



Institute for
Research on
Poverty

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON



CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT
Prevention Board



Increasing Engagement of Fathers in Services Through Father-Specific Programming

December 2nd, 2020

Webinar begins at 2pm EST/1pm CST/12pm MST/11am PST

Outline of Presentation

- Benefits of father involvement
- What is father-specific programming?
- Insights from
 - Milwaukee Fatherhood Initiative
 - African American Breastfeeding Network
 - Dads Matter
- Take-aways for successful father-specific programming
- Questions and discussion



Who are fathers?

- Biological
- Stepfather
- Father figure

...in families ranging from married to cohabiting, single parent, and re-combined.



Notions of the role of a father are diverse, and may be influenced by cultural and demographic factors.

Benefits of father involvement



Benefits of father involvement

Positive father involvement is associated with positive social, emotional, and cognitive outcomes for children from infancy to adolescence, and into adulthood.



Amato, 1994; Deutsch, Servis, & Payne, 2001; Flouri & Buchanan, 2003; McBride, Schoppe-Sullivan, & Ho, 2005; Mosley & Thomson, 1995; Parke et al., 2002; Sarkadi, Kristiansson, Oberklaid, & Bremberg, 2007; Volling & Belsky, 1992; Yeung, Duncan, & Hill, 2000

Benefits of father involvement in family services

Father involvement in programming – including permanency planning and parenting training, Head Start and schools – is associated with improved child outcomes.



Coakley, 2008; Fagan & Iglesias, 1999; Lindahl, Tollefson, Risser, & Lovejoy, 2008;
Nord, Brinhall, & West, 1997

What is father-specific programming?



Father-specific programming

Father-inclusive practice aims to actively encourage father participation and ensure that services are responsive and accessible to fathers as well as mothers and children.

Father-specific programming is designed specifically for fathers, with the needs and interests of fathers guiding service delivery.



Overcoming barriers

Beliefs that act as barriers

- Father participation is not important, extra / optional
- Father-child relationship is secondary
- Fathers' capacity to be caregivers is limited
- Fathers as risk factors

Additional barriers

- Provider discomfort or uncertainty engaging fathers
- Competing responsibilities for fathers, particularly work related
- Tension between parents
- COVID

Strategies for involving and engaging fathers

- Father-friendly environment
- Preparation and training
- Address practical barriers to engagement
- Reinforce fathers' contributions
- Learn about and respond to fathers' needs and interests
- Demonstrate awareness of differences between involvement of residential and nonresidential fathers AND awareness that nonresidential fathers may be highly involved

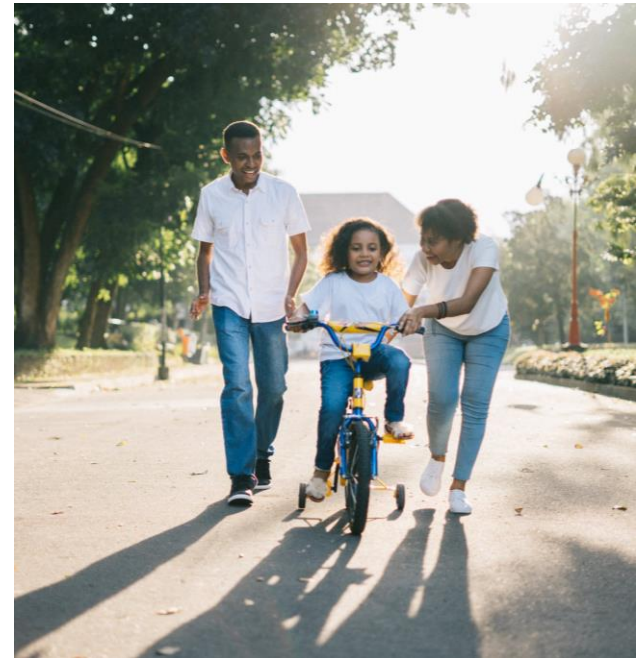


Milwaukee Fatherhood Initiative



Milwaukee Fatherhood Initiative

MFI is a collaborative effort between the City of Milwaukee Mayor, Housing Authority, and numerous partner organizations assisting fathers in helping their children to thrive.



The core belief is that positive father involvement strengthens children, families and communities.

Milwaukee Fatherhood Initiative promotes...

