



Intro to the Fathers Corps & Father-Friendly Principles

October 3, 2024





Cross Systems Collaboration



Alameda County Health



Alameda County
**Social Services
Agency**



Fathers Make a Difference



- Fathers make important contributions to children's:
 - Regulation/self control (Gottman, 1997)
 - Language/development (Pancsofar 2006)
 - Cognitive/emotional development (Cabrera 2007)
- Birthing experience gives fathers a leg up on becoming attached to his baby in a way that is unique to him and his own feelings about the child (Kyle Pruett)
- Attachment experience between father and newborn is an intrinsically powerful one (Kyle Pruett)



Fathers Corps Overview



- Established in 2013
- Collaborative effort – First 5 Alameda County and Alameda County’s Health Care Services and Social Services Agencies
- Began with learning community for male service providers



Father Engagement and Support



- Fatherhood Summit – 2019, 2022, 2023, 2025
- Dad-scussions – launched 2020
- Fatherhood Partnership Grants
- Oakland Head Start Daddy & Me Events





Capacity Building



- **Father Friendly Provider Network (FFPN)** – *Builds participant awareness of fathers' experiences, needs, and challenges*
- **Healthy Relationships Learning Community (HRLC)** – *Builds the capacity of participants to support parents with establishing/reestablishing healthy co-parenting relationships*
- **Fatherhood Training Series with public systems:**
 - Berkeley Public Health Department
 - Family Justice Center Network (statewide)



Systems Change



- Alameda County Board of Supervisors adopted Father-Friendly Principles – 2015
- Coordinated Fatherhood Training Series with public systems:
 - Berkeley Public Health Department
 - Family Justice Center Network (statewide)
- City of Oakland Head Start Daddy & Me Events
- California Fatherhood Council
- 10-year Fathers Corps Review and Evaluation
- Healthy Schools and Communities and 10 HealthPAC Community Healthy Centers - including Father-Friendly Principles implementation activities into contracts



Road Map For Effective Father Engagement and Support



FATHER-FRIENDLY PRINCIPLES

For Agencies & Organizations Serving Families

INCLUDE NEEDS OF FATHERS

Fathers, and the needs of fathers, are included in the structure and delivery model of all family services in agencies and organizations.

PROVIDE FATHER-FRIENDLY SERVICES

Agencies and organizations are open, supportive, helpful and inclusive towards the needs of fathers and further the goal of increasing fathers' involvement in their children's lives.

PORTRAY POSITIVE FATHER IMAGES

Materials, illustrations, posters, brochures and other collateral include positive, diverse images of fathers. Facilities provide father-friendly environments consistent with the needs of men and fathers.

CREATE POSITIONS THAT SERVE FATHERS

Agencies and organizations create positions that serve fathers and actively recruit men to fill those positions in order to better address the needs of fathers.

TRAIN STAFF ON FATHERHOOD ISSUES

Agencies and organizations working with families strive to provide training for all staff on working with men and on fatherhood issues.

EXPECT FATHER PARTICIPATION

Agencies and organizations develop program policies with a clear expectation that fathers should and will participate.

DESIGN PROGRAMS FOR FATHERS

Agencies and organizations make every effort to create the image that programs are designed for fathers as well as for mothers and children.

For more information go to www.First5Alameda.org/Fathers-Corps



Alameda County Health & Fathers Corps



Alameda County Health Staff Visibility Partnership and Action

- Leadership in Fathers Corps
- Visibility raises awareness
- Funder / First 5 and service providers
- Fatherhood Deliverables (2017)
- Father-Friendly Principles Implementation
- <https://diversityoffatherhood.com/>
- Fatherhood Summit



Alameda County Health Partnership



Coaching and TA Support



- Review Father-Friendly Principles Implementation Tool
- Identify 2 Father-Friendly Principles to implement
- Identify implementation activities and timeline
- Monthly / Quarterly check-ins
- Fatherhood resource connections
- Materials development
- Services and program support



Increasing Network of Fatherhood Services



- Surveying and connecting with dads (FFP #1)
- Launching father-centered services
 - Father-centered health events (FFP #2)
 - COVID Response
 - Boot Camp for New Dads & Dad-chelor Party
 - Fathers participating in Centering Pregnancy Groups
 - Spanish Speaking “Daddy & Me” Groups
 - Café Dad (English & Spanish groups) - ACPHD

You're invited to a "Dadchelor" Day party otherwise known as a Baby Shower for Men!

- Brunch
- Education
- Resources
- Diapers 4 Dad's
- Gifts for baby
- Gift cards

Space is limited...
RSVP Today!



