

# ACF

Administration  
for Children  
and Families

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Administration for Children and Families

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**TO:** State and Territory Human Service Commissioners, State, Tribal and Territorial Agencies Administering or Supervising the Administration of Title IV-E and IV-B of the Social Security Act, Indian Tribes and Indian Tribal Organizations, State Courts, and State and Tribal Court Improvement Programs. State and Territorial Agencies Administering or Supervising the Administration of other ACF programs including child support, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Head Start, Child Care, and other family and youth services.

**SUBJECT:** Integrating Approaches that Prioritize and Enhance Father Engagement

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this information memorandum (IM) is to strongly encourage all human service agencies including child welfare agencies, courts, offices of child support enforcement, offices of public assistance, offices of child care, Head Start programs and family and youth services programs to work together across governments to jointly create and maintain an environment that prioritizes father engagement as a critical factor in strengthening families and adopt approaches to enhance paternal involvement in all family support and child welfare related programs.

## INFORMATION

This IM emphasizes the importance of meaningful father engagement in all Administration for Children and Families (ACF) programs to better serve children and families. The memorandum highlights research findings that demonstrate the value of father involvement in the lives of children and families, and identifies promising practices to promote and sustain meaningful father engagement, regardless of a father's physical location or custodial participation. ACF and its offices speak in unison in strongly encouraging all agencies to work together to ensure that meaningful father engagement is a central aspect of the work done across family serving state and county agencies.

## **I. Background**

As a united family services system, we must work diligently to mitigate known barriers to father engagement and prevent new barriers from arising. Our goal is to create a culture of engagement that encourages and supports fathers in becoming more involved in the lives of their children. ACF's vision is an environment that invites, supports, and rewards positive paternal involvement in the lives of children and families, not one that deters or drives fathers away because of fear of sanction and intimidation.

It is commonly recognized that numerous aspects of current child welfare, child support, and family assistance, and the broader human services ecosystem have resulted in consequences that create reticence for fathers to come forward and claim paternity or engage with systems where paternity has been established. In most instances, child welfare, child support enforcement and family assistance have largely been compliance-oriented systems that carry a threat of punitive action, including sanctions as strong as arrest, jail time, and permanent loss of parental rights to a child. These systems have not historically been organized around facilitating and incentivizing positive behavior change; and historically have not created cultures of engagement that are likely to encourage paternal involvement. With this in mind, ACF calls upon family services agencies to ensure that fathers feel welcome, supported, heard, and able to participate as fully as circumstances permit, and in accordance with applicable law, in all programs and services.

## **II. The Benefits of Father Engagement**

There is a great deal of evidence indicating that fathers play an important role in healthy child development and family stability. A father's positive involvement in the life of his child, both by direct engagement with the child and positive engagement with the mother, can lead to better child outcomes in a number of areas.

### **a. Contribution to Early Childhood Development**

Starting in early childhood, fathers can have a deep influence on the development of children's early learning skills and academic achievement. Positive early interactions, such as father-infant play, may help improve a child's social skills and stimulate cognitive competence during this crucial time when children are just learning to interact with the world around them (Roggman, Noyce, Cook, Christiansen, & Jones, 2004). A meta-analysis of studies on father involvement and early learning notes that children with foundations in these early learning and social skills may be better prepared to transition into academic settings (McWayne, Downer, Campos, & Harris, 2013). Furthermore, findings suggested that both the quantity and quality of father interactions matter, and that more frequent and positive father involvement are related positively to areas such as a child's self-regulation, prosocial skills, and academic and cognitive skills between ages 3 and 8 (McWayne, Downer, Campos, & Harris, 2013).

Father involvement may also affect behavioral issues in children. Here again, it is not only the quantity but also the quality of involvement that is significant. Positive interactions and stronger emotional ties between father and child may lead to a greater sense of emotional

security and lower levels of depression and anxiety in children (Amato & Gilbreth, 1999). Authoritative parenting on the part of a father, e.g., helping with homework, setting limits and offering emotional support, has been linked not only to better academic achievement, but also to fewer externalized behaviors, e.g., aggression, delinquency, etc. (Amato & Gilbreth, 1999). Non-resident father involvement has also been associated with children's social and emotional well-being, academic achievement, and behavioral adjustment (Adamsons & Johnson, 2013.) Children and adolescents that have close and positive relationships with their fathers are less likely to engage in risky behaviors or substance and alcohol use (National Fatherhood Initiative, 2015).

