



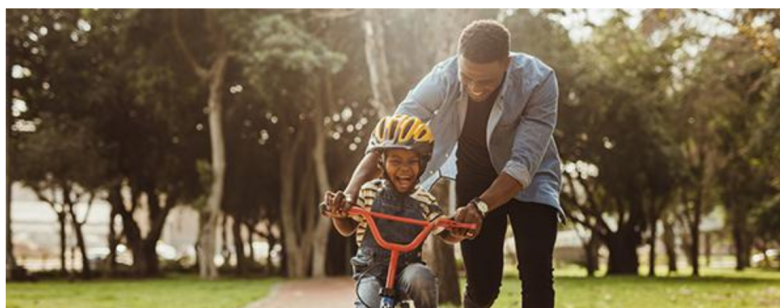
Fatherhood
Research
& Practice
Network

The Blueprint

News from the Fatherhood
Research & Practice Network

Federal Rule on Employment Services for Noncustodial Parents Proposed for Rescission

The Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) is proposing to rescind a [2024 final rule](#) that allowed state and tribal child support agencies to use federal IV-D funds for employment and training services for noncustodial parents (NCPs). The rule was intended to improve NCPs' economic stability and, in turn, the regularity of child support payments. OCSE is now proposing to rescind it, citing insufficient evidence that the approach reliably improved employment outcomes or child support payment regularity, projected federal costs reaching \$98.5 million annually by FY2034, and overlap with existing federal workforce programs. The comment period is open through August 10, 2026. Comments can be submitted at [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) using docket number ACF-2026-0100.



Legislative Support for Parenting Time in the Child Support Program

Two recent developments signal growing momentum around incorporating parenting time into the federal child support program — a change that would help unmarried parents who, unlike married parents who divorce, currently have no systemic process for addressing parenting time through the child support program. In response to the January 21 [House Ways and Means Subcommittee Hearing on Strengthening the Child Support Enforcement Program](#), the National Parents Organization (NPO) submitted a statement for the record recommending that federal financial participation be extended to cover parenting time orders established in conjunction with child support orders. The National Child Support Engagement Association (NCSEA) has been [working with congressional staff to refine a draft bipartisan bill](#) — the PARENTS Act — to do the same. Importantly, this bill includes language specifically designed to screen for domestic violence during the development of any parenting time agreement. Among other issues, both NPO, in this statement for the record, and NCSEA, in their [legislative proposal](#), also recommend increasing funding for the national Access and Visitation grant program from its 1996 level of \$10 million per year.

Dads Are Taking More Parental Leave Than the

Headlines Suggest

In last month's newsletter, we highlighted a [Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis working paper](#) stating that 95% of fathers take zero weeks of parental leave. A new [analysis from the American Institute for Boys and Men](#) — and a new [report from Paid Leave for All](#) paired with a [National Collaborative for Infants & Toddlers \(NCIT\) webinar](#) — offers a more nuanced picture, particularly for low-income NCPs who are some of the most likely to depend on state paid family leave programs. In states with public paid family leave programs specifically:

- Fathers take roughly twice as much leave as those without.
- In Washington State, fathers took an average of 8.1 weeks of leave (nearly equal to mothers' 8.3 weeks), just spread over more calendar weeks.
- In nearly all state paid family and medical leave programs, bonding leave claims from men are approaching or matching those from women. California — the oldest state program — reached equal uptake for the first time in its 20-year history in FY2024-2025, with claims from men growing 470% since launch.

When state programs are in place and fathers know about them, they use them. Program outreach and design matter enormously for the population this field serves.

Upcoming Webinar: All About *The 24:7 Dad: 12 Habits of Confident Fathers*

National Fatherhood Initiative® | July 21, 2026 | 2:00–2:45 PM ET | [Register here](#)

NFI President Chris Brown will walk practitioners through how to use his newly released book, [The 24:7 Dad: 12 Habits of Confident Fathers](#), to help the fathers they serve become more confident, engaged, and intentional. A practical session for organizations looking to add a skill-building tool to their work with dads.

SFRI Launches Inaugural Dissertation Prize

Recently completed your PhD with a focus on family strengthening, economics, and/or family policy? The [Strengthening Families Research Initiative \(SFRI\)](#) at the University of Notre Dame is accepting applications for its [inaugural Dissertation Prize](#), recognizing outstanding PhD research related to the economics of families and family policy. The competition is open to scholars from any discipline whose dissertations were approved between January 1, 2025, and June 30, 2026.

Contact Us to Learn More

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