


**Institute for
Research on
Poverty**
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON



**CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT
Prevention Board**

Supporting the Inclusion of Fathers in Child and Family Services

March 24th, 2021



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

Research | Training | Policy | Practice

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Outline of Presentation

- Benefits of father involvement
- What is father-inclusive practice?
- Insights from
 - Darryl Davidson, Milwaukee Fatherhood Initiative
 - Nucha Isarowong, Barnard Center for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health, University of Washington
 - Kaleem Caire, One City Schools
- Take-aways for successful father-inclusive practice
- Questions and discussion



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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.

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Benefits of father involvement



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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

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Benefits of father involvement in child and 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

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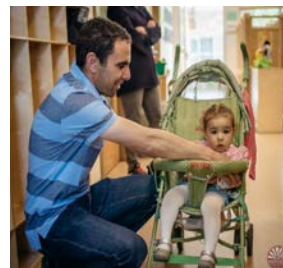
What is father-inclusive practice?



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Father-inclusive practice

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.



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Barriers to father engagement

- Beliefs that act as barriers
- Provider barriers
- Practical barriers
- Competing responsibilities
- Tension between parents



Ahmann, 2006; Garfield & Isacco, 2006; Harknett, Manno, & Balu, 2017;
 Moore & Kotelchuk, 2004; O'Donnell et al., 2005; Phares, Fields, & Binitie, 2006
 Yogman, Garfield, & AAP Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health, 2016

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FATHER-FRIENDLY PRINCIPLES
 For Agencies & Organizations Serving Families

- INCLUDE NEEDS OF FATHERS**
- Fathers, and the needs of fathers, are included in the structure and delivery model of all family services in agencies and organizations.
- PROVIDE FATHER-FRIENDLY SERVICES**
- Agencies and organizations are open, supportive, helpful and inclusive towards the needs of fathers and further the goal of increasing fathers' involvement in their children's lives.
- PORTRAY POSITIVE FATHER IMAGES**
- Materials, illustrations, posters, brochures and other collateral include positive, diverse images of fathers. Facilities provide father-friendly environments consistent with the needs of men and fathers.
- CREATE POSITIONS THAT SERVE FATHERS**
- Agencies and organizations create positions that serve fathers and actively recruit men to fill those positions in order to better address the needs of fathers.
- TRAIN STAFF ON FATHERHOOD ISSUES**
- Agencies and organizations working with families strive to provide training for all staff on working with men and on fatherhood issues.
- EXPECT FATHER PARTICIPATION**
- Agencies and organizations develop program policies with a clear expectation that fathers should and will participate.
- DESIGN PROGRAMS FOR FATHERS**
- Agencies and organizations make every effort to create the image that programs are designed for fathers as well as for mothers and children.

For more information go to www.FirstAlameda.org/Fathers-Corps

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Darryl Davidson
Milwaukee Fatherhood Initiative



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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.

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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

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Develop a Support Network that Empowers Fathers in Every Aspect of their Lives

- By identifying the places fathers need support, public health and social service providers can work to build a comprehensive network that strengthens fathers in every aspect of their lives
- Employment and education opportunities, father-focused community events, father-friendly workplace policies
- Have maternal and child health programs work to establish connection and build trusting relationships with fathers and show fathers that they are valued, needed, and respected

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Fathers need to co-lead these conversations. After all, fathers best understand what difficulties fathers face when navigating systems and can propose informed solutions.




“We [fathers] are part of our family and community structure; we aren’t add-ons.”

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Assess Your Work Environment

- Do you offer a “father-friendly” environment? Are there positive messages around your office that are reflective and reinforcing about fathers?
- Have you assessed the “attitude” of inclusion of fathers in your program? Are all staff aware that fathers are valued?
- Do you have training in place to support and empower father engagement?
- Is your program ready to engage fathers as partners in its work? Do you include fathers on advisory committees and in focus groups?
- Do you have policies in place to support father involvement, partnership and engagement?

