Change Initiative Exemplar Resources Summary:
Father Engagement in Child Welfare

CONTENTS

I. Organizational Indicators of Effective Father Engagement in Child Welfare[1]

COMPONENT	ORGANIZATIONAL INDICATORS
Leadership & Organizational Philosophy	1. Communicates to caseworkers, attorneys and other staff that non-resident fathers (those who do not live in the home where a child has been abused or neglected) and paternal family members are a resource for the child (as a potential placement option or other care provider). 2. Expects caseworkers, attorneys and other staff to engage and work with both non-resident and resident fathers proactively. 3. Expects all staff to interact with fathers in a gender-responsive, non-accusatory, and non-blaming manner. 4. Expects staff doing hiring for the organization to include fathers as participants/consultants in the new staff hiring process and in interviews. 5. Encourages the healthy development of the *father-child* relationship. 6. Encourages the healthy development of the *father-mother* relationship, whether or not the father and mother are together, except in cases where there is a history of domestic violence or other circumstances making such a relationship not in the child's best interests. 7. Expects staff providing orientation and training for newly hired personnel to emphasize the importance of involving non-resident fathers in cases and to do so during the earliest days of employment. 8. Expects staff doing hiring for the organization to emphasize through interview questioning the importance of involving non-resident fathers in cases and to determine whether candidates for employment personally support and value an aggressive approach to involving non-resident fathers in cases. 9. Encourages couples who are considering marriage to access pre-marital education including information on parenting issues. 10. Supports fathers on the organization's staff in balancing work and family life. 11. Provides adequate funding and staff to effectively serve fathers. 12. Provides families with balanced information on father involvement by discussing the negative impact of father absence and the positive impact of involved fathers. 13. Believes that a child welfare organization's services should be provided as much to fathers as they are to mothers. 14. Expects caseworkers, agency attorneys and other staff to use fathers as a resource for the child (for example, for information such as health histories, to identify potential assistance to the child from paternal relatives, and to identify potential kinship foster placements). 15. Has developed a vision or mission statement that includes serving fathers. 16. Encourages staff to communicate to families that fathers are just as important as mothers in raising healthy children. 17. Helps families understand father involvement from a holistic perspective (i.e., physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual involvement).

[1] Adapted from the *Father Friendly Check-Up*™ for Child Welfare Agencies and Organizations, developed by the National Quality Improvement Center on Non-Resident Fathers and the Child Welfare System.

Component	Organizational Indicators
	18. Expects staff to include a father component in new staff orientation and training activities. 19. Encourages staff to connect fathers with individuals and community-based organizations that can provide them with the resources needed to become involved, responsible, committed dads. 20. Works with mothers to involve fathers in the lives of children. 21. Examines and expresses their own attitudes and beliefs about supporting fathers. 22. Supports fathers with tools, information, policies, and programs that help them in their fathering roles. 23. Experiments and remains flexible in creating, promoting, delivering, and evaluating family-directed services. 24. Displays a positive attitude about fathers and men when interacting with families. 25. Supports fathers in their cases in balancing work and family life.
Program Management, Policies & Procedures	1. Include a clear expectation that caseworkers and other staff will **identify** fathers early in child welfare cases and continue to attempt to identify them throughout the life of the case. 2. Include a clear expectation that caseworkers and other staff will **locate** fathers early in child welfare cases and continue to search for them throughout the life of the case. 3. Include a clear expectation that caseworkers and other staff will **contact** fathers early in child welfare cases and continue to contact them throughout the life of the case. 4. Provide clear case documentation methods to include specific identifying information about fathers. 5. Include a clear expectation that caseworkers and other staff will utilize child support enforcement staff to identify and locate fathers. 6. Include a clear expectation that caseworkers and other staff will utilize parent locator services and locator technologies including the use of public assistance records, motor vehicle records, hospital records, and other public records to identify and locate fathers. 7. Encourage fathers/men in their cases to balance work and family life. 8. Ensure that a father who has not abused/neglected his child and who acts to gain custody is always subject to the same procedures and requirements that would be applied to a child's mother in the same situation. 9. Include a clear expectation that caseworkers, agency attorneys and other agency staff will make all relevant and appropriate case information available to fathers (for example, case plans, changes in placements, court dates). 10. Ensure that fathers are included in, and know and understand what is expected of them under case plans, and are provided with resources to meet those expectations. 11. Ensure that fathers are consistently treated in a gender-responsive, non-accusatory, non-blaming manner. 12. Include a clear expectation that all policies and procedures will promote involvement of non-custodial parents and their kin in the life of the child. 13. Include a clear expectation that caseworkers, agency attorneys and other agency staff will proactively engage and work effectively with fathers in conducting the work of the organization.

