

Engaging Fathers/Males

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Learning Objectives

- Explain the importance of father/male engagement
- Describe the challenges & barriers that fathers/males face
- Identify their own biases and assumptions about fathers/males and opportunities for growth
- Demonstrate how to adjust their practice, policies/procedures, & organizations to work better with fathers/male clients
- Develop an action plan for engaging fathers/males in family services

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Youth from Fatherless Homes

- 63% of youth suicides
- 90% of homeless & runaway youth
- 85% of youth who exhibit behavioral disorders
- 71% of all HS dropouts
- 75% of all youth in substance abuse centers
- 70% of youth in state-operated institutions

Bassett, L. (2016). Engaging fathers as a strategy for child welfare practice.

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Child & Family Service Reviews

Many State reviews indicate that workers:

- Do not adequately involve fathers in case planning or provide services for them
- Fail to contact fathers, even when they had been involved in their children's lives
- Do not adequately involve fathers in any aspect of their child's case

Kendall, J.R., Pilnik, L., Chiamulera, C.S.
Engaging Nonresident fathers in Child Welfare Cases:
A Guide for Court Appointed Special Advocates.

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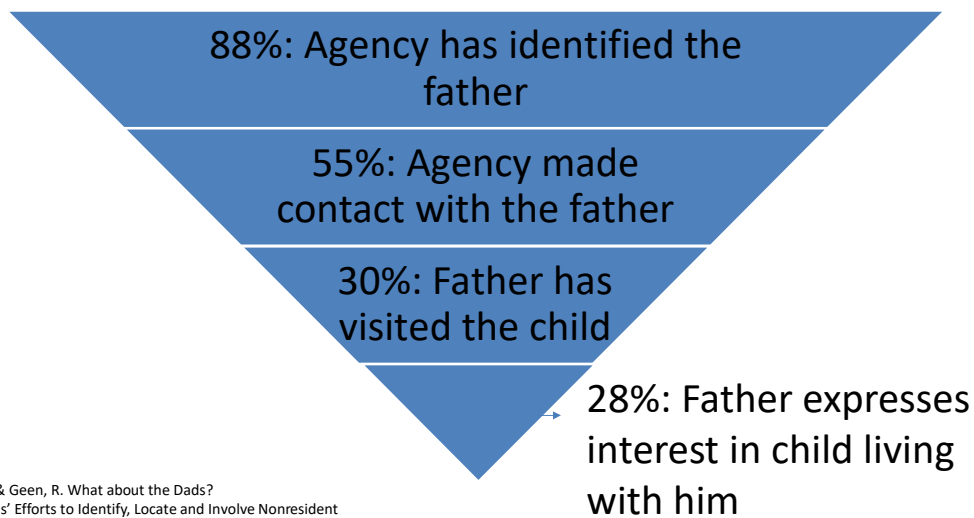
Children with Noncustodial Fathers

	Foster Children	Children Served by Child Welfare Agencies	Children in General Population
Children with noncustodial fathers	80%	72%	28%
❖ Paternity known	81%	85%	60%
• Contact with father in past year	54%	66%	72%
• Father contributed to child's support	16%	40%	42%

NC Division of Social Services & the Family and Children's Resource Program. (2005). Father Involvement in Child Welfare.

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Among almost 2,000 children removed from homes where the father did not reside:



Malm, K., Murray, J., & Geen, R. What about the Dads? Child Welfare Agencies' Efforts to Identify, Locate and Involve Nonresident Fathers. Washington, DC: Urban Institute.

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Benefits of Engaging Fathers as Partners

- Beneficial for children and families
- Research suggests that involving fathers in child welfare:
 - May shorten the time a child spends in foster care
 - Increased reunification rate with fewer repeat placements
 - Lower rate of repeat abuse and neglect reports

Zero to Three. (2016). What Millennial Dads Want: Harnessing the Potential of Fatherhood. Policy Implications

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Integrating Approaches that Prioritize and Enhance Father Engagement Information Memorandum October 2018


Work together across governments to jointly:

- Create and maintain an environment that prioritizes father engagement as a critical factor in strengthening families
- Adopt approaches to enhance paternal involvement in all family support and child welfare related programs.

Access at: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/assets/acffatherhoodim_final.pdf


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Engaging Fathers is Ethical Practice!