Research also suggests that father involvement may affect mother-infant attachment quality (Hossain, Field, Gonzales, & Malphurs, 1994). Research also suggests that mothers who have positive relationships with their children's fathers may exhibit more positive parenting behaviors, such as being more responsive and affectionate, self-controlled, and emotionally supportive (Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy, 2012).

#### b. Economic Contribution to Health and Development of Children

Fathers' economic contributions affect their children's health and development in a number of ways (Black, Dubowitz, & Starr, 1999; Tamis-Lemonda, Shannon, Cabrera, & Lamb, 2004). A father's financial support can help ensure his child lives in a safer neighborhood and has supports and materials that can aid in academic success, e.g., books, computer and financial help for college (Amato & Gilbreth, 1999). Fathers' regular and consistent financial contributions are also associated with lower levels of food insecurity for children in early and middle childhood (Nepomnyaschy, Miller, Garasky, & Nanda, 2014) and greater access to wholesome foods (Amato & Gilbreth, 1999).

#### c. Contribution to Family Stability and Well-Being

There is also strong evidence that involved fathers can affect family stability and well-being in general. Engaging men as fathers through parenting programs may help prevent child abuse (Bilukha et al., 2005; Holzer et al., 2006; Mikton & Butchart 2009). A father's engagement during pregnancy and in child rearing can positively affect his relationship with the child's mother and help reduce a mother's stress and caregiving workload, which in turn can positively affect marital satisfaction for parents who are married (Milkie & Denny, 2014). In addition, research suggests that the involvement of fathers in child welfare cases may affect some child welfare outcomes, such as reducing the amount of time a child spends in foster care and a greater likelihood of reunification (Burrus, Green, Worcel, Finigan, & Furrer, 2012).

### **III. Creating a Father-Friendly Family Service Approach**

There are a number of initial steps that agencies may consider in developing environments that promote and support father engagement across child and family service settings. ACF deems it important to consider the customer experience and take an objective look at the quality of the

contacts fathers have with our agencies, the circumstances under which those contacts occur and the costs and benefits of fathers participating in the agencies' programs and services. ACF considers it critical for all family serving agencies to thoughtfully review the messages they send to fathers, both explicitly and implicitly. Among the questions that may shed light on messaging to fathers are the following:

- Are there values or attitudes present in the workforce that may inhibit identifying and working with fathers?
- Are there inter-programmatic barriers to father engagement, e.g., engaging in one program may create problems for fathers in another program?
- Do family service programs have a joint commitment and sense of purpose in seeking greater father engagement?

#### **IV. Importance of Father Engagement to all ACF Programs**

Father engagement is critical to the effective operation of, and benefits each of, the ACF programs serving children and families. Below, we describe in more detail how father engagement is interwoven into the various ACF programs and the linkages between a firm commitment to father engagement and improved outcomes for children and families.

##### **a. Administration for Children, Youth and Families**

###### **i. Children's Bureau**

Effectively engaging fathers is critical to achieving the Children's Bureau's (CB) vision of strengthening families, preventing maltreatment and the unnecessary removal of children from their homes, and promoting the safety, permanency and well-being of children.

###### *Fatherhood Engagement in Prevention*

Engaging fathers prior to formal child welfare agency involvement, in a preventative fashion, is an area that child welfare agencies are beginning to recognize as important. Agencies may use Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) program funding to support prevention programs that include father engagement. For example, the District of Columbia uses CBCAP funding to proactively support a community organization to implement a home visiting program for fathers that includes social events with their children and other fathers and father cafes, where they can share their experiences. The program has shown improvement in parent-child attachment, as well as improvement in the relationships and interactions between the father (usually the non-custodial parent) and the child's mother.

