



# Implementing a Text Messaging Intervention to Engage Fathers in Home Visiting

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## Abstract

**Purpose** This “From the Field” article reports on the Text4Dad text messaging intervention designed to engage fathers in home visiting. We introduce implementation process components from our pilot study across three Healthy Start home visitation sites.

**Description** Three Fatherhood Community Health Workers (F-CHWs) and three fathers from one Text4Dad site were interviewed. Using content analysis, we examined the experiences of F-CHWs who implemented Text4Dad and program participants who used Text4Dad.

**Assessment** Results highlighted five implementation process components related to: (1) F-CHWs’ use of Text4Dad and enrolling fathers; (2) F-CHWs’ interactions with fathers, perceptions of Text4Dad content, and integration of Text4Dad into home visits with fathers; (3) training and technical assistance for F-CHWs; (4) father program participants’ acceptability and usability of Text4Dad; and (5) fathers’ barriers to interactive use of Text4Dad.

**Conclusion** The F-CHWs were able to successfully enroll fathers into Text4Dad. F-CHWs and fathers found Text4Dad content acceptable to their circumstances. Text4Dad technology was viewed as usable, with some limitations. F-CHWs experienced challenges accessing the Text4Dad platform while on home visits. Results suggested that F-CHWs did not use Text4Dad to facilitate interaction, and accordingly, fathers had a lower than anticipated response rate to texts sent by their F-CHWs. We conclude with future directions for improving the implementation of text messaging programs in community-based fatherhood programs.

## Significance

*What is Already Known on this Subject?* Healthy Start home visitation programs use a community-based participatory approach to support maternal and child health among pregnant women and new mothers with low income. Given the benefits of father involvement to maternal child health, Healthy Start has begun to promote father involvement in their services and programming. Mobile technology has been identified as a way to encourage father involvement.

*What this Study adds?* Leveraging mobile technology, we developed and pilot tested Text4Dad, an interactive and mentor-based text message program, as an add on to existing Healthy Start home visitation programs to support father involvement. Interviews with male mentors and enrolled fathers yielded key implementation process components (i.e., ease of use and enrollment of fathers, relevant parent education content, need for additional technical assistance and training to support mentor–father interactions) for using Text4Dad that have implications for incorporating mobile technology into community-based home visitation programs to promote father involvement.

**Keywords** Father involvement · Maternal child health · Home visiting · Technology and families · Implementation process components

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## Introduction

Father involvement is beneficial to children during the perinatal period and beyond (Cardenas et al., 2021; Diniz et al., 2021). Efforts to include fathers in home visiting programs

remain limited, even though fathers' involvement in home visiting may have positive associations with child and family outcomes (Burcher et al., 2021). Separately, technology has been shown to promote behavioral change and most adults, including 97% of individuals with low income, own a mobile device (Fletcher et al., 2019; Pew Research Center, 2021). A burgeoning body of research examines the use of technology to engage fathers in a variety of parenting support programs (Balu et al., 2018, 2021; Bigelow et al., 2020; Hamil et al., 2021; Hayward et al., 2021; Lee & Walsh, 2015; Lewin-Bizan et al., 2020; Marcell et al., 2021; Fletcher et al., 2019; Self-Brown et al., 2018; Lee et al., forthcoming). These programs have generally been stand-alone interventions instead of being delivered in tandem or in support of in-person programs such as home visits that are inclusive of fathers. This study examined the implementation of Text4Dad, a mentor-based interactive text messaging program delivered to fathers in support of an in-person home visiting program (i.e., Healthy Start). Implementation process components were obtained from qualitative interviews with Text4Dad community health workers ( $N=3$ ) and fathers ( $N=3$ ).

### Intervention Model: Text4Dad

This article is based on process data collected from a pilot study of Text4Dad (Lee & Lee, 2019, Lee et al., forthcoming) conducted within a six-site evaluation of Healthy Start fatherhood programs in one Midwestern state. Healthy Start programs use a community-based participatory approach to support maternal and child health among pregnant women and new mothers with low income. Aligned with the community-based participatory approach, community health workers are essential to the delivery of services to Healthy Start families (DeAngelis et al., 2017). Healthy Start community health workers are often community members who may not have specific training in maternal and child health but who serve in a role as a "cultural broker" to "bridge the gap" to connect mothers to health care providers and community resources (DeAngelis et al., 2017; Meister et al., 1992).

