

## Dads in the Mix: The Future of Responsible Fatherhood Initiatives

March 19, 2008

### Audience Q&A Session

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Larry Klinger - 12:17 pm

Q: What types of activities do you do with your fathers to keep them so involved with the program?  
Allegheny Intermediate Unit - Pittsburgh PA

Gardner Wiseheart

A. Our attitude and approach to what we do is that fathers matter in their child's life. Fathers are involved in home visits, both with mom, as well as individually; we have a couples group focusing on relationship skills; dads group focuses on information, resources, and skills relevant to men/fathers; father-child activities (play group with dads and kids 3 yrs and younger and fishing with kids 4 yrs. and up). The father-child activities encourage interaction appropriate for the developmental level of the child, and learning to support the child moving to the next developmental level. We also work with the dads in specific employment areas, as well as support them in accessing services through our local Workforce Development agency. There are also 4-5 social activities during the year for families.

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Leonard Bryant - 4:14 am

Q: Mr. Wiseheart, the families that you deal with are they mandated to participate or merely voluntarily?

Gardner Wiseheart

A. Moms and dads participate on a voluntary basis

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Ernest Richards - 12:15 pm

Q: Are you able to use this program with domestic violence cases or child abuse and neglect?

Gardner Wiseheart

A. An important role of our program in these areas is prevention. Safety is always a primary concern. In situations of domestic violence or child abuse and neglect we would continue to work

with these moms and dads, as appropriate (as well as other agencies which may be involved), while continually assessing what's in the best interest of the child. Since we work with the individuals in home visits, we have some advantage to assess safety.

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Cassie Lynch - 12:18 pm

Q: Is there a particular curriculum you use for the couples and individual groups?

Gardner Wiseheart

A. In the couple's group we use Love's Cradle; for individual groups we use modules we have developed to address the specific needs and interests of dads; we also use Maps for Dads, a father child interaction curriculum covering prenatal through 3 years old in groups and home visits. For more information on Maps for Dads see [www.hfsatx.com](http://www.hfsatx.com).

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Michael Byrd - 12:18 pm

Q: Please speak to the issue of race vs. socio-economic status which plays a factor in father engagement in support programs? Also engagement is impacted by, as you spoke of fathers with multiple children by multiple partners.

Robert Johnson

A. Michael, our experience is that race and socio-economic status are a major factor in father engagement in support programs. One example is looking at the big picture. Approximately \$100 billion in child support is owed to America's children. According to the General Accounting Office, 70% of that debt is owed by individuals who according to the U.S Department of Labor have no quarterly earnings in that year. These fathers' average earnings are less than \$7,000 per year; they are technically eligible for food stamps. The majority of children that these fathers are responsible for supporting are in extreme poverty. Unfortunately the majority of these poor fathers are fathers of color. In many cases the measures taken to enforce these fathers financial support to their children are ineffective. Many times child support orders are set too high. The % of income/support they are required to pay is disproportional to fathers with greater income. Also, in many cases few resources are available to improve fathers' employability. At the end of the day, this father has no potential to provide even minimal support for their children, substantially reducing any engagement with their children. For low-income fathers with multiple children the problem is exacerbated.

Gardner Wiseheart

A. Race and socio-economic status are certainly factors. Relationships among and between partners, jealousy, how to spend time/have a relationship with which children, support payments, and employment issues are among the concerns that many moms and dads face. In groups, moms and dads, regardless of race and socio-economic status, can learn from other couples, and gain skills and resources; in home visits they can discuss more private concerns—these experiences enable them to more successfully handle the concerns and demands in their lives and move forward.

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Rhonda Smith - 12:18 pm

Q: How does Gardner's program sustain itself? What funding sources are used?

Gardner Wiseheart

A. We are currently funded by a combination of federal, state, and private dollars.

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Kathy Wright - 12:11 pm

Q: What geographic area was targeted in the Princeton study? Kathy Wright, New Jersey Parents Caucus.

Matthew Stagner - 12:19 pm

A: The study was conducted in 20 urban areas in the U.S. and was designed to be representative of the U.S. urban population of births. [www.fragilefamilies.princeton.edu](http://www.fragilefamilies.princeton.edu) is the website for the study. There are a range of races and ethnicities.

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Kathylynn Pierre - 12:20 pm

Q: Do you know of any research that supports offering incentives to fathers for participation in these types of outreach/prevention programs?

