

Father Engagement

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Today

- Introductions
- Father Engagement
- Fathers in your Organizations
- What is working in Father Engagement

Fathers in the U.S.

- 72.2 Million
 - Estimated fathers in the U.S.
- 24.6 Million
 - Child <18 in married residential
- 2.0 Million single fathers
 - (17% of single parents)
- 29.2 Million
 - Also grandfathers

U.S. Census Bureau (2018) <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/newsroom/facts-for-features/2017/db17-#12.pdf>

Fathers as Primary Caregiver

- Increase in stay at home dads
 - Doubling to 2 million from 1989 to present
 - Steady increase, but recession bump as well
- Increase in single father households
 - 8% of households with minor children vs less than 1% in 1960

U.S. Census Bureau (2018) <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/newsroom/facts-for-features/2017/bs17-#12.pdf>

Father Roles and Culture Changes

- Societal Views of Fathers
 - Added value beyond bread winner; Not only noted when absent
- Fathers' views of their role as a parent
 - Reframing success as a parent

Father Involvement and Engagement

- Terms interchanged often in literature
- Today:
 - Involvement – related to children/families
 - Engagement – integrating into programs/services



Understanding Fathering

- Pre-90s research on parenting
 - Parenting-child effects: Mothers
 - Most studies didn't ask for direct father input
- 90s – 00s
 - Reconceptualizing father involvement
 - Explosion in research focusing on fathering
 - Beginning to understand fathers, as parents, in services

Charles, P., Spielgegel, J., Garman-Smith, D., Schoeny, M., Henry, D., & Tolau, P. (2018). Disagreement in Parental Reports of Father Involvement. *Journal of Family Issues*, 39(2), 328–351.

Involving and Measuring Fathers

- No clear framework until early 2000
- Measurement became key
- Quantitative vs Qualitative
 - Counting involvement
 - Understanding involvement
- Evolving concept shaped policy and engagement



Father Involvement: Evolving Concept

- Quantifying Involvement
- Number of Interactions
 - One dimensional – Yet illustrated “more involvement”
- Comparing Parenting
 - Mothers vs Fathers – Showed expected
- Diverging Measures
 - Separate constructs to show differences

Devault, A., Forget, G., & Dubeau, D. (2015). Fathering: Promoting Positive Father Involvement.

Father Involvement: Evolving Concept

- Roles and Functions
 - More specified
 - Began linking child development outcomes
- Task Sharing
 - Family systems perspective
 - Co-parenting: share of responsibilities

Devault, A., Forget, G., & Dubeau, D. (2015). Fathering: Promoting Positive Father Involvement.

Father Involvement: Evolving Concept

- What was missing?
- Context
 - Variations and subtle variations
 - Culture and Unique Attitudes
 - Unique Behaviors and Components of Parenting
- Bias
 - From research/researchers, policy, and other sources

Devault, A., Forget, G., & Dubeau, D. (2015). Fathering: Promoting Positive Father Involvement.

Father Involvement: Evolving Concept

- Qualitative Approach
- Point not to generalize but to...
 - Better define
 - Show cultural variations
 - Get at the meanings
 - Understand sub-populations
 - Broader perspectives

Devault, A., Forget, G., & Dubeau, D. (2015). Fathering: Promoting Positive Father Involvement.

Father Involvement: Evolving Concept

- Benefits
- Better understanding⁽¹⁾
 - Father motivations and attitudes
 - Empowering for fathers
 - Barriers to parenting for fathers
 - Youth particularly
 - Systems and organizational barriers
 - Engagement important

Devault, A., Forget, G., & Dubeau, D. (2015). Fathering : Promoting Positive Father Involvement.

Father Involvement Measured

- Generally: Increasing
- Amount of time
- Numbers of dads
- Providing
 - Not only financial but other unique contributions

Charfen, et al (2018)
U.S. Census Bureau (2018)

Child

- Development – direct effects
 - Academic achievement ⁽¹⁾
 - Lower aggression and other bad behaviors ^(2,4)
 - Fewer instances of depression and anxiety ⁽²⁾
 - Education/SES of father -> Education outcomes ⁽³⁾
 - Supportive Father -> Social Competent behaviors ⁽³⁾
- Indirect Effects -
 - Well-being and environment; Family Stress Protective in other parent abuse cases ^(4,5)

1-Roggman et al.,(2004) Playing With Daddy: Social Toy Play, Early Head Start, and Developmental Outcomes.
2 - Amato and Gilbreth, Nonresident Fathers and Children's Well-Being A Meta-Analysis.
3 - Charfen, et al (2018) & Dubowitz, H., et al (2000) Fathers and child neglect. & Law, Guterman, and Lee. (2008)

