



Fatherhood
Research
& Practice
Network

www.frpn.org

State Policies and Practices to Promote Father Involvement

April 18, 2019



Who is FRPN?



Jay Fagan, Ph.D.
Temple University
FRPN Co-Director



Jessica Pearson, Ph.D.
Center for Policy Research
FRPN Co-Director



Overview of FRPN

- Six-year, \$4.8 million cooperative agreement to Temple U & CPR
- Funding by U.S. DHHS, ACF, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, 2013-2019
- Targets fatherhood researchers & programs serving low-income fathers



Fatherhood Research And Practice Network

#1

Promote
Rigorous
Evaluation

#2

Build
Evaluation
Capacity

#3

Disseminate
Information





FRPN State Planning Mini Grants

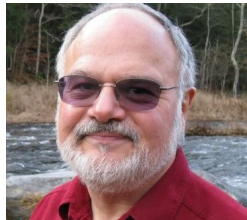
CO	Families First Colorado
CT	State of Connecticut, Department of Social Services
KY	Lexington Leadership Foundation
MI	University of Michigan, School of Social Work
MN	Minnesota Fathers and Families Network
NC	North Carolina State University, School of Social Work
PA	The Strong Families Commission
RI	Parent Support Network of Rhode Island
SC	South Carolina Center for Fathers and Families
WA	Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, Economic Services Administration (ESA), Office of the Assistant Secretary
WY	Wyoming Children's Trust Fund



Presenters



**Frances Pardus-Abbadessa, Executive Deputy
Commissioner, HRA/Office of Child Support Services,
New York City, NY**



**Sasha Rasco, Associate Commissioner, Prevention and
Early Intervention (PEI) Division, Texas Department of
Family and Protective Services, TX**



**Fernando Mederos, Graduate School of Social Work,
Simmons College, MA**

**Ann Ream, Director of Community Relations and Foster
Care, Summit County Children Services, OH**



**Cynthia Osborne, Associate Dean for Academic
Strategies and Director, Child and Family Research
Partnership, TX**





Why a Webinar on Policies and Practices to Promote Father Engagement at the State Level?

- Father engagement improves child outcomes but many human services agencies don't include dads
- ACF's IM of 10/17/18 urges all HS agencies to enhance paternal involvement
- Few states have Councils or Commissions to create policies & practices for father engagement
- Some states are pursuing promising engagement policies & procedures
- Agencies dealing with child support, child welfare and child health/ development are key
- New research can move the policy agenda

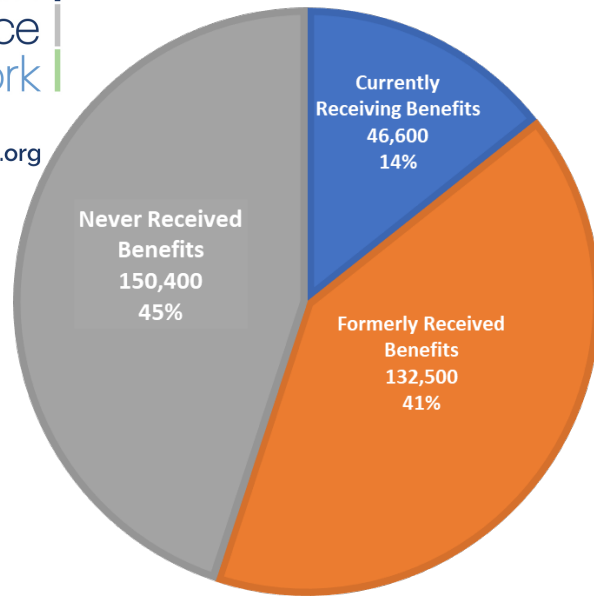
Child Support

Frances Pardus-Abbadessa
Office of Child Support Services
New York City

- Adjusting orders for fathers with low income
- Debt forgiveness
- Connections to employment
- Engaging fathers to avoid court involvement
- Meeting fathers where they are
- Improved communication



