



# Promoting Responsible **FATHERHOOD**

A GUIDE TO KEY IDEAS, EFFECTIVE APPROACHES,  
AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES FOR  
MAKING CONNECTIONS CITIES AND SITE TEAMS

*Part of a Series from the Technical Assistance Resource Center of the Annie E. Casey Foundation*

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A list of Technical Assistance Resource Center Resource Guides appears on the inside back cover.

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### ***About the Annie E. Casey Foundation***

*The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private charitable organization dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children in the United States. It was established in 1948 by Jim Casey, one of the founders of United Parcel Service, and his siblings, who named the Foundation in honor of their mother. The primary mission of the Foundation is to foster public policies, human-service reforms, and community supports that more effectively meet the needs of today's vulnerable children and families. In pursuit of this goal, the Foundation makes grants that help states, cities, and neighborhoods fashion more innovative, cost-effective responses to these needs. For more information and a copy of this report, visit the Foundation's website at [www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org).*

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# preface to family strengthening resource guides

*Children do well when their families do well, and families do better when they live in supportive neighborhoods.*

This simple premise underlies *Making Connections*, the centerpiece of a 10- to 15-year commitment by the Annie E. Casey Foundation to improving the life chances of vulnerable children by strengthening their families and neighborhoods. The Foundation is working in U.S. cities to promote neighborhood-scale programs, policies, and activities that contribute to stable, capable families.

*Making Connections* seeks to improve outcomes for children, families, and communities by tapping the skills, strengths, leadership, and resilience that exist in even the toughest neighborhoods. The initiative is founded on the belief that families and their children can succeed if the people who live, work, and hold positions of influence in tough neighborhoods make family success a priority—and if there are deliberate and sustained efforts within the broader community and at the state level not only to connect isolated families to essential resources, opportunities, and supports, but also to improve the material conditions of the neighborhood.

The Foundation is dedicated to helping communities engage residents, civic groups, public- and private-sector leadership, and faith-based organizations in efforts to transform the toughest neighborhoods into family supportive environments. *Making Connections* works to enable residents to earn decent wages; interact with family, friends, neighbors, and social institutions; and live, work, and play in a safe, congenial, and enriching environment.

To improve the health, safety, educational success, and overall well-being of children and families, *Making Connections* is a long-term campaign aimed

at helping selected cities build alliances and mobilize constituencies at the neighborhood level.

*Making Connections* has identified three kinds of connections that we believe are essential:

- + **Economic Opportunities** that help families succeed economically by securing good jobs, accumulating savings, and accessing adequate goods, services, and community facilities that provide them with the basic necessities of food, clothing, shelter, and health care. To meet this need, communities must address workforce issues, such as job development, employment and training, as well as wage supplements, asset-building strategies, and community investments. All of these help ensure predictable incomes, which in turn bolster healthy child development and help revitalize communities.
- + **Social networks in the community**, including friends, neighbors, relatives, mentors, community organizations, and faith-based institutions that provide neighbor-to-neighbor support and help connect families and residents to each other.



## MAKING CONNECTIONS CITIES

Atlanta	New Haven
Baltimore	New Orleans
Boston	Oakland
Camden	Philadelphia
Denver	Providence
Detroit	San Antonio
Des Moines	San Diego
Hartford	Savannah
Indianapolis	Seattle
Louisville	St. Louis
Miami	Washington, D.C.
Milwaukee	

the  
*MAKING CONNECTIONS* network

In 1999, the Foundation began to develop a set of ideas about strengthening families with sites in 22 cities across the country. We did not seek to work in only the most stressed and disinvested places, but rather in communities where existing efforts and the policy climate appeared receptive to a long-term family strengthening effort through neighborhood transformation. The initial phase of *Making Connections* was thus exploratory and focused on alliance and capacity building. In mid-2002, *Making Connections* transitioned to a second phase focused squarely on results—meaning measurable improvements in the well-being of children and families and in neighborhood conditions.

Currently ten sites have entered Phase II of the initiative: Denver, Des Moines, Hartford, Indianapolis, Louisville, Milwaukee, Oakland, Providence, San Antonio, and Seattle. Each is engaged in comprehensive family strengthening and neighborhood transformation efforts that are guided by a set of core results used to measure progress, invest resources, deploy technical assistance, and make sure work is consistent with local priorities and the goals of *Making Connections*.

Boston, Camden, Detroit, Miami, New Orleans, Philadelphia, San Diego, Savannah, and St. Louis are Family Strengthening Investment sites focused on specific strategies, such as increasing family economic success and helping children enter school ready to learn. The Family Strengthening sites also contribute to cross-site learning exchanges and the Foundation’s efforts to improve access among working families to the Earned Income Tax Credit.

The civic sites of Atlanta, Baltimore, New Haven, and Washington, D.C., are important to *Making Connections* because of their special relationship to the Foundation. Baltimore has been our headquarters since 1994. Atlanta is home to United Parcel Service, which was cofounded by Jim Casey, and New Haven is the new home for the Foundation’s direct service arm, Casey Family Services. Washington, D.C., is included as a civic site because it is the nation’s capital. Although not bound by the formal parameters of the initiative, these sites allow us to partner with local officials, community organizations, and residents on a range of flexible investments that strengthen families and neighborhoods.

All of the sites are part of the *Making Connections* Network, which is convened regularly around different issues and topics to share lessons, strategies, and effective approaches to strengthening families.

- + **Services and supports**, both formal and informal, public and private, which provide preventive as well as ongoing assistance, and which work for families because they are accessible, affordable, neighborhood based, and culturally appropriate. These include high-quality schools, health care, housing assistance, and affordable child care.

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE: CORE RESULTS**

*Making Connections* must demonstrate to residents, communities, policymakers, elected and government officials, other foundations, and the general public that strengthening families and neighborhoods offers a compelling solution to the social isolation, economic disinvestments, and fragmented systems that have ensnared too many lives for too long.

The Foundation is thus using a set of core results to help evaluate progress, gather data, guide investments, and hold itself accountable for producing the evidence that shows how *Making Connections* makes a lasting difference in the lives and life chances of children, families, and neighborhoods.

The following six result areas, and the indicators used to quantify them, were distilled from the broad range of research, assessments of the Foundation’s previous investments in multisite community change initiatives, and data gathered to build the evaluation framework for *Making Connections*.

**1. Families have increased earnings and income**

*We’ll know we’re making a difference when:*

- + More parents and young adults are employed
- + More parents are employed in jobs that provide family supporting wages and benefits, as well as opportunities for career advancement
- + Levels of family income and earnings increase
- + Stable labor force attachment increases

**2. Families have increased levels of assets**

*We’ll know we’re making a difference when:*

- + The number of families who save and the level of family savings increase
- + More families own homes, cars, and other assets
- + More eligible families file for the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit
- + Access to reasonably priced housing, consumer goods, and financial services increases
- + Fewer families have payment-related disruptions in housing status and living conditions, such as utility shut-offs, repossessions, and foreclosures

**3. Families and youth increase their civic participation**

*We’ll know we’re making a difference when:*

- + More families have adults members that register and vote
- + More residents are prepared for and take up formal and informal leadership roles
- + More families take civic action through formal activities and associations, such as tenant and other civic organizations

**4. Families have strong supports and networks**

*We’ll know we’re making a difference when:*

- + More families are connected to informal helping networks and natural helpers
- + More families are connected to formal networks, such as resource exchange and mutual aid associations

**5. Families have access to services that work for them**

*We’ll know we’re making a difference when:*

- + More services and supports that strengthen families meet standards for quality and effectiveness
- + More families are satisfied with agencies, organizations, and institutions and the services they provide



**6. Children are healthy and ready to succeed in school**

*We’ll know we’re making a difference when:*

- + Pregnant women receive prenatal care in the first trimester
- + All children have access to health insurance
- + More children enter school with the strengths, skills, and good health that enable them to learn
- + More children have developmentally appropriate preschool experience
- + More parents are involved in their children’s schools

During Phase I of *Making Connections*, the Foundation encouraged local priorities to shape the work in the sites. Within the Phase II sites, however,

the focus on the core results is explicit and resources and time are spent on deliberate and sustained efforts to pursue this set of outcomes.

### CORE CAPACITIES

No single investment, intervention, or entity alone can create and sustain durable change that strengthens families in tough neighborhoods, especially on a large scale. *Making Connections* must help catalyze a mobilized community that can drive and sustain change over the long term. In Phase I of the initiative, we introduced a set of milestones and markers that keyed on building the relationships, alliances, and capacity needed to underpin a broad-based family strengthening agenda.

Given the focus on results in Phase II of *Making Connections*, our proposed theory of change looks to develop certain core capacities within the sites that leverage alliances and capacity in the sites to propel change and achieve results. The Foundation and site teams thus work to support, invigorate, and nurture the development of these core capacities, which include:

- + Develop, achieve, and sustain a **collective vision** for results among residents, institutions, and other stakeholders
- + Develop, promote, and sustain **resident leadership** within the **collective change process** to achieve results
- + **Develop and sustain relationships and partnerships** among residents, institutions, and others in support of a collective change process to achieve results
- + Implement **powerful strategies** to achieve results
- + Promote, lead and sustain the **successful transformation of public systems**

- + Support **collaborative learning and accountability** for results
- + Build capacity to **communicate core messages, ideas, and beliefs** to engage and influence public will and a wide audience

### What do we mean by “family strengthening”?

Family strengthening policies, practices, and activities recognize the family as the fundamental influence in children’s lives. They reinforce parental roles and messages and reflect, represent, and accommodate families’ interests. Family strengthening means parents have the opportunities, relationships, networks, and supports to succeed, which include involving parents as decision-makers in how their communities meet family needs.

A family’s major responsibility is to provide an optimal environment for the care and healthy development of loved ones. Although basic physical needs—housing, food, clothing, safety, and health—are essential, children also need a warm emotional climate, a stimulating intellectual environment, and reliable adult relationships to thrive.

