The Genesee County Healthy Start Engaged Father Program

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Flint Fatherhood Advisory Board (FAB)

Members of the Parenting in Context Research Lab:

www.parentingincontext.org
Fathers and social services

- Fathers often do not engage in (traditional) parenting programs and services
- Most programs are not tailored to fathers’ needs: A meta-analysis of 77 parent training programs indicated that only four focused on fathers (Kaminski et al., 2008)
- Service providers are not well trained at engaging fathers
Parenting Matters: Supporting Parents of Young Children

- Very few interventions in early childhood target fathers' roles.
- Those that do tend to focus on financial factors (e.g., child support enforcement) rather than enhancing fathers' parenting capacity or father-child relationships directly.
- Little is known about how to engage fathers in parenting interventions.

The authors identify a key gap in current intervention practice – the role of pediatric health care providers in engaging fathers.

Recommendations included basic suggestions, such as pediatric care providers welcoming fathers, addressing fathers as co-parents, encouraging fathers to assume caregiving roles early on.

The report also highlights the need to educate fathers about the care and health of their infant.
Fathers expect to be involved

- Desire to be active, engaged positive fathers
- However, challenges faced by fathers differ
- Think creatively about windows of opportunity to engage men
Fathers are involved, especially when children are young:
- 76% of unmarried fathers saw their child in the past 30 days
- 75% had an overnight visit since the child was born
- Nearly 80% paid some child support (Mincy et al., 2005)
- 47% of families had resident fathers, and 77% of fathers had some contact with their new babies (Shapiro, Krysik, & Pennar, 2011)
Healthy Start Engaged Father Program
Logic Model & Approach
**PROGRAM: HEALTHY START**  
**PROBLEM: ENHANCE FATHER ENGAGEMENT IN HEALTHY START**

### INPUTS
- Healthy Start staff  
- Community Outreach workers  
- Quality Assurance coordinator  
- Health Education coordinator  
- Program evaluation coordinator  
- MSW interns  
- Grant funding for the fatherhood engagement components

### PROGRAM COMPONENT
- Fatherhood mentorship and outreach  
- Father-friendly “new dad” packet  
- Environmental cues at WIC and in medical clinic settings  
- Father Need Assessment and Screening

### PROGRAM ACTIVITIES
- In-person support and education groups  
- Facebook social support group  
- Text messaging support  
- F/U from health screening  
- Dad friendly “what to expect”  
- Listing of local fathering resources  
- Posters depicting dads with their babies  
- Dad friendly magazines, brochures, etc.  
- Referral to community MH and other resources that accept men

### OUTCOMES
- **Immediate**  
  - Increased attendance at:  
    - Prenatal appointments & ultrasound  
    - Birth and delivery of baby  
    - Well-baby check up visits

- **Short and Medium Term**  
  - Increased knowledge of infant development and milestones  
  - Increased knowledge regarding the importance of fathers  
  - Greater engagement with Healthy Start  
  - Enhanced help seeking  
  - Use of community resources

- **Impact**  
  - Positive father engagement enhances family and baby health and wellbeing

### ASSUMPTIONS
1. Fathers are a critical component of Healthy Start engagement.  
2. Efforts to engage fathers in Healthy Start services will increase maternal engagement in services.  
3. Positive father involvement—in Healthy Start and with mother and baby—will enhance short- and long-term maternal and infant health outcomes.  
4. Target age in programs: kids up to age 5 (0-5 years old)

### EXTERNAL FACTORS
1. Limited program funding for additional program curricula/materials.  
2. Limited capacity for additional supervision.  
3. Must fit within existing care models.  
4. Possibility of hiring a male community outreach worker at some point in the future, but probably not immediately.
Current Components of the Engaged Father Model

1. Father-friendly and father-focused parent education materials
   - The first few months
   - Pregnancy
   - Includes needs assessment/ initial screening

2. Text4dad (pilot phase)

3. Direct outreach
   - Hiring relatable program staff to implement program
   - CHWs, social workers, etc.
   - Man2Man University

4. Staff training and engagement

5. Flint FAB
“My greatest wish is that my children will always know just how much I love them and for the rest of their lives will know that no matter what, I will always be there for them, any way I can.