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	14. Ensure that forms for families and staff (for example, intake forms, applications and questionnaires) are gender neutral except where gender-specific information is vital to the case. 15. Ensure that caseworkers, agency attorneys and other agency staff explain to fathers their rights and responsibilities while also emphasizing the importance of their involvement in child welfare and court processes. 16. Include referrals to resources that help dads with personal development, parenting, and family life in general. 17. Use measurement tools and methodologies for evaluating the effectiveness of services provided to fathers. 18. Evaluate the effectiveness of staff in working with fathers when reviewing staff performance. 19. In situations where the mother does not want the non-resident father involved with the child, include procedures for caseworkers to assess promptly and fairly whether the father's involvement would create a risk of physical or emotional harm to the child. 20. Help both the mother and the father resolve differences among them, with the goal of the best interest of the child in mind. 21. Provide a system and tools to hire casework staff with the knowledge, skills, and sensitivity to interact productively with fathers, as well as with mothers, and children.
Parent-Involvement Program	1. Uses approaches and programs with fathers that are intended to promote meaningful and sustained father engagement in the life of his child. 2. Includes a strengths-based approach to working with fathers that begins with where the father is in his development, not with where staff thinks he should be. 3. Provides services that have equal regard and respect for parenting approaches typical of fathers and mothers. 4. Offers services specifically directed at fathers. 5. Provides families with balanced information on father involvement discussing the negative impact of father absence and the positive impact of involved fathers, as well as information on father involvement when there is a history of domestic violence. 6. Periodically surveys fathers to determine their needs, concerns and interests related to the organization's child welfare work. 7. Provides fatherhood resources in the form of materials and information emphasizing the importance of responsible fathering and fathering skills. 8. Uses fatherhood resources, parenting curricula and educational materials that reflect the diversity of fathers served by the agency/organization. 9. Provides effective measurement tools and methodologies for evaluating efforts directed at fathers. 10. Expects staff to support the belief that fathers can be excellent parents. 11. Expects staff to make every effort to interact with fathers. 12. Promotes father engagement by involving fathers and the father's extended family in case planning early in a case. 13. Provides information for fathers that includes the benefits of a healthy marriage on child development and men's well-being. 14. Provides information for fathers that helps prepare men for marriage or helps fathers strengthen their marriage.

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	15. Refers fathers to community-based father support groups when such groups are available and when referral is appropriate. 16. Presents information to fathers in ways that match men's typical learning styles (i.e., hands on, interactive, visually engaging, opportunities for discussion and debate, etc.) 17. Hires male staff to deliver child welfare services with the specific goal of enabling the agency/organization to interact more effectively with fathers. 18. Hires service delivery staff, of either gender, that mirrors the fathers served in culture, race, language, age, etc. 19. Refers fathers to peer-led programs for parents in the child welfare system when such programs are available and when referral is appropriate. 20. Expects staff to avoid using language that is divisive and that stereotypes men/fathers and women/mothers. 21. Maintains lists of recommended father-oriented and male-oriented resources (for example, fatherhood classes and support groups, employment services, educational services, legal services) and expects staff to promote the use of these resources with fathers when appropriate. 22. Expects staff to be aware of and refer fathers to special community-based events that celebrate fatherhood and fathers.
Physical Environment of the Program	1. Says, through visible father-related images in the waiting room and in caseworkers' offices that "Fathers are expected and welcome here." 2. Has gender-neutral colors and decorating scheme. 3. Offers reading materials (i.e., books, magazines and other literature) directed toward fathers/men as well as mothers/women. 4. Has a staff listing containing photos of both male and female staff. 5. Has male staff in positions where visitors are likely to have initial visual or telephone contact with the agency/organization (for example, receptionist, security guard). 6. Has family restrooms or a diaper deck in the men's restroom. 7. If a TV or video plays in waiting areas, some of the programs or videos appeal to men. 8. If a library is available to families, it includes parenting and other information directed toward fathers.
Staff Training & Professional Development	1. Have been trained in how to ensure that a father/man who is contacted by the organization for the first time in connection with a case knows that he and his case participation are welcome. 2. Are open to constructive criticism regarding personal biases, including biases against men/fathers. 3. Are comfortable with differences in parenting styles typical of fathers and mothers. 4. Believe that fathers are important to the healthy development of children. 5. Believe that fathers can be excellent parents. 6. Have been trained on the importance of identifying, locating, and contacting fathers early in child welfare cases and continuing these efforts throughout the life of the case.

Component	Organizational Indicators
	7. Have been trained in the use of parent locator services and other locator technologies in order to more effectively identify and locate fathers. 8. Have been trained on how to work with fathers in a gender-responsive, non-accusatory, non-blaming manner. 9. Have been made aware of community resources that offer services specific to fathers, including those involved in the child welfare system. 10. Have been trained on how to work effectively with both mothers and fathers when the relationships are contentious, including identifying when domestic violence is a factor in the relationship. 11. Have been trained on how to work effectively with fathers who may express their opinions strongly and loudly, but who pose no physical danger to staff. 12. Perceive my organization's programs and services to be as much for fathers as for mothers. 13. Avoid using language that is divisive and that stereotypes men/fathers and women/mothers. 14. Make every attempt to interact with mothers and fathers equally when they come in together to receive services. 15. Seek fathers' input in decision-making situations involving important aspects of children's day-to-day lives. 16. Have participated in training that includes explicit discussion of the importance of fathers to the healthy development of children. 17. Encourage mothers to cooperate with fathers in raising children and vice versa. 18. Have been trained in gender differences in communication styles. 19. Have been trained in including a father component in new staff orientation and training. 20. Have been trained on the best practices of father involvement used by other child welfare organizations. 21. Have been trained in including questions related to father involvement in new staff hiring practices such as interviews. 22. Have been trained to recognize and appreciate father's typical parenting styles, and how they differ from mothers' styles. This includes why responsible, committed fathering is important to children's well-being. 23. Have been trained in cultural and familial barriers to father involvement in the lives of children. 24. Have been trained to examine their own attitudes, beliefs and behavior toward accepting and including fathers. 25. Have been trained in helping fathers balance work and family life. 26. Have been trained in hiring casework staff with the knowledge, skills, and sensitivity to interact productively with fathers, mothers and children. 27. Have been trained to recognize and know male cultural patterns and the ways they become evident when males/fathers interact with others.
Collaboration & Organizational Networking	1. Works to promote the education of juvenile and family court judges and court employees (in the various types of courts) about the ways in which children benefit when fathers are responsibly involved in the lives of their children. 2. Develops a good relationship with local child support enforcement offices and staff members in order to be of mutual assistance in helping obtain appropriate financial support of children, learning more about individual family situations and in better promoting the welfare of children in the families served by the child welfare agency.