➤ Responsible Parenting

➤ Economic Stability



via father specific group and individual education,
fatherhood gatherings, and individual case management

The MFI is a hub in a partnership designed to facilitate fathers' seamless access to a wealth of supportive services.

- Child support services
- Offender reentry services
- Workforce development /
employment consultation
- Permanent supportive housing
- Energy assistance
- Behavioral Health services
- Child Development Screening



Some of these services are delivered at the same facility to allow for close coordination among agencies serving mutual clients

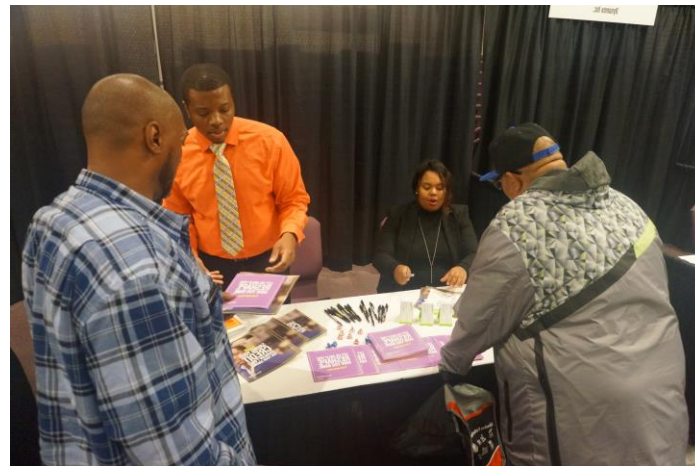
Education provided by facilitators in “Nurturing Fathers,”
24/7 DAD, and other curricula:

- Character development
- Relationship education
- Teen Pregnancy Prevention
- Immunization schedules
- Breastfeeding support
- Referrals for home visiting programs
- Referral for substance abuse



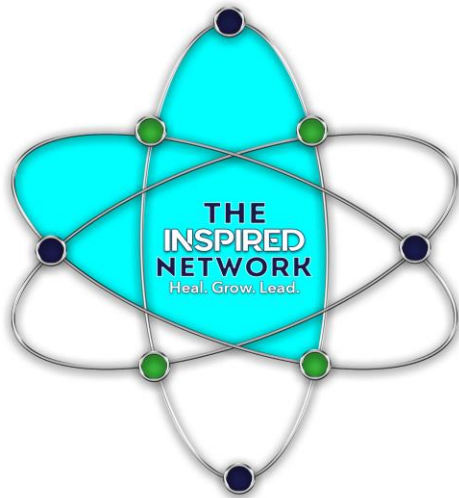
Milwaukee Annual Fatherhood Summit

Milwaukee Fatherhood Initiative and partners host a large two day gathering in October typically connecting over 1,000 men to education, job training, employment, health, child support, driver's license recovery, expungement and other resources.



Father 2 Father, African American Breastfeeding Network





**African American
Breastfeeding Network Inc.**

Advancing spiritual development to
combat the effects of trauma, abuse
and neglect

in young people of color.

We inspire young leaders to achieve
unlimited success in their potential
by:

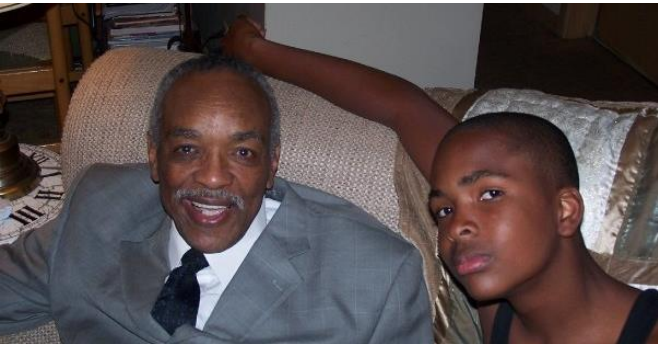
HEALING from their PAST,

GROWING into their POTENTIAL,

in order to

LEAD with **LOVE!**





HEAL

- Suicide was the 2nd leading cause of death for Youth in Wisconsin and 3rd in the country.
- **58%** of Wisconsin adults reported growing up experiencing at least one ACE, while **25%** reported having 4 or more ACE's.
- Reduce the *intergenerational* spread of negative influences on physical health, mental health, achievement, and overall well-being.

