

The first group of FRPN funded projects will receive a total of \$350,000. All four projects involve randomized-controlled trials (RCTs); are led by researcher/practitioner teams; and involve the collection of data from program participants and/or staff at pre and post-program time points to assess changes in father-child relationships and co-parenting. The teams and their funded projects include:

**Enhancing social support among low-income fathers: A randomized-controlled trial (RCT) of *Circle of Parents***

The primary purpose of this study is to rigorously test the effect of a peer support network known as *Circle of Parents*, which will be delivered to 200 fathers of young children receiving Head Start/Early Head Start services. This group will be compared to a randomly generated group of identical fathers who have been waitlisted for services.

Change over time for both groups of fathers will be measured using standardized questionnaires, father interviews, and child developmental assessments. Although research has suggested specific strategies to recruit and retain fathers, we need to know much more about why fathers enter and leave parenting groups. Thus, the secondary aim of this study is to explore recruitment, engagement, and retention of young, low-income fathers.

This study is a research-practice partnership between the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's School of Social Work and the Wayne Action Group for Economic Solvency (WAGES) in Goldsboro, North Carolina. The principal investigator is Paul Lanier, PhD. The lead practitioner on this project is Patricia Beier, Director for Children and Families at WAGES.

**Developing All Dads for Manhood and Parenting**

The Center for Urban Families (CFUF), in collaboration with Bright Sarfo, Ph.D., as the lead researcher, will use a randomized control trial to test the efficacy of "Developing all Dads for Manhood and Parenting" (DAD MAP). The DAD MAP curriculum is grounded in behavioral theory and is culturally tailored to low-income, African American fathers. It includes interactive group exercises and activities designed to build parenting skills, improve interpersonal communication, increase knowledge of child support policy, enhance knowledge regarding the importance of fatherhood involvement and strengthen fatherhood self-efficacy.

The FRPN funded study aims to compare the DAD MAP curriculum condition to an unstructured support group condition using randomization to explore:

1. The extent to which DAD MAP curriculum participation is associated with improvements in co-parenting cooperation, parental involvement, financial contribution child wellbeing, and workforce participation;
2. The extent to which changes in parental behavior among fathers is associated with childhood wellbeing; and

**FRPN Co-Director** Jay Fagan, PhD | *Professor, Temple University School of Social Work*  
Ritter Hall Annex, 5th Floor | Philadelphia, PA 19122 | (215) 204-1288 | [jfagan@temple.edu](mailto:jfagan@temple.edu)

**FRPN Co-Director** Jessica Pearson, PhD | *Director, Center for Policy Research*  
1570 Emerson Street | Denver, CO 80218 | (303) 837-1555 | [jspearson@centerforpolicyresearch.org](mailto:jspearson@centerforpolicyresearch.org)

**FRPN Coordinator** Rebecca Kaufman, MSW | *Temple University*  
Ritter Hall Annex, 6th Floor | Philadelphia, PA 19122 | (215) 204-5706 | [rebecca.kaufman@temple.edu](mailto:rebecca.kaufman@temple.edu)

3. How individual participant characteristics (employment status, criminal background, cohabitation with custodial parent, and custodial status) impact DAD MAP curriculum effects on fatherhood behavior and childhood wellbeing.

The principal investigator is Bright Sarfo, Ph.D., and the lead practitioner on this project is Vernon Wallace, responsible fatherhood manager for the CFUF.

### **The Home Visiting for Fathers Study**

The “Home Visiting for Fathers Study” will be conducted by Jennifer Bellamy, Ph.D., using data from a multi-site RCT of an enhancement to home visiting services called Dads Matter. Dads Matter is a modular intervention designed to be layered into any home visiting program model using a co-parenting approach. The study will be conducted within five Chicago-based home visiting programs.

This FRPN funded study aims to tease apart how key factors may boost or dampen efforts to better serve fathers through home visiting. These factors include employees’ attitudes about working with fathers, employee’ experience working with both mothers and fathers in home visiting settings, the content of the home visiting intervention itself, and the attitudes of mothers and fathers about fathers’ participation in home visiting. Study outcomes include mothers’ and fathers’ engagement in the intervention, the quality of the mother-father relationship, child wellbeing, the quality of father-child interactions, and the quality of the implementation of Dads Matter.

The principle purpose of the study is to clarify intervention mechanisms and moderators in order to inform training and support for home visiting programs seeking to serve fathers and build a conceptual model of father engagement in home visiting. Some of the key research questions include:

1. What is the effect of Dads Matter training on employees’, fathers’, and mothers’ expectations and attitudes about including fathers in home visiting?
2. Do employees’, fathers’, and mothers’ attitudes and expectations impact the quality of the implementation of Dads Matter?
3. How does training in Dads Matter interact with employees’ experiences applying the intervention in the field to produce intervention outcomes?

The principal investigator is Jennifer Bellamy, Ph.D., and the lead practitioners are Doug Brown and Eren Morales of Metropolitan Family Services of Chicago, Illinois.

### **The Ridge Project**

A primary aim of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of a fatherhood program operated by the Ridge Project, Inc. The study includes a two-group RCT with 400 low-income fathers drawn from 11 research sites in nine Ohio cities (Canton, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Findlay, Lima, McClure, Toledo, and Wooster). The average poverty rate of these locations is higher than those of the State of Ohio and the U.S.

The study's experimental group will attend a 20-hour program over a five-week period. Intervention effects will be assessed at three time points:

1. Time 1 (baseline);
2. Time 2 (immediately after the completion of the program); and
3. Time 3 (3 months after the Time 2 assessment) in comparison to the control group, which will not participate in the program.

It has been hypothesized that, relative to the control group, the experimental group within this study will report greater improvement over time in the quality of father-child relationship (primary outcome). The quality of father-child relationships is expected to be mediated by the quantity of father-child relationship, father identity, and the father-mother co-parenting relationship.

This study is a collaborative effort between the Baylor Institute for Studies of Religion and the Ridge Project, Inc. The principal investigator is Young-Il Kim, Ph.D. and co-investigators are Sung Joon Jang, Ph.D. and Byron R. Johnson, Ph.D. The lead practitioner on this project is Brenda Oyer, Ed.D., Research and Data Manager of the Ridge Project, Inc