COMPONENT	ORGANIZATIONAL INDICATORS
	3. Promotes coordination and collaboration with the larger father-engagement community, such as fatherhood programs and organizations that regularly work with fathers and families. 4. Works to promote education for attorneys (especially those who represent fathers and children as well as those who represent the state or county in child welfare court proceedings) about the importance to children of having involved, responsible, committed fathers in their lives, as well as how to use the legal system to better engage fathers. 5. Works to educate courts, parent attorneys, child support enforcement staff, and social service caseworkers about the importance of explaining to fathers their rights and responsibilities, while also emphasizing the importance of their involvement in child welfare and court processes. 6. Actively works in partnership with one or more other public or private agencies to **identify** fathers of children the child welfare organization serves. 7. Actively works in partnership with one or more other public or private agencies to **locate** fathers of children served by the child welfare organization. 8. Actively works in partnership with one or more other public or private agencies to **contact** fathers of children served by the child welfare organization. 9. Actively works in partnership with one or more other public or private agencies to **engage** fathers of children served by the child welfare organization.
Community Outreach	1. Is perceived by the *community at large* as "father-friendly". 2. Is perceived by *fathers and men* as "father-friendly". 3. Encourages other organizations within the broader child welfare field (including court related organizations and child support enforcement) to work with fathers on enhancing positive relationships with their children. 4. Encourages organizations in other professional fields (such as healthcare, business, faith-based, law enforcement) to work with fathers. 5. Makes presentations, holds workshops, or presents papers at conferences on the organization's work with fathers. 6. Participates in a network or coalition of organizations and leaders that promotes responsible fatherhood community-wide. 7. Submits articles or article ideas on the organization's work with fathers for publication in print media (e.g., journals, magazines, newsletters, newspapers). 8. Periodically issues press releases on the organization's success in working with fathers. 9. Promotes responsible fatherhood in the community as a preventive measure in the fight to reduce the incidence of negative outcomes for children, such as poverty, out-of-wedlock pregnancy, alcohol and drug abuse and suicide. 10. Is willing to share best practices in working with fathers with other organizations.

II. Strategies for Developing & Implementing Policies & Practice Models to Effectively Support Father Engagement

Organizational Component	Promising Approaches Identified in the Literature	Potential Strategies to Improve Father Engagement
Leadership & Organizational Philosophy	• The agencies' climate and practices often convey how open they are to working with fathers. If fathers do not feel comfortable, respected, or valued in their dealings with the child welfare system, then they might not choose to work with social workers toward permanency (Coakley, 2008; O'Donnell, Johnson, D'Aunno, & Thornton, 2005). • There are some tentative developments on the ground in some localities where workers are starting to talk to each other across settings and to develop discussions around how fathers should be worked with (Featherstone, 2003) • Before the question of improved casework with birthfathers of foster children is addressed, an honest discussion is heeded in the field about its desirability. If the issue of birthfathers as discharge resources is not openly debated, any models or programs for more effective work with birthfathers are likely to be sabotaged if not openly rejected (Franck, 2001) • Notwithstanding the importance of individual case worker efforts and innovative parent support programs that operate in different locations, vision is needed at the highest policy and administrative levels to bring about and sustain fundamental changes . . . Concerted leadership and goal-directed efforts are required for significant substantive changes that go beyond local communities or singular activities (Hairston, 1998) • The caseworkers' behaviors, however, cannot be fully understood without a more thorough exploration of the context of their practice. As discussed earlier, caseloads with a large percentage of multiple-father families must create a difficult if not overwhelming challenge for caseworkers with respect to paternal involvement in case planning and service provision. Nothing is known about whether or how caseworkers are prepared or supported in meeting this challenge or other challenges that arise in attempting to engage these parents. Exploring the views of other professionals such as child welfare supervisors, administrators, and juvenile court judges about paternal involvement is therefore also critical, since these staff are ultimately responsible for defining, facilitating, and monitoring what caseworkers do (O'Donnell, 2001)	• Conduct surveys or convene focus groups of leadership and staff in all child welfare practice settings to better understand barriers to father engagement, and develop consensus on organizational philosophy, goals and expectations regarding father engagement • Commit to, create and support an agency-wide focus (goals and objectives; policies and procedures; practice; quality assurance; evaluation) on the identification, location, contact, engagement, and interagency collaboration regarding fathers.