Sources: SAMHSA; Wisconsin DPI;SWWR

FATHER2FATHER
EMPOWERMENT GROUP

2nd Thursdays and
3rd Saturdays • 8PM

**THE ABC'S OF
BLACK FATHERHOOD**

Father2Father Empowerment Group brings together soon-to-be and veteran Black fathers for support, awareness and encouragement to be better leaders for their children, families and community. Sessions focus on positive parenting, and ways to support liquid-gold (breastfeeding).

Entry Into **BP Gas Card Raffle**
For Father's In Attendance

**BROOKS GRIFFIN, HOST
FATHER ADVOCATE, AABN INC.**

EMAIL BROOKS.GRIFFINAABN@GMAIL.COM TO RECEIVE ZOOM LINK



GROW

- Positive Parenting, Communication, Healthy Relationships
- Ways To Support Breastfeeding
- Overcoming Adversity

LEAD

R.E.A.L. Fatherhood



Rick Polk, OWN IT



Damon Manns, Owen's Place



Damian Smith, Safe & Sound

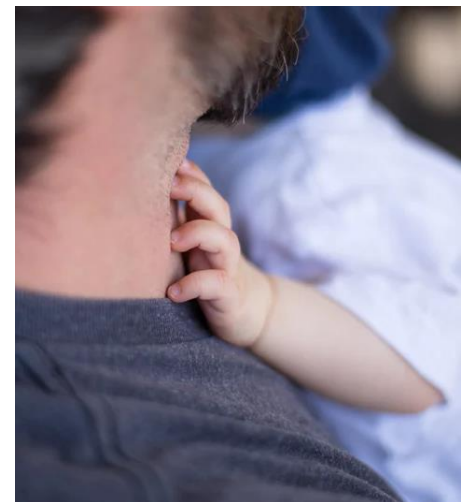
- Empathy, Inspiration & Professionalism
- MENTORING MATTER
- “Healing The Broken Man” 2021 Campaign

Engaging Fathers in Home Visiting Services- Dads Matter HV



FATHERS AS A “MISSING PIECE” IN HOME VISITATION

- Growth of home visitation
- Fathers and child maltreatment risk
- Fathers and related child outcomes
- Fathers shape the effectiveness of home visitation
- Few home visitors report engaging fathers in services

