



DC Family Policy Seminar

A community service project of Georgetown University

Reconnecting DC Families: Involving Low-Income Fathers in the Lives of Their Children



BACKGROUND BRIEFING REPORT

The DC Family Policy Seminar provides District policy-makers with accurate, relevant, nonpartisan, timely information and policy options concerning issues affecting children and families.

The DC Family Policy Seminar is part of the National Network of State Family Policy Seminars, a project of the Family Impact Seminars, a nonpartisan public policy institute in Washington, DC.

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Abstract

Over the past two decades, the number of U.S. children growing up in households in which a father does not reside has increased by 56 percent.¹ Approximately 24.7 million U.S. children (36.3 percent) do not live with their biological father.² Although it is certainly not always the case that fathers who live apart from their children are uninvolved fathers, father absence does have clear negative economic and psychological consequences for children and is costly for society. Children whose fathers do not live with them are more likely to (1) perform poorly in school, (2) have low self-esteem, (3) initiate sexual activity early, (4) be economically deprived, (5) abuse drugs or alcohol, and (6) have health and emotional problems.³ While at one time fathers were thought of mainly as providers for their families, their involvement with their children is now considered essential to family health and well-being.⁴ Through the establishment of fatherhood programs and work force policies, and by providing additional funding and more welfare and child support flexibility, federal, local, and state governments have attempted to encourage and promote father involvement by helping fathers with low incomes become financial providers and nurturers.

Researchers and practitioners may disagree on which approach most effectively promotes father presence, but all agree that father involvement matters and that programs must aid in reconnecting dead broke dads and their children. This briefing report (1) reviews the consequences of father absence and the benefits of father presence for children; (2) examines the policy environment affecting fathers with low incomes; and (3) highlights creative local and national models promoting father involvement.

This report provides a brief introduction to the issue addressed by the DC Family Policy Seminar on February 8, 2000. The authors thank the numerous individuals in the DC government and in local and national organizations who contributed to the report. Special thanks are given to Susan Rogers, Leslie Gordon, Vince Hutchins, Mark Rom, Donna R. Morrison and the staff of the National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health for hosting this seminar, and to the staff of the Martin Luther King Memorial Library for providing space and technical assistance. This briefing report and seminar is funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Health Resources and Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, under its cooperative agreement with NCEMCH (MCU-119301).

Reconnecting DC Families: Involving Low-Income Fathers in the Lives of Their Children

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This seminar discusses a variety of approaches to involving fathers with low incomes in the lives of their children. The organizers hope to encourage increased collaboration among community, government, and nonprofit organizations to ensure that responsible fatherhood programs will improve in quality and increase in quantity. The seminar will also highlight several successful programs that may assist Washington, DC, officials and service providers if they choose to create future fatherhood initiatives. The contents of this briefing report are as follows:

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I. Introduction

Over the past two decades, the number of U.S. children growing up in homes in which a father does not reside has increased by 56 percent.¹ Approximately 24.7 million U.S. children (36.3 percent) do not live with their biological father.² According to the National Center on Fathers and Families (NCOFF), more than one-half of U.S. children born in 1992 will spend all or part of their childhood apart from one parent, usually their father.⁵ The statistics for the District are even more alarming. In 1998, 58 percent of children were living in homes from which the father was absent.⁶ Although it is certainly not always the case that fathers who live apart from their children are uninvolved fathers, father absence does have clear negative economic and psychological consequences for children and is very costly for society.

Both divorce and out-of-wedlock births are on the rise. The number of divorced adults in the United States quadrupled between 1970 and 1995, rising from 4.3 million to 17.6 million.⁷ Over 1 million U.S. children were affected by divorce in 1995, and more than 85 percent of children whose parents are divorced are in the custody of their mother.⁸ The number of babies born to unmarried women has also increased; it rose from over 200,000 in 1960 to 1.2 million in 1995.⁹ The number of children living with never-married mothers rose from 221,000 in 1960 to 5,862,000 in 1995.⁷

Poverty is most prevalent among families headed by single mothers. According to the National Center for Children in Poverty, 48 percent of all children in mother-headed families live in poverty.^{10,11} In 1990, 33 percent of the District's female-headed families were in poverty.⁶ Father absence is viewed as a major cause of family poverty and public dependency.¹² Vice President Al Gore has stated that "promoting responsible fatherhood is the critical next phase of welfare reform and one of the most important things we can do to reduce child poverty".¹³ If a mother and

father combine their incomes, the likelihood of their children living in poverty lessens.

Sadly, in 1990, only 46 percent of the 9.5 million noncustodial fathers of nearly 18 million children eligible for child support reported paying child support.¹⁴ Child support evaders, typically fathers, have been categorized as either "deadbeat dads" (those who can afford to pay child support but choose not to) or "dead broke dads" (those who are willing to pay child support but cannot afford to do so).^{15,16} Policymakers crafting policy to encourage father involvement need to be aware that some fathers with low incomes are not able to support their children financially.¹⁷

Traditionally, a responsible father has been one who supports his children financially. Studies have shown, however, that money is not all children need from their fathers. Children whose fathers provide for them economically and are regularly and positively connected to them do better emotionally and have fewer behavioral problems than children whose fathers do neither.¹ States and communities are attempting to increase fathers' capacity to provide for their children by offering employment assistance and by making available parenting/child development services to strengthen fathers' emotional connection with their children.

Federal, state, and local governments face a huge challenge in trying to connect dead broke dads with their children. These fathers are unable to provide their families with sustained financial support and may not want their presence to result in the termination of any federal or state assistance their children are receiving, so they may avoid contact with their children.¹ States and federal agencies are beginning to design programs for fathers with low incomes that are similar to the kinds of employment and family support services typically extended to mothers who are moving from welfare to work. New policies and programs encourage responsible fatherhood by helping fathers with low incomes become providers and nurturers.

This briefing report begins with a review of the consequences of father absence and the benefits of father presence for children. It then examines the policy environment affecting fathers with low incomes, highlights the lessons learned from demonstration programs and research, and presents national and District program models that promote father involvement. It closes with a summary of the challenges and policy considerations facing those striving to provide services for fathers with low incomes.

II. Father Absence

The Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics has found that while involved fathers are spending more time with their children, fewer men are involved fathers.¹⁸ The number of divorces and the high incidence of unmarried women giving birth has led to a reduction in the average amount of time fathers spend with their children.¹⁸ Only one in six children of divorced and separated fathers see their fathers at least once a week, and of these children ages 10 years and above only one in ten have weekly contact.¹² Almost half of the fathers who do not live with their children have no contact with their children at all.¹⁹ Only 57 percent of unwed fathers consistently visit their children during the first 2 years of the children's life.^{19,20} After the child reaches 2½ years of age, that figure drops to less than 25 percent.^{19,20}

A father's perception of his financial situation, his self-esteem, and whether or not he views himself as a role model can affect the father-child relationship.¹¹ Men may be psychologically and physically absent from their children's lives for several reasons, including

- Lack of skills necessary to be good and involved fathers
- Absence of a male role model in their own lives
- Physical distance between themselves and their children

- Poor relationship with their children's mother
- Inability to influence child-rearing decisions¹¹

Studies of father involvement as distinct from mother involvement indicate that fathers' parenting style, level of closeness, and flexibility affect children's well-being. Children whose fathers do not live with them are more likely to (1) perform poorly in school, (2) have low self-esteem, (3) initiate sexual activity early, (4) be economically deprived, (5) abuse drugs or alcohol, and (6) have health and emotional problems.³ The negative outcomes of father absence can be categorized as health, economic, and social risks.