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Program Management, Policies & Procedures	• Promising Practices: (1) Review all cases of children in long term care to determine paternity status; (2) Encourage father's involvement and that of his family in a Family Group Decision Plan; (3) Support a policy of forgiveness of unpaid child support (arrearages) for time spent with the children; (4) For long distance dads (incarcerated or living in another state) encourage fathers to participate in a book project . . . father reads on tape a chapter from a book and sends tape and book to the child (Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare, 2004) • There were policy and agency procedures that limited social workers from fully involving fathers. Fathers and other male caregivers did not appear to be a viable resource for permanency, yet it was not evident that efforts had been made to understand and adequately address their needs (Coakley, 2008) • Fathers relinquished their parental rights because they could not fix multifaceted, multisystemic problems with underlying racial and societal causes in the relatively short time frame mandated by child welfare law. Child welfare agencies should therefore, examine the process by which fathers must relinquish parental rights because of racial and societal factors that put them at a disadvantage as well as their choice to remain a noncustodial father. Further, they can identify ways that fathers can be involved even though they have not met standards that dictate relinquishment of parental rights and apply these in cases where fathers desire to be involved and in cases that do not pose safety issues (Coakley, 2008) • In the case records, the documentation regarding fathers was of poorer quality than the documentation regarding mothers. Inadequate and inconsistent information about fathers led to difficulties understanding their personal situations, strengths, needs, and the extent of their involvement. To address those types of issues child welfare agencies need to establish a means to comprehensively track, assess, and monitor fathers and sociodemographic information as soon as families come in contact with the child welfare agency. Procedures also should be put in place to thoroughly document and validate various types of meaningful involvement, such as financial support, care-giving tasks, physical presence, emotional support, communication (in person, letters, e-mails, phone calls), and recreational involvement. Incorporating standardized measures would be efficient and effective ways to gather pertinent information from fathers on an ongoing basis (Coakley, 2008) • The fundamental task in practice has to be to first gather information about *all* salient men, in keeping with the 'principle of non-avoidance of all significant persons' (O'Hagan & Dillenberger 1995, p. 178). This should include gathering views on the role of the man with regard to the	• Develop protocols and standards for information gathering about fathers and father figures • Develop protocols and standards for locating fathers • Develop protocols and standards for ongoing search for fathers • Develop protocols and standards for assessment of fathers and father figures • Develop protocols and standards for engagement of fathers and father figures in case planning • Support the establishment of legal paternity • Utilize the child support system to help identify fathers • Support the securing child support payments • Utilize FGDM/FTM/FGC, and take steps to require the inclusion of extended paternal family members • Use concurrent planning • Use expedited permanency • Develop programs for incarcerated fathers • Use Differential Response

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	children from all involved, including the man himself (Lamb *et al.* 1986). The only thing that we know for certain about fathers is that every child encountered in practice has a *biological* father. A real commitment to turning rhetoric into reality entails explicitly acknowledging and embracing this fact (Daniel & Taylor, 1999) • If therefore a mother is anxious about the prospect of divulging information, her anxiety is likely to stem from a fear about how the information will be acted upon. It is therefore important to clarify the distinction between gathering information, and planning intervention based on that information (Daniel & Taylor, 1999) • Clearly the assessment of all significant men on the risk/asset dimension whether present in the home or not is essential, with the acknowledgement that some may incorporate aspects of both (Daniel & Taylor, 1999) • Those types of outreach that evoke the best response from birthfathers—the use of written documents expressing their rights, responsibilities, and case plans—should be emphasized (Franck, 2001) • For instance, when caseworkers are only required to conduct an initial search for a child's father, this reduces the chances of locating him. Policies that encourage ongoing searches – including those that call for methodically raising the issue at subsequent hearings – increase the likelihood of contact. Moreover, nonresident fathers may not be included in case planning or family group conferencing sessions unless there is a legal obligation or official policy that requires it (Green, 2008a) • Implement policies that require ongoing attempts to search for and locate non-resident fathers. Implement policies that ensure non-resident fathers and paternal relatives are involved in the case planning process, mediation and family team meetings (Green, 2008b) • State-level departments of child welfare and federal level child welfare agencies should provide leadership in developing model policies and administrative regulations to guide child welfare practice when children are involved in the child welfare system and their parents are in correctional institutions. Family-oriented policy directives and agency protocols that are widely understood and practiced are required components of serious efforts to support parent-child relationships and promote children's well-being when parents are incarcerated. Agency protocols, developed in collaboration with corrections practitioners, can facilitate case worker contact with incarcerated parents, parent-child communication, and parental participation in meetings and hearings about the children. Policies and protocols must be explicit with respect	• Develop protocols and standards for documentation of father involvement and engagement • Develop specific written documents expressing fathers' rights, responsibilities, and case plans that specifically provide for their inclusion