My children are a gift, and I will treasure mine forever.”

— Unknown author
The fatherhood program is an extension of the Healthy Start program.

We aim to strengthen families by providing fathers and partners with support and encouragement.

WHO WE ARE:
The fatherhood program is an extension of the Genesee Healthy Start program. We strengthen families by providing resources and support to fathers whose partners are in Healthy Start.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE:
Fathers of young children living in Genesee County.

HOW CAN WE HELP?
- Fatherhood Resource Packet
- Health Screening and Referral
- Man-to-Man Fatherhood Group
- Community Resources
- Father-friendly Activities

Did you know that positive father involvement contributes to child health and wellbeing? Children with involved fathers have greater success in school, fewer behavioral problems, and more self-confidence.

CONTACT YOUR HEALTHY START WORKER TO GET A FATHERHOOD RESOURCE PACKET AND MORE INFORMATION!

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL 810-257-3134
FAST FACTS

- You have a right to request DNA testing
- You have a right to agree to who the legal father is if you are 100% certain
- You have the right to make an agreement about parenting time for your child
- You have the right to make an agreement about custody for your child
- If your child receives money for food, cash, or healthcare from the state, the state will ask for child support
- If the state cannot find you to personally give you paperwork, they can still start a case for child support. You cannot dodge a child support case.
- If your child does not get money from the state, you have a right to not have a child support order if you live together or agree that you don’t want support
- You have a right to work to try to create your own order
- Both parents have a right to be in their child’s life and see their child
- Both parents can ask for help from the state to create an order
- **YOU CAN BE INVOLVED AND MAKE DECISIONS FOR YOUR CHILD AND FAMILY**

ADAPT PROGRAM

DNA TESTING AT THE HOSPITAL

INFORMATION ABOUT THE COURT SYSTEM

CREATE YOUR OWN COURT ORDER

2 MONTHS TO COMPLETE, NOT 2 YEARS

PARENTING TIME AND CUSTODY

CHILD SUPPORT

KNOW YOUR OPTIONS

Genesee County ADAPT Program

Phone: 810-232-3278

Genesee County
Friend of the Court
1101 Beach St.
Flint, MI 48502

What Every Parent Should Know About Becoming a Legal Parent

The Basics Of DNA, Paternity Establishment, Custody, Parenting Time and Child Support

Phone: 810-232-3278
Man2Man is a personal development and life-planning course that empower and equip men with the necessary tools to walk and embrace true manhood. Man2Man teach men how to live inspired, embrace their potential and live with intention. Man2Man also help men to identify and up-root core issues that plague and cause dis-function within their daily lives and overcome those obstacles with faith, passion and extreme determination.

Join Man 2 Man Univ. Today
You don’t want to miss out on the opportunity to empower or become empowered. Your voice matters and we want to equip and support you so you can be the man and father you’ve always wanted to be.
A HEALTHY BABY BEGINS WITH YOU
CALL 810-237-6161
Reaching Parents in a Changing World

- Mobile phones, tablets, and smartphones are ubiquitous.
- Increasingly important part of everyday life.
- Relatively inexpensive.
Expecting a baby?
FREE text messages to help keep you & your baby healthy
Get critical health tips timed to where you are in your pregnancy when you sign up for text4baby.
Learn More

Text4baby Tips
Some women may spot or bleed in early pregnancy. If you have any bleeding, it's always best to call your doctor or midwife (CNM/CM).

Signing Up is Easy!
Get FREE text messages on prenatal care, baby health, parenting and more!
Click here to sign up

Health Hotlines 4 Moms
Check out this list of key phone numbers and hotlines and get connected to info and services right away.
Click here for hotline list
JUST FOR DADS!
SIGN UP FOR
TEXT4DAD!

