Maps for Dads, a step-by-step guide for new fathers once the baby is born available on the Healthy Texas Babies website.²⁷⁹ Another website, Live Like a Dad, provides information specifically for fathers-to-be on pregnancy, the baby's arrival, and life as a father.²⁸⁰ According to the CFRP State Fatherhood Questionnaire, a survey distributed to Texas state agencies to learn about their fatherhood programs and policies, these father-specific education materials were influenced in part by a focus group of fathers who felt "left out" and unsupported due to a lack of resources available to them during and after the pregnancy.

FCH's Office of Maternal & Child Health also operates the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) and the PRAMS2 Pilot. PRAMS is a statewide surveillance system sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) that surveys mothers within 60 to 180 days after the birth of their children about their experiences before, during, and after their

pregnancy. PRAMS surveys approximately 300 Texas mothers each month, providing the most comprehensive population-based data on maternal health related to pregnancy in Texas. Although PRAMS is inherently geared to mothers and maternal experiences during and after pregnancy, FCH is extending the survey's scope to be more inclusive of experiences related to fathers and families in its one-year pilot program, PRAMS2. PRAMS2 includes survey questions about father involvement, adverse childhood experiences, and other experiences related specifically to the pregnancy. PRAMS and PRAMS2 provide population-level information but do not provide any direct services to parents; however, the surveys provide valuable data on mothers, fathers, and pregnancy experiences that can inform future policy decisions.

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Nutrition Services Section (Texas WIC) offers the Peer Dad program, in which expectant fathers whose partners receive WIC services are paired with WIC-trained male peer mentors. Peer Dads currently work in local four agencies across Texas,[†] and each Peer Dad covers several clinics within the local agency. In addition to serving fathers that come to the WIC clinic, Peer Dads also do outreach at hospital neonatal intensive care units (NICU) and high schools.²⁸¹ The Peer Dads provide information and support, including one-on-one counseling, classes on the advantages and management of breastfeeding, and motivational materials, to help fathers encourage and support their partner in breastfeeding.²⁸² Peer Dads also provide information on car seat safety, safe sleep, child development, and shaken baby syndrome.²⁸³ Some Peer Dad programs provide additional services, including a phone hotline and a Daddy Bootcamp, in which participants learn about basic infant care and child development.²⁸⁴ Currently, the Peer Dad program does not reach fathers with older children.

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, CHILD SUPPORT DIVISION

The Office of Attorney General's Child Support Division (OAG) provides nine family programs, five of which primarily serve fathers (Table 8). The programs cover a range of issues including parenting skills, family violence, parental incarceration, father involvement, child support, and legal assistance.

The OAG's Child Support Division plans to incorporate fathers in their future family programs, and is considering using father-friendliness posters and updating the Maps for New Dads publication in collaboration with DSHS's WIC program. The OAG also sees potential for interagency collaboration for research and public awareness campaigns to highlight the important role that fathers play in raising their children and in co-parenting effectively with their child's other parent. These research and public awareness efforts will entail a closer coordination to reach professionals who serve young or at-risk families, especially community-based home visiting programs and fatherhood programs.

[†] As of the date of this report, there are four active Peer Dad programs in Cameron and Hidalgo counties, East Texas (Tyler), and San Antonio. The College Station agency plans to fill the Peer Dad position as soon as possible.

Table 8. Texas Office of the Attorney General, Child Support Division, Family Initiatives Programs

Program/Service	Description	Eligibility	Partners/ Contracting Org	Location
Parenting and Paternity Awareness (p.a.p.a.) Curriculum Classes	Statutorily required educational program for middle and high school students on the rights, responsibilities, and realities of parenting.	High school health course credit student	N/A	Statewide
Family Violence Education	Collaboration with the Texas Council on Family Violence and community advocacy programs across the state in an effort to support safe access to child support services for survivors of family violence.	Child support customers who disclose concerns with safety (family violence disclosure)	Texas Council on Family Violence (grant contract)	Statewide; special court-based collaboration in Denton and Williamson counties
Texas Start Smart	Grant funded project to apply behavioral economics principles and a rapid cycle evaluation method to diagnosing, designing, testing, and evaluating behavioral economics informed interventions.	Random assignment into treatment group at participating pilot site locations	Section 1115 demonstration grant with the Office of Child Support Enforcement	Paris/Tyler, Dallas, El Paso and Amarillo
Education Outreach to Justice-Involved Parents	Provides incarcerated, recently released and paroled parents with information about paternity establishment, child support compliance and modification processes.	Currently or formerly incarcerated parents	Texas Department of Criminal Justice and Federal Bureau of Prison reentry coordinators and prison facility staff	Statewide; strong collaboration in El Paso, Houston, and Corpus Christi
Promoting Father Involvement	Father engagement and paternity establishment training and resources for the HHSC Nurse Family Partnership and Home Visiting programs, the Texas WIC program, school-based teen parent programs, and local community and faith-based parent education programs.	Not applicable	HHSC WIC, PEI, school districts; community-based organizations	Statewide

Program/Service	Description	Eligibility	Partners/ Contracting Org	Location
NCP Choices	Partnership between OAG-CSD and the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) linking IV-D courts, OAG child support, and local workforce development boards. Ties employment services to court-imposed sanctions. Provides employment services and enhanced child support compliance monitoring services for unemployed or underemployed noncustodial parents who owe child support. Services include career planning and counseling, job search assistance, work clothing, transportation, and GED or ESL classes. In some areas, it also includes parenting classes.	Noncustodial parent must: have a full service child support case; be in front of the court on non-payment of support contempt charges or establishing a first-time obligation; have a social security number and be legally eligible to work in the US	TWC, 21 out of 28 Workforce Development Boards, Title IV-D courts	21 out of 28 Workforce Development Board areas
Access & Visitation Direct Service Providers	Provide visitation services for noncustodial parents, shared parenting education, and information regarding child custody, conservatorship, and possession order issues. Grantees include community and faith-based organizations and county domestic relations offices (DROs).	Noncustodial parents	Harris County, El Paso County, Bexar County, and Tarrant County domestic relation offices (DROs); New Day Services (Fort Worth); Family Ties (Waller); American Family Law Center (Houston)	El Paso, San Antonio, Houston, Fort Worth, Waller
Access & Visitation Hotline	Provides legal education, assistance, and resources to parents in the IV-D program with shared parenting, paternity, or child support issues.	Noncustodial parents in the IV-D program	Legal Aid of Northwest Texas	Statewide
Parenting Order Legal Line	A collaborative project of the OAG and the Texas Access to Justice Foundation. Provides unbundled legal services and telephone settlement conferences to help noncustodial parents resolve access and visitation conflicts.	Noncustodial parents who meet the financial eligibility threshold	Supreme Court of Texas, Texas Access to Justice Foundation, Texas Legal Services Center	Statewide

Source: Child & Family Research Partnership, State Agency Fatherhood Questionnaire 2017.

TEXAS JUVENILE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT

The Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD) seeks to transform young lives and create safer communities through the protection and education of youth about the discipline, value, and work ethic necessary to become productive citizens.²⁸⁵ Recognizing that many of the youth in its custody are also fathers or fathers-to-be, TJJD has offered Parenting and Paternity Awareness (p.a.p.a.) classes in its state-operated facilities since 2010 as a method to prepare young fathers for reentry.²⁸⁶ P.a.p.a. is an educational curriculum created by the Office of the Attorney General Child Support Division (OAG) designed to increase secondary school students and young adults' understanding of what it takes to be a responsible and dependable father, including basic knowledge of paternity and child support laws, skills for healthy relationships, the financial implications of fatherhood, the benefits of father involvement and stability, and relationship violence prevention.²⁸⁷

TJJD reported that its p.a.p.a. classes have the capacity to serve up to ten fathers per semester. Classes are open to all youth, but priority is given to those who are expecting or have a child. TJJD plans to continue working with fathers through a hands-on parenting class that uses the *Just Beginnings* curriculum to engage both the parents and children in attendance. TJJD sees this curriculum as an opportunity to address the gap in services that does not allow fathers to interact and bond with their children.

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION SERVICE

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, a statewide educational agency that partners with the nationwide Cooperative Extension System (CES) of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and Texas county governments, developed the Fathers Reading Every Day (FRED) program to encourage fathers and father-figures to read to their children daily.²⁸⁸ As part of the four-week program, fathers receive a packet with a program introduction, a list of recommended books, tips for reading aloud, and a reading log to record the number of books and amount of time they spend reading aloud with their child(ren). At the end of the program, fathers turn in the reading log and complete an exit survey; fathers and their children are also invited to attend a party to celebrate their completion of the FRED program.²⁸⁹ The FRED program is offered in several counties across the state; since 2002, over 6,000 fathers and children in 77 Texas counties have participated in the FRED program.²⁹⁰ The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service also offers free online parenting courses; however, most are geared towards military families, family caregivers, or families with additional health needs, such as a disability or chronic illness, and none deals specifically with fatherhood.²⁹¹ It also received a Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education grant from the Administration for Children and Families in 2015.²⁹²

Inter-Agency Efforts

As part of the state's larger efforts to support fathers, build knowledge, and raise awareness of the state of fatherhood programs in Texas, PEI and CFRP co-hosted annual Texas Fatherhood Summits in 2016 and 2017. Additionally, CFRP and PEI continue to convene stakeholders from numerous Texas state agencies on a quarterly basis to coordinate efforts around fatherhood, and build cross-agency collaboration.

TEXAS FATHERHOOD SUMMIT 2016: BUILDING THE EVIDENCE BASE FOR FATHERHOOD PROGRAMS

The first Texas Fatherhood Summit, held on February 3, 2016, brought together almost 200 researchers, policymakers, and practitioners in the field of fatherhood from more than 124 organizations to exchange ideas and assess the state of fatherhood programs and research throughout the country. The Texas Fatherhood Summit had two major goals: 1) to review the current state of fatherhood research and programming; and 2) to facilitate dialogue among stakeholders at the federal, state, and local levels with others dedicated to improving fathers' participation in the lives of their children. CFRP's Post-Summit Assessment shares information about the summit sessions, in addition to feedback received from the post-summit surveys.²⁹³

The primary takeaways from the first Texas Fatherhood Summit included: recognizing that the traditional view of fathers as financial providers, and not as nurturers, has impeded efforts to increase positive father involvement; and needing to find ways to include fathers in policies and programs aimed at improving father involvement, co-parenting, and economic stability. Many attendees noted that the summit was the largest convening of fatherhood experts they had ever participated in. The summit's unique breadth of experts allowed for exploration of national research studies, state efforts to engage fathers, and lessons from service providers in the field. Many attendees requested additional time for networking with their colleagues at the next summit—feedback that set the stage for planning the second Texas Fatherhood Summit, which focused on how to improve and strengthen services for fathers.

TEXAS FATHERHOOD SUMMIT 2017: STRENGTHENING SERVICES TO SUPPORT FATHERS

The second Texas Fatherhood Summit was held on March 24, 2017, and brought together more than 300 service providers, researchers, advocates, and representatives from government and state agencies, and community nonprofits from more than 140 organizations. The goals of the second summit were to: 1) provide a better understanding of the fathers participating in programs—why they participate, what they gain, and how to get them to programs; and 2) provide attendees with an opportunity to learn what programs are available across the state and network with one another. The summit was designed to encourage attendees to think about and apply the discussions and lessons learned to their own work, aided by a workbook they completed during the summit sessions.

The second Texas Fatherhood Summit provided an opportunity to build on the momentum from the first Texas Fatherhood Summit. At the conference, participants were able to focus on how their programs and organizations could best serve fathers at the personal or programmatic level. Attendees noted that they appreciated hearing directly from fathers through videos of EFFECT participants describing their families and their participation in the EFFECT Program. Attendees also shared the desire to hear from the co-parents and children of the fathers they served as well. Respondents unanimously expressed the desire to continue gathering for a summit. For the future, summit participants highlighted the need for broadening the scope of the summit beyond fatherhood programs to both recognize and address the systems and structural challenges, such as poor education, under- or unemployment, and incarceration, that impact fathers and their families.

TEXAS FATHERHOOD INTERAGENCY COUNCIL

Beginning in January 2016, CFRP and PEI worked together to convene the Texas Fatherhood Interagency Council (TFIC), with the goal of raising awareness of fathers' roles and impacts on family wellbeing, identifying ways to better support fathers, and building connections and capacity for cross-agency collaboration. The TFIC is made up of fatherhood stakeholders across six Texas state agencies, including DFPS, the Office of the Attorney General (OAG), and the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC). TFIC members meet on a periodic basis to connect and collaborate in their efforts to support fathers and their families. TFIC members also worked together to identify the needs of fathers in their communities and find ways to meet these needs.

TFIC meetings provide agencies with the information and impetus to make concrete changes to support fathers. The DFPS Office of Volunteer and Community Engagement, which manages community engagement programs for Child Protective Services (CPS) and Adult Protective Services (APS), created a fatherhood community engagement initiative as a result of its participation in the TFIC. In addition, the TFIC created an avenue for HHSC to ask for members' contributions to its state plan on family violence, to make the plan more inclusive of fathers. The TFIC has also sparked conversations about how in-hospital education for fathers can be connected with family violence interventions and OAG paternity establishment efforts.

The TFIC is an ongoing effort on the part of state agencies. Its members continue to learn more about the needs of fathers and develop strategies for collaboration among agencies to better serve fathers and their families.

Local Level

CFRP canvassed federal, state, and county-level resources available online to obtain information about the fatherhood programs being implemented in Texas. Across the state, more than 70 programs exist to promote father involvement and provide fathers with the tools for healthy, effective parenting. Funded mostly through local, state, or federal grants, and operated by nonprofits and other local organizations, these programs mostly operate at the

local level, serving just one city or county, with only a handful operating in multiple counties. These initiatives vary in their program goals, emphasis, requirements, reach, and the rigor of their evidence base. Although many programs target similar populations of fathers and may even operate in the same communities, programs often work in isolation from one another and from larger systemic efforts to provide services or promote awareness about responsible fatherhood. These programs could benefit from the creation of a larger state or regional network for programs, which could provide them with systematic support and allow them to share their knowledge and resources with one another. Moreover, programs are concentrated in larger urban centers: about two-thirds of the programs we identified are located in Austin, Dallas, El Paso, Fort Worth, Houston, or San Antonio. Many programs are for both mothers and fathers, although about half of the programs we identified are directed specifically to fathers.

A preliminary inventory of initiatives in Texas that aim to increase and improve fathers' involvement with their children is presented in Appendix C. The programs on this list are ones for which CFRP was able to locate information through online research. There may be other programs that are not included on this list, because we were unable to find information about them. This list is not intended to be conclusive; rather, it is a living document which can be updated to reflect the programs currently offered to fathers and their families. Creating a publicly-accessible clearinghouse would allow organizations to share information about the programs they offer and provide updates on their programs as necessary. A clearinghouse would also allow fathers to more easily identify the resources available in their area.

The preliminary inventory in Appendix C identifies the organization—the nonprofit or government entity—that operates the program and the county or city in which the services are available. Each program's funding source is specified, and the table is color-coded to indicate programs that are funded by the same source: blue for federal funding, purple for state funding, and orange for community, non-profit, or unknown funding sources. The services offered are described in the *Program Features* column. *Program Focus* identifies the primary objective(s) of the program, based on the following categories: parenting skills, co-parenting, healthy relationships, father engagement, financial stability, employment, child abuse prevention, anger/stress management, incarceration/reentry support, child support, paternity establishment, job readiness, domestic violence, and training and support. Finally, if there are any eligibility requirements to participate in the program, they are defined in the last column.

Currently, efforts to serve Texas fathers through fatherhood programs are disjointed in terms of the populations they serve, the rigor of their evidence base, and the locations where they are held. Programs are concentrated in urban centers, and many do not offer the “fathers-only” approach so valued by EFFECT fathers. Programs also offer different focuses and services, including employment assistance or parenting skills. As a result, fathers may access programs that only meet some of their needs. Moreover, many fathers across the state lack access to fatherhood programs entirely.

In Tarrant County and San Antonio, stakeholders have organized to provide more coordinated services to fathers. Founded in 2000 as the Fatherhood Initiative, the Fatherhood Coalition of Tarrant County is a partnership between organizations and businesses that works to increase awareness and recognition of the importance of responsible fatherhood, and provides assistance to organizations that work with fathers.²⁹⁴ Members include the representatives from state and local government such as the Fort Worth Independent School District, the Tarrant County Public Health (TCPH), the Texas Department of Criminal Justice-Parole Division, and Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County, as well as nonprofit organizations such as Catholic Charities, Safe City Commission, Early Childhood Matters, and NewDay Services, a PEI Fatherhood EFFECT contractor.²⁹⁵ In 2015, the Fatherhood Coalition of Tarrant County released the “Dad’s Pocket Resource Guide,” which includes a directory of service providers in the area, in addition to information about abuse indicators and baby necessities.²⁹⁶

In San Antonio, Native American and Latino/Chicano fathers organized the San Antonio Fatherhood Campaign (SAFC) in 2004, with support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation Fatherhood Initiative and Making Connections-San Antonio.²⁹⁷ The SAFC is an initiative of the American Indians in Texas at the Spanish Colonial Mission (AIT-SCM), a nonprofit organization that provides services and programs to address the needs of the indigenous communities in San Antonio.²⁹⁸ The SAFC promotes responsible fatherhood by offering parenting and fatherhood classes, mentorship, support groups, and other services.²⁹⁹ It works with a variety of partners, including the National Compadres Network, the Children’s Shelter, and the Bexar County Sheriff’s Office.³⁰⁰

Summary

Texas is committed to serving fathers and their families through an array of programs including ones operated by state agencies and others that are the product of local initiatives and efforts. Several divisions within the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) including PEI and Child Protective Services (CPS) have launched programs specific to fathers. The Department of State Health Services (DSHS), the Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD), and the Office of the Attorney General Child Support Division have also led the way in providing supports for fathers. Texas also recognizes the importance of cross-agency coordination and collaboration for meeting fathers’ varying needs and brings stakeholders together through interagency meetings and annual Texas Fatherhood Summits.

Despite these efforts, much more remains to be done to fully meet the needs of the most vulnerable fathers and families in Texas. We review the efforts of other states to meet these needs in the next chapter to highlight what innovative strategies Texas may be able to incorporate into a comprehensive plan for supporting fathers.

CHAPTER 5: WHAT TEXAS CAN LEARN FROM OTHERS

In this chapter, CFRP provides an overview of the broad initiatives, policies, and programs that are being implemented at the national level and in other states to support fathers and be more inclusive of the entire family. We highlight the barriers to getting fathers involved in programs, and provide examples of programmatic efforts to overcome these barriers. We also show how resistant family policies have been to the changes in American families, and how a few states are beginning to implement policies that are responsive to the changing family. These findings are incorporated into a comprehensive plan for serving fathers and families in Texas in the next chapter.

Federal Fatherhood Efforts

As described in Chapter 1, promoting and supporting responsible fatherhood became a federal priority in the 1990s. During the Clinton, Bush, and Obama administrations, both Congress and the Executive branch took multiple actions to support responsible fatherhood programs and policies, which are described below.³⁰¹

RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD PROGRAMS AND EVALUATIONS

As part of the federal welfare reform of 1996, Congress recognized the need to promote responsible fatherhood as a way to support child wellbeing.³⁰² During the 106th Congress (1999-2000), Congress provided funding to the National Fatherhood Initiative (NFI), a non-profit organization that works with government agencies, the military, corrections departments, and community organizations to create fatherhood programs.³⁰³ Concurrently, Congress also provided funding to evaluate the Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization's fatherhood program, signaling the federal government's commitment to researching and assessing the impact of responsible fatherhood programs.³⁰⁴ Although Presidents Clinton, Bush, and Obama included funding for responsible fatherhood programs in each of their budgets, it was not until the 109th Congress of 2005-2006 that the Healthy Marriage Promotion and Responsible Fatherhood (HMPRF) grants program was created and funded under the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 beginning in FY2006 and continuing through FY2010.³⁰⁵ The program was subsequently reauthorized under the Claims Resolution Act of 2010.³⁰⁶ The HMPRF programs support healthy marriage, responsible parenting, and economic stability activities, and are funded through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration of Children and Families' (ACF) Office of Family Assistance (OFA).³⁰⁷ The HMPRF programs have continued to receive funds through FY2016.³⁰⁸ Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education grantees, the New Pathways for Fathers and Families grantees, and Responsible Fatherhood Opportunities for Reentry and Mobility (ReFORM) grantees are currently funded from FY2015 through FY2020.³⁰⁹

The federal government also provides funding to further the knowledge and research base of responsible fatherhood. OFA funds the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse (NRFC), which shares research on responsible fatherhood and effective practices to support fathers and

responsible fatherhood program providers. NRFC relies on multiple avenues to share information including: the fatherhood.gov website, media campaigns, social media, virtual trainings, outreach and presentations at events, written products to advance the fields of responsible fatherhood research and practice, and a National Call Center for fathers and responsible fatherhood practitioners.³¹⁰ In addition, the ACF's Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) is implementing several research and evaluation projects, including the Building Bridges and Bonds (B3), the Parents and Children Together (PaCT) Responsible Fatherhood Evaluation, the Fatherhood and Marriage Local Evaluation and Cross-Site (FaMLE Cross-Site) project, and the Ex-Prisoner Reentry Strategies Study, all of which partner with Responsible Fatherhood programs.³¹¹ OPRE also awards grants to fund research on Healthy Marriage/Responsible Fatherhood, and provides information on the curricula used by Healthy Marriage/Responsible Fatherhood grantees through its Strengthening Families Curriculum Guide.³¹² To promote rigorous evaluation, strengthen the field of fatherhood research, and share information on effective fatherhood research and evaluation practices, OPRE funded the Fatherhood Research and Practice Network (FRPN).³¹³ FRPN provides grants to study responsible fatherhood programs, develops and shares measurement instruments for use in fatherhood program evaluations, and provides training and technical assistance to practitioners and researchers through webinars, written documents, and its Researcher and Practitioner Forum.³¹⁴

THE FEDERAL RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD WORKING GROUP

The Obama administration established the federal Responsible Fatherhood Working Group to coordinate federal efforts to support responsible fatherhood programs and father engagement.³¹⁵ Led by the Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships, the Office of Public Engagement, and the Domestic Policy Council, the group consists of members from the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Justices, Labor, and Veterans Affairs, as well as the Corporation for National and Community Service and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. There are a range of fatherhood initiatives within each department that all share the common goal of supporting responsible fatherhood and fathers in the community. Fatherhood initiatives include, among others, promoting fatherhood in the workplace through work-family balance solutions, equipping fathers to participate in the education and financial security for their children through adult literacy programs, and ensuring successful reentry after incarceration through responsible fatherhood programs.³¹⁶ Currently, no information is available on the Trump administration's plans to support responsible fatherhood efforts.

