

## Engaging the Non-Resident Father for Child Welfare Staff

### **Course Attendance Preparation**

**Note:** Because printed workbooks will not be available at the training event here are your options:

- 1) Print this entire workbook and the "Best Practice Guide for Engaging Fathers and Non-Residential Parents" and bring them both to the training.

OR

- 2) Review and download this entire "Participant Workbook" and the "Best Practice Guide" and bring them to the training saved on an electronic portable device. However, the following pages from the workbook must be printed for use in the training;
  - ❖ Self-Reflection for Workers in Child Welfare
  - ❖ Engaging a Specific Father
  - ❖ Transfer of Learning

**The Best Practice Guide for Engaging Fathers and Non-residential Parents can be accessed at:**  
[https://files.nc.gov/ncdhhs/documents/files/dss/other\\_resource\\_tools/Practice-Guide-for-Fatherhood-Engagement.pdf](https://files.nc.gov/ncdhhs/documents/files/dss/other_resource_tools/Practice-Guide-for-Fatherhood-Engagement.pdf)

### **Pre-Training Activity**

In order to prepare for this training you are asked to do the following activities.

1. Review and bring to class your agency's diligent search policy.
2. Identify and bring with you 3 examples of formal and informal resources and support services available to fathers in your county.
3. Through exploration of your agency data, identify and be ready to share case examples of successful father engagement.

# Engaging the Non-Resident Father for Child Welfare Staff

*North Carolina Division of Social Services  
Children's Services, Staff Development*

The two-day training is designed to provide child welfare staff with information to support a practice shift toward engaging non-resident fathers in child welfare cases involving their children.

The information contained in this Participant Workbook was adapted with permission from the National Quality Improvement Center on Non-Resident Fathers and the Child Welfare System and from "Engaging Absent Fathers A Training Outline", the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Training Program, University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work.

Developed and compiled by  
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North Carolina Division of Social Services  
Children's Services  
Staff Development  
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## Competencies and Learning Objectives\*

<p><b>A.</b> Is aware of his/her own professional and personal responses, biases, values, stereotypes and cultural competence and understands how these may influence thinking and positively or negatively affect their practice.</p>	<p><b>A1.</b> Explain and discuss two examples of how their own values and perceptions about fathers may impact the engagement of fathers.</p> <p><b>A2.</b> Explain and state at least one example of how personal experience or history influence cultural viewpoints and male stereotypes.</p>
<p><b>B.</b> Engages in practices consistent with values and attitudes which support positive approaches to work with the community, agency, staff, and clients.</p>	<p><b>B1.</b> State at least three benefits to the child welfare professional when fathers are engaged.</p> <p><b>B2.</b> List at least three benefits to the child when fathers are engaged.</p> <p><b>B3.</b> Discuss at least two child well-being outcomes, listed in the <i>Best Practice Guide for Engaging Fathers and Non-Residential Parents</i>, when fathers have healthy involvement with their child.</p> <p><b>B4.</b> Explain at least three protective factors, listed in the <i>Best Practice Guide for Engaging Fathers and Non-Residential Parents</i>, which are linked to a lower incidence of child abuse and neglect.</p> <p><b>B5.</b> Describe three strategies consistent with diligent efforts to locate and contact the non-custodial parent.</p> <p><b>B6.</b> Describe what constitutes a father friendly program and cite three examples.</p> <p><b>B7.</b> Demonstrate how to use the <i>Father Friendly Check-up</i> tool to assess their agency's ability to facilitate and sustains father engagement.</p> <p><b>B8.</b> Name two barriers that may prevent males from seeking help and articulate two strategies that may encourage men to seek help.</p> <p><b>B9.</b> Discuss at least one challenge to engaging the non-residential father, and identify at least two strategies for engaging the non-residential father.</p> <p><b>B10.</b> Explain at least five interview suggestions specific to custodial mothers, listed in the <i>Best Practice Guide for Engaging Fathers and Non-Residential Parents</i>, which help mothers understand how the child can be best supported when fathers are engaged.</p> <p><b>B11.</b> Describe and explain the differences between the two types of father engagement strategies based on the dynamics of an actual case and the unique experiences of the non-resident father.</p>

# Agenda

Welcome and Introductions

The Importance of Fathers

Locating Fathers

Identifying Formal and Informal Support Services

Engaging the Non-Residential Parent

Father Friendly Check Up

Culture of Manhood and Fatherhood

Engaging Fathers

Closing

# The Impact of Father Absence

Children are:

- Five times more likely to live in poverty
- Twice as likely to commit a crime
- Twice as likely to drop out of school
- Twice as likely to be abused
- More likely to bring weapons and drugs into the classroom
- More likely to commit suicide
- More than two times as likely to abuse drugs or alcohol
- More likely to become pregnant as a teenager

Adapted from the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Training Program

# Father of the Year Candidates

## 1. John

John is a 27-year old college-educated father with a low-paying job as a lab assistant. The family has very little savings. Although offered several promotions throughout the years, John chooses to remain in this position so he can spend the maximum amount of time with his 2- and 7-year-old daughters. John fixes dinner on most nights for his wife (Debra) and the children, and takes a very active role in the lives of his children. Debra feels that John lacks initiative and should take advantage of the promotions. She feels that the extra money could come in handy for the family and future college costs for the children. This causes arguments from time to time but John believes that his children need his time more than his money.

## 2. James

James is a very highly compensated executive who makes a six-figure income and cares very much for his family. He loves his wife (Denise) and two sons very much and wants to ensure they have the best that life can offer. Denise, his wife, is concerned that James is not spending enough time with the children, who are 7 and 13. She believes James should explore a potential career change so he could spend more time at home with the family. James disagrees and wants to offer the family a better life than he had as a child. Moreover, he wants to make sure his children have the best education and support to be prepared for the real world. He believes that his children know how much he loves them and wants to model a strong work ethic for them as well as the importance of being a responsible person.