NYC Caseload



Total Caseload = 330,000

Benefit Status of All NCPs (Cash Assistance, MA, SNAP, SSI)

- Currently in Receipt = 15%
- Formerly in Receipt = 43%
- Never in Receipt = 42%

% of cases with orders (SEP) = 81% 2018 Collections = \$771,584,978

- Current Orders = 62%
- Arrears-only = 31%
- Zero-Dollar Orders = 7%

- Cases with a payment= 159,000 (59%)
 - Paid 90% or More = 60%

Number of Individuals on Caseload = 953,000

- 369,000 children under age 21
 - That's 1 out of 6 children in NYC
- 290,000 custodial parents (CP)
- 294,000 noncustodial parents (NCP)



Programs to Address Right Sizing Orders and Reducing Debt Owed to NYC DSS

Modified DSS Order (MDO)

- For NCPs with current support obligations payable to DSS.
- Allows NCPs to lower their monthly obligation to DSS subject to the Court's approval.
- Currently receiving CA, SSI, or Medicaid and income falls below the NYS Self-Support Reserve (\$16,862 for 2019).
- **Since 2009, more than 410 NCPs participated.**
- **Orders reduced by an average of 91%; average support order went from \$364/month to \$33/month.**

DSS Arrears Cap Program

- Arrears must have been built up while income was below the federal poverty level (\$12,490 for 2019) .
- Arrears owed to DSS can be reduced down to a max. of **\$500** if they had gone to Court.
- **Since 2008, more than 12,000 NCPs participated in Arrears Cap. The total amount of debt reduced is more than \$96 million.**

Arrears Credit Program

- May qualify for a total of up to a **\$5,000 credit** toward DSS arrears after consistent and full current child support payments for one year.
- Participants can qualify for up to three years and earn a credit of up to **\$15,000** in total.
- **Since 2010, more than 800 NCPs have completed the Arrears Credit program.**
- **Participants have reduced about \$8.4 million in debt.**

Other Programs

- **Pay It Off**- time limited program where NCPs payment is matched towards reducing arrears
- **Addressing Debt Owed to Custodial Parents**- partnership with mediation groups to reduce debt owed to custodial parents
- **Early Intervention**-outreach to NCPs with new orders to encourage them to appear in Court and pay their obligations regularly

Effectiveness of Programs

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Program	Before	After
Modify DSS Order (MDO)	35% paying	57% paying
Arrears Cap Program	51% paying	63% paying
Pay It Off (2018) 178 parents paid off their debts entirely (646 participants)		52 % increase-in average monthly payments for the remaining noncustodial parents



PHOTO IS OF MODELS USED FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY.

SUPPORT THROUGH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

STEP

THE JOB YOU WANT
The Support Children Need

NYC Human Resources
Administration
Department of
Social Services
Office of
Child Support
Enforcement

BRC-970 (E)

Connecting NCPs to Employment

The Support Through Employment Program (STEP) offers noncustodial parents (NCPs) the opportunity to gain stable employment so they can pay their child support orders.

We partner with:

- NYC Family Court Support Magistrates
- OCSS staff in the Family Courts
- HRA employment providers

- 1,600 NCPs connected to employment at an average wage of nearly \$14 per hour in 2018
- More than \$2.7 million in collections from NCPs referred into STEP in 2018
- Launched an incentive program to help NCPs reduce debt for reaching certain employment milestones in 2018

Brochure on STEP in English/Spanish: <http://bit.ly/STEPbrochure>

Meeting NCPs Where They Are

Parent Support Program is a problem-solving court approach to connecting noncustodial parents (NCPs) to employment services and other programs to reduce barriers to paying child support.