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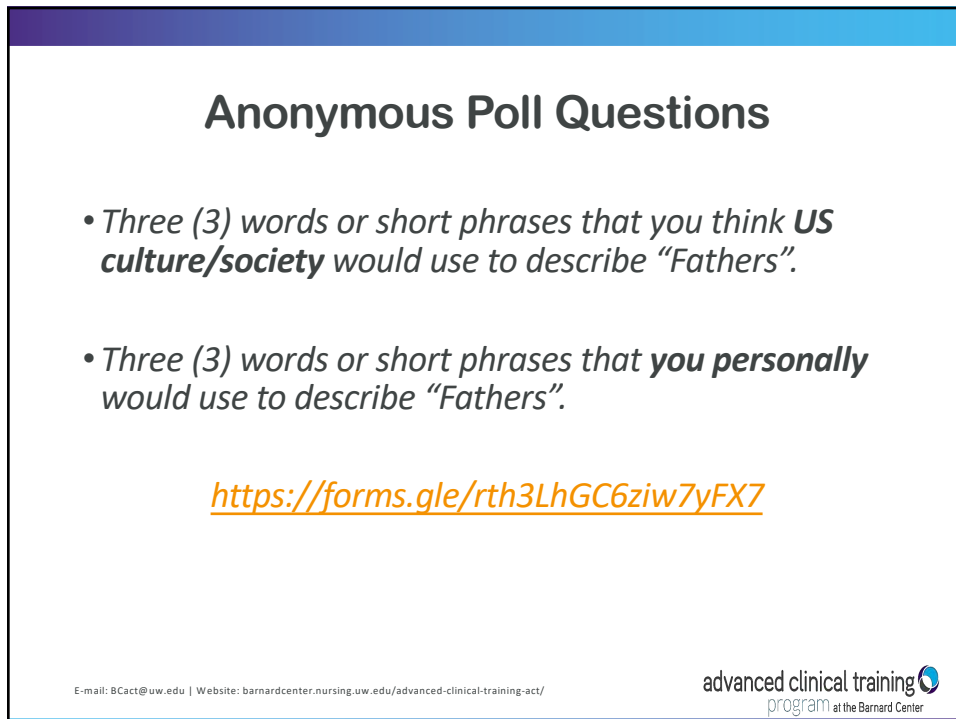
Supporting the Inclusion of Fathers in Child and Family Services

Nucha Isarowong, PhD, LCSW
University of Wisconsin-Madison Institute for Research on Poverty &
Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention Board Webinar Series
March 24, 2021

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Anonymous Poll Questions

- *Three (3) words or short phrases that you think **US culture/society** would use to describe “Fathers”.*
- *Three (3) words or short phrases that **you personally** would use to describe “Fathers”.*

<https://forms.gle/rth3LhGC6ziw7yFX7>

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Quick Illustration

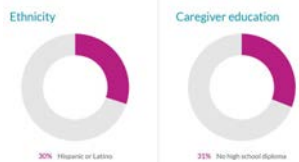
- National HeadStart Biennial Report 2015
 - Served 1,007,800 families in 2,935 programs
 - 234,000 children from ~2400 programs (82.9%) had fathers participate in organized, regularly scheduled activities designed to engaged with fathers
 - ~23% if we assume one father per child

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Home Visiting National Profile 2018



National Home Visiting Resource Center. (2019). *2019 Home Visiting Yearbook*. Arlington, VA: James Bell Associates and the Urban Institute.

<https://nhvrc.org/yearbook/2019-yearbook/>

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Workforce Development Hypotheses

Why were child-family services not engaging with fathers in services for and with their children?

- Home visitors did not know how to engage with fathers
- Home visitors not aware of the influence of fathering on children's development prenatally and beyond
- Social-cultural beliefs about the roles of men and fathers
 - Home visitors may have beliefs about and/or histories with men, fathers, and fathering that may get in the way
- Intersection of race, class, and fatherhood

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Perceptions of Fathers

- *Three (3) words that you think **US culture/society** would use to describe "Fathers".*
- *Three (3) words that **you personally** would use to describe "Fathers".*

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Barriers to Father Engagement

- *What obstacles have you experienced or can think of that deters or prevents fathers from engaging in services for and with their children?*

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Anyone or anything with the power to deter or prevent fathers from engaging in services for and with their children.