Threats to a family’s ability to manage its responsibilities come from many sources: externally generated crises, such as a job or housing loss, or internal crises, such as child abuse or estrangement among family members. Unexpected events, such as the birth of a child with a disability or a teen’s substance abuse problems, as well as everyday stresses such as new jobs, marriages, deaths, and household moves, can cause destabilizing changes. The family’s ongoing stability hinges on its ability to sustain itself through these disruptions.

To help families cope effectively with crises and normal life events, communities need a variety of resources. These include adequate and accessible services for children at all stages of their development,

effective family supports, and cohesive social networks.

Family strengthening policies and practices consider the whole family, not just individual family members. Often, formal system and agency programs inadvertently create tensions when their focus excludes family needs. A striking example is a well-intentioned nutrition program, which arranged to ensure that homeless children received breakfast, lunch, and dinner at school. The children’s parents and other siblings had no source of food, however, and the program participants had no opportunity to share meals with the rest of their families. Once the program leaders recognized the problem, they learned to reconsider their strategies and included parents and siblings in the school mealtimes.

Similarly, many welfare-to-work programs report difficulties in job retention because of stresses often resulting from the jobs themselves. When a family finds better employment, its rituals, daily logistics, roles, and responsibilities often change. More successful programs consider these disruptions ahead of time and develop ways to help families adjust and adapt.

#### **What do we mean by “strengthening neighborhoods”?**

Families must be helped to thrive within the context of their neighborhoods and broader communities and regions. Workforce strategies, for example, should connect neighborhood residents to specific local or regional businesses and industries that offer family supporting wages. Community investment strategies should connect the assets and resources of each unique neighborhood to the larger regional economy and encourage new investments, new business development, and access to high-quality, affordable goods and services.

*Making Connections* recognizes that the informal social networks most important to people (their

friends, neighbors, faith communities, and clubs) almost always exist at the neighborhood level. Time and again, these natural helping networks strengthen families’ ability to raise their children successfully. One key component of strengthening neighborhoods is thus to nurture and sustain social capital.

At the same time, *Making Connections* seeks to link families to broader networks both within and outside their own neighborhoods in ways that open up new possibilities for children and parents alike.

Finally, strengthening neighborhoods means placing formal public services in neighborhoods, and making sure those services work for families, not against them. This requires redefining the jobs of public workers so that professionals from separate mainline systems—as well as natural helpers or informal caregivers—work together in teams and are deployed to specific neighborhoods to take the necessary steps to help families succeed.

#### **The Technical Assistance Resource Center**

The Foundation’s Technical Assistance Resource Center (TARC) helps the *Making Connections* Network access powerful ideas, skillful peers, proven practices, and opportunities to increase the leadership skills of local residents. TARC provides assistance to the *Making Connections* cities on a range of topics, from building alliances that lead to stronger families in healthier, more stable communities, to diverse strategies that community leaders may pursue in terms of jobs, housing, safety, schools, and health care. TARC responds to the sites’ priorities through a “help desk” approach that works to meet site requests for assistance with real time “peer consultations,” in which colleagues who have addressed a particular problem successfully share their learnings. In this way, *Making Connections* cities are building a wealth of practical know-how that’s emerging from on-the-ground innovators.





Another component of the Foundation’s technical assistance strategy is a set of Resource Guides, including this one. These guides summarize trends in the field, highlight effective examples, and point to the people, organizations, and materials that can provide additional help. Resource Guides allow Foundation staff to create a common fund of knowledge across a broad range of issues, and also support community leaders, residents, and other local partners who want to learn more about specific subjects.

The number of Resource Guides will fluctuate as demand changes, but approximately 12 to 15 will be produced (*see the inside back cover for a list*). All guides address topics aimed at both supporting individual families and strengthening neighborhoods. They fall into four categories:

- + Family Economic Success;
- + Enhancing Social Networks;
- + Building High-Quality Services and Supports; and
- + Techniques for Advancing a Family Strengthening Agenda in Neighborhoods.

The guides in the first three categories address substantive areas in which activities can lead directly to better outcomes for children and families, while also strengthening neighborhoods. For example, the first Family Economic Success Resource Guide focuses on jobs. It offers strategies that can help connect low-income, working families to local and regional labor markets, and thus secure better wages and benefits. The guide also shows how family supporting jobs fortify tough neighborhoods, making them more attractive as places to live and providing strong incentives for younger residents to participate in the labor force.

The Resource Guides in the second and third categories similarly affect both individual families and their neighborhoods. The guide on child care can help communities develop plans for increasing the supply of this critical family support, especially the notoriously hard-to-find care for infants and school-age children and care during nontraditional work hours. Achieving this goal not only would improve the developmental preparation of young children, it also would help stabilize parental employment, enhance the viability of neighborhood enterprises, and promote safer, better-connected communities.

The guides in the fourth category address techniques for advancing neighborhood-based family strengthening work, such as how to develop a communications strategy and how to use data and maintain accountability for specific outcomes.

Additional guides will be developed as our learning and experience in the sites deepens. By the same token, this and other guides are works in progress; they will be updated periodically as we continue to share effective strategies and practice. We view these guides thus not as an end unto themselves but as a first step in posing and answering some of the most difficult questions about how to strengthen families in tough neighborhoods. We encourage you to share your thoughts with us about what works, and point us to additional sources of expertise. And we thank you, again, for your commitment to securing a better future for children and families most in need of better connections to opportunity, support, and help.

# introduction

## PROMOTING EFFECTIVE FATHERHOOD PRACTICE, ADVOCACY, AND RESEARCH IN THE MAKING CONNECTIONS SITES

Fathers matter in the lives of children. A caring father can produce a profound and positive impact on the life of his child simply by being involved. That's why *Making Connections* communities should pay attention to fathers as they seek to build strong families and communities.

Children with fathers or close relationships with adult males have higher self-esteem, are better learners, and are less likely to be depressed.<sup>1</sup> Children whose fathers share meals, spend leisure time with them, or help them with homework are more successful in school than children whose fathers do not.<sup>2</sup> And men whose fathers cared and sacrificed for them are more likely to become responsible fathers themselves.<sup>3</sup>

Even when fathers do not live with their children, they can make crucial contributions to their children's development and emotional adjustment by staying involved, being emotionally supportive, offering praise, and providing discipline.<sup>4</sup>

But when fathers are absent from the lives of their children, children often suffer. Even in a society in which many mothers work, many families still need fathers' paychecks to stay out of poverty. While the poverty rate for children in two-parent families is 8 percent, the rate for children in divorced families is 31 percent. For children whose parents never married, the poverty rate is 64 percent.<sup>5</sup>

The noneconomic costs of father absence may be even more serious. Children raised without fathers at home are more likely to perform poorly in school,<sup>6</sup> develop emotional problems, engage in risky behaviors such as early sexual activity and

drug and alcohol abuse,<sup>7</sup> and experience violence as children.<sup>8</sup> In addition, fatherless boys are more likely to become violent men than boys raised with fathers.<sup>9</sup>

Yet 24 million children still live in homes without their biological fathers, and 20 million live in single-parent homes—most of them lacking fathers.<sup>10</sup> These children's futures are at stake.

Many of these children are being raised by parents who lack the earnings, assets, and support systems to meet their children's needs. They are being raised in neighborhoods where economic opportunity is scarce and support systems for families are weak. All too often, families in the toughest communities are isolated from the broader, mainstream economy and are unable to achieve economic security for themselves and their neighborhoods.

Work to engage fathers must cut across all aspects of the family strengthening agenda that *Making Connections* seeks to catalyze in its sites to improve long-term outcomes for vulnerable children. As this guide makes clear, fatherhood programs—no matter how effective—are insufficient in and of themselves. The key is to link fathers and programs that support them to a broad range of family supports and social services. Thus, developing strategic ways to more fully involve child welfare, early childhood, corrections, education, and health care agencies and practitioners in this work is a pressing need. We must also realize that good programs for fathers are not confined to the fatherhood field alone and that community- and faith-based organizations are effective advocates for fathers. Success will be elusive if the movement is left only to national policy organizations and a relatively small group of advocates.



# executive summary

## THE STATE OF THE FIELD TODAY

During the past two decades, the field of responsible fatherhood has grown considerably both at the national and state levels. This guide lists many organizations dedicated to sustaining this growth and advancing effective advocacy. Site teams can and should capitalize on this trend, but must also recognize some of the field's strengths, vulnerabilities, and key needs. These include:

- + The formation of strong, credible advocacy organizations such as the National Fatherhood Initiative, the National Center for Fathering, and the National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families. These organizations can help connect sites to research data, provide examples of effective practice, and develop communications strategies needed to advocate for responsible fatherhood initiatives. See the Promising Approaches and Resources section for contact information and website addresses.
- + A serious lack of funding for the fatherhood field poses a possibility of cutbacks in direct service programs, especially in the area of employment and training for low-income fathers. This scarcity of resources has also contributed to the politicization of the fatherhood field. For example, many elected officials and policymakers view funding decisions for fatherhood issues as either/or decisions in terms of their impact on men versus women, or strengthening fathers at the expense of promoting marriage.
- + The need to increase capacity among fatherhood advocates to develop programs and push for policy changes that help bridge partisan, ideological, and practice divides.
- + The need for the field to develop strategies that integrate responsible fatherhood efforts into education, social service, corrections, and health care arenas.

## EFFECTIVE FATHERHOOD PROGRAMS

In recent years, practitioners have learned much about what it takes to restore fathers to their families. And though the list of services that fatherhood programs should include is long, most of these services are already available in many low-income communities. Indeed, a recent survey by the Georgia Fatherhood Services Network indicated that existing programs and services in communities throughout Georgia could meet 70 percent of the needs of low-income, non-custodial fathers. That's why *Making Connections* communities should not be reluctant to embrace the fatherhood agenda.

### elements of EFFECTIVE FATHERHOOD programs

- + Community-Based Outreach
- + Life-Skills Training
- + Links to Physical and Mental Health Care
- + Education and Job Training
- + Helping Fathers Get Access to Their Children
- + Legal Services
- + Peer Support
- + Parenting Skills Training
- + Relationship Skills Training
- + Housing Assistance
- + Transportation
- + Services for Formerly Incarcerated Fathers and Their Families

### Community-Based Outreach

The most effective fatherhood programs include extensive outreach. Fatherhood practitioners recognize that many fathers, especially low-income fathers, are unaware of services available to them. In other cases, fathers are aware of services but reluctant to take advantage of them. Effective programs use men who are beneficiaries of the services to reach out to other men in the places they congregate, including barbershops, basketball courts, concerts, health clinics, and even neighborhood street corners.