Violation Petitions in Brooklyn, the Bronx and soon to be Manhattan



Service plan to overcome specific barriers



Connect NCPs to employment services



Child Support navigation



Consistent communication with Resource Coordinator



Frequent court hearings



Graduation
Start new jobs and make six months of consistent child support payments

ELIGIBILITY

ACTIVITIES

OUTCOME



Modernizing Service Delivery for Families

We are creating a new service model for parents age 24 and younger

We are using behavioral economic theory to improve the way we communicate with parents

We are making changes to our summons package so that NCPs have a better understanding of the importance of showing up to Court with the right documentation to get a “right-sized order”

We are texting NCPs and CPs to remind them of Court hearing appointments

We are improving our customer service model (bringing services into community and finding innovative ways to provide customer services)

Changing the Way the Program is Perceived in NYC



Working with community partners to reach mutual clients

- Partner with NYC child welfare Preventive Services Program
- Provide training and outreach to create awareness around the anti-poverty benefits of the program and our services
- Developed **Snapshot**, an online portal to give real-time access to partners on information regarding an NCP's child support case (with signed permission).



Videos in the Words of Parents and "How To Videos"

- Created videos of parents on our caseload discussing their role as parents and their experience with the program
- Creating "How To" videos for You Tube to help parents navigate complex child support forms and processes



Partnered with the City University of New York (CUNY) Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College to develop curriculum for Social Workers emphasizing the value of fathers in children's lives

- Curriculum has been implemented at the Silberman School and Columbia University

Resources

- Smeeding, T.M., Garfinkel, I, & Mincy, R.B. (2011) “Young Disadvantaged Men: Fathers, Families, Poverty and Policy.” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. 635:6-21.
- Paulsell, D. et. al. (2015) “Helping Noncustodial Parents Support Their Children: Early Implementation Findings from the Child Support Noncustodial Parent Employment Demonstration (CSPED) Evaluation.” Interim Report. September 2015,
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/programs/css/cspedinterimpl2015.pdf>
- Elaine Sorensen. (2016) “The child support program is a good investment.” Office of Child Support Enforcement.
https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/programs/css/sbt_n_csp_is_a_good_investment.pdf

Strengthening Families and Communities

Sasha Rasco, Department of Family and Protective Services, TX



- Healthcare
- Nutrition
- Childcare
- Maltreatment
- Mental Health

Supporting Fathers to Strengthen Families and Communities

PEI Fatherhood Initiatives

- Fatherhood EFFECTS program
- Fatherhood Public Awareness
- Supporting Fathers through Systems change - Fatherhood Interagency Meetings
- Identifying Maltreatment Risk in Communities



Fatherhood EFFECTS

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FUNDED STRATEGIES



FATHERHOOD PARENT EDUCATION

- 24/7 Dads
- Nurturing Fathers
- Man in Me



WRAPAROUND SUPPORT SERVICES

- Basic needs support
- Group-based parenting
- Support groups
- Job skills readiness/support



COMMUNITY-LEVEL CHANGE

- Collaboration/Coalitions
- Public awareness

OUTCOMES MEASURED

- Bonding/Attachment
- Parenting knowledge
- Social Support
- Basic needs
- Reduce the incidence of child abuse/neglect

FAMILIES SERVED ANNUALLY

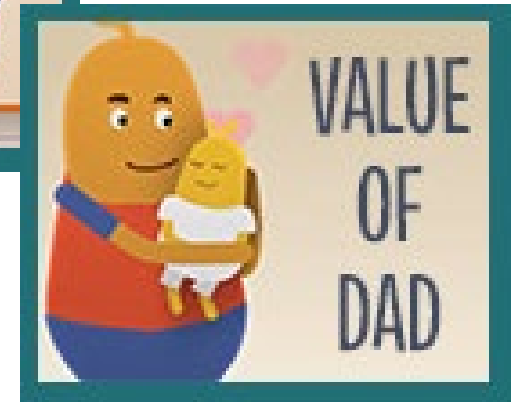
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HOUSING AUTHORITY
OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN
Bringing Opportunity Home