Health Risks

Children whose fathers do not live with them are three times more likely than children who live with their fathers to experience emotional or behavioral problems requiring psychiatric treatment and three times more likely to commit suicide when they reach adolescence.²¹ Adolescent females reared in homes without fathers are more likely to engage in premarital sex than adolescent females reared in homes with both a mother and a father.²² Children who grow up in a single-parent (usually father-absent) home are at an increased risk for drug abuse as adolescents and are 4.3 times more likely to smoke cigarettes as teenagers than children growing up with their fathers in the home.²³

Social Risks

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), children who grow up in homes without fathers are three times more likely to fail at school and twice as likely to drop out of high school compared to children whose fathers live with them.²⁴ Studies have also shown that older boys and girls from female-headed households are more likely to commit criminal acts than are their peers who live with two parents.²² In addition, it has been shown that chil-

dren who grow up without fathers at home are at increased risk of being incarcerated and of being involved in violent crime. In 1991 the U.S. Department of Justice reported that 70 percent of the juveniles in state reform institutions grew up in single- or no-parent situations.²⁵ Further findings revealed that 72 percent of adolescent murderers, 60 percent of rapists, and 70 percent of long-term prisoners in the United States grew up in father-absent homes.^{21,25}

Economic Risks

In 1996 young children living with unmarried mothers were five times more likely to be poor and ten times more likely to be extremely poor than other U.S. children.²⁶ Almost 75 percent of U.S. children living in single-parent families will experience poverty before they turn 11 years old, as compared to only 20 percent of children in two-parent families.²⁷ According to a 1994 Committee on Ways and Means report, 90 percent of welfare case-loads are families with no father present in the home.²

Father absence has clear negative economic and psychological consequences for children and is very costly for society. Whether single parents never married or are divorced, their children are more likely to grow up in poverty, less likely to finish school, and more likely to engage in risk-taking behaviors than children of married parents.¹²

III. Father Presence

Children benefit from positive relationships with their fathers as well as with their mothers.²⁴ Those who are more involved with their fathers (for example, those who eat meals, go on outings, and receive help with homework from their fathers) are likely to be more sociable and to have fewer behavioral problems than those who lack such interaction.²⁴ It has also been shown that father-child interaction promotes children's physical well-being, perceptual abilities, and compe-

tence in relating to others.²⁸ In addition, there is evidence that continued contact with fathers who do not live with them but who are loving, supportive, and nurturing increases girls' emotional well-being and adjustment abilities.^{3,29} In a 26-year longitudinal study of 379 individuals, researchers found that the single most important factor affecting children's development of empathy is paternal involvement.³⁰ Fathers who spent time alone with their children performing routine child care tasks at least twice a week raised children who became the most compassionate adults.³⁰

A Department of Education study, *Fathers' Involvement in Their Children's Schools*, of over 20,000 parents found that children do better in school when their fathers participate in school activities, even when other possible influences such as race and ethnicity, parents' level of education, family income, and mother involvement are taken into account. Further findings demonstrate that when fathers do such things as attending school meetings, parent-teacher conferences, and class events and volunteering at school, children are more likely to get As, enjoy school, and participate in extracurricular activities and are less likely to repeat a grade.³¹

Studies of two-parent families have fairly consistently found that father involvement has positive effects on children. Additionally, a growing body of research indicates that a father's financial support as well as his positive involvement with his children increases positive outcomes for children who do not live with both of their parents when there is also cooperation between the parents. Father presence must extend beyond physical and financial boundaries to functional and emotional relations with children.³ Father presence matters, and this fact has fueled many policies and programs that aim to increase fathers' financial, physical, and emotional involvement with their children.¹⁸

IV. Fathers as Providers

Since the 1950s family policy has focused on the role of fathers as economic providers.²¹ Legislative initiatives and government agencies have been intent on enforcing fathers' financial responsibilities through paternity establishment and child support enforcement legislation.⁸ The Deadbeat Parents Punishment Act of 1998 and the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PWORA) introduced tougher enforcement guidelines and penalties for nonpayment of child support.¹⁷ Most recently, Congress passed legislation requiring mothers to establish paternity of their children in order to receive welfare. These punitive measures were designed and implemented to make fathers responsible for their children and to enable states to collect payment of child support from deadbeat dads. Collecting child support from fathers is important because (1) it reduces the cost to society of welfare, much of which goes to mother-headed families that do not receive child support payments, and (2) it has been shown that fathers who fulfill their child support obligations are more likely to be involved with their children.

However, in pursuing deadbeat dads, legislation has continually also punished the nearly 4 million fathers who are unemployed or among the working poor. These dead broke dads, whose incomes are so low that they qualify for food stamps, simply don't have the economic resources to pay child support. Furthermore, welfare-eligibility requirements, paternity establishment, and child support enforcement policy deters fathers with low incomes from contributing financially to their families and from becoming involved in the lives of their children.²¹

The child support system was designed with middle-class fathers—who have the means to make financial contributions to their families—in mind, not to meet the needs of welfare families.³² In 1996 only 30 percent of poor children who lived apart from their fathers received child support.¹⁴ Dead broke dads tend to be young, African

American, and poorly educated (nearly half have not completed high school); they earn an average annual personal income of \$8,956 (in 1998 dollars).¹⁴ Even though 90 percent of these fathers worked or sought work in 1990, only 18 percent of them worked full time and year round.¹⁴ Many fathers who do not pay child support are in jail, homeless, or generally unattached to households. Few, if any, receive public assistance, and even fewer receive means-tested employment-related services.¹⁴

The welfare program has had a variety of eligibility rules that place more restrictions on two-parent households than on single-parent households. These restrictions have created disincentives for marriage and for the physical presence of fathers in the homes of their children.²¹ Fathers of children on welfare have little incentive to provide child support, even if they are able to do so, because what they pay goes to the federal and state governments to offset the cost to those governments of providing the welfare payments these families receive.¹⁴ Thus the financial contributions made by noncustodial parents of children on welfare do not directly benefit their children. With welfare reform, states have the option to pass through some, none, or all of the child support paid by a father to a family enrolled in the Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) program.¹⁴ The new law therefore eliminates a financial link between noncustodial parents and their children. Presently only a handful of states pass through the entire amount of child support collected on behalf of TANF families.³³

All of these TANF policies have been implemented to make fathers fulfill their financial obligations to their children. Yet current child support enforcement strategies and welfare reform provide welfare families with little, if any, incentive to participate in the formal child support system. The punitive measures that address fathers' financial obligations without dealing with the underlying problems of fathers with low incomes only increases the prevalence of father absence.¹⁴

V. Expanding the Boundaries of Fatherhood

Fathers, once viewed primarily as providers, are now considered essential to family health and well-being.⁴ A father's involvement as nurturer, disciplinarian, teacher, coach, and moral instructor is critical to children's healthy development.²¹ Therefore it is extremely important that fathers' presence in the lives of their children be promoted.