The image features a graphic of a pair of scales of justice, symbolizing ethics and balance. The word "Ethics" is written in a large, bold, red font across the center of the scales. The background is split into a white top-left section and a grey bottom-right section, with a yellow triangle in the top-right corner.

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EXERCISE: WHO IS FATHER OF THE YEAR?

This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-SA-NC](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

The image shows a golden trophy cup with the words "WORLD'S BEST DAD" engraved on it. The trophy is set against a white background with a grey shadow. The right side of the slide has a dark grey background with the text "EXERCISE: WHO IS FATHER OF THE YEAR?" in white, bold, uppercase letters.

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Exercise: Who is “Father of the Year?”

“Alfonso” (V.I.P. Dad)

- High paying job
- Pretty stable marriage
- Works long hours
- Travels
- Moderately affectionate
- Minimally engaged

“Cheng” (Underemployed Dad)

- Some part-time work
- Pretty stable marriage
- Works from home but bored
- Not the “bread-winner”
- Mildly affectionate
- No night “duty”

“Chris” (Non-resident Dad)

- Low paying job(s)
- Never married
- Works regular hours
- Has small apartment
- Highly affectionate
- Fairly engaged

“LaRon” (Step-Dad)

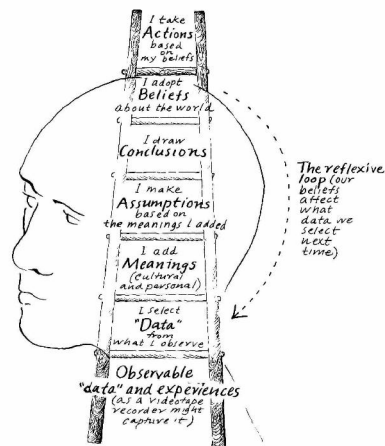
- Full-time construction
- Pretty stable marriage
- Works regular hours
- Paycheck to paycheck
- Mildly affectionate
- Good night “duty”

Frankel, P. Bringing Back the Dads! Effective Evidenced-Based Practice for Engaging Fathers in the Child Welfare System. [PowerPoint Presentation]

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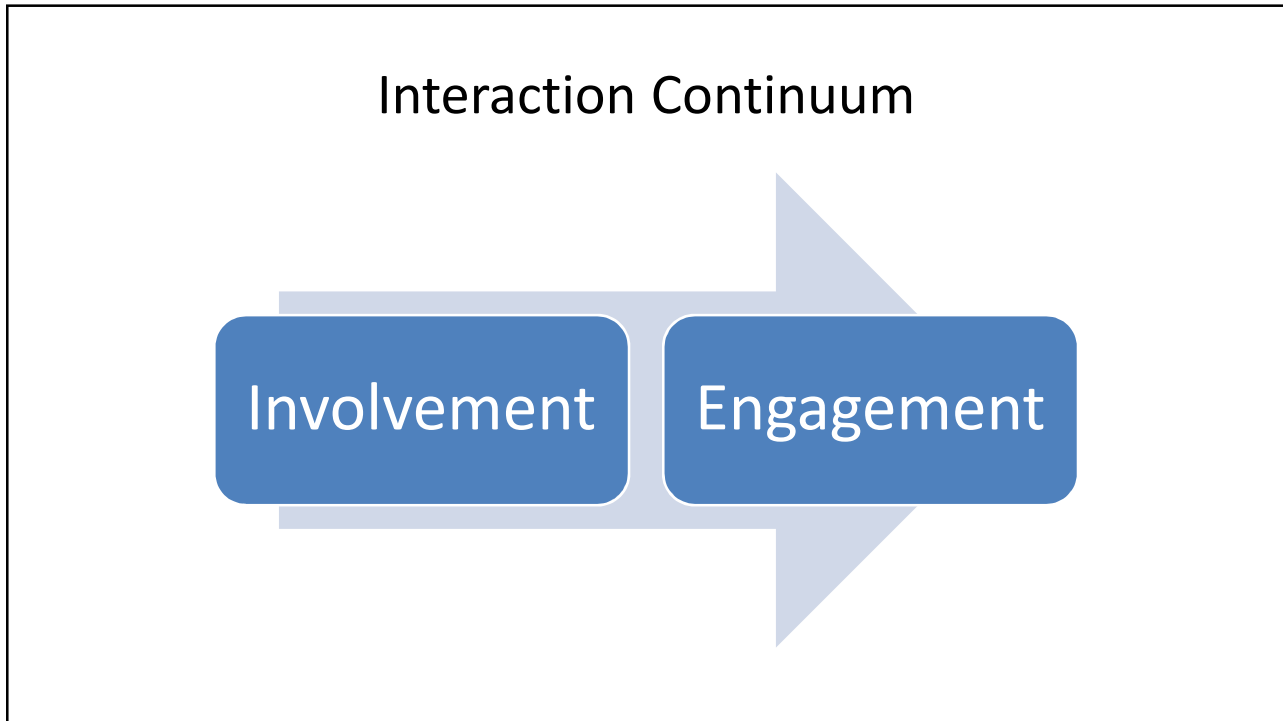
Ladder of Inference