iDADS

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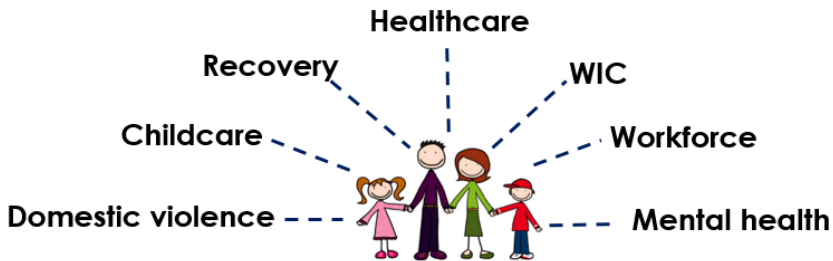


Help for Parents, Hope for Kids Campaign

Visit HelpAndHope.org for more information.

Supporting Fathers Through Systems Change

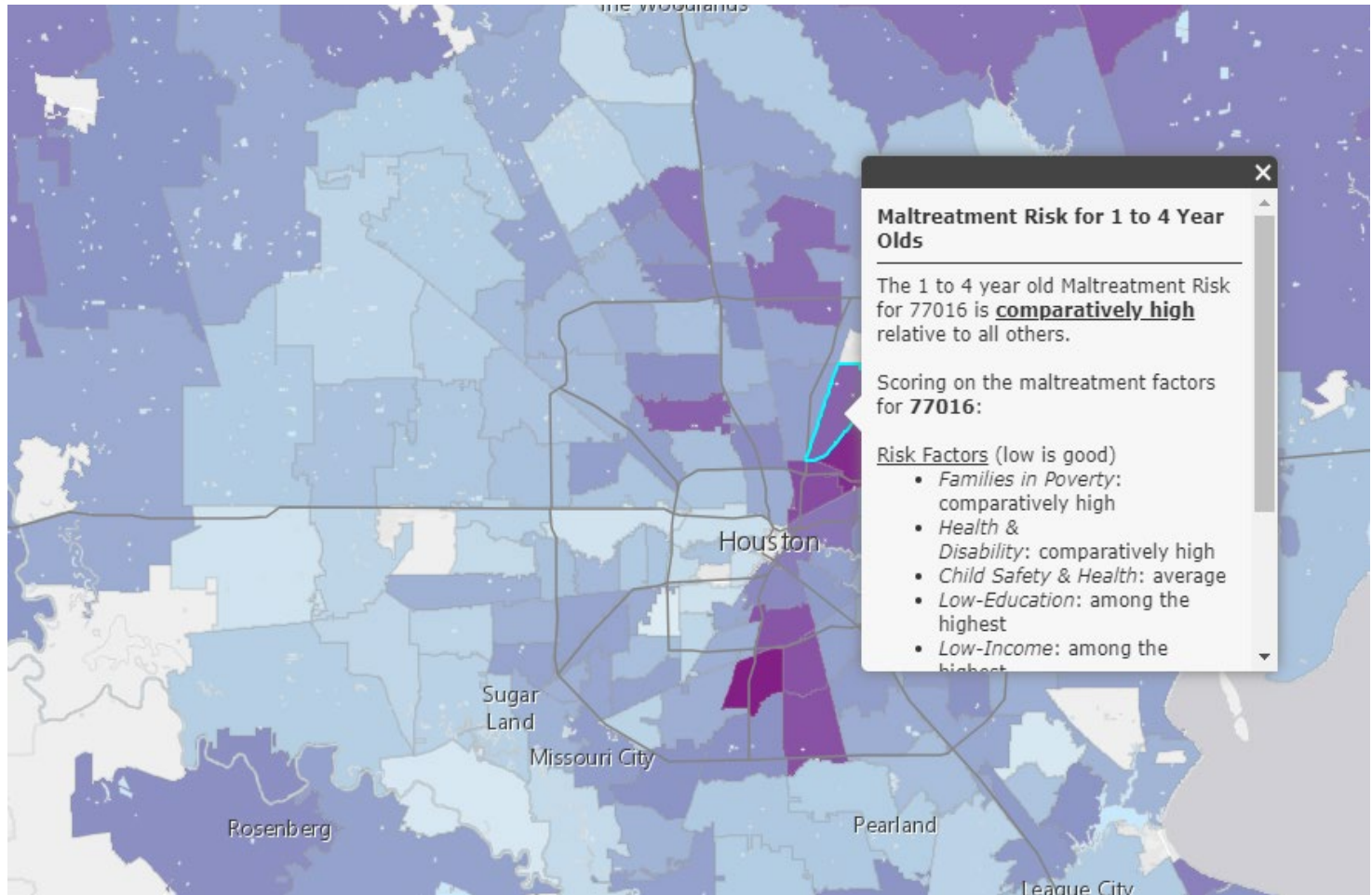
Systems-Change



Why Systems-Change?



Maltreatment Risk in Communities



Resources

- Help for Parents, Hope for Kids - HelpAndHope.org
- Fatherhood Playbook – [Google Play Store](#), search TxSafeBabies or Father’s Playbook
- State of Babies Yearbook 2019 - www.stateofbabies.org
- Zero to Three - www.zerotothree.org
- Child Trends - www.childtrends.org

Child Welfare

Fernando Mederos, Simmons College
Ann Ream, Summit County Children
Service, Ohio

- Recognize importance of fathers
- Locate & engage fathers
- Assess fathers for strengths & needs
- Provide on-going services & assistance
- Promote supportive & safe coparenting
- Address special issues (e.g., family violence, poverty, substance abuse)



FATHER INVOLVEMENT POLICIES & PROCEDURES

- Recognize the importance of **all** fathers
- Commit to identify, locate and engage all fathers
- Assess for strengths & needs
- Make diligent attempts to involve fathers
- Review existing policies & procedures
- Ensure commitment & support of leadership
- Understand challenges for low-income fathers & men of color

KEY PRACTICE: INITIAL ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

- Develop detailed and resourced procedures for engagement of all father figures
- Do screening referral for all issues including paternity & child support
- Explore involvement of child with father figures & paternal family.