Gatekeeper

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Barriers to Father Engagement

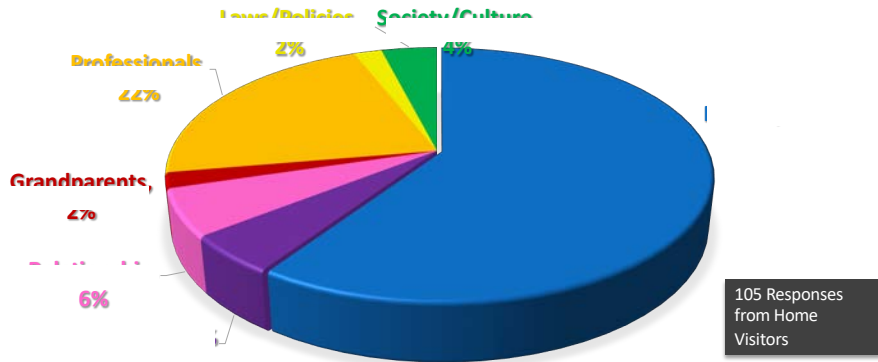
| | |
|-----------------------------|---------------|
| Society/Culture | Laws/Policies |
| Professionals/Organizations | |
| Grandparents | |
| Mothers | Fathers |
| Mother-Father Relationships | |

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Sources of Obstacles to Father Engagement



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Lessons Learned: Provider Level

- Complex concerns around parent/home visitor dynamics:
 - Female home visitors worried about perceived intimacy (from mothers)
 - Female home visitors experience fear/anxiety around engaging men
 - Male HV/father “intimidation”

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Lessons Learned: Institutional Level

- Agencies appear to be rigorously examining the risks related to hiring male home visitors
 - Concerns around male home visitors visiting mothers (liabilities)
 - Systems hold assumptions about fathers and father engagement
 - Systems hold assumptions around male home visitors

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Lessons Learned: Fathers

- Fathers are perceived as their own “gatekeepers”
 - Self identify as lazy, uninterested, uncaring, etc.
 - Personal history with their own fathers
 - Beliefs about roles
 - Beliefs about services
 - Fathers choose work
 - Incarceration
 - Substance use or abuse

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Lessons Learned

- Deeply-rooted stereotypes and biases around fathers, fatherhood, and father engagement exist in and across all communities
- Professionals want to engage more fathers, but perceive tremendous barriers
- Engaging fathers is important but not yet **essential**
 - Especially when including fathers in services

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DIVERSITY-INFORMED TENETS FOR WORK WITH INFANTS, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

1. Self-Awareness Leads to Better Services for Families
2. Champion Children's Rights Globally
3. Work to Acknowledge Privilege and Combat Discrimination
4. Recognize and Respect Non-Dominant Bodies of Knowledge
5. Honor Diverse Family Structures
6. Understand That Language Can Hurt or Heal
7. Support Families in Their Preferred Language
8. Allocate Resources to Systems Change
9. Make Space and Open Pathways
10. Advance Policy That Supports All Families

From: <https://diversityinformedtenets.org/>

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Thank you!

Nucha Isarowong, PhD, LCSW
Barnard Center for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

<https://barnardcenter.nursing.uw.edu/>

nucha@uw.edu

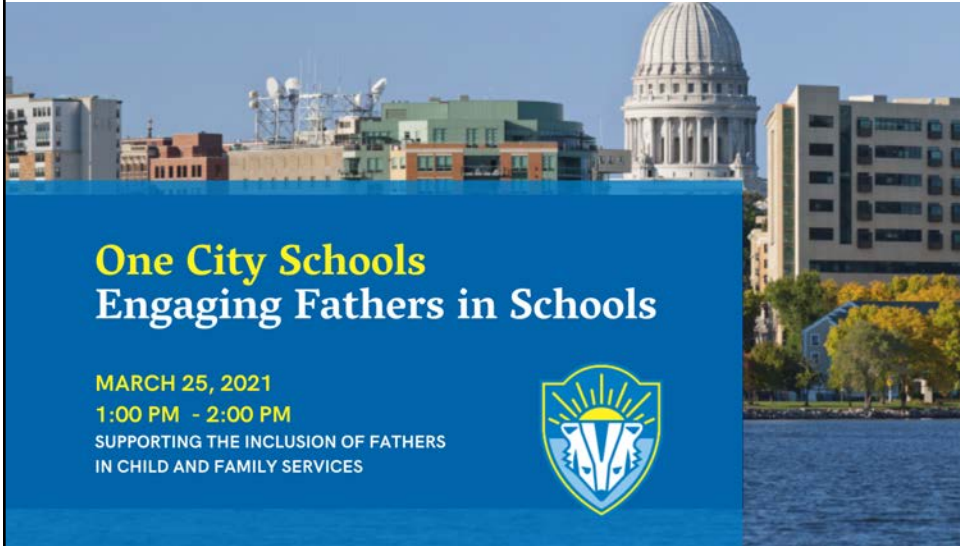
Diversity-Informed Tenets for Work with Infants, Children & Families

