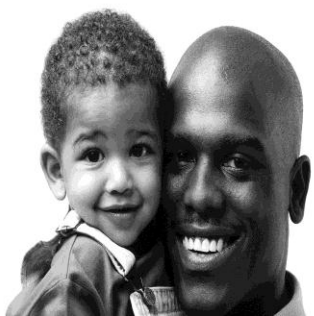


Taking Fatherhood Work to the Next Level: *Exploring Father Involvement Curriculums as Beneficial Tools in Promoting Positive Behaviors and Healthy Relationships*

אבא aabbo Pai Daddy Baba Papa tata





Our Vision:

A world in which children are cherished, families are engaged in their communities, and communities thrive.

*Funded by the
State of California Department of Social Services
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www.familyresourcecenters.net



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Father Factor



- **24 million children** in America (1 out of 3) live in father-absent homes
- Children who live in father absent homes are more likely to:
 - Live in poverty
 - Experiment with drugs and engage in criminal behavior
 - Higher risk for child abuse and neglect
 - Experience educational, health, and behavioral problems

(Source: National Fatherhood Initiative)

Supporting Father Involvement (SFI)

Evidence-Based Services for Children and Families

Project Funded by:

California Department of Social Services,
Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP)

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Supporting Father Involvement

Research to Practice

- **Father Engagement trainings**
- **Agency assessment and action plans**
- **Evidence-based SFI intervention**
- **Training and technical assistance to support implementation**

Supporting Father Involvement Research Methods

- Original sites
- Randomize controlled trials
- Group structure
- 5 aspects of family life (domains)
- SFI approach to groups
- Number of families

SFI Outcomes

Participating parents experienced :

- reduced stress and anxiety
- more satisfied with their relationship (less conflict)
- employ less harsh discipline

Their children become:

- less hyperactive and aggressive

Supporting Father Involvement

- Networking
- Organizational Self-Assessment
- Coaching and Technical Assistance
- Evidence – Based Intervention
 - 32 hour curriculum for fathers or couples
 - Five dimensions of family life
 - Over 900 families to date

Supporting Father Involvement (SFI)

Levels of Participation



The Organizational Change Process



Steps to Engaging Fathers

- Value fathers
- Prepare your agency
- Reach out
- Implement programs and services
- Sustain efforts

Assessment

- Father –friendliness
- Stakeholder input
- Pre/Post data



FATHER-FRIENDLINESS

ORGANIZATIONAL SELF-ASSESSMENT

- 1. ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT
- 2. AGENCY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
- 3. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT
- 4. STAFFING/HUMAN RESOURCES
- 5. COMMUNICATION AND INTERACTION
- 6. POSITION AND REPUTATION IN THE
COMMUNITY
- 7. PROGRAM SERVICES

Advantages of Evidence Based Practices

- Backed by research
- Manualized
- Rated on the Evidence Based Clearing House
- Attractive to funders

Father Involvement has Positive Outcomes for Children

- Enhanced social skills: empathy, awareness, self control
- Problem solving abilities: curiosity, exploration, willingness to try
- Increased cognitive capacities : verbal skills, IQ, competence in math

Source: Kyle Pruett, "Fatherneed: Why father care is as essential as mother care for your child," New York: Free Press, 2000.

Father Involvement has Positive Outcomes for Mothers

- Economic stability
- Shared workload
- Decreased stress



Source: Kyle Pruett, "Fatherneed: Why father care is as essential as mother care for your child," New York: Free Press, 2000.

Father Involvement has Positive Outcomes for Fathers

- Increased life satisfaction
- Better overall health
- Higher self-esteem
- Bonding with child leads to ongoing involvement

Source: Kyle Pruett, "Fatherneed: Why father care is as essential as mother care for your child," New York: Free Press, 2000.

A Protective Factors Approach to Father Involvement



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What is Strengthening Families?