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	to fathers so that these men are not automatically excluded or subjected to benign neglect, as is too often the current practice. In addition, procedures should be in place to assure that policy implementation and day-to-day practices support agency goals without undermining parental rights, family preferences, or fathers' commitments (Hairston, 1998) • Use Family Finding and FGDM with wide family constellation (Jenkins & Kinney, 2009) • Improving Involvement: (1) Mediation and negotiation to promote the advantages of a father's involvement needs to be a standing and ongoing opportunity; (2) Understand the dynamics of the intergenerational families and see their strengths; social network service models, such as child and family team meetings, need to incorporate the knowledge and skills necessary to work with intergenerational dynamics to help fathers gain and maintain access to their children; (3) Fathers' parents and kin are a resource for developing a new father's identity, especially if he is a young or teenaged father (Jordan Institute for Families, 2005) • (1) More intense services, monitoring, supervision, and support are needed to help fathers build continuity in their relationships; Assessments, case planning, and case reviews should not be seen as opportunities to confirm a father's problems and deficiencies, but to promote responsible fathering; (2) Protocols and standards for locating fathers, for engaging fathers through appropriate outreach activities, and for making them a part of child welfare case plans need to be included; "Reasonable efforts" to locate and involve fathers need to be part of child welfare casework practice (Jordan Institute for Families, 2005) • Expedited permanency planning, concurrent planning, and family group meetings (Mallon, 2003) • Concurrent planning might prompt earlier efforts to locate fathers because the father, or his relatives, may be identified as a placement resource, even while the caseworker seeks to reunify the child with his or her mother (Malm, 2003) • Paternity establishment has become vital to identifying a father and any of his relatives as potential caregivers. Family group conferencing or family meetings are being used increasingly by child welfare agencies to involve the extended family in the case decisionmaking process. Using these techniques puts agencies in a better position to make noncustodial fathers part of the case planning (Malm, 2003) • Search for fathers early in the case. Most successful information gathering about a nonresident father's identity and location occurs very early in the case either as case investigation or other assessment activities. If a nonresident father's identity and location are not determined early on, there is less of a chance he will have contact with the agency (Malm, Murray & Geen, 2006).	

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	• Use child support data more consistently. Child support information, including father location, paternity, and financial support, can be helpful in considering placements with fathers or other ways in which fathers can play a constructive role in their children's lives (Malm, Murray & Geen, 2006). • Develop models for involving fathers constructively. Unless the child has a case plan goal of placement with his/her father or paternal kin, caseworkers are unlikely to know what, if anything, they should be doing to involve nonresident fathers (Malm, Murray & Geen, 2006). • Legal paternity and child support payments create the critical institutional supports for constructive father involvement (National Child Welfare Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice, 2002) • Some child welfare agency policy manuals and CIPs provide guidance to social workers and courts regarding father identification. While some of these practices are encouraged to engage the father in the child's life, other agencies or courts stress early father identification to avoid delays in permanency planning for the child. The latter exposes a gap in agency practice relating to identifying fathers as it explicitly perpetuates the notion that fathers should not be identified in child welfare cases except to terminate his parental rights when the goal of the case is adoption. This may have a particularly pernicious effect on non-resident fathers and children when the father was not the perpetrator of abuse or neglect and could be a viable placement option. In fact, few, if any, child welfare policy manuals focus on early identification of non-resident fathers who are not the alleged perpetrator to see if court involvement may be avoided by coordinating an agreement between the mother and father that would allow the latter to care for the child (National Quality Improvement Center on Non-Resident Fathers and the Child Welfare System, 2007) • Although most state statutes or case law do not explain the steps agencies must take to attempt to locate non-resident parents, several state child welfare agency policy manuals provide guidance on the subject. For example, Florida's, Illinois,' New York's and Wisconsin's policy materials provide detailed explanations of recommended steps caseworkers should take to diligently search for and locate non-resident parents early in a case (National Quality Improvement Center on Non-Resident Fathers and the Child Welfare System, 2007) • Few state child welfare policy manuals include policies or procedures on how to initiate contact with non-resident fathers (National Quality Improvement Center on Non-Resident Fathers and the Child Welfare System, 2007)	