In June 1995 President Clinton challenged all federal agencies to support fathers and their positive involvement in the lives of their children. He called on the agencies to assist in the review of every program, policy, and initiative that pertains to families to ensure that program objectives and research were taking fathers into consideration and attempting to improve their relationship with their children. This first-ever governmentwide initiative to strengthen fatherhood expanded Head Start and Healthy Start and encouraged states to be flexible in their use of TANF in order to support fathers' financial and emotional involvement with their families. In June 1998 Vice President Gore, via the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, released the results of these efforts in "Nurturing Fatherhood: Improving Data and Research on Male Fertility, Family Formation, and Fatherhood." This report concluded a multiyear effort to identify what was known about fatherhood and what additional government research could be undertaken to increase the understanding of how fathering and family structure affect child and adult well-being. In response to the report, DHHS has promoted responsible fatherhood by (1) improving work opportunities for fathers with low incomes, (2) increasing efforts to collect child support, (3) offering parenting-skills classes, (4) supporting noncustodial parents' right to have access to and visit their children, (5) reducing domestic violence, and (6) involving boys and young men in preventing teenage pregnancy and premature parenting.^{24,34}

The TANF program has also given states the opportunity to develop and implement creative and innovative strategies to decrease the number of families dependent on public assistance. Federal TANF dollars can fund responsible fatherhood initiatives that will improve needy fathers' ability to provide their children with financial and emotional support. States can offer parenting classes and premarital and marriage counseling and can fund state or local media campaigns to encourage fathers to play a responsible role in their children's lives.³⁴ States can also use their welfare block grant funds or their maintenance-of-effort (MOE) funds to provide employment-related services to noncustodial parents who have children on welfare.¹⁴ Under the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, Congress authorized the Department of Labor to allocate \$3 billion in welfare-to-work grants to states and local communities to create additional job opportunities for those welfare recipients who are most difficult to employ. These grants can serve noncustodial parents if they meet certain eligibility requirements.¹⁴ DHHS is working closely with the Department of Labor to implement the Welfare-to-Work program, which provides grants to states and communities to move long-term welfare recipients and certain noncustodial parents of children on welfare into lasting, unsubsidized employment.

Most recently the Clinton administration has proposed increasing the Welfare-to-Work program's budget. Since FY 1997 DHHS has awarded \$10 million in block grant funds annually to all 50 states, the District, and U.S. territories to promote access and visitation programs for noncustodial parents. The program's purpose is to increase these parents' involvement in their children's lives. Each state has the flexibility to design and operate these programs and to provide such services as voluntary or mandatory mediation, counseling, education, development of parenting plans, development of guidelines for visitation, and alternative custody arrangements.²⁴ One of the many pending proposals includes the requirement that states must spend at least 20 percent of their formula funds on

noncustodial parents. Presently, states are not required to spend a given percentage of their funds on these parents. To receive these services noncustodial parents would be required to enter into an individual responsibility contract with the service provider and the state child support enforcement agency. Signing the contract would signify their agreement to cooperate in the establishment of paternity, make regular child support payments, and work.³³

In granting states more flexibility in the way they distribute TANF funds and provide fatherhood initiative grants, the federal government has encouraged the creation and implementation of responsible fatherhood programs. Despite the fact that the interest in fathers and father involvement is relatively new, many pilot programs have been implemented to test ways to get fathers more involved with their children, and research centers dedicated to studying fathers and families have produced valuable insights on how to help fathers with low incomes overcome barriers to reconnecting with their children.

The most recent evaluation of Parents' Fair Share (PFS) has given policymakers and researchers their first comprehensive glimpse at how directing services to noncustodial parents can have a positive effect on these parents' ability to pay child support. The Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) developed the model for PFS pilot programs set up in nine cities between 1992 and 1993, with the goal of increasing the ability of noncustodial parents of children on welfare to pay child support and thereby to increase the amount of child support collected overall. The four key components of the model include (1) occupational training and job-search and placement services, emphasizing on-the-job training; (2) enhanced child support enforcement; (3) mediation services to help mothers and fathers resolve disagreements that interfere with child support compliance; and (4) peer support and parenting instruction.³⁵

PFS led to many discoveries, one of the most

noteworthy being the fact that facilitated working partnerships between local providers and child support enforcement resulted in better outcomes. States that had forged solid relationships between child support agencies and community providers experienced the largest increases in child support payments. PFS findings indicate that the amount of child support fathers actually paid was affected not only by their income but also by the state of their relationship with the custodial parent and by their attitude toward the child support enforcement and welfare systems.^{15,17} PFS also indicates that (1) employment assistance can help some fathers get jobs, (2) outreach efforts are needed to identify fathers who may benefit from services and those who have unreported income, and (3) helping fathers with low incomes keep jobs and advance in the labor market are the most difficult challenges that need to be addressed.¹⁷ Thus PFS illuminates many barriers that prevent fathers with low incomes from financially supporting their children, and it provides a strong framework for future fatherhood programs.

NCOFF has conducted extensive research on fathers. Drawing from its findings and from practitioner experiences in programs serving fathers and families, it has outlined "Seven Core Learnings" about fathers:

- Fathers care, even if that caring is not shown in conventional ways.
- Fathers' presence affects children's economic well-being, social support, and development.
- Joblessness is a major impediment to family formation and father involvement.
- Existing approaches to public benefits, child support enforcement, and paternity establishment create obstacles and disincentives to father involvement. The disincentives are sufficiently compelling to result in "underground fathers"—men who acknowledge paternity and are involved in the lives of their children but refuse to formally establish paternity and pay child support.

- A growing number of young fathers and mothers require support to develop the vital skills they need to share parenting responsibility.
- The transition from biological father to committed parent has significant development implications for young fathers.
- The behaviors of young parents, both fathers and mothers, are influenced significantly by intergenerational beliefs and practices within their families of origin.⁵

A number of organizations and programs that aim to increase fathers' financial, physical, and emotional involvement with their children have used the lessons learned from PFS and NCOFF as a basis for their development.

VI. National Models

There are many different strategies and approaches to reconnecting fathers with low incomes with their children. Some programs advocate greater flexibility with child support collection, others promote marriage, and still others focus on employment and earnings as the most effective means by which to increase fathers' presence in the family and their financial support. The promoters of "responsible fatherhood" programs tend toward a cultural, often faith-based approach, with marriage an explicit goal. Advocates of employment and flexible child support arrangements argue that marriage is not a viable goal until the father is employed and able to provide financial support. Several studies have highlighted the impact of employment on a father's involvement with his children and suggest that if unemployed noncustodial parents are provided with jobs and job training they will meet more of their child support obligations.¹¹ Many fatherhood initiatives have focused on the premise that payment of child support promotes father presence.

Even though researchers and practitioners debate about the effectiveness of different models for and approaches to promoting father presence, they all agree that fathers matter and that pro-

grams must help reconnect them and their children. Numerous existing fatherhood programs serve as models for policymakers and practitioners who are striving to do just that.