## 3. Jim

Jim is a very caring and sensitive father. He hugs and kisses his daughters ages 7 and 12 every day before they go to school. Moreover, he attends all of their school events and routinely cries in public when his children accomplish significant achievements such as graduation or roles in school plays. Debbie, his wife, believes Jim needs to give his kids growing space to grow as individuals. She believes that Jim's behavior is not healthy for him or the children. Jim believes he is merely showing the world and his children how much he loves them. This causes arguments from time to time.

Adapted from the National Quality Improvement Center on Non-Resident Fathers

# Self-Reflection for Workers in Child Welfare

The child welfare system has been focused on mothers to the exclusion of fathers for most of its history. An important step toward changing this culture and becoming more inclusive of fathers is for child welfare workers to reflect on their own attitudes, beliefs and actions about including fathers in their casework. Here are some statements devised by the Butler Institute for Families in Denver, Colorado, to help workers with this process of reflection.

*Read each question and answer it with the first thought that comes to your mind.*

	YES	NO	SOMETIMES
I think about the ways my personal family experiences influence my work with fathers.			
I seek to understand the stereotypes and biases that I may have and how those affect my work with fathers.			
I counsel children whose fathers are not involved in their lives to adjust and move on. I think that is best.			
I feel relieved when I learn that the bio-dads are absent and won't be involved in a case.			
I believe that the mother's role and continued presence is far more important than the father's.			
I believe that it is important for children to have some connection to non-custodial fathers even if they are incarcerated.			

	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>SOMETIMES</b>
I know which resources and services in my community are father friendly.			
I can articulate agency and institutional barriers that prevent fathers from remaining involved in children's lives.			
I can list several strategies that qualify as "diligent search" when it comes to locating absent fathers.			
I seek out education, consultation and training to improve my effectiveness in working with fathers.			
I know how to communicate with mothers so that they share accurate information about absent fathers, and I help them to understand the importance of fathers in the lives of their children.			
I use different skills to engage fathers than I use to engage mothers.			
I assist fathers in negotiating system barriers.			
I advocate for changes that will better serve fathers and their families.			
I facilitate the involvement of extended family in case planning regardless of whether			



a father is incarcerated, remote or otherwise removed.			
I believe a father can commit acts of domestic violence yet be a good parent and role model for his children.			

Caseworkers and child welfare agencies should use these reflective statements to identify attitudes and biases that may be a barrier to fostering father involvement and those that promote the process of building a father-friendly agency.

Adapted with permission from the Northern California Training Academy, excerpt from Reaching Out, Winter 2010 and the National Quality Improvement Center on Non-Resident Fathers, American Humane®

# Alamance County Department of Social Services Checklist for Diligent Searches

Person's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Case Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Log#/1 Case #: \_\_\_\_\_

CPS-I, CPS-A, IN-HOME, FOSTER CARE, & ADOPTION		
LOCATION	DATE	RESULTS
<p><b>CPS Record Request/Check</b>  <i>Statewide Central Registry Check Conducted</i>  <input type="checkbox"/> yes    <input type="checkbox"/> No  <a href="http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dss/">http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dss/</a>  <i>This will give you information on how to contact the other counties- not specifically the CPS history.</i></p>		
<p><b>DMV</b>  <a href="https://wirm.dhhs.state.nc.us/login.aspx">https://wirm.dhhs.state.nc.us/login.aspx</a>  <i>Access to OLV</i></p>		
<p><b>Child Support (ACTS)</b>  <a href="https://wirm.dhhs.state.nc.us/login.aspx">https://wirm.dhhs.state.nc.us/login.aspx</a>  <i>Access to OLV</i></p>		
<p><b>Employment Security Commission (ESC)</b>  <a href="https://wirm.dhhs.state.nc.us/login.aspx">https://wirm.dhhs.state.nc.us/login.aspx</a>  <i>Access to OLV</i></p>		
<p><b>Food Stamps (FSIS)</b>  <a href="https://wirm.dhhs.state.nc.us/login.aspx">https://wirm.dhhs.state.nc.us/login.aspx</a>  <i>Access to OLV</i></p>		
<p><b>IMS: Work First &amp; Medicaid (EIS)</b>  <a href="https://wirm.dhhs.state.nc.us/login.aspx">https://wirm.dhhs.state.nc.us/login.aspx</a>  <i>Access to OLV</i></p>		
<p><b>Register of Deeds</b>  <a href="http://www.ncard.us/">http://www.ncard.us/</a>  <i>This allows you the ability to locate contact information for all Register of Deeds offices in NC.</i>  <a href="http://www.alamance-nc.com/">http://www.alamance-nc.com/</a>  <i>The local sites can be useful for determining property ownership, finance records and Alamance County births.</i></p>		
<p><b>County Tax Office</b>  <a href="http://www.alamance-nc.com/">http://www.alamance-nc.com/</a>  <i>To search for personal and property tax by an individual's name. Check the County of residence web site. Several counties allow searches online.</i></p>		