Matthew Stagner - 12:23 pm

A: There are a range of incentives being offered in the Building Strong Families study, for which Gardner's program is one site. From this, we will learn more about how and whether such incentives work, but that analysis has not yet been conducted.

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Jaquelin Rodriguez - 12:21 pm

Q: Does this study apply to interracial relationships? Jaquelin Rodriguez Centro Nia-Washington D.C., Family support specialist.

Matthew Stagner - 12:24 pm

A: Yes, but I'm not sure of the numbers. There were 5,000 children in the sample. You can learn more at [www.fragilefamilies.princeton.edu](http://www.fragilefamilies.princeton.edu)

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Rhonda Smith - 12:21 pm

Q: How does the program break through stereotypes in engaging men into program participation?

Gardner Wiseheart

A. We do a great deal of staff training on this topic as well as utilize supervision.

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David Brantford - 1:12 pm

Q: I find the research from Fragile Families stating that 90% of unmarried fathers are still connected to mothers at the time of child's birth to be high. How and where was this research conducted? D. Brantford, Program Manager for Heartland Alliance, Chicago

Matthew Stagner - 12:21 pm

A: The study engaged a random sample of 5,000 children born in 20 U.S. urban areas in 1998 to 2000. You can learn more at [www.fragilefamilies.princeton.edu](http://www.fragilefamilies.princeton.edu)

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NYSDOH Corning Tower - 1:23 pm

Q: What has been the presenters' experience in engaging partners from the health community?

Gardner Wiseheart

A. In our experience health community partners are important. Our partners include Ob-Gyns, pediatricians, community health clinics, and 2 hospitals.

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John Jolley - 12:24 pm

Q: How important is culture to Fatherhood Approaches?

Robert Johnson

A. John, my experience is that culture is a critical element in determining fatherhood approach. If cultural dynamics are ignored, key strategies may be overlooked, which can impact outcome measures. One example is in Des Moines, Iowa. The majority of the population in fatherhood programs is white—average age 35 years old. In the planning process, a question should be asked: based on culture will the labor force be more receptive to efforts of 35-year-old white males for employment than African Americans or Hispanics of the same age?

Gardner Wiseheart

A. Culture is important. Dads (and moms) care about their kids—that's true across cultures. In our experience, HOW they demonstrate their caring, while mediated by culture, appears to be strongly impacted by gender and personality.

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Josh Pedretti - 12:25 pm

Q: What was the largest reason fathers were not supporting or engaging with their children?

Robert Johnson

A. Josh, in my opinion, for economic reasons. Many low-income fathers are dead broke not deadbeat.

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Stephanie Alston - 12:18 pm

Q: In terms of the impact of "involved" fathers on their children's lives, do these studies also take into account stepfathers or are we only focusing on birth fathers?

Matthew Stagner - 12:29 pm

A: The study has now followed about 5,000 children for several years, so the effects of stepparents can be assessed. You can learn more about the study at [www.fragilefamilies.princeton.edu](http://www.fragilefamilies.princeton.edu)

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Robbie Brunger - 12:28 pm

Q: Tallahassee, FL. For Johnson: How did you persuade the CSE folks to share their data with you?

Robert Johnson

A. Robbie, in the planning phase of the project CSE was identified as the major beneficiary and lead agency partner in program approach. It was CSE data that made the case that effort was needed in order to support poor children and that if the program was successfully implemented, it would result in significant resources for Georgia's children. Also, I don't want to underestimate the importance of visionary leadership in the agency. I suggest that you identify someone in an executive position in an agency or state who would like to address this issue. Also, most is public information.

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Larry Klinger - 12:29 pm

Q: Pittsburgh, PA. What other states are using similar model other than GA.

Robert Johnson

A. Larry, very few statewide models, probably Texas and Massachusetts. In my opinion, lacking this information is one of the challenges of fatherhood field

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Carole Johnson - 12:31 pm

Q: What was/is the cost of the Georgia Network Model?

Robert Johnson

A. Carole, Georgia started out with \$350k statewide model. 36 fatherhood programs \$3-5 million.

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Thomas Garchar - 12:27 pm

Q: Once the father became employed and began paying child support, was the state reimbursed for the child's support during his absence. What was the incentive for the state?

