



Engaging Dads in Child Welfare

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Dads Rock: *Nurturing Father Engagement*



Objectives

- Introduction
- Why dads are vital to child well-being
- How to engage nonresident dads in a child welfare agency/context
- How nonresident dads can self-advocate, and how caring others can advocate for them
- National Fatherhood Initiative[®] (NFI) resources for engaging dads
- Non-NFI resources for engaging dads



Father Absence Crisis

- **18.4 million children, 1 in 4, live without a father.**
(Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2021)
- **9 in 10 Americans agree** there is a father absence crisis.
- Research shows that **when children have involved, responsible, and committed fathers, they express better socio-emotional and academic functioning** and grow up to lead happier, healthier lives.
- Research also demonstrates **that father absence is strongly linked to poverty, teen pregnancy, juvenile delinquency, abuse, suicide, substance and alcohol abuse, and a host of other issues.**
- However, **many of our nation's organizations remain mother-centric** in their family offerings and services.

(Source: National Fatherhood Initiative (2019). *Father Facts, 8th Edition.*)



Strengths of Father Presence

The **Strengths** of **Father Presence**



Children with involved fathers have a **strong foundation for child well-being.**

They are at **lower risk** for a host of **poor childhood outcomes.**



- ✓ Infant Mortality
- ✓ Low Birth Weight
- ✓ Emotional and Behavioral Problems
- ✓ Neglect and Abuse
- ✓ Injury
- ✓ Obesity
- ✓ Poor School Performance
- ✓ Teen Pregnancy
- ✓ Incarceration as Juveniles
- ✓ Alcohol and Substance Abuse
- ✓ Criminal Activity
- ✓ Suicide

National Fatherhood Initiative
www.fatherhood.org

Source: National Fatherhood Initiative® 2019. *Father Facts: Eighth Edition*. Germantown, MD: National Fatherhood Initiative®.

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Why **Involved Dads** are **Good for Moms**



Mothers reap a host of benefits when fathers are involved during pregnancy and in raising their children.



- ✓ More likely to receive prenatal care
- ✓ Less likely to smoke during pregnancy
- ✓ Healthier births
- ✓ Lower risk of post-partum stress
- ✓ Lower risk of post-partum depression
- ✓ Lower parenting stress
- ✓ More leisure time
- ✓ Higher marital satisfaction

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Poll #1

How comfortable are you with engaging dads?

How to Engage Dads in a Child Welfare Agency/Context

■ Five-step process

1. Create a father-friendly culture
2. Assess dads' needs
3. Create a father-focused effort
4. Identify, locate, and engage dads
5. Measure, evaluate, improve

Step 1: Create a Father-Friendly Culture

- Comprehensive organizational assessment of “father-friendliness” or “father-readiness”
 - 145-item questionnaire
- Use helps identify specific no- and low-cost tactics to increase father-friendliness
- Provides guidance on how to develop a father-friendly action/tactical plan

Father Friendly Check-Up™

- Created in 2000
- Continuously refined—6th version (2018)
- National Responsible Fatherhood Capacity-Building Initiative (2006-2011)
 - 119 small, medium, large organizations in diverse sectors and settings
 - Used as foundation for developing plan to more effectively serve fathers
 - 93% increased capacity in short- and long-term
 - 1 in 3 increased by 20% or more

Father Friendly Check-Up™

- 4 Assessment Categories
 - Leadership Development
 - Organizational Development
 - Program Development
 - Community Engagement
- Score each category
- Identify strengths and weaknesses
- Create action plan to leverage strengths and shore up weaknesses

Free @ fatherhood.org/getting-started

Father Friendly Check-Up™: Leadership Development

Take 5 minutes to complete the Leadership Development portion!

As much of it as you can.