### Life Skills Training

Some fathers need to begin with the basics. Even before they seek job training, they need help with the so-called “soft skills” that will help them get and keep jobs. These skills include learning the importance of showing up on time for work, learning to accept criticism on the job, and learning to work in teams with coworkers.

When they are ready to look for jobs, fathers often need help with resumés and coaching on how to conduct themselves in interviews. They may even need money to buy appropriate clothing or to pay for basic personal services such as haircuts.

Finally, fathers may need help removing legal barriers that contribute to their inability to get and keep good jobs, including verifying U.S. citizenship, getting drivers’ licenses, and paying or expunging traffic violations.

### Links to Physical and Mental Health Care

Given the impact of limited health care resources, staffers of effective fatherhood programs have learned that they must be able to link their clients to an array of community-based health care services.

While many Americans get their health care through employer-provided or -subsidized insurance,

employers often limit or even exclude coverage for low-wage employees. A Kellogg Foundation publication, *A Poor Man’s Plight: Uncovering the Disparity in Men’s Health*, reported that 58 percent of African-American men ages 18 to 64 were uninsured. Among Latino men, 46 percent lacked health insurance, compared to only 17 percent of non-Latino white men. And while Medicaid covers the health care costs for almost 50 percent of low-income mothers, only 15 percent of low-income fathers are eligible for the program.

An Urban Institute study, *Helping Poor Nonresident Dads Do More*, indicated that 25 percent of low-income, nonresident fathers reported having at least one health barrier to work. For example, without treatment, dental and vision problems can become major employment barriers.

Some low-skilled men also have undiagnosed or untreated mental illnesses. In *A Poor Man’s Plight*, the authors noted that acknowledging mental illness or emotional distress can prove difficult for minority men, who perceive such difficulties as “not acting like a man.”

Connecting fathers to substance abuse treatment is also critical, especially given studies that indicate men may be more likely to binge drink and use illicit drugs than women.

### Education and Job Training

Recent national studies have established that low-income fathers, like low-income mothers, lack the education and training they need to get and keep good jobs. According to a report by the Urban Institute, 40 percent of low-income fathers surveyed in 1999 had never finished high school. Many non-custodial fathers who have not completed high school may need help preparing for and successfully completing the GED exam before they can enter and complete job training programs.



Yet fathers have far fewer training opportunities. A 2001 Urban Institute report found that the rate for low-income mothers' participation in training and education classes was 19 percent in 1996 compared to just 4 percent for low-income, noncustodial fathers.<sup>11</sup>

Increasing access to job training is only half the battle. There are also disparities in terms of how much help fathers receive in their efforts to find work. An Urban Institute report, *Helping Poor Nonresident Dads Do More*, showed that in 1999, 20 percent of mothers reported receiving job search assistance compared to only 6 percent of fathers.<sup>12</sup> And once employed, many low-income workers still need additional vocational training or academic courses to help them earn higher wages and advance in their careers.

#### Helping Fathers Get Access to Their Children

When parents' relationships deteriorate, mothers generally assume custody of the children, especially if the parents have never married. In such arrangements, many mothers deny fathers opportunities to spend time with their children especially if the fathers have fallen behind in child support payments. In these instances, low-income fathers often must obtain court orders for visitation rights. This process frequently requires that the father obtain financial assistance to pay the legal expenses. Still, in many cases, mothers refuse to grant fathers permission to see their children. In such instances, fathers may also need to retain legal counsel to enforce their visitation rights. This is very problematic in that these fathers, in addition to having financial challenges with their own livelihood and orders to stay current with child support payments, often cannot afford to pay for lawyers' fees.

When this issue results from the parents' inability to get along with each other, some communities

have opened child access or transfer centers, which allow children to stay in contact with both parents during stressful times. At these safe and monitored sites, noncustodial parents can visit with their children or pick them up for off-site visits.

#### Legal Services

Legal assistance that helps fathers obtain and enforce their visitation rights can translate into increased economic security for families, because when fathers see their children regularly, they are more likely to pay child support. According to the Census Bureau, in 1999 approximately 79 percent of noncustodial parents who had joint custody or visitation rights paid some or all of the child support they owed, compared to only 46 percent of noncustodial parents who lacked either joint custody or visitation.

Fathers often need legal help establishing reasonable levels of child support. Many low-income fathers are unaware of how the child support system works or the consequences of failing to comply with child support orders. Thus, these fathers may face payments that they can't meet. This frequently occurs when they are unemployed or incarcerated.

Problems with child support can also hamper fathers' efforts to get jobs. Fathers with child support debt may be inclined to avoid interactions with governmental agencies they view as connected to law enforcement or the courts. Unfortunately, such agencies can be instrumental in helping them resolve issues associated with their child support obligations.

It is not uncommon for fathers who don't pay child support to end up with criminal records because of their nonpayment; others lose their drivers' licenses. Thus, helping fathers overcome legal problems can be critical to both their engagement in their children's lives and their ability to provide for them financially.

### Peer Support

Many fatherhood programs use peer support groups to help fathers learn to manage problems. In peer support groups, fathers learn that they are not the only men who are ill-prepared to earn good wages, support their families, deal with troubled relationships, and navigate the complex child support enforcement system.

Peer support can especially help fathers who are reentering the workforce after incarceration or extended unemployment. Support groups help these men deal with frustrations that might stem from underemployment, feelings of discrimination, and a lack of work experience. Without addressing these feelings first, many fathers cannot face other barriers to mainstream employment.

### Parenting Skills Training

Researchers have determined that the vast majority of low-income, noncustodial fathers—once presumed to be indifferent to their children—are eager to be good fathers when their children are born. Yet many lack the skills or confidence needed to take active roles in their children’s lives.

Although most fathers express love toward their newborn children, many do not know how to care for them. This is not helped by the fact that boys are less likely than girls to be assigned caregiving roles when they are young. As a result, they lack experience and competence as new parents when they attempt to care for their infants. Many also grew up without males to model parenting for them.

These fathers can benefit from parenting training. Because of the distinctive way that fathers interact with their children, fathers typically contribute to child well-being in different ways than mothers. With some guidance, fathers’ parenting styles can provide advantages for both mothers and children.

Training is especially effective for these fathers when it is offered before their children are born or while their children are very young. Fathers who receive parenting training early in their children’s lives are more likely to form stable parenting relationships with their children’s mothers even if the couples do not marry, better enabling the fathers to stay connected to their children.

### Relationship Skills Training

Children who are supported and nurtured by two parents at every stage of childhood are much more likely to develop into healthy and stable adults. Indeed, studies show that children do best when they are raised by two biological, married parents in households with low stress levels.<sup>13</sup>

Many children, however, are not fortunate enough to be raised in such families. Current data show that approximately 40 percent of children in father-absent homes go at least one year without seeing their fathers, 26 percent of children live in different states than their fathers, and 50 percent of children living absent their fathers have never been in their fathers’ homes.<sup>14</sup>

Frequently, conflict resolution services are offered to parents who can’t get along. These services are intended to help them resolve their differences in the interest of working together on behalf of their children. If those efforts fail, well-designed programs can support efforts to help parents develop skills necessary to work cooperatively to raise their children. These efforts can help noncustodial, divorced, or never-married parents stay involved in their children’s lives.

### Housing Assistance

The housing needs of low-income, noncustodial fathers go largely unmet because housing assistance programs are generally unavailable to adults who are not their children’s primary caregivers. In addition, the very real shortage of affordable housing has



allowed local governments to legitimize their discounting of fathers' needs by saying that homeless women and children should come first. While often true, this is also used as an excuse to exclude fathers.

The lack of adequate housing hurts young fathers in at least two ways. For one thing, it makes it difficult for them to obtain and retain jobs, in that employment applications generally require addresses and residential telephone numbers. Secondly, fathers without decent housing face problems getting visitation rights to see their children. Judges are reluctant to grant temporary custody to men who cannot demonstrate that they can provide a safe place for their children to stay when they visit.

### Transportation

Although job opportunities can frequently be found in suburban areas, many low-income fathers live in urban or rural settings, making job sites difficult to reach. In addition, many lower-level or entry-level job opportunities require evening and weekend work—times when public transportation is less available.<sup>15</sup>

Even when transportation is accessible, during the first few weeks of employment fathers need stipends to help them get to and from their jobs. Fatherhood practitioners are finding that without transportation stipends, many fathers have no way to get to their jobs, to the agencies that provide social services, or to see their children.

### Services for Incarcerated Fathers and Their Families

Today, many children are growing up with fathers in prison. In 2000, 1.4 million children had fathers in state or federal prisons. Yet only about 60 percent of fathers in federal prisons and 40 percent of fathers in state prisons have weekly contact with their children, including phone calls and letters. As of 2002,

## guiding PRINCIPLES for effective FATHERHOOD programs

- + Effective fatherhood programs are locally based and connected to key actors in their communities, including private-sector employers, policymakers, educators, and leaders of community-based and religious organizations.
- + Effective fatherhood programs are staffed by personnel who are eager to work with fathers, culturally competent, and trained to deal with fathers' specific needs. Effective programs use case managers to help fathers identify barriers to their success, think through plans of action, and follow through on their plans.
- + Effective fatherhood programs recognize that many factors contribute to fathers' inability to pay child support. Programs provide or link fathers to an array of services including job training, education, transportation assistance, life skills, legal services, health care, substance abuse treatment, and housing assistance.

more than 300,000 households with minor children had a father in prison.

Many jails and prisons are now working to help fathers maintain relationships with their children while in prison. One important program that works closely with the prison system is New York's Osborne Association. The program's objective is to teach incarcerated fathers to be responsible and loving parents, both while they're incarcerated and after they return home. In 2002, nearly 150 incarcerated fathers completed Osborne Association sponsored parenting courses.