Robert Johnson

A. Thomas, when father pays child support a % is dedicated to state-owed arrears. One benefit of being in a program is that the agent can adjust the amount so that it only represents small % of payment. One national effort on the way is to allow states to forgive state-owed arrears if fathers participate in a program and pay regular support.

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Dacia Caglin - 12:31 pm

Q: What specific strategies did San Angelo utilize to make their program father friendly? H. Caglin, Marriage Relationship Specialist, Healthy Families Orange

Gardner Wiseheart

A. There are a number of strategies we utilize. First and foremost we believe fathers matter. This is reflected in our program philosophy, the services we offer, and environment, as well as staff attitudes, language, and behavior. From simple things like addressing a letter to both mom and dad, to specific programming for dads' issues and needs, all go together to create an atmosphere in which men can feel comfortable, trusted, and included.

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Laura Schmidt - 12:30 pm

Q: What are some of the interventions that programs like this do to improve father-child relationships? L. Schmidt, LIRS, Baltimore, MD.

Gardner Wiseheart

A. We use a father-child interaction curriculum in home visits and groups—Maps for Dads—as well as have numerous activities for father-child interactions that create “teachable moments”. For more information see our web site, [www.hfsatx.com](http://www.hfsatx.com).

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Sharon Abrams - 12:34 pm

Q: What were the options to incarceration that were provided?

Robert Johnson

A. Sharon, the alternative to incarceration was to allow the court or agent to determine if participation in structured program (employment, education, case management) with a specific workforce outcome (employment or improvement in employment potential) would provide greater benefits for children. Remember that for many low-income fathers, incarceration will not improve their economic capacity to support their children.

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Carolyn Green - 12:31 pm

Q: For Mr. Johnson: Please explain the relationship with the Community College concerning the Fatherhood Program. The State of North Carolina also has a Community College within 50 miles of each town in the state

Robert Johnson

A. Carolyn, states that have this infrastructure have a tremendous opportunity to address this issue as part of a statewide effort. In the case of the Georgia Fatherhood Services Network, a fatherhood program was incorporated into each of 36 technical schools, funding provided support for case manager, and the technical school connected with child support enforcement and department of labor to coordinate and deliver systematic services in each community. I will be happy to talk with you further. [rjoh745290@bellsouth.net](mailto:rjoh745290@bellsouth.net)

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Champana Bernard - 12:31 pm

Q: What were some of the alternatives to incarceration? What was the success rate?

Robert Johnson

A. Referral to structured employment services and case management program. In Georgia, there was a 60% success rate participants finding jobs

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Kimberly porter - 12:30 pm

Q: How did the state department of labor help with employing fathers?

Robert Johnson

A. Kimberly, State Department of Labor assigned workforce specialist to fatherhood case management team. The team consisted of child support, technical school, and department of labor. All case managers participate in coordinated service delivery to participants. This arrangement is probably better agreed upon at the state level.

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Jane Penner-Hoppe - 12:32 pm

Q: What was the retention rate for the 60% who were placed in jobs?

Robert Johnson

A. Great question Jane. I'm not sure of the retention rate. You may want to contact Georgia program (see slide #8 of my presentation). Also, at the end of the day retention should be key measurable outcome.

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Barbara Turpin - 12:34 pm

Q: For Gardner: How have you been able to involve low-income fathers in states that grant all rights initially to the mother?

Gardner Wiseheart

A. We work with dads to establish paternity and then, when appropriate, walk with them through the child support process. By involving dads early, at the birth of the child, and developing a relationship with both mom and dad there are more opportunities for involvement in an ongoing way.

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Calvin Williams - 12:32 pm

Q: So what is the future of responsible fatherhood initiatives?

Robert Johnson

A. See Senate bill 1626. Visit [www.nflgonline.org](http://www.nflgonline.org) and click on policy initiatives.

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Eileen Harvey - 12:32 pm

Q: Mr. Stagner: For slide #3, did the study document the amount of time fathers spent with the child?

Matthew Stagner

A. The questionnaire for the year one follow up does not appear to have exact hours of time the father spent with the child unless he was considered a primary provider of child care. But there may be some data on this that I am not aware of. The full list of publications from the study is available at <http://crcw.princeton.edu/publications/publications.asp>.

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Hildy Dworkin - 12:34 pm

Q: For the programs discussed: how are fathers and couples recruited?