Step 2: Assess Dads' Characteristics, Needs, Wants

- Demographics (e.g. age, race/ethnicity, income, etc.)
- Employment
- Health status
- Disabilities
- Drug and alcohol use
- History w/criminal justice system
- Life goals/desires
- Interests and hobbies
- Custody arrangement
- Interaction with child/children (frequency and quality)



Step 2: Assess Dads' Needs

- Quality of relationship with mother/main caregiver of child/children
- Fathering skills
- Parenting challenges
- Current and past use of father-specific programs and services
- Support network, especially for being a dad
- Motivators for engaging w/your agency/program
- Barriers for engaging w/your agency/program
- Suggestions for improving your agency/program



Step 3: Create a Father-Focused Effort

- Component 1 (Core): Help dads understand the child welfare system and how to navigate it
- Component 2: Provide resources (e.g. program, services, referrals, etc.) that meet dads' needs beyond understanding child welfare and that match **your and/or your network's capacity to deliver them**
 - Child support (e.g. establishing fair, affordable payment)
 - Education (e.g. GED)
 - Job training and placement
 - Regaining driver's license
 - Fathering and parenting knowledge and skills
 - Etc.



Step 3: Create a Father-Focused Effort

- Component 3: **Staff** training
 - On the father-focused effort (buy-in)
 - How to engage dads
 - Free training curriculum on engaging nonresident fathers @ fatherhood.gov/research-and-resources/social-worker-training-curriculum-engaging-non-resident-father
- Component 4: **Partner** training
 - On the father-focus effort (buy-in)
 - Their role



Step 4: Identify, Locate, and Engage Dads

- Identify
- Locate
- Engage



Step 5: Measure, Evaluate, and Improve

- Measure
- Evaluate
- Improve



Poll #2

Do the families you work with have mostly nonresident or resident dads?

Tips for Engaging Nonresident Dads

- Assume the dad wants to be involved
- Restore the dad in the child's life
- Individualize each case
- Suspend judgments
- Make room for expressions of anger
- Seek first to understand
- Recognize and acknowledge previous experience with child welfare
- Transparency regarding agency's involvement and the dad's role in the case process
- Acknowledge the power in your position along with empowering the dad

(Source: National Center for Child Welfare Excellence: nccwe.org)

Tips for Engaging Nonresident Dads

- Identify the dad's strengths
- Increase his understanding of how important he is to his child
- Encourage opportunities for change particularly if he is the person caused the harm
- Ask the dad, "How would you like your child to remember you 10 to 15 years from now?"
- Remind the dad that he's a role model for his child
- Explain agency/program expectations for the dad

(Source: National Center for Child Welfare Excellence: nccwe.org)

How Nonresident Dads Can Self-Advocate & Caring Others Can Advocate for Them

- Know dads' rights and responsibilities
- Know how dads can work with a lawyer
- Know dads' role **in** court
- Know dads' role **outside** court
- Know the role and importance of child support
- Know how incarceration affects child welfare cases

Free guide @ fatherhood.org/findingyourway

Polls #3 & #4

Had you heard of National Fatherhood Initiative® (NFI)
before you learned about this presentation?

Do you use any NFI resources (e.g. program, guide, brochure, poster, etc.)?

More on Low, Medium, and High Intensity Resources

Low Intensity Resources

Variety of Brochures, Tip Cards, Pocketbooks, Pocket Guides, and Posters



50 PACK

Brochure
Importance of an Involved Father



50 PACK

Tip Card
10 Tips for Expectant Dads



5 PACK

New Dad's Pocket Guide



5 PACK

Pocketbook for Moms
Ways to be a Great Co-Parent

For Dads!



Poster Sets
Horizontal and Vertical

For Moms!

Child Support Brochure (New!)



Learn more @ fatherhood.org/brochure-11-things-to-know-learn-about-child-support/

More on Low, Medium, and High Intensity Resources

Medium Intensity Resources

Booster Sessions, Guides, Downloadable eGuides

INCLUDES 5 SESSIONS



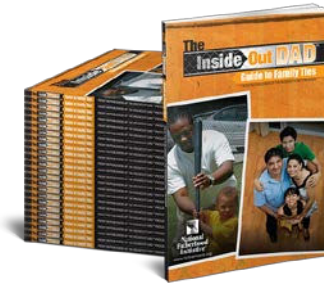
- ✓ Workforce Readiness
- ✓ Rights & Responsibilities
- ✓ Visitation
- ✓ Child Support
- ✓ Money Management

FatherTopics™ Booster Sessions
Non-Custodial Dads



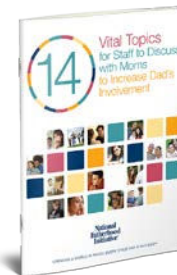
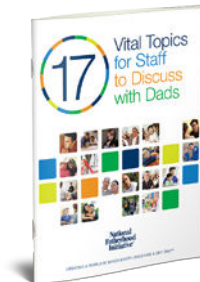
5 PACK