Similarly, since 1996, the National Fatherhood Initiative's Long Distance Dads program in New York's prison system has helped more than 20,000 incarcerated fathers stay involved in their children's lives. The 12-week Long Distance Dads curriculum teaches fathers to manage their anger, improve their communication skills, develop healthy relationships, and cope with daily frustrations.

### Helping With Reentry

At some point, most of these fathers will return to their communities. About 1,600 exoffenders are released from prison every weekday in America. In 2000, more than 600,000 prisoners were released from federal and state prisons into communities across the United States. Because an estimated 60–70 percent of prisoners are parents, that means that as many as 360,000 parents reenter society each year—the vast majority fathers.

Yet when most fathers leave these institutions, they face daunting obstacles that are generally associated with the lack of job skills and education. While not all fatherhood programs need to provide such services, low-income communities must provide these services so that fathers can effectively reconnect with their families and communities.

### Community-Based Outreach

Most fatherhood practitioners realize that they must actively recruit fathers to connect them to services for which they are eligible. This is especially true in underserved communities, where fathers don't know about service opportunities, or how to find services for which they are eligible. For example, counselors at the Center for Fathers, Families, and Workforce Development (CFWD) in Baltimore (see page 28) target areas in low-income neighborhoods where men congregate. By going into the community, CFWD

identifies the fathers who are most difficult to locate, both by the court system and service providers—and in greatest need of help.

The Male Involvement Network in New Haven, Connecticut, (see page 23) is a network of public and private service providers, clients, and funders. The Network's staff has discovered that, contrary to public perception, most low-income fathers in the New Haven area want to be involved with their children. But because of eligibility standards for public assistance, and the punitive nature of the child support system, many of these men were reticent to interact with social service providers. Once fathers began to trust the Network's outreach workers, case managers were able to link them to services.

### Supervised Visitation

Visitation centers provide space for court-ordered supervised visitation and eliminate the need for interaction between custodial and noncustodial parents. In many centers, staff members accompany children to see their noncustodial parents in rooms filled with age-appropriate activities. The Children's Rights Council (CRC) operates more than 20 such programs in various parts of the country. These centers are referred to as Child Access Transfer Centers. The CRC staff believe the availability of these centers reduces family violence between never-married, separated, and divorced parents.

At Family Place (see page 25), a supervised visitation center in Louisville, all of the visits have been court-ordered. Family Place goes a step beyond the normal child access center program by offering separate entrances and parking lots for mothers and fathers. This is to better ensure that the judges' orders will be carried out more effectively.





# potential questions, requests, opportunities, and challenges

## WHAT QUESTIONS MIGHT NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTS AND LEADERS RAISE ABOUT RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD?

### Skepticism about Supporting Disadvantaged or Low-Income Fathers

One of the questions that *Making Connections* site teams and local partners may face as they introduce the idea of working with low-income fathers is this: Why should communities try to help so-called “deadbeat dads”?

The notion of low-income fathers as deadbeat dads became popular in the early 1990s, when the federal government increased its efforts to force fathers who did not pay child support to live up to their obligations, and thus help reduce government spending on supports for their dependent families.

There is, however, a powerful argument that counters the “deadbeat dads” stereotype. As researchers have focused their attention on fathers who don’t pay child support, one fact has become increasingly clear: Many fathers do not pay because they cannot pay.

A better description for many of these fathers is “dead-broke.” Research shows that the majority of fathers who fail to meet child support obligations are uneducated, unskilled, and—perhaps most significantly—disconnected from the economic opportunities, social supports, and competent services that might help them overcome these deficits.

For example, an Urban Institute analysis found that of the 4.5 million noncustodial fathers who do not pay child support 2.5 million are poor themselves. In 1999, 40 percent of these fathers had not finished high school. The same percentage had been

jobless for more than one year.<sup>16</sup> In addition, these low-income fathers had annual personal earnings of \$5,627, well below the federal poverty level.<sup>17</sup>

One obstacle to employment that isn’t new, but has grown in recent years, is the incarceration rate for low-income men. Having served their time, young fathers seeking fresh starts and new jobs are still burdened with criminal records. Employers are reluctant to hire them, even if their crimes were nonviolent, such as failing to pay child support.

In addition, many low-income fathers face other legal obstacles, such as suspended drivers’ licenses, which make them unattractive to employers.<sup>18</sup> These findings paint a more complex picture of low-income fathers’ barriers to family and community involvement.

Another positive development that will help communities build support for helping fathers is that media coverage of fatherhood has changed significantly in recent years. An analysis of six news sources—*Time*, *Newsweek*, *U.S. News & World Report*, *Ebony*, *Emerge*, and *USAToday*—found media coverage of fathers has evolved beyond stereotypes to provide important background information about father involvement and its effects. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, two stereotypes dominated news coverage of fathers. Some news accounts focused on the new “nurturing fathers” who were very involved in caring for their children. At the same time, as policymakers began debating welfare reform, stories about “deadbeat dads” who did not pay child support also were increasing.

By the mid 1990s, however, reporting about fathers became more sophisticated as journalists began to chronicle the causes of father absence and

its economic and social costs to children, families, and communities—as well as the growth of programs and initiatives to help fathers.

While coverage of fatherhood issues has waned since the mid-1990s, stories about low-income fathers continue to support the notion that fathers' emotional and financial support are both critical to the well-being of their children.

Television has also improved the portrayal of fathers. A June 2003 study from the Parents Television Council (PTC) found that 83 percent of TV children have father figures involved in their lives and that an increasing number of TV children are depicted living with both biological parents.

The PTC's analysis of the 2002–2003 season as compared with the previous season shows a 6 percent increase in the number of TV children living in traditional families with both married parents and a 3 percent decline in the number of children depicted living without father figures.

### **Fear of Domestic Violence**

Communities may also fear that promoting father involvement will needlessly expose mothers and children to risks of domestic violence—a very reasonable concern.

It is estimated that 1.9 million women each year experience domestic violence. In addition, the NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund has reported that as many as 60 percent of women on public assistance report histories of abuse; at any given time, as many as 30 percent are victims of domestic violence.

But that does not mean fathers need to be kept away from their families. Indeed, there is evidence that efforts to maintain or increase the involvement

of fathers in the lives of children can reduce the risks of violence, especially when parents are unmarried.

Data from the Fragile Families and Child Well-being Study<sup>19</sup> show that fewer than 10 percent of new mothers reported that the fathers of their children were physically abusive, emotionally abusive, or controlling. These mothers were much less likely to report these kinds of abuse than were mothers who had ended their relationships with the fathers of their newborns.

Mothers' boyfriends are more likely than other nonrelative caregivers to abuse or neglect children. While communities may feel that mothers who are no longer romantically involved with the fathers of their children should be able to go on with their lives, involvement with new partners can pose risks for children. These risks might be reduced if another highly involved parent—namely the father—remains involved with the children.

At the same time, communities must recognize that some noncustodial parents pose a danger to their children and partners. Any program that promotes reunification for families should have staff members who know how to recognize signs of physical and emotional abuse and are prepared to act quickly to protect children and others from danger.

### **Scarcity of Resources**

At a time when state and local budgets are tight and public resources are diminishing, most agencies and organizations that could be helping fathers are overwhelmed by the demands placed upon them to serve low-income mothers and their children.

Thus, many community leaders and family advocates take the position that providing expanded services to low-income fathers will reduce needed



resources to support female-headed families. The advocates will suggest that because funds, staff, and time are limited, women and children should be given priority. That argument, however, fails to consider that fathers' financial support is still needed to help most poor families escape poverty.

Providing expanded services to low-income fathers is the next logical step in our nation's efforts to reform welfare. While states have succeeded in moving many former welfare recipients into jobs, the average wage for women leaving welfare is only \$6.61 an hour.<sup>20</sup> For families struggling to leave welfare dependency behind, fathers who work and pay child support can help move their families from poverty to self-sufficiency.



#### WHAT ARE THE TRENDS AND OPPORTUNITIES ON WHICH SITES CAN BUILD?

##### **More Awareness that Fathers Matter**

An emerging body of research substantiates the notion that fathers matter in the lives of their children—regardless of their ability to support the children financially. One study found that children of nonresident fathers reported being more satisfied with their lives when their fathers offered trust and encouragement.<sup>21</sup>

Children with involved, loving fathers are significantly more likely to avoid high-risk behaviors such as drug use, truancy, and criminal activity compared to children who have uninvolved fathers. Even in high-crime, inner-city neighborhoods, more than 90 percent of children raised in safe, stable, two-parent homes do not become delinquents.

Children with involved fathers also do better in school. A survey of more than 20,000 parents by the National Center for Education Statistics found that

children perform better both academically and socially when their fathers are involved with their schooling, including attending school meetings and volunteering at schools.

In addition, fathers have a distinctive style of interacting with their young children, adding an important dimension to children's intellectual and social development. As the national organization ZERO TO THREE notes, fathers are much more likely than mothers to engage in active play: "Exploring, moving, tumbling, pretending, singing, and running all help children learn about themselves and the world around them. Infants who are 'well-fathered' are often more secure and curious."

This evidence should be used to encourage communities to help fathers who want to stay involved with their families and to let fathers know that they are important to their children.

##### **Good News from the Fragile Families Study**

Until recently, the public perception of low-income, noncustodial fathers was that they were neither involved in their families' lives, nor interested in being involved. But results from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, a joint project of Princeton and Columbia Universities, have begun to refute that perception.

The Fragile Families study followed poor, unwed parents and their children in 20 cities over five years beginning with children's births. Researchers have overwhelmingly found that at the time their children are born, unwed fathers want to help care for and support their children.

The study has also reported that four out of five mothers said that their children's fathers provided some financial support during pregnancy. Eighty-four percent of the couples put fathers' names on

## father FACTS

### Fathers matter economically.

- + The Census Bureau estimates that almost 20 million children in the United States—29 percent of all children in this country—live in single-parent homes. While the poverty rate for children in two-parent families is 8 percent, for children in divorced families it's 31 percent. And, for children whose parents never married, it's 64 percent.
- + According to the Urban Institute, 70 percent of low-income children who lived apart from their fathers received no child support whatsoever. In the late 1990s, about 90 percent of the 2.8 million low-income, nonresident fathers failed to pay child support.

