

# Executive Summary: Participation Dosage in *Key to Kāne*: A Pilot Text-Messaging Intervention for Fathers

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Unlike in previous generations, fathers today want to be more actively engaged in their children's lives, but their involvement may be constrained by myriad factors. Given the extensive evidence that involved fatherhood benefits children, fatherhood interventions have been designed to encourage men to take a positive and active role in their children's lives and help increase quantity and quality of involvement.

*Key to Kāne* is a pilot, technology-assisted, text-messaging intervention for fathers of children aged 0 to 12, delivered in Hawai'i that focuses on three topics having the potential of supporting father involvement: information about normative child development, concrete and simple ideas for fathers on ways to become engaged with their children, and encouragement of men in their role as *Nā Mākua Kāne* (fathers).

Using data collected from the 120 participants in this intervention, analyses assessed both the determinants of the extent to which fathers read text messages (i.e., reading dosage) and whether different reading dosages differentially affect intervention outcomes. A few key findings emerged from the present study:

- Reading dosage is bimodal: many fathers do not read any messages, while many others read most or all messages.

- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander fathers are more likely than non-Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander fathers to be in the no-dosage group; fathers with more children are more likely than fathers with a smaller number of children to be in the no-dosage group; and fathers who experience no economic, behavioral, or legal challenges are more likely than men who experience these personal challenges to be in the high-dosage group.
- Quantitative analysis suggests that higher reading dosage does not encourage fathers' engagement with their children. However, initial analysis of qualitative data obtained through focus groups suggests that intervention participants perceived positive changes in their involvement with their children.

Contrary to previous research findings, the quantitative findings presented here do not provide evidence that higher participation dosage encourages fathers' engagement with their children. This may be explained by limitations of our study:

- It is possible that we had a "ceiling effect" from recruiting mostly low-risk participants, as we would expect stronger effects with high-risk participants. Similarly, fathers with individual needs not covered in our text messages may not have benefited from the intervention, even if they had faithfully read texts and registered a high reading dosage. As such, we have two recommendations: recruitment efforts should continue targeting the vulnerable fathers who are less engaged with their children, and new curricula should be developed considering the importance of tailored approaches.
- Initial qualitative analysis indicates that fathers would like to meet other fathers, either face-to-face or through an online forum. We recommend that the effectiveness of *Key to Kāne* as an enhancement to an interactive intervention be evaluated. We also recommend continuing to collect qualitative data, as these data are essential for determining the kind of help fathers want, and for determining the mechanisms by which such interventions are most effective.