<p><b>Clerk of Courts</b>  <a href="http://www.nccourts.org/">http://www.nccourts.org/</a>  <i>Access to Criminal, Civil, District, and Superior Court dockets in all NC counties.</i></p>		
<p><b>NC Dept. of Corrections &amp; Sex Offender Registry</b>  <a href="http://www.doc.state.nc.us/offenders/">http://www.doc.state.nc.us/offenders/</a>  <a href="https://wirm.dhhs.state.nc.us/login.aspx">https://wirm.dhhs.state.nc.us/login.aspx</a>  <i>Access to OLV</i></p>		
<p><b>Other DOC:</b>  <a href="http://www.corrections.com/links/viewlinks.asp?Cat=30">http://www.corrections.com/links/viewlinks.asp?Cat=30</a>   <a href="http://publicrecords.onlinesearches.com/North-Carolina-Jail-and-Inmate-Records.htm">http://publicrecords.onlinesearches.com/North-Carolina-Jail-and-Inmate-Records.htm</a></p>		
<p><b>Federal Bureau of Prisons</b>  <a href="http://www.bop.gov">http://www.bop.gov</a></p>		
<p><b>Sheriff Department &amp; Local Jails</b>  <i>Check the County of residence web site. Several counties allow searches online. *Alamance County Jail does not offer this option.</i>  <a href="https://www.vinelink.com/vinelink/siteInfoAction.do?siteId=34003">https://www.vinelink.com/vinelink/siteInfoAction.do?siteId=34003</a>  <i>This site may be limited use, but it could be helpful if you know the person's first and last names.</i></p>		
<p><b>Out-of-State Criminal Record Check if Need Verified with Supervisor</b>  <i>Local LE may be able to assist with this if court involvement. Otherwise, you may have to contact that state directly and send a request in writing.</i></p>		
<p><b>One Case/AS400</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACDSS CPS Hx (Assessments, In-Hm, FC)</li> <li>• Food Stamps</li> <li>• Medicaid</li> <li>• Work First</li> <li>• Daycare</li> <li>• Adult Services</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Board of Election</b>  <i>Check the County of residence web site. Several counties allow searches online. You will need to call and request to know if a person is registered to vote. This is public information, so no release form is needed.</i></p>		
<p><b>ICWA (Indian Child Welfare Act)</b>  <a href="http://www.doa.state.nc.us/cia/index.htm">http://www.doa.state.nc.us/cia/index.htm</a> <input type="checkbox"/>  <a href="http://www.healing-arts.org/tribelinks.htm">http://www.healing-arts.org/tribelinks.htm</a> <input type="checkbox"/></p>		

<a href="http://nc-choke.com/">http://nc-choke.com/</a> <input type="checkbox"/> <a href="http://www.nicwa.org/Indian Child Welfare Act/">http://www.nicwa.org/Indian Child Welfare Act/</a> <input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Mexican Consulate in Raleigh, NC</b> 919-750-0046		
<b>Embassies in the World</b> <a href="http://embassy-finder.com/">http://embassy-finder.com/</a> <i>Can be helpful in locating Consulates where families are originally from.</i>		
<b>Local White Pages</b> <a href="http://www.whitepages.com/">http://www.whitepages.com/</a>		
<b>Directory Assistance</b> <a href="http://www.directoryassistance.com/">http://www.directoryassistance.com/</a>		
<b>Utilities:</b> Water <input type="checkbox"/> Electric <input type="checkbox"/> Gas/Oil <input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Internet:</b> <a href="http://www.whowhere.com/">www.whowhere.com</a> <input type="checkbox"/> <a href="http://www.peoplesearch.com/">www.peoplesearch.com</a> <input type="checkbox"/> <a href="http://www.peoplefinder.com/">http://www.peoplefinder.com/</a> <input type="checkbox"/> <a href="http://www.whitepages.com/">http://www.whitepages.com/</a> <input type="checkbox"/> <a href="http://www.zabasearch.com/">http://www.zabasearch.com</a> <input type="checkbox"/> <a href="http://www.ancestry.com/">http://www.ancestry.com</a> <input type="checkbox"/> <a href="http://www.facebook.com/">http://www.facebook.com</a> <input type="checkbox"/> <a href="http://www.spokeo.com/">http://www.spokeo.com</a> <input type="checkbox"/> <a href="http://www.google.com/">http://www.google.com</a> <input type="checkbox"/> <a href="http://www.ussearch.com/">http://www.ussearch.com</a> <input type="checkbox"/> <a href="http://www.myspace.com/">http://www.myspace.com</a> <input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Wildlife Commission for Hunting/Fishing License</b> <a href="http://www.ncwildlife.org/Licensing.aspx">http://www.ncwildlife.org/Licensing.aspx</a> <i>Fax or email a written request to the attention of James Jones, Licensing Supervisor; include the absent parent's full name, DOB and drivers license # if you know it. The fax # is 919-707-0292 and his email is <a href="mailto:james.jones@ncwildlife.org">james.jones@ncwildlife.org</a></i>		
<b>Discussion with known parent regarding contact info for absent parent (initial and ongoing)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage relatives during CFT Meetings</li> <li>Ask if anyone is in jail</li> </ul>		
<b>Discussion with children regarding contact info for absent parent (initial and ongoing)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When was the last time they saw or spoke to their parent?</li> <li>Who is their parent related or kin to?</li> <li>Do they visit with their parent's relatives?</li> </ul>		
<b>Discussion with collaterals regarding contact info for absent parent (initial and ongoing)</b>		

<p><b>Discussion with relatives regarding contact info for absent parent</b> <i>(initial and ongoing)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage relatives during CFT Meetings</li> <li>• Ask if anyone is in jail</li> <li>• Complete the DSS-5318 Relative Search Information form to identify relatives</li> <li>• Mail out a DSS-5317 Relative Notification Letter for when children come into custody.</li> <li>• Mail out the DSS-5316 Relative Interest form to the relative and ask them to mail it back to assess their level of interest in the child.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Introduction Letter Mailed re: CPS Involvement and/or Custody of Child with DSS</b></p>		
<p><b>Home Visit Attempts to Last Known Address:</b>        8:00 am to 5:00 pm <input type="checkbox"/>          5:00 pm to 12:00 am <input type="checkbox"/>          Saturday(s) &amp;/or Sunday(s) <input type="checkbox"/></p>		
<p><b>Certified Letter re: CPS Involvement Mailed once address confirmed and other attempts fail to solicit a response.</b></p>		
<p><b>Veterans/Military Search</b>        Branch Served:        Dates Served:  <a href="http://www.defense.gov/landing/comment.aspx">http://www.defense.gov/landing/comment.aspx</a>  <i>"I need to verify if someone is a member of the military. What Department should I contact?</i>  <i>Please contact the officials at Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) for assistance with military verification of Active Duty members. Their telephone number is (703) 696-6762 and their fax number is (703) 696-4156. You may also use their <u>on-line verification form</u>. This system requires the last name and social security number of the military member."</i>  <a href="http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/milsvc/">http://www.vba.va.gov/bln/21/milsvc/</a>        For VA Services Information, please contact        Benefits Information &amp; Assistance 800-827-1000</p>		
<p><b>Contacted child(ren)'s school for any parent info listed.</b></p>		