- Use family search resources
- Train SWs in father engagement
- Take difficult practice junctures into account
- Inquire about the father at each contact

KEY PRACTICE: ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

Assess Strengths and Weaknesses

- Build on strengths—fatherhood vision, history of appropriate nurturing, openness to seek help, capacity for self-reflection
- Educate men--impact of their behavior on children, their importance in nurturance, self-esteem, trauma, role-modeling for children, etc.
- Assess risks--substance abuse, mental health issues, domestic violence, etc.

KEY PRACTICE: ON-GOING SERVICES

Provide a gender-appropriate system of care:

- Fatherhood programs that address nurturing, healthy co-parenting, child abuse and neglect
- Programs for men who use violence in their families
- Mental health and substance abuse services with practitioners experienced with men
- Specialized assistance for low income men re: child support enforcement, criminal record mitigation, child access, single parent support

KEY PRACTICE: CO-PARENTING

Develop framework for engagement that values both parents equally.

- Understand how to approach single mothers about engaging out of home fathers.
- Understand how to approach out of home fathers about supportive co-parenting
- Promote responsible, egalitarian and respectful fatherhood
- Help men connect with supportive cultural traditions.

KEY PRACTICE: SPECIAL ISSUES

Develop best-practice frameworks for addressing men with:

Family violence issues

Fathering and poverty

Fathering and community violence

Fathering and the courts: paternity,
custody issues, child support, etc.