Job or Jail: Fathers That Work, Indianapolis, IN

The Job or Jail: Fathers That Work program is predicated on the belief that fathers can be successful providers if they have adequate support systems. The program's objective is to increase the amount of child support collected by engaging participants in income-producing activities. The program has been designed to help noncustodial parents find permanent employment. Fundamental aspects of the program include direct job placement, career counseling, résumé preparation, job-search assistance, interviewing techniques, short- and long-term vocational training, high school diploma/GED and literacy classes, and drug/alcohol rehabilitation. Participants have access to all these services. Those who lack the skills they need to secure a job are provided with job training, the goal of which is to enable them to secure long-term employment and to give them access to career opportunities, job training, and community service opportunities. The prosecutor's office in Marion County (Indianapolis), IN, gives unemployed fathers who do not take advantage of these services and are not meeting their child support obligations the choice of taking a job offered by one of the employers who participate in the program, taking part in job training offered by the program's affiliates, performing community service, or going to jail.^{17,36}

Job or Jail: Fathers That Work program activities begin in a Marion County courtroom, where deputy prosecutors recommend to the court that certain fathers who are delinquent in their child support payments be ordered to participate in one of the program's three components: direct job referrals, indirect job referrals, or community service. Fathers who have some work experience and job skills are recommended for the direct job refer-

rals component. They are linked with one of the participating employers and hired if they meet minimum criteria. The prosecutor's office is responsible for direct job referrals and has agreements with many agencies that serve participants' varied needs. The program works with the Private Industry Council to identify employers that will hire participants. Only employers who offer jobs with what the council terms "good wages" and benefits are considered.¹⁷ The indirect job referrals component is recommended to clients who have multiple barriers to employment or who need help with résumé writing, obtaining a GED, literacy, basic skills, or advanced training. Many are referred to Goodwill Industries or America Works for training; after they complete this training they are referred for jobs. Fathers who refuse to work or cannot be employed are referred to the community service component of the program.^{17,36}

Since the program's inception in August 1996, more than 50 percent of all the participants who have been enrolled in the program have continued to pay child support, and 64 percent are still employed 6 months after joining.¹⁷ Participants have also served more than 17,000 community service hours, thereby putting thousands of dollars into the community. According to the program, fathers have improved their lives as a result of their participation, and this improvement has, in turn, improved the lives of their children, not only by virtue of the child support these fathers pay but also by virtue of the work example fathers set for their children.^{17,36}

Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization, Washington DC

Founded by Charles Ballard in 1982, the Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization is a nonprofit, nontraditional, community-based organization. The program began in Cleveland but is now based in Washington, DC. It has a \$1.8 million annual budget and has sites in six cities: Cleveland, OH; Milwaukee, WI;

Nashville, TN; San Diego, CA; Yonkers, NY; and Washington, DC. The sites are supported by state and private funding. The organization hires only married couples as managers in order to model healthy, intact family relationships.³⁷ Teaching listening skills and modeling marriage are fundamental to the institute, the goal of which is to "turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers."³⁸ The institute encourages fathers to become involved in the lives of their children in a loving, compassionate, and nurturing way. The delivery of services is based on the idea that a father's life has a tremendous impact on the lives of both his children and their mother and that when the father is provided with comprehensive services his children's and their mother's opportunities increase. The institute focuses primarily on fathers, but it also takes a holistic approach to providing services to all family members who affect the father's life.^{38,39}

The institute targets young, unwed fathers, many of whom have dropped out of high school and have a history of substance abuse or trouble with the police.¹² But services are designed to also address the needs of mothers and their children. The institute organizes mother support groups for the mothers of children whose fathers are absent. To receive services, participants in the program must commit for at least a year, develop a work ethic, attain a high school diploma or GED, abstain from alcohol and drug use, and establish paternity of any of their children born outside of marriage.^{38,39}

When a father enrolls in the program, a home assessment is conducted, and outreach sessions begin shortly thereafter. Participants meet with an outreach specialist 20 to 30 hours a month and receive intense, nontraditional, one-on-one support, group support, family outreach services, fathering skills training, health and nutrition information, medical and housing referrals, and education and career guidance. The husband and wife team interacts with fathers to create environments that will enable these fathers to offer their

children a sound quality of life. The institute concentrates on four interrelationship attributes. Fathers work on (1) developing a sense of self-realization; (2) addressing issues with their children and the children's mother; (3) understanding how important it is for their children to complete their education; and (4) learning how to become financially independent and to care and provide for their children.^{38,39}

By analyzing data, the institute discovered that a relatively high percentage of the participants assigned to outreach workers who were married ended up marrying or developing closer and more meaningful relationships with the mother of their children, even though the program does not explicitly advocate marriage.⁴⁰ Consequently, the institute has hired only couples with strong marriages and former program participants who are married (referred to as protégés) to serve as role models in their respective communities.⁴⁰ This reinforces the program's position that the best environment for a child is one in which the child's mother and father are in a loving, compassionate, and secure marriage. The replication sites headed by married couples reinforce this example.⁴⁰ The institute's mentor couples must live where they serve and must uphold high personal standards: They must not drink, smoke, or engage in other risk-taking behaviors.³⁷ The couples are available to program participants 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. By modeling strong family relationships and also by playing the role of family members for participants, the staff offer participants a strong sense of family, something many of them have never had.⁴⁰

Since the institute's inception, it has served more than 4,500 fathers and their families.

A 1993 evaluation of the Cleveland program and its services, conducted by Dr. G. Regina Nixon and Dr. Anthony E. King of Case Western Reserve University, established that

- 97 percent of fathers who participated in the program spent more time with their chil-

dren than they did before and were providing their children with financial support

- 96 percent of fathers who participated in the program experienced an improved relationship with their children's mother
- 92 percent of fathers who participated in the program developed positive values and attitudes
- 70 percent of fathers who participated in the program completed the equivalent of 12 years of education, and nearly 12 percent completed at least one year of college
- 62 percent of fathers who participated in the program are employed full time, and 11 percent are employed part time³⁸

The Hartford Housing Authority Family Reunification Program and Employment Program, Hartford, CT

The Hartford Housing Authority (HHA) Family Reunification Project is a collaborative program between the Hartford Housing Authority and the state Child Support Enforcement Agency. The program is for fathers who have acknowledged paternity and have accepted responsibility for their children residing in public housing. It grew out of a collection of partnerships between the city of Hartford, the state of Connecticut, private businesses, and federal housing and health agencies. The HHA approach supports the belief that the achievement of self-sufficiency and the restoration of self-esteem leads to family unification.⁴¹

The HHA program ensures that every effort to build, modernize, or otherwise improve public housing employs residents of public housing to the greatest possible extent. Participating fathers are guaranteed jobs, a state credit of \$100 a month toward overdue child support, and flexible child support payment arrangements. Participants are to use their earnings to support their families. The program's goal is to help participants become self-sufficient, which will result in their financial independence. Further services provided by the HHA program include job readiness training, employ-

ment counseling and job referral, money management training, parenting skills training, medical checkups, self-esteem seminars, and substance abuse prevention counseling. The job readiness training component covers everything from filling out job applications to preparing résumés and navigating the interview process. Workshops on budgeting money and opening and managing savings and checking accounts are provided. Seminars that help fathers maintain and improve their self-esteem are also offered.⁴¹

To participate in the HHA program, families are required to become full participants in HHA's Family Investment Center Program. This program is designed to provide access to social services such as communication-skill enhancement, parenting skills classes, individual and group counseling, and programs that promote the well-being of children. Department of Social Services staff assist fathers in reuniting with their children and in building relationships with them. The Department of Social Services has also assigned special child support employees to work with fathers and HHA to resolve any outstanding child support issues. Fathers enrolled in the program are expected to be role models, and their participation in their children's school activities, sports, and social activities is encouraged. In addition, fathers are required to be actively involved in community-based activities, especially employment and education activities.⁴¹