Recognizing the potential benefits of positive father involvement during the perinatal period and beyond, Healthy Start programs in one state developed strategies to engage fathers in services. Fathers or father figures of children enrolled in Healthy Start were invited to participate in home visiting delivered by male Fatherhood Community Health Workers (F-CHWs). Three of the six Healthy Start programs participating in the larger fatherhood program evaluation agreed to pilot test Text4Dad, in which the mobile program was conceptualized as an "add-on" to help

F-CHWs connect to and engage with fathers in between home visits.

Text4Dad content was designed to support interactions between F-CHWs and fathers outside of home visits, as well as to reinforce parent education delivered to Healthy Start mothers and fathers such as the importance of well-child visits and fathers' roles in supporting maternal breastfeeding. Text4Dad was developed on a proprietary technology platform utilized in prior research with female mentors and new mothers (NurturePA; see Martin et al., 2018). Briefly, there are two unique features of Text4Dad. First, the platform is interactive and designed to facilitate bidirectional rather than unidirectional interactions between F-CHWs and enrolled fathers. Some messages were designed to encourage fathers to respond with questions or feedback. Second, the platform provides tailoring to each father. The Text4Dad platform auto-populates evidence-informed messages (e.g., on topics such as child development, play, coparenting, self-care, and caregiving) and links to web-based resources that were matched to the infant's age (i.e., 0–2, 2–4, 4–9, 9–15 months). Within the Text4Dad platform, F-CHWs were then able to tailor to individual fathers using names and other information (e.g., demographic, contextual). Unlike most other texting programs, messages were sent from the Text4Dad platform by the F-CHWs directly to fathers, adding to the personalized nature of the interaction.

## Methods

### Participants and Procedures

During this study, the research team provided training and technical assistance based on protocols adapted from NurturePA (Martin et al., 2018). The three Healthy Start sites that participated in this pilot study are hereafter referred to as Site 1 (small urban city), Site 2 (large urban city), and Site 3 (small urban city). The three sites implemented Text4Dad for approximately 1.5–9.5 months between October 2018 and July 2019 and enrolled a total of 108 fathers, the majority of whom were from low-income contexts (i.e., partners of women or infants who were Medicaid eligible).

We report here methods that follow the COnsolidated criteria for REporting Qualitative research (COREQ) criteria (Tong et al., 2007). The research team conducted semi-structured interviews with F-CHWs ( $N=3$ ) to assess their motivations to use Text4Dad, whether they felt Text4Dad enhanced fathers' participation in home visiting, whether they saw Text4Dad as a way to provide interactive social support to fathers, and whether Text4Dad facilitated their other fatherhood services (e.g., group sessions, community-based events). All three F-CHW were Black or African

American males and were professionally trained to deliver home visiting services. The research team also conducted semi-structured interviews with three fathers ( $N=3$ ) who used Text4Dad to assess acceptability and usability of Text4Dad, whether Text4Dad helped fathers feel more connected to their F-CHWs, whether Text4Dad provided a source of social support, and whether Text4Dad helped fathers engage in other components of the fatherhood program. A member of the research team (i.e., female doctoral candidate trained for qualitative interviews) conducted one father interview, and the F-CHW at Site 3 completed two additional father interviews. All interviews were voluntary and conducted within the context of site visits to each Healthy Start location. The small number of participants reflects the limited number of fathers who volunteered to be interviewed, as well as constraints in resources (i.e., outside the Healthy Start staff's regular scope of work) to conduct additional interviews. The Institutional Review Board at the University of Michigan approved the current study. All participants in the current study provided their informed consent.

### Analysis Plan

Using grounded theory techniques (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), we engaged in content analysis of the interview transcripts (Stemler, 2000). Grounded theory is an inductive method wherein the understanding of phenomena is grounded in data and does not involve the formulation of *a priori* hypotheses (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Using emergent coding (i.e., no *a priori* hypotheses), two members of the research team identified process components for Text4Dad implementation by independently reading interview transcripts. Afterward, the two members compared notes, reconciled any disagreements, and identified triangulated implementation process components from the interview data with other data obtained from the Text4Dad evaluation (Stemler, 2000). The analysis took approximately 2–3 months to complete from start to end.

### Results

Five process components for implementing Text4Dad emerged from the content analysis that may be informative to practitioners interested in incorporating mobile technology to community-based fatherhood programs, including home visiting programs. The three process components from F-CHWs included: (1) use of Text4Dad and enrolling fathers; (2) interactions with fathers, Text4Dad content, and integration of Text4Dad into home visits; and (3) training and technical assistance. The two process components from fathers included: (4) acceptability and usability of

Text4Dad; and (5) barriers to interactive use of Text4Dad. Table 1 provides relevant example quotes.