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	• Differential response may be another promising technique to involve non-resident fathers on a voluntary basis, to establish a relationship with their child, prevent the child's removal, and/or increase the father's involvement in the child welfare case. Through differential response, non-custodial fathers may become placement options for children whose safety may be at risk if they remain with the caretaker with whom an abuse or neglect referral was made (National Quality Improvement Center on Non-Resident Fathers and the Child Welfare System, 2007). • Creating assessments that incorporate the full spectrum of possible paternal contributions identified in the literature and that accurately differentiate those fathers who are not likely to achieve service goals in a reasonable time frame (O'Donnell, Johnson, D'Aunno & Thornton, 2005)	
Parent-Involvement Program	• Elements of Effective Fatherhood Programs: Community-Based Outreach; Life-Skills Training; Links to Physical and Mental Health Care; Education and Job Training; Helping Fathers Get Access to Their Children; Legal Services; Peer Support; Parenting Skills Training; Relationship Skills Training; Housing Assistance; Transportation; Services for Formerly Incarcerated Fathers and Their Families (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2005) • Model programs: Provided staff training or hired staff with experience working with incarcerated populations; Used theoretically driven program models; Allowed a sufficient time to complete important core activities adequately (at least 8 weeks); Taught both incarcerated and re-entering fathers important skills and gave them opportunities to practice using them; Provided incentives to engage fathers and families; Engaged fathers either one-on-one or in small group settings; Addressed the unique needs of both incarcerated and re-entering fathers; Provided diversity in the delivery of program services to incarcerated fathers (Bronte-Tinkew, Burkhauser, Ericson & Metz, 2008) • "What Works" Strategies: Incorporate teaching methods and materials that are culturally appropriate for fathers and populations being served; Select teachers and facilitators who believe in the program being implemented and provide them with relevant training and coaching; Effective programs have a high staff-participant ratio; Target curricula and set clear goals to be achieved by the program; Use theory-based approaches that have been effective in influencing parenting behaviors in other contexts; Employ a variety of teaching methods designed to focus on fathers as individuals and, in doing so, personalize the information; Allow sufficient time to complete important core program activities; Have staff who engage in one-on-one relationships with fathers; Provide incentives to engage fathers and families; Replicate	• Make consistent efforts to recruit and hire male staff • Solicit feedback from fathers and paternal relatives when developing fatherhood programming and supports • Examine whether programs or services offered to fathers are designed to engage fathers, and represent best practice knowledge • Develop peer support programs (father-to-father mentoring and coaching; "Circle of Men" groups; father-led, male-only groups) • Create protocols, standards and opportunities for meaningful and positive child-father contact • Create programs with the ability to respond effectively to

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	curricula with fidelity (Bronte-Tinkew, Horowitz & Metz, 2008) • For long distance dads (incarcerated or living in another state) encourage fathers to participate in a book project . . . father reads on tape a chapter from a book and sends tape and book to the child (Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare, 2004) • To maximize the benefits for the child of contact with the father it is essential to explore with all relevant people, including the mother, father and child, what role they see the father playing in the child's life. Regular but aimless contact can leave all parties feeling confused, dissatisfied and uncomfortable (Daniel & Taylor, 1999) • Efforts to identify service needs of birthfathers and to offer services tailored to those needs are essential. The impact of poverty as an obstacle to family reunification is clearly underestimated. Employment and training resources to augment income should be sought for fathers as well as mothers (Franck, 2001) • Court procedures and supportive programs offered through child welfare agencies are seldom tailored to meet the needs of non-resident fathers. Working non-resident fathers may have trouble attending daytime court hearings and services because they cannot continually take time off from work. For unemployed fathers, job training and placement is a crucial but often overlooked dimension of services. These lapses in services have a range of negative ramifications: unemployment not only brings financial instability, but can also be linked to "emotional disengagement" between the father and his child. Additionally, programming offered to non-resident fathers must be designed according to male psychology and learning styles. Peer support from other fathers is the key to successful father involvement programs. Drug treatment and other services for non-resident fathers that are gender-specific can also help, although they are often not available. The lack of male caseworkers in the child welfare system may also contribute to a father's sense of alienation from the process. Finally, there is a dearth of residential substance abuse facilities for fathers living with their children (Green, 2008a) • Utilize culturally sensitive support services designed to engage fathers and offered at hours that can accommodate various work schedules (Green, 2008b). • Father involvement depends on fathers working with fathers; peer support—fathers working with fathers—is the glue holding effective programs together; (1) child welfare workers who are male and have the knowledge and skills can make a big difference; (2) "Support fathers," used as a component of safety planning, can make a difference; (3) Father-to-father support within community-based partnerships works (Jordan Institute for Families, 2005)	fathers' basic needs (food, housing, employment training and placement etc), through direct services or timely referrals • Develop residential substance abuse programs with the capacity to serve fathers and their children together • Develop culturally responsive programs • Offer programs at hours when working fathers can attend

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	• Increasing father's ability to provide familiar, stable, daily routines; fathers' participation during birthdays, holidays, school graduations, and other rituals are the building blocks of their engagement (Jordan Institute for Families, 2005) • Initiatives are needed to prepare fathers to assume conventional parenting roles. Parenting materials prepared specifically for fathers of children in care should be developed. Visiting, in particular, needs to be addressed. Fathers need to know how to play with and enjoy their children as well as how to care for them (Franck, 2001). • Agencies may need to examine whether services offered to fathers are designed to engage fathers (Malm, Murray & Geen, 2006). • It is crucial agencies be "father-friendly," even when there are lacking adequate male staff to serve the fathers who arrive. It is also not sufficient to simply announce the availability of classes and programs for fathers. Men must know they are truly welcomed. They need to feel the agency support them, their partners, and their nuclear and extended families. If poverty, isolation, homelessness, or other issues are disclosed, make available the necessary resources either within the program or via referral (National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute, 2003). • Develop *"Palabra" (being of your word)* – a positive and trustworthy reputation in the community. This is best accomplished by implementing programs based on ancient indigenous beliefs and teachings of what it is to be a real man. These teachings and programs should stress the importance of treating fathers with respect, love, dignity, and trust to begin the healing process. Becoming culturally sensitive and including ceremonies and rituals in Fatherhood groups helps rebuild the spirit of the family (National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute, 2003) • Respond to Other Needs: Provide respite services for families without childcare alternatives; Collaborate with other agencies to offer a broader range of services – i.e., housing, temporary shelters, food banks, mental health services, drug and alcohol rehab (National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute, 2003). • Establishing and Providing Fatherhood Programs: o Develop a program whose focus is the reinforcement of the positive involvement of Latino Males in the lives of their families, communities, and society o Based on the principle of *Un Hombre Noble*, "a Noble Man," the mission should be to strengthen, rebalance, and/or redevelop the traditional *compadre* extended family	