- What did I read?
- What was said?
- What did I hear?
- What conclusions did I come to?
- What belief of mine was challenged?
- Did any strong emotion come up? Why?

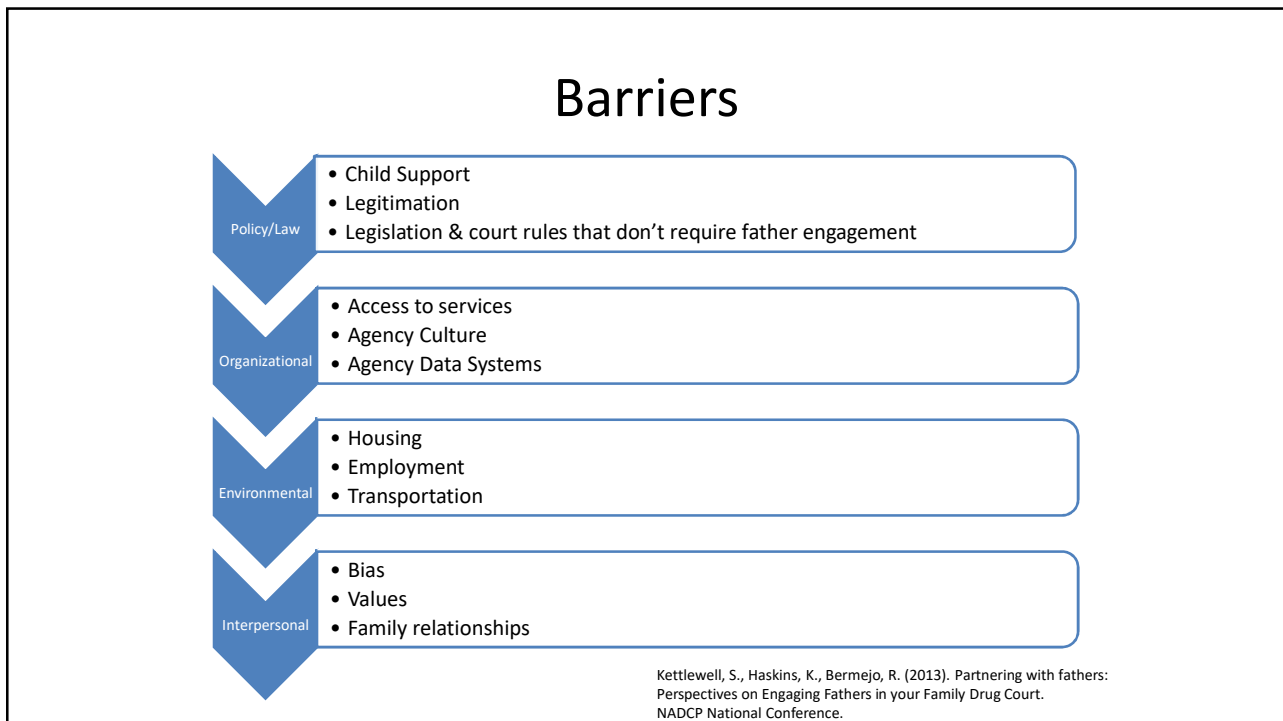


Senge (1994). The Fifth Element Fieldbook

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Addressing Father Engagement Without Addressing Bias

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Child Welfare Workers

- Of the 5,052 investigative caseworkers representing children in the NSCAW II cohort, the majority of caseworkers were:
- Female (79.3%)
- 25 to 44 years old (72.1%)
- 57.5% were White, 23.7% were Black, 14.9% were Hispanic, and 4.0% described their race/ethnicity as —Other.