*The first six items listed are NC State System programs available on your computer.*

*When doing searches on the Internet, try to do a global search (not putting a city and/or state). Most Internet searches will allow this.*

*Once a child enters foster care, agencies have 30 days to identify and notify relatives. While it is important to explore a caretaker's desire not to contact other relatives, including the other parent, law and policy require that they be contacted unless it would pose a risk to the child and/or caretaker. Notification does not entitle relatives to placement of the child however; they may be able to provide information about other family and community connections related to the child. The agency will conduct the appropriate assessments and determine what is in the child's best interest in terms of contact with any relatives or kin notified.*

**SW Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Supervisor**  
**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

# Resources

## National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse (NRFC)

<https://www.fatherhood.gov/>

July 2009

This site provides a link that highlights State programs and strategies to promote parenting and responsible fatherhood.

### **North Carolina**

State-Funded Direct Service Parenting/Responsible Fatherhood Programs North Carolina allocates a portion of federal funds and TANF program money for fatherhood initiatives across the state. Although the state does not sponsor an official statewide fatherhood initiative, state and federal funding is used to fund fatherhood programs in local family resource centers. The North Carolina Department of Correction offers a program for incarcerated fathers and expectant fathers to assist them in reconnecting with their children. Local community-based organizations offer additional direct-service parenting and fatherhood programs through a federal Responsible Fatherhood demonstration grant.

State-Funded Programs to Prevent Unwanted or Early Fatherhood Under the aegis of the Division of Public Health, North Carolina uses some federal and state TANF funds to support efforts aimed at preventing and reducing out-of-wedlock births. The state also has launched an initiative to prevent teen pregnancy. The initiative encompasses two programs, one directed at preventing teen pregnancy, the other directed at providing support for teens who already are parents. These programs provide services through schools and other community-based organizations.

### *Child Support Assistance*

The state operates a child support program through its Division of Social Services Child Support Enforcement (CSE). The purpose of the program is to ensure that children receive financial support from both parents. **CSE will help locate parents, establish paternity, file support orders, and receive payment after orders have been set.** North Carolina does not have any state-funded programs that provide services to noncustodial parents unable to pay their child support.

### *Services Geared Toward Low-Income Noncustodial Fathers*

North Carolina's state TANF plan allows for the use of TANF funds for child support initiatives, including fatherhood programs targeted at noncustodial parents. Additional services for low-income noncustodial fathers in the state are funded through federal Responsible Fatherhood initiative grants. Operation Breakthrough, a federally funded program, targets noncustodial fathers with children enrolled in Head Start and aims to improve child-parent relationships.

### *Incarceration and Reentry Services and Programs for Incarcerated Fathers*

The state's Department of Correction provides a number of programs and services to facilitate inmates' transition out of incarceration. For example, the Going Home program provides parenting instruction for incarcerated fathers, and other programs provide educational and employment services

Fatherhood Resource Center. This Web site provides links to fatherhood initiatives and resources across North Carolina and around the country; available at <http://wch.dhhs.state.nc.us/Fatherhood%20Initiatives%20and%20Resource%20Websites.htm>

Responsible Fatherhood State Profile: North Carolina Toll-free: 1 (877) 4DAD411  
[www.fatherhood.gov](http://www.fatherhood.gov)

The NRFC site also provides tips for professionals and resources for dad such as "Activities of the Week", suggested activities for fathers to engage in with their children. The site also has information in Spanish.

## **Support Services**

### **The Men's Council (TMC)**

Website states the following:

The Men's Council (transitioning from the Triangle Men's Center) is focused on helping men grow, enrich and improve their lives through support, fellowship and community. The Men's Council strengthens men in their roles of son, father, husband/partner, friend, and citizen.

Web site contains resources for men, articles, links to websites for men, videos and monthly events.

Contact Information

The Men's Council

PO Box 6155

Raleigh NC 27628

Contact through their [Feedback Page](#) or email: [mail@themencouncil.org](mailto:mail@themencouncil.org)

### **Men's Council of the Triad - MCOT**

Current Location: Media Center / Library of New Garden Friends School,  
1124 New Garden Road, Greensboro, NC 27410

Hosting monthly meetings in the Greensboro area for many years, topics of interest to men with moderators and lively discussion.

Second Tuesday Meetings 7:30 to 9:30 pm

For more information contact:

Jim Stinson at [phyndr@gmail.com](mailto:phyndr@gmail.com) or phone Lyn Labell at 336-851-1319



## **Forever Fathers**

<http://www.afatherforever.com/home.html>

Website states the following:

### **Who We Are**

Fathers Forever is a 501(c)(3) Non-profit Organization that serves as a map to help fathers chart a new course of fatherhood. We help to facilitate and restore the relationship between the fathers and their children in three ways: Socially, Educationally, and Economically.

### **Our Vision**

Bridging the Gap between Fathers and Children...thus Saving Our Children, One Father At A Time.

### **Our Mission**

Fathers Forever's purpose is to decrease the number of children being raised without the support of their fathers and decrease the number of non-child support cases in our court system.