Gardner Wiseheart

A. San Angelo recruits primarily by meeting new parents in the hospital at the birth of the child. For referrals of parents prenatally (or within 3 months of the birth) we visit with both mom and dad at their home and offer them the program.

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Philip Cowan - 12:33 pm

Q: Where can we find out information about father involvement programs that have received systematic evaluation? Phil Cowan, University of California, Berkeley (Supporting Father Involvement Project sponsored by California Office of Child Abuse Prevention)

Robert Johnson

A. Philip, you may find some evaluations on ACF website.

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Dacia Caglin - 12:34 pm

Q: Since the implementation of the Georgia Fatherhood Program has there been a measured decrease in the amount of uncollected child support? Ramon Perez, Relationship Support Worker, Healthy Families Orange

Robert Johnson

A. Ramon, since 1998 the Georgia program has provided fatherhood services to approximately 3,000 participants each year. According to my information, this program has been responsible for substantially increasing the amount of support provided to the children of these fathers, therefore decreasing the amount of uncollected support. Please keep in mind that although serving 3,000 low-income fathers each year sounds like a lot, there are thousands of fathers that remain to be served.

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Andrea Kane - 12:34 pm

Q: Can Gardner and Robert discuss whether the programs they're familiar with help fathers address prevention of subsequent pregnancies? Can they share any lessons learned?

Robert Johnson

A. Andrea, my experience is that most programs do not address prevention of subsequent pregnancies as part of their program design. In my opinion, when this is ignored, fatherhood practitioners are missing a major opportunity to have significant community impact. My experience is that the majority of low-income fathers will have repeat pregnancies without improving their economic or family support capacity to take care of these children. I suggest that avoiding a repeat pregnancy be incorporated into the Fatherhood Personal Responsibility Plan, and an incentive must be incorporated. This will require a major systematic effort. For every program reducing the number of repeat pregnancies will have a major community impact. The sum total will have a major national impact.

Gardner Wiseheart

A. In our program in San Angelo family formation is a specific topic of discussion with moms and dads-- both individually and as a couple. This discussion is ongoing and includes their thinking on subsequent children, and details for planning how to make their idea of family a reality. These discussions take place in group settings as well as home visits. In our experience, a factor impacting subsequent pregnancies is dad's degree of empathy for his child(ren) with whom he has interaction. The degree of empathy seems to impact decisions for subsequent children (e.g. spacing between children) as well as behaviors regarding what to do to prevent or delay subsequent pregnancies.

Rebecca McElroy - 12:34 pm

Q: Along the lines of funding, have any cost-benefit analyses been performed on these programs? There has been a good bit of talk about prevention programs in child welfare, and this seems like it has real potential for that as well.

Robert Johnson

A. Rebecca, great question. The State of Georgia model was developed as a return on investment program design. The assumption was first that there was a need: \$500 million in uncollected child support. The cost of collecting these uncollected, and in many cases uncollectible, funds resulted in a tax payer burden. For example: most families who don't receive support are receiving state assistance including Medicaid.

Fathers who fail to pay are in contempt of court. The average sentence for contempt for nonpayment is 90 days; the incarceration cost is \$50 a day; a tax payer total of \$4,500 to put someone in jail who in many cases has no ability to pay. Cost benefit analysis used in Georgia: tax payer investment of \$2,000 providing employment and education services to fathers, who are put in position to contribute support to their children. This resulted in a reduced number children who need state financial support, a reduced number of individuals incarcerated for nonpayment, and a reduction in enforcement costs (amount of time agent spends pursuing non-payer). Another goal I would like to see is reduction in pre-mature pregnancy. This is just one example.

Bob Brown-Barrios - 12:35 pm

Q: Are these fatherhood programs established in law (state statute?)

Robert Johnson

A. Bob there may be few established in statute (look at Texas). Most are not. In my opinion, this should be goal for every state.

Q. How are these state funded programs?

Robert Johnson

A. Some states are using TANF Block Grant

Q. Do the programs have a dedicated funding source?

Robert Johnson

A. In most cases no-this is a major challenge!

Q. How are the program funds allocated?

Robert Johnson

A. Each program is different.

Q. What is the governance structure for collaborative partners?

Robert Johnson

A. Great question. This has to be developed according to need

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Harvey Reid - 12:34 pm

Q: I am with a fatherhood program in Memphis. I would like to develop a relationship with Juvenile Court in order to reduce child support payments of participants. What would you recommend?