Dolan, M., Smith, K., Casanueva, & Ringeisen, H. (2011).
NSCAW II Baseline Report: Caseworker Characteristics,
Child Welfare Services, and Experiences of Children Placed
In Out-of-Home Care

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Overcoming Our Biases

- Get Out of Denial
- Consciously and Intentionally Connect with Fathers
- See Something, Say Something



https://www.ted.com/talks/verna_myers_how_to_overcome_our_biases_walk_boldly_toward_them?language=en

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Mothers

- Assume mother wants the best outcomes for their child
- Provide mother with information on the importance of fathers
- Address mothers' concerns
- Remind mothers that they play a role in engaging fathers
- Recognize that it isn't easy

Minnesota Fathers & Families Network. Talking with Moms about Engaging Dads. St. Paul, MN. September 2009.
California WIC Association. Encourage Moms to Include Dads.

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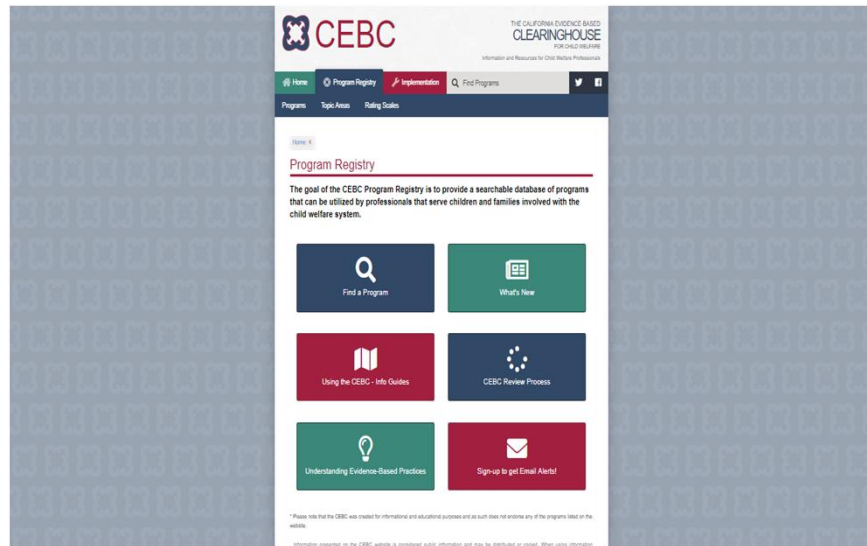
Child Welfare Professionals

- Identify and locate fathers early
- Engage paternal family
- Provide comprehensive needs assessment and services
- Recognize issues of power

Kettlewell, S., Haskins, K., Bermejo, R. (2013). Partnering with fathers: Perspectives on Engaging Fathers in your Family Drug Court. NADCP National Conference.

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Engaging Fathers in Practice



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Best Practice: SFI



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Best Practice: Caring Dads



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Assessing “Father-Friendliness”

- Dakota Father Friendly Assessment
- National Fatherhood Initiative Father Friendly Check Up
- Father-Friendliness Organizational Self-Assessment & Planning Tool

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Action Planning

- Provide your name and the name of your organization
- Explain the mission and goals of your organization
- Think about how your organization currently engages fathers:
 - How does your organization engage fathers?
 - What does your organization do well to engage fathers?
 - What areas can be improved to increase father engagement in your organization?

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Action Planning

- Create a father engagement vision
 - WHAT: Specific deliverables/returns on investment
 - HOW: Describe how you will achieve deliverables
 - WHEN: Create a timeline that is feasible but timely
 - WHO: Identify stakeholders & how you will get their buy-in

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Resources

- Akamai University – Men’s Studies & Fatherhood Certificate Program
- HHS Fatherhood E-learning Module
- <https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/resources-and-training/online-learning-modules/fatherhood/index.html>
- *Child welfare revisited: An Africentric perspective*, edited by Joyce C. Everett, Sandra S. Chipungu, and Bogart R. Leashore. Rutgers University Press.