### **Mailing Address**

4501 New Bern Avenue Suite 130-227

Raleigh, NC 27610

(919) 779-9905

(919) 332-5793

1-800-246-7090

Glen Warren, Founder/Executive Director

[glenwarren@afatherforever.com](mailto:glenwarren@afatherforever.com)

## **Men's Empowering Resource Center (MERC), Inc**

<http://www.eteamz.com/burlingtonstarz/>

Website states the following:

“Our current primary focus is the establishment of our Responsible Fatherhood Program, which is designed to promote the financial and personal responsibilities in fathers to their children and to increase their participation in the lives of their children.”

### **Contact:**

Men's Empowering Resource Center, Inc.

MERC Bulldawgs AAU Basketball Club

152 Pine Street

P.O. Box 871

Graham, NC 27253

[mencan@mercinc.org](mailto:mencan@mercinc.org)

# Resources and Support Services

## Web Based

### RISE

<http://www.risemagazine.org/index.html>

Rise is an electronic magazine by and for parents involved in the child welfare system. Examples include Issue Number 12, Spring 2009 Fathers Rights and Roles, articles include Putting Fathers Back in the Picture, Burden of Proof, Standing Up for My Son, Mr. Mom Stepping Into fatherhood and Time to Man Up.

Issue Number 10, Summer 2008 is about parenting from prison, articles include; Staying Connected, Bonding from Behind Bars and Pen Pals.

- [www.fatherhood.org](http://www.fatherhood.org)
- Futures Without Violence, <http://www.futureswithoutviolence.org>

## National Resources

### National Fatherhood Initiative

<https://www.fatherhood.org/>

Web site states “National Fatherhood Initiative is dedicated to giving our nation's children a brighter future by educating and engaging fathers.”

The site contains a wealth of information such as links for professionals and fathers, father factor blog, an ebook series for dads, technical assistance, events Facebook page and Twitter, etc.

National Fatherhood Initiative  
20410 Observation Drive, Suite 107  
Germantown, MD 20876  
p: (301) 948-0599  
f: (301) 948-6776

### American Humane Association Fatherhood Initiative

<http://www.americanhumane.org/children/programs/fatherhood-initiative/>

The site contains information about the national fatherhood Initiative, Professional Resources and has information about what dads can do with their children.

National Headquarters  
Washington, D.C.  
Call: (800) 227-4645  
Write: American Humane Association  
1400 16th Street NW, Suite 360  
Washington, DC 20036  
Email: [info@americanhumane.org](mailto:info@americanhumane.org)

National Center for Fathering

<http://fathers.com/>

Library of articles, resources for fathers, and links related to hot topics, Facebook and Twitter.

Contact: <mailto:dads@fathers.com>

### **PARENT HELP**

<http://www.parenthelp-ny.org/>

#### **According to the website;**

PARENT HELP offers a variety of FREE, voluntary and confidential telephone-based services to help dads and moms who are living apart resolve their conflicts over such issues as child custody, visitation, child support and co-parenting.

1-800-716-3468

### **Note additional resources**

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- 
- 
- 
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# Engaging a Specific Father

Think about a family on your caseload that involves an absentee father and respond to the following questions:

1. Why is it important for you to locate this father?
2. Using the Diligent Search package as a reference, what steps have you taken to find this father? If you have not found this father yet, knowing what you know now, what additional steps can you take to locate this father?
3. What do I know about this father that may help or hinder my efforts to engage him in his child's life and reunify him with his child?
4. List specific ideas for involving this father in the Family Service Plan.
5. What strengths do you see in this father?
6. What concerns and needs do you see for this father?
7. What resources could I offer this father?

Adapted from the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Training Program

# Barriers to Father Involvement

- Child Welfare Professional and Systemic Bias
- Overburdened workers
- Mothers as gatekeepers
- Circumstances of non-custodial fathers
- Worker's reluctance to involve a male perpetrator
- Domestic violence
- Not knowing he's a dad
- Father has a new family
- Geographic mobility
- Remarriage of either parent
- Father's psychological pain
- Lack of finances
- Lack of confidence in parenting skills
- Poor father "role models"
- Lack of extended family support
- Societal ambivalence over fatherhood
- Dealing with legal system and bureaucracies

Adapted from the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Training Program

## Engaging Non-Resident Fathers

Engagement Strategy	This strategy might be useful when...
<p>Start from the assumption that the non-resident father wants to be involved.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The father has been absent for a period of time but demonstrates interest in the child’s well-being.</li> <li>• The father has not returned your calls; consider that there may be some underlying reasons that you are unaware of.</li> <li>• The mother or someone from the maternal family tells you that the father doesn’t want to be involved; however, this has not been directly confirmed.</li> </ul>
<p>Facilitate the restoration of the father in the life of the child by co-creating goals based on the father’s strengths, not his deficits.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The father feels as though he doesn’t have anything to offer his child.</li> <li>• The father has been absent for a period of time and doesn’t know how to re-engage in a relationship with his child.</li> <li>• The father is struggling with joblessness, financial issues or multiple demands, or is caring for a new family.</li> </ul>
<p>Treat each case on an individual basis, not based on experiences with other fathers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You have your own personal struggles with fathers or “father figures” in your life.</li> <li>• You have multiple cases in which the fathers are absent and refusing to engage. When this is true, it is important to take a step back and examine how other cases are influencing the decisions in the current case.</li> </ul>
<p>Suspend judgments and listen to all sides. There are two sides to every story. Give the nonresident father an opportunity to give his side.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You have heard a lot of negative things about the father from the mother, maternal family members or even other workers the case was assigned to.</li> <li>• You have your own personal struggles with fathers or “father figures” in your life.</li> <li>• Allegations about the father have been made but not substantiated...weigh out all of the information.</li> <li>• The father has been absent from the child’s life.</li> </ul>