Robert Johnson

A. Harvey, the approach you are suggesting is one that I encourage. It is important to develop relationships with the legal system. I suggest that you review your participant's orders and document the need for reduction based ability to pay. I also suggest that you make the case that reduced order will provide greater incentive for participant to provide support regularly. Finally, I suggest that you find out CSE procedures for modifications.

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Michael Byrd - 12:35 pm

Q: What work if any has been done to work with Dept. of Corrections to program and provide resources for incarcerated fathers? Incarcerated fathers with child welfare involvement are not supported by DOC to be involved with their children.

Robert Johnson

A. Michael, a significant number of fathers in corrections have child support orders. Paying child support is one major condition of parole. I encourage you to articulate the benefit of providing father social welfare support. Also review HR 1593 Second Chance Re-entry Act.

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Sheldon Applewhite - 12:36 pm

Q: Just getting men to come out is hard. How do we get them to just come and hear what we have to say?

Gardner Wiseheart

A. True. We first go to them and find out what they want to hear.

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Mary Scaff - 12:36 pm

Q: What does a "father-friendly" environment look like?

Gardner Wiseheart

A. For a detailed description of the components of a father-friendly agency, see Head Start Bulletin—Father Involvement Issue No 77, 2004 at [www.headstartinfo.org](http://www.headstartinfo.org).

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Bill Haigwood - 12:37 pm

Q: Many unmarried fathers not living with mom are shut out of the parenting relationship by the custodial mother shortly after the child is born. How do you engage a mother who wants nothing more to do with the father?

Gardner Wiseheart

A. In our experience it's important to determine why she doesn't want anything to do with the father of her child. We would engage single mothers in the same way we engage couples and single fathers—develop a relationship and offer services that are appropriate to their needs and that support healthy child outcomes.

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Melissa Proctor - 12:35 pm

Q: Are there specific efforts to involve the fathers of children who are dependents of the child welfare system in any of these or other initiatives? If so, what is done differently to work with this population of fathers?

Robert Johnson

A. Melissa, I suggest that you review child welfare procedures to see if diligent search incorporates assurance that low-income paternal families are not discriminated against. Also, it's very important to look at a father's family as a resource.

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Cathy Sisco - 12:40 pm

Q: Are there any additional suggested activities to engage dads in a program if there is a woman running the program?

Gardner Wiseheart

A. Leadership of any program is important. How the program is structured, staff trained, supervised, and supported to engage dads, does not have to be dependent on the gender of the person

running the program to be effective. Activities to engage dads need to fit the target group you serve and what you want to accomplish.

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Lisa Nitsch - 12:38 pm

Q: How do you help fathers get/stay engaged with their children if they have been violent toward the child's mother?

Gardner Wiseheart

A. Some dads can and some dads shouldn't... In some situations it may be best to start with supervised visitations and work towards independent interactions as appropriate.

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John Manning - 12:39 pm

Q: John Manning, Seattle, Washington. Is it possible to get the return on investment program format used in Georgia?

Robert Johnson

A. John, all things are possible. [rjoh745290@bellsouth.net](mailto:rjoh745290@bellsouth.net)

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Darnisha Ladd - 12:41 pm

Q: Omaha Public Schools. Who is responsible for child support in the case of a teenage father? In this case, are the boy's parents responsible?

Robert Johnson

A. Each state is different. I suggest you check local regulations.

Gardner Wiseheart

A. You would need to check to see how this is handled by your state. In Texas the court has the discretion to set a reasonable child support order based on the non-custodial teen's circumstances and earning ability. The court can also decide who pays—generally, the responsible party is the teen's parent. Orders for teen non-custodial parents are set for regular review so adjustments can be made based on circumstances.

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Cynthia Stringfellow - 12:46 pm

Q: Please share some of the curricula that have been successfully utilized and that are moving towards being evidence based.

Gardner Wiseheart

A. We have evolved the Healthy Families model to be truly family centered and have developed a father-child interaction curriculum (Maps for Dads). In couple's group we use Love's Cradle, a relationship skills curriculum developed by Bernard Gurney and Mary Ortwein.

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Champana Bernard - 12:43 pm

Q: Mothers can sometimes be a barrier to fathers' involvement with their children. Are there any proven best practices and/or strategies on how to address this issue?