Text “daddy” to 24587 to receive 2 notifications a week about things you can do with your baby!

**EXAMPLE TEXTS**

1. **5 TO 6 MONTHS**
   - Babies <3 music, especially when Daddy sings to them. It helps them develop language skills, soothes them when they're upset, & it makes them feel loved!

2. **5 TO 6 MONTHS**
   - Daddy Pro Tip: Daddy, here’re some ideas to make ur baby laugh: funny faces, unexpected sounds, funny movements (dance moves), & nearly any other silly thing kids do.

3. **7 TO 8 MONTHS**
   - To a baby this age, parents who have been away a long time will feel like strangers & may even scare them. Try not to take it personally—it’s a normal part of child development, and it just takes time & patience.

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This service is free. Normal data usage rates apply. You can unenroll at any time by texting “STOP” to 24587. Questions or comments? Contact Porsha Black at Genesee Healthy Start: pblack@gchd.us or 810-257-3134.
Michigan Health Endowment Fund

- Develop Engaged Father Technical assistance package and statewide collaboration
  - Potential for collaboration and sharing across the state
- Expand parent education content to pregnancy period
- Enhance Text4dad to the pregnancy period
- Environmental Cues
- Media campaign to promote Text4dad
  - “Real Flint Dads”
- Social media component? Pilot test expanded outreach via Facebook social support groups
Evaluation – Administrative Data

- Number of Engaged Father packets distributed to fathers;
- Number of fathers who participate in Healthy Start home visits;
- Number of Healthy Start home visits that each father participates in during time family is enrolled in Healthy Start;
- Number of prenatal appointments father attended;
- Number of ultrasound and other health appointments father attended;
- Father attended birth and delivery of baby;
- Father visited mother in the hospital after birth of baby.
To measure fathers’ knowledge in domains of infant health, developmental milestones, and the importance of fathering, we will use existing questionnaires and surveys that measure knowledge and behavior of fathers.

- **Opinions on Babies** – A 32-item scale that measures knowledge of typical infant development across a number of domains derived from the American Academy of Pediatrics Bright Futures Guidelines for Health Supervision. This measures the knowledge of infant health and wellbeing that pediatric professionals believe mothers should know.

- **Role of the Father Questionnaire** – A 15-item scale that assesses beliefs about the father’s role and importance in child development (topic include the importance of playing with children, personality development, etc.).

- **Paternal Antenatal Attachment** – A 16-item scale that measures father's early emotional attachment with the developing baby.

- **Fathering Self-Efficacy** – A 12-item scale that the project team has developed to measure fathers’ confidence in being a good father.

- **Paternal Perinatal Support** – An 8-item scale that assesses how much the fathers report they help their partner during pregnancy.
Staff training: Strategies to engage fathers
Service delivery

- Is the timing of services flexible?
- What are the expectations for father engagement in service planning and deliver?
- Are fathers included in important decisions like case planning?
- Are appointment reminders sent to both mom and dad?
Staff behavior and attitudes

- What do you know about the fathers you serve?
- What are staff/clinicians attitudes about the fathers they serve?
- Do staff understand the role men play in children’s lives?
- What biases might be influencing your efforts to engage with men?
- Do fathers believe there is value to using the programs?
Physical environment and clinic setting

- What does the agency or clinic setting say about the role of men and fathers?
- Is the physical environment welcoming to fathers?
- Are there resources for fathers?
- Do promotional materials reflect fathers in the wording and images?
“Everyone I came in contact with was very experienced, and had been doing this for a long time – that was very reassuring.”

-Nichole
Strategies to reach fathers

- Conduct a needs assessment of the fathers in your agency setting
  - Talk with dads
  - Determine your population of interest/what dads you want to reach

- Talk to your staff and clinicians about how they perceive the men in their setting

- Assess agency policies that may be facilitating or hindering father involvement

- Develop a strategy to engage fathers more actively
  - New policies
  - New practices
  - New partnerships with other service providers