Help Me Grow Guide
The First Year



25 PACK

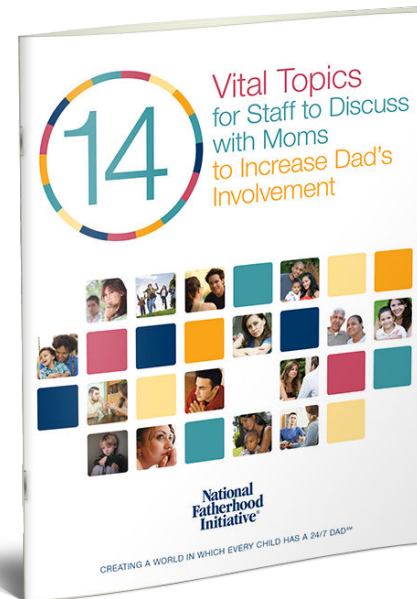
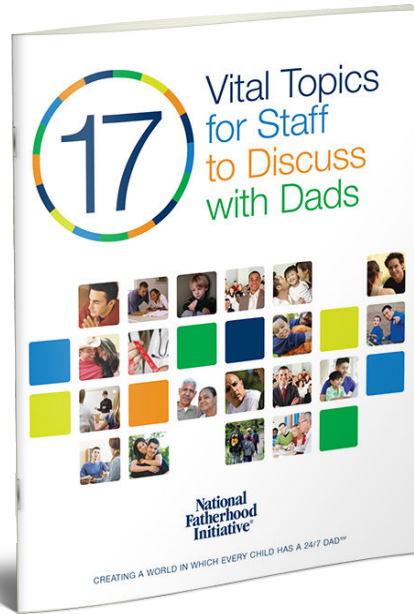
InsideOut Dad® Guide to Family Ties



Staff Guides

Vital Topics to Discuss with Dads and Moms

Vital Topics Guides



Learn more @ store.fatherhood.org/discussion-guides-topical/

Free training @ academy.fatherhood.org/courses/how-to-use-the-vital-topics-guides-to-increase-father-involvement

More on Low, Medium, and High Intensity Resources

High Intensity Resources

Group-Based, One-on-One, and Self-Paced Programs



24/7 Dad® A.M. and P.M.



InsideOut Dad®



24/7 Dad® Key Behaviors Workshop

For Moms!



Understanding Dad™

**National
Fatherhood
Initiative®**



Fathering in 15™

For Dads!