### Implementation Process Component 1: Use of Text4Dad and Enrolling Fathers

Overall, F-CHWs felt that Text4Dad was easy to use. However, it could take some time to get used to the online platform and some of its features (e.g., adding new fathers or creating new groups of fathers), and there were key limitations to the online platform. As noted in Table 1 Component 1, the F-CHW at Site 1 mentioned that the online platform was not easily accessible during home visits and, because he had to log in to Text4Dad to send messages, it was not possible for him to reply to fathers' messages or responses to Text4Dad texts in real time. This F-CHW said that he preferred to use his personal mobile device. That said, he still appreciated being able to send out parent education and community-based event message "blasts" via Text4Dad.

To enroll fathers in Text4Dad, F-CHWs considered Text4Dad one part of their larger fatherhood program and attempted to use home visits to discuss Text4Dad content with fathers. In other words, Text4Dad was presented to fathers as a part of the home visiting program rather than as a separate effort. This integration into existing services helped to facilitate fathers' enrollment into Text4Dad.

F-CHWs used Text4Dad to send out weekly messages that included parent education and links to community-based events (e.g., backpack giveaways, conferences, employment workshops). Some F-CHWs regularly embedded online resource links into their messages. The F-CHW from Site 3 noted in particular the usefulness of sending out information to fathers, especially those who are challenging to engage in home visits (Table 1).

### Implementation Process Component 2: Interactions with Fathers, Text4Dad Content, and Integration into Home Visits

Most F-CHWs did not use Text4Dad to provide mentoring and social support, but rather to send parenting resources and reminders about home visit sessions or events. Indeed, only one of the three F-CHWs used the check-in messages in the Text4Dad platform, which were designed to elicit responses from fathers (e.g., "Hi, [name of father]. How helpful was the link I sent you about [parenting topic]? Text 3 = helpful, 2 = neutral, or 1 = not helpful."). Accordingly, F-CHWs did not usually receive a response from fathers. This was the case even when the pre-programmed content was tailored and personalized to the father. When asked about the lack of response from fathers, F-CHWs noted that fathers' lives were chaotic and hectic. For example,

**Table 1** Implementation process components and example quotes from Text4Dad F-CHWs and enrolled fathers

Key Implementation Process Components	Example Quote
Component 1: F-CHWs' use of Text4Dad and enrolling fathers	<p>"There is no thread, chat room, between you and client. You have to open up a new message to respond. I can't reply from my phone. You have to keep creating a new message to respond. I would need mobile access to reply from my phone or something like that. We're on the go too much. Sometime I respond to the client from my regular phone if I see that they had messaged me through Text4Dad." (F-CHW from Site 1)</p> <p>"First thing was the dads I already had...then there was...new dads. When I add a new dad to caseload, I add them to Text4Dad. I don't pitch [Text4Dad] as separate from Healthy Start... It's a part of what we do in the Healthy Start program." (F-CHW from Site 1)</p> <p>"Text4Dad is a good way to get information such as about jobs out to fathers, especially those who might not partake consistently with home visits. It's a good way to promote their engagement." (F-CHW from Site 3)</p> <p>"It's exciting because there's so much good information but I don't want to flood them with information." (F-CHW from Site 2)</p>
Component 2: F-CHWs' interactions with fathers, Text4Dad content, and integration into home visits	<p>"Even when I text from my regular phone, there is a low response rate. We never know where these dads are in their lives on any given day. They have bad days for weeks on end...Healthy Start is voluntary. I take that same approach with Text4Dad. We can't reprimand [fathers] for not using Text4Dad how we want them to use it. They get the info and they use it maybe [or] they don't, but we keep delivering it to them. I think of it as that kind of concept—it's there for them to use if they want it." (F-CHW from Site 1)</p> <p>"He (father mentee) really appreciate[d] the article. [He] was wondering about (relevant) information, but didn't know how to get that information." (F-CHW from Site 3)</p>
Component 3: Training and technical assistance	<p>"The training was really good. You just need to be taught on it (Text4Dad). Joyce was able to provide that. I reached out to her a couple of times throughout after initial training just for things that I needed support with." (F-CHW from Site 2)</p> <p>"The support team is awesome...[They][were] responsive to [the] site's needs. Monday reminder emails were right away, timely, and consistent. The consistent and responsive support system is really key." (F-CHW from Site 3)</p> <p>"I like the sending out the messages approach and leaving contact to home visits. In terms of interaction via text, I don't think Text4Dad is the best way to do it. I think it is best to do that during the home visits." (F-CHW from Site 2)</p>
Component 4: Fathers' acceptability and usability of Text4Dad	<p>"She (partner) [is] pregnant. We don't have anything, you know, and the [Text4Dad] program helped with...two thirds of what we needed...That's why we [are] here." (Father 1)</p> <p>"The reason I signed up for this (Text4Dad) is because what the lady was saying sounded informational. Plus, I was new to being a father, so I wanted to get all the information I could...It kinda taught me what not to do [and] how to do [things] because...there's a few things she (partner) didn't know [like] safe rules and stuff like that. So yeah, it was very helpful." (Father 2)</p> <p>"Honestly, I mean for dads that need a lot of help like me, it (Text4Dad) helps." (Father 3)</p> <p>"It (Text4Dad) helped a lot because even if I couldn't make an event, we [were] still able to keep in contact and he (F-CHW) was still able to [follow][up] with me." (Father 2)</p> <p>"Personally, I try to stay in contact with him (F-CHW) as much as possible... When like there's an event or a job that come[s] up, I get it on Text4Dad." (Father 3)</p>
Component 5: Fathers' barriers to interactive use of Text4Dad	<p>"I work from 3:00 (in the afternoon) to 1:30 in the morning...It takes me a little bit to wind down from the night... So, I don't end up getting to sleep [until] like 2:00, 2:30, [or] 3:00 (in the morning)." (Father 3)</p>

