FATHERS!
THE MISSING LINK IN SYSTEMS OF CARE

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The Importance of Fathers

Building Next Generation Men
Father absence is considered by many to be the major social problem in our society today.

24 million children, 1 out of 3, live without their biological father in the home.
Children growing up **without fathers** face greater risks and account for:

- **90%** of Homeless & Runaway Youth
- **71%** of High School Dropouts
- **63%** of Youth Suicides

American Institutes for Research | www.air.org
Just the Facts

1 in 4 children live in a home without a dad.

Just the Facts

Children living in female-headed homes with no spouse present have a poverty rate of 47.6% - over four times the rate for children living in married couple families.

Just the Facts

Children raised in a father-absent home are more likely to experience behavioral problems.

Just the Facts

Individuals from father absent homes are 279% more likely to carry guns and deal drugs than peers living with their fathers.

Just the Facts

Adolescent boys with absent fathers are more likely to engage in delinquency than those with fathers who are present.

Just the Facts

92%
of parents
in prison
are fathers.

Just the Facts

Daughters are less likely to engage in risky sexual behavior when they have consistent contact, and a sense of closeness, with their dads.

“When it comes to daughters, taking the time to listen to them, learn about their lives, show up for important events, and provide emotional support, could protect against early and unrestricted sexual behavior”
Emotional Wellness

• While almost any man can father a child, there is so much more to the important role of being dad in a child's life.

• Fathers are central to the emotional well-being of their children.
The Effects of FatherFULLness

• When fathers are involved, their children learn more, perform better in school and exhibit healthier behavior.

• Even when fathers do not share a home with their children, their active involvement can have a lasting and positive impact.

• The Education Department is working for fuller recognition and inclusion of fathers in all of their programs because of the huge impact fathers can have on their kids.
Engaged fathers can be described as those who behave warmly and interact meaningfully with their kids.

They’re the sort of dads who help with homework and attend important events, seldom insulting their children or behaving coldly.

Fatherhood requires love not DNA
"Nothing in life compares" to being Sasha and Malia's father, he said. "You don't need a fancy degree for that. You don't need a lot of money for that."
The Most Valued Investment A Father Makes Isn't Financial At All. It’s The Deposit Of Time, Attention, And Touch Early On In A Child's Life.
This We Know!

Children with involved and engaged fathers tend to have more positive outcomes relative to physical, cognitive, and social emotional health.
Dads who live with their kids and take time out of their days to attend important events are far more likely to have a positive impact than absent fathers.
Find Ways to Connect

For dads who live apart from their kids, there are limited options for engaging fatherly interactions.

“Writing letters, phone calls — even if you’re not in physical proximity, knowing your dad cares and wants to be involved to the extent that they can is really important,”
Most studies suggest that, until children hit puberty, the **Father Effect** is roughly equal for boys and girls.

Both boys and girls who are **fortunate enough** to have dads in their lives **excel** and, in some cases, **outperform** their peers.
Some Super Hero's Don't Have Capes.

They Are Called Dad.
To support and partner with families rearing children who have emotional and mental health needs in order to improve their quality of life.
As family members we have negotiated the human service systems on a personal level. This experience allows us to offer a wealth of information and support to the families engaged in AFN programs and activities.
Things We Must Change
Why is a strategic framework for men in their roles as fathers required?

• Engaging men as fathers both in working towards providing safety for children and service provision can be difficult, particularly for those men who contend with issues of identity, social and economic inclusion.

• Being able to better support men at all stages of the family life cycle will lead to greater opportunities for children and families.
Six Key Factors for a Strategic Framework

1. **Organizations that operate from a child-centered and family inclusive philosophy.** Focusing on **improving the engagement** of men in service provision could lead to **better outcomes** for children and **greater entry points** into their lives.

2. **Men as fathers represent a significant customer base of the organization and funded non government services.** An **improved awareness** of the needs and expectations of fathers, particularly in relation to best providing for the care, **protection and wellbeing** of their children, will facilitate more **responsive service provision**.

3. **Men as fathers are good for children and families.** Men in their role as fathers who are **positively involved** in their children’s lives **create greater opportunities and outcomes** for those children as well as benefiting their own **psychological and emotional wellbeing**.
4. The changing roles, expectations and aspirations of men as fathers.
   • Changes in the composition and structure of families require a commensurate change in the way organizations understands and supports families.

5. Changing policy, research and program development trends.
   • The development of the framework ensures that organizations remains progressive in its services and strategies.

6. Establishing male positive and father inclusive practices within a gender equity framework.
   • Valuing the unique and important contribution of fathers to family and community life underpins the framework.
   • Engaging fathers in a greater proportion of child care and domestic life promotes greater gender equity to mothers both within and outside the family.
Barriers

- Difficulty **identifying** and locating fathers
- **Gatekeeping** by mothers
- Lack of interest by fathers
- Lack of **paternity establishment**
- Lack of **resources** and **services** to refer fathers to
- Difficulty **knowing how** to get fathers more involved
- **System Biases** - Legal, Child welfare and Economics
- Lack of clear policy on **when** and **how** to involve dads
- **Stereotypes** about fathers
Types of Resistance

• **Arguing** – The client may dispute your accuracy, integrity and intelligence.