Fatherhood Initiatives in Other States

One of the primary benefits of participating in the EFFECT Program for fathers is the connections these programs facilitate between fathers and other community resources. These connections are particularly salient given fathers' high levels of needs, as described previously. The limited availability of resources in many communities and various eligibility requirements can be barriers to fathers accessing resources they need. Many states, including Texas,

recognize the needs fathers have and the barriers to meeting those needs, and are investing in comprehensive supports for fathers. These efforts are summarized below.

STATE INITIATIVES

Acknowledging the gap in comprehensive fatherhood programming, some states have developed broad state-led initiatives to address some of the systematic challenges that fathers and fatherhood programming face. A pioneer of this approach is the John S. Martinez Fatherhood Initiative of Connecticut, led by the Connecticut Department of Social Services. Established in 1999 by bipartisan legislation, the broad-based, multi-agency, statewide program provides many services common to fatherhood programming, including intensive case management, economic stability assistance, group education, and counseling sessions. A key aspect of the Initiative is a certification process for fatherhood programs in the state, which ensures consistency and quality of service delivery to low-income, noncustodial fathers and their families, and recognizes fatherhood programs that have demonstrated exemplary practice.³¹⁷ The process also allows certified fatherhood programs to offer the State-Owed Arrearage Adjustment Program for eligible participants.³¹⁸

Connecticut's Initiative has established a quasi-experimental design system to evaluate the fatherhood programs it helps to coordinate.³¹⁹ The evaluation collected demographic information on the almost 4,000 participants who enrolled in the Promoting Fatherhood Project from 2006 to 2011.³²⁰ The evaluation found that fathers in the program reported needing assistance in education, job training, housing, outstanding child support, parenting time, co-parenting, and parenting skills. The Promoting Fatherhood Project was encouraged to partner with the Department of Education, Department of Labor, and Department of Corrections, the State Department of Social Services, and the Connecticut Court Support Services Division to provide services to fathers. The evaluation also recommended that the Promoting Fatherhood Project reach out to the Departments of Transportation, Motor Vehicles, and Public Health to improve fathers' access to services, such as reliable transportation, documentation such as drivers' licenses or birth certificates, and physical and mental health treatment.³²¹

Another noteworthy state-led initiative is the Ohio Commission on Fatherhood (OCF), established in 1999. Commissioners of the OCF include representatives from different state agencies, the Ohio Governor's designee, bipartisan members of the Ohio House and Senate, and exemplary citizens chosen based on their knowledge and experience working in the field of fatherhood. Housed in the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, the OCF strives to support low-income fathers through a four-strategy approach: funding fatherhood programs, including developing pilot programs and funding community-based initiatives; training professionals on how to promote responsible fatherhood; engaging in the community; and developing policy recommendations to further the field of fatherhood. This multidimensional, broad-based framework helps promote father engagement across all levels of society and strategically tackle the diverse barriers that fathers face as they try to become better parents, partners, and providers by providing supports ranging from employment skills to low-income,

noncustodial fathers, to reentry services for fathers recently released from incarceration.³²² The OCF helps coordinate a variety of programs and events to promote father engagement. One example is its County Fatherhood Initiative, which offers resources to county leadership in the state, such as training for conducting needs and asset assessments, planning for fatherhood summits, assistance for implementing community action plans, and grant money to begin or continue fatherhood programs in the community.³²³ Additionally, the OCF provides funding for organizations to host father-child events during Responsible Fatherhood Month in June, and hosts an annual Fatherhood Summit each year to more than 300 fatherhood and family-service practitioners, county and state agency staff, and community members.³²⁴

Similar to Ohio, Hawaii established a State Commission on Fatherhood (COF) in 2003. The Commission provides advisory services to state agencies, as well as recommendations for laws, programs, and policies that target children and families.³²⁵ In addition to serving as a clearinghouse and coordinating body for all government and nongovernmental activities and information around responsible fatherhood, the Commission promotes and financially supports programs for fathers, raises public awareness about the importance of father involvement, recognizes outstanding fathers and fatherhood programs in the state, and identifies and supports best practices in father involvement. The COF collaborates with the University of Hawaii Center on the Family to produce the State of Fathers in the State of Hawaii, a report that provides a snapshot of the fatherhood landscape in Hawaii, and identifies the differences and similarities between fathers in Hawaii and the mainland.³²⁶ Although it is administratively housed within the Department of Human Services, the eight commissioners in the COF are all volunteers; their backgrounds range from working in the corrections system to social work to religious institutions.³²⁷

The Illinois Council on Responsible Fatherhood (ICRF) was founded by the Illinois State Legislature in 2003.³²⁸ To accomplish its mission of increasing the number of children with involved and responsible fathers, the ICRF works in four main areas: raising awareness of the impacts of father absence; providing state agencies and service providers with resources for promoting responsible fatherhood; promoting cultural change within state agencies and service providers to acknowledge fathers as parents; and advocating for programs and policies that encourage positive father involvement.³²⁹ The ICRF hosts an annual symposium for fathers and faith and community leaders to increase public awareness of the importance of father involvement; it also shares resources for fathers and fatherhood organizations in Illinois on its website.³³⁰ The ICRF provides guidance and suggestions on legislation and policy pertaining to fathers, including the new Voluntary Acknowledgment of Paternity Form, and child support debt forgiveness.³³¹ It also publishes annual reports outlining its yearly goals, achievements, and plans for the following year.³³²

In 2009, the Pennsylvania State Roundtable identified father involvement in child dependency matters as a priority and created the Fatherhood Engagement Workgroup. The Workgroup's vision is that positive connections between children and their fathers are achieved and

nurtured by prompt identification, outreach, and engagement in services that recognize fathers' unique strengths and are tailored to meet each father's individual needs.³³³ The group examines current levels of father involvement in child dependency matters, studies state and national best practices, and recommends specific action items to enhance father engagement, including the need for case planning and services to provide equal effort to support both mothers and fathers, planning meetings and court hearings that involve fathers, and assessing and developing father-friendly services and practices.³³⁴

In addition to promoting fatherhood broadly, states also provide direct services to fathers in a variety of settings. To support teen parents, similar to Texas' p.a.p.a. curriculum, New Mexico's state-funded GRADS program provides an in-school curriculum that covers prenatal care, parenting, child development, healthy relationships and support systems, and economic independence.³³⁵ Administered by the New Mexico Public Education Department, the GRADS program has expanded since its creation in 1989 to include Fatherhood Programs, on-site child care centers, and career readiness services.³³⁶ The Healthy Montana Teen Parent Program works with teen parents in community-based organizations and high schools, providing family support services, health service referrals, parenting education, and father involvement and other support services.³³⁷

Although most states provide reentry services and training for incarcerated or recently released parents, about half of states also offer parenting classes at one or more correctional facilities through their Departments of Corrections with partners in the state. States providing parenting programs for incarcerated fathers include Alabama,³³⁸ Alaska,³³⁹ Colorado,³⁴⁰ Idaho,³⁴¹ Kansas,³⁴² Kentucky,³⁴³ Louisiana,³⁴⁴ Maine,³⁴⁵ Nebraska,³⁴⁶ New Jersey,³⁴⁷ New Hampshire,³⁴⁸ North Dakota,³⁴⁹ Pennsylvania,³⁵⁰ Rhode Island,³⁵¹ South Carolina,³⁵² Utah,³⁵³ Virginia,³⁵⁴ Washington State,³⁵⁵ Washington D.C.,³⁵⁶ and West Virginia.³⁵⁷ For example, New Hampshire offers an 18-hour parenting program based on the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension's Family Focus Curriculum at all state prisons, as well as parenting support groups, healthy relationship classes, seminars, and other resources.³⁵⁸ In Nebraska, the Department of Correctional Services (NDCS) is a self-operating school district. In addition to Adult Basic Education (ABE), Adult Secondary Education (ASE), and vocational training, the NDCS offers relationship, life skills, and parenting programs for inmates.³⁵⁹ Facilities in Kansas choose to offer either the InsideOut or Active Parenting Now programs, and can combine them with Play and Learn classes, in which inmates can apply the skills from the curricula with their children in a supervised setting.³⁶⁰ Washington has implemented two Parenting Sentencing Alternatives to keep nonviolent offenders with minor children out of prison: the Family and Offender Sentencing Alternative (FOSA), in which offenders' sentences are waived and they are placed under community supervision, and the Community Parenting Alternative (CPA), a partial confinement program in which offenders remain under electronic monitoring surveillance.³⁶¹ These two programs are in addition to Washington's Strength in Families program, which is a parenting, relationship, and employment readiness program for soon-to-be-released prisoners.

States also work with families involved in their child welfare systems, providing parent education and support services. Very few of these states, however, specifically reach out to fathers involved in the system. Similar to Texas' Child Protective Services' (CPS) Responsible Fathering Initiative, Indiana's Department of Child Services (DCS) sets an example of how to work with fathers.³⁶² DCS partners with local organizations in each region as part of its Father Engagement Program. Fathers of children with Informal Adjustments (IA), or children classified as a Child in Need of Services (CHIN) or Juvenile Delinquent/Juvenile Status (JD/JS) are referred to a partner organization by their DCS case manager. The program helps fathers navigate the DCS system, increase their contact with their child(ren), and connect to support services to strengthen the family. Father Engagement Services staff also serve as advocates for fathers who must appear in court on behalf of their child(ren).³⁶³

LOCAL INITIATIVES

A handful of cities and counties also have taken the initiative to develop innovative fatherhood programming in their jurisdictions.

Under Mayor Bloomberg, New York City began NYC Dads, the Mayor's Fatherhood Initiative. Started in 2010, the citywide multi-agency initiative includes 14 agencies, which offer programs that support father involvement ranging from family reunification programs for incarcerated fathers to employment programs at housing authorities.³⁶⁴ NYC Dads' website not only offers information on fatherhood programs and services, including an extensive list on employment and training resources, but it also lists free or low-cost activities for children and their fathers, as well as book recommendations.³⁶⁵ Resources remain available on the initiative's website, although it appears that the initiative has stalled under the current mayoral administration.

Counties across the country have taken a variety of approaches to support fathers. For example, counties in California created the FIRST 5 Commission in 1998 to support children and families at the county level during the first five years of life. FIRST 5 of San Mateo County and FIRST 5 of Santa Clara County have had success in providing resources and implementing programming specifically for fathers through the FIRST 5 framework. Although FIRST 5 is a state-level initiative, the organization and execution of its programming is delegated to the counties' locally appointed commissions. In 2007, the FIRST 5 of Santa Clara County Commission joined forces with the Mexican American Community Services Agency to develop the Fatherhood/Male Collaborative, which seeks to develop programs and services that help fathers become positive influences for their families and children, including parenting workshops, job training and education, and child visitation and child support assistance.³⁶⁶ FIRST 5 of San Mateo County has implemented a Dad's Workgroup, which consists of representatives from across state and county agencies to determine fatherhood engagement strategies for at-risk fathers, as well as a "Daddy's Tool Bag" DVD that aims to provide fathers with the support and confidence to develop secure attachment with their young children.³⁶⁷

In Ohio, the Cuyahoga County Fatherhood Initiative (CCFI) hosts a variety of activities to promote father involvement for children of all ages. In addition to public awareness campaigns, the CCFI funds a 211 Fatherhood line, a variety of parenting classes and workshops for fathers and expectant fathers, workforce training programs, and supervised visitation, custody, and parenting time programs, among others.³⁶⁸

PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS & PARTNERSHIPS

The field of fatherhood has seen an increase in organizations that are dedicated to building the profession of fatherhood practitioners and service providers who assist fathers and families in their communities by providing training and networking opportunities. One such organization is the Colorado Practitioner Network for Fathers & Families (CPNFF), which began in 1996 to support father involvement and responsible fatherhood in Colorado. Currently housed in Families First, CPNFF comprises a leadership team, work teams, task forces, and a forum. CPNFF operates across the state to promote the establishment of fatherhood programs; provide opportunities for networking, information-sharing, and training for fatherhood professionals, service providers, and stakeholders; and support community-based programming and services.³⁶⁹

Ohio has also recognized the value of a fatherhood practitioner network. The Ohio Practitioners' Network for Fathers and Families (OPNFF) formed in 2003 to advance a fatherhood and family agenda through a partnership with public agencies, grassroots faith and community organizations, and local and state government entities. With more than 700 organizational members, OPNFF's influence spans across the entire state of Ohio, in both urban and rural areas, to provide networking, training, resources, policy research, advocacy, and other support to fatherhood professionals.³⁷⁰

The Minnesota Fathers & Families Network (MFFN) is an organization established to support practitioners and agencies on issues related to fathers and fatherhood in Minnesota. MFFN's vision is that healthy communities, healthy families, and healthy fathers each play an integral role in achievement of the others, and that these relationships should be promoted through informed practice, public policy, and system change. The network supports this mission by increasing the capacity and network of fatherhood professionals in the state, maintaining awareness of legislation and policy affecting fathers and families, and providing leadership and opportunities throughout Minnesota to advance fatherhood programming and services.³⁷¹

The Delaware Fatherhood and Family Coalition (DFFC) is an advocacy coalition that champions father involvement. The coalition works with state, faith-based, community, and grassroots organizations, as well as with parents and leaders to develop and implement a comprehensive approach to supporting father involvement. Its work includes building local capacity to provide fatherhood and relationship education, providing this education to fathers, increasing public awareness of the importance of father involvement, and promoting the fatherhood and relationship supports offered by DFCC members.³⁷²

NONPROFIT/COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS

Throughout the country, communities have formed collaborative networks and initiatives to have a greater impact on fatherhood by directly serving fathers. Nonprofit organizations, foundations, and health centers are collaborating—sometimes with state or local government—to promote father involvement, raise awareness of the importance of fathers, and provide direct services to fathers in their area.

Several collaboratives exist at the state level. In 1997, the Illinois Fatherhood Initiative (IFI) was founded to connect children and fathers through fathers' active engagement in the education of children, making it the first statewide, nonprofit fatherhood initiative in the United States. IFI uses strategic collaborations and alliances across private, nonprofit, and government sectors to address a variety of issues related to fatherhood, including the implementation of programs that inspire and equip men to become engaged with their children; to learn how to balance their careers and their families; and to create safe and secure learning environments for children. IFI also sponsors events, scholarships, and award programs related to fatherhood, such as its fatherhood essay contest, college internship initiative, and mentoring program that pairs adults with young men ranging from third grade to high school students.³⁷³

Illinois' Fathers for New Futures (FNF) hosts the Power of Fathers Symposium, a statewide collaborative of nonprofits that seeks to strengthen and support low-income minority fathers in developing relationships with their children, families, and communities.³⁷⁴ Among its programs, FNF provides job readiness training, parent education, case management, child support information, and additional services to young fathers and men trying to reconnect with their families.³⁷⁵ FNF also hosts a working group of practitioners, and research and policy experts that supports outcomes for children of noncustodial, African-American fathers.³⁷⁶

The Indiana Fatherhood Coalition (IFC) is a statewide resource for fathers that consists of organizations working to increase involvement of men—fathers, uncles, stepfathers, grandfathers, or other father figures—in the lives of children. The Coalition acts as an information portal for men to learn important ways to be better fathers, as well as sponsors or supports events and programming that contribute to the overall mission of IFC, such as the annual Indiana Dads Expo.³⁷⁷

The South Carolina Center for Fathers and Families, based in Columbia, South Carolina, supports six fatherhood programs in 12 communities throughout the state. The Center is an outgrowth of the fatherhood initiative "Reducing Poverty through Father Engagement," sponsored by the Sisters of Charity Foundation of South Carolina in 1997, as well as the public-private partnership between the Foundation and the South Carolina Department of Social Services. The Center's programming promotes father-friendly policies and practices to erase negative stereotypes of unmarried, low-income dads. The Center aims to enable and inform a larger field of fatherhood practitioners and decision-makers by sharing policies, practices, and lessons learned from its on-the-ground programming.³⁷⁸

The Washington State Fathers Network is a coalition of fathers with children who have special needs. The network seeks to connect the fathers with one another and with resources, information, and education to assist them in becoming more competent and compassionate caregivers for their children. The network's activities span a wide range, from chapter meetings across the state, to events such as the annual Fathers Conference or camping trips, to management and advocacy services to promote the interests and needs of fathers within the organization. The network is affiliated with a variety of other organizations that also provide services for fathers.³⁷⁹

The Fatherhood Task Force of South Florida offers a regional model by serving male family members, including fathers, grandfathers, and uncles, as well as men who serve as significant male role models for children. The Task Force operates through a partnership between agencies and organizations throughout South Florida. In addition to maintaining a clearinghouse of research on fatherhood, the Task Force also offers programming including Fathers in Education Day, Fathers in Action, and Advocacy Week, and workshops highlighting the importance of fathers for the social and emotional development in their children.³⁸⁰

Collaboratives in Milwaukee, Cleveland, Baltimore, and Indianapolis work at the metropolitan level. In Milwaukee, following a training session of community leaders by the National Fatherhood Initiative in 2005, the mayor and planning committee formed the Milwaukee Fatherhood Initiative (MFI). Among other initiatives, the MFI hosts an annual summit on fatherhood for fathers and responsible fatherhood stakeholders. Fathers who attend the summit workshops are eligible for a credit toward back child support owed to the state.³⁸¹

The Healthy Fathering Collaborative of Greater Cleveland (HFC) is a network of public and private agencies that aims to provide education, services, and support directly to fathers throughout the lifespan of fatherhood, from pre-conception and pregnancy to childbirth, early childhood, and parenting school-age children.³⁸² Member agencies provide four types of services: programs that help fathers address barriers that impact their involvement with their children; supportive services for fathers; fatherhood development programs; and father-child social/recreational event programs.³⁸³

In Baltimore, the Center for Urban Families sponsors the Baltimore Responsible Fatherhood Project (BRFP), which serves low-income fathers and communities to increase fathers' emotional and financial support of their families. BRFP delivers services through a comprehensive three-month cohort model of case management, support service referrals, and education workshops to increase child support awareness and management, improve parenting and healthy relationship skills, and increase job readiness and employability among its fathers.³⁸⁴

The Fathers and Families Center (FFC), a United Way of Central Indiana member agency in Indianapolis, serves fathers and expectant fathers through its federal, state, and locally supported initiatives that promote responsible fatherhood, increased child support, healthy marriage,

noncustodial father involvement, ex-offender reentry, and crime prevention. Originally developed by the Wishard Hospital's Social Work Department as a means to address the high single-parent birth rate and the invisibility of young fathers in the area, FFC now offers four areas of programming and services to its fathers: high school equivalency programs; workforce development; college and career programs; and strengthening families and strong fathers.³⁸⁵

Father Inclusiveness and Family-Centered Policies

In addition to large, comprehensive approaches to supporting fathers, states and communities can take small but meaningful steps to be more inclusive of the whole family, including fathers, in their programs and services. The strategies listed below are not exhaustive, but are meant to provide a range of ideas the state of Texas can consider to better coordinate and provide services for families.

In general, fathers participate in parenting and family services at lower rates than mothers. For example, fewer than 50 percent of eligible fathers participate in Early Head Start,³⁸⁶ and fewer than 30 percent of fathers participated in child maltreatment prevention programs.³⁸⁷ Although fathers may want to take part or be involved in parenting programs or in the programs their children and co-parents take part in, fathers often face many barriers that make it difficult to participate, including difficulty in asking for help because of gender norms and distrust in social service programs. Additionally, biases in the design of parenting interventions and programs often marginalize fathers, even if unintentionally.³⁸⁸

Biases can exist at the institutional level (referring to the father-friendliness of program policies, recruitment, and support), the professional level (staff capabilities and biases), the content level (content relevance for fathers and mothers), and the resource level (availability of resources to effectively assess father friendliness and implement changes).³⁸⁹ Efforts to increase fathers' participation must address barriers to fathers' participation, as well as adopt strategies to make fathers not only feel welcome, but expected in family services and programming.