- Research based framework
- Builds protective factors
- Buffers against child abuse and neglect
- Exemplary centers included men

www.cssp.org/reform/strengthening-families

Two Approaches with Common Goals

Strengthening Families

Benefits ALL families

Builds protective factors to buffer risks

Supporting Father Involvement

Positively engages fathers in the lives of their children

Prepares agencies to welcome and include fathers

Program Outcomes Supported by Research:

Strengthened families

Optimal child development

Reduced incidence of abuse and neglect

5 Protective Factors

- Parental resilience
- Social connections
- Concrete support in times of need
- Knowledge of parenting and child development
- Social/emotional competence of children

Strategies for Building Protective Factors

- Understand the link between services and protective factors
- Think about outcomes for fathers
- What is missing?
- Involve fathers in assessment and goal setting

Parental Resilience

*Father involvement builds
partnerships for problem solving
and mutual support*

Parental Resilience: *The ability to cope and bounce back*

Resilient fathers can be:

- A source of stability and reassurance
- Problem- solvers who are driven to find solutions
- Decision makers
- Partners who share parenting responsibilities

Parental Resilience: *The ability to cope and bounce back*

Fathers may need support to cope with:

- Financial stress
- Work stress
- Anger and violence as family norms
- Reluctance to ask for help

Social Connections

Father involvement reduces social isolation by building relationships

Social Connections: Friends, Family and Community Members who offer essential support to parents

Social connections for fathers:

- Work
- Home
- Sports and recreation
- Community involvement
- Fathers need the opportunity to connect with other fathers

Concrete Support in Times of Need

Father involvement decreases stress by helping fathers provide for their families

Concrete Support in Times of Need: *Helping Families meet their basic needs*

Families need

- Stable housing
- Adequate food and clothing
- Healthcare
- Financial reserves for emergencies

Concrete Support in Times of Need: *Offering appropriate services and supports in times of crisis*

Involved fathers can provide

- Financial support
- Shared responsibility for childcare
- Employer-subsidized healthcare

Concrete Support in Times of Need: *Offering appropriate services and supports in times of crisis*

Concrete support for fathers may include:

- Education
- Employment services
- Housing assistance
- Coaching for financial literacy
- Legal counsel
- Treatment services

Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

Father involvement breaks down stereotypes and allows fathers to be equal partners in child-rearing

Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development: *Accurate information helps parents have appropriate expectations*

Effective co-parenting has many benefits:

- Shared responsibility for children
- Partnership in child – rearing decisions
- Emotional support
- Reduced stress and anxiety

Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

Fathers may struggle due to

- Generational patterns of harsh discipline
- Lack of flexibility in gender roles
- Gate-keeping mothers who create obstacles to learning

Fathers need

- Exposure to information
- Supportive feedback
- Tools and techniques for positive discipline

Social and Emotional Competence of Children

*Father involvement provides
different opportunities for
children to learn social and
emotional skills*

Social & Emotional Competence: *A child's ability to interact positively, self-regulate behavior and communicate effectively*

- Children learn from both parents
- Differences are not a deficit
- Fathers are more likely to encourage
 - Problem solving
 - Risk taking
 - Self reliance

SFI Curriculum Builds Protective Factors

- Parental Resilience
 - Problem solving and communication
 - Ways of responding to and handling stress
 - Strengthening self-esteem
- Social Connections
 - Strengthening the couple/co-parenting relationship
 - Boundaries with parents and in-laws
 - Supportive relationships with other participants
- Concrete Support
 - Work and community resources
 - Case management services

SFI Curriculum Builds Protective Factors

- Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development
 - Parenting skills
 - Division of parenting responsibilities
 - Three generational transmission of parenting styles
- Social and Emotional Competence of Children
 - Importance of fathers to their children's development and health
 - Playtime for fathers and children

Integration of Father Friendly Practices



Targeted Outreach

- Begin at the beginning
- Designate a staff member
- Partner with mothers or female care takers
- Extend invitations
- Ask for input
- **What need do you want to fill?**

Sustaining Father Involvement

- Family activities
- Community development
- Organizational Commitment



What you can do

- Address your biases- your personal experience with fathers
- Learn about the resources and supports available
 - **Child Support**
 - **Legal Aid**
 - **Education and training programs**
 - **Community Supports**
- Educate fathers of their rights AND responsibilities

Agencies & Networks

- Partner with others- a cohort approach
 - Including public partnerships such Child Support, Child Welfare, Cal WORKS
- Survey- What do fathers want?
- Services and supports that are responsive to father's needs and interest such as FES, job search, housing, etc.
- Evaluate and enhance your organization
 - 7 areas to enhance organizational father friendliness

Resources

- Supporting Father Involvement :
www.supportingfatherinvolvement.org/strategies
- California Evidence Based Clearinghouse:
www.cebc4cw.org
- Strengthening Families
www.cssp.org/reform/strengthening-families
- National Fatherhood Clearinghouse
www.fatherhood.gov
- Cal SWEC Father Engagement Toolkit
<http://calswec.berkeley.edu/toolkits/father-engagement>

Thank You!



CONTACT INFORMATION

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