Gardner Wiseheart

A. Moms can be gatekeepers and often it is a matter of degree. In our experience it is important to be respectful of mom's position, while supporting her to appreciate the importance of father's involvement in the child's life. Simultaneously, we would support dad learning ways he can demonstrate his commitment, caring and concerns for his child to mom. By supporting mom and dad to developing a co-parenting relationship that focuses on the child, gatekeeping issues can often be mediated and worked through.

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Larry Klinger - 12:43 pm

Q: Can Mr. Wiseheart discuss how they track their outcomes? - Pittsburgh

Gardner Wiseheart

A. As we are currently part of a multi-site research project, information is collected and entered based on research protocols and will be evaluated by the researchers.

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Harvey Reid - 12:43 pm

Q: We have developed a partnership with our county corrections center (Memphis/Shelby County, TN) who had Federal grant money from Responsible Fatherhood, Healthy Marriages program. We do 10 group sessions and 2 individual sessions.

Robert Johnson

A. Harvey, great example of collaboration!

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Cassie Lynch - 12:44 pm

Q: Any ideas on working with the 'other fathers', new men in mom's life that become caretakers of children that are not biologically theirs? We see a connection in our area with them and child

abuse/child homicide rates. C. Lynch, ED, Positive Parenting, Inc

Gardner Wiseheart

A. Research reports higher rates of child abuse and neglect by these “other fathers” as opposed to biological fathers. These may be difficult men to engage as they have less investment in the child and tend to be transient. In our experience, the higher the degree of couple commitment and the more mom is invested in the child in an empathetic way, the better the chances of involving him. We have found that it’s important to work with mom around the issues of safety for her child and the importance of appropriate male influence in her child’s life (or how to pick a partner).

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Mercedes Almirall - 12:45 pm

Q: Has any direct relationship between domestic violence incidence and early fatherhood (teen fatherhood) been established?

Gardner Wiseheart

A. I’m not certain how conclusive the research is on this, but our experience is that it’s important to engage young dads in domestic violence prevention that includes peer support and anger management, as well as information and discussions around values and manhood.

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Patricia Deitz - 12:46 pm

Q: Gardner: Do you use male staff to work with dads? How do you take two separate visits to parents into account in your HF program?

Gardner Wiseheart

A. All staff are responsible for working with both moms and dads, although male staff do work with dads in some specific situations, just like females work with moms in specific situations. Most often visits are together, however, visits with each individually occur based on need and/or availability (e.g. one may be at work). Support workers (some of whom are male) and the dad guys work as a team with each couple and through supervision who sees whom, in what constellation, and over what issues is decided based on needs, circumstances, and resources. We account for visits based on what’s best to support the family moving forward and what’s in the best interest of the child.

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Helen Bassett - 12:46 pm

Q: When paternity is not established and children residing with their mother are placed for adoption or placed in foster care, have any programs developed a focus or specific interventions for putative fathers (the unmarried father)?

Robert Johnson

A. Helen, great interest is emerging in assuring that a diligent search is carried out to determine paternal families' ability to support children.

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Madeline Sosa - 12:47 pm

Q: How can our program get fathers? How can the fathers that pay child support but not the custodial have equal opportunity with their children's education and activities?

Gardner Wiseheart

A. In Texas, the non-custodial parent's opportunities are usually delineated in the child support orders by the court.

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Gwen Samuel - 12:48 pm

Q: CT uses term "Dead Beat Dad" and based on the number of non-custodial fathers that do support their children via the child support system, name calling is not an inclusive mechanism. Does other state have this type of slogan?

Robert Johnson

A. Gwen, most states have moved away from this slogan. Research suggests that fathers who love their children want to do the right thing but are unable to due to educational or economic reasons. They are not DEADBEAT they are DEAD BROKE.

Gardner Wiseheart

A. Some states have countered this slogan by recognizing "Dead Broke Dads".

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Kathylynn Pierre - 12:47 pm

Q: When conducting these intervention programs with the fathers, what do you do with the mothers? Do you start another program next door?

Robert Johnson

A. Kathylynn, the movement is to provide family supports!

Gardner Wiseheart

A. In a family-centered program the focus is on the child. Agencies and agency workers come and go—what remains constant in the child's life is mom, dad, and others in the child's environment (other family members and non-family). By being truly family centered, a program can engage and work with each of the individuals in the family system that impact the child's life. This involves having relevant and appropriate services for each individually as well as together.