Father inclusiveness is the planning, development, and delivery of fatherhood policies and services that incorporate the social needs of fathers and that acknowledge the balance fathers must find between their families' needs and their own.³⁹⁰ A number of benefits arise from father-inclusive programming, such as greater satisfaction in fathers' parenting skills by both fathers and mothers; healthier behavior, better school readiness, and increased self-perception in children; and improved communication skills, sensitivity to children, parenting attitudes, and knowledge about child development by fathers.³⁹¹ The next section describes the barriers to involving fathers in programming as well as ongoing efforts to overcome these barriers and include fathers in services and programs serving children and families.

BARRIERS TO FATHER INVOLVEMENT IN PROGRAMMING

Fathers face several barriers to becoming involved in programs and services for their children and families. For the growing number of nonresidential fathers, maintaining a constant presence in their children's lives is already a challenge.³⁹² In addition, many fathers lack a father figure who modeled the modern conceptualization of father as equal and active co-parent on which to base their own behavior.³⁹³ This section provides insight into additional challenges fathers face to participating in family programming.

Fathers may be less likely to seek help and support

Research indicates that men are much less likely than women to seek help for their own physical or mental health needs.³⁹⁴ This finding is consistent for men across different ethnicities and races, as well as different ages. A study of Head Start fathers found that many fathers were unwilling to admit that they needed help at all, and demonstrated a preference for doing things on their own, rather than seeking assistance from outside of the home.³⁹⁵ Some men may view asking for help as an admission of failure, and this feeling could conflict with men's sense of masculinity and identity.³⁹⁶

Fathers may perceive social services to be unwelcoming to men

Some fathers may be willing to ask for help or want to participate in family programming, but do not act on their desires because they feel unwelcome in social services or family programs. Fathers may perceive child and family services and programming to be oriented toward mothers only, to the exclusion of fathers.³⁹⁷ Fathers' beliefs that programs are for mothers are often reinforced by staff behaviors and attitudes toward fathers. Most staff are female, and often are not trained to work with men and fathers.³⁹⁸ Staff may also demonstrate or act on biases against men and their capacity to be good parents.³⁹⁹ Research in child protective services has found that caseworkers reach out to mothers more than fathers and perceive that outreach to mothers is more productive than outreach to fathers.⁴⁰⁰ In addition, caseworkers tend to view fathers' problems as less important than those of mothers and either treat fathers with suspicion, or as an "afterthought".⁴⁰¹ As a result, fathers may feel unwelcome or marginalized in child and family programs.

Fathers do not trust social systems and programs

Beyond feeling ostracized, some fathers may believe that social or family programs are actively working against them; consequently, they do not trust that these systems will help them.⁴⁰² Caseworkers within the child welfare system believed that fathers' avoided services because they feared consequences such as being found delinquent on child support with the attendant effects, such as losing their drivers' license or being incarcerated.⁴⁰³ Fathers may show distrust even for programs that are explicitly supportive in nature: for example, EFFECT fathers mentioned being wary of the program at first and believing that it was a trap to make them pay child support or to punish them.⁴⁰⁴

Mothers may exclude or limit fathers' involvement in programs

Maternal gatekeeping may also play a role in keeping fathers less involved or active in child and family services.⁴⁰⁵ In many cases maternal gatekeeping is based on real concerns about fathers' involvement. For example, mothers limit the interaction of fathers who they perceive as threats to their children because of fathers' involvement in crime, substance abuse, or likelihood of child abuse or neglect.⁴⁰⁶ Service providers should ensure that family members are kept safe during services.

In some cases, however, maternal gatekeeping because they believe that men are less capable of providing adequate care, or that women have the primary responsibility of taking care of matters regarding the home and family.⁴⁰⁷ In some cases, mothers limit fathers' involvement with their children to bolster their own maternal identity.⁴⁰⁸ As a result, mothers may limit fathers' involvement with their children, despite fathers' ability and desire to take on a more active role.

Parents face practical barriers to involvement

Fathers commonly cite their work as a barrier to their participation in family services and programming, because home visits or program services are often scheduled during the traditional work day.⁴⁰⁹ Moreover, despite expanding their involvement with their children to include caretaking, many fathers continue to strongly identify with the responsibility of providing for their family well.⁴¹⁰ These fathers may struggle with adjusting their schedules or asking for time off, given that these behaviors may be perceived as undermining the breadwinner role.⁴¹¹ However, because high numbers of both mothers and fathers work outside the home, this barrier is salient for both parents.

Nonresident parents face additional barriers to involvement

Most programs direct correspondence and communication to the parent with whom the child lives. As a result, nonresident parents often do not receive information about their child's participation in a program, and are unaware of opportunities for their involvement. Nonresident parents may use parenting time plans to structure their time with their child; when the nonresident parent's time with the child does not coincide with programming, nonresident parents miss opportunities for participation.

INCREASING FATHER INCLUSION IN PROGRAMS

Organizations can take many steps to become more family-friendly and better engage both parents in their services and programs. Several examples of programmatic strategies that organizations can adopt to become more father-inclusive are highlighted below.

Commit to father- and family-inclusion as an organizational goal

To successfully engage fathers, organizations and programs must fully commit to adopting father- and family-inclusive policies. Leadership should signal that working with the whole family—both mothers and fathers—is a priority for the entire organization by reaching out to

all staff, from program staff who directly provide services to fathers and families, to development managers who educate funders on the importance of father involvement.⁴¹² Providing information to staff on fathers' value to their families and focusing on the benefits of father involvement can help staff see fathers' participation in programming as a strength and an asset.⁴¹³ Program leaders must also ensure that they are dedicating the resources—attention, time, and funding—to adequately support the pivot to family-inclusive culture and practice. The Texas Home Visiting (THV) program provides an example of committing to father inclusion, by setting father engagement as a priority from the beginning.

Change organizational culture to value and expect fathers' participation

To better engage with fathers, organizations must address both institutional biases within family services and policies, which tend to provide attention and services to mothers, as well as personal biases that may influence service providers' engagement with fathers.⁴¹⁴ Personal biases can include stereotypical beliefs about fathers' tendency to abuse children or to be absent parents, or the belief that fathers' participation is unimportant or that fathers are less capable parents.⁴¹⁵ Program staff's attitudes and biases can affect their behavior towards fathers, such that fathers may feel either excluded or unwelcome in programming and services. Programs and organizations can address these biases and stereotypes by providing opportunities for dialogue, training, and education to learn about the importance of a whole-family focus and to build a more inclusive culture. Through training, staff can gain competency and experience in working with men, forming productive client relationships, and addressing cultural and gender stereotypes.⁴¹⁶ Organizations and staff can then transition from not just valuing fathers' involvement but also normalizing it, such that father engagement is as standard and expected as mothers' involvement in programming.⁴¹⁷

Invite fathers to participate and remind them of their importance

One of the simplest ways to show fathers that they are an integral part of the family is by explicitly inviting them to participate in programs and services. In an evaluation of the Texas Home Visiting program, fathers reported that often the home visitor simply asking the father to participate in the home visit was all it took to get the father to take part.⁴¹⁸ Framing the invitation to make it clear that the father's participation is not only important, but also expected reinforces for both fathers and families that father involvement is the norm.⁴¹⁹ Fathers also shared that they appreciated having a specific role during the home visit, which may reflect their desire for some direction and guidance as they first participate in programming.

The invitation to participate in the program is also an opportunity to provide information and context to both fathers and mothers about the importance of fathers' involvement with their children. Compared to mothers, fathers often lack confidence in their parenting skills or abilities and are less knowledgeable about child development.⁴²⁰ Moreover, some fathers may have internalized gender norms and stereotypes that limit their involvement with their children to the role of provider, rather than caregiver.⁴²¹ Taking the time to explain to fathers the importance of their involvement and providing guidance on the multiple roles fathers can play in their

children's lives sends a welcoming message and encourages fathers to become more involved and active in family programming.⁴²² Program staff should also provide information on the importance of fathers' involvement to mothers, to both reduce mothers' gatekeeping behavior and induce the mothers to welcome and encourage their male co-parent's participation.⁴²³

Use inclusive or gender-neutral language

Another relatively simple strategy to be more inclusive of fathers is to ensure that all material and paperwork related to the program uses language that includes both mothers and fathers.⁴²⁴ For example, promotional material and paperwork should use inclusive language such as "parents" or "caregivers" and include signature spaces for "parents/guardians" or "caregivers" rather than "mom and dad" or just "mom."⁴²⁵ These practices are not only inclusive of fathers, but also of LGBTQ families or families with nontraditional family structures.⁴²⁶ Staff should solicit the contact information of both parents and include both parents on all correspondence and communication.⁴²⁷

Work around parents' availability

One of the most common responses from fathers about their inclusion in family programming and services is that the programs are often scheduled during working hours, such that they are not able to attend meetings or appointments.⁴²⁸ Scheduling programming before or after work, or on the weekends is a simple way not only to signal to fathers that they are valued, but also to enable them to participate.⁴²⁹ Because many fathers and mothers work outside the home, offering more flexible hours for services is an important step to providing services that are inclusive of the whole family. Staff should also make efforts to include nonresident parents, where appropriate, by trying to work with their schedules and parenting time plans, to allow nonresident parents to participate in program activities.

Ensure that the physical space is welcoming and inclusive for the whole family

A family-inclusive culture can be demonstrated through changes in the physical space. An environment that displays positive and diverse images of men, instead of just women and their children signals to fathers that they are included in the programming and that they have an important place in their families' lives.⁴³⁰ Programs should also ensure that fathers feel physically comfortable. Providing furniture that is the appropriate size and choosing other aspects of the physical space, such as color scheme and layout, are also key in creating a sense of belonging for fathers.⁴³¹

Make programming and services appealing and relevant for both parents

Inviting both parents to programming and ensuring that they feel welcome is an important first step. Providing services that mothers and fathers need and want in ways that are relevant and appealing to them is also crucial. Fathers and mothers may have different needs and thus require different services; for example, fathers may need more information on child development, or are more likely than mothers to be noncustodial parents.⁴³² Programs should ensure that staff can adequately provide services or make an appropriate referral for both parents.

Programs may also need to talk to parents to identify the types of services and programming parents prefer. For example, do parents want to receive services as a family, or do they want access to mother- or father-only programming? Do single parents and co-parents require different supports or programming from one another?

Another key strategy is to ensure that program curriculum is tailored to fathers in both content and process. For example, an evaluation of the Sure Start family program in the U.K. found that its fathers prefer active, outdoor classes or activities rather than more traditional, discussion-based approaches, but that many parenting skills curricula do not necessarily lend themselves to active sessions.⁴³³ Programs should design or select curricula with their target parent population in mind and with an understanding that fathers may respond differently than mothers to certain approaches.

Assess the father and family-friendliness of your program

Several fatherhood inclusion checklists or assessment tools are available to assist agencies and organizations with evaluating their father-friendliness in terms of their culture and practice. These include the Father-Friendliness Organizational Self-Assessment and Planning tool, developed by the National Center for Strategic Nonprofit Planning and Community Leadership (NPCL), in conjunction with the National Head Start Association (NHSA); the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families, the Illinois Department of Public Aid; the Division of Child Support Enforcement;⁴³⁴ the Father Friendly Check-Up by the National Fatherhood Initiative;⁴³⁵ the Assessment Guide on Father-Inclusive Practices by the John S. Martinez Fatherhood Initiative of Connecticut;⁴³⁶ and the Dakota Father Friendly Assessment.⁴³⁷ In addition, Strategies, a statewide organization in California that provides coaching, facilitation, and technical assistance for community-based organizations, agencies, and networks, developed the “Enhancing Organizational Father Friendliness” matrix that offers an overview for how agencies and organizations can increase father inclusiveness within their programming through their agency policies and procedures, program services, physical environment, and communication and interaction.⁴³⁸

FAMILY POLICIES FOR TODAY’S FAMILIES

Just as programs can do more to be more inclusive of fathers and the whole family, policymakers can adapt public policies to make them relevant for fathers and their families today. First, we provide a summary of how, generally, family policies have not adapted to the changes in families highlighted in Chapter 1. We also highlight a few examples of family policies that have responded to changing families, which can inform future policymaking to support families in Texas.

Family policies assume most families are married

The American family has changed dramatically over the last 60 years; the percent of children living with both parents who are in their first marriage has fallen from 73 percent in 1960 to 46 percent in 2014.⁴³⁹ Policies, however, have not kept pace with these changes; they still operate

under the assumption of married parents who live together or one unmarried parent.⁴⁴⁰ For example, unmarried fathers are often excluded from most means-tested programs, and a father's presence in the home can jeopardize his family's eligibility for services.⁴⁴¹

Family law, too, is built around the institution of marriage.⁴⁴² For example, married fathers are granted custody and considered legal fathers automatically, whereas unmarried fathers must prove their paternity by taking additional steps, such as signing a "voluntary acknowledgement of paternity" or taking legal action.⁴⁴³ Moreover, because family law assumes that a newborn is living with two married parents or one unmarried parent, most states do not have rules to grant custody at birth for two unmarried parents who do not live together.⁴⁴⁴ Fifteen states automatically grant sole custody of a child to an unmarried mother at her child's birth, requiring unmarried fathers to pursue a court order to establish custody or visitation.⁴⁴⁵ Low-income fathers often lack either the knowledge of the court system or the financial resources to pursue custody or parenting plans.⁴⁴⁶

Fathers who live with or are in romantic relationships with their children's mother are more likely to have more access to and involvement with their children than fathers who live apart from or who are no longer in romantic relationships with their children's mother.⁴⁴⁷ When unmarried parents separate, their ability to get along and have a positive co-parenting relationship is one of the largest predictors of fathers' subsequent involvement with their children.⁴⁴⁸ Divorced families can rely on the court system to enforce or modify their agreements as necessary.⁴⁴⁹ In addition, many court systems offer parent education and other resources to divorced parents. These resources are typically unavailable for unmarried parents.⁴⁵⁰

Because policies assume a traditional nuclear family, many policies continue to perpetuate gender stereotypes of fathers as breadwinners and mothers as caregivers. This stereotype ignores the reality that many mothers—and most single mothers—work to support their families, and that fathers are taking on more caregiving roles. Although there is no legal preference for maternal custody, in the majority of cases, physical custody is awarded to the mother, reinforcing the norm that fathers primarily contribute to their families through financial means.⁴⁵¹

In most states, child support orders are not accompanied by a visitation or parenting time order, and the child support system is often entirely separate from the access and visitation system, further separating caregiving and financial support roles.⁴⁵² Texas, however, is a leader for other states. Since 1989, the Texas Family Code ruled that all child support orders in Texas must be accompanied by a parenting time plan to ensure access and visitation.⁴⁵³ In addition, the Texas Office of the Attorney General (OAG) Child Support Division dedicates resources to assisting noncustodial parents in establishing and enforcing access and visitation, as well as meeting their child support obligations, if necessary.⁴⁵⁴

Many policies favor the residential or custodial parent. For example, only the parent who has custody of the child for the larger portion of the calendar year can claim the child as a dependent

for tax purposes, even if the other parent provides more financial support.⁴⁵⁵ The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) provides a smaller benefit to noncustodial parents, even though these parents may not only live with the child nearly half of the calendar year, but also be required to contribute child support and other kinds of support to their child.⁴⁵⁶

Policies continue to reinforce maternal gatekeeping

As currently structured, family policies either explicitly favor mothers' caregiving over fathers', or support the custodial parents, who are overwhelmingly mothers, over the noncustodial ones.⁴⁵⁷ As previously mentioned, most child support systems are entirely separate from access and visitation systems, and states receive federal incentives to enforce child support orders but not access and visitation orders.⁴⁵⁸ This structure helps promote maternal gatekeeping behavior, in which mothers control fathers' access to and contact with their children.⁴⁵⁹ Although some maternal gatekeeping stems from real concerns about fathers' behavior, such as physical abuse or substance abuse, it may also come from mothers' desire to bolster their maternal identity or their lack of confidence in fathers' domestic and parenting capabilities.⁴⁶⁰ Additionally, some fathers report that mothers restrict fathers' access to their children because the fathers were behind on child support payments or had begun new romantic relationships.⁴⁶¹

Family policies currently disincentivize father involvement

Many family policies are designed in ways that can actually *discourage* fathers from becoming involved with their families. Eligibility for means-tested programs including SNAP, Medicaid, and TANF, is based on household income and assets, which means having two parents in the home—even if they are unmarried—can jeopardize a family's eligibility for services.⁴⁶² As a result, parents may decide to live separately, which can reduce fathers' involvement with their children.

Unmarried fathers typically prefer to provide informal financial support or in-kind support to their children, because fathers' income is often variable.⁴⁶³ Formal child support orders must be filed, however, when unmarried families apply for public benefits such as Medicaid or TANF. If their applications are approved, some or all of the child support that is collected from noncustodial parents—usually fathers—goes directly to the government to offset the cost of providing the benefits.⁴⁶⁴ As a result, a formal child support order can cause resentment among fathers, who want the child support to go directly to their children; therefore, fathers are less motivated to pay child support.⁴⁶⁵ The lack of a connection between the payment of child support and access to the child may also further discourage fathers from paying child support, because their compliance does not guarantee access to their child(ren).⁴⁶⁶ Fathers' perceptions of the child support system can discourage fathers from establishing paternity entirely: one EFFECT father explained that he did not sign the Acknowledgement of Paternity form at his child's birth because it was "pre-registration for child support."⁴⁶⁷

Moreover, in many cases fathers are unable to pay their child support, not only because fathers (particularly low-income fathers) face challenges to earning steady wages such as incarceration, unemployment, or poor health, but also because many child support orders overestimate

fathers' ability to pay.⁴⁶⁸ For fathers who have children by more than one partner, child support orders can overestimate the amount they can pay by 33 to 60 percent.⁴⁶⁹ Fathers can work with the child support system to modify the order, but this requires knowledge of the system and may require hiring a lawyer, an expense many low-income fathers cannot afford.⁴⁷⁰

The inability to pay child support discourages fathers from being involved with their families through several mechanisms. Fathers who are unable to fulfill the provider role for their families may find the fatherhood role to be less fulfilling, and reduce their involvement.⁴⁷¹ Conversely, mothers may discourage fathers who are unable to meet their child support obligations from being involved.⁴⁷² Fathers' failure to pay child support tends to increase conflict between parents, many of whom already struggle with co-parenting.⁴⁷³ As a result, fathers who cannot pay child support are motivated to avoid their families: the presence of child support arrears are linked to less contact, involvement, and informal support for families.⁴⁷⁴

Some family policies are leading the way

Although policies and programs have largely remained stagnant in the face of drastic changes in American families, we highlight several examples in which policy has responded to the changing circumstances of families today.

Family courts are promoting the involvement of both parents

Family court systems across the country are taking measures to promote the participation and involvement of both parents in their children's lives when parents divorce. In Tennessee, for example, the Parenting Plan is a way for the Tennessee Court system and divorced or divorcing parents to focus on the children's best interests and recognize that children benefit from the emotional and financial support of both parents.⁴⁷⁵ The Parenting Plan moves away from "custody" and "visitation" and encourages both parents to have as much involvement with their children as possible.⁴⁷⁶ This policy marks a shift away from the mother-centered paradigm in which mothers were generally given sole or majority physical custody of children following divorces, and allows greater opportunities for fathers to be included in their children's lives.

Family courts are taking steps to foster a positive co-parenting relationship

When parents are able to work together in the best interest of their child, regardless of the status of their romantic relationship, children benefit because they experience more frequent contact and have improved relationships with both parents.⁴⁷⁷ Family court systems are beginning to play a role in fostering positive co-parenting.

For example, the Family Division of the Maine District Court within the State of Maine Judicial Branch provides support for court proceedings involving children and offers free parent education programs to help reduce the negative effects of separation and divorce on families.⁴⁷⁸ Additionally, Maine facilitates parenting arrangements in the best interests of the children, particularly if there are interfamily issues. Similarly, the Utah Court system also helps to deal with family issues related to parenting through its Co-Parenting Mediation program that

helps parents with visitation problems to resolve conflicts without formal court intervention.⁴⁷⁹ A mediator assists parents with parenting time arrangements and other co-parenting issues such as school, medical, and safety issues. Parties are not required to come to an agreement regarding their issues in mediation, but they are expected to make a good-faith effort to resolve co-parenting issues.⁴⁸⁰

In Minnesota, the Hennepin County's Co-Parent Court, a partnership between family court, the child enforcement agency, and community service providers, was created to better support unmarried parents. Co-Parent Court includes: tailored case management and social services; a co-parent education program designed specifically for unmarried parents; and assistance in establishing parenting plans, either during co-parent workshops or through formal resolution services and, as a last resort, court hearings.⁴⁸¹

Child support systems are providing support for noncustodial parents

In some states, child support systems are taking steps to work closely with noncustodial parents to achieve higher levels of enforcement and payment. As described earlier, Texas is a leader in child support by requiring all parent-child suits to include a parenting plan to ensure access and visitation.⁴⁸² The Texas Office of the Attorney General (OAG) also provides resources to noncustodial parents, including an Access and Visitation hotline, to assist them with gaining access to their children. The OAG also supports unemployed, low-income noncustodial parents to meet their child support obligations through its Noncustodial Parent (NCP) Choices program, a collaboration between the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) and the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC).⁴⁸³ NCP Choices provides job referrals and job search assistance among other services to help noncustodial parents overcome barriers to employment, become economically self-sufficient, and become more consistent in their child support payments.