### Fathers matter emotionally and intellectually.

- + A survey of more than 20,000 parents by the National Center for Education Statistics found that children perform better in school, both academically and socially, when their fathers are involved with their schooling, including attending school meetings and volunteering at schools.
- + A survey of 455 teenagers, published by the journal *Adolescence*, found that students who reported higher self-esteem and lower rates of depression also reported greater levels of intimacy with their fathers than other teens.
- + A survey of African-American men revealed that those who experienced a positive relationship with a father who cared and sacrificed for them were more likely to be responsible fathers themselves.

- + In a 1997 Head Start survey, researchers found that the more involvement fathers have with their children, the more likely children are to display positive social behaviors and the less likely children are to display aggressive and/or hyperactive behavior.

### Fathers matter in avoiding high-risk behaviors.

- + Children with involved, loving fathers are significantly more likely to avoid high-risk behaviors such as drug use, truancy, and criminal activity compared to children who have uninvolved fathers.
- + Using a sample of more than 20,000 teenagers from the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse, research showed that even after controlling for closeness to mothers, the closer the relationships between teens and their fathers, the less likely the teens were to use drugs.
- + Girls from father-absent families are more likely to become sexually active at younger ages and to bear children outside of marriage.

### Being an involved father has benefits for men.

- + According to the *Journal of Marriage and the Family* in 2001, men who live with their biological children are more involved in community and service organizations, more connected to their own siblings and parents, and work more hours per week than non-fathers and the fathers of adult children.



- + A 1994 report in the *Journal of Men's Studies* found that men with greater marital satisfaction tend to be more involved with their children.

**Recent research identifies barriers facing low-income unwed fathers.**

- + The Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, a national study of unwed families reports that:
  - Ninety-nine percent of fathers in the study expressed a desire to be involved in raising their children.
  - Approximately 75 percent of mothers interviewed believed that the chances of marrying the father were 50 percent or higher.
  - Eighty percent of the fathers were involved in helping their babies' mothers during pregnancy, either financially or in other ways.

**Many low-income fathers don't get far in school and are frequently unemployed.**

- + According to a 1999 Urban Institute report, 40 percent of low-income, noncustodial fathers never finished high school.

- + More than 41 percent of low-income, non-custodial fathers have been unemployed for at least one year. The Urban Institute's analysis of the Survey of Income and Program Participation data shows that in 1990, only 10 percent of low-income, noncustodial fathers worked full-time, year-round. Forty-five percent worked intermittently, and about one-third did not work in 1990, but looked for employment during the year.
- + The average wage for these men was only \$5.40 per hour, and their average personal income was \$3,932. In 1998 dollars, this income is \$8,956 per year. Most worked in low-skill jobs, as operators/laborers (42 percent) or in service jobs (23 percent).

**Many low-income fathers face significant barriers to employment.**

- + According to the Urban Institute, 25 percent of low-income, nonresident fathers reported having at least one health barrier to work. More than 50 percent of low-income, noncustodial fathers were uninsured in 1999. Medicaid covered only 15 percent of these fathers, as compared to almost 50 percent of mothers.



children’s birth certificates, and 79 percent of the children will take their fathers’ surnames.

Also, a 2003 report from the Urban Institute found that nearly half of young, poor children and two-thirds of poor infants are likely to see their fathers frequently—even if their parents are not married.

### **Continued Availability of Federal and State Funding**

Even in times of budget problems, there are federal funding sources that can provide communities with resources to serve low-income, noncustodial fathers. The most prominent is the federal welfare block grant, distributed to states to help welfare families become self-sufficient. States have considerable discretion in how this money is spent. In addition to these federal funds, states are required to spend state money, called Maintenance-of-Effort (MOE) funds, to assist families leaving welfare.

States use the majority of their welfare block grant and MOE funds to support current welfare recipients or to provide transitional assistance for those who have recently left the welfare rolls. They may also use these funds to provide employment assistance, job training, substance abuse treatment, mentoring, counseling, marriage counseling, mediation, transportation, child care, access and visitation services, and child support pass-throughs to families.

In addition, welfare reform legislation pending in 2004 included proposals for programs that seek to start healthy marriage programs, fatherhood demonstration projects, and media campaigns to promote responsible fatherhood.

The Administration for Children and Families of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has made “healthy marriage” one its priorities and has

launched a Community Healthy Marriages Initiative. In addition, HHS is allocating funds in a number of other programs—including refugee resettlement and child welfare—for marriage promotion.

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) created the federal program that provides employment and training services to individuals, including low-income adult job seekers, dislocated workers, those looking to advance in the labor market, and those moving from welfare to financial independence. WIA funds are allocated from the federal government to states; most WIA funds are distributed through locally controlled Workforce Investment Boards.

One new source of federal funding targets help to families with parents in prison. The Justice Department’s Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative offers funds for state and local governments to provide services specifically for juvenile and adult serious, high-risk offenders returning to the community. Services in prison may include education, parenting skills, vocational training, and substance abuse treatment.

Finally, faith-based organizations may apply for grants from federal agencies and should consider activities related to fatherhood.

### **WHERE TO GO TO FIND HELP FOR FATHERS**

A broad assortment of organizations operate programs aimed at helping low-income fathers contribute to their children’s lives. Here are some examples of the kinds of organizations where fathers might find services:

- + Child support agencies
- + Faith organizations
- + Community and technical colleges



- + Departments of Corrections  
(community-based programs)
- + Departments of Human Services
- + Hospital- and medical center-based parenting programs
- + Public and private agencies that provide substance abuse treatment

There are also organizations that have programs in multiple cities, such as Boot Camp for New Dads, MELD, and STRIVE, that are listed in the Promising Approaches and Resources section and provide services in communities across the country. Check to see if there is one in your community.

#### HOW DO WE KNOW IF IT'S WORKING?

##### **Integrating Fatherhood into the Family Strengthening Agenda**

For many years, social services agencies have viewed low-income, noncustodial fathers as the source of their families' problems rather than a part of the solution to those problems. Many social services staff—whether they work in government agencies or community-based organizations—still view “family support” as a service for mothers and children, not fathers. The idea of serving men as a primary objective is newer. Unless that view is changed, there is little chance the responsible fatherhood agenda will succeed.

##### **Fathers Establishing Paternity**

The 1996 welfare reform law required states to make paternity establishment procedures easier and faster. The law mandated that states publicize the availability of voluntary paternity establishment.

From 1996 to 2000, the number of paternities established increased by 46 percent.<sup>22</sup> For instance, California's Paternity Opportunity Project (POP) works in hospitals, prenatal clinics, and courts to help unmarried fathers establish paternity when their children are born.

##### **Fathers Paying Child Support**

One of the first indications that a fatherhood program is successful is that its participants begin paying their child support obligations. In a review of 12 studies about fathers' payment of child support and child outcomes, nine reported a positive and significant relationship between the amount of child support paid by nonresident fathers and child well-being, including school grades and behavior, reading and math scores, and years of educational attainment.<sup>23</sup>

A very significant aspect of fathers' payments of child support obligations is the fact that these dollars added to the household income can help mothers leave welfare. A national study found that former welfare mothers who received child support were less likely to return to welfare after they had left the rolls. In contrast, women who left welfare and did not receive child support payments were 31 percent more likely to return to welfare than those who had received payments.<sup>24</sup>

##### **Fathers Spending Time with Children and Reducing Conflict with Mothers**

A good indication of effective fathering is the amount of time that men spend with their children, which means they are likely to develop strong bonds with each other. In addition, involved fathers are more motivated and thus more likely to maintain the relationship and provide financially for their children.

Another critical measure of the success of fatherhood programs is the quality of the relationship between the two parents. Children do best when the relationships between their parents are as low stress as possible. Many programs try to help parents resolve conflicts, agree on child-rearing practices, and resolve issues that may have ended their romantic involvement.

### how to MEASURE the status of FATHERHOOD in your community

Comparing local demographic figures to national statistics can help identify how widespread and harmful father absence is in a community—and where to start. Some important indicators:

1. Number of families with minor children in poverty
2. Unemployment rate
3. Teen pregnancy rate
4. Number of single-mother households
5. Number of people in prison or recently released from prison
6. Number of substance abusers
7. Percentage of population without high school diploma
8. Population ages 16 to 19 not in school or not working





# promising approaches and resources

There are many examples of promising programs successfully helping low-income, noncustodial fathers. The organizations listed below serve many functions—the fatherhood elements are highlighted in depth.

## **Male Involvement Network — Reaching Out to Hard-to-Reach Men**

New Haven’s Male Involvement Network is a web of local and state service providers, clients, and funders. Staff members discovered that, contrary to public perception, fathers wanted to be very involved with their children. But because of eligibility standards for public assistance and the punitive nature of the child support system, many fathers were reticent to interact with social service providers.

The Male Involvement Network uses extensive outreach efforts to establish relationships with fathers. Outreach workers advertise the support group in barbershops, pool halls, public housing centers, and other social networks in which low-income fathers participate. To develop an even stronger rapport with these men, the Network uses program alumni as outreach workers, mentors, and support group leaders. Once fathers trusted the intentions of the Male Involvement Network’s outreach workers, case managers were better able to link them to services.

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## **STRIVE—Getting Tough to Teach Life Skills**

With a long-term goal of finding jobs for low-income job seekers, a national program called STRIVE has created a curriculum that helps participants learn the soft skills needed to succeed both in the workplace and in personal relationships. Many low-income, noncustodial fathers report that STRIVE training was key to their success.

STRIVE, which stands for Support and Training Result In Valuable Employees, begins with a group meeting on the Friday before the three-week class begins. At the group meetings, participants learn about the philosophies and expectations of the STRIVE facilitators, including a strict dress code (light-colored shirt, tie, short haircut, no facial hair, dark slacks, dark socks) and the punctuality policy—those who arrive for any meeting just 30 seconds late can’t come in.

One element of the program called “Pookie” helps fathers learn the importance of simple rules. Fathers who break the dress code, for example, are fined and have to pay into the Pookie—an empty water bottle. Pookie also teaches fathers how to ask for help. When fathers break a rule but have no money for the Pookie, they must stand in front of the class and ask class members to chip in to pay the fine. STRIVE forbids classmates from offering help—the act of asking for support is important for fathers to experience. At the end of the classes, all the money goes toward the graduation ceremony.