<http://diversityinformedtenets.org>

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One City Schools
Engaging Fathers in Schools

MARCH 25, 2021
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM
SUPPORTING THE INCLUSION OF FATHERS
IN CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES



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OBJECTIVES

1. Background on One City Schools
2. Impact of Fatherlessness on Families
3. How we Engage Fathers at One City Schools
4. Strategies for Engaging Fathers in their Children's Education and Schools
5. Q&A




CHILDREN'S PHOTOS BY HEDI RUDD PHOTOGRAPHY

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About One City



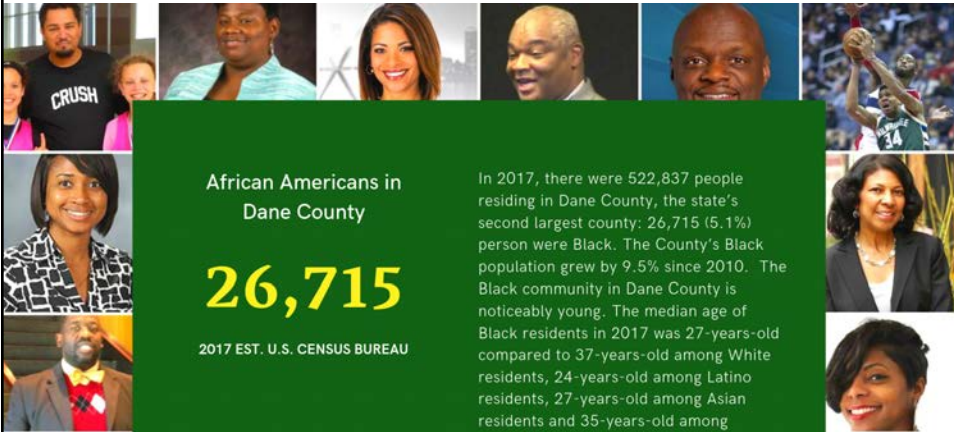
Kaleem Caire
Founder & CEO

A Brief Background

One City Schools is a Madison, Wisconsin-based nonprofit developer and operator of high-quality educational opportunities for children. Founded in July 2014, its mission is to seed a new model of public education that effectively prepares young children for success in school and life from birth through high school graduation. One City currently operates two schools: One City Preschool and One City Expeditionary Elementary School.

CHILDREN'S PHOTOS BY HEDI RUDD PHOTOGRAPHY

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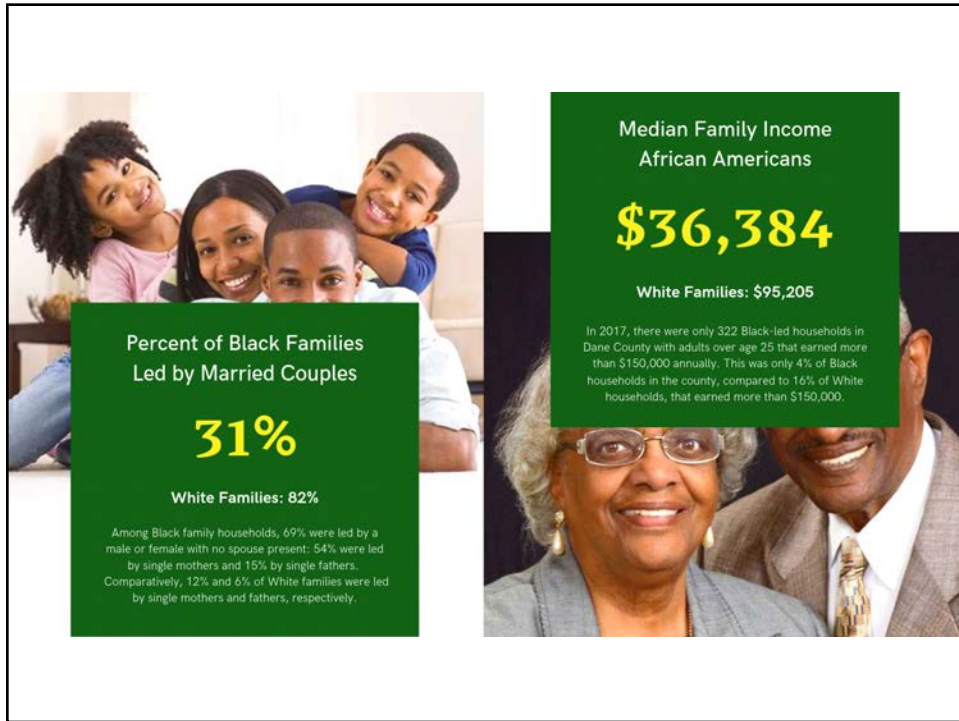
African Americans in Dane County