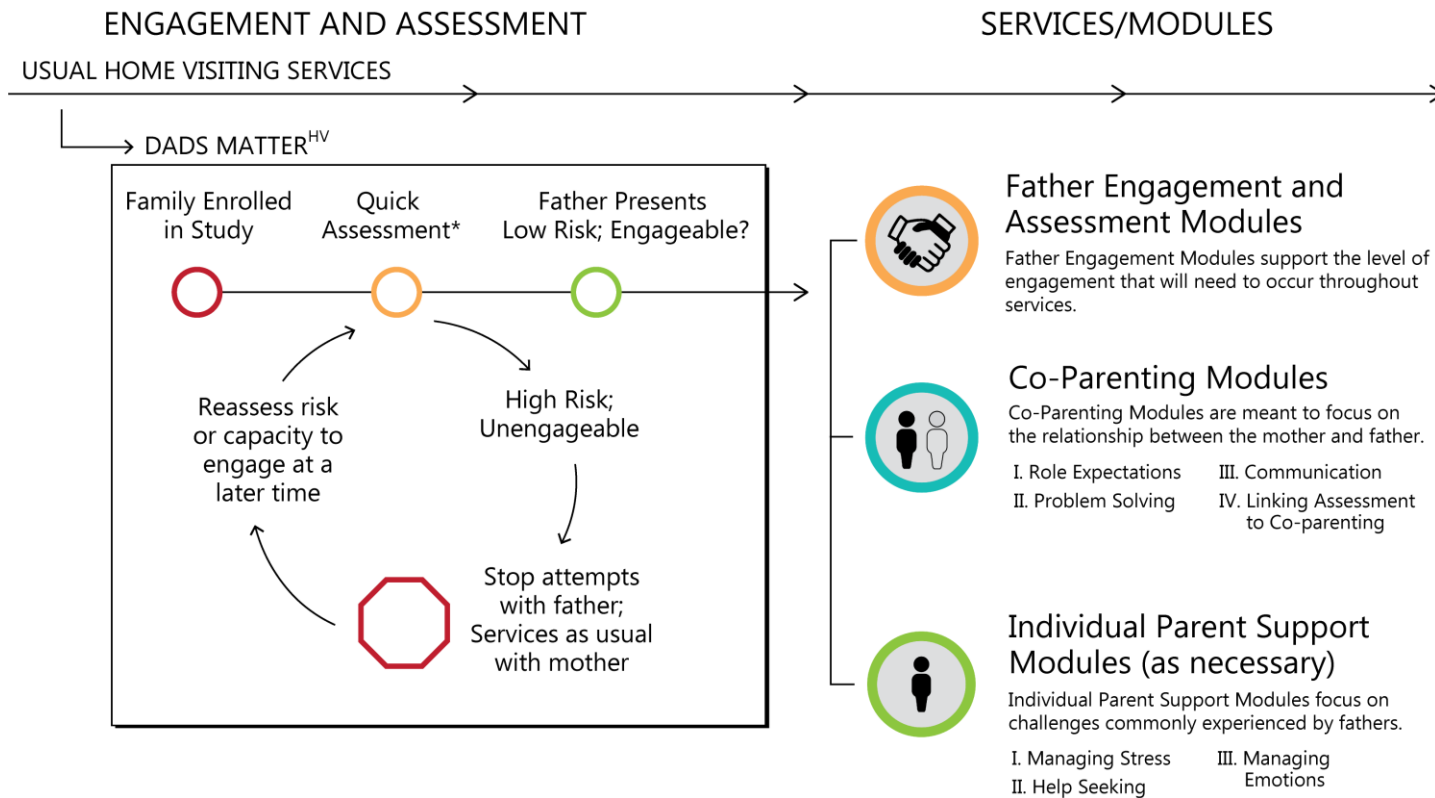


Surveys with Home Visitors

- Workers espouse generally positive attitudes and expectations about working with fathers, but say:
 - Lack of time
 - Perception that fathers do not want to participate
 - Lack of training
 - Worry that if they work with fathers, it will take away from their work with mothers

....Prevents them from engaging fathers.

The Dads Matter HV Model



FATHER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES-Control Group

- Incentives
- Leave him information
- Tell him he's needed/important
- Communicate through mom

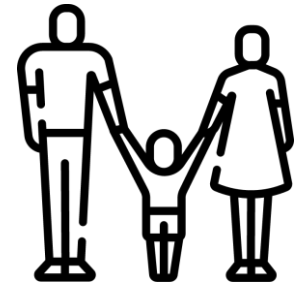


FATHER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES-Intervention Group

- Talk to him
- **Make eye contact**
- Leave things for him
- Communicate through Mom
- Specifically/explicitly invite him
- Tell him he's needed/important
- Referrals (jobs etc.)
- Using hands-on activities
- **Use technology**
- **Being there/consistent/building trust**
- Giving him information
- Providing opportunities to interact with other dads
- Explaining benefits of his involvement
- **Using "other" activities: holiday parties, family events, etc.**
- Respect/acknowledge his expertise
- Consider schedules

Dads Matter HV PRACTICE CHANGES

- More inclusion of fathers/paying attention to them in various aspects of services
 - Active encouragement of fathers and fathering
- Reflection on their own perceptions and beliefs about fathers
- More of a family approach
 - Talking to moms and dads about the importance of dad
- Getting over discomfort, uncertainty, hesitation
 - Increasing skills



Take-Aways

- Fathers can be engaged in home visiting services, but it takes:
 - Flexibility
 - Creativity
 - Persistence
- Home visitors will state that they generally value fathers, but they need consistent support and encouragement to identify and address barriers
 - Practice
 - Training on specific strategies
 - Cueing/asking
 - Supervision/leadership

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND THANK YOU

The Dads Matter HV Team:

- *Neil Guterman, PhD, Dean, New York University*
- *Aaron Banman, PhD, Assistant Professor, University of Nebraska, Omaha*
- *Justin Harty, MSW, LCSW, Doctoral Candidate, University of Chicago*



UNIVERSITY *of*
DENVER

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Takeaways for successful father-specific programming



Some takeaways...

- Know the fathers you're serving
- Reinforce fathers' contribution
- Reduce barriers to participation
- Connection with other fathers
- Parenting and co-parenting
- Coping with ongoing, chronic life stress
- Who does the outreach? Who provides services?
- Support and referrals to quality, culturally-sensitive community resources



Questions and Discussion



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Prevention Board



Thank You!



www.preventionboard.wi.gov

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Photo credit: Alameda County Father Corps' Fatherhood Photo Bank

<https://www.diversityoffatherhood.com/>