Facilitators devote the first week to attitude training. They start with Stand and Deliver, an exercise in which fathers share their most painful memories in front of the class. Leon Samuels, a group facilitator at STRIVE’s Washington, D.C. site, says he has seen big, tough, grown gang members break down and cry. This honesty creates trust and support

between participants. During attitude week, fathers learn that life is 10 percent what happens to them and 90 percent how they react.

Facilitators witness a remarkable transformation in fathers who complete the three-week program. STRIVE follows fathers for at least two years after the class, because getting a job is the easy part—keeping the job can be much more difficult. Even when the first job doesn't stick, it provides good practice for the second or third one that will.

STRIVE DC opened in the District of Columbia in August 1999. As of April 2003, the program had received 2,300 applications and 551 individuals graduated—81 percent of whom were still working. There are 20 STRIVE programs in cities across the country, including the *Making Connections* cities Baltimore, Boston, Hartford, New Haven, San Diego, and Seattle.

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**Baltimore Men's Health Center—  
 Ensuring Good Health for All**

It is estimated that as of 2002, 50,000 men in Baltimore were without health insurance—96 percent of them African American. For these men, emergency rooms provide their only source of medical care; most have not received regular medical care for years. Their illnesses ranged from chronic diseases such as hypertension and diabetes to life-threatening conditions such as prostate cancer. Some are also addicted to drugs; many need mental health treatment.

By the summer of 2003, 6,000 of those uninsured men had sought and received medical services from the Men's Health Center, a division of the Baltimore City Health Department. The center also has a partnership with Maryland Primary Care, a state-run program offering medical treatment to low-income adults with chronic health conditions.

To qualify for services, men must be ages 19 to 64, city residents, low-income, uninsured, and not receiving care from any other provider. Staff members provide a variety of services, including physical examinations, substance abuse counseling, and even referrals for jobs and training.

To attract men to the center—especially men who mistrust public health organizations—the center employs community outreach workers who attend health fairs, pass out flyers at barbershops, and get men to visit the center. Lynwood McAllister, director of the center, knows that there is a large need for health care services among men who have recently been released from prison. In response, the center began working with the Maryland Reentry Partnership, and outreach workers now visit prisons and inform men from the local area about the services so that they can come in for treatment immediately after being released.

According to McAllister, “We teach women from the beginning to be health conscious and get an exam every year, but there are many men who use the emergency room as their providers and who haven't had general health care in years.” McAllister's vision is to serve as many men as possible and to provide a source for medical services until all of Baltimore's men are insured and receiving regular care.

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### **Dads Make a Difference— Family-Centered Father Empowerment**

Dads Make a Difference, part of the Healthy Families San Angelo initiative, was begun in 1992 as one of the first family-centered fathering programs in the United States. The program works to engage fathers shortly after the birth of their children to build trust and get participants involved in meetings with other fathers and mothers, team parenting, and family outings. Dads Make a Difference works with fathers and their families to stress the importance of father involvement, honor different parenting styles, and encourage father-child activities. Problem solving and life skills development, relationship coaching, and job training are also emphasized. Healthy Families San Angelo reports that from 1992–2002, 74 percent of fathers who participated in the program are actively involved with their children, and, of those who are divorced or separated from their spouse, 68 percent are current on child support payments. The initiative’s staff say that Dads Make a Difference has been replicated in 13 cities across the United States and Canada.

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### **The Georgia Fatherhood Program— Keeping Fathers Out of Jail with Jobs**

Each year, approximately 3,000 Georgia fathers who cannot pay child support get help from the state. Instead of sending them to jail, the state sends them to job training programs. Since 1997, more than 10,000 fathers have received such services. Among fathers who enrolled in the program in 2002, nearly half began paying child support.

The program was created by Georgia officials who recognized that many noncustodial parents want to pay child support, but can’t find jobs to help them do so. To remedy the problem, the state’s Department of Human Resources developed a comprehensive network of services for fathers; the most central of these is the job training program. When fathers fall behind on their child support payments, the child support office refers them directly to the fatherhood program—rather than sending them into the court system, where they could be sentenced to jail for nonpayment.

The state’s Department of Technical and Adult Education, a partner in the program, offers vocational training at 36 state technical colleges and four other sites. The job training program generally takes three to six months to complete. Participants are required to work at least 20 hours per week while enrolled in the program, and pay child support during this time. When they complete the program, participants get help finding full-time employment with good wages. The average hourly wage for 2002 graduates who found jobs was \$8.20 per hour; an increase of \$2.23 an hour. And some graduates earn as much as \$17 an hour working as welders.

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### **Louisville’s Family Place— Maintaining Parent-Child Relationships**

In 1999, Kentucky’s family court administration asked the staff of Family Place, a child abuse treatment agency, to host a supervised visitation program in the Louisville area.

The idea was to solve a growing problem: When families were in court for custody issues, domestic violence cases, or divorces, noncustodial parents couldn't see their children because there was no system to provide supervised visits. Since the program began, judges can recommend that noncustodial parents see their children at Family Place. In 2002 alone, there were more than 900 visits to the center.

Custodial parents—75 percent of them mothers—bring their children for the supervised visits. There are separate entrances and parking lots for mothers and fathers, and the center requires the custodial parent to leave the grounds during the visit. After the noncustodial parent has gone through security checks, a staff member walks the child to another area where the visit takes place.

Family court judges decide the frequency, duration, and the conditions of the visits. A level one visit requires intense supervision; an armed security guard and staff member are always present. A level two visit is more lenient, allowing the child and parent to meet alone in a room with age-appropriate toys and games. However, the doors are always left open, and a staff member stays within earshot to monitor the visit and ensure the child's safety. Staff members can then provide the courts unbiased accounts of the parent-child relationships, which may be useful in custody debates.

Pat Helms, president of Family Place, says, "The goal of this program is to allow children to maintain contact with their parents in a child-friendly, parent-neutral environment." If visits go well, nonsupervised visits may be recommended. Of the 24 cases that closed at Family Place in 2002, 14 were able to begin nonsupervised visits.

**Contact:**

*Pam Helms, President*

*Family Place: A Child Abuse Treatment Agency, Inc.*

*982 Eastern Parkway*

*Louisville, KY 40217*

*502.636.2801*

*phelms@familyplaceky.org*

**Rubicon Programs, Inc.—**

**Using Peer Support to Help Fathers Stay on Track**

Rubicon Programs Inc. in Richmond, California, runs a Fathers at Work program, part of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation's six-site demonstration focused on helping low-income fathers get jobs that pay decent wages. Rubicon offers a variety of educational and training opportunities for fathers, including an on-site industrial bakery and training in landscaping, painting, mechanical maintenance, and health care.

But in addition to paid job training, one of the program's key elements is providing fathers with peer support. Using a curriculum developed by the National Partnership for Community Leadership (NPCL), Rubicon connects fathers to 20-week-long peer groups in which they learn about personal development, life skills management, responsible fatherhood, relationships with children's mothers, and health. The meetings allow fathers to share common frustrations associated with their new jobs and lifestyles—and provide mutual aid to prevent potential setbacks.

In 2003, fathers also began to benefit from the program's management information system, which creates one computer file for each father showing all of the Rubicon services he has received. The system improves Rubicon's ability to identify and meet fathers' needs well after they begin working.

In its first 20 months, the program helped 60 young, noncustodial fathers—many of whom began the program without high school diplomas—



successfully find jobs and keep them. Its success prompted a local community foundation to document and publish Rubicon's practices in hopes of replicating its effectiveness.

**Contact:**

*Makini Hassan, Director of Workforce Development  
Rubicon Programs Incorporated  
2500 Bissell Avenue  
Richmond, CA 94804  
510.412.1729  
makinib@rubiconpgms.org  
www.rubiconpgms.org*

**Boot Camp for New Dads—  
Using Dads to Teach New Fathers to Be Dads**

Boot Camp for New Dads, which began in 1990 in Irvine, California, helps new fathers and soon-to-be fathers across the country learn basic parenting skills and gain confidence about caring for their babies. Prenatal and infant health practitioners at medical clinics and hospitals recruit fathers for the program through mothers seeking prenatal care.

Founder Greg Bishop says the program seeks to help prenatal and infant health practitioners understand that new fathers need skills—not scolding. “The typical approach by obstetrics staff members is to identify unmotivated fathers and tell them that they need to be there and care for the mothers,” Bishop says. “But the fathers already care, they just need help. By presuming that they don’t care, the medical staff members are insulting the dads.”

Boot Camp provides an all-male environment, curriculum, and language that makes analogies between the skill of caring for children and skills in which many men already have confidence, such as mechanics—or sports. Graduates of the program—the “veterans”—teach other “rookie” fathers how to change diapers, identify crying babies’ needs, and even how to turn away hounding relatives. At the first session, graduates help rookie dads confront

their insecurity by handing over their own babies to the rookies—the first time many of them have held babies.

By January 2003, the program was operating at 160 sites in 38 states, including many programs operated by the armed forces. More than 50,000 fathers have participated nationwide since 1992. A quarterly newsletter and a wealth of online support material accompany the curriculum. And because graduates do a majority of the instruction, Boot Camp is relatively inexpensive to run.

**Contact:**

*Greg Bishop  
Boot Camp for New Dads  
230 Commerce, Suite 210  
Irvine, CA 92602  
714.838.9392  
www.newdads.com*

**Total Action Against Poverty (TAP)—Helping Head Start Fathers Have Fun with Their Children**

TAP Fatherhood and Families in Roanoke, Virginia, offers several programs that not only get fathers into jobs but help them engage in the lives of their children with parenting education and, most importantly, fun.

TAP contacts fathers through eight Head Start centers and plans events to which fathers may bring their children. Jon Morris, TAP’s director, says a lack of money or imagination keeps many fathers from doing activities with their children; TAP events facilitate their involvement. TAP’s Skating Night, held every two to three months, allows fathers and their families to roller skate together and has drawn over 100 participants. Fathers also have taken trips with their children to theater performances of *Sesame Street Live*. The TAP staff ran a father-and-child carnival to kick off the school year in 2003 and a basketball league in which fathers competed and represented their children’s respective Head Start centers.