26,715

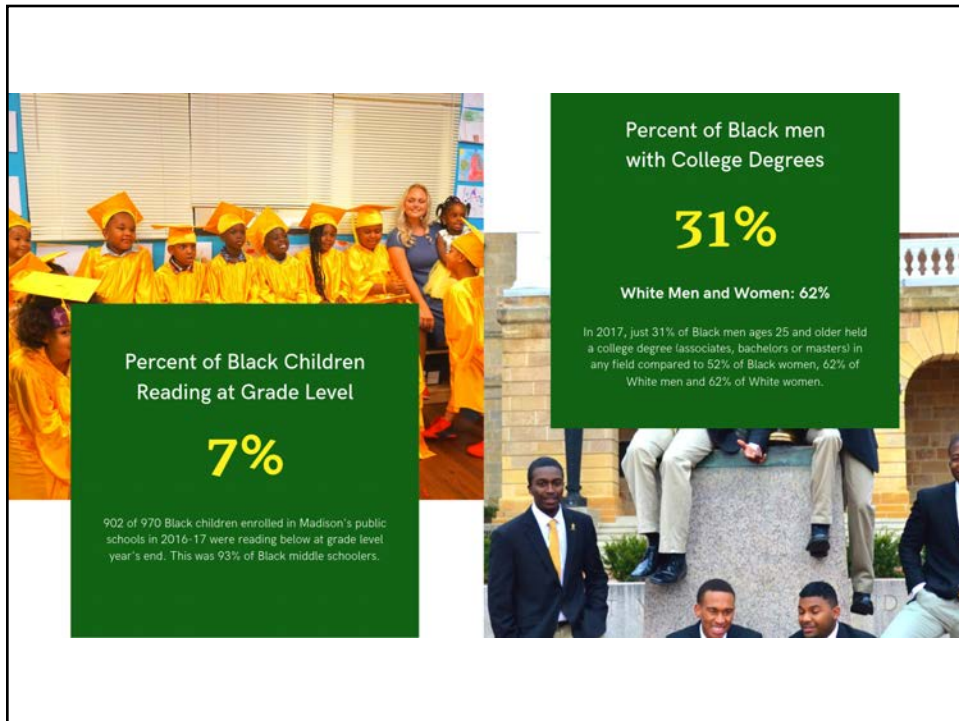
2017 EST. U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

In 2017, there were 522,837 people residing in Dane County, the state's second largest county: 26,715 (5.1%) person were Black. The County's Black population grew by 9.5% since 2010. The Black community in Dane County is noticeably young. The median age of Black residents in 2017 was 27-years-old compared to 37-years-old among White residents, 24-years-old among Latino residents, 27-years-old among Asian residents and 35-years-old among American Indian residents.