according to the F-CHWs, fathers were juggling multiple jobs and working irregular hours, which made it difficult for them to find downtime to respond to text messages they received and read. Although the text messages were appreciated, it was not the fathers' priority to respond or engage in interactive dialogues with their F-CHWs.

Overall, F-CHWs liked the Text4Dad content and felt that it was relevant to their fatherhood program participants. In providing feedback on how to improve the content, F-CHW from Site 3 recommended adding messages related to how fathers might support the adjustment of older siblings when welcoming a new baby.

When it came to integrating Text4Dad content into home visits, there were mixed responses from F-CHWs. The F-CHW from Site 3 said that he used Text4Dad to introduce a parenting topic each week and then discussed it during

home visits. He noted that he shared a resource (i.e., article) with a father via Text4Dad and received positive feedback at a recent home visit (Table 1, Component 2). Adding to this, he said that Text4Dad contributed to good conversations during the in-person visits. That said, the F-CHW from Site 1 said that there was not necessarily a tie between Text4Dad content and what was discussed during home visits. Relatedly, F-CHWs at Site 1 and Site 2 indicated that they felt that interaction and support with fathers were perhaps best implemented through in-person visits rather than through texting.

### Implementation Process Component 3: Training and Technical Assistance

The research team provided extensive training and technical assistance to F-CHWs, adapted from content that was developed for NurturePA, which delivered mother-focused content using the same mobile platform as Text4Dad (Martin et al., 2018). F-CHWs agreed that the training and technical assistance provided by the research team was helpful (see Table 1, Component 3). Because Text4Dad was only accessible through an online portal, F-CHWs needed to log in using a computer most of the time. Currently, there is no Text4Dad app and the program cannot be directly integrated with a user's mobile phone. Therefore, F-CHWs could not use Text4Dad features or reply to fathers using their phones. Not surprisingly, a recommendation was to integrate Text4Dad more seamlessly with mobile devices. F-CHWs suggested that support (e.g., incentives, additional staff) would be helpful to facilitate use of Text4Dad for interaction and social support.

### Implementation Process Component 4: Fathers' Acceptability and Usability of Text4Dad

Although this pilot study had a small sample size, fathers who participated in the interviews reported satisfaction with Text4Dad. They learned new parenting information and received instrumental help from their F-CHWs (see Table 1, Component 4). Father 1 referred to the tangible support he and his partner received through Text4Dad. Father 2 noted that he had just become a new father and learned parenting tips via Text4Dad neither he nor his partner was aware of. Father 3 mentioned fathers in need of parenting support and resources and Text4Dad being helpful for such fathers. Importantly, fathers reported that Text4Dad was useful for staying in touch with their F-CHWs, scheduling or getting reminders about home visiting sessions, and learning about upcoming opportunities (e.g., job postings) and community-based events.