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Rebecca Hines - 12:55 pm

Q: Do any of the presenters know about a newsletter prototype, in Spanish, designed specifically for Dads, as well as, web sites that have articles and other resources written in lay language for Dads on the importance of their role in their children's lives?

Gardner Wiseheart

A. Two web sites for dads are [www.fatherville.com](http://www.fatherville.com) and [www.brandnewdad.com](http://www.brandnewdad.com)

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Joyce Gonsalves - 12:45 pm

Q: La Familia Counseling Center. Are there any ideas on how to bring fathers into a fathers group when we are already doing parenting workshops in a community resource center?

Gardner Wiseheart

A. Some organizations that conduct workshops for moms and dads have had success with sessions, or breakout groups, just for dads and just for moms as a part of their ongoing workshop agenda.

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Joyce Gonsalves - 12:48 pm

Q: Do they provide the fathers what their rights are as parents?

Gardner Wiseheart

A. Yes, but of primary importance is what's involved in being a responsible father. Most dads want information and "how-to" skills to fulfill their responsibilities.

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Cynthia Stringfellow - 12:55 pm

Q: Within the statewide model, how are the services delivered at the local level? Do local community-based agencies apply for funding from the state?

Robert Johnson

A. Cynthia, in statewide model the key delivery point is at the local level. Therefore the model incorporates significant local control. All local activities are integrated and there is a service delivery continuum local-state-state-local. Local communities are included in unified funding plan.

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Champana Bernard - 12:51 pm

Q: (This question is from Fairfax County, VA - DFS): Do you have any tips or tools for locating absent fathers?

Robert Johnson

A. For fathers who want to be in children's lives unable to pay offer service support!

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James Rodriguez - 12:53 pm

Q: What are the requirements of child support and child welfare to serve fathers by policy or statute?

Robert Johnson

A. James- great question, policy platform has to be developed based on jurisdiction.

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John Manning - 12:54 pm

Q: There is a program on the east coast, I am not sure which state but I believe Robert may know about it, where the state began a plan for forgiveness of back child support for men coming out of prison. I would like to get the information on that program.

Robert Johnson

A. John, we are finding out that some states have been given authority to forgive state owed arrears. I just found out that Iowa legislature has given Child Support authority to forgive state owed debt. The prescription for forgiveness is spelled out based on a participant's successful completion of specific requirements.

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Stephanie Borgman - 12:55 pm

Q: Could you comment on partnerships with literacy providers and information organizations such as libraries?

Gardner Wiseheart

A. Improving literacy skills can be important for improved employment opportunities which can contribute to the quality of the co-parent relationship and the relationship with the child. Partnerships with literacy providers can aid in providing services and support for moms and dads.

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Rosemarie Coratola - 12:56 pm

Q: Do any of the programs work with fathers that have mother with post-partum depression?

Gardner Wiseheart

A. Yes. Research has shown that father's role in the co-parent relationship is strongly connected to a decrease in post-partum depression.

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Madeline Sosa - 12:57 pm

Q: How can we involve dads who live out of state and do not live in the same state where the child lives? What can be done to help children whose dads have passed away?

Gardner Wiseheart

A. Some hospice programs have services for kids whose parents have died.

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NYSDOH Corning Tower - 1:59 pm

Q: What opportunities exist for partnering on home visits?

Gardner Wiseheart

A. Home visits are all about partnering with mom, with dad, and with both as a couple. Through developing trust and building relationships with mom and dad, tremendous opportunities can emerge for mom, for dad, and especially for kids.

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Rich Batten - 1:01 pm

Q: Please describe the successes or challenges faced by the programs highlighted in regards to screening for domestic violence issues and providing fatherhood services. Rich Batten, Family and Fatherhood Specialist, the Colorado Department of Human Services.

Gardner Wiseheart

A. Screening for domestic violence issues is an ongoing process—both at admission as well as throughout the program. Moms and dads seldom admit to domestic violence in the initial assessment process. All workers are trained to recognize domestic violence issues and talk with moms and dads from a prevention, as well as an intervention, stand point. In situations where domestic violence occurs appropriate steps are taken, following particular protocols, to maintain safety for the child and victim.

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