Recognizing that the child welfare system can be intimidating and difficult to navigate, a growing number of jurisdictions are offering parent-to-parent support or mentor programs. Such programs match parents to peer mentors or coaches who have experienced the system personally

and now are able to help orient new parents to child welfare processes and proceedings and help them understand their responsibilities, opportunities and the resources that are available.

### *Incarceration*

It is not uncommon for fathers of children involved with the child welfare system to be incarcerated. Incarcerated fathers are often rich sources of information about family resources and help identify paternal relatives that may aid in child rearing in their absence. Many child welfare agencies are increasing their efforts to keep children connected to incarcerated fathers through technology when distance or infrequency of contacts present barriers. Despite even long-term incarceration, fathers can remain an important source of support and connection for children and youth.

Proactively working with fathers, whether custodial, noncustodial, geographically separated, or incarcerated can be helpful in strengthening familial relationships, encouraging fathers to play more active roles in the lives of their children, and making connections with paternal family members and resources, all of which help improve the long-term well-being and development of children.

CB strongly encourages all child welfare agencies to enhance their efforts to work with fathers across the continuum of child welfare services.

## **ii. Family and Youth Services Bureau**

The Family and Youth Bureau (FYSB) works to address a number of issues that impact or are related to father engagement. FYSB's mission is to support the organizations and communities that work every day to put an end to youth homelessness, adolescent pregnancy and domestic violence. FYSB achieves this by administering grants to programs that provide shelter, community services and prevention education for youth, adults and families.

FYSB's grantees and programs work with parents, children, and youth to lay the foundation for healthy relationships and promote safe and responsible behavior. In taking on this range of engaging men and boys on issues as challenging as domestic violence and youth homelessness, FYSB's grantees seek to be preventative and decrease the likelihood that families and youth are placed in vulnerable and dangerous situations. Public awareness initiatives, on-the-ground education and training, experiential learning, modeling, and coaching are all central strategies to FYSB's support of parents, children, and youth. Knowing that these issues cross-cut cultures and socioeconomic status, FYSB's grantees also work intensively to ensure all of the programs and services it supports are grounded in cultural competence and are respectful of, and appropriate to the communities they are intended to serve. FYSB is deeply committed to learning what works and is pursuing rigorous evaluation and assessment of its work with a constant eye toward return on investment to demonstrate inherent value.

### *Runaway and Homeless Youth Program*

FYSB's Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) Program provides shelter and support services for youth experiencing homelessness, including pregnant and parenting youth and their child(ren). Particularly through the Transitional Living (TLP) and Maternity Group Home (MGH) program, which serve youth between the ages of 16 and 22, services are designed to help youth experiencing homelessness develop the skills necessary to make a successful transition to self-sufficient living, paving a way for youth to realign education and career paths in order to set them up for success and a stable family later in life, ending a possible cycle of poverty. MGHs are specifically designed to meet the needs of pregnant and parenting youth and offer an array of comprehensive services to teach parenting skills, child development, family budgeting, and health and nutrition to young mothers and fathers.

#### *Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program*

FYSB's Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention (APP) Program supports programs promoting healthy relationships, parent-child communication, and male responsibility while helping prevent teenage pregnancy among middle school youth. APP's Sexual Risk Avoidance Education grantees provide youth with mentoring, counseling, and adult supervision to promote abstinence from sexual activity.

Several of APP's Personal Responsibility Education Program grantees implement a curriculum called Wise Guys that works to strengthen communication between boys and their parents; increase knowledge related to sexual attitudes and the consequences of risky behavior to prevent early entrance to fatherhood; and enhances boys' ability to identify personal values.

#### *Family Violence Prevention Services Program*

FYSB's Family Violence Prevention and Services Program grantees have supported a number of efforts working with fatherhood programs/initiatives to address domestic violence and promote healthy parenting practices. State Domestic Violence Coalitions and Tribal programs collaborate with fatherhood programs to share common messages about domestic violence prevention, strong families, and healthy relationships, focusing on engaging boys, men and especially fathers in efforts to reduce incidences of intimate partner violence.

#### *Conclusion*

FYSB strongly encourages all grantees and service providers it supports to ensure that father engagement, parent empowerment, and work with young men and boys continue be incorporated as part of their programming in local communities.