Other states have developed programs similar to Texas' Noncustodial Parent (NCP) Choices program.⁴⁸⁴ Arkansas offers the Noncustodial Parent Outreach Work Referral Program (NPOWR), and Washington State offers the Alternative Solutions Program.⁴⁸⁵ In addition to providing job readiness training and employment placement assistance, these programs offer additional support services including modifying child support orders and handling license suspensions.⁴⁸⁶ As another example, the Georgia Fatherhood Program, administered by the Georgia Division of Child Support Services (DCSS), provides employment services to noncustodial parents to help them achieve self-sufficiency and increase their involvement with their children.⁴⁸⁷ Through a partnership with Goodwill Industries and the U.S. Department of Labor, Goodwill provides subsidized employment to noncustodial parents with child support cases in certain counties. The Georgia Fatherhood Program also works with the Department of Corrections and Pardons and Parole to offer "Reentry Services" for incarcerated noncustodial parents, including providing education on child support, paternity testing, information on the establishing or re-establishing support, access, and visitation after their release, and tools on how to be a better and more involved parent.⁴⁸⁸

Similar support is occurring at the federal level. The Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) within the Administration for Children and Families launched the Child Support Noncustodial Parent Employment Demonstration Project (CSPED) in 2012.⁴⁸⁹ CSPED provides funding to child support agencies in eight states—California, Colorado, Iowa, Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Wisconsin—to provide services, including employment and case management, to noncustodial parents struggling to pay child support. The ongoing five-year evaluation of CSPED is being conducted by the Institute for Research on Poverty at the University of Wisconsin and Mathematica Policy Research and will inform future efforts to support noncustodial parents and their children.

Some policies provide support to noncustodial parents outside of the child support system

Noncustodial parents are not always identified as parents, because a child does not reside in their household. As a result, programs and policies may be unaware of noncustodial parents' additional needs, such as child care, or their challenges, including lower take-home pay after child support has been garnished. Ignorance of these needs and challenges may make current efforts to support these noncustodial parents, such as community college programs or workforce training initiatives, less effective. Moreover, by only reaching custodial or residential parents, states miss out on the full range of supports and resources a child has available.

One initiative in Massachusetts is making a deliberate effort to reach and support noncustodial parents. The Father Friendly Initiative (FFI), offered through the Boston Public Health Commission, provides services for low-income fathers in the Boston area to help them become responsible members of their families and communities.⁴⁹⁰ FFI targets men who have child support, custody, visitation, or other court-related problems. Services include parenting classes, medical insurance, substance abuse referrals, anger management counseling, support groups, employment and education preparation, and custody and visitation counseling.⁴⁹¹

Paid family leave in a few states helps support family wellbeing from the start

Perhaps one of the most discussed family policies is family leave, particularly in the time-period just after childbirth. Fathers' use of parental leave can increase their bond with and emotional connection to their child.⁴⁹² Taking parental leave can also increase fathers' involvement: fathers who take two or more weeks of paternity leave are more likely to engage in childcare tasks, such as bathing, dressing, and feeding the child, and getting up at night to respond to the child.⁴⁹³ Increased father engagement during the first few years of a child's life has important impacts on children's intellectual and social development, and sets the stage for continued involvement.⁴⁹⁴

The United States adopted unpaid family leave in 1993 through the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Under FMLA, parents can take up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave to care for immediate family members or their own serious health conditions. FMLA eligibility is limited to employees who have worked for their employer for at least one year and are employed at work sites with 50 or more employees.⁴⁹⁵ Unmarried fathers and father figures are protected under FMLA: FMLA defines a son or daughter as "a biological, adopted, or foster

child, a stepchild, a legal ward, or a child of a person standing in loco parentis,” who is under the age of 18, or 18 or older and incapable of self-care because of a physical or mental disability.⁴⁹⁶ In addition, employees are not required to provide medical certification of a birth of a child, nor establishment of paternity to take leave after the birth of the child.⁴⁹⁷ However, unmarried fathers are unable to take leave to care for their partner, because FMLA only covers leave to care for a spouse, defined as a husband or wife.⁴⁹⁸

Although many families are not eligible to take leave under FMLA or cannot afford to take unpaid leave, among families who do use FMLA, fathers often take off less time than mothers and face greater barriers in taking advantage of the law. A study from Boston College’s Center for Work and Family found that 70 percent of fathers only take off ten days or fewer after the birth of their most recent child, compared to the 12 weeks they are entitled to under FMLA.⁴⁹⁹ A study conducted by the Department of Labor found that fewer employers offer paid family leave for fathers than for mothers and that fathers often cut their leave short for economic, professional, and social reasons.⁵⁰⁰ When mothers are already taking unpaid leave, it is often necessary for fathers to keep working to have a source of income. Moreover, regardless of whether leave is paid or unpaid, fathers often feel professional and social pressure to return to work early or not take leave because they believe they will be perceived as a less dedicated employee.⁵⁰¹ There are opportunities to reverse this culture, however. A study in the American Economic Review found that if one father takes paid family leave, his male coworkers are more likely to take leave when they have children.⁵⁰²

Parents, especially fathers, are more willing and able to take leave when it is paid and provides job protection.⁵⁰³ Only three states currently offer guaranteed paid family leave policies: California, Rhode Island, and New Jersey. These laws apply to both mothers and fathers, equally. New York passed a Paid Family Leave Benefits Law in 2016, which will take effect January 1, 2018.⁵⁰⁴ Implemented in 2004, California has the nation’s oldest paid family leave policy and provides up to six weeks of paid leave to care for a seriously ill child, spouse, parent, or registered domestic partner, or to bond with a new child through its Employment Development Department.⁵⁰⁵ The benefit amount is approximately 55 percent of an employee’s weekly wage, from a minimum of \$50 to a maximum of \$1,067. In Rhode Island, the Temporary Caregiver Insurance Program provides up to four weeks of paid leave for the birth, adoption, or fostering of a new child, or for the care of a seriously ill child, spouse, domestic partner, parent, parent-in-law, or grandparent.⁵⁰⁶ It provides a minimum benefit of \$72 and a maximum of \$752 per week, based on employee earnings.⁵⁰⁷ New Jersey’s Family Leave Insurance, a provision of the New Jersey Temporary Benefits Law, allows up to six weeks of paid leave to care for a new child or an ill family member, and pay is limited to two-thirds of the employee’s average weekly wage.⁵⁰⁸ The Family Leave Insurance benefits run concurrently with FMLA and the New Jersey Family Leave Act (NJFLA), which entitle eligible employees of covered employers to take unpaid, job-protected leave for family and medical reasons.⁵⁰⁹ Unlike the FMLA and NJFLA, Family Leave Insurance does not offer any job protection at the end of the six weeks.⁵¹⁰ The laws in all three states have varying eligibility requirements.

New York's upcoming Paid Family Leave program, which is expected to begin in 2018, provides job-protected wage replacement for up to eight weeks for employees to bond with new children, to care for a close relative with a serious health condition, and to provide relief when someone is called into active military service.⁵¹¹ An employee must be employed full-time for 26 weeks or part-time for 175 days to be eligible, and must take the leave within the first 12 months of the birth, adoption, or fostering of a child.⁵¹² For its first year, the program offers a maximum of 50 percent of employee salary, which is capped at one-half of New York's state Average Weekly Wage (approximately \$1,296). This maximum is set to incrementally increase to 67 percent over the next four years.⁵¹³

Several states have adopted legislation to permit parents—both mothers and fathers—to actively engage with their children, without risking their employment security. Several states have passed small necessities leave policies, which allow eligible employees to take a specified amount of time off from work to attend children's school activities or to accompany children or elderly relatives to medical appointments without losing their jobs. California,⁵¹⁴ Colorado,⁵¹⁵ Illinois,⁵¹⁶ Massachusetts,⁵¹⁷ Minnesota,⁵¹⁸ Nevada,⁵¹⁹ North Carolina,⁵²⁰ Rhode Island,⁵²¹ Vermont,⁵²² and the District of Columbia offer a limited number of hours, ranging between four and 40 hours annually, of leave for both mothers and fathers.⁵²³ These laws not only protect parents' ability to be actively involved with their children, but also signal the importance of parent involvement for both mothers and fathers.

Summary

The state of Texas has committed to investing in fathers through its programs and policies to promote the wellbeing of Texas families. Texas is not alone in this effort, and can learn from the work of other states and countries to support fathers. Although, generally, family policies have not adapted to the changing American family, there are some innovative policies paving the way. In the next chapter, we incorporate all the work to support fathers in Texas that is currently underway with recommendations for the kinds of policies and programs Texas may consider implementing as a part of a comprehensive plan to support fathers.

CHAPTER 6: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO SUPPORT TEXAS FATHERS AND FAMILIES

Over the past several decades, research on father involvement and support has reached a resounding, if somewhat self-evident, conclusion: fathers matter. Although a substantial body of research now demonstrates a compelling link between positive father involvement and improved child outcomes, the research on the effects of programs aimed at strengthening and supporting fathers' positive involvement in their children's lives continues to evolve.

The last several decades have also brought about dramatic changes for American families. Many men are becoming fathers in particularly disadvantageous situations: young, unmarried, and lacking in education. These fathers face a multitude of barriers to being the fathers they want to be, from poor employment prospects and high incarceration rates, to juggling multiple parenting roles among the children they live with and the ones they do not. Other men are assuming more of the caregiver role within their household, yet these fathers often have limited parenting skills and few opportunities to acquire essential skills.

Both federal and state investments in promoting the positive impact fathers have on their children and families continue to increase, but these investments must be considered within the larger contexts of systemic shifts in family structure, the labor market, and incarceration rates. Family policy has largely been resistant to these shifts, but some states, including Texas, are pioneering new policies and programs to meet the changing needs of families.

In addition to gauging the effectiveness of the Fatherhood EFFECT Program, our evaluation also aimed to understand how the state of Texas can better serve fathers who often have varying and significant challenges or needs. Given the changing demographic and economic landscape, what steps beyond fatherhood programs should Texas consider to support fathers across the state?

Our recommendations for a comprehensive plan to support Texas fathers and families include strategies to strengthen evidence-based programming, as well as recommendations for increasing coordination and collaboration across Texas state agencies to create a seamless safety net of services and supports to better meet the changing needs of fathers and their families. Additionally, we offer an agenda for the Texas Fatherhood Interagency Council (TFIC) to consider as they move forward in determining next steps for family policy in Texas. All recommendations should be considered within the broader social context that many fathers live; any comprehensive plan will be limited in its effectiveness if broad system-level changes to enhance employment among low-skilled workers and reduce incarceration rates among less-educated men and minorities are not prioritized.

Strengthen Fatherhood Programming

Findings from both the implementation and outcomes evaluation of the EFFECT Program presented in Chapter 3 informed several recommendations for strengthening the state's ongoing investment in evidence-based programming as part of a comprehensive plan for supporting Texas fathers and families.

TARGET FATHERS WHO MAY BENEFIT THE MOST

Discussions with program staff and fathers, and reviews of other father-specific programs, indicate that the fathers who *need* the programs the most may also be the ones who *benefit* the most, even though these fathers may be the most difficult to recruit. Targeting young or teen fathers, prisoners re-entering society, and fathers who are involved with Child Protective Services (CPS), may be particularly effective at breaking cycles of disadvantage. Additional groups to target include fathers who are establishing paternity, access and visitation orders, or child support orders, and fathers in the military (which may require the support of leadership on base or post).

EFFECT fathers suggested a more targeted and intensive approach to advertising the program. They recommended conducting outreach at a range of organizations and locations including the Salvation Army, housing/homeless shelters and organizations, other family-oriented programs, child support offices, probation and parole officers, TANF, WIC, SNAP, Alcoholics or Narcotics Anonymous (AA/NA) programs, anger management programs, and high schools or community colleges to reach younger fathers. One father suggested advertising at local sporting events and even suggested putting a sign behind home plate that reads, "Want to be a better dad? Call..." Fathers observed that they often see advertisements for women's needs but that they seldom see advertisements for programs to support fathers. Another father suggested establishing a father hotline that could provide support and referrals to programs and resources, similar to 211. Staff agreed that larger advertising and marketing campaigns could help reach other fathers; if PEI pooled marketing resources to create a statewide campaign, EFFECT staff suggested, not only could EFFECT staff reach a larger group of fathers, but staff could spend more time and resources providing services and making strategic partnerships, rather than spend so much time on recruitment.

FIND EARLY INTERVENTION POINTS

PEI should consider ways to reach younger men before they are "broken."⁵²⁴ One EFFECT staffer noted, "If we could get to the teen dads, we could really break some cycles."⁵²⁵ Fathers agreed, noting that young fathers and first-time fathers definitely need these programs (yet may be resistant to joining them). Intervening early can help young men establish solid foundations for their families, such as a strong co-parenting relationship, stable employment, and engaged fatherhood, which can lead to better outcomes for them and their child(ren). Older fathers need the programs and they do benefit; however, older fathers often come to the programs with thousands of dollars in child support arrears, long incarceration histories that

make employment difficult, and children with multiple partners and precarious parenting time arrangements. Reaching fathers before these issues arise may limit these negative life situations and enhance their personal and children's wellbeing.

INCREASE COORDINATION AT THE STATE LEVEL TO FACILITATE LOCAL COLLABORATION

EFFECT sites are currently identifying partners and building relationships at the local level, but the state should take a more active role in facilitating connections across organizations and agencies to create systemic partnerships. For example, the state could establish and support regional collaborations that are similar in structure to the TFIC, bringing together local fatherhood programs, community organizations, and governmental agencies, and regional representatives of state agencies including Medicaid, WIC, domestic violence organizations, Domestic Relations Offices (DROs), Texas Workforce Commission, Child Protective Services, Texas Education Agency, and the Office of the Attorney General Child Support Division (OAG). This increased collaboration may assist in identifying needs of fathers that vary by region, developing regional programs and practices to serve fathers and their families, and increasing referrals of fathers into and out of the EFFECT Program.

Additionally, the state is funding multiple programs in the same counties (e.g., HOPES, EFFECT, and Texas Home Visiting). When fathers were asked about whether they had heard of any home visiting programs in their communities, very few fathers indicated they were aware of these programs. EFFECT staff also had limited knowledge of other state-funded programs within their community. In all three EFFECT sites we visited, PEI is also funding home visiting programs. These programs, which target families with young children, could be an important asset to recruit fathers. Facilitating collaboration across funding and program providers can help support fathers by providing referrals and ensuring continuity of services. The state should also support the work of fatherhood programs within EFFECT by building a network among grantees to share their experiences and learn from one another. This sharing can be done through quarterly phone calls or annual meetings, such as the Texas Fatherhood Summit.

Fatherhood programs would benefit from being part of a concerted and coordinated effort on behalf of the state to support fathers. Moreover, a state-led effort to increase collaboration across agencies and organizations working in fatherhood and raise the profile of responsible fatherhood would increase the visibility of these programs, making it easier for fathers to access them.

INCORPORATE FEEDBACK FROM FATHERS WHEN MAKING PROGRAMMATIC CHANGES

EFFECT participants had recommendations for additional services to improve the EFFECT Program. Fathers suggested providing more events or spaces for fathers to take their children when they spend time with them. For example, one EFFECT participant wanted classes in which fathers could bring their children and do activities together; another spoke about being able to bring teenage children specifically to allow fathers to share advice and allow both teenagers and

fathers to share their feelings with each other. EFFECT participants also suggested ways to reach other fathers. One father said the program should host a conference for fathers; others said they would attend an event for fathers and their children at school. Another father suggested a help hotline that fathers could call when they needed to talk to another father for support and advice.

Overall, fathers reported very few suggestions for improving the EFFECT Program itself; almost two-thirds of fathers who completed the Satisfaction Survey said the program was great as it was, and hoped it would continue. Fathers' most common desire was for the program to last longer or for there to be more classes. Several fathers suggested that there should be more programs like EFFECT, and that the program should reach more fathers, particularly teenage and incarcerated fathers. Fathers also asked for opportunities to bring their co-parents and children to the program, to allow them to learn together. Although fathers "liked how [the program] is for dads only," a few EFFECT participants recommended classes for mothers and co-parents, to provide them with the opportunity to learn similar skills.⁵²⁶ Additional suggestions to improve the program included sharing more information, incorporating more videos, and modeling of behaviors; providing transportation to classes or holding classes in more locations; adding field trips and guest speakers; providing snacks; and including more hands-on activities and unstructured discussion time. Fathers also wanted to find ways to keep the program going after they had completed it; one father wanted to meet with other fathers who had graduated, and another father asked for a newsletter with updates about the fathers who participated in the program and articles that would remind them about the lessons.

It would not be possible for the state or communities to incorporate every suggestion fathers make to enhance or improve the programs. As the EFFECT Program grows in size and reach, however, communities may be encouraged to pilot and test adaptations, and share the lessons learned that may lead to broader implementation of successful alterations or additions to the EFFECT model.

IDENTIFY ADDITIONAL SERVICES FATHERS NEED

Recognizing that the lack of affordable transportation is a barrier to program participation, staff recommended providing additional funding for bus passes or transportation vouchers. Because the sites perceived they could not use PEI grant funds for this purpose, staff had to seek partners that could provide financial assistance with transportation. Developing these partnerships and finding donors took time, and this financial support was not always assured.

EFFECT staff also shared the need for more knowledge and communication about referral resources. The fathers they served had a variety of needs, from stable housing and accessible housing assistance, to child care, to job training and employment referrals. Staff explained that referral agencies were not always available or of the desired quality; for example, a food bank could have food one month, but not the other. Sometimes EFFECT staff's ability to provide assistance was limited: for example, fathers could obtain job training, but not the funding

needed to obtain an occupational license. In particular, staff singled out the need for better referrals for legal matters such as child custody and visitation or immigration.

EFFECT staff also needed assistance and better connections with the child support system, both because fathers had a great deal of mistrust and incorrect information about the child support system, and because fathers needed assistance with managing their payments and arrears. Finally, EFFECT staff shared that providing programming or information for mothers on the importance of father involvement could help fathers; in many cases, mothers' gatekeeping behaviors kept fathers from becoming more involved, or being able to contact their child(ren) at all.

PEI may consider tasking the TFIC to conduct an on-going assessment of fathers' needs within parenting programs and in the broader system. Prioritizing these needs and determining the level of effort or resources required to meet the needs should be a standing agenda item of the TFIC.

MEASURE THE DESIRED OUTCOMES OF THE PROGRAMS

Currently, the measures used to determine the value and outcomes associated with participating in the EFFECT Program are limited. The Protective Factors Survey and the model-specific surveys provide some useful information, but these surveys do not measure directly the goals of fatherhood programs, such as economic stability, father involvement, or relationship quality, nor the outcomes the program models intend to impact, such as knowledge of child development, attitudes about parenting, communication skills, improved co-parenting quality, and increased confidence as a father. As a result, current measures fail to demonstrate the entire value of the program.

PEI and EFFECT sites should use a measurement instrument that better captures these outcomes. Many instruments are available that can do this, including CFRP's Parenting Check-In for Dads (PCI-D), available in Appendix D. Informed by the Mathematica Policy Research Fatherhood and Marriage Local Evaluation (FaMLE) and Building Bridges and Bonds (B3) studies, as well as CFRP's Parenting Check-In (PCI) developed for primary caregivers in home visiting programs, the PCI-D captures changes in father behavior, attitudes, and knowledge across the domains of father involvement and engagement, co-parenting quality, conflict prevention and resolution, and economic stability. CFRP proposes that EFFECT I and II sites administer the PCI-D pre- and post-surveys concurrently with the pre- and post-PFS to test further the PCI-D's validity and reliability.

A Comprehensive Plan for Supporting Texas Fathers

The state of Texas has already demonstrated a significant commitment to supporting fathers and their families through evidence-based programming, nascent collaboration among state agencies to coordinate efforts to support fathers, acknowledgment of the need to be more father-inclusive in family programs and services, and annual summits that bring together providers, state agencies, advocates, nonprofits, and researchers in the field of fatherhood. This

commitment, albeit significant, could be enhanced through a more deliberate structure of coordination that draws on the efforts of various state agencies to identify and address the challenges that many fathers and families face in providing a supportive, safe, and stable environment for Texas children.

ESTABLISH A FORMAL INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON FATHERHOOD

The Texas Fatherhood Interagency Council (TFIC) should play an important role in Texas' next steps to support fathers and their families. The TFIC recognizes that fathers are an important—yet underutilized and undervalued—resource to their families. The state should build on the momentum of the Texas Fatherhood Summits and the TFIC to give structure to its efforts to support fathers and their families by empowering the TFIC to lead this initiative.

The TFIC should be established as a formal council with a clear, measurable statement of purpose, and resources to support its agenda. State agency heads should determine the leadership structure and membership of the TFIC; membership should be determined by the level of authority the TFIC is given. For example, the TFIC may begin as an advisory council to state agencies on ways that each agency can improve its efforts to serve fathers and families, or it may be established with decision-making authority to coordinate services across agencies. Either way, the TFIC should review the structures of the successful initiatives to support fathers and families that other states are undertaking (as detailed in Chapter 5 of this report) and determine what is most appropriate for Texas.

ESTABLISH THE SCOPE OF WORK FOR THE TEXAS FATHERHOOD INTERAGENCY COUNCIL

CFRP's review of the work currently underway in Texas and across the country to support and include fathers informs an agenda the TFIC can use to guide their work toward a comprehensive plan for supporting fathers. Once the TFIC has an appropriate structure, members should review the work of other states and the federal government highlighted in this report to determine the scope of its work and identify viable policies and programs to implement in Texas.