Engagement Strategy	This strategy might be useful when...
<p>Make room for expressions of anger. This emotion in men is socialized as “acceptable.” It may be the only one they are comfortable expressing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You detect hostility from the father; acknowledging it may help defuse it.</li> <li>• The father has not been kept informed about his child by the mother or others.</li> <li>• Anger is the only emotion the father feels secure expressing, as it keeps him from feeling vulnerable to others.</li> </ul>
<p>Help the non-resident father identify his tangible and non-tangible assets.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It appears that the father is struggling with his identity as a father.</li> <li>• The father doesn’t believe he has anything to offer his child.</li> <li>• The father is struggling with joblessness or financial issues, and/or is juggling multiple demands.</li> </ul>
<p>Remind the father that he is a role model to his children. Boys learn about manhood from their fathers, and girls get a sense of what to expect from their fathers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The father isn’t fully aware of how his presence in his child’s life can benefit his child.</li> <li>• It would be helpful for the father to consider what type of messages he wants to send to his child through either his involvement or lack of involvement.</li> </ul>
<p>Acknowledge your power as a caseworker but empower the father to use his assets and his often-hidden power to keep his child safe by remaining engaged and involved. Remember, some men struggle and “present” differently when feeling helpless and hopeless.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The father feels disempowered based on his previous and current life circumstances and the additional perceived “intrusion” of child welfare.</li> <li>• The father feels that the mother has all the power and he can’t do anything to the change that; encourage him to look at what he can offer that may be different from what the mother can offer.</li> <li>• The father needs to understand the importance of his involvement to help keep his child safe and promote his or her well-being; let the father know about the benefits of involvement.</li> </ul>
<p>Recognize and acknowledge the previous experiences the father may have had with child welfare workers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The father was removed from his parents and placed in foster care.</li> <li>• The father had a bad experience with his caseworker, judge, probation officer, attorney, etc.</li> <li>• The father has had indirect experience or knowledge of child welfare processes, fostering distrust of system personnel.</li> </ul>

Engagement Strategy	This strategy might be useful when...
<p>Be clear and transparent about the reasons for the agency's involvement, the father's role throughout the process and agency expectations. Suspicion may be present and he may think he is being sought only to obtain child support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The father doesn't trust the system or those who represent the system.</li> <li>• The father's experience has suggested that he is only needed for the money he can provide.</li> <li>• The father fears he is unable to pay child support because of his own financial challenges.</li> <li>• The father feels shame for his inability to financially provide for his children.</li> </ul>
<p>Remind the father of how important he is in the life of his children, how there are some things only he can provide and that his children will carry what he does with them forever.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is important for the father to hear specifics about how he can positively impact his child's life; it is not enough to talk in general terms; the father needs to hear how his presence can benefit the child. Share some of the benefits identified in this training.</li> <li>• The father needs to consider how he would like his child to remember him 10 to 15 years from now.</li> </ul>

Adapted from the National Quality Improvement Center on Non-Resident Fathers, American Humane



# Fathers and Child Development



Certain behaviors are normal for children at certain ages. The following are activities a father can do with his child to promote healthy developmental growth.

## Birth to 3 Months

- ♥ Offer me a finger to hold. Listen to me and learn my responses. Smile and touch me when you talk to me. Tell me I am wonderful.
- ♥ Develop trust. Gently hold me while talking in sweet encouraging tones. Call me by name and make eye contact.
- ♥ Pick me up when I cry and reassure me. Do not leave me alone crying and give me the impression that no one cares for me.
- ♥ Learn how to soothe me and meet my needs before I cry.
- ♥ Gently rub my back, sing to me, play music for me, or bounce me gently to music. I am sensitive to sound, so keep music low.
- ♥ Hold me securely in new places and protect me.
- ♥ Keep me clean, well fed, and clothed appropriately for temperature.
- ♥ Give me colorful toys that make interesting sounds.
- ♥ Sucking calms me, so let me suck my fingers or a pacifier. Be gentle and do not interrupt my sucking by pulling or jiggling something I am sucking on.

## 3 to 6 Months

- ♥ During bath time, try washing me in a sitting position; help me sit up for 5-10 minutes. I may also want to sit up and play. Help me keep my back straight while I sit for 5-10 minutes.
- ♥ Give me safe healthy finger foods at 5-6 months (e.g., crackers.)
- ♥ Lay me on a blanket on the floor and let me roll and reach.
- ♥ Spend time with me (toy play, smile, nod, talk, and laugh.)
- ♥ Give me toys or attention when I need a distraction.
- ♥ Respond to my fears and cries by holding, talking to, and reassuring me. Tell me what I'm feeling and that it's okay.
- ♥ Talk to me, sing to me, or give me my favorite toy at diaper changing time. Don't scold, make loud noises, or frowning faces.
- ♥ Keep me in the back seat in my car seat, even if I complain. Distract me with some toys and reassure me. Put my seat where I can see outside.
- ♥ Avoid separating me from you for days. I need consistent, reliable relationships, so if you leave me for long periods, expect me to be more attached to you for a while and to need more reassurance.

## **6 to 12 Months**

- ♥ Play peek-a-boo, puppets, wave bye-bye; teach me words and colors, even if I can't repeat the words right now.
- ♥ Have a regular bedtime routine. Slow my activity an hour before bedtime; rock me, pat my back, and bring my favorite blanket. Once dry, fed, and well prepared for bed, leave me with a kiss. Ignore my cries for a few minutes until I am asleep.
- ♥ Encourage physical exploration within your eyesight.
- ♥ Keep dangerous objects away from me and baby-proof my environment. Be there to comfort me when I get hurt.
- ♥ Help me stand by holding my hands. Make sure my heels are flat.
- ♥ I may purposefully drop and throw things as an experiment. Give me safe things to drop and throw.
- ♥ Open a cupboard in the kitchen kept safe for my exploration. Keep only non-breakable objects that are baby-friendly.
- ♥ Give me something interesting on my tray to explore at mealtime (e.g., cooked spaghetti, spoons.)
- ♥ Do not force me to eat, and understand that I am learning and will be messy with my food.