#### **b. Office of Child Care**

Child care serves as a critical resource in strengthening the role fathers play in the lives of their children. Nurturing relationships between fathers and their families contribute to positive cognitive and social developmental outcomes among children (Grossmann, K., Grossmann, K. E., Fremmer-Bombik, E., Kindler, H., Scheuerer-Englisch, H., & Zimmermann, A. P. [2002]), as well as healthier family environments that are less likely to involve, and better equipped to

mitigate the effects of, adverse early childhood experiences (ACEs) which negatively impact long term healthy growth, development, and learning (Verbitsky-Savitz, N., Hargreaves, M., Penoyer, S., Morales, N., Coffee-Borden, B., & Whitesell, E. [2016]). Early care and learning providers in both home- and center-based settings are uniquely positioned to facilitate and promote fatherhood engagement initiatives. For families where both parents do not live in the same household, child care settings are an important resource to help families communicate about their children's growth and learning, and develop their parenting skills.

The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), through the Office of Child Care (OCC), supports low-income working families through child care financial assistance and enhances children's learning by improving the quality of early care and education and afterschool programs. Supporting fatherhood engagement is an allowable quality expenditure based on the emphasis on parent engagement in the CCDF Act and Final Rule, which encourages grantees to invest in training and outreach that engages parents and families in culturally and linguistically appropriate ways to expand their knowledge, skills, and capacity to be meaningful partners in supporting their children's positive development.

OCC strongly encourages all offices of child care and child care programs to work intensively to engage and involve fathers.

### **c. Office of Child Support Enforcement**

The child support program is the largest public program with a primary focus on fathers and their role in creating family well-being and economic self-sufficiency. The child support enforcement program works with fathers from the time their children are born until their children reach the age of majority. By engaging with fathers from the beginning, the child support program protects the legal connection fathers have with their children and supports lifelong emotional and financial support. The child support program is focused on more than just financial support, with expanded efforts to support fathers' engagement in the lives of their children through shared employment services and parenting programs.

#### *Employment*

The child support program struggles to perform its core mission effectively in enforcing support obligations and obtaining child support for children when noncustodial parents are not employed. The child support program can help increase opportunities for family and individual advancement through employment opportunities. An analysis by ACF's Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) estimates that 13% of noncustodial parents are unemployed for extended periods of time. When large numbers of noncustodial fathers are out of the labor force, they suffer a decrease in life satisfaction, potentially adverse health consequences, and their families suffer from a lack of reliable child support payments. Research evidence shows that employment programs for noncustodial parents contribute to the effectiveness of the child support program. OCSE may authorize a state to use incentive payments to provide employment programs for noncustodial parents. In Texas, for example, the child support program has used incentive funds to connect more than 37,000 noncustodial parents to employment services resulting in \$360 million in support for their families. The state should submit its request using the procedures

listed in OCSE-AT-01-04, and demonstrate how their use of funds will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the state's child support program.

### *Identifying and Engaging Fathers*

The child support program has the capacity, experience and resources to address barriers that federal partners cite, such as identifying, locating and engaging fathers. One resource, the Federal Parent Locator Service (FPLS) is an assembly of systems operated by OCSE, to assist states in locating noncustodial parents to establish paternity and child support obligations, as well as enforcing and modifying child support orders. FPLS data can also help child welfare agencies identify, locate, inform, and evaluate both maternal and paternal relatives as possible placement options for children at risk of entering the foster care system. OCSE makes this data available to child welfare agencies right now, to help promote, support and maintain positive parent/child relationships. State child welfare agencies can enter into an agreement with OCSE to access FPLS data directly for this purpose.

Paternity establishment is a core function of the child support program. In 2016 the program helped more than 1.4 million fathers create legal bonds to their children. For many of those fathers, the child support program was at the hospital with voluntary paternity establishment services helping to cement their relationships from the very start. Establishing paternity is a milestone opportunity for an unmarried father to demonstrate his commitment to his child and is an important predictor of that father's continued involvement. The child support program partners with other family support programs like home visiting, WIC and Early Head Start to engage fathers during pregnancy, at birth, and in the first years of a child's life.

OCSE strongly encourages all child support offices and programs to enhance their efforts to work with fathers in positive and supportive ways.