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Resources

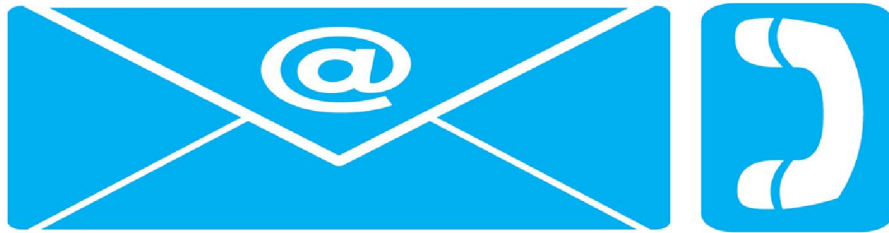
- National Family Preservation Network
Fatherhood Curriculum
 - <http://www.nfpn.org/father-involvement/basic-training-package>
- National Responsible Fatherhood
Clearinghouse Responsible Fatherhood
Toolkit: Resources from the Field
 - <http://www.fatherhood.gov/toolkit/work/child-welfare>

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Resources

- National Quality Improvement Center on Non-Resident Fathers and the Child Welfare System
- UC Berkeley Father Engagement and Father Involvement Toolkit
 - <https://calswec.berkeley.edu/father-engagement-and-father-involvement-toolkit/training-coaching-tol-tools>

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Father Engagement Scenarios

Peter

You are a caseworker that has recently determined a case of child sexual abuse to be indicated. The child's mother and the mother's paramour are the perpetrators by commission. When both adults were arrested and incarcerated, the child's mother indicated that she did not know who the child's father was. The child was placed in foster care when no other relatives could be identified. A week after the child was placed in foster care; a man, Peter, arrived at your agency claiming to be the child's father. He presented a copy of the child's birth certificate and showed that his name was listed as the father. He said he had not seen his daughter for 3 years because he was in prison and was recently released. Peter would like to have his daughter released to his custody immediately.

Emmanuel

Lucinda is a 15-year-old female in 9th grade. She is currently living in a residential treatment facility. Lucinda was placed by Child Protective Services because she was truant and was Indicated for physically abusing her younger sibling. Lucinda's mother is not willing to allow her to come home. Lucinda's father, Emmanuel, is allegedly in the area, but has no contact with her. You have learned that he has not paid child support in over a year. Lucinda knows where her father lives but will not disclose the information because she does not want him to go to jail. One afternoon, Emmanuel calls your office and indicates that he would like to have custody of his daughter.

Dan

Willy is a 6-year-old male who was placed into foster care nearly 2 years ago. Willy had lived with his mother until one day; she left him with a neighbor and did not return. Willy stayed with the neighbor for 2 weeks and was then brought to the local Child Protective Services Agency. Willy's grandparents were located but refused to care for the child. There was no record of a father on the child's birth certificate. The neighbor indicated that the father was Dan and he lived about two hours away. At the time of placement, a letter was sent to Dan's last known address but there was no response. The child has been with the same resource family for his entire placement and they have said that they would like to adopt him.

Steve

Steve is a 32-year-old male. He works in a local factory and lives with two roommates. Steve has a minor criminal record of drinking related incidents. All of the incidents occurred prior to his 20th birthday. Last year Steve briefly dated Amanda. Amanda ended the relationship after a few weeks and Steve has not heard from her since. Yesterday, Amanda was arrested for possession of cocaine and the local police took her 10-month-old son into emergency custody. Amanda informed the police that Steve is the child's father, but he does not know he is the father. She said she would like the child to go with Steve during her incarceration. All available information about Steve was given to your agency.

Seth

Seth is a 40-year-old male. He is the father of Drew, a 16-year-old child on your caseload. Drew has behavioral problems and is diagnosed with Oppositional Defiant Disorder. Drew was expelled from school after threatening to kill his teacher. He now attends a charter school. Drew lives with his mother and sees his father one weekend per month in the community. Drew and his father were very close when Drew was younger. When Drew was 10, his parents divorced. Seth quickly remarried and his involvement with his son decreased dramatically. Seth's new wife, Alison, did not like Drew and said she would not allow him to be in their home. Drew's recent behaviors have caused his mother to request placement of the child. Drew indicates that he wants to live with his father. In a private meeting, Seth reports that he would love to live with his son, but his wife will not allow it