## **12 to 24 Months**

- ♥ Learning to walk takes time. Hold my hand and encourage me to take steps when I am ready—do not rush me.
- ♥ If I grab, hit, or bite when I am mad, do not scold me or hit me. Teach me words to use instead of hurting others.
- ♥ It will take time before I am able to do many things. Set limits, but I will break rules many times before I learn. "No!" is not enough; please explain why (e.g., "The stove is too HOT!" Move me and show me a safe place to play.)
- ♥ Give me choices whenever possible. Do not say "no" too often, and distract me if I am refusing something. Reward me for good behavior. Ignore my "no" if I do not get a choice.
- ♥ Let me scribble with thick washable crayons or felt markers; tape a paper to the table so it does not slip.
- ♥ Compare colors and sizes with me (big spoon, red balloon.)
- ♥ Read to me. Tell me about the story; let me pat the pages and make noises; help me learn to turn pages by half lifting one.
- ♥ Building blocks, sandboxes, ride and pull toys, jack-in-the-boxes, music toys, and balls are very important learning tools.
- ♥ Understand that "me" and "mine" are important before I can learn about "you" and "yours." Set up a box that is mine.
- ♥ Teach me about not hurting others and about sharing, but do not shame me. Be patient, and encourage my empathy for others.

## **24-36 Months**

- ♥ Let me do it myself when possible. Let me feed myself, even if I am messy. Give me two choices when you can.
- ♥ Let me make choices about the food I eat, and let me refuse food. Reduce in between snacks so I will be hungry at mealtimes. Do not use food as a reward or punishment.
- ♥ Teach me about dangerous things (matches, knives, strangers, stray animals, cars, etc.) There should be significant consequences for dangerous behavior after giving warnings.
- ♥ Naps are still important to reduce cranky and moody behavior.

- ♥ Give me a warning that it will soon be time to move along.
- ♥ Do not hurry me too much; I need patience and time to learn.
- ♥ Read to me, color with me, and teach me games.
- ♥ If there is a new baby, remember I will be jealous. Assure me of your love, give me special time, and let me help with the baby.
- ♥ Tell me what I am feeling, comfort me, and don't scold me.
- ♥ Offer a hand when I am in a new situation. (This substitutes for picking me up.) Do not insist I have to grow up.
- ♥ Blow bubbles for me. Teach me to catch and throw a ball.
- ♥ Respect my fears and do not force me into fearful situations. Comfort me and encourage me that there is nothing to fear.

### ***Potty Training Tips***

- ❖ No age is exact for toilet training. Watch for me to grimace at dirty diapers, show you my wet pants, and stay dry for up to two hours. I need to be verbal enough to understand toilet training.
- ❖ Change me as soon as possible; tell me it is nice to be clean.
- ❖ Let me have a toy to keep me happy and busy on the potty-chair. Put me on the potty briefly at first (up to 5 minutes.)
- ❖ Praise my efforts and encourage me to let you know when I need to go potty.
- ❖ Teach me the family words for toilet training.
- ❖ Dress me in easy to remove clothing; be patient, never scold me; visit the potty before going somewhere; help me wipe, teach me to wash my hands, and show me how to flush.

### ***Tantrums***

- ❖ • Learn warning signs and distract me. Do not expect too much.
- ❖ • Since tantrums are a release of frustrated feelings and a way to get attention, ignore me if I am in a safe place. Do not reward tantrums. Stay calm and leave me, reassuring me you will be back when I am quiet. When I stop, talk to me; tell me what I am feeling. Help me express my frustration in words.

## **3-5 Years**

- ♥ Discuss physical gender differences with me. Teach me the proper names for body parts without shame. If I am old enough to ask the question, I am old enough to understand the answer. Do not give me more information than I ask for.
- ♥ Create a home library with interesting books about heroines and heroes, fables, and fun stories. Read to me every day, and let me point to pictures, fill in missing words, predict what happens next, and discuss the ideas in the book. Understand when I want my favorites repeatedly.
- ♥ Remember, rewards works better than punishment. Have a sticker chart, give balloons, pennies for the bank, etc.
- ♥ Play children's music; sing, clap, and dance with me.
- ♥ Encourage physical involvement and imaginative expression (e.g., "Itsy-Bitsy Spider" and "I'm a Little Teapot.")
- ♥ Teach me to count, sing my ABCs, and write my name with lots of patience. This will take time and repetition.
- ♥ I need a bike or tricycle, balls, clay, and play space with toys.
- ♥ Plant a garden or a pot from seed. Help me water it and watch it grow. Pick flowers for my table and let me eat the vegetables.

- ♥ Follow a routine at bedtime. Show me the clock and tell me it is time for bed. Let me pick out my bath toys, choose my pajamas, read me a story, etc.
- ♥ Spend time with me. Sing me a song; rub my back. Kiss me, say goodnight, and I love you.
- ♥ Give me permission to say “no” to adults that make me feel uncomfortable. Talk with me and get to know how I am feeling.

## **5 to 8 Years**

- ♥ Discuss physical gender differences with me. If I am old enough to ask the question, I am old enough to understand the answer. Do not give me more information than I ask for.
- ♥ Create a home library with interesting books about heroines and heroes, fables, and fun stories. Read to me every day, and let me read a part of each book; discuss the ideas in the book.
- ♥ Remember, rewards works better than punishment. Have a sticker chart, give balloons, pennies for the bank, etc.
- ♥ Play board games with me.
- ♥ Sing, draw, and cook with me.
- ♥ Teach me new things with lots of patience. This will take time and repetition.
- ♥ I need a bike or tricycle, balls, clay, and play space with toys.
- ♥ Plant a garden or a pot from seed. Help me water it and watch it grow. Pick flowers for my table and let me eat the vegetables.
- ♥ Let me help with chores around the house.