#### **d. Office of Family Assistance**

The Office of Family Assistance (OFA) has long recognized the value of healthy father involvement and the positive father-child relationship. According to a recent congressional report, low-income noncustodial parents historically have had little opportunity to participate in public assistance programs. Most of the policy discussion about low-income children that occurred during the "welfare reform" debates between the 1960s to 1990s was focused on single custodial mothers and their children, not on the fathers of those children (Tollestrup, J. (2018); *Fatherhood Initiatives: Connecting Fathers to Their Children*, CRS Report No. RL31025. Retrieved from Congressional Research Service website: [www.crs.gov](http://www.crs.gov)).

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), the \$16.5 billion block grant program created in 1996, has to some degree changed that scenario. The third congressional finding of the law that enacted the TANF program states: "Promotion of responsible fatherhood...is integral to successful child rearing and the well-being of children" (Tollestrup, J.). We are encouraged that about half of all states use some TANF funds for responsible fatherhood activities and hope to see that expand across the country.



In 2006, OFA began providing \$75 million in demonstration grant funding for Responsible Fatherhood activities and currently funds 36 organizations across the country. These programs provide services that combine father-child involvement skills development services and activities to address participation barriers and the economic stability needs of their participants with healthy relationship education (romantic and interpersonal) to improve father engagement and strengthen co-parenting and overall child and family well-being. Additionally, OFA funds *The National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse* ([www.Fatherhood.gov](http://www.Fatherhood.gov)), which serves as a resource for responsible fatherhood information, designed to promote and encourage the appropriate involvement of fathers in the lives of their children. This free, easily accessible resource can help all ACF programs achieve our common goal to improve the overall well-being of the families we serve.

In 2017 OFA, OPRE, and the Children's Bureau developed a project to identify and synthesize information about existing resources and efforts to engage fathers and paternal relatives of children involved in the child welfare system, identify potential strategies to increase their engagement (including Responsible Fatherhood grant programs), and carry out a systematic, replicable process to implement and test those strategies. The impetus for the project was a review of the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) findings, which show a lack of engaging birth parents overall and particularly low engagement of birth fathers and paternal relatives. As this project develops, we will provide regular updates on progress and findings that we hope to benefit fathers, their families and children across family service programs. Together, these initiatives and resources can go a long way to help all ACF programs achieve our common goal of improving the overall well-being of the families we serve.

OFA strongly encourages all offices of public assistance to work intensively to reach, include, and empower fathers to be active contributors in the lives of their children.

#### **e. Office of Head Start**

Engaging fathers in Head Start (HS) and Early Head Start (EHS) programs can have a deep impact on children, their families, and the community as a whole. Engaging fathers in HS/EHS centers across the country builds a lasting impact on fathers' connection and involvement in their children's development and well-being, leading to a larger impact on the family as a whole as well as on the entire local community.

##### *Fathers as contributors to school readiness and well-being*

OHS has a long history of engaging male family members and father figures as important contributors to the school readiness of children and to the well-being of families and communities. ACF encourages HS and EHS programs to continue to engage fathers as advocates and lifelong educators of their children in ways that meet the different needs of their individual families and communities. Investing in on-going professional development for staff to help them assess and evaluate how they work with fathers and examining cultural perspectives to improve their understanding of the unique needs and strengths of fathers are some of the ways in which OHS programs are working to engage fathers.

### *Integration of fathers critical for children's success*

Father engagement is critical to successful outcomes for children. Ideally, father engagement should not be a stand-alone initiative but rather a vital and integrated aspect of parent, family and community work in HS and EHS. OHS programs should also consider opportunities to strengthen community partnerships. For example, programs can reach out to childcare partners, domestic violence providers, local child welfare agencies, child support locations, and TANF offices, to align and reinforce father responsive strategies that strengthen families and support father-child relationships.

OHS strongly encourages all HS offices and programs to redouble their efforts in working with fathers.

### **f. Office of Regional Operations**

The Office of Regional Operations (ORO) has a long history of promoting ACF programs and policies and collaborating with public and private partners, including on the issue of father engagement, through the Immediate Office of the Regional Administrator and ACF's 10 Regional Offices, ORO conducts father engagement activities across the regions in several ways.