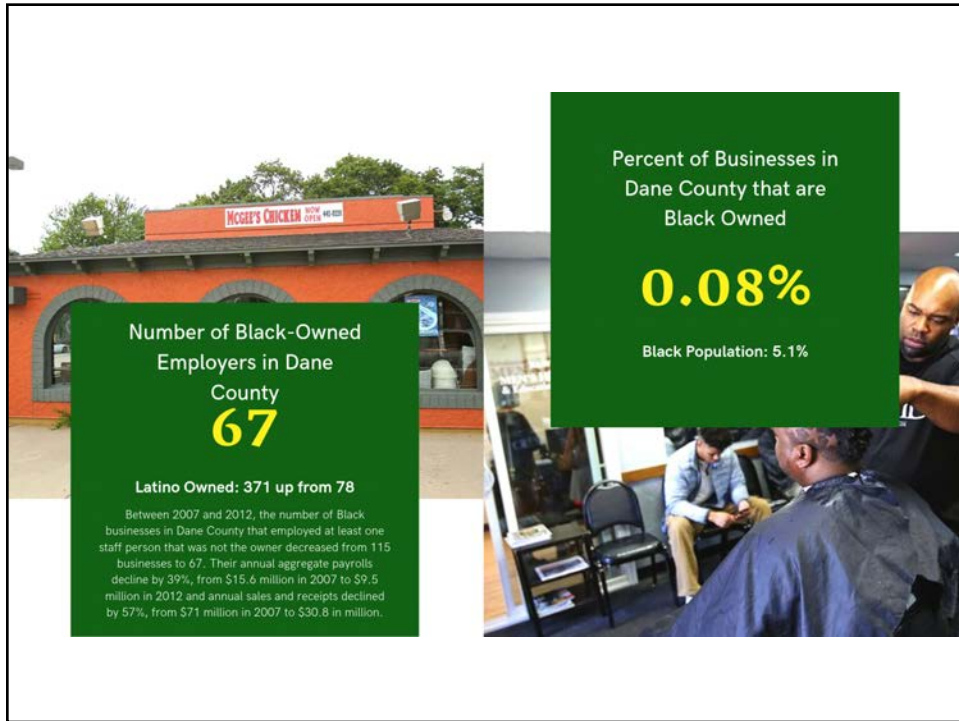
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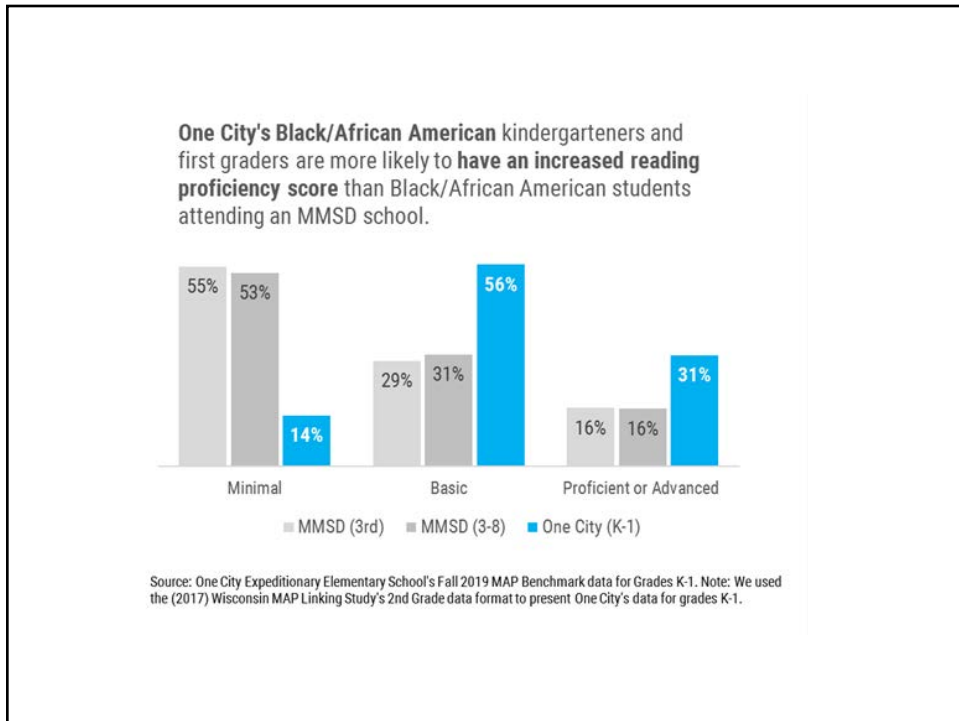
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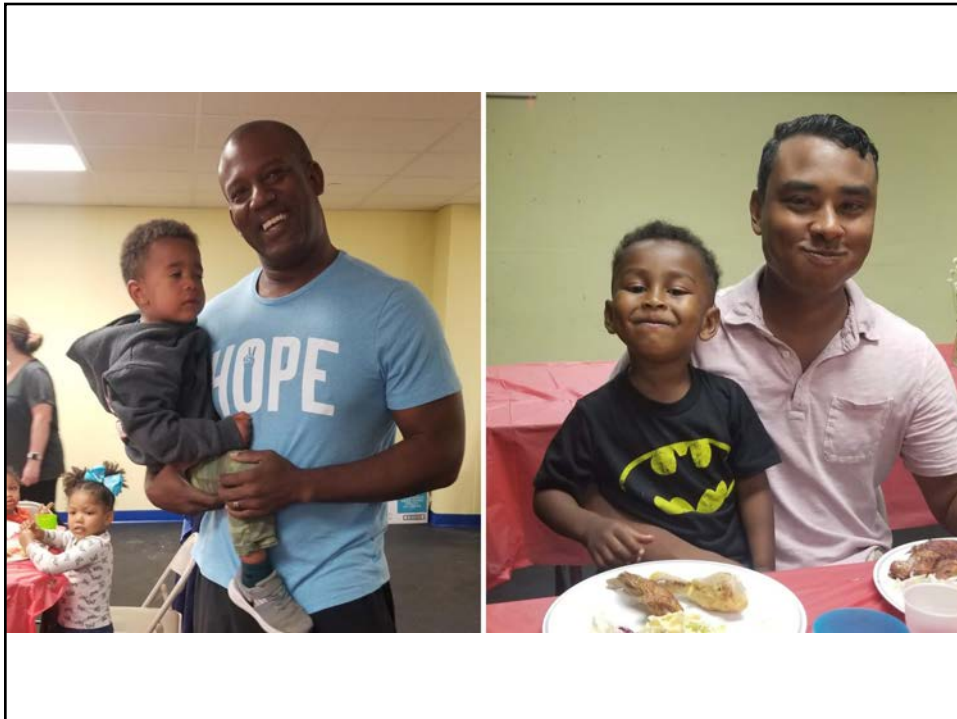
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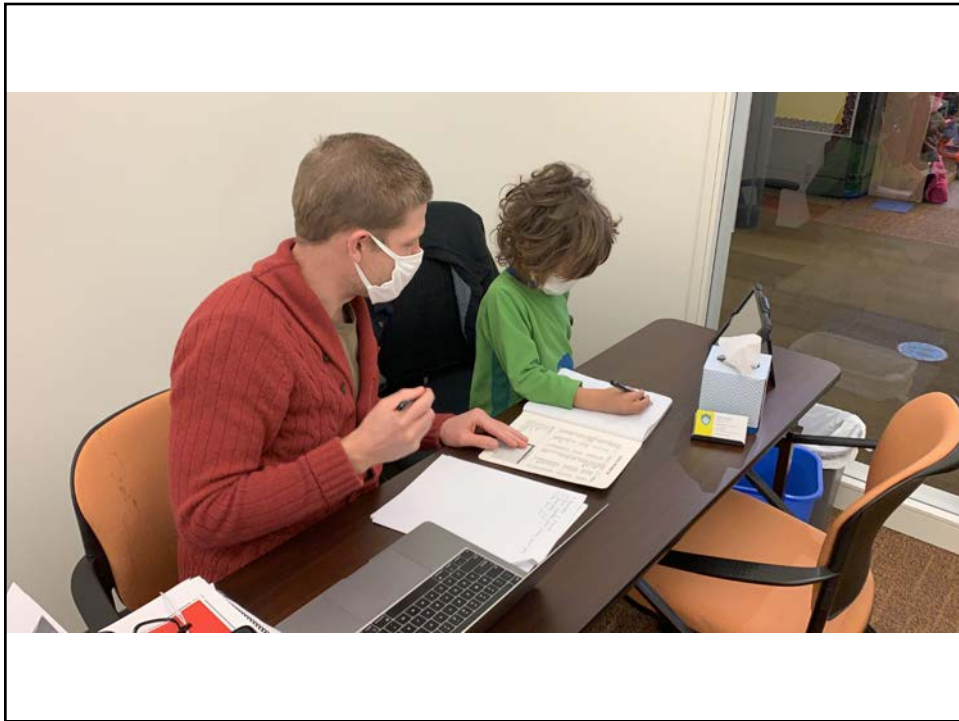
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Takeaways for successful father-inclusive practice



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Some takeaways for supporting inclusion of fathers

- Create a father-friendly environment
- Communicate welcome and respect
- Reinforce fathers' contribution
- Reduce barriers to participation
- Recognize the diversity of fathers & get to know the fathers you serve
- Consider fathers in designing and delivering programming
- Staff preparation and training



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Questions and Discussion



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Thank You!



www.preventionboard.wi.gov

Contact the presenters:

Tova Walsh
tbwalsh@wisc.edu

Darryl Davidson
DADAVID@milwaukee.gov

Nucha Isarowong
nucha@uw.edu

Kaleem Caire
kcaire@onecityschools.org

Photo credit: Alameda County Father Corps' Fatherhood Photo Bank
<https://www.diversityoffatherhood.com/>

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