CREATE AN INVENTORY OF FATHERHOOD PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

The TFIC can support and strengthen fatherhood programs in Texas by establishing a method to regularly inventory state- and locally-funded programs and initiatives that serve fathers. For example, the TFIC could host or support a website or portal that allows agencies to share provider and program information. This kind of website or portal would be helpful for agency staff to provide referrals to fatherhood programs for their clients.

The website or portal could also serve as a resource for fatherhood practitioners and policymakers. The website could provide an online learning community for fatherhood program staff to share evidence-based programs, recruitment strategies, and best practices, for example, as well as to identify opportunities to collaborate with one another. Through the

portal or website, the TFIC could also recommend standards for training service providers in father-friendly and family-inclusive practices and support the creation and dissemination of training materials across state agencies and contractors, among others.

HOST REGIONAL COLLABORATIVES

To further support fatherhood professionals and promote whole-family policies, the TFIC should host regional collaboratives. These organizations would convene fatherhood stakeholders, including responsible fatherhood program staff, representatives from state agencies, including WIC, DFPS, TWC, and the OAG, and local community organizations to share resources and coordinate activities. At these regional collaborative meetings, the TFIC could provide information on best practices for including the whole family and advice to implement systems-level change. Additionally, regional collaboratives would provide opportunities for regions to try new partnerships and experiment with program services and delivery.

HOST ANNUAL FATHERHOOD SUMMITS

The TFIC can capitalize on the momentum of the past two Texas Fatherhood Summits by hosting future summits. The annual fatherhood summit would provide an opportunity for policymakers, state agencies, program providers, and other responsible fatherhood stakeholders from across the state to regularly gather to network and identify opportunities for collaboration. The summit also provides a mechanism for local and regional collaboratives to systematically share their best practices, successes, and lessons learned with one another.

PROMOTE A FAMILY-INCLUSIVE CAMPAIGN

Although many policies have not kept pace with changes in American families, the TFIC can encourage programs and agencies to promote a family-inclusive campaign at the state and regional levels. Family-inclusive campaigns should combine public awareness with training and incentives to support organizations and agencies in assessing the family and father friendliness of their culture and programming and adopting best practices in family inclusion.

DEVELOP A MECHANISM TO SYSTEMATICALLY IDENTIFY FATHERS SERVED BY STATE AGENCIES OR PROGRAMS

A crucial step to creating a comprehensive state plan is to identify those fathers who are being served by the state through other systems. Texas is already serving many fathers, but currently the state does not have a mechanism to identify the fathers among the populations it serves. Taking steps to identify parents—both custodial and noncustodial, residential and nonresidential—when they intersect with multiple systems can give policymakers a better sense of parents' current needs and challenges.

IDENTIFY GAPS IN SERVICES FOR FATHERS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION TO FILL GAPS

Once parents have been identified in the various government systems, TFIC members can then assess the state of fathers and families in Texas more accurately and identify promising areas for interventions or collaborative efforts. Although the TFIC can develop family-inclusive policy recommendations across all agencies and programs, it may be helpful to initially select one or two areas in which fathers face the largest gap in services or have the highest unmet needs, or where early intervention can reach the highest number of fathers. For example, state agencies may be able to reach expectant fathers at WIC clinics or prenatal doctor appointments and provide information and services to foster a positive co-parenting relationship and increased father involvement.

Conclusion

The State of Texas is well on its way toward a comprehensive plan for supporting fathers and their families. Many of the pieces of the plan already exist—investments in evidence-based fatherhood programming and a commitment to cross-agency coordination and collaboration. The existing strategies should continue to evolve as the needs of fathers and families evolve. In addition to what already exists, Texas needs to examine the broader policy context to identify the systemic influences that create barriers to fathers' positive involvement with their families. Together, these efforts will provide a road map for improving the welfare of Texas children and their families.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Fatherhood Program Evaluations

The table below summarizes key information from each of the evaluations discussed in this report’s “Do Fatherhood Program Work?” section. It presents the base reference for the evaluation, the program name, population served, basic curriculum information, findings in four key areas, the number of participants in the evaluation, and the type of research design.

Reference	Program/ Policy Name	All Dads/Non- residential/ Residential	Curriculum or Focus	Results: Father Involvement	Results: Economic Stability	Results: Healthy Relationships	Results: Child Abuse Prevention	Sample Size	Research Design
Block et al. (2014)	InsideOut Dad	Nonresiden- tial	This program aimed to reduce recidivism and strengthen father-child relationships for incarcerated fathers. <i>InsideOut Dad Curriculum</i> , based on the <i>Long Distance Dads Program</i> , was used with an added reentry component.	Analysis of the program found statistically significant overall positive changes for fathering confidence, parenting knowledge, parenting behavior across program sites. Fathers in the treatment group were statistically more likely to call their children.		Statistically significant improvements to fathers' attitudes related to spirituality, self-worth, and fathering while in prison were found for fathers in the treatment group.		411 (307 treatment; 104 control)	Quasi- experimental
Bloom et al. (2000)	Family Transition Program	Nonresiden- tial	The FTP model included 4 features: a limit on case assistance; financial work incentives (e.g. years of	The FTP treatment group received increased care and support from noncustodial biological fathers	Children in the FTP treatment group were more likely to receive money from their father directly or through			1,108 (554 treatment; 554 control)	RCT

Reference	Program/ Policy Name	All Dads/Nonr esidential/ Residential	Curriculum or Focus	Results: Father Involvement	Results: Economic Stability	Results: Healthy Relationships	Results: Child Abuse Prevention	Sample Size	Research Design
			transitional child care after leaving welfare-to-work); enhanced services and requirements (e.g. intensive case management and participation in employment related activities); and parental responsibility mandates (e.g. parents ensured children attended school regularly).	by five percentage points. Children in the FTP treatment group were cared for more by their fathers.	a child support agency.				
Bloom, Redcross, Zweig, & Azurdia (2007)	Center for Employment Opportunities Program	All Dads	The program aimed to assist ex-offenders with transition into permanent employment, reduce recidivism, and improve father-child relationships. Participants received pre-employment classes, paid transitional employment, job coaching and		There were statistically significant positive effects for program participants in finding employment and retaining a job over 12 months of the study compared to control group. Additionally, participants were statistically less likely to be re-			995 (568 treatment; 409 control)	RCT

Reference	Program/ Policy Name	All Dads/Nonr esidential/ Residential	Curriculum or Focus	Results: Father Involvement	Results: Economic Stability	Results: Healthy Relationships	Results: Child Abuse Prevention	Sample Size	Research Design
			placement, and post-placement support for one year.		incarcerated for a new crime.				

Reference	Program/ Policy Name	All Dads/Nonr esidential/ Residential	Curriculum or Focus	Results: Father Involvement	Results: Economic Stability	Results: Healthy Relationships	Results: Child Abuse Prevention	Sample Size	Research Design
Bronte-Tinkew (2007)	An Ache in their Hearts	All Dads	An Ache in their Hearts curriculum provided written information on infant death, relationship counseling, psychosocial support, and support in the grieving process.			Fathers in the treatment group had significantly reduced psychiatric disturbances and reduced levels of anxiety 15 months post loss. Fathers were significantly more likely to seek support as a coping strategy and significantly less likely to use avoidance coping strategies. High-risk parents participating in the program were more likely to maintain relationship quality compared to the comparison group. Significant benefits at 15 months post loss suggest long-term efficacy of the intervention.		144 (84 treatment; 60 control) *Of N=144, 65 participants were fathers	Quasi-experimental

Reference	Program/ Policy Name	All Dads/Nonr esidential/ Residential	Curriculum or Focus	Results: Father Involvement	Results: Economic Stability	Results: Healthy Relationships	Results: Child Abuse Prevention	Sample Size	Research Design
Bronte-Tinkew et al (2007)	Triple P- Positive Parenting Program	Residential	Curriculum titled <i>Facilitator's Guide to Group Triple P</i> . This program targeted families with children with high levels of behavior problems. The goal was to reduce child behavior problems and reduce marital stress, and increase marital satisfaction.			Both treatment groups had statistically significant positive effects on intended outcomes, but the enhanced treatment was not significantly different from standard. Fathers reported improvements to child behavior, conflict over parenting, and relationship satisfaction and communication.		37 (21 standard group; 23 enhanced group)	RCT
Bronte-Tinkew, Burkhauser, & Metz (2012)	Preparing for the Drug Free Years	All Dads	Program designed to teach parents effective methods to prevent substance abuse for their children. Curriculum is based on research on causes of adolescent problem behaviors, risk factors, and protective factors.	Fathers receiving treatment were significantly more likely to communicate rules pertaining to substance use and be more involved with their children compared to the control group. They were also significantly more				175	RCT

Reference	Program/ Policy Name	All Dads/Nonr esidential/ Residential	Curriculum or Focus	Results: Father Involvement	Results: Economic Stability	Results: Healthy Relationships	Results: Child Abuse Prevention	Sample Size	Research Design
			Sessions include strengthening family relationships, setting clear expectations on drugs, and substance abuse prevention.	likely to exhibit proactive communication with their child and improvement to relationship quality or bonding with their child.					
Campis, Lyman, & Prentice-Dunn (1986)	Long Distance Dads	Nonresidential	Long Distance Dads curriculum. This is a parenting program to promote responsible fatherhood and empower fathers.	Minimal to no effect. Fathers receiving treatment self-reported an increased number of letters sent to children and total contact with children. These findings were not corroborated by reports from caregivers.				89 (42 treatment; 47 control)	Quasi-experimental

Reference	Program/ Policy Name	All Dads/Nonr esidential/ Residential	Curriculum or Focus	Results: Father Involvement	Results: Economic Stability	Results: Healthy Relationships	Results: Child Abuse Prevention	Sample Size	Research Design
Cancian, Meyer & Caspar (2008)	Child Support Earnings Disregard Policy	Nonresiden tial	This policy mandated that the amount of child support paid by noncustodial parents was not subtracted from TANF amounts received by custodial parents.	There were no differences in paternity establishment between treatment and control groups.	A greater percentage of treatment fathers paid child support in years two and three. They also paid greater amounts of child support than those in the control group.			13,616	RCT
Cookston, Braver, Griffin, Deluse, & Miles (2006)	Dads for Life	Nonresiden tial	This program targeted recently divorced fathers to improve the father- child relationship. It was designed to increase parenting skills, decrease parental conflict, and promote better co-parenting skills. It incorporated the films <i>Eight Short Films about Divorced Dad</i> .			No effects were found in fathers' reports of co- parenting. However, ex- spouses of fathers in the treatment group reported statistically significant improvement in parenting relationship over time. Interparental conflict decreased over time for fathers receiving treatment.		214 (127 treatment; 87 control)	RCT
Cowan et al. (2009)	Supporting Father Involvement	All Dads	This program was designed to increase fathers'	Comparing the couples-only and comparison groups,		Comparing the couples-only and comparison groups,		289	RCT

Reference	Program/ Policy Name	All Dads/Nonr esidential/ Residential	Curriculum or Focus	Results: Father Involvement	Results: Economic Stability	Results: Healthy Relationships	Results: Child Abuse Prevention	Sample Size	Research Design
	(Couples- based)		involvement with their families and support positive child development. SFI curriculum was based on family risk model. Couples participating in the program were assigned to SFI couple group, SFI fathers-only group, or low-dosage comparison group.	the study observed that mothers in the SFI couples group reported increases in fathers' share of parenting, but also reported increases in conflict about child discipline. However, there was no significant difference for fathers in the same treatment regarding share of parenting or conflicts about discipline. No change was observed in fathers' psychological involvement in parenting or child outcomes (e.g. aggression, hyperactivity, anxiety or depression).		the study reported fathers in the SFI fathers-only group experienced greater average decline in parental stress compared to comparison group. No changes were observed for fathers in attitudes about authoritarian parenting.		*193 couples (95 treatment; 98 comparison)	

Reference	Program/ Policy Name	All Dads/Nonr esidential/ Residential	Curriculum or Focus	Results: Father Involvement	Results: Economic Stability	Results: Healthy Relationships	Results: Child Abuse Prevention	Sample Size	Research Design
Cowan et al. (2009)	Supporting Father Involvement (Fathers- only)	All Dads	This program was designed to increase fathers' involvement with their families and support positive child development. SFI curriculum was based on family risk model. Couples participating in the program were assigned to SFI couple group, SFI fathers-only group, or low-dosage comparison group.	Comparing the fathers-only and comparison groups, no significant difference was observed in changes to psychological involvement in parenting or child outcomes (e.g. aggression, hyperactivity, anxiety or depression).		Comparing the fathers-only and comparison groups, there was no change in parenting stress levels, authoritarian parenting beliefs, fathers' share of parenting, conflict about discipline, or relationship satisfaction		289 *194 couples (96 treatment; 98 comparison)	RCT
Dinkmeyer &McKay (1982)	Systematic Training for Effective Parenting for Incarcerated Fathers (STEP-UP)	All Dads	This program was designed to help young low-income fathers achieve self-sufficiency and effectively support their families. Participants received case management services, counseling, and mentoring from successful men.		No statistically significant effects reported. Study reported higher percentage of fathers receiving mentoring services found and retained jobs during the project period and earned slightly higher average hourly incomes compared to	A higher percentage of mentored fathers reported strengthened family relationships compared to non-mentored fathers.		120 (assigned to 4 different treatment groups)	RCT

Reference	Program/ Policy Name	All Dads/Nonr esidential/ Residential	Curriculum or Focus	Results: Father Involvement	Results: Economic Stability	Results: Healthy Relationships	Results: Child Abuse Prevention	Sample Size	Research Design
					groups without mentors.				
Doherty, Erickson, & LaRossa (2006)	Parenting Together Project	Residential	The Parenting Together Curriculum was designed to improve fathers' knowledge, skills, and commitment to fatherhood role; increase mother support and expectations; and promote better co- parenting and parental cooperation.	There were statistically significant differences for fathers receiving treatment for quality of father- child relationship pertaining to warmth/emotional support, intrusiveness, positive affect, and dyadic synchrony. Overall the father- child relationship quality was significantly higher for fathers in treatment group. Fathers in treatment were, on average, available to their children for 40 more minutes than those fathers in the control group.				132 (65 couples treatment; 67 control)	RCT

Reference	Program/ Policy Name	All Dads/Nonr esidential/ Residential	Curriculum or Focus	Results: Father Involvement	Results: Economic Stability	Results: Healthy Relationships	Results: Child Abuse Prevention	Sample Size	Research Design
Duggan et al. (2004)	Hawaii's Healthy State Program	All Dads	The Healthy State Program is a child abuse prevention program. Home visitors work with at-risk families to reduce abusive and neglectful parenting behaviors, improve family functioning, and promote health and development of children.	For families in the treatment group, as reported by mothers, there was no significant effect on fathers' accessibility, engagement, or sharing of responsibility. In families with a nonviolent fathers at baseline, mothers reported they were more likely to be satisfied with father accessibility.				684 (373 treatment; 270 control)	RCT
Fagan & Iglesias (1999)	Head Start Based Father Involvement Program	All Dads	This program entailed: volunteering in Head Start; weekly Father's day programs in classroom; father sensitivity training for staff; support groups for fathers; father-child recreation activities.	The treatment group showed significant effects for direct interaction, accessibility, and support of learning in univariate analyses. No significant effects were found for child-rearing behaviors.				96 (55 treatment; 41 control)	Quasi- experimental

Reference	Program/ Policy Name	All Dads/Nonr esidential/ Residential	Curriculum or Focus	Results: Father Involvement	Results: Economic Stability	Results: Healthy Relationships	Results: Child Abuse Prevention	Sample Size	Research Design
Fagan & Stevenson (2002)	Men as Teachers	All Dads	Program designed for African-American fathers with children enrolled in the Head Start program with curriculum based on empowerment theory, emphasizing fathers' strengths while developing parenting skills. Included the video series <i>Parenting: Attitude of the Heart</i> .	The study observed positive effects of the program on attitudes about teaching. No significant difference was found in fathers' parenting satisfaction between treatment and control groups.		No significant differences were found between treatment and control groups in racial oppression socialization.		38 (19 treatment, 19 control)	RCT
Fagan (2008)	Minnesota Early Learning Design	All Dads	The program was designed to improve co-parenting of youth fathers. Program components included helping fathers share parenting responsibilities, reducing fathers' isolation, and providing positive role models for fathers.	No difference was found between groups in parenting confidence.		The program had a positive impact on fathers' reports of communications, but no effect on mothers' reports of communication and fathers' involvement. It also had a positive impact on fathers' reports on parenting alliance, but no effect on mothers' report of		165 fathers (post-test sample: 44 treatment, 46 control)	RCT

Reference	Program/ Policy Name	All Dads/Nonr esidential/ Residential	Curriculum or Focus	Results: Father Involvement	Results: Economic Stability	Results: Healthy Relationships	Results: Child Abuse Prevention	Sample Size	Research Design
						parenting alliance. No difference was found in fathers' support.			
Fletcher et al. (2016)	Meta-analysis of Triple P	All Dads	The aim of this meta-analysis was to determine the differences of impact of the Triple P program on parenting practices for fathers and mothers using the Parenting Scale, which in a 30-item tool designed to identify dysfunctional parenting practices.			Triple P has a significantly greater effect on improving mothers' parenting practices than fathers' parenting practices, although they still saw small improvements. Fathers saw the largest effect in the Stepping Stones format of Triple P.		28 Triple P RCT intervention studies	RCT
Frank & Keown (2015)	Triple P	All Dads	The study examined the outcomes and process of Triple P adapted to enhance father engagement. Assessments of child behavior, self- and partner-reported parenting and the inter-parental relationship were conducted at pre,	Fathers in the treatment group reported significantly fewer and less severe child behavior problems. Mothers were also likely to report that intervention group fathers used less negative parenting practices.		Fathers in treatment groups reported significantly fewer child-rearing conflicts with their child's mother.		42 families (23 treatment, 19 control)	RCT

Reference	Program/ Policy Name	All Dads/Nonr esidential/ Residential	Curriculum or Focus	Results: Father Involvement	Results: Economic Stability	Results: Healthy Relationships	Results: Child Abuse Prevention	Sample Size	Research Design
			post, and follow up times, evaluating fathers and mothers separately.						
Harrison (1997)	Parental Training for Incarcerated Fathers	Nonresidential	This program was designed to improve incarcerated fathers' attitudes about child-rearing and self-esteem. Program used multiple curricula including <i>Concept Media's Curriculum</i> , <i>The Nurturing Program</i> , and <i>Systematic Training for Effective Parenting Program</i> .	Fathers receiving treatment experienced statistically significant improvement to attitudes about child rearing compared to control group. Separately, the children of fathers in the program were administered a Self-Perception Profile for Children or Adolescents, but there were no significant changes in child and adolescent perception over time for fathers receiving treatment.		No significant difference was found between treatment and control groups for parental self-esteem.		30 (15 treatment; 15 control)	RCT
Knox & Redcross (2000)	Parents' Fair Share	Nonresidential	The program was designed to help low-income		No statistically significant difference was	No effect was found in the likelihood of		5,611	RCT

Reference	Program/ Policy Name	All Dads/Nonr esidential/ Residential	Curriculum or Focus	Results: Father Involvement	Results: Economic Stability	Results: Healthy Relationships	Results: Child Abuse Prevention	Sample Size	Research Design
			noncustodial fathers find stable employment, increase earnings and child support payments, and become more involved parents by providing parents with employment training, peer support, voluntary mediation between parents, and enhanced child support enforcement (e.g. lowering child support enforcement).		found between treatment and control in employment or earnings. Fathers in the treatment group were statistically more likely to increase formal child support payments, but decreased cash amounts of informal payments.	mothers to report that the father had improved as a parent or parenting discussions about the child, style of conflict between parents, or mothers taking out restraining order against noncustodial fathers.		(2,819 treatment; 2,792 control)	
Landreth & Lobaugh (1998)	Filial Support Training	Nonresidential	This program aimed to encourage work and independence in families receiving public assistance and reduce welfare dependency by increasing families' levels of work and income.	Treatment group fathers scored higher than control fathers on all measures of acceptance of their children (Porter Parental Acceptance Scale). Treatment fathers scored lower than control fathers on				32 (16 treatment; 16 control)	RCT

Reference	Program/ Policy Name	All Dads/Nonr esidential/ Residential	Curriculum or Focus	Results: Father Involvement	Results: Economic Stability	Results: Healthy Relationships	Results: Child Abuse Prevention	Sample Size	Research Design
				the Parenting Stress Index total score, parent domain subscale, and filial problems checklist.					
Lewin-Bizan (2015)	24/7 Dads Hawaii Evaluation	All Dads	This program used the <i>24/7 Dads</i> curriculum to trains fathers in self-awareness, caring for self, fathering skills, parenting skills, and relationship skills.	Fathers in the intervention group were statistically more likely than fathers in the control group to be involved in father involvement tasks expected of contemporary fathers (e.g. helping children with homework, reading to children, and positive encouragement of children). Fathers in the program also reported statistically significant		Fathers in the intervention group were statistically more likely to improve levels of support for mother of the child at than fathers in the control group.		48	RCT