Once fathers have participated in events with their children, TAP encourages them to attend weekly meetings to learn about the different stages of child development. At one meeting, a Planned Parenthood representative spoke with fathers about how to tackle difficult topics with their small children such as sex and body image. At parenting classes, fathers are invited to come with their children's mothers or other women who may be involved in their children's development.

In July 2003, TAP celebrated the participation of its 100th father and planned to seek grant money to add three additional staff members and expand the program.

**Contact:**

*Jon Morris*  
*P.O. Box 2868*  
*Roanoke, VA 24001-2868*  
*540.345.6781*  
*jmorris@tapdads.org*  
*www.tapdads.org*

**The Center for Fathers, Families, and Workforce Development (CFWD) — Teaching Fathers and Mothers to Parent Together**

Poor relationships between mothers and fathers end up hurting their children. And never-married parents, even if they are still couples, can have more difficult experiences ensuring the health and well-being of their children. And when never-married couples break up, there are no divorce proceedings to determine parental responsibilities.

The 50/50 Parenting program, run by the Baltimore-based Center for Fathers, Families, and Workforce Development, recognizes these problems and helps parents work together regardless of the status of their relationships. The program emphasizes team parenting: parents are encouraged to build healthy and respectful relationships, improve

their decision-making skills, and communicate more effectively, even if they are not married or a couple.

CFWD staff also help parents to create support networks that help them raise their children. With a program motto of “Share the Work, Share the Rewards,” supporters can include grandparents, parents' new spouses or partners, and other close family or community members. Joe Jones, CFWD's executive director, believes it's especially important to bring new romantic partners into the process. It's easy for parents to become upset about their former partner's new boyfriend or girlfriend, and the deterioration of parental relationships too quickly leads to lapses in relationships between parents and their children.

In addition to 50/50 Parenting, CFWD's services include Partners for Fragile Families, men's support groups, and STRIVE Baltimore, a job preparation program for both men and women.

**Contact:**

*Joe Jones, Executive Director*  
*Center for Fathers, Families, and*  
*Workforce Development (CFWD)*  
*3002 Druid Park Drive*  
*Baltimore, MD 21215*  
*410.367.5691*  
*www.cfwd.org*

**Long Distance Dads—Connecting Fathers Behind Bars with Their Families**

Since 1996, Long Distance Dads has helped more than 20,000 fathers stay involved in their children's lives, improve their communication skills, develop healthy relationships, and cope with daily frustrations. In other words, the program helps fathers prepare for life outside prison.

Long Distance Dads, a 12-week curriculum for incarcerated fathers, uses peer facilitators because many inmates are hesitant to speak frankly in front



of prison staff for fear that it will hurt their parole chances. So specially trained inmates take an intensive one-year training program, then facilitate parenting support groups and train other peer group leaders. All peer facilitators work under prison staff supervision.

The National Fatherhood Initiative administers the program and provides the Long Distance Dads curriculum, as well as training on how to use it, at no charge. Many sites have begun providing Spanish-speaking instructors and a bilingual curriculum to serve Hispanic inmates.

**Contact:**

*Charles Stuart, Executive Director of Incarcerated  
Fatherhood Programming  
National Fatherhood Initiative  
101 Lake Forest Boulevard, Suite 360  
Gaithersburg, MD 20877  
717.671.7231  
[www.fatherhood.org/lddads.htm](http://www.fatherhood.org/lddads.htm)*

**SELECTED RESEARCH AND POLICY ORGANIZATIONS**

The **Center for Law and Social Policy** (CLASP) is a national nonprofit policy organization that seeks to improve the economic conditions of low-income families with children. CLASP analyzes a number of state and federal policy areas affecting noncustodial parents including child support, marriage, workforce development, and welfare reform.

**Contact:**

*Center for Law and Social Policy  
1015 15th Street, NW, Suite 400  
Washington, DC 20005  
202.906.8000  
[www.clasp.org](http://www.clasp.org)*

The **Center for Policy Research** conducts studies to help improve the effectiveness of human services. The center publishes reports about child support strategies for incarcerated parents, local child support offices, and access and visitation programs.

**Contact:**

*Center for Policy Research  
1570 Emerson Street  
Denver, CO 80218  
303.837.1555  
[www.centerpolicyresearch.org](http://www.centerpolicyresearch.org)*

The **Center for Family Policy and Practice** (CFFPP) provides training and technical assistance to practitioners. Its mission is to help create a society in which both mothers and fathers can support their children emotionally, financially, and physically. CFFPP also seeks to challenge the negative public perception of low-income fathers. Much of CFFPP's work focuses on reforming the child support enforcement system and bridging the gap between fatherhood organizations and women's organizations.

**Contact:**

*Center for Family Policy and Practice  
23 North Pinckney Street, Suite 210  
Madison, WI 53703  
608.257.3148  
[www.cffpp.org](http://www.cffpp.org)*

The **Children's Rights Council** is a national nonprofit organization based in Washington, D.C. The Council works to assure children meaningful and continuing contact with both their parents and extended family regardless of the parents' marital status. It also operates 12 Child Access Transfer Centers across the country, allowing children to stay close to both parents during the stressful time of family breakup.

**Contact:**

*Children's Rights Council*  
 6200 Editors Park Drive, Suite 103  
 Hyattsville, MD 20782  
 301.559.3120  
 www.gocrc.com

The **Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study**, a research project funded by the federal government and foundations, examines interviews conducted with unwed parents over a five-year span beginning with their children's birth. The study collects data in 20 U.S. cities with populations over 200,000 and measures the effects of policies on families and children.

**Contact:**

*Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study*  
 Center for Research on Child Wellbeing  
 Wallace Hall, Princeton University  
 Princeton, NJ 08544  
 609.258.5894  
 http://crcw.princeton.edu/fragilefamilies  
 www.mdrc.org

Based at Columbia's Mailman School for Public Health, the **National Center for Children in Poverty** (NCCP) identifies and promotes strategies that reduce the number of young children living in poverty and improves the lives of children growing up in poverty. NCCP researches child poverty and finds innovative solutions. One such example is the center's *Map and Track: State Initiatives to Encourage Responsible Fatherhood*.

**Contact:**

*National Center for Children in Poverty*  
 Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University  
 215 West 125th Street, 3rd Floor  
 New York, NY 10027  
 646.284.9600  
 info@nccp.org  
 www.nccp.org

The **National Center on Fathers and Families** (NCOFF) is a leading research organization on fathers and the source of the Fatherlit database, which contains over 8,000 abstracts related to fathers and families. NCOFF also aims to tighten the connection between research and practice by fostering relationships between state officials, researchers, and practitioners through forums on topics such as providing father-specific services and working with children of prisoners.

**Contact:**

*National Center on Fathers and Families*  
 University of Pennsylvania  
 3440 Market Street, Suite 450  
 Philadelphia, PA 19104-3325  
 215.573.5500  
 www.ncoff.gse.upenn.edu

The **Welfare Information Network** is a research clearinghouse to help state and local policymakers, organizations, and individuals obtain the policy analysis and technical assistance they need to implement welfare reform. WIN provides more than 9,000 links to 400 welfare-related websites.

**Contact:**

*Welfare Information Network*  
 1401 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 800  
 Washington, DC 20005  
 202.587.1000  
 www.financeprojectinfo.org/win

**FATHERHOOD ORGANIZATIONS**

Founded in 1983, the **Family and Corrections Network** (FCN) is a nonprofit volunteer organization that seeks to support families of offenders by promoting family involvement, empowerment, integrity, and self-determination within criminal justice departments and other agencies. FCN has produced numerous publications on families of



offenders, provided press information, provided technical assistance, and made presentations before national and local organizations.

**Contact:**

*Family and Corrections Network*  
32 Oak Grove Road  
Palmyra, VA 22963  
434.589.3036  
[www.fcnetwork.org](http://www.fcnetwork.org)

**The Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization** began in 1982 as an effort to reduce infant mortality by engaging expectant fathers to encourage mothers to reduce harmful behaviors that increase the risks of infant morbidity and mortality.

The organization places a strong emphasis on marriage. Married couples move into communities to demonstrate model marriages to community residents. A major goal of the program is to help parents reconcile, hopefully leading to marriage.

**Contact:**

*The Institute for Responsible Fatherhood*  
3594 Hayes Street, NE, Suite 102  
Washington, DC 20019-7522  
202.396.8320

**The National Center for Fathering** (NCF) provides training and technical assistance to organizations serving fathers. Its services include staff training, strategic planning, and assistance in building public support for community fatherhood initiatives.

NCF has a wealth of material including an impressive list of books and tapes about fathering in a variety of situations; reports based upon its own polling research; and training that it provides online, in written materials, or at on-site workshops.

In 1998, NCF began the Urban Fathering Project (UFP) in Kansas City, which focuses on the needs of inner-city fathers, especially African Americans. UFP offers four programs: literacy programs to encourage fathers to read to their children; a diversion program that provides courts with alternatives to incarceration for fathers charged with drug-related offenses; a responsible fatherhood program that uses court referrals; and a faith-based outreach program that challenges and supports men in churches to be better fathers to their own children and to mentor other children in the community.

**Contact:**

*The National Center for Fathering*  
P.O. Box 413888  
Kansas City, MO 64141  
800.593.DADS  
[www.fathers.com](http://www.fathers.com)

**The National Partnership for Community Leadership** (NPCL) provides an array of services to the field of responsible fatherhood, including training, support, technical assistance on fatherhood services, and research and policy development.

Due to the success of NPCL's curriculum among fathers and practitioners, federal and state policymakers, and non-fatherhood program administrators, the organization's annual International Fatherhood Conference has become a significant gathering of advocates, researchers, and practitioners in the field.

Approximately 1,200 people attend NPCL's yearly spring conferences for training workshops, policy discussions, and networking. Since 1997, NPCL outreach efforts have included responsible fatherhood initiatives in Australia, Canada, the Caribbean, Japan, South Africa, and the United Kingdom.