Mother

- Mother:
 - Improved Mother-Child Attachment⁽¹⁾
 - Decreased Perinatal Anxiety and Stress ^(1,2)
 - Protective effect of maternal depression ^(2,3)

1- Hossain, Z., Field, T., Gonzalez, J., Malphurs, J., Valle, C. D., & Pickens, J. (1994). Infants of "depressed" mothers interact better with their nondressed fathers. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 15(4), 348-357.
2 - Deng, E. R., Rizo-Simons, S. J., Parkers, M. E., Rich-Kiwants, J. W., Gilman, M. W., Wright, R., & Taveras, E. M. (2016). The influence of antenatal partner support on pregnancy outcomes. *Journal of Women's Health*, 25(7), 672-679.
3 - Lewin, A., Mitchell, S. J., Waters, D., Hoigkinson, S., Southam-Lalonde, C., & Gilmore, J. (2015). The protective effects of father involvement for infants of teen mothers with depressive symptoms. *Maternal and child health journal*, 19(3), 1016-1023.

Identified Risks

- Maltreatment and Overrepresentation in Severe Child Maltreatment^(1, 2)
- Exposure of child to Intimate Partner Violence ⁽³⁾
- Antisocial father behavior and conduct ⁽⁴⁾

1- Dubowitz, H., Black, M., Kerr, M., Starr Jr., R., & Harrington, D. (2000). Fathers and child neglect.
2 - Lee, Guterman, and Lee. (2008) Risk Factors for Paternal Physical Child Abuse.
3 - Linares, M. S. (2012). Therapeutic engagement with partner-abusive fathers.
4 - Jaffee, S. R., Moffitt, T. E., Caspi, A., & Taylor, A. (2003). Life with (or without) father...

Risks in Services

- Domestic violence moderates impact of Nurse-Family Partnership ⁽¹⁾
- Low father involvement -> Lower retention and Drop-out ^(2,3)
- Interventions designed to improve social network inversely impacted by father involvement ⁽⁴⁾

1 - Eckenrode et al. (2000) Preventing Child Abuse and Neglect with a Program of Nurse Home Visitation
2 - Navaie-Walser, M., Martin, S. L., Campbell, M. K., Tessaro, I., Kotchuck, M., & Cross, A. W. (2000). Factors predicting completion of a home visitation program by high-risk pregnant women
3 Spreen-Simon, C., Neilgas, D., & Kelly, J. (2001). Adolescents at risk for mistreating their children
4- Guterman et al. (2013) Examining the Effectiveness of Home-Based Parent Aide Services to Reduce Risk for Physical Child Abuse and Neglect

Challenges to Fathering

- Gatekeeping
 - Mothers ⁽¹⁾
 - Intergenerational Families ⁽¹⁾
 - Effects on Father's Parenting Quality ⁽²⁾
 - "Professional Gatekeeping" ⁽³⁾
- Service Systems
 - Unclear: access, timing, lack of tracking

1 - Allen and Hawkins, (1999) Maternal Gatekeeping.
2 - Altenburger, L. E. (2018). Father-Child Relationships: Early Precursors and Consequences for School-Aged Children's Social and Cognitive Adjustment.
3 - Frasciolo, F., Fernberg, M., Albert Smitman, G., & Favez, N. (2016). Professional gatekeeping toward fathers: A powerful influence on family and child development. *Perspectives on Infant Mental Health* (Internet). 2016, 1-7.

Motivations to Parent

- Innovative Strategy
- Neuroscience Research ⁽¹⁾
 - Very similar brain response btw parents: Motivation to Parent when seeing the infant
 - Primary vs Secondary Caregiver: very similar responses in neuroplasticity (change); fathers as primary vs secondary had greater effects
 - Early parenting: important time for establishing this change
 - Synchrony with mother and child
 - Lots not understood; particularly in father brains and comparison to mothers

1- Feldman, R. (2015). The adaptive human parental brain: implications for children's social development. *Trends in neurosciences*, 38(6), 387-399.

Policy Driving Fathers

- Child Support and Enforcement
 - Social Security Acts – 50s, 60s, 70s
- "Responsible Fatherhood" Initiatives of 90s
- Family and Medical Leave Act (93')
- U.S. Deficit Reduction Act (06'):
 - father involvement and engagement promoting

Carlson, M. J., & McLanahan, S. S. (2012). Fragile families, father involvement, and public policy.