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	system. By using this process it is important to encourage and support the positive involvement of Latino males as fathers, sons, grandfathers, brothers, *compadres*, partners, and mentors in their families and community. o It is important to increase the positive support and influence of Latino males; this will also reduce the incidence of substance abuse, domestic violence, child abuse, teen pregnancy, gang violence, and other family and community problems. o By using a culturally appropriate Latino fatherhood curriculum like *Cara y Corazon*, a culturally rooted interactive program, you can attempt to build on the positive strengths of the traditional Latino family structure and reinforce the males role as a caring, responsible, respectful partner in the healthy development of the children, family and community. o It is important to be flexible and prepared to meet the fathers where they are. o Establish a support network when men can have a place, or *lugar*, to gather in a *Circulo de Hombres*, or "Circle of Men," where they can continue to assist and encourage one another to be a good father and partner (National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute, 2003) • Therefore it is important to offer services and programs that develop confidence and help motivate fathers to become involved the education and development of their children. We cannot assume every father knows how to read or play with his child. In many cases this father may not have had his own father around to teach him how to do this. Father/child reading programs, play groups, family field trips, and other interactive activities are important to help fathers and become comfortable with being involved in their child's education. Offer sessions dedicated to teaching fathers how to read with their children. Teach them to read with enthusiasm and not to be afraid to make faces and jump around if needed during the storytelling. Help them make it fun. Take young fathers and their children on field trips to fun and educational places like zoos and museums to introduce them to activities that they can do with their children. Many of these venues may offer discounts to groups. Teach fathers how to play with their children. Encourage them to get down on the floor with their children (National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute, 2003) • More gender-responsive programs are needed (National Quality Improvement Center on Non-Resident Fathers and the Child Welfare System, 2007) • The following are lessons learned in starting a program or involving fathers in an existing program: Involve fathers whenever a program or agency involves the mother (except in cases	

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	of safety issues). Have men lead the fatherhood programs. Include the mothers in complementary group activities. Make the programs culturally relevant. Let the fathers help determine the type of activities (Rosenberg & Wilcox, 2006) • Have strong male leadership; use men to market, recruit for, and facilitate the program; Build programs around the stated needs of the men in the program; Provide the leadership and men with the essentials of group and 1:1 leadership skills, including building group norms, handling differences, listening, and confidentiality; Respect the "culture" of the men involved: geographic area, age, socio-economics, ethnicity, and race; Provide resources, education, and information (the "tangibles"); Laugh, have fun through social times and activities (both for men only and with their families), but with absolutely no alcohol involved; If possible, have developmentally appropriate father-child activities; Never let costs or money get in the way of father involvement (this includes transportation, child care); Be flexible in scheduling; find places and times where men can attend (i.e., individual education programs); Have family activities (family is everyone who is important in a child's life, such as grandparents and neighbors); Let men learn from other men (i.e., one-on-one and in groups); Know that numbers alone have little to do with program success. Always spend time "celebrating" successes ("bragging rights"); the men need unlimited opportunities to "brag" about their kids and the value they have in their children's lives (Rosenberg & Wilcox, 2006)	
Physical Environment of the Program	• Make Your Facility Accessible . . . These actions can help ensure consistent participation by fathers: Arrange transportation services by providing bus schedules and tokens, taxi voucher, carpools, or offering shuttle services; Make car seats available for transporting infants and children under 60 lbs or ensure the family owns a car seat (National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute, 2003) • Have meetings in places that are friendly, easygoing, nonclinical, and relaxed; Provide food or snacks. "Feed them and they will come." (Yes, food does make a difference!) (Rosenberg & Wilcox, 2006)	• Provide and/or arrange for transportation • Arrange for car seats to be made available for fathers • Create meeting and event space that is relaxed and non-clinical. • Provide food/snacks • Provide other incentives to encourage father involvement
Staff Training and Professional Development	• Practice Tips: Request in-service workshops on fathers' issues that promote awareness, knowledge, and skills. (1) Encourage child welfare and court administrators to provide training about fathers and their needs. Workshops should cover: a) awareness-raising activities designed to help professionals examine their biases about fathers and explore how any	• Conduct a survey to better understand staff attitudes and beliefs about fathers, the importance of the father-child