**Contact:**

*The National Partnership for Community Leadership*  
 2000 L Street, NW, Suite 815  
 Washington, DC 20036  
 202.822.6725  
[www.npcl.org](http://www.npcl.org)

In 1988, grassroots leaders gathered to respond to the adverse effects that men were having on women, children, and families in Latino communities. An outgrowth of that meeting is the **National Compadres Network** (NCN), which sponsors training workshops focused on advocacy, community service, and education to promote the positive involvement of Latino males in the lives of their families and in their communities.

Along with *Bienvenidos* Family Services in California, NCN established the **National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute** (NLFFI), which provides research, training, and assistance to practitioners assisting men in Latino communities. Leaders of NCN and NLFFI have provided technical assistance tailored for the specific needs of Latino families to more than 30 community-based organizations involved in work with disconnected fathers; conducted forums in eight cities to share information with practitioners, policymakers, and advocates; and developed brochures, pamphlets, posters, and other materials for dissemination to local community leaders, elected officials, and faith leaders.

**Contact:**

*The National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute*  
 5252 Beverly Boulevard  
 Los Angeles, CA 90022  
 323.728.7770  
[www.bienvenidos.org/nlffi](http://www.bienvenidos.org/nlffi)

The **National Fatherhood Initiative** (NFI) is a membership organization with the largest staff of any fatherhood organization in the country.

National leaders in sports, politics, business, education, and entertainment comprise the Board of Directors, allowing the organization to draw the public's attention to the problem of father absence and the valuable contributions fathers make in the lives of their children.

In addition, NFI has developed communication strategies that promote awareness of responsible fatherhood. It has assembled task forces on fatherhood at every level of government and helped develop statewide fatherhood initiatives in a number of states. NFI's annual conferences are attended by political leaders from both parties.

**Contact:**

*National Fatherhood Initiative*  
 101 Lake Forest Boulevard, Suite 360  
 Gaithersburg, MD 20877  
 301.948.0599  
[www.fatherhood.org](http://www.fatherhood.org)

The **National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families** (NPNFF) is a membership organization for practitioners in responsible fatherhood and fragile families programs. NPNFF has approximately 675 members from across the United States.

NPNFF publishes a quarterly newsletter, a memo on policy issues, and a policy report for its members. It also provides technical assistance, training, and consultation services. Because many NPNFF members are capable of providing informal advice, support, and technical assistance, NPNFF's network of practitioners is an important service for communities.

**Contact:**

*National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families, Inc.*  
 1003 K Street, NW, Suite 565  
 Washington, DC 20001  
 202.737.6680  
[www.npnff.org](http://www.npnff.org)



## selected references

*Broke but Not Deadbeat: Reconnecting Low-Income Fathers and Children*, by Dana Reichert. Denver: National Conference of State Legislatures, July 1999. Reichert's guide is one of the best available in terms of giving detailed advice to states, communities, and nonprofits that want to start programs for low-income fathers. She offers advice on program design, target service populations, and funding.

*Connecting Low-Income Fathers and Families: A Guide to Practical Policies*, by Dana Reichert. Denver: National Conference of State Legislatures, June 2000. This guide offers state policymakers specific ideas about their options for helping low-income, noncustodial fathers.

*Expanding the Goals of "Responsible Fatherhood" Policy*, by Juliane Baron and Kathleen Sylvester. Washington, DC: Social Policy Action Network, December 2002. Using interviews of fathers and frontline practitioners, this report identifies deeply rooted attitudinal and cultural barriers that prevent fathers from seeking help—and prevent social services agencies from serving fathers effectively.

*Face to Face with Fathers: A Report on Low-Income Fathers and Their Experience with Child Support Enforcement*, by Daniel O. Ash. Madison, WI: Center on Fathers, Families, and Public Policy, 1997. Based on father focus groups, this report describes the primary issues low-income, never-married families experience as they interface with the welfare and child support enforcement systems. It also includes a case study of one low-income working father voluntarily trying to establish paternity and secure child support and visitation orders.

*Father Facts, Fourth Edition*, by Dr. Wade F. Horn and Tom Sylvester. Gaithersburg, MD: The National Fatherhood Initiative, 2002. The book offers a synthesis of research and statistics about fathers and fatherlessness in the United States.

*Fatherless America: Confronting Our Most Urgent Social Problem*, by David Blankenhorn. New York: Basic Books, 1995. This book examines the ways in which fatherhood has been deconstructed and makes proposals for a cultural shift in the way that society sees fathers.

The Fatherlit database, maintained by the National Center on Fathers and Families, includes abstracts more than 8,000 papers, books, and articles about fathers. The database can be accessed free of charge from the NCOFF website at [www.ncoff.gse.upenn.edu](http://www.ncoff.gse.upenn.edu).

*Growing Up with a Single Parent: What Hurts, What Helps*, by Sara McLanahan and Gary Sandefur. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994. Based on four national surveys and drawing on more than a decade of research, *Growing Up with a Single Parent* discusses the connection between family structure and a child's prospects for success.

*Guiding Principles for Child Support Enforcement in Working with Fragile Families*, by Barbara Cleveland. Washington, DC: National Center for Strategic Nonprofit Planning and Community Leadership, 2001.

*The Heart of a Father: How Dads Can Shape the Destiny of America*, by Dr. Ken Canfield. Chicago: Northfield Publishing, 1996. Ken Canfield provides advice to fathers about being involved in their children's lives at all points of their development.

*Involving Males in Preventing Teen Pregnancy: A Guide for Program Planners*, by Freya Sonenstein, Kellie Stewart, Laura Duberstein Lindberg, Marta Pernas, and Sean Williams. Washington DC: The Urban Institute, 1997. This Urban Institute book profiles more than 20 programs nationwide that work with boys and young men to prevent teen pregnancies and repeat pregnancies. The book includes practical advice about program design.

*Making Fathers Count: Reviewing 25 Years of Fatherhood Efforts*, by Kathleen Sylvester and Kathy Reich. Baltimore: Annie. E. Casey Foundation, 2001. This publication provides an overview of father involvement efforts over the past quarter century and explains current challenges facing practitioners and advocates in the fatherhood field.

*Managing Arrears: Child Support Enforcement and Fragile Families*, by Janet K. Atkinson and Barbara Cleveland. Washington, DC: National Center for Strategic Nonprofit Planning and Community Leadership, 2001. This report summarizes the findings of the NPCL Peer Learning College exercise related to child support arrears management, offering explanation, analysis, and recommendations for future action.

*Marriage Promotion: Risk of Family Violence*. By Ronald B. Mincy and Chien-Chung Huang. Atlanta, August 2002. Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Population Association of America. This paper examines the level of family violence in fragile families and the effect of previous abusive relationships on subsequent relationships.

*New Expectations: Community Strategies for Responsible Fatherhood*, by James A. Levine and Edward W. Pitt. New York: Families and Work Institute, 1995. This book highlights dozens of programs nationwide that focus on teaching men of different ages, income levels, and ethnic backgrounds how to be good fathers.

“Noncustodial Fathers: What We Know and What’s Left to Learn” by Elaine Sorensen, in *Nurturing Fatherhood: Improving Data and Research on Male Fertility, Family Formation and Fatherhood*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, June 1998. Sorensen uses data from the 1990 Survey of Income and Program Participation to paint a statistical picture of low-income, noncustodial fathers.

*OCSE Responsible Fatherhood Programs: Early Implementation Lessons*, by Jessica Pearson and Nancy Thoennes. Denver, CO: Center for Policy Research, 2000. This report provides historical context and a demographic profile of OSCE programs. It includes program profiles, information about program recruitment, and lessons learned about fatherhood program development.

*Reaching Common Ground—Dollars and Sense: Improving the Determination of Child Support Obligations for Low-Income Mothers, Fathers, and Children*. Ann Arbor, MI: Center on Fathers, Families, and Public Policy and National Women’s Law Center, 2002. This joint publication discusses the legal and policy issues surrounding child support awards and adjustments.



*Reaching Common Ground—Family Ties: Improving Paternity Establishment Practices and Procedures for Low-Income Mothers, Fathers and Children.* Ann Arbor, MI: Center on Fathers, Families, and Public Policy, 2000. This edition of the *Common Ground* series looks at paternity establishment from both mothers' and fathers' perspectives and makes public policy recommendations.

*Restoring Fathers to Families and Communities: Six Steps for Policymakers,* by Kathleen Sylvester and Kathy Reich. Washington, DC: Social Policy Action Network, 2000. This policy guide offers state and local policymakers concrete ideas for encouraging fathers to support their children, both financially and emotionally. The guide includes profiles of promising programs, as well as resources for communities.

*Turning the Corner on Father Absence in Black America: A Statement from the Morehouse Conference on African American Fathers,* Morehouse Research Institute and Institute for American Values. Atlanta: Morehouse Research Institute, 1999. This paper makes recommendations about policies and funding to help fathers and the best ways to support the growing fatherhood movement in the African-American community.



# endnotes

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## resource GUIDES

The following Resource Guides are available from the *Making Connections* Technical Assistance Resource Center. Copies can be printed or ordered by visiting the Casey Foundation TARC website at [www.aecf.org/tarc](http://www.aecf.org/tarc). In addition, the TARC Resource Bank provides an online database for all information contained in the printed Resource Guides. Updated regularly, the Resource Bank allows easy searching across all guides simultaneously.

### **Economic Opportunities for Families**

- + Connecting Families to Jobs
- + Building Family Assets
- + Community Investments for Family Economic Success

### **Enhancing Social Networks**

- + Residents Engaged in Strengthening Families and Neighborhoods

### **Building High-Quality Services and Supports**

- + Building More Effective Community Schools
- + Community Safety and Justice
- + Child Care for Communities
- + Meeting the Housing Needs of Families
- + Improving Health Care for Children and Families
- + Developing Community Responses to Domestic Violence
- + Engaging Higher Education Resources
- + Promoting Responsible Fatherhood

### **Techniques for Advancing a Family Strengthening Agenda in Neighborhoods**

- + Using Strategic Communication to Support Families and Neighborhoods
- + Connecting Families to Computers and On-Line Networks



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