#### *Engaging state and territory human services*

Father engagement is discussed in face-to-face commissioner and state leadership meetings. ORO provides leadership consultation on promising whole family strategies, especially those working across multiple human services programs. ORO facilitates peer-to-peer learning opportunities for new state commissioners on a variety of topics including fatherhood programs.  
*Engaging federal, state and local partners and facilitating cross-sector collaboration*

ORO convenes internal and external regional workgroups with federal agencies in support of local efforts to promote economic mobility and social well-being, especially those targeting fathers. ORO coordinates with all ACF programs impacting fathers including TANF, Head Start, child support, child care, child welfare, and family and youth services to promote father engagement in state and local programs. ORO also works with federal, state and local partners to highlight and disseminate innovative practices on father engagement.

#### *Promoting responsible fatherhood through communicating and convening*

ORO has a long history of facilitating national, regional and statewide conferences to support responsible fatherhood, father engagement, and re-entry initiatives. Audiences and partners include state officials, service providers, researchers, community leaders and families. Our goal is to provide relevant and timely information about parenting, policy, programs, research, resources and the important role of all fathers in a child's growth and development.

ORO strongly encourages all human services agencies to work across their programs and collaborate with state and local partners to design services to meaningfully engage and involve fathers in the lives of their children.

**g. Conclusion**

Father engagement is inextricably linked to strengthening families, which is a fundamental charge and key goal across ACF. **United as a system to strengthen, build and support families across the country, ACF reaffirms the integral part fathers play in the lives of their children, their families, and their communities.**

Child and family serving agencies must work together to create cultures that encourage, rather than deter, fathers to take a more active role in their children's lives.

Given the importance of father engagement to the success of all ACF programs, and the positive impacts of father engagement on child, youth and family well-being, we encourage all family service agencies to join us in making father engagement a joint priority.

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## RESOURCES

### Fatherhood:

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/css/child-support-professionals/working-with/fatherhood>

### Fatherhood Guide

[https://www.air.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report/AIR\\_Fatherhood\\_Guide\\_061413\\_0.pdf](https://www.air.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report/AIR_Fatherhood_Guide_061413_0.pdf)

### National Fatherhood Institute: Father Friendly Check Up

<https://www.fatherhood.org/ffcu>

### Office of Family Assistance

Alabama Fatherhood Initiative (AFI). The Department of Human Resources (DHR) Fatherhood Initiative is a joint effort of the DHR Family Assistance and Child Support divisions. Since 2002, the AFI partnership has offered noncustodial parents skills training and employment assistance and also funds a number of community-based organizations that offer vocational and parenting education to incarcerated and other noncustodial fathers.

The Noncustodial Parent Employment Program (NCPEP), Florida. The program is a partnership between a secular not-for-profit organization (Gulf Coast Jewish Family Services), the courts system, and TANF One-Stop Centers. Through their NCPEP, this initiative helps noncustodial parents who are not making their child support payments and have children who receive or are eligible to receive public assistance to: find employment, make child support payments, improve parenting skills, motivate participants to increase their interaction with their children, and decrease TANF dependency.

Non-Custodial Parent Choices Program, Texas. Texas' Non-Custodial Parent Choices Program—which participated in an [impact evaluation](#)—operates in 21 Workforce Development Boards across Texas and targets low-income unemployed/underemployed noncustodial parents to help them overcome substantial barriers to employment and career advancement while becoming economically self-sufficient and making consistent child support payments.

Responsible Fatherhood Grants and the Father and Paternal Relative Engagement in the Child Welfare System Project. In 2006, OFA began providing \$75 million in demonstration grant funding for Responsible Fatherhood activities and currently funds 36 organizations across the country and funds the *National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse* ([www.Fatherhood.gov](http://www.Fatherhood.gov)) These efforts are designed to strengthen positive father-child engagement, improve social and economic outcomes for fathers and their families, improve healthy relationships (including couple and co-parenting), and support family formation and strengthening through healthy marriage education and activities

### **Office of Child Care and Office of Head Start**

Additional resources designed to support father engagement within early care and learning programs include the National Center on Parent, Family and Community Engagement's <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/family-engagement/article/engaging-fathers> ongoing father engagement newsletter and related webinars. In addition, the NCPFE has developed [an interactive framework](#) for Head Start programs to guide them in their efforts to engage parents, families, and communities in children's learning.