The Center for Fathers, Families, and Workforce Development
(Formerly Known as Baltimore City Healthy Start Men's Services/STRIVE)

The Center for Fathers, Families, and Workforce Development (CFWD) is an independent not-for-profit organization that grew out of the work of Baltimore City Healthy Start, Inc. (BCHS), a quasi-public corporation administered by the City Health Department and funded by DHHS and Project STRIVE. Five separately funded

programs make up CFWD: the BCBS Men's Services Program; Support and Training Results in Valuable Employees (STRIVE); the Sandtown Youth Haven Police Mini-Station (PAL); the Team Parenting Demonstration Program (which is funded by the Ford Foundation); and the Baltimore City Partners for Fragile Families (PFF). By arranging for these programs to collaborate, CFWD attempts to empower families with low incomes by enhancing the men's ability to fulfill their roles as fathers and both parents' ability to support their families financially. Two beliefs are central to the CFWD approach: (1) men want to be emotionally and financially responsible for their children and (2) poverty can hinder parental involvement and support. CFWD has received local and national recognition for its work with young urban African-American fathers.⁴²

Each component of CFWD provides male clients with tools and resources that help them be financially responsible for and emotionally supportive of their children.¹⁷ The Men's Services Program component of CFWD supports men in becoming more active in the lives of their children. The program, which has served 450 men, focuses on case management, life skills development, and parenting education. The Healthy Start Men's Journal provides the foundation for the program's curriculum and is a tool the program uses to educate and support parents and to promote responsible fatherhood.⁴³ The journal addresses the following issues: male parenting, communication skills, male/female relationships, male sexuality, self-esteem, family health, racism, power and control in relationships, male-male relationships, and decisions and consequences.⁴³

The STRIVE program concept was developed by East Harlem Employment Service in 1985 in New York City. The model has been very effective. STRIVE Baltimore is an intensive job-readiness and placement service. The 3-week training course blends practical skills with self-examination, critical thinking, relationship building, affirmation, learning, and teaching. The intensive course

emphasizes job-seeking skills, job readiness, work place behavior, appearance, and attitude. The course cornerstone is attitudinal training, as CFWD is based on the belief that the greatest barrier to employment is attitude. Within 3 weeks after completing the course, most STRIVE participants are placed in jobs. Those who have not finished high school are referred to an equivalency program that they can complete while they are working. Those who have high school diplomas are encouraged to enter night school at the college level.⁴⁴

Since STRIVE Baltimore began, 75 percent of its participants have graduated, and 79 percent have remained employed. Through the program, more than 300 clients have found jobs at more than 60 companies. After fathers get jobs, they are eligible for post-employment training that focuses on wage progression to help them obtain better jobs. A key element of STRIVE is follow-up. The program maintains contact with its clients and their employers for 2 years following the client's graduation, and the program is available to assist clients throughout their lives.⁴⁴

In cooperation with the Police Athletic League, PAL encourages fathers' involvement with their children. CFWD also provides family services through team parenting. The team-parenting program recognizes that never-married parents, whether or not they are a couple, may need support to work together for the health and well-being of their children. Their support team might include the children's grandparents, the parents' new spouses or partners, and other important individuals in the family's life.⁴²

PFF is funded by the Ford and Mott Foundations and DHHS through the State of Maryland Child Support Enforcement Agency. It provides fathers with education, job training, and job placement to encourage them to establish paternity. The Baltimore City PFF demonstrates how partnerships between community-based organizations serving young noncustodial fathers and local child support enforcement agencies can suc-

cessfully advocate for and support fragile families.¹

With these five components, CFWD assists fathers and mothers in supporting their children financially and emotionally in an attempt to reduce poverty and father absence.¹

VII. District Models

DC Healthy Start

The DC Healthy Start Project (DCHS) established the Male Outreach Worker Program (MOW) to promote the idea that men play an important role in the healthy birth and development of their children. The MOW Program is holistically structured to address the physical, mental, and socioeconomic needs of fathers and potential fathers. The program is federally funded and serves Wards 5, 6, 7, and 8 of Washington, DC. DCHS receives referrals from government and private agencies, health and social service providers, alcohol and drug treatment facilities, DC Healthy Start clients, DC Healthy Start case managers, and schools and churches. In addition, male outreach workers go door to door to solicit participation in the program. DCHS provides case management for males, some of whose family members participate in Healthy Start.^{45,46}

Once a father has been accepted into the program, male outreach workers work with him to create a Personal Development Plan (PDP). This plan could encompass drug treatment, counseling, job training, and parenting skills, among other things. The outreach worker helps fathers prioritize their goals. After the plan is finalized, the client must sign it. The outreach worker helps him complete the PDP, and the program works with him for approximately 2 years.^{45,46}

DCHS clients can participate in the Healthy Start Father's Curriculum sessions; take part in weekly men's support group sessions; get job training, receive help in meeting other goals; learn parenting skills; and obtain counseling and health education. The program also incorporates the cur-

riculum of the *Healthy Start Father's Journal*, which was created by BCHS Men's Services. The staff works to develop clients' characters by helping them form a positive self-image and by encouraging them to strive for self-improvement. Outreach workers engage in ongoing outreach to clients to urge their continued participation in Men's Services activities.^{45,46}

STRIVE DC

STRIVE DC is a nonprofit employment service that began operating in August 1999. It is a job-readiness and job-placement program aimed at helping clients change their attitudes toward work, thereby making them more employable. The program is often referred to as "attitude boot camp." It follows the format developed by East Harlem Employment Service in New York and of the Baltimore STRIVE component of CFWD. STRIVE DC has a grant with the city for noncustodial parents and child support.⁴⁷

STRIVE DC recruits applicants from all parts of the city, mainly through newspaper ads. The training program runs for 3 weeks, during which participants meet from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., 5 days a week. Participants wear business attire to classes. They learn how to receive instructions, accept criticism, and function as team members; think in terms of job advancement and long-term careers; dress and speak appropriately; use the telephone; write résumés; and fill out applications. They perform tasks that simulate the kinds performed in the work place and engage in group interaction sessions, one-on-one counseling, role playing, mock interviews, and so forth. Clients receive practical information about applying for a job and staying employed. The jobs they get after completing the program are typically entry-level positions paying \$7.00 to \$9.00 an hour at companies in a wide variety of industries. STRIVE DC does not place clients in dead-end jobs that provide no opportunities for professional development. The program intends to track participants and follow up on their progress for 2 years after

their initial placement. Beyond that, STRIVE DC is committed to monitoring its graduates for the rest of their lives.⁴⁷

STRIVE DC provides separate career-related programs for men and women. A "For Men Only" workshop deals with the responsibilities of fatherhood, conflict resolution, and racial prejudice on the job. A "For Women Only" workshop addresses problems such as child care, domestic abuse, and barriers women face when trying to find employment. STRIVE DC also works with participants on custody/visitation/abuse issues.⁴⁷

The Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization, DC Office

The Washington, DC, office of the Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization is based on the national model. The District site opened in 1996 and has a staff of eight. Bruce and Cesalie Jenkins, a married couple, are the managing partners. They are on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to help fathers connect with their families and with their places of employment. The Jenkins have helped hundreds of fathers get involved in their children's lives and lead lives filled with respect, dignity, and love. They offer free assistance with setting and reaching goals; relationship issues; parenting challenges; parental disputes; and paternity establishment. They also help participants discover their potential as people and as fathers. They assist participants in locating full-time job and training opportunities; developing a sense of pride as fathers; supporting their families; and becoming the kind of fathers they want to be.⁴⁸