### ***Strategies for Play Groups***

- ❖ Give flashlights to my friends and me. Let me turn out the lights. Teach us to make shadow puppets on the walls.
- ❖ Set up a folding table or chairs in the living room. Drape a sheet over it and let us play in the “tent” or “cave.”
- ❖ Allow us to dig a hole in the back yard. Fill it with water.
- ❖ Remember attention spans and likes vary with children. Plan a variety of activities; be flexible. Allow some children to move on while other children finish the activity.
- ❖ Encourage cleaning up when a child becomes bored with one activity before moving to the next activity.
- ❖ Organize a game of “Duck, Duck, Goose.”
- ❖ Set up a tea party with juice and crackers with a toy tea set or plastic cups and plates. Hold tea parties outside.
- ❖ Give my friends and me the broom and mop for horse riding in the house on a rainy day.
- ❖ Set up a folding table on its side to create a stage for a puppet show.
- ❖ Dress up and act out children’s stories.
- ❖ Draw faces on the tips of fingers and play finger puppets with friends. (Draw a mouth in the crease of the finger.)
- ❖ Make a house out of a discarded appliance box. Cut a door and windows for my friends and me. Help us decorate.

## 8 to 12 Years

- ♥ Allow lights on after bedtime if I am reading a book. Check out a new library book each time a book is read. Used bookstores are also economical resources. Let me choose.
- ♥ Turn off the TV and play a game with me or talk things over. Do not let me watch PG-13 or R rated movies.
- ♥ Bake cookies with me; we can wear aprons, and do not get too upset about how messy the kitchen becomes.
  
- ♥ Provide an allowance contingent on performing household chores. Encourage saving money in a piggy bank, and give me bonuses for a good attitude and/or an exceptional job done.
- ♥ Teach me cards and board games I can play with my friends.
- ♥ Encourage outside play (e.g., jump rope, skates, balls, etc.) Draw a hopscotch grid on the sidewalk with chalk.
- ♥ Teach me about nurturing by giving me responsibility for a family pet. Understand I may forget and remind me.
- ♥ I need to know how to swim to stay safe in water. ♥ Teach me about nature through camping, hiking, and going to the zoo.
- ♥ Let me organize a water fight with the hose and balloons.
- ♥ Establish family traditions. Remind me about what we did last year. Tell me why it is important.

### ***Strategies for Child Safety***

- ❖ Know where I am at all times. Teach me to check in and give me timelines.
- ❖ Provide clear instructions to me about what you believe is safe, and supervise my activities.
- ❖ Make my house safe, friendly, and child centered. Children can visit under your watchful eye.
- ❖ Get to know the parents in my neighborhood and my friends' parents. Teach me to keep away from places that are unsafe.
- ❖ Give me permission to say, "My mom or dad wants me home," or "My mom will not let me," if I need to make an excuse to get out of an uncomfortable or pressure situation.
- ❖ Teach me about drugs, alcohol, smoking, and teen pregnancy. Let me tell you how I feel about these things.
- ❖ Teach me how to value myself and care for myself. Value me.
- ❖ Teach me to be cautious of overly friendly adults or strangers.
- ❖ Ask me how I am feeling. Listen. Keep communication open.
- ❖ Be reliable and predictable, and create a safe place for me to put my trust.
- ❖ Forgive me when I fail, and apologize when you have let me down. Teach me about respect by modeling it.
- ❖ Teach me about my bright future and celebrate each accomplishment along the way. Give me vision.

## 12 to 18 Years

- ♥ Be clear about what you expect of me. Set curfews and know where I am at all times. Make sure I check-in frequently.
- ♥ Start with small freedoms, assuring me that larger freedoms will be allowed once I've proven myself capable of the smaller ones.
- ♥ Allow me to have privacy by giving me a lock on my door, a journal, and by knocking before entering my room. My lock is a privilege, as long as I open the door when you knock.
- ♥ Allow me to have my own music in my room.

- ♥ Encourage me to express my feelings in writing and verbally. It is okay to be angry, but not mean.
- ♥ When I speak, listen to the feeling underneath, along with the words. Am I scared? Or hurting?
- ♥ Friends are very important for me. Allow me to talk on the phone and have friends over. Let me organize a slumber party, pool party, or homework session. Allow my friends and me to take over the living room for an evening.
- ♥ Let me wear what I like as part of self-expression. Go shopping with me to buy clothes we both like.
- ♥ Encourage volunteer or paid work. I need to build a resume. Instill responsibility and polite public behaviors.
- ♥ Support and encourage me to gain a special talent early in my teen years (dance, music, drama, sports, art, etc.)

### ***Strategies for Dealing with Conflict***

- ❖ • Understand my need for developing a separate self, and do not take my struggles to gain independence personally.
- ❖ • Understand that I still need supervision, guidance, and protection, even if I push you away or am critical of you. Troubled children often report a parent does not “love them enough” to wonder where they are or what they do.
- ❖ • Acknowledge my feelings and maintain consistent consequences for my disobedience of clear limits you set.
- ❖ • Always relate consequences to my disobedience (e.g., if an hour late, set the next curfew time an hour earlier.)
- ❖ • When I make mistakes, disobey, or lose my temper when you set limits, know that this is normal. Do not give up. Reassure me that you still care and will not give up on me.
- ❖ • Give me another chance. I want your love and approval and I will keep trying.
- ❖ Reassure me that you are still proud of me.
- ❖ • Give me a vision for who I can become. Give me a reason why I should make healthy positive choices.
- ❖ • Maintain communication and physical affection.

Adapted from the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Training Program

# Transfer of Learning

What are two things you have learned that you can apply immediately to your practice?

a

b

What are three things you will share with your supervisor?

a

b

c

What resources/handouts will you share with co-workers when applicable?



Adapted from the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Training Program