Your Organizations

Processes for Organizations

- All Staff
 - Consider own attitudes and biases
 - View process through lens of fathers
 - View organization through lens of fathers
 - Find gatekeepers and Gatekeeping processes
 - Ask fathers!
 - Consider what possible changes to processes could help make change
 - Envision what the possible change could be

Activity

- Group by organization type if at all possible; but interdisciplinary, great!
- Handout

Feedback & Brainstorm

In Healthcare Settings

- Recommendations ⁽¹⁾
 - Reciprocal engagement
 - Encourage Early Father Child Care
 - Facilitate Cooperative Care
 - Healthy Relationships
 - Address Parent Health

Allport et al., (2018) Promoting Father Involvement for Child and Family Health. Academic Pediatrics

--Break--

What engagement strategies work?

- Outcomes: fathers, children, families, and mothers
- Organizations
- Study Lessons

Dads Matter: Flexible, Modular-Based Services

- Dads Matter designed as a flexibly delivered “modular” enhancement to existing services
 - Tested in: Parents As Teachers, Early Head Start (home-based option), Healthy Families America
- Service Goals: *(in modules)*
 - Assess father’s role in the family
 - Engage fathers
 - Support the co-parenting team
 - Provide direct support to specific parent issues

Dads Matter: Critical Process Strategies

- Engage everyone in the organization
- Creative Assessment
 - Questions that give dad access to visit
- Preparation
 - Ask to join
 - Invite
 - Call/Confirm
 - Leave things (bring a copy)

What happens when it works?

- Within Organizations
- Worker Perceptions
- Outcomes for Fathers
- *Study Lessons

Dads Matter

Pilot

- Many positive findings across domains ⁽¹⁾

Randomized Trial

- Home Visiting Services
 - Increased activities with fathers, Positive attitudes toward home visitors, no harm done to mother vs home visitor relationship
- Fathers
 - Perceptions of their contributions to child's life higher, increased attendance in home visits
- Mothers
 - Stability of relationship with home visitor, improved perceptions of fathers' contributions to child's lives
- Children
 - Processing findings

1 - Guterman, Bellamy, and Barman, (2018) Promoting Father Involvement in Early Home Visiting Services for Vulnerable Families: Findings from a Pilot Study of "Dads Matter"

Organizations

- Feasibility: It's doable!
 - Fairly low impact intervention can influence rates ⁽¹⁾
- Interventions Can Increase Father Involvement ^(2,3)
- Father Impact on Services
 - Prior studies showed retention in services ⁽¹⁾
 - Current showing no change in mother attitudes toward services
 - Cost and Time? Resources; Staff time (e.g. supervision)

1 - Guterman, Bellamy, and Barman, (2018) Promoting Father Involvement in Early Home Visiting Services for Vulnerable Families: Findings from a Pilot Study of "Dads Matter".
2 - Doherty, Erickson, and LaRossa, (2008) An Intervention to Increase Father Involvement and Skills with Infants during the Transition to Parenthood.
3 - Doherty, Phares, and Birkeland, (2002) Involvement of Fathers in Therapy & Sons of Clinicians.

Worker Perceptions

- When fathers present, workers positive about experience ⁽¹⁾
- Workers able to use specific strategies but support needed ⁽²⁾
- Workers need to know what "success" looks like ⁽¹⁾

1 - Barman, A. J. (2017). Organizational and Worker Level Factors Influencing Father Involvement and Engagement in Early Home Visitation Programs.
2 - Bellamy, et al. (2019) Conference Presentation: Home Visitors Attitudes, Expectations, and Practice Following Training in Dads Matter: Results from a Qualitative Study


Fathers

- Workers in early parent programs across the country report father access/attendance ⁽¹⁾
- Most fathers report some sort of attendance at prenatal visits ⁽²⁾
- Early engagement in prenatal visits -> More Feelings of Attachment ⁽²⁾

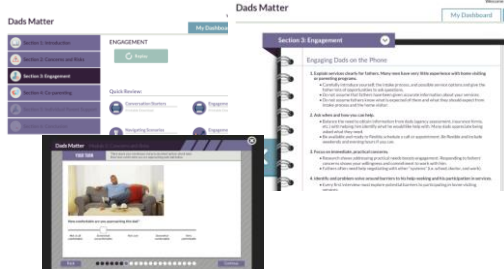
1 - Barman, A. J. (2017). Organizational and Worker Level Factors Influencing Father Involvement and Engagement in Early Home Visitation Programs.
2 - Walsh, T., Jones, M., Tolman, R., Lee, S., & Singh, V. (2019) Conference Presentation: Early Service Experiences As a Barrier or Facilitator of Subsequent Service Engagement

Dads Matter: Lessons Learned

- Staff attitudes and resulting behaviors
 - Biggest influence on engagement rates and implementing new engagement activities
- Professional Gatekeepers
 - Those messaging overtly or subtly
- Organizational Culture
 - Should continue to be explored
- Staff creative strategies important!


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Next Steps: Online




Thank you!

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