### Implementation Process Component 5: Fathers' Barriers to Interactive Use of Text4Dad

Despite program usefulness in staying in touch with their F-CHWs, fathers did not report high levels of interaction with their F-CHWs. This may be because the F-CHWs did not utilize check-in messages or attempt to elicit responses from fathers with questions. As noted by the F-CHWs previously, fathers may have been too busy, hard to locate, and in general difficult to reach via any format. Father 3 spoke to this issue (see Table 1, Component 5). He noted that he did not reply back to the Text4Dad messages because he had

multiple jobs and had very little time to reply. However, he still found the messages helpful for his situation.

## Conclusion and Implications

A growing body of research has examined the implementation of technology-delivered approaches to support fathers' parenting (Balu et al., 2018, 2021; Hamil et al., 2021; Hayward et al., 2021; Lee & Walsh, 2015; Lewin-Bizan et al., 2020; Marcell et al., 2021; Fletcher et al., 2019). Studies suggest that such approaches are acceptable and usable to fathers (Balu et al., 2021; Hamil et al., 2021; Hayward et al., 2021; Lee & Walsh, 2015; Lee et al., 2019; Lewin-Bizan et al., 2020; Fletcher et al., 2019). However, thus far, many technology-delivered approaches have encountered similar implementation challenges as in-person fatherhood programs, including low enrollment and uptake, limited reach, and challenges with sustainability (Balu et al., 2021; Hayward et al., 2021; Lewin-Bizan et al., 2020; Self-Brown et al., 2018). Furthermore, to date, most programs have yet to show robust links with fathers' parenting outcomes, including Dad2K (Self-Brown et al., 2018), DadTime (Balu et al., 2021), Key to Kāne (Lewin-Bizan et al., 2020), mDad (Lee & Walsh, 2015; Lee et al., 2019), SMSdads (Fletcher et al., 2019), Suffolk County Fatherhood Initiative texting intervention (Hayward et al., 2021), and DadTime (Balu et al., 2021). Of note, a few randomized control trials are ongoing (e.g., text4FATHER, Marcell et al., 2021; SMS4dads, Fletcher et al., 2018).

Similar to prior studies (Balu et al., 2021; Fletcher et al., 2019; Lee & Walsh, 2015; Lee et al., 2019; Self-Brown et al., 2018), F-CHWs and fathers in our pilot study found Text4Dad content relevant and acceptable to their contexts and situations. F-CHWs found the technology relatively easy to use, albeit limited in terms of functionality. Then, a key implication for implementing mobile technology in a community-based home visiting context is that such approaches may be most effective when they are more seamlessly integrated into existing devices, such as mobile phones, without the need to access a separate online platform (Balu et al., 2021). Although one of the F-CHWs adapted to this situation by moving conversations over to his personal phone, this meant important interactions were not captured on the Text4Dad platform. Future endeavors could involve working to create a Text4Dad app that could be directly downloaded to and used on home visitors' mobile devices.

Another critical lesson learned from this pilot study is related to the use of Text4Dad as a tool to support interactions between the F-CHWs and fathers. There was a lower-than-expected level of F-CHW and father interactions via Text4Dad, given that the platform and training sought to

emphasize the use of texting for bidirectional communication. Notably, NurturePA, using the same platform as a stand-alone intervention, had high levels of interaction between female mentors and new mothers, the majority of whom were middle-income (Martin et al., 2018). In this study, the low levels of interaction may be due in part to the limitations of the Text4Dad platform mentioned above, as well as F-CHWs' hesitancy in using Text4Dad to interact with fathers outside of home visits. Implications and recommendations from this lesson then may be conducting traditional home visits while using Text4Dad for unidirectional communications with fathers who are especially less engaged in home visiting and could only be reached through texting. For such fathers, employing the program as a *substitute* for home visits might be helpful and more practical from the F-CHW's perspectives. A stand-alone texting program like NurturePA (Martin et al., 2018) relied solely on the use of text messaging-based social support and mentorship without an in-person home visiting component. A similar approach for Text4Dad may be more realistic than expecting staff members to supplement in-home visits with texting in between visits, especially when it comes to engaging difficult-to-reach fathers.