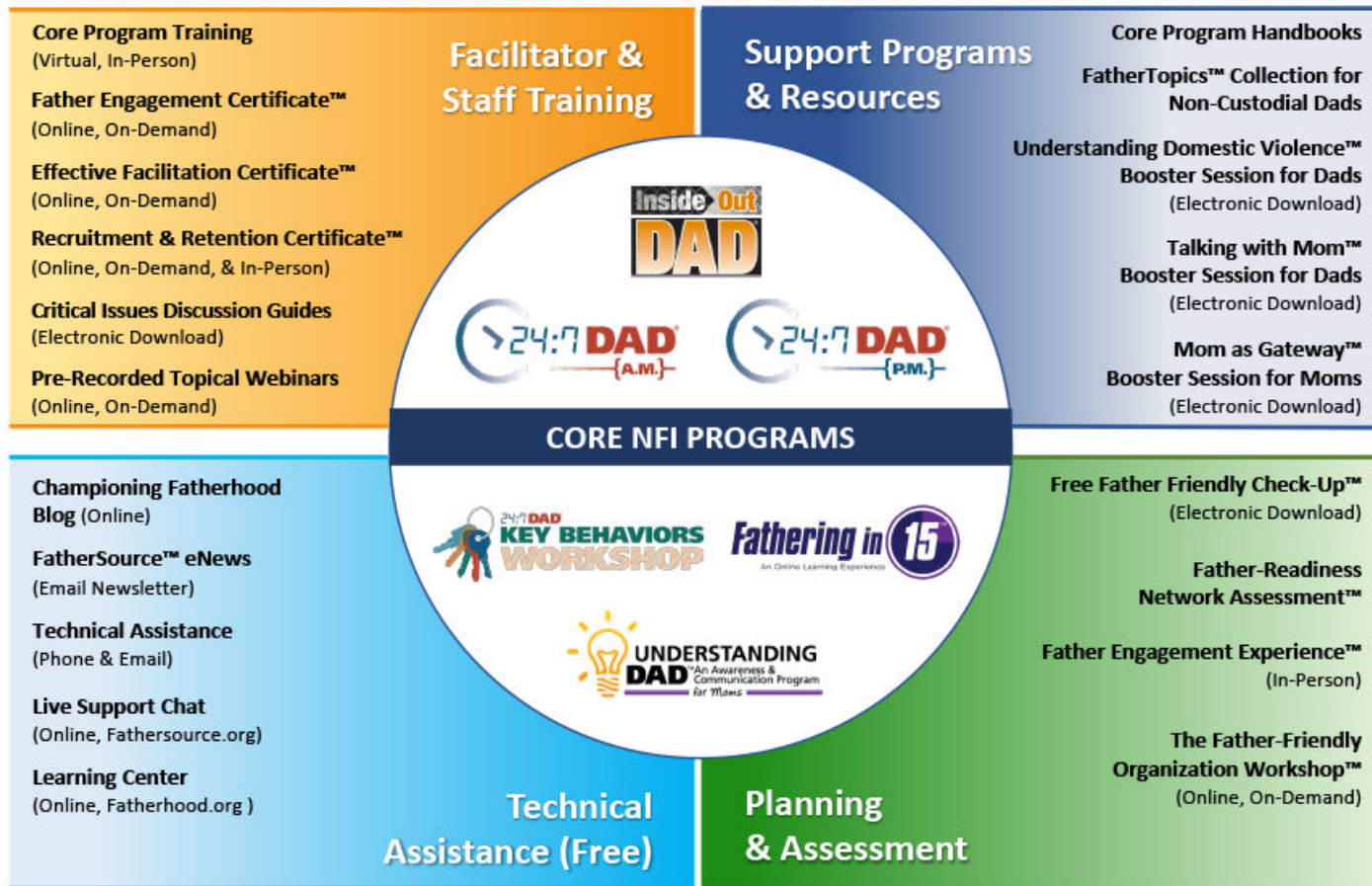
Integrated System of Programs, Resources, Training, Services



How to Succeed with NFI Fatherhood Programs



[Compliment Your Core Program(s) and Maximize Success with NFI Resources & Services from Each Quadrant]





NEW Brochure! 11 Things for Dads to Know & Learn About Child Support

This brochure is great for dads who currently owe child support, will soon owe it, and even those behind on their child support payments. Help dads learn about the child support system, how to deal with it, how to navigate it.

[Buy Now! >](#)



NEW, FREE RESOURCE! Strengths-Based Infographics

Two new infographics to help you support father involvement. Download them and start inspiring others!

The Strengths of Father Presence

[Download Now! >](#)

Why Involved Dads are Good for Moms

[Download Now! >](#)

FatherSource™: NFI's Store

SIGN IN

Fatherhood.org Community Contact Shopping Cart \$0.00



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LEARN MORE



Featured Products

Best Sellers



Need help? [Click to chat!](#)

Live Chat

Non-NFI Resources

- National Quality Improvement Center on Fathers and the Child Welfare System Final Report: <https://www.fatherhood.gov/research-and-resources/final-report-national-quality-improvement-center-non-resident-fathers-and>
- Center for the Study of Social Policy Report Report on Engaging Young Fathers in the Child Welfare System: <https://www.fatherhood.org/championing-fatherhood/how-to-effectively-serve-dads-involved-in-child-welfare>
- Engaging Fathers and Paternal Relatives: A Continuous Quality Improvement Approach in the Child Welfare System: <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/famcentered/engaging/fathers/>
- 2022 Child Welfare Information Gateway Podcast Series on Engaging Dads: <https://www.childwelfare.gov/more-tools-resources/podcast/episode-71/>

Non-NFI Resources

- Dads Rock Videos: <https://.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/communities/bcbh/#strengths> www
- A Guide for Father Involvement in Systems of Care: https://www.air.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report/AIR_Fatherhood_Guide_061413_0.pdf
- Casey Family Programs: <https://www.casey.org/engaging-fathers-prevention/>

Q & A



Thanks!



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