Fathering and substance abuse

Resources

- Ohio Dept Job and Family Services: Best Practices Guide for Engaging Fathers: A toolkit for Children Services Staff
[http://fatherhood.ohio.gov/Portals/0/Revised%20FINAL_JFS-01444%20Best%20Practice%20Guide%20for%20Fathers%20\(online\).pdf](http://fatherhood.ohio.gov/Portals/0/Revised%20FINAL_JFS-01444%20Best%20Practice%20Guide%20for%20Fathers%20(online).pdf)



Research

Cynthia Osborne, Child and Family
Research Partnership

- Research-practitioner collaboration
- Research driving the father engagement agenda
- Examples of policy-focused research
- Using research evidence for system level change
- Pressing research questions for serving fathers

Learning More through Collaboration and Research

- Find a research and evaluation partner to work with you
- The evidence on fatherhood research is modest, but growing
- Evaluating programs and community efforts to support fathers helps to answer:
 - Does **it** work?
 - Why does it/doesn't it work the way we envisioned?
 - For whom does it work best?
 - How can we make it work more effectively?
 - What are the returns to our investments?

Sample Research/Evaluation Activity in Texas

- How do we increase father participation in home visiting programs?
- To what extent do fathers help retain families in home visiting programs?
- Why do fathers enroll in fatherhood programs? What benefits do they receive from participation?
- How can the child welfare system more effectively serve families with IPV?
- How can we increase in-hospital paternity establishment?
- What factors predict child support enrollment and payment?
- How can we more effectively serve young fathers?
- How can communities collectively increase father engagement?

Use Evidence to Guide Your Interventions and Strive for Systems-Level Change

Process Map for Systems-Level Change

**Long-Term,
Measurable Goal:**

Increase fathers' engagement with their children

**Evidence-Based
Drivers of Change:**

Positive
Co-Parenting
Relationship

Financial
Stability

Reduction of
Anti-Social
Behavior

Parenting
Skills &
Knowledge

**Indicators of
Progress:**

*For Each Evidence-Based
Driver of Change:*

Policies & Practices
Physical Environment
Public Perception & Awareness
Programmatic Availability & Alignment
Peer Networks & Support
Physical Planning & Place

Track Progress Toward Systems-Level Change

Process Map for Systems-Level Change

Long-Term,
Measurable Goal:

Increase fathers' engagement with their children

Evidence-Based Drivers
of Change:

Positive
Co-Parenting
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Financial
Stability

Reduction of
Anti-Social
Behavior

Parenting
Skills &
Knowledge

Indicators of
Progress:

Programmatic: Co-parenting programs are made available to parents through schools, faith-based institutions, and healthcare institutions

Public Perception: A public campaign on the importance of positive co-parenting is launched

Programmatic: Responsible fatherhood programs partner with local employers, health providers, and the child support office to support fathers

Physical Planning & Space: Public transportation routes between jobs and neighborhoods exist launched

Programmatic: Father support and peer groups are held hosted at day cares, schools, labor and delivery or children's hospitals, the Domestic Relations Office (DRO), child support office, or jails/prisons

Policies & Practices: Lower barriers to employment or housing for non-dangerous ex-offenders

Programmatic: Organizations and institutions require children's forms list both parents' names

Physical Environment: Changing tables are required in both men and women's bathrooms

Public Perception: A Father's Day event recognizing fathers in the community and providing fatherhood resources is held

Pressing Research Questions for Serving Fathers

- How do we effectively serve non-resident fathers?
- What is the best age for intervention?
- Do our findings generalize to other demographic and geographic contexts?
- How do we better retain our fathers in services?
- What is the right combination of services?
- How can multiple systems collectively serve fathers?

Resources

- Child and Family Research Partnership – UT Austin
 - <https://childandfamilyresearch.utexas.edu/>
 - Various reports and one-pagers on fathers
 - Videos and infographic
 - https://childandfamilyresearch.utexas.edu/sites/default/files/Infographic_ImportanceofFathers062015.pdf
- FRPN: <https://www.frpn.org/>
- MPR, Inc: <https://www.mathematica-mpr.com/our-focus-areas/family-support>
- MDRC: <https://www.mdrc.org/population/focus/fathers>
- National Fatherhood Initiative: <https://www.fatherhood.org/>

Questions for the Panel?



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