Another implication for practitioners to consider is the training and technical support necessary to support the implementation of technology-based interventions. Our results suggest that F-CHWs may need more support to maintain fidelity to the intended goals of the intervention (e.g., bidirectional communication), for example, to use check-in messages that elicit responses from enrolled fathers. Relatedly, it may be that Text4Dad messages need to be modified to include elicitation of interactions (e.g., ending each message with a question for the father to answer) so that fathers providing a response is more naturally embedded in Text4Dad once a message is sent. Implementing Text4Dad by someone who does not provide home visiting or ongoing technical assistance related to the implementation of support and interaction with texting may be necessary for the program to be beneficial and scaled up in a community-based context.

### Study Limitations

There are several study limitations. First, we were not able to report on key sociodemographic information—such as age, race and ethnicity, education level, income, relationship status—and mobile phone literacy (e.g., how comfortable or competent fathers feel in using mobile technology) of the fathers who participated in Text4Dad because the online platform that captured interactions between the fathers and F-CHWs was missing relevant fields for data entry, preventing us from capturing such information. That said, all three

Text4Dad sites served majority low-income fathers who identified as Black or Latinx. Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that 97% of low-income adults (i.e., those making less than \$30,000 annually) own and readily use cell phones, with Black and Latinx adults reporting higher levels of cell phone ownership and usage compared to their white counterparts (Pew Research Center, 2021). There are few differences between men and women in cell phone ownership and usage (Pew Research Center, 2021). However, we are mindful that not all fathers may have enjoyed texting. In fact, in addition to experiencing competing demands, low participation rates may be attributed to fathers not being interested in texting another male about parenting information.

Second, the study and its data analysis relied on a very small group of F-CHWs and fathers on which the current study's findings are based. We most likely did not reach saturation with our small sample size. We were limited in conducting additional interviews because the interviews took place within the context of site visits and were voluntary. Additional interviews, especially those with Text4Dad enrolled fathers, would allow for gaining a more comprehensive perspective of the acceptability, usability, and feasibility of the program. That said, our findings concerning fathers' general acceptability of the Text4Dad messages support results from multiple pilot testing we have conducted with over 170 fathers to assess the acceptability and usability of the Text4Dad message type and content (Lee et al., [forthcoming](#)).

Third, two of the father interviews were conducted by an F-CHW, which could have biased some of our results. At the same time, it is important to note that fathers were challenging to access for interviews and thus leveraging the F-CHWs' access to fathers was key. Furthermore, all interviewers, including the F-CHW who conducted two father interviews, were trained using pre-determined interview protocols. The interviewers also used the same written script and set of questions to interview the fathers.

In sum, there were advantages and limitations to the implementation of Text4Dad in a community-based setting. Although F-CHWs were able to enroll fathers in Text4Dad, F-CHWs seemed to prefer to use texting to send out "blasts" of information rather than as a tool to connect with fathers outside of home visits. F-CHWs and fathers interviewed for this study found the content relevant and useful. However, integration into home visiting services may require more training and technical assistance to fully capitalize on the potential promise to use technology to engage fathers in services and supplement or reinforce the parent education content delivered during home visits.

**Author Contributions** Shawna J. Lee conceptualized the pilot study, including its research design and formation of collaborations with all

program sites, analyzed the data, interpreted the data, and led the writing of this manuscript. Joyce Y. Lee assisted with implementing the pilot study via staff training, data collection, data analysis, and co-writing and editing this manuscript.

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**Availability of Data and Material (Data Transparency)** Data are stored at the University of Michigan School of Social Work and may be made available upon request.

**Code Availability** Code (e.g., R and Stata) used for analyzing the data are currently stored at the University of Michigan School of Social Work and may be made available upon request.

## Declarations

**Conflicts of interest** Shawna J. Lee is a Quality Improvement and Quality Assurance consultant to Michigan's Genesee County Healthy Start program. Genesee County Healthy Start neither participated in this study, nor did Genesee County Healthy Start receive funding from FRPN.

**Ethics Approval** The University of Michigan Health Sciences and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the study as exempt human subjects research (Study ID: HUM00126226).

**Consent to Participate** I invite you to do an interview regarding your experiences using Text4Dad. This interview will take about 1/2 hour. You will be asked to talk about your opinions regarding Text4Dad. We have a few questions about how well you liked the program, and how we can improve it. If you agree, the interview will be audio recorded for our team to review later. You will receive a \$25 Visa gift card for participating in this interview. The information we obtain will be used to improve the text4dad program. There are no direct risks or benefits to your participation in this study. Your participation is voluntary. Please share only what you are comfortable sharing. You can end the interview at any time. You can skip questions you do not want to answer. You may stop your participation at any time.

**Consent for Publication** Not applicable.

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