Reference	Program/ Policy Name	All Dads/Nonr esidential/ Residential	Curriculum or Focus	Results: Father Involvement	Results: Economic Stability	Results: Healthy Relationships	Results: Child Abuse Prevention	Sample Size	Research Design
				improvements in happiness about being a parent compared to the control group.					
Magill-Evans et al. (2007)	Video Self-Modeling Effects of Parenting Education on First-Time Fathers' Skills	Residential	The program was designed to improve fathers' parenting skills (including response to infant behavioral cues), promote their infants' development, and increase their competence as a father. Program used the <i>Keys to Caregiving</i> video series.	Fathers receiving treatment exhibited more positive father-child interactions compared to fathers in the control group. Fathers in the treatment group were statistically more sensitive to infant cues over time and fostering cognitive growth.				183 (89 treatment; 94 control)	RCT
Mazza (2002)	Young Dads	All Dads	The program was designed to improve confidence and responsible parenting for young fathers. Fathers received individually targeted comprehensive services including counseling;	There were statistically significant positive effects for fathers receiving treatment in perceptions of the quality of current and future relationship with children.	There were statistically significant positive effects for fathers receiving treatment in employment rates and vocational plans.	There were statistically significant positive effects for fathers receiving treatment in frequency in contraceptive use and availability of persons with whom a personal problem could be discussed.		60 (30 treatment; 30 control)	RCT

Reference	Program/ Policy Name	All Dads/Nonr esidential/ Residential	Curriculum or Focus	Results: Father Involvement	Results: Economic Stability	Results: Healthy Relationships	Results: Child Abuse Prevention	Sample Size	Research Design
			mentoring; referrals for employment, education, health care, housing, legal advocacy; and parenting skills training.						
McBride (1990)	Effect of Parenting Education on First-Time Fathers	All Dads	This study aimed to show that fatherhood involvement programs increased father interaction and parental responsibility. Fathers receiving treatment participated in weekly parent education discussion groups and father-child play groups. The discussion groups followed didactic parent educational programs like Parent Effectiveness Training, Adlerain, and Behavioral Approaches	Fathers receiving treatment scored significantly higher than the control group on measures of comfort with their parenting role, parental responsibility, interaction and accessibility to the child.				30 (15 treatment; 15 control)	Quasi- experimental

Reference	Program/ Policy Name	All Dads/Nonr esidential/ Residential	Curriculum or Focus	Results: Father Involvement	Results: Economic Stability	Results: Healthy Relationships	Results: Child Abuse Prevention	Sample Size	Research Design
McKerny, Clark, & Stone (1999)	PEACE Program	Nonresiden tial	The curriculum aimed to prevent issues for families post-divorce based on social learning theory and parenting skills training. Parents were required to attend a two-and-a-half-hour-long session after filing for divorce before a decree is granted.			Parents receiving treatment and in the subsample reported significantly better relationships with their children ($p \leq .10$). Parents in the subsample also reported that they were significantly more satisfied with their custody agreement ($p \leq .001$). On average, parents found the program helpful and reported that the other parents' negative behaviors had "decreased" and "stopped completely" after receiving treatment.		236 (136 treatment; 100 control)	RCT
Owen & Mulvihill (1994)	PAT	Residential	Parents as Teachers is a home-based program in which a home visitor educates and supports parents on			Fathers in the program reported higher levels of perceived social support compared to the control		128 (59 treatment; 69 control)	Quasi- experimental (longitudinal)

Reference	Program/ Policy Name	All Dads/Nonr esidential/ Residential	Curriculum or Focus	Results: Father Involvement	Results: Economic Stability	Results: Healthy Relationships	Results: Child Abuse Prevention	Sample Size	Research Design
			positive ways to guide their child's development and prepare them for school. The program also aims to reduce parent stress and provide parents with external social support.			group. Fathers' levels of parenting satisfaction decreased over time in the program. Fathers reported higher levels of parenting confidence. The study reported no significant effects of parent knowledge about child development, parenting attitudes, or parenting stress.			
Pfannenstiel & Honig (1991)	Information and Insights About Infants	All Dads	This program was designed to support first-time, low-income fathers with prenatal support using the Information and Insights about Infants (III) intervention program and the "Where are the Fathers?" booklet.	Fathers receiving treatment scored significantly higher than the control group on measures of father-infant interaction (e.g. AFIS scale measuring behavioral empathy, infant mood, vocalizations, distress, visual gaze, posture, and interaction				67 (34 treatment; 33 control)	RCT

Reference	Program/ Policy Name	All Dads/Nonr esidential/ Residential	Curriculum or Focus	Results: Father Involvement	Results: Economic Stability	Results: Healthy Relationships	Results: Child Abuse Prevention	Sample Size	Research Design
				attempts) at hospital discharge. However, no significant differences were found on measures of father-infant interaction between treatment and control groups one month after discharge. A second follow-up found fathers in treatment scored higher on measures of knowledge (e.g. Epstein's Knowledge of Infant Scale) about child development compared to the control group.					
Robbers (2005)	Responsible Fatherhood for Incarcerated Dads	Nonresidential	This program was designed to improve family relationships, knowledge and attitude toward fatherhood, and awareness of justice system for	The study observed positive outcomes on knowledge and attitudes about fatherhood for fathers in treatment group. No statistically significant effects		No statistically significant effects were observed for quality of relationship between father and mother of child or knowledge of justice system.		87 (56 treatment; 31 control)	Quasi-experimental

Reference	Program/ Policy Name	All Dads/Nonr esidential/ Residential	Curriculum or Focus	Results: Father Involvement	Results: Economic Stability	Results: Healthy Relationships	Results: Child Abuse Prevention	Sample Size	Research Design
			incarcerated fathers.	were observed for frequency of contact with children.					
Schroeder & Doughty (2009)	Noncustodial Parenting Choices	Nonresidential	Program targeted noncustodial parents who were under- or unemployed, owed child support, and whose children received public assistance. The program aimed to improve compliance of child support orders through helping parents find a job, educational training, and assisting with transportation or equipment costs.		Parents in the treatment group were significantly more likely to be employed and less likely to receive unemployment insurance benefits the first year after entry.			3,749 (1,875 treatment; 1,874 comparison)	Quasi- experimental

Reference	Program/ Policy Name	All Dads/Nonr esidential/ Residential	Curriculum or Focus	Results: Father Involvement	Results: Economic Stability	Results: Healthy Relationships	Results: Child Abuse Prevention	Sample Size	Research Design
Schroeder, Looney, & Schexnayder (2004)	Project Bootstrap	Nonresiden tial	Part of Texas Fragile Families Initiative, this program was designed to improve community-based services for young fathers. The program components included employment assistance, case management, help with child support orders, peer support groups, and cash incentives.		The study observed that fathers in treatment were more likely to be employed compared to control, but had lower average earnings. Additionally, the study found positive effects for the treatment group of consistently paying child support and participation in workforce development and training programs. Custodial mothers associated with fathers receiving treatment spent less time on TANF compared to mothers associated with control group. No effect was found in average amount of child support payments			118 (59 treatment; 59 control)	Quasi- experimental

Reference	Program/ Policy Name	All Dads/Nonr esidential/ Residential	Curriculum or Focus	Results: Father Involvement	Results: Economic Stability	Results: Healthy Relationships	Results: Child Abuse Prevention	Sample Size	Research Design
					and receipt of public assistance.				
Smith et al. (2016)	Centering Pregnancy (CP) Group Sessions	All Dads	This program aimed to increase male partner support and facilitate stronger family formation through CP group sessions during prenatal pregnancy programs. CP integrates health assessment, education, and support in a group setting that invites fathers to participate in the program.			Although there were no significant differences between intervention and control groups, male partners in the intervention group who attended at least one CP session were perceived as more supportive at both the beginning and end of the program.		249 (132 intervention; 117 comparison)	Quasi- experimental

Reference	Program/ Policy Name	All Dads/Nonr esidential/ Residential	Curriculum or Focus	Results: Father Involvement	Results: Economic Stability	Results: Healthy Relationships	Results: Child Abuse Prevention	Sample Size	Research Design
Westney, Cole, & Munford (1988)	A Prenatal Education Intervention	Nonresiden tial	This program was designed to educate prospective adolescent fathers on pregnancy and prenatal care and increase fathers’ supportive behaviors for mother and infant. Curriculum structured as four prenatal classes.	Fathers receiving treatment significantly increased knowledge of pregnancy, prenatal care, and infant development and care. Study reports that significant positive relationship between support and knowledge scores from pre- to post-tests indicate that increased knowledge may lead to more supportive behaviors for mother and infant.				28 (15 treatment; 13 control)	RCT
Wilczak & Markstrom (1999)	Systematic Training for Effective Parenting for Incarcerated Fathers	Nonresiden tial	The curriculum for the program was based on the <i>Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP) Program</i> and modified for incarcerated fathers. The	Fathers in the program scored significantly higher at post-test relative to pre-test on fathers’ knowledge about new parenting skills and parent satisfaction.				42 (21 treatment; 21 control)	RCT

Reference	Program/ Policy Name	All Dads/Nonr esidential/ Residential	Curriculum or Focus	Results: Father Involvement	Results: Economic Stability	Results: Healthy Relationships	Results: Child Abuse Prevention	Sample Size	Research Design
			program aimed to increase knowledge of parenting and child development, parent satisfaction, and parenting confidence levels.						
Wilson et al. (2016)	Dads Tuning into Kids	All Dads	This program targeted paternal emotional-socialization practices in a seven-session group program using an adaptation of the group-parenting program <i>Tuning in to Kids</i> .	Intervention fathers reported more empathy and expressive encouragement towards their children after the program than they did before, as well as small but statistically significant improvements in parenting efficacy.				162 (87 treatment, 75 control)	RCT

Appendix B: Evidence-based Responsible Fatherhood Programs

Program	Target Audience	Description	Evidence Base
24/7 Dad	All dads	Supports the growth and development of five characteristics for fathers— fathering skills, relationship skills, parenting skills, self-awareness, and caring for self—through a 24-hour program delivered during two-hour sessions over a 12-week period. ⁵²⁷	A randomized control trial in Hawaii found that fathers randomly assigned to the treatment group showed significant, positive improvement in fathers’ knowledge and skills (based on scores on the 24/7 Dad Fathering Skills Survey), father involvement (based on scores on the Inventory of Father Involvement ⁵²⁸), and the quality of the father-child relationship (assessed with two single-item questions). ⁵²⁹ Quasi-experimental studies have found similar results with fathers showing improved self-efficacy and lower stress levels, ⁵³⁰ positive improvement in parenting knowledge, communication knowledge, parenting attitudes, co-parenting/relationship attitudes, gender attitudes between the pre-test and post-test, ⁵³¹ and improvement in self-awareness, caring for self, parenting skills, fathering skills, and became less traditional in their perceptions of male roles after their participation in the program. ⁵³²
Active Parenting	Parents of children ages between the ages of two and 12 years	Video-based parenting program, set up as six two-hour weekly sessions, designed to help parents teach their children responsible behavior and reduce behavioral issues.	Active Parenting is listed in SAMHSA's (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) NREPP (National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices) Three quasi-experimental studies that found that parents who completed the program rated their children’s behavior better after the program, reported improved attitudes and beliefs about parenting, attitudes about physical punishment, and reported decreased parent-child problems. Researchers also observed fewer behavioral issues among children whose parents had completed the program. ⁵³³

Program	Target Audience	Description	Evidence Base
Becoming Parents for Low-Income, Low-Literacy Couples ⁵³⁴	Expectant parents	Prevention-focused, skill-based 30-hour workshop for new parents cope with the stressors of starting a family, including addressing barriers, improving communication skills, and learning self-care techniques.	One randomized control trial evaluation in the Building Strong Families study found that the program's implementation in Oklahoma had positive outcomes in relationship quality, co-parenting, and father involvement 15 months after the intervention, as compared to the control group. The study also found positive outcomes in family stability 36 months after the program as compared to the control group. ⁵³⁵
Boot Camp for New Dads ⁵³⁶	Expectant fathers	Three-hour workshop in which new fathers with young babies provide expectant fathers with information and guidance on fatherhood through facilitated conversation and activities. ⁵³⁷	A quasi-experimental study of the British version of the program found that participants reported increased confidence, preparedness for being a father, and knowledge of improving the couple relationship. ⁵³⁸ One quasi-experimental study in Denver showed that both mothers and fathers thought the program had a positive impact on fathers' relationships with their children. ⁵³⁹
Creating Lasting Family Connections Fatherhood Program: Family Reintegration (CLFCFP) ⁵⁴⁰	Fathers, men in father roles, and expectant father experiencing or at risk for family conflict resulting from physical and/or emotional separation (e.g., incarceration, substance abuse, military service)	Workshop designed to strengthen families, establish family accord, improve parenting skills, and reduce the likelihood of further problems (e.g., substance abuse, violence, risky sexual behavior, prison recidivism). Designed to be given in two-hour sessions once or twice a week over eight to 20 weeks.	CLFCFP is listed in SAMHSA's (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) NREPP (National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices). Two quasi-experimental studies found the following outcomes for treatment populations relative to the comparison group: reduced recidivism rates, improved relationship skills, greater knowledge of the STDs, no change in intention to binge drink compared to increased intentions among the comparison group, and increase in spirituality.
Effective Black Parenting ⁵⁴¹	African-American families at risk for child maltreatment	A parenting skill-building program created specifically for parents of African-American children, designed as a 15-session program or small groups	A quasi-experimental evaluation using pre- and post-tests found that participating parents indicated improvements in parental rejection, in the quality of family relationships, and in child behavior outcomes. A later

Program	Target Audience	Description	Evidence Base
		of parents or a one-day seminar version for large numbers of parents. The program covers child maltreatment, child behavior disorders, and substance abuse, as well as the racism, prejudice, cultural pride, and parental stress.	cohort reported that participating parents used more praise and less hitting and spanking than a comparison group. At the one-year follow-up, reductions in parental rejection and were maintained.
Family Wellness: Survival Skills for Healthy Families ⁵⁴²	Nonresidential fathers, stepfathers	A program used to teach, encourage, and support families and those who work with them to promote healthy communities. The program teaches practical skills based on proven principles that strengthen, support, and empower families.	The Family Wellness curriculum is listed in SAMHSA's (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) NREPP (National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices) and is considered a Best Practices Program. ⁵⁴³ One quasi-experimental study that found that intervention parents have greater increases in communication, conflict-resolution, problem-solving, disciplinary, and cooperation skills.
Fatherhood Development Curriculum ⁵⁴⁴	Young, primarily unwed, low-income fathers aged 16-25; applicable for work with older fathers	Group-discussion based intervention of 25 workshops that provides support, information, and motivation in the areas of life skills, parenthood, relationships, health and sexuality, and responsible fatherhood. The curriculum also provides a methodology for training and learning and assessment tools.	One quasi-experimental study of a small sample of the pre- & post-assessment instruments completed by participants in the fatherhood support group classes, more than 75 percent of the participants have increased their knowledge of and improved their attitude toward responsible fathering and parenting. ⁵⁴⁵
InsideOut Dad ⁵⁴⁶	Incarcerated fathers	Workshop series that helps incarcerated fathers improve their parenting skills and self-efficacy, and to increase their contact with their children after their release from prison. Workshop is designed to be given over 12 two-hour sessions.	InsideOut Dad is listed in SAMHSA's (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) NREPP (National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices). One quasi-experimental study found that treatment participants showed increased self-efficacy, an increase in parental knowledge, improved parental attitudes, and proactive contact of

Program	Target Audience	Description	Evidence Base
			calling their children relative to the comparison group.
Nurturing Fathers Program	All fathers	A 13-week training course designed to teach parenting and nurturing skills to fathers through fathers' experiences with their own fathers and through learning about their children's needs. The program covers developing attitudes and skills for male nurturance, healthy family relationships, and child development, with an emphasis on maintaining a positive and supportive co-parenting relationship with the child(ren)'s mother, whether the parents are together or separated. ⁵⁴⁷	One evaluation study with approximately 1,000 participants living in Florida used the Adult and Adolescent Parenting Inventory-2 to assess parenting and child-rearing attitudes of adult and adolescent parent and pre-parent populations. After participating in the program, fathers showed improvement in several parenting attitudes and behaviors, including expectations, empathy, corporal punishment, role reversal, and power/independence. ⁵⁴⁸
Parenting Together Curricula ⁵⁴⁹	Couples that just became first-time parents and could use assistance in developing the father's role in parenthood	Eight two-hour sessions between the second trimester of pregnancy and five months postpartum for first time parents that focuses on the development of fathers' knowledge, skills, and commitment to the fatherhood role. The program aims to help couples with co-parenting and communication.	A randomized control trial evaluation found that fathers who completed the program showed higher quality interactions with their infants and increased workday accessibility when compared to a control group. ⁵⁵⁰
Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP) ⁵⁵¹	Premarital and marital couples	Marriage and relationship workshop that teaches couples communication, teamwork, and conflict prevention and resolution skills. Workshop is given over 12-15 hours and is set up as 30-90 minute weekly	PREP is listed in SAMHSA's National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices. One 2011 randomized control study found reduced divorce rates, improved communication skills, increased confidence in their marriage, increased positive bonding between couples, and no change in satisfaction

Program	Target Audience	Description	Evidence Base
		workshops followed by weekend retreat.	for sacrificing for their partner relative to the comparison group. Three randomized control experiments found reduced levels of problem-intensity among treatment couples. One of these studies also found improved relationship satisfaction and communication among treatment couples.
Responsible Fatherhood Curriculum ⁵⁵²	All fathers, but evaluated with low-income, noncustodial parents	Curriculum designed by MDRC to be used for the Parents' Fair Share evaluation. Designed to be used at peer support meetings that gathered two or three times per week, the curriculum's goal is to help the participants look at themselves as men and as fathers. The program aims to further develop the skills that participants need to be successful fathers, such as negotiating relationships with their partners, children, family, friends, employers, and the court system. ⁵⁵³	The Parents' Fair Share Study, a national demonstration project that used a randomized control trial design, found that fathers who participated in the program were more likely to provide formal child support. Program participation also increased participants' efforts to engage in active parenting, increased frequency of discussions about the child among parents with the youngest children, and increased frequency of visits among fathers with no high school diploma. ⁵⁵⁴
Strengthening Families Program (SFP) ⁵⁵⁵	Families with children between three and 16 years of age	Parenting skills curriculum designed to increase family resilience and reduce risk factors. Designed to be administered over 14 two-hour weekly sessions.	Listed in SAMHSA's National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices. In a randomized control trial evaluation in the United States and Canada of families with a parent who had problems with alcohol in the last five years, U.S. parents reported decreases in conduct disorder symptoms than Canadian parents. Parents who received the program had lower scores on inconsistent discipline and verbal abuse. In a statewide implementation of SFP, participating families showed small improvements in

Program	Target Audience	Description	Evidence Base
			<p>covert aggression, criminal behavior, alcohol and drug use, overt aggression, concentration problems, social skills, and depression. Participating families also showed improvements in pre- and post-tests in parenting skills, positive parenting, parental involvement, parental supervision, and parenting efficacy, as well as family conflict, family organization, family cohesion, family communication, and family strength/resilience.</p>
<p>Supporting Father Involvement (SFI)</p>	<p>Fathers with children between birth and 11 years of age and with at least one other significant person in the child(ren)'s life</p>	<p>A parenting intervention with three core objectives: 1) strengthen fathers' involvement in the family; 2) promote healthy child development; and 3) prevent key factors implicated in child abuse. The program's intended outcomes include: reduced symptoms of anxiety and depression in parents; increased hands-on father involvement; reduced harsh parenting; reduced couple's conflict; and decreases in children's maladaptive behaviors.⁵⁵⁶</p>	<p>In a randomized control trial of 500 mostly low-income families living in California in which families were randomly assigned to the father-only group, the couple group, or a low-dose comparison condition in which both parents attended one three-hour group session, the evaluation found significant increases in psychological engagement and behavioral involvement with their children over an 18-month period for fathers in the father-only group and in the couples group.⁵⁵⁷ Additionally, fathers in the couples group reported no change in couple relationship satisfaction, whereas fathers in the control group and in the father-only group reported decreases in relationship satisfaction.</p>

Appendix C: Fatherhood Initiatives in Texas

The table below provides a working list of initiatives in Texas that aim to increase and improve fathers’ involvement with their children. The list is not exhaustive; the programs included in the list are the ones that CFRP was able to locate through online research. Programs are color-coded by their funding source: blue for federal funding, purple for state funding, and orange for community, non-profit, or unknown funding sources.