### **Family and Youth Services Bureau**

The following highlights initiatives being led by both state coalitions and tribal programs. Each program would need to be contacted individually to determine location, accessibility, use of technology, and supports for language access.

#### **FVPSA State Domestic Violence Coalitions**

##### Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence (FCADV)

Family First and the Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence continue to partner to take a stand against domestic violence throughout the state. The partnership provides the opportunity to collaborate and share common messages about domestic violence prevention, strong families, and healthy relationships, focusing on engaging boys, men and especially fathers.

<http://www.allprodad.com/stronger/>

##### Texas Council on Family Violence (TCFV)

TCFV works with the Child Support Enforcement Division of the Office of the Attorney General to incorporate domestic violence awareness into their responsible fatherhood programming.

Additionally, each year TCFV honors five Texas champions who make a difference in the lives of victims of domestic violence in Texas.

<http://tcfv.org/texas-council-family-violence-honors-four-outstanding-texas-leaders-fathers-fathers-day/>

##### Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WSCADV)

WSCADV provides trainings to home visitors that include discussion of responsible parenting in the context of DV. They also promote healthy relationships and healthy parenting via the Refuse

to Abuse campaign, How's Your Relationship cards, Love Like This series, Just Futures project and Peninsula Tribal support project, and monitor responsible fatherhood issues via our Public Policy project. Parenting is discussed often in the blog.

<https://wscadv.org/projects/refuse-to-abuse/>

#### Resources for Young Parents & Children Experiencing Homelessness

[https://youth.gov/youth-topics/runaway-and-homeless-youth/resources-young-parents-children?field\\_yhp\\_topic\\_tid%5B%5D=469&field\\_yhp\\_audience\\_tid=All&field\\_yhp\\_type\\_of\\_resource\\_tid=All&=Apply](https://youth.gov/youth-topics/runaway-and-homeless-youth/resources-young-parents-children?field_yhp_topic_tid%5B%5D=469&field_yhp_audience_tid=All&field_yhp_type_of_resource_tid=All&=Apply)

Additionally, the Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence has focused on engaging fathers by promoting safe, stable and nurturing relationship behaviors with their children. A key aspect of the program focuses on promoting skin to skin contact between father and infants, increasing father/child bonds, father participation in parenting responsibilities and reducing maternal stress and inter-parental conflict. Coalitions such as the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence as well as the Wyoming Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault have partnered with state organizations and councils develop statewide strategies to address fatherhood programming through policy and technical assistance.

#### FVPSA Tribal Program Initiatives

##### Ama Doo Alchini Bighan, Inc., Arizona

The Ama Doo Alzhee Dilzin (ADAD) Mother and Fatherhood of Traditional Prayer program focuses on offering awareness and education from a traditional perspective in the area of violence prevention and intervention as well as suicide awareness, substance abuse, and home care. ADABI educates the larger populace in the area of preventative care and also assist those who may be suffering from violence overall. The focus has been to educate with a bicultural emphasis in order to align with cultural practices, traditional beliefs and foundations of protecting one's self.

##### Inter-Tribal Council of California, California

The Inter-Tribal Council of California continues to implement their "Motherhood Is Sacred" and "Fatherhood Is Sacred" training that reinforces the positive aspects of roles and responsibilities of native parents and how to support healing and recovery from violence and trauma impacts.

##### Preventing and Addressing Intimate Violence when Engaging Dads (PAIVED) project

Through the Preventing and Addressing Intimate Violence when Engaging Dads (PAIVED) project, the Family Violence Prevention and Service Program is assisting the Office of Family Assistance (OFA) and the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE) to outline approaches that federally funded Responsible Fatherhood (RF) programs could take to address and contribute to the prevention of intimate partner violence (IPV) among fathers. Both the FCADV and the TCFV have been enlisted to support these efforts.