The staff has worked extensively in the community and has established relationships with people and organizations that assist fathers in getting and keeping jobs. They offer help with filling out job applications; résumé preparation; locating job vacancies; and handling family issues and work issues. Outreach specialists go door to door to locate those in need of such services.⁴⁸

VIII. Challenges

Creating Flexible Policies

Locating absent fathers and bringing them into the formal system depends upon establishing paternity and upon the father's willingness to be a part of his children's life. Nearly 90 percent of all fathers attend the birth of their children.⁴⁰ However, the national paternity establishment rate is barely 50 percent for children born out of wedlock who are receiving TANF or Child Support Enforcement (CSE) services.² In the District the paternity establishment for children born out of wedlock who are receiving TANF or CSE services is only 2 percent.² As word circulates within low-income communities that fathers who cooperate with paternity establishment efforts but fail to comply with child support orders may be imprisoned or have their driver's license revoked, many fathers choose to become less involved with their children.²¹ Therefore, fundamental to paternity establishment and to father involvement is the reevaluation of child support enforcement and welfare policies affecting fathers with low incomes. Such policies need to be made more flexible so as not to discourage fathers from being involved with their children.

If these "underground fathers" formally acknowledge paternity and seek services from programs, their relations with their children's mother could introduce additional obstacles to their establishment of a good relationship with the children. Research suggests that the issues affecting fathers and families are interrelated and that fathering is dramatically affected by the relationship between the biological mother and the biological father.¹⁸ Whether a father is resident or nonresident, his fathering is influenced by the status and history of his union with his children's mother. The children's mother thus plays a critical role in promoting and supporting fathers' involvement with their children.⁴⁰ Potential conflicts between parents can seriously and adversely affect their children. In certain situations, the reinvolvement of

fathers might result in physical harm to mother and child. In these instances, the process of reconnecting fathers and children becomes more complex. It is essential that fathers, mothers, and children receive counseling to try to resolve relationship issues. Furthermore, policymakers need to think creatively about how to develop and implement child support, visitation, and custody policies in ways that do not exacerbate tensions between mothers and fathers.

Marriage

Many programs and fatherhood initiatives advocate marriage as the most effective pathway to involved, committed, and responsible fatherhood.²¹ Fatherhood initiatives promoting marriage argue that for the number of children growing up with involved and committed fathers to rise, the number of children living with their married fathers must do so also.²¹ Some research suggests that when a man and a woman who have children or are planning to have children get married, this benefits the father, the mother, and the children. However, current strategies for promoting fatherhood and marriage conflict with welfare-to-work programs that attempt to help single mothers achieve self-sufficiency through work.²¹ Those who oppose the promotion of marriage argue that the notion that it guarantees effective fatherhood or that fatherhood can only be effective within marriage is false, and that encouraging fathers to work and to pay child support is more important than pushing them to marry.⁴⁰ Regardless of their position, however, virtually all researchers and policymakers agree that marriage is an important social good, even if they do not know how to produce more marriages.

Collaboration

The greatest challenge facing many programs targeting dead broke dads is collaboration. Without statewide or strategic plans that address issues related to fathers with low incomes, such collaboration between state agencies will rarely

occur. It is also difficult for federal and local agencies and community-based organizations to work together. Welfare services, child support agencies, community organizations, and the courts usually have competing goals and assumptions about the populations that they serve and to whom they are accountable. Most programs tend not to be a part of state systems such as the education, welfare, child support, or court systems, and many are unaware of each other's existence. Most public and private programs for fathers with low incomes work independently. Consequently, there is no comprehensive or strategic approach to service delivery at the local, county, or state level.¹⁷

Baltimore has become a model for many communities across the country because of the high degree of communication and coordination among its fatherhood program sponsors and practitioners.¹⁰ Baltimore's fatherhood-related activities span a broad range of public institutions including health, education, criminal justice, and social welfare institutions.¹ The mayor's office, which has created a Male Initiative within the Department of Social Services, has provided strong leadership, and state funding is abundant. Contributions from foundations and corporations have proven integral to the success of programs targeting fathers with low incomes. Most important, Baltimore's father-focused services are multi-dimensional; they promote the importance of nurturing children as well as of providing for them economically.¹⁰ While Baltimore's collaboration efforts are too recent for their effectiveness to be assessed, the state's ability to achieve this level of collaboration is in itself worthy of praise and emulation.

IX. Policy Considerations

Policymakers have focused on child support and paternity establishment when making policy relevant to fathers with low incomes. They have put tough enforcement measures into effect in an attempt to collect more money from fathers. But concentrating solely on child support enables us to

determine only whether fathers are fulfilling their financial obligations to their children.

Over the last few years, the idea that fathers can and should be more than economic providers has gained acceptance. By (1) establishing fatherhood programs, (2) providing funding, (3) making welfare and child support arrangements more flexible, and (4) creating work force policies, the federal government has attempted to encourage and promote father involvement. The U.S. House of Representatives recently passed the Fathers Count Act of 1999, the first bill to dedicate federal funds to implementing responsible fatherhood initiatives. This is also the first bill to address issues of dead broke dads and to separate them from deadbeat dads. The intention of the bill is to provide grants to states to encourage fathers to become better parents and to promote fatherhood in families with low incomes by expanding job training and employment opportunities and by supporting programs that help men meet their responsibilities as fathers. The bill sets aside \$150 million in grants to be distributed over 6 years to nonprofit groups and state agencies with programs providing educational, economic, or employment aid to young parents.⁴⁹

There is no way to force men to be good fathers. A man's participation in a fatherhood program does not guarantee that he will be a loving, involved, and responsible father. At present we have not effectively measured whether any of these programs have made their participants better fathers. It is much easier for policymakers to evaluate whether programs make fathers more financially responsible. In order to fully evaluate fatherhood initiatives we need a basis upon which to assess fathers as nurturers. In addition, program effectiveness has been difficult to assess because many communities place more emphasis on helping fathers and serving families than on conducting rigorous evaluations of programs.¹⁷ To determine the true impact these programs have had on the lives of fathers and their children, more research must be done, and programs must expand their focus to include assessment.

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Appendix A

District Resources

Concerned Black Men, Inc.

1511 K Street, NW
Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: (202) 783-5414

Concerned Black Men is a national nonprofit organization with affiliate chapters in several cities. Male volunteers act as positive role models for young men and build stronger channels of communication between adults and children through programs and activities promoting educational, cultural, and social development. The Washington, DC, chapter sponsors an annual youth recognition awards banquet, a Martin Luther King Jr. oratory contest, teen pregnancy prevention workshops, a youth offender outreach project, and other programs and events.

DC Healthy Start Male Outreach Workers' Program

Contact: DeCosto Brown
2700 Martin Luther King, Jr., Avenue, SE
Cottage #8
Washington, DC 20032
Phone: (202) 645-0415
Fax: (202) 562-5084

The DC Healthy Start Male Outreach Workers' Program targets adolescent boys, expectant fathers, and fathers with children under 1 year of age. Based on evidence that a pregnant woman who has her partner's support and encouragement is more likely to get early prenatal care, give birth to a healthy baby, and raise children who are happy, educated members of society, the program targets male parents and helps them be more productive and involved fathers. The program recently expanded into Wards 5, 6, 7, and 8. Services offered include support groups, counseling, refer-

als, job training, parenting skills classes, and mentoring programs.

Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization

Contacts: Bruce Jenkins and Cesalie Jenkins,
Managing Partners
3594 Hayes Street, NE
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Washington, DC 20019-7522
Phone: (202) 396-8320
Web site: <http://www.responsiblefatherhood.org>

The Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization, founded in 1982 by Charles A. Ballard, is a nonprofit, home-based, grassroots organization dedicated to encouraging fathers to become involved in the lives of their children in a loving, compassionate, and nurturing way. With program sites in six cities, the institute seeks to create and maintain an environment in which fathers can develop the parenting and life skills they need in order to be the fathers they want to be. Staffed by people who live in the communities where they work, the institute provides free assistance with setting and reaching goals, relationship issues, parenting challenges, parental disputes, and paternity establishment. Staff also assist fathers in finding full-time jobs and future training opportunities in order to fulfill their potential as reliable providers.

STRIVE DC

Contact: Christine Hart-Wright, Executive Director
1108 3rd Street, SE
Washington, DC 20003
Phone: (202) 484-1264
Fax: (202) 484-2135

STRIVE DC is a nonprofit employment service that began operating in August 1999. It is modeled on the format developed by East Harlem Employment Services in New York and on the Baltimore STRIVE component of CFWD. STRIVE DC recruits applicants from all over the city, mainly through newspaper ads, for its job readiness and job placement program, which aims to improve participants' attitude toward work. In addition to the job training curriculum, STRIVE DC provides social services in separate formats for men and women and works with participants on custody, visitation, and abuse issues.

Appendix B

National Resources

Center for Fathers, Families, and Workforce Development

Baltimore City Healthy Start

Contact: Joseph Jones, Director

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Center for Fathers, Families, and Workforce Development (CWFD) is an independent not-for-profit organization that grew out of the work of Baltimore City Healthy Start, Inc., a quasi-public corporation administered by the City Health Department and funded by DHHS. CFWD and Healthy Start have developed a team-parenting program that is based on the premise that mothers and fathers need to work together for the health and well-being of their children, regardless of the status of their relationship. According to this model, the children's maternal and paternal grandparents, the parents' new spouses or partners, and any others who are important to the family are viewed as potential members of the team that will work together to meet the children's emotional, psychological, and financial needs by sharing decision-making, resolving conflicts, and consistently providing children with access to both parents and their families in a safe environment. CFWD expects to complete the design of a team-parenting pilot project that will operate in several cities.

Center of Fathers, Families, and Public Policy

Contact: Daniel Ash

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Madison, WI 53703

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E-mail: dash@cffpp.org

Center of Fathers, Families, and Public Policy (CFFPP) is engaged in training, technical assistance, and public education that promotes public policy centering on children's well-being, which is dependent on the "preservation of the well-being of both parents." Current CFFPP projects include the Legal Assistance Project to aid fathers in navigating the child-support enforcement system, and a collaborative project with the National Women's Law Center (NWLC) that sponsors a meeting series for those working on child support issues from the perspective of mothers and fathers for the purpose of developing policy recommendations. The CFFPP Colloquia series brings father, mothers, program practitioners, and advocates together to discuss important topics for fragile families. The summer 2000 national conference will address the relations of previously violent, noncustodial fathers with their children and domestic partners.

Center for Successful Fathering, Inc.

13740 Research Blvd., G-4

Austin, TX 78750

Phone: (512) 335-8106 / (800) 537-0853

Fax: (512) 258-2591

E-mail: rklinger@fathering.org

Web site: <http://www.fathering.org>

The Center for Successful Fathering is based on the belief that children need the balance of mothers and fathers. Its mission is to increase the awareness of men and women about the essential role fathers play in raising their children; to provide fathers and potential fathers with timely and relevant skills to assist them in becoming the best fathers they can be; to develop and disseminate fathering information to increase the under-

standing of fathers' obligations and responsibilities in raising their children; and to dispel the misconception that fathers are obsolete.

The center collaborates with other associations and community leaders to present conferences on fathering, in addition to sponsoring fathering programs and workshops for fathers of elementary, middle, and high school students. The center focuses its research efforts on identifying successful fathers and exploring the reasons for their success. The research examines the lives of new fathers, fathers of adolescents, unmarried fathers, adolescent fathers, custodial fathers, and noncustodial fathers. The center also investigates characteristics of father-friendly work places, especially to learn how corporations in today's competitive climate can accommodate fathers who want rewarding careers and also to be involved parents.

Child Trends

Contact: Kristin Moore
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Web site: <http://www.childtrends.org>

Child Trends is a nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization dedicated to studying children, youth, and families through research, data collection, and data analysis. It was established in 1979 and currently has a staff of 39 researchers, analysts, and administrative and support personnel. Its major research areas include adolescent pregnancy and childbearing; the effects of welfare and poverty on children; and issues related to parenting, family structure, and family processes, including fatherhood and male fertility. Child Trends gathers data on the major indicators of children's and family well-being, analyzes trends in these data over time, and works to develop new or improved indicators. Child Trends develops and tests new conceptual approaches to studying

emerging areas of research and seeks to improve upon, expand, or refine existing measurement instruments.

Staff members recently served on the planning committee for a year-long series of interrelated conferences and meetings to review current approaches to gathering information, composed a series of widely disseminated summary reports, presented new findings on fathers at related research conferences, and contributed to a final report from the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, *Nurturing Fatherhood: Improving Data and Research on Male Fertility, Family Formation, and Fatherhood*.

The Fatherhood Project National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families

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330 7th Avenue
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Phone: (212) 268-4846
Web- site: <http://www.fatherhoodproject.org/>

The Fatherhood Project, the longest-running national initiative on fatherhood, is a research and education project that is examining the future of fatherhood and developing ways to support men's involvement in child rearing. Its books, films, consultation, seminars, and training programs all present practical strategies to support fathers and mothers in their parenting roles. Current projects include ongoing research into "best practices" and strategies for creating a work place that enables fathers to better balance work and family life, while also enhancing business productivity and increasing women's opportunities. The Fatherhood Project also administers the Male Involvement Project, a national training initiative that helps Head Start and other early childhood programs get fathers and other significant men involved in their programs and in the lives of their children.

Another project, the State Initiatives on Responsible Fatherhood, is examining all 50 states' fatherhood policies and programs to gain a better understanding of the government's role in fostering responsible fatherhood.

National Center for Fathering

Contact: Ken Canfield, Ph.D., Founder and President

P.O. Box 413888

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Fax: (913) 384-4665

Web site: <http://www.fathers.com/>

The mission of the National Center for Fathering is to inspire and equip men to be better fathers. In working toward this goal, the organization has become a leading research center that develops resources to strengthen community-based efforts addressing the need for more and better fathering. As a result of its research, the center has also developed training programs for fathers from diverse cultural communities. It encourage and supports specialized fathering groups for divorced fathers, stepfathers, military fathers, and incarcerated fathers and has designed its programs to reach fathers in civic, corporate, and ecclesiastical settings.