• **Interruption** – The client may interrupt the conversation in a defensive manner.

• **Denial** - The client may show and unwillingness to recognize problems, cooperate, accept responsibility or take advice.

• **Ignoring** – You will notice that the client is obviously, and sometimes defiantly, not paying attention to you.
Recommended Services

- Individual Coaching
- Job Training
- Financial Literacy
- Health and Wellness Workshops
- Parent-Child Enrichment Activities
- Legal Workshops and Consultations
- Employment Assistance
- Housing Assistance
Tips for Working with Fathers

Start where the father is not where you think he should be, or where stereotypes may lead you.

Be patient and willing to hang in there, as most fathers in the system will experience ups and downs throughout the process.

Ask explorative questions in a non-threatening manner.
More Tips

• Never be judgmental. Recognize your biases and manage them.

• Be respectful and understand cultural definitions of masculinity.

• Demonstrate genuine and ongoing caring.

• Do not make false promises.
When Working With Fathers

Assume that men can be reached, look for ways to meet specific needs and be prepared to follow-up.
Engaging & Recruiting

We’re looking for a few good men to step up and strengthen the chain
RESOURCES: Through Fathers Toolkit Binder

Peer to Peer Support
Employment Services
One-on-One Support
Legal Concerns
Housing & Education
Support Groups
Our degree of success has been based partly on our networking with agencies, programs, schools, churches, military, courts and other entities that have involvement with fathers. It’s important that you utilize every opportunity to network. Networking provides opportunities for us to form collaborations on projects such as:

- Father Daughter Dinner Dance
- Speakers Bureau
- Bring your Father to School Day
- Sports Event
- Picnics
How Do We Keep Dads Involved & Engaged

**Education and Participation**

Train 24/7 Dads and Nurturing Fathers – Emphasis every day fathering skills
Agents Of Transformation (AOT) – Empowerment and Advocacy
Nurturing Parenting – Emphasis on how to be nurturing

**Consulting Page**

Activities – Father & Child Tailgate Party, Baseball Game, Arena Football, the Circus, Harlem Globetrotters
Family Enrichment – Mental Health Expo, Live Laugh & Lifesavers,
Annual Cookout, Amusement Parks
Support Groups

Our agency offers 12 difference support groups around South Western PA. Of these groups five are specialized support groups for men.

Fathers Involved Now
AFN Central
Crafton Heights
Mercy Behavior Health
Natrona Heights
Allegheny County Jail
Stages to Engagement

Engagement

Planning

Implementation

Transition

Follow-up
Engagement 30 Day

- Initial Contact
- Relationship Building
- Utilize Personal Touch
- Caring Attitude
- Start Joint Planning
- Initiate Paperwork
Planning

30-60 Day

Fathers Support Plan (FSP)

Guide
Coach
Support
Cheer On
Implementation

60 Day +

Implement
Concrete Goals

Action Steps

Support
Transition Phase

Connect to Natural Setting

Document the Outcome
Did We Make a Difference?

Follow-Up 30/60/90
Providing The Missing Link

Fathers Involved Now
Rhode Island Fatherhood Initiative
Robert Reynolds, RI Fatherhood Initiative Coordinator

- Recovery from substance use and mental health
- Experience paying child support & working on healing relationship with daughter
- Experience with the criminal justice system including incarceration
- Experience with child welfare and reunification with his child
- Happily married living with wife and son
Rhode Island Fatherhood Leadership Team

- Parent Support Network of Rhode Island
- Father leaders
- Department of Children, Youth & Families
- Office of Child Support, Department of Human Services
- Department of Corrections
- Children Friends & Families, Responsible Fathering Program
- Family Care Community Partnership

Meets 4th Wednesday monthly at 9 AM

We are continuing to grow membership with strategic planning activities
Family Summer Fun: Social Events & Fatherhood Engagement
Adventureland, Water Wiz and Pawtucket Red Sox Game
October 2017 RI Fatherhood Summit

• Strong participation representing fathers, families and agency representation

• Inter-agency state partnership State Panel presentation including representation representing health, child welfare, child support, corrections, mental health, addictions, and family court.

• Introduction of strategic community action planning process and how state and community agencies, fathers, and communities can be involved.

• Fathers provided input on the need for the RI Fatherhood Initiative and the engagement of fathers statewide.
New England Fathering Conference 2018
Developing a Statewide Community Action Plan

• Community Needs Assessment Research Completed
• Held full-day Community Action Planning Training with key leadership partners
• Held 2 Focus Groups representing state and community partners across key sectors
• Early September will hold 2\textsuperscript{nd} RI Fatherhood Summit to review draft community action plan for additional input and final recommendations for implementation.
• Leadership Team review final Statewide Strategic Community Action Plan and begin formal implementation by September 30, 2018.