Program Name	Organization	Location	Funding Source	Program Features	Program Focus	Eligibility
Access & Visitation Direct Service Providers	Attorney General of Texas, Child Support Division - Family Initiatives (partner with Harris County, El Paso County, Bexar County, and Tarrant County domestic relation offices (DROs); New Day Services (Fort Worth); Family Ties (Waller); American Family Law Center (Houston))	El Paso, San Antonio, Houston, Fort Worth, Waller	Federal Access and Visitation grant	Provide visitation services for noncustodial parents, shared parenting education, and information regarding child custody, conservatorship, and possession order issues. Grantees include community and faith-based organizations and county domestic relations offices (DROs).	Access and Visitation, Co-Parenting	Noncustodial parents
Alliance for North Texas Healthy and Effective Marriages, dba Anthem Strong Families	Alliance for North Texas Healthy and Effective Marriages	Dallas	Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education Grant	Provide training on marriage education, marriage skills, and relationship skills programs; may include parenting skills, financial management, conflict resolution and job and career advancement	Healthy Relationships, Parenting Skills, Employment, Financial Stability, Job Readiness	Married couples, high school students
Community Based-Child Abuse Prevention— Home Visiting, Education, and Leadership (HEAL)	Texas Department of Family and Protective Services— Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) (contractors operate the program in five counties)	Concho, Harris, Runnels, Tarrant, and Tom Green counties	Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention-ACF	Provides evidence-based, parent education programs, home visiting services, support groups, basic needs support, child care, resource and referrals.	Parenting Skills	Families with young children

Program Name	Organization	Location	Funding Source	Program Features	Program Focus	Eligibility
Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention—Fatherhood EFFECT	Texas Department of Family and Protective Services—Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) (contractors operate the program in six counties)	Cameron, Denton, El Paso, Fort Bend, Tarrant, and Taylor counties	Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention-ACF	Offers parenting education course and case management. Participants receive child care, transportation, and food/diapers/clothing	Parenting Skills, Healthy Relationships	Fathers or father figures who have children under age 17, no open or substantiated CPS case, and have at least one risk factor from a designated list
Community-Centered Healthy Marriage and Relationship Grants	AVANCE – Houston, Inc.	Houston	Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education - ACF United Way	Provides classes on parenting skills, improving relationships between couples, and strengthening families; job and career advancement skills training; services include advocacy and referrals; Program uses the following curricula: Parejas Unidas, Active Relationships, Father Factor and AVANCE, Inc.’s Parent Education Curriculum.	Parenting Skills, Healthy Relationships, Co-Parenting	Families and married couples
Empowering Families Project (EPF)	The Parenting Center	Fort Worth, Tarrant County	Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education Grant - ACF	Provides community education, marriage programs and counseling services focused on parenting skills, financial management, conflict resolution, and job, career advancement, and marriage skills training	Parenting Skills, Healthy Relationships, Job Readiness, Employment, Financial Stability	Low-income parents and families, those on or at risk of going on TANF, and refugees
Father Engagement	Community Action, Inc. of Central Texas	San Marcos	Community Services Block Grant - ACF	24/7 Dad Fatherhood Groups facilitated by the Father Engagement Coordinator.	Father Engagement, Parenting Skills, Healthy Relationships, Child Abuse Prevention, Anger/Stress Management, Training and Support	Free weekly meeting for fathers, stepfathers, grandfathers, uncles, or father figures
Fathers and Children Together (FACT)	Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County	Fort Worth, Tarrant County	Federal - Pathways to Responsible Fatherhood - ACF	Provides personal Mentor-Navigator to help with child support/visitation, employment, parenting skills, strengthening relationships, education, finances, and anger management	Parenting Skills, Healthy Relationships, Job Readiness, Employment, Financial Stability	Low-income mothers and fathers

Program Name	Organization	Location	Funding Source	Program Features	Program Focus	Eligibility
Fathers in Action	AVANCE Inc. Houston and AVANCE Inc. RGV	Houston and Pharr-San Juan-Alamo	New Pathways for Fathers and Families – ACF	Provides eight-week curricula on parenting skills, conflict prevention and resolution, and co-parenting, offer four booster workshops on child support, healthy relationships, and employment, and provide case management and employment services.	Parenting Skills, Healthy Relationships, Job Readiness, Employment, Financial Stability	Fathers, expectant fathers, and father figures to children younger than 18, focusing on fathers of children ages birth to five years
Horizon Eagle	Horizon Outreach	Spring	New Pathways for Fathers and Families - ACF	Provides curriculum-based instruction on effective parenting and relationship skills, resources for economic stability; emphasis on veterans suffering from PTSD	Parenting Skills, Healthy Relationships, Employment, Financial Stability	All fathers, veteran fathers with history of PTSD
Motivation, Education, and Training, Inc.	Motivation, Education, and Training, Inc.	New Caney	New Pathways for Fathers and Families - ACF	Provides employment, vocational training, emergency support, housing services *New grantee, information on fatherhood program not available online	Employment, Financial Stability, Job Readiness	Migrant and seasonal farmworkers, low-income families
Strengthening Relationships/St rengthening Families (SR/SF)	Texas State University	San Marcos	Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education Grant - ACF	Provides high school youth training on value of marriage, relationship skills and budgeting; and job readiness and financial literacy/management skills; incorporates case management, referrals, and home visits as needed	Healthy Relationships, Employment, Financial Stability, Job Readiness	Pregnant and parenting teens
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service	Texas A&M	College Station	Health Marriage and Relationship Education Grant - ACF	Provides educational programs, activities, and resources for agricultural-based programs and organizations across Texas. Includes the Fathers Reading Every Day (FRED) program for fathers.	Training and Support	Schools, organizations, or programs offering agricultural-based services. All fathers.
Texas Start Smart	Attorney General of Texas (OAG), Child Support Division - Family Initiatives	Paris/Tyler, Dallas, El Paso and Amarillo	Federal-Office of Child Support Enforcement	Grant funded project to apply behavioral economics principles and a rapid cycle evaluation method to diagnosing, designing, testing, and evaluating behavioral economics informed interventions.	Child Support	Random assignment into treatment group at participating pilot site locations

Program Name	Organization	Location	Funding Source	Program Features	Program Focus	Eligibility
TYRO Champion Dads	Alliance for North Texas Healthy and Effective Marriages (ANTHEM)	Dallas area	New Pathways for Fathers and Families - ACF	Provides free workshops on fatherhood, navigating the child support system, anger management and communication. Provide additional supports such as transportation, vocational training, and job placement.	Parenting Skills	All fathers
Access & Visitation Hotline	Attorney General of Texas, Child Support Division - Family Initiatives (partner with Legal Aid of Northwest Texas)	Statewide	State	Provides legal education, assistance, and resources to parents in the IV-D program with shared parenting, paternity, or child support issues.	Access and Visitation	Noncustodial parents in the IV-D program
Pathways to Parenting (P2P)	Children & Family Institute	Dallas	State	Provides one-on-one mentoring to support families, career planning for parents, group classes about pregnancy and parenting for parents with infants, life-skills training, and education and referrals to support healthy child development.	Parenting Skills, Financial Stability, Employment, Job Readiness, Training and Support	To receive P2P's free services, the participant must be pregnant or have a child under the age of one and be a U.S. citizen. The program is open to men and women.
Community-Based Family Services	Texas Department of Family and Protective Services—Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) (contractors operate the program in 11 counties)	Bexar, Brown, Callahan, Coleman, Comanche, Eastland, Guadalupe, McCulloch, Mills, Runnels, and San Saba counties	State—DFPS Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention grant (PEI)	Parent education, home visitation, support groups, family counseling, resource and referrals, case management and basic needs support.	Parenting Skills	Families investigated by CPS who were designated low priority, were considered low-risk cases, or who did not have confirmed allegations of abuse or neglect

Program Name	Organization	Location	Funding Source	Program Features	Program Focus	Eligibility
Education Outreach to Justice-Involved Parents	Attorney General of Texas, Child Support Division - Family Initiatives (partner with Texas Department of Criminal Justice and Federal Bureau of Prison reentry coordinators and prison facility staff)	Statewide; strong collaboration in El Paso, Houston, and Corpus Christi	State	Provides incarcerated, recently released and paroled parents with information about paternity establishment, child support compliance and modification processes.	Paternity Establishment, Child Support	Currently or formerly incarcerated parents
Family-Based Safety Services	Texas Department of Family and Protective Services—Child Protective Services	Statewide	State – DFPS (CPS)	In-home services to help families maintain a stable and safe home and to reduce the risk of future abuse or neglect. Services include family counseling, crisis intervention, parenting classes, substance abuse treatment, domestic violence intervention, and day care.	Violence Prevention, Healthy Relationships, Parenting Skills	Families that have been investigated by CPS, whose children at risk of abuse or neglect, or whose children have been removed from the home
Family Group Decision Making (FGDM)	Texas Department of Family and Protective Services—Child Protective Services	Statewide	State – DFPS (CPS)	Practices to work with and engage children, youth, and families in safety and service planning and decision making, including Family Group Conferences (FGC), Circles of Support (COS), and Family Team Meetings (FTM)	Violence Prevention	Families with open CPS cases
Family Violence Education	Attorney General of Texas, Child Support Division - Family Initiatives (contract with Texas Council on Family Violence)	Statewide; special court-based collaboration in Denton and Williamson counties	State	Collaboration with the Texas Council on Family Violence and community advocacy programs across the state in an effort to support safe access to child support services for survivors of family violence.	Violence Prevention	Child support customers who disclose concerns with safety (family violence disclosure)

Program Name	Organization	Location	Funding Source	Program Features	Program Focus	Eligibility
FOCUS for Fathers	NewDay Services	Fort Worth	State and Federal – Responsible Fatherhood Grant	Works to increase responsible father involvement in the lives of their children through a ten-week program. There are three goals of the program: benefit children by increasing fathers' emotional and financial support; strengthen co-parenting relationships; promote fathers' parenting skills (i.e. decision making, conflict resolution, and communication skills)	Parenting Skills, Healthy Relationships, Co-Parenting	All fathers
Gabriel Project Life Center	Catholic Charities Central Texas	Austin and Brazos Valley	State and Federal	Works to provide alternatives to abortion by educating and mentoring families and providing material assistance. Participants sometimes receive baby items, such as diapers, clothing and bottles. Offers English and Spanish classes in two education tracks focused on pregnancy and parenting topics. Class topics include and are not limited to age appropriate play, baby basics and mommy care, breastfeeding, childbirth stages 1 and 2, eating right during pregnancy, and folic acid. Individual education, consultations, and professional counseling may also be available.	Parenting Skills	All moms and dads to be and parents of children 24 months or younger

Program Name	Organization	Location	Funding Source	Program Features	Program Focus	Eligibility
Healthy Outcomes through Prevention and Early Support (HOPES I and II)	Texas Department of Family and Protective Services— Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) (contractors operate the program in eight counties)	HOPES: Cameron, Ector, El Paso, Gregg, Hidalgo, Potter, Travis, and Webb counties HOPES II: Dallas, Harris, Jefferson, Lubbock, McLennan, Nueces, Taylor, and Wichita counties	State – DFPS (PEI)	Offers group sessions, case management, counseling, parent education, and home visitation to promote supportive family environments, healthy relationships, and positive communication. Contracts with community-based organizations to provide child abuse and neglect prevention services. Each site uses curriculum that best fits their community; 24/7 Dad, Triple P, Breaking the Cycle, Fathering After Violence, and Nurturing Fathers are all being used.	Violence Prevention, Healthy Relationships, Parenting Skills	Must have child age birth to five years, no open/substantiated CPS case, reside in the county where the contract was awarded, and have two risk factors from a designated list
Help through Intervention and Prevention (HIP)	Texas Department of Family and Protective Services— Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI)	Multiple program sites statewide	State – DFPS (PEI)	Provides voluntary services to families to increase protective factors and prevent child abuse; extensive family assessment, home visiting programs that include parent education and basic needs support	Child Abuse Prevention, Parenting Skills	Parents whose parental rights were previously terminated/who have had a child die due to child abuse and neglect, who currently have newborn

Program Name	Organization	Location	Funding Source	Program Features	Program Focus	Eligibility
HEROES: Help Establishing Responsive Orders and Ensuring Support for Children in Military Families	Attorney General of Texas, Child Support Division - Family Initiatives (partner with Judge Advocate General Corps (JAG), Family Readiness Group staff, the Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN), the Texas Veterans Leadership Program (TVLP), Texas Yellow Ribbon, and child support and legal services programs across the United States and internationally)	Statewide	State	Offer service members, veterans and their dependents enhanced, personalized assistance in addressing paternity establishment, child support and parenting time (custody/visitation) matters; Provide appropriate relief in Texas child support cases where military service/combat related injuries have contributed to non-compliance with court orders; and Promote positive co-parenting solutions for service members and families.	Paternity Establishment, Access and Visitation, Child Custody, Co-Parenting	Service members and Veterans
Military and Veteran Families Pilot Prevention (MFVPP) program	Texas Department of Family and Protective Services— Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) (contractors operate the program in three counties)	Bell, Bexar, and El Paso counties	State – DFPS (PEI)	Promote positive parental involvement, educate, facilitate, and otherwise support parents' ability to provide continued emotional, physical, and financial support for their children, and prevent child abuse and neglect occurrences in military communities through parent education and case management.	Child Abuse Prevention, Parenting Skills	Military and veteran families who include a person registered as the "primary caregiver" who is an active duty or former military member, National Guard member, Ready Reserve member, veteran, military retiree or their dependents, and a child aged zero to 17 (or expecting a child).

Program Name	Organization	Location	Funding Source	Program Features	Program Focus	Eligibility
Nurturing Fathers and the Triple P-Positive Parenting Program	Mona Mentors	Houston/Harris County	State – DFPS (CPS)	Offers fathers the opportunity to learn how to be nurturing men/fathers, how utilize positive discipline of their child(ren) based on the stages and developmental needs of children, how to keep children safe, and communicate within children in a way that promotes healthy parent-child relationships.	Parenting Skills, Healthy Relationships	All parents
Noncustodial Parent Choices	Attorney General of Texas, Child Support Division - Family Initiatives	21 out of 28 Workforce Development Board areas	State	Provides enhanced child support case compliance monitoring and employment services for un/underemployed, NCPs who owe child support; services include personal career counselor, job leads, job search guidance, career planning, GED or ESL classes, and work clothing and transportation assistance; typically lasts six months.	Child Support, Employment/ Financial Stability	Noncustodial parent must: have a full service child support case; be in front of the court on non-payment of support contempt charges or establishing a first-time obligation; have a social security number and be legally eligible to work in the US
Parent Collaboration Group	Texas Department of Family and Protective Services—Child Protective Services	Statewide	State – DFPS (CPS)	Partnership between CPS and parents who are or have been recipients of services from CPS that allows input from biological parents in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the CPS program	Father Engagement	Nominated by current Parent Liaisons or Regional DFPS staff
Parenting Awareness & Drug Risk Education (P.A.D.R.E.)	Life Steps	Austin	State and Local	Helps expecting, new and current fathers overcome the challenges that often come with parenting. The program consists of two main pieces: case management, which includes learning how to access resources, and a nurturing father program, which provides the tools needed to be a successful parent.	Parenting Skills, Healthy Relationships	All fathers

Program Name	Organization	Location	Funding Source	Program Features	Program Focus	Eligibility
Parenting and Paternity Awareness (p.a.p.a.)	Attorney General of Texas, Child Support Division - Family Initiatives (partner with Texas Education Agency and Regional Education Service Centers)	Multiple program sites statewide	State	Public school curriculum (14 sessions) on rights, responsibilities, and realities of parenting; focuses on father involvement, paternity establishment, financial/emotional challenges of single parenting, healthy relationship skills	Parenting Skills, Paternity Establishment, Violence Prevention	Public school students
Parenting Order Legal Line	Attorney General of Texas, Child Support Division - Family Initiatives (partner with Supreme Court of Texas, Texas Access to Justice Foundation, Texas Legal Services Center)	Statewide	State	A collaborative project of the OAG and the Texas Access to Justice Foundation. Provides unbundled legal services and telephone settlement conferences to help noncustodial parents resolve access and visitation conflicts.	Access and Visitation	Noncustodial parents who meet the financial eligibility threshold
Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) and the PRAMS2 Pilot	Department of State Health Services (DSHS), Family and Community Health Division (FCH), Office of Maternal & Child Health	Statewide	Centers for Disease Control (CDC)	A statewide surveillance system that surveys mothers within 60 to 180 days after the birth of their children about their experiences before, during, and after their pregnancy.	Maternal and Child Health	Representative sample of new mothers in Texas
Project Help through Intervention and Prevention (HIP)	Texas Department of Family and Protective Services	Multiple program sites statewide	State – DFPS (PEI)	Provides voluntary services to families to increase protective factors and prevent child abuse; extensive family assessment, home visiting programs that include parent education and basic needs support	Child Abuse Prevention, Parenting Skills	Parents whose parental rights were previously terminated/who have had a child die due to child abuse and neglect, who currently have newborn
Promoting Father Involvement	Attorney General of Texas, Child Support Division - Family Initiatives (partner with HHSC WIC, PEI, school districts; community-based organizations)	Statewide	State	Father engagement and paternity establishment training and resources for the HHSC Nurse Family Partnership and Home Visiting programs, the Texas WIC program, school-based teen parent programs, and local community and faith-based parent education programs.	Paternity Establishment, Father Engagement	N/A

Program Name	Organization	Location	Funding Source	Program Features	Program Focus	Eligibility
Responsible Fathering Initiative	Texas Department of Family and Protective Services—Child Protective Services	Statewide	State – DFPS (CPS)	Provide men with support and services to help them be fully involved dads; identify ways to engage fathers	Father Engagement	N/A
Safe Babies	DFPS-PEI	Selected hospitals across the state	State – DFPS (PEI)	Evaluate hospital-based education programs for fathers or male caregivers at the baby’s birth. Programs focus on postpartum mental health awareness, infant safety, abusive head trauma reduction, and father involvement	Violence Prevention, Parenting Skills	Fathers or male caregivers receiving in-hospital education at selected hospitals
SAFE Futures	SAFE Alliance	Austin area	State grants, federal campaigns, other contributions	Provides child abuse and family violence prevention through parenting skills, domestic violence education, evidence-based services for fathers, support for survivors of domestic violence and their children, and assistance with housing, mental health, or other issues affecting wellbeing	Domestic Violence, Parenting Skills, Father Engagement, Financial Stability	All parents who have experienced domestic violence in their families
Services for Incarcerated Parents and Parents Returning to the Community	Attorney General of Texas (OAG), Child Support Division - Family Initiatives	Multiple program sites statewide	State	Creates and delivers resources about paternity and child support to incarcerated and formerly incarcerated parents (handbook and DVD); encourages incarcerated parents to remain emotionally and financially engaged with children; parents can request review of their child support obligation	Child Support, Paternity Establishment	Incarcerated and formerly incarcerated parents
Services to At-Risk Youth (STAR)	DFPS PEI (contractors operate the program in multiple sites across the state)	Services available in all 254 counties	State – DFPS (PEI)	Serve youth and their families needing crisis intervention, help with family conflict, concerns involving school performance and attendance and building parent and youth skills. Provide crisis counseling, individual and family counseling, emergency short-term respite care, as well as youth and parent skills classes to youth and families in their communities.	Parenting Skills	Youth age zero to 17 and through age 18, and their families

Program Name	Organization	Location	Funding Source	Program Features	Program Focus	Eligibility
Strong Start	SAFE Alliance	Austin area	State grants, federal campaigns, other contributions	Provides parenting education to learn how to increase positive behaviors and decrease challenging behaviors in children	Parenting Skills	Parents of children five years of age or younger
Texas Families: Together and Safe (TFTS)	DFPS PEI (contractors operate the program in six counties)	Multiple program sites statewide	State – DFPS (PEI)	Parent education and training, support groups, child care, family counseling, limited home visitation, basic needs support, resource and referrals.	Parenting Skills, Co-Parenting, Violence Prevention, Anger/Stress Management	Families with children three to 17 years, no open CPS case, no prior case of abuse or neglect, in counties served
Texas Healthy Baby Initiative	DSHS	Statewide	State—DSHS	Provide information to mothers and fathers about pre- and inter-conception health, partner involvement, informed decision-making prior to and during pregnancy, and injury during a baby’s first year. Includes the Someday Starts Now, Maps for Dads, and Live Like a Dad websites.	Parenting Skills, Co-Parenting	N/A
Texas Home Visiting	DFPS (contractors operate the program in	Multiple program sites statewide	State and Federal – DFPS and MIECHV federal funds (PEI)	Families receive services through evidence-based based home visiting programs and are referred to supplemental services as needed. Programs include Home Instruction for Parents of Pre-School Youngsters (HIPPY) Nurse Family Partnership (NFP), and Parents as Teachers (PAT).	Parenting Skills	Families with children ages zero to five; some programs have income eligibility requirements
Texas Offenders Reentry Initiative (T.O.R.I.)	Texas Offenders Reentry Initiative	Multiple program sites statewide	State and Federal	Provides an array of supportive services to assist ex-offenders reduce rates of recidivism and lead productive lives, including services focused on housing, family, employment acquisition, education, health care, and mentorship.	Parenting Skills, Employment, Financial Stability, Training and Support, Incarceration/Re entry	Ex-offenders

Program Name	Organization	Location	Funding Source	Program Features	Program Focus	Eligibility
Twogether in Texas	Healthy Marriage Program Texas Health and Human Services Commission	Multiple program sites statewide	State—HHSC	Dedicates its services to increasing the wellbeing of children by providing voluntary marriage and relationship education, which teaches communication skills and conflict management strategies.	Healthy Relationships	Married or unmarried couples
WIC Peer Dad (PD) Program	The Office of Title V and Family Health (OTVFH)	Cameron and Hidalgo counties, East Texas (Tyler), San Antonio	State—DSHS (The Office of Title V and Family Health (OTVFH))	Teaches fathers and mothers about: Breastfeeding, Shaken Baby (e.g. Periods of Purple Crying), Baby Behavior training, Being a dad –caring for a mom. Makes referrals to social services for financial security (e.g. employment, utilities, etc.) Reaches out to fathers and grandfathers of women who do not breastfeed.	Parenting Skills	Fathers or father figures whose partner is currently receiving WIC benefits
Bridges to Growth	The Georgetown Project	Georgetown	Georgetown Health Foundation and private donations	Initiative that builds the skills and confidence of parents and child care providers to create nurturing early environments for children. Offers parenting classes, a lending library, and support group, and hosts free children’s events	Parenting Skills	Parents of young children
Compadre Y Compadre	The Children’s Shelter	San Antonio and Bexar County area	United Way, local foundations/ donations	Two-week “Daddy Boot Camp” – learn child development, infant safety precautions, hands-on child care training; 15 week parenting class (Nurturing Fathers and Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors curricula) – nonviolent discipline, appropriate boundaries, stress management, self-awareness, overcoming barriers; offer case management, assessments/screenings, aftercare mentoring, school readiness	Parenting Skills, Violence Prevention, Anger/Stress Management	Any male caregiver with a child under the age of 18