National Center on Fathers and Families

Vivian Gadsden, Ph.D., Director

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The mission of the National Center on Fathers and Families (NCOFF) is to improve the opportunities of children and the efficacy of families and to support research that advances the understanding of father involvement. Developed in the spirit of the Philadelphia Children's Network's (PCN) motto, "Help the children. Fix the system," NCOFF

seeks to increase and enrich the possibilities available to children and to ensure that children receive the help they need, and that the system allows fathers to participate in their children's lives. NCOFF shares with PCN the premises that children need loving, nurturing families; that families need to be supported in order to nurture their children; and that efforts to support families should increase the ability of mothers, fathers, and other adults within and outside the biological family to contribute to the children's development.

NCOFF was founded in July 1994 with core funding from The Annie E. Casey Foundation to develop and implement a research agenda that is practice-focused and practice-derived, to expand the knowledge base on father involvement and families within multiple disciplines, and to contribute to critical discussions in policy.

National Fatherhood Initiative

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Web site: <http://www.fatherhood.org/>

The mission of the National Fatherhood Initiative (NFI) is to improve the well-being of children by increasing the number of children growing up with loving, committed, and responsible fathers. A nonprofit, nonsectarian, nonpartisan organization, NFI conducts public awareness campaigns promoting responsible fatherhood, organizes conferences and community fatherhood forums, provides resource material to organizations seeking to establish support programs for fathers, publishes a quarterly newsletter, and disseminates information to men seeking to become more effective fathers. NFI aims to create an historic social movement around fatherhood with the help of PSAs and national media campaigns, national and regional fatherhood summits, and the develop-

ment of state and local fatherhood projects or campaigns.

**National Center for Strategic Nonprofit
Planning and Community Leadership**

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Washington, DC 20036
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Web site: <http://www.ncpl.org>

National Center for Strategic Nonprofit Planning and Community Leadership (NPCL) is a nonprofit organization created for charitable and educational purposes. NCPL's mission is to improve the governance and administration of nonprofit tax-exempt organizations and strengthen community leadership through family and neighborhood empowerment. The flagship project of the NPCL is Partners for Fragile Families: Focus on Fathers, a 10-city demonstration project involving social service providers, law enforcement, and labor specialists. Its specific goals are to help never-married fathers assume legal, financial, and emotional responsibility for their children; expand the services provided by community-based fatherhood programs; promote the adoption of policies that will encourage the formation of healthy families and foster cooperation among service providers and public agencies; and improve both the placement services work force development agencies provided to fathers and the services intended to help them increase their earning potential. The emphasis of the project is on teaching participants about parental accountability, a father's role and his impact on his children, how to be an effective disciplinarian, handling the daily needs of children, and negotiating the child support enforcement system.

**National Practitioners Network for Fathers and
Families**

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The National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families (NPNFF) is a national individual membership organization whose mission is to foster communication, promote professionalism, and enhance collaboration among individuals working with fathers and fragile families. Through publications, conferences, training events, technical assistance, advocacy, collaborations with other organizations serving fathers and families, and networking opportunities, NPNFF seeks to improve the effectiveness of practitioners who work with fathers and fragile families, and represents the perspective of fatherhood and fragile families program practitioners. Through participation in national advocacy coalitions and collaborative efforts, NPNFF ensures that the voice of the individuals who work with fathers in local programs will be heard as national policy decisions are made.

**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Fatherhood Initiative**

DHHS Policy Information Center
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200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201
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Fax: (202) 401-6228
Web site: <http://fatherhood.hhs.gov>

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Fatherhood Initiative is working to promote responsible fatherhood by improving work opportunities for fathers with low incomes, increasing the amount of child support collected, enhancing parenting skills, supporting noncustodial parents' access to and right to visit their children, reducing domestic violence, and involving boys and young men in preventing teenage pregnancy and premature parenting. DHHS is also working with private, public, and foundation partners to ensure that both fathers and mothers are fully involved in raising their children. In March 1999 DHHS launched a nationwide public service

campaign that challenged noncustodial fathers to remain emotionally and financially connected to their children, and it is collaborating with other federal agencies, researchers, and private foundations to improve data collection, research, and evaluation of fatherhood programs.

Urban Institute: Non-Custodial Fathers and Public Policy

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Washington, DC 20037

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Web site: <http://www.urban.org>

The Urban Institute is a nonprofit policy research organization that was established in Washington, DC, in 1968. The institute's goals are to sharpen thinking about society's problems and efforts to solve them, improve government decisions and their implementation, and increase citizens' awareness about important public choices. Urban Institute researchers have studied noncustodial fathers and public policy and concluded that there is no "one-size fits all" approach to enforcement that will accomplish the goal of increasing the financial support such fathers provide their children. The Urban Institute's policy brief series, *Strengthening Fragile Families*, provides information on policies that help parents with low incomes provide the emotional and financial support their children need.

About the DC Family Policy Seminars

The DC Family Policy Seminar (DC FPS) is a collaborative project of the Georgetown Public Policy Institute (GPPI) and its affiliate, the National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health (NCEMCH). The mission of the DC FPS is to provide District policymakers with accurate, relevant, nonpartisan, timely information and policy options concerning issues affecting children and families.

The DC FPS is coordinated by Vince Hutchins, Project Director, National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health, 2000 15th Street, North, Suite 701, Arlington, VA 22201; (703) 524-7802.

To receive additional information about the DC FPS, or to request copies of the following briefing reports or highlights, please contact Susan Rogers or Kristine Kelty at (703) 524-7802.

- *Do School-Based Mental Health Services Make Sense?*
- *Out-of-School Time Activities: Can Families Help Programs and Can Programs Help Families?* May 1999.
- *Quality Housing for All: Family and Community-Led Initiatives.* February 1999.
- *Educating with Peers: Other Do—Should You?* November 1998.
- *Saving Our Schools: Would Vouchers Create New Solutions or New Problems?* April 1998.
- *Finding Families: DC's Foster Family Deficit.* February 1998.
- *Building the Future: Strategies to Serve Immigrant Families in the District.* October 1997.
- *Diverting Our Children from Crime: Family-Centered, Community-Based Strategies for Prevention.* May 1997.
- *The Child Care Crisis in the District of Columbia: Can (or Should) Businesses Fill the Gap?* March 1997.
- *Feeding Our Families: Community Food Security in the District of Columbia.* November 1996.
- *Keeping Our Kids Safe: Preventing Injury in DC Schools.* September 1996.
- *Fundraising for Family-Centered Organizations in the District.* July 1996.
- *Strengthening Families: Parenting Programs and Policies in the District.* April 1996.
- *Transitioning from Welfare-to-Work in the District: A Family-Centered Perspective.* February 1996.
- *Helping Families and Schools Get it Done: Mentoring Interventions in the District.* November 1995.
- *Caring for Our Children: Meeting the Needs of Low-Income, Working Families in the District.* September 1995.
- *Families that Play Together: Recreation and Leisure in the District.* July 1995.
- *HIV/AIDS: Helping Families Cope.* April 1995.
- *Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Programs: A Family Approach.* February 1995.
- *Family-Friendly Welfare Reform: Using Welfare Policies to Strengthen the Family.* November 1994.
- *Preventing Family Violence.* September 1994.
- *Preventing Adolescent Violence.* May 1994.
- *Preventing Teen Pregnancies.* December 1993.