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	personal issues with men might affect their work with fathers; b) information about the characteristics, hardships, and needs of fathers; and c) education about how to help fathers in a male-friendly manner. (2) Since ethnic-minority populations are overrepresented among fathers whose children are in the child welfare system, diversity training is an essential part of continuing education workshops (Cohen et al, 2009; Kiselica, 2009) • Practice Tips: Address any negative biases about fathers. (1) Recognize that fathers are complex. Although some fit the stereotype of the man who is unconcerned about his children, many others care deeply about their children's well-being and have the capacity to be outstanding fathers. (2) Maintain an open mind and a positive perspective with each new father you meet. Look for and affirm fathers who want to be a constructive presence in their children's lives (Kiselica, 2009) • Provide guidance and training to caseworkers on identifying, locating, and involving fathers. Casework practice related to identifying, locating and involving fathers appears case specific and variable. Agencies and courts should make clear what steps caseworkers should consider when mothers do not know or share information about the child's father. Even when mothers do provide information on the child's father, workers may want to reach out to other individuals (e.g., relatives, former caseworkers) in order to confirm and expand upon the information provided (Malm, Murray & Geen, 2006). • Safety concerns need to be acknowledged and assessed at a case level and, as previously noted, through training (Malm, Murray & Geen, 2006). • Father involvement depends on recognizing the fragility of fatherhood. Nonresidential fathers in child welfare are at very high risk for noninvolvement with their children. All child welfare professionals need to recognize the many possible reasons for this, and not view it as either a father's lack of interest in the children, the removal of a "risk factor," or a means to streamline case planning (National Child Welfare Resource Center on Family-Centered Practice, 2002) • If social workers do not feel comfortable with fathers, then they are unlikely to involve fathers. Social workers' apprehension and unwillingness to work with fathers may be racially based or influenced by agency practices that are not culturally competent . . . Child welfare agencies need to provide cultural competence training to social workers to work effectively with African American fathers with a special focus on racial and gender specific barriers (Coakley, 2008)	relationship, and father engagement. • Provide guidance and training to caseworkers on policies, protocols, and strategies in identifying, locating, and engaging fathers • Develop and provide cultural competence training and guidance to staff • Develop and provide training and guidance to staff regarding locating fathers • Develop and provide training and guidance on safety assessments and domestic violence issues involving fathers

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	• Efforts are needed to help caseworkers identify and overcome their biases against birthfathers, their difficulties communicating with them, and even their fears of approaching them (Franck, 2001). • Provide comprehensive training to caseworkers on the benefits of non-resident father involvement and various search techniques (such as Parent Locator Search software) (Green, 2008b). • More training, greater awareness of ways to locate fathers . . . are needed (National Quality Improvement Center on Non-Resident Fathers and the Child Welfare System, 2007) • Caseworkers must convey empathy, respect and genuineness when working with fathers . . . Caseworkers need to adapt their approaches to fit fathers in varying circumstances. There is no single model for fatherhood and no single model for being an involved father . . . (and they must be able to work with) married parents; cohabiting parents; incarcerated fathers; multiple fathers; boyfriends; stepfathers (Rosenberg & Wilcox, 2006) • Determining caseworkers' attitudes about the value of including fathers in child welfare interventions obviously would contribute to understanding this practice (O'Donnell, 2001). • Designing and testing methods of training and skill development to help staff clarify and modify any unhelpful preconceptions about fathers, and acquire the expertise to deal with frequently encountered problems such as fathers' discomfort with social services and fear of authority (O'Donnell, Johnson, D'Aunno & Thornton, 2005)	
Collaboration & Organizational Networking	• Father involvement requires assistance in building relationships with community systems**;** fathers whose families are involved with child welfare have the additional burdens of meeting the terms and complying with many community systems (the courts, child support agencies, child welfare, social/health/mental health services, and schools); without adequate community-based resources for coaching, brokering, advocating, and supporting fathers, adding these tasks to a father's everyday life can be highly stressful, and can affect a father's relationship within the family (Jordan Institute for Families, 2005) • Social service organizations and practitioners should provide leadership for the development of public policies and service programs that help parents in prison maintain ties with their children and address family needs related to correctional supervision (Hairston, 1998) • Child Support and Family Court Systems: o Establish relationships with child support enforcement representatives that share your mission of changing the behavior and attitudes of fathers, to gain financial and emotional commitment for children.	• Provide staff training on collaboration and networking with other state and community agencies • Develop strategic linkages with community organizations, courts, correctional facilities, and child support agencies

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	○ Create collaborative relationships so clients can be referred to a known county representative. ○ Schedule a facilities tour and an overview of agency capabilities so the county knows how you can help. ○ Invite a child support services representative to attend client meetings and directly explain requirements, procedures, and offer answers to questions. ○ Communicate clearly the rights of fathers to visit their children – even if child support payments are not yet established or are in arrears (National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute, 2003) • When child welfare offices fail to collaborate with other local child serving agencies, there is diminished opportunity to locate and engage non-resident fathers. Child support registries, for example, can be an important resource for locating a non-resident parent. However, many caseworkers cannot access them or are not trained to use them. Employment services, veterans' affairs offices and the penal system could also help locate and engage fathers if more partnerships were forged (Green, 2008a) • Additional collaborations are needed (National Quality Improvement Center on Non-Resident Fathers and the Child Welfare System, 2007)	
Community Outreach	• Family advocates and child welfare and criminal justice professionals should promote the development of a national research, knowledge-building, and knowledge-dissemination agenda focusing on prisoners and their families and children . . . It is important that a broad-based constituency—social service providers, criminal justice practitioners, academicians, community leaders, prisoners, and families—be involved in defining research needs and approaches and in assessing and interpreting research findings and their implications for policy and practice (Hairston, 1998).	• In collaboration with university and community partners, develop and evaluate father engagement approaches and programs to identify and promote best practices

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