Program Name	Organization	Location	Funding Source	Program Features	Program Focus	Eligibility
Cooperative Parenting & Divorce Course	Bexar Family Solutions	San Antonio	Unknown	Program that attempts to minimize the negative effects of divorce and conflict between parents on their children. Offered in 2-hour classes for eight weeks with no more than 15 parents per class. Meets the requirement for the Bexar County District Courts for parents mandated to attend cooperative parenting education. Offered at convenient hours for working parents and at a reasonable cost. Mandated parents pay for the course on a sliding scale based on income.	Co-Parenting, Healthy Relationships, Anger/Stress Management	Available to parents who have volunteered or have been ordered by the Court to attend Cooperative Parenting due to conflict in co-parenting their children.
Dad's Club	North Texas Fatherhood Initiative (subsidiary of Texas Healthy Marriage and Relationship Initiative)	Dallas	Unknown	Provides support group for fathers to connect and share information; dads promote positive involvement and interaction by participating in monthly "Lunch Dads" activity	Parenting Skills	All fathers
Dads Count	ESCAPE Family Resource Center	Harris, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Liberty Counties	Private Funding	Dads Count helps men understand their responsibilities as fathers and how to establish stronger relationships with their children. The course also addresses the challenges of co-parenting, the demands on children living in two homes, and anger management when times get tough.	Healthy Relationships, Co-Parenting, Anger/Stress Management	All fathers
Family Education Program	Any Baby Can	Austin and Travis County area	Housing Authority of the City of Austin and City of Austin and Travis County	Offers parenting classes that help new and experienced parents to become positive role models for their children. Also offers a family learning center that provides tutoring for diverse literacy needs. The classes help parents to become self-sufficient, raise healthy families, and support their children in school.	Parenting Skills, Training and Support	All parents
Family Place, Family Pathways, My Father's House	Buckner Children and Family Services	Amarillo, Conroe, Dallas, Houston, Lubbock, Lufkin, Midland	Unknown	Single parent focus; parents and children are offered safe place to live, counseling services, and lessons in parenting skills, money management, and conflict resolution; provide spiritual mentorship	Parenting Skills	Must be 18 years or older and enrolled in educational/vocational program

Program Name	Organization	Location	Funding Source	Program Features	Program Focus	Eligibility
Family Support Services	Healthy Families San Angelo	San Angelo	Unknown	Integrates dads program into full family approach. Intensive, long-term home visiting that engages moms and dads from prenatal stage to child's second birthday. Male and female home visitors focus on bonding and attachment, healthy birth spacing through contraceptive use, family self-sufficiency through education and employment, and healthy relationship skills. Uses Healthy Babies...Healthy Families, Maps for Dads, and Steps to Success curricula.	Parenting Skills, Healthy Relationships, Employment, Financial Stability	Mothers must be under 21 years old at intake
Fatherhood 101	Fatherhood Help Services of El Paso	El Paso	Unknown	Supports fathers through practical and applicable information about their roles and responsibilities in becoming and or being a father, including taking responsibility for themselves and their families.	Parenting Skills	All fathers
iParent SA Military Services	The Children's Shelter	San Antonio/ Bexar County	United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County, DFPS, Metro Health 1115 Waiver	Provides in-home parenting support, education, and case management	Parenting Skills	Parents and dependents of active or retired military service men and women with children ages zero to 17
iParent SA Parenting Support	The Children's Shelter	San Antonio/ Bexar County	United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County, DFPS, Metro Health 1115 Waiver	Provides short- and long-term services including in-home and group-based parent training, child school readiness, developmental assessments, family enrichment activities, case management, 24/7 crisis intervention, and emergency day/overnight respite	Parenting Skills	Parents/guardians with children under 18 in San Antonio or Bexar County
Just Beginning	First 3 Years	Dallas	The Dallas Foundation, Communities Foundation of Texas, Gaston Episcopal Hospital Foundation	Addresses the parenting support needs of teen fathers within the juvenile justice system by giving them tools to communicate with and build positive relationships with their child.	Parenting Skills, Healthy Relationships, Incarceration/Re entry	Fathers in the juvenile justice system

Program Name	Organization	Location	Funding Source	Program Features	Program Focus	Eligibility
Navigating Fatherhood	Man in Me	Pflugerville	Unknown	Provide fatherhood and parenting group sessions using the 24/7 Dad curriculum	Parenting Skills, Father Engagement	Unknown
MCH Family Outreach Services	Methodist Children's Home	Abilene, Bryan/College Station, Corpus Christi, Dallas, El Paso, Houston, Killeen, Las Cruces, Lubbock, San Antonio, Tyler, Waco	Private contributions, other	Provide In-Home Services and Parent Education programs for families. In-Home Services offers early intervention services including case management, parent support, and resources and referrals for parents. Parent education provides guidance and support for developing parenting skills.	Parenting Skills	Parents with children ages zero to 18. Parents or children must be facing crisis.
On My Shoulders	SOLUM Community Transformation Initiative	Gainesville/ Cooke County	Unknown	Builds partnerships and effective relationships between parents and their children. Skills include problem solving, positive relationships, communication clarity, emotional control, partnership parenting, anger management, and trauma resolution.	Parenting Skills, Co-Parenting, Healthy relationships, Anger/Stress Management	All parents/caregivers
Parent Education	Family Service Association of San Antonio	San Antonio	United Way, corporate/ foundation grants	Parenting classes to teach effective nurturing and disciplining; in-home parenting sessions; speakers bureau to spread word on child abuse prevention throughout the community	Parenting Skills	All parents
Parenting 101, Positive Parenting, Parenting Help, and Helping Children Cope with Divorce	DePelchin Children's Center	Multiple program sites statewide	United Way	Courses that cover child development, communication, positive discipline, stress management, causes of child misbehavior, and positive parenting strategies; divorce class offers guidance on navigating the process to minimize negative impact on children; offer eight-week, six-week, and two-day classes; use Parenting 101 and Triple P curricula	Parenting Skills, Co-Parenting	All parents

Program Name	Organization	Location	Funding Source	Program Features	Program Focus	Eligibility
Parenting & Family Life Classes	Family Houston, a United Way Agency	Houston	Unknown	Provides parenting classes, as well as co-parenting and divorce classes which qualify as court-mandated divorcing parent education.	Parenting Skills, Co-Parenting, Anger/Stress Management	All parents/caregivers
Practical Fatherhood	Austin Life Care	Austin	Unknown	As a part its "Earn While You Learn" program, Austin Life Care's practical fatherhood program provides parenting skills for both new and experienced fathers in a supportive environment and is led by male instructors who are also fathers	Parenting Skills	All fathers
Pregnancy to Age Three (P-3) Home Visiting Program	Lumin Education	Dallas	Private donations and government grants	Home visiting parent education program based on the "Parents as Teachers (PAT)" model that teachers parents to be actively involved in their child's education and development. Includes developmental and health screenings, as well as monthly group meetings with doctors and community experts on child development.	Parenting Skills	Parents with children ages zero to three
Project Bootstrap	Teen Health Clinic, Baylor College of Medicine	Houston/Harris County	Unknown	The Bootstrap program provides young fathers ages 16-25 with a stipend to pursue education and vocational training.	Employment, Financial Stability, Training and Support	Fathers ages 16-25 years old
Safe Harbour Supervised Visitation Center	Project Unity	Brazos Valley	OAG, City of Bryan Community Development Block Grant, Dansby Foundation, United Way of Brazos Valley	Center for children's supervised visits with noncustodial parent; provides parenting education, assists in developing shared parenting plans, and facilitates fathering support groups	Parenting Skills, Co-Parenting	Families that have some type of supervised visitation requirement

Program Name	Organization	Location	Funding Source	Program Features	Program Focus	Eligibility
San Antonio Fatherhood Campaign	San Antonio Fatherhood Campaign	San Antonio	Unknown	Offers a variety of classes and workshops on parenting and other issues relating to today's needs for being a well-rounded parent and responsible father, including family leadership, relationship strengthening, behavioral health support, and character development.	Parenting Skills, Co-Parenting, Healthy Relationships, Domestic Violence	All fathers
Services to Fathers, Parent-Child Education Program	AVANCE-San Antonio	San Antonio	Unknown	Provides educational courses for fathers, case management, and support services such as meals and transportation; uses the Five Protective Factors framework to promote father involvement and AVANCE Inc. Services to Fathers Curriculum; parents learn about anger and stress management, domestic violence prevention, and positive expression of emotions	Parenting Skills, Violence Prevention, Child Abuse Prevention, Anger/Stress Management	Must have a child birth to three years old and have income within the federal poverty guidelines
Strengthening Families Program	Youth Advocacy	Austin	City of Austin Community Youth Development Fund	Provide an evidence-based curriculum focused on reducing family-related risk factors and building protective factors in young children and their parents/caregivers to reduce substance abuse or violent/risky behaviors in youth	Parenting Skills	Parents or caregivers of children in fourth through eighth grades who live in the 78744 zip code
Success for Life	Family Care Connection	Dallas County	Unknown	Aimed at teen/young adult parents; provides case management, parent education, mentoring, and marriage/relationship skills training through group meetings, home visits, and high school class presentations; emphasizes role of fathers	Parenting Skills, Healthy Relationships	Teen/young adult parents
Teen Parenting Services	LifeWorks	Austin area	Foundation partners and private donations	Case management services and home visits to support pregnant and parenting teens to complete their educations and develop parenting skills. Parenting groups are provided at local school and community locations.	Parenting Skills, Employment, Financial Stability	Teen/young adult parents

Program Name	Organization	Location	Funding Source	Program Features	Program Focus	Eligibility
Watch D.O.G.S.	Local chapters of the National Center for Fathering Program	1390 schools in Texas	Unknown	Fathers and father figures of K-12 children volunteer at least one full day a year at their child/student's school during the school year. Watch D.O.G.S. assist with monitoring the school entrance or cafeteria, assisting with the loading and unloading of school buses and cars, and assisting teachers in the classroom.	Father Engagement	Fathers or father figures who volunteer at least one full day a year
Young Parents Program	LifeWorks	Austin area	Foundation partners and private donations	Apartment-based transitional housing program for pregnant and parenting youth. Includes case management, parenting classes, and full-time supervision.	Parenting Skills	Teen/young adult parents

Appendix D: Parenting Check-In for Dads (PCI-D)

1

Parenting Check-In for Dads

CHILD & FAMILY
RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
LBJ SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ASK ABOUT YOU AND YOUR EXPERIENCES, BELIEFS, AND ACTIONS AS A PARENT. PLEASE ANSWER THE QUESTIONS HONESTLY AND COMPLETELY. FOR EACH QUESTION, INDICATE YOUR ANSWER BY SELECTING THE BOX NEXT TO THE OPTION THAT BEST APPLIES TO YOU.

1. Today's date (MM/DD/YYYY): ____ / ____ / ____
2. What is YOUR name (First, Last)? _____ Date of birth (MM/DD/YYYY): ____ / ____ / ____

THIS SURVEY WILL ASK YOU SEVERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP YOU HAVE WITH YOUR CHILD AND YOUR CHILD'S MOTHER. IF YOU HAVE MULTIPLE CHILDREN, PLEASE ANSWER ABOUT YOUR CHILD WHO IS CLOSEST TO AGE 5. ONLY ANSWER ABOUT ONE CHILD.

3. What is the name of your biological or legally adopted child closest to age 5? *If you have two children equally close to age 5, please respond about the younger child. For example, if you have a 4 year-old child and a 6 year-old child (both are equally close to age 5), please respond about the 4 year-old child.

Name of child (First, Last): _____ Child's date of birth (MM/DD/YYYY): ____ / ____ / ____

4. How much contact do you have with this child?
 - Lives with me all or most of the time
 - Lives with me part of the time
 - Does not live with me, but we have regular contact
 - We hardly have any contact
 - We have no contact → **SKIP TO QUESTION 7**

5. This question asks about the activities you engaged in with your child.

In the past month when you spent time with your child, how often did you...	Regularly	Often	Some-times	Hardly Ever	Never	Not at My Child's Age
Help your child with her/his daily routine, such as bathing, changing diapers, getting dressed, bedtime, and hygiene routines	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Help your child learn new things or help with homework	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Read books with or read to your child	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Watch videos/DVDs or TV with your child	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Play outside or play sports with your child	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hug or show physical affection to your child	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tell your child that you love her/him	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spend time doing things your child likes to do	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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6. This question asks about your use of the following strategies to get your child to do what you thought s/he should do.

In the past month when you spent time with your child, how often did you...	Regularly	Often	Some-times	Hardly Ever	Never	Not at My Child's Age
Explain to your child why something s/he did was wrong	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Give your child something else to do instead of what s/he was doing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Shout, yell, scream at, or threaten your child	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spank or use physical punishment with your child	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Promise your child treats (such as candy or a toy) to stop misbehavior	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Put your child in time-out	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Establish a reward system for your child (e.g., sticker charts) to encourage positive behavior	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Praise your child when s/he used good behavior	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Threaten to spank your child, but not actually do it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Take privileges away from or ground your child	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7.

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
When I am with my child, I act like the father I want to be	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being a father is harder than I thought it would be	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to be there for my child as much as s/he needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find that taking care of my child is much more work than pleasure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My child seems harder to care for than most children	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel prepared to be the father I want to be	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In the past month, I have felt overwhelmed by my parenting responsibilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel trapped by my responsibilities as a father	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am confident in my ability as a father	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would be doing better in life without my child	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I often feel tired, worn out, or exhausted from raising my child	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am proud of what I do for my child as a father	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My interactions with my child today will impact his/her future	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I often feel angry with my child	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have someone to give me advice on how to be a good father	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel supported in my role as a father	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have little control over the things that happen to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I know how to calm down when I am angry	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can do a lot to change many of the important things in my life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I often feel helpless in dealing with problems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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8. Parents share parenting roles and responsibilities differently. For each of the parenting roles and responsibilities listed below, please indicate whether you believe this should be primarily the father's responsibility, the mother's responsibility, or both the father's and mother's responsibility.

Whose responsibility is:	Father's Responsibility	Both Father's and Mother's Responsibility	Mother's Responsibility
Comforting or soothing the child when s/he is upset	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Putting the child to bed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feeding or preparing food for the child	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bathing or assisting the child with grooming and dressing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reading to or educating the child	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Disciplining the child	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Providing for the child financially	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Giving the child love and affection	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Playing with or entertaining the child	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Providing protection for the child	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teaching the child about life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- 9.

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
It is my responsibility to provide money or items for my child	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I provide as much for my child as s/he needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My child's mother and I share responsibility for taking care of and supporting our child	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I provide as much financial support for my child as I can	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a budget for my expenses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel confident in my ability to conduct an effective job search	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have goals for my career in five years	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would like to learn new job skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ASK YOU ABOUT THE MOTHER OF YOUR CHILD WHO IS CLOSEST TO AGE 5. PLEASE ANSWER AS HONESTLY AS POSSIBLE.

10. Please select the option that best describes your current relationship with the mother of this child:

- Married
- Romantically involved, *and* living together
- Romantically involved, but *not* living together
- Casual or on and off relationship
- Just friends
- Not in any type of relationship
- Widowed/Mother is deceased → **SKIP TO QUESTION 14**
- Other (please specify): _____

11. How often did you and this child's mother see or talk to each other in the past month?

- Every day or nearly every day
- A few times a week
- A few times a month
- Hardly ever
- Never

12. This question asks about the way you and your child's mother work together as parents.

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
She can rely on me to spend time with our child when I say I will	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If she had to go away for one week and couldn't take our child with her, I would feel comfortable taking care of our child by myself	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
She does not follow the decisions I make about our child	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
She speaks badly about me to our child	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We share information about our child with each other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We make joint decisions about our child	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We try to understand where each other is coming from	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We respect each other's decisions made about our child	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
She makes it hard for me to spend time with our child	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
She makes it hard for me to talk with our child	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
She tells our child what our child is allowed and not allowed to say to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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13. This question asks about your interactions with this child's mother in the past month.

In the past month, how often did the following happen?	Regularly	Often	Sometimes	Hardly Ever	Never
If she was rude or angry, I acted rude or angry too	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When we had a disagreement, I yelled or screamed at her	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We argued or fought in front of our child or within earshot of her/him	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I knew how to ask for something I needed without becoming aggressive with her	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When we argued, our arguments became violent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I apologized if I was rude or yelled	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was satisfied with the way we handled conflict	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If our arguments became heated, I was able to calm down and cool things down	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ASK YOU ABOUT YOUR INCOME. PLEASE ANSWER AS HONESTLY AS POSSIBLE.

14. In the past month, has your income changed?

- Increased
 Decreased
 Stayed the same → **SKIP TO QUESTION 16**

15. If your income has changed, was it because of a change in...? Select all that apply.

- Employment
 Hours
 Schedule
 Pay
 Other (please specify): _____

16.

Please indicate your level of agreement with how the following items negatively affect your financial stability:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Lack of employment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Limited education level and skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Issues related to child support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Incarceration record that limits employment opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inability to work enough hours	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personal disability or serious health problems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Substance abuse problems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discrimination or harassment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personal mental health	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Housing instability and lack of a permanent address	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of transportation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Need to care for a family member	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify): _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

GO TO THE NEXT PAGE

PLEASE ONLY ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IF YOUR CHILD DOES NOT LIVE WITH YOU ALL OR MOST OF THE TIME.

IF YOUR CHILD DOES LIVE WITH YOU ALL OR MOST OF THE TIME, GO TO THE NEXT PAGE

17. Do you have a court order that specifies when you can spend time with your child who is closest to age 5?

- Yes, and I follow it
- Yes, but I do not follow it
- Yes, but my child's mother does not follow it
- No, but I plan to open a case
- No, and I have no plan to pursue one

18. Approximately how many days per month is your child supposed to spend with you, according to the court order?

Days per month: (ex: 10) _____

19. Please answer the following questions about the past month.

	Every day or almost every day	3-4 times per week	1-2 times per week	2-3 times per month	Once per month	Not at all
How often did you try to contact your child?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How often did you see your child in person?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How often did you talk on the phone, send letters, cards, or texts, use video chatting or other social media to connect with your child?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

20. Do you have a legal agreement or child support order that requires you to provide financial support for your child?

- Yes, and I follow it
- Yes, but I don't or can't follow it
- No, but I or my child's mother plan to open a case
- No, and I have no plan to open a case

21. During the past month, not including formal child support payments, how often did you provide financial support for your child?

- On a regular basis
- When my child's mother asked
- When I had extra money
- I did not provide financial support for my child in the past month

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22. During the past month, how often did you buy items such as clothes, diapers, food, milk, medicine, or toys for your child?

- On a regular basis
- When my child's mother asked
- When I had extra money
- I did not buy any items for my child in the past month

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ALL PARTICIPANTS SHOULD ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.

23. What are your top reasons for participating in this program? Select all that apply.

- I want to learn new skills to be a better parent
- I want help finding a job
- I want to learn from other fathers who are also doing the best they can with their children
- I want to learn new strategies to discipline my child
- I want my child to be more prepared for school and life
- I have been ordered to take a course like this by a judge
- I have been asked to take a course like this by my parole officer
- Other (please specify): _____

24. Have you ever participated or are currently participating in a parenting program?

- No
- Yes → What was the name of the parenting program or organization? _____

Thank you so much for taking this survey!

Appendix E: 24/7 Dad A.M. Fathering Skills Survey (FSS) Part B Item Domains

Question	Self-Awareness	Caring for Self	Fathering Skills	Parenting Skills	Relationship Skills
1. The 24/7 Dad has which of the five following traits					
2. When the 24/7 Dad uses his fathering skills, he knows:					
3. Today's culture does not link body image and what it means to be a man. (T/F)					
4. People learn what it means to be a man mostly through:					
5. A good way for men to handle their feelings is:					
6. Grieving is:					
7. Which of the following is not a healthy way to handle stress?					
8. Most men don't like to visit the doctor because:					
9. Which of the following is not a communication style?					
10. Two good ways to talk with my children are:					
11. Married men, on average, live fuller, happier lives than unmarried men. (T/F)					
12. Can a Dad have all of the traits of the Ideal Father?					
13. Which of the following statements best describes the purpose of Family Rules?					
14. Which statement is true?					
15. What is the best definition of self-worth?					
16. Nature has more to do with how children turn out than how their parents raise them.					
17. A Dad without custody and little or no access to his children can't create a plan to increase his involvement in their lives. (T/F)					

18. Which of the following statements is true about how well children do in school.					
19. Which of the following is not true about problems between parents in raising their children?					
20. What is the most important thing to keep in mind when you try to work out differences with your children's mother in raising your children?					
21. A Dad mostly provides for his family in which of the following ways?					
22. Which of the following statements is true about balancing work and family?					
Total	11	5	9	7	9

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