SCAN ME

Or Text (510) 605-4117



Saturday, May 20th
10:00 am-12:30pm
West Oakland Health Center
700 Adeline Street, Oakland 94607



Increasing Network of Fatherhood Services



- Father-Friendly Spaces (FFP #3)
 - Changing tables in men's rooms
 - Updated program forms
 - Dad's Corner
 - Images of fathers (photobank)
 - Increased outreach to fathers
- Hiring Male Staff, Partnering with other CBOs (FFP #4)
- Father-Friendly Provider Network & staff training (FFP #5)

You're invited to a "Dadchelor" Day party otherwise known as a Baby Shower for Men!

- Brunch
- Education
- Resources
- Diapers 4 Dad's
- Gifts for baby
- Gift cards

Space is limited...
RSVP Today!



SCAN ME

Or Text (510) 605-4117



Saturday, May 20th
10:00 am - 12:30pm
West Oakland Health Center
700 Adeline Street, Oakland 94607



OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Community Schools, Thriving Students



Increasing Network of Fatherhood Services



- Father-Friendly Spaces (FFP #3)
 - Changing tables in men's rooms
 - Updated program forms
 - Dad's Corner
 - Images of fathers (photobank)
 - Increased outreach to fathers
- Hiring Male Staff, Partnering with other CBOs (FFP #4)
- Father-Friendly Provider Network & staff training (FFP #5)

You're invited to a "Dadchelor" Day party otherwise known as a Baby Shower for Men!

- Brunch
- Education
- Resources
- Diapers 4 Dad's
- Gifts for baby
- Gift cards

Space is limited...
RSVP Today!



SCAN ME

Or Text (510) 605-4117



Saturday, May 20th
10:00 am - 12:30pm
West Oakland Health Center
700 Adeline Street, Oakland 94607



OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Community Schools, Thriving Students



Lessons Learned



- Men want to be engaged in health services and support
- Buy in from front line staff and middle management – True Champions
- Staff turnover
- Continuity
- Takes time to change perspective, challenge biases, shift culture, change practice, and change systems
- Requires innovation



Keys to Success

- Establishing the Male-only learning community; it created a network that penetrated our systems and community-based organizations
- Introduction and adoption of the Father-Friendly Principles
- Developing the Diversity of Fatherhood Photobank
- Responsive to needs of fathers (e.g., co-parenting, navigating family court, father-centered parenting education, etc.)



Keys to Success



- Began as cross-systems Collaboration and buy-in from systems' leaders
- Engaging fathers directly through focus groups and Dad-scussions
- Scaffolding multiple components of the program and continuing to produce resources, services, and supports
- Branding
- Highlighting that fathers were not being supported/acknowledged/respected by our system of care
- Creating Father-specific services



What's Next?



- Share 10-year Evaluation Findings and Impact
- Expand and build on Oakland Head Start Father Engagement
- Expand Healthy Relationship Learning Community
- Dad-scussions - Community Engagement
 - Daddy & Me Back to School Photo Shoot
 - Record Expungement Fair
 - Child Support Information Fair
- Relaunch Interagency Fatherhood Workgroup
- Support First 5 California's Fatherhood Initiative
- 2025 Fatherhood Summit





MARK YOUR CALENDAR

ALAMEDA COUNTY
FATHERHOOD SUMMIT

HONORING THE POWER OF FATHERHOOD

SEPTEMBER
27 2025



first5alameda.org/FathersCorps



SUPPORTING FATHER INVOLVEMENT AND SUCCESS:

An Evaluation of the Fathers Corps
Program of First 5 Alameda County

Arnold Chandler, Forward Change



About Fathers Corps

Established in 2013, the Alameda County Fathers Corps is a **cross-systems collaboration** of Alameda County's Health Care Services Agency, Social Services Agency, Department of Child Support Services, Department of Probation, and led by First 5 Alameda County.

Mission: Fathers Corps works to create a father-friendly system of care for families by building the capacity of service providers to effectively see, serve, and support fathers and father-figures. The multi-program initiative specifically seeks to create father-specific and father-centered services that enhance the parenting skills of low-income fathers of color.



Purpose of the Evaluation



Document the history of the program at its 10-year anniversary to assess how program activities have impacted target populations. Three primary questions guided the evaluation:

- 1 What **effect has Fathers Corps had on fathers and father figures** participating in program activities?
- 2 How has Fathers Corps **influenced service providers who work directly with fathers**, including observed changes in organizational practices towards fathers?
- 3 What **impact has Fathers Corps made on service delivery to fathers by public, private, and nonprofit organizations**, according to leaders of those groups.



Methods of data collection included document review, analysis of historical program surveys, key informant interviews, a focus group held with fathers, and an evaluation survey. Evaluation was conducted between February 2023 and January 2024.



The Fathers Corps Model

Programs and
Target Populations



Target Populations and Outcomes



Fathers/Father Figures

Target Population
Low-income fathers of color not residing with their young children (ages 0-5).

Target Outcome
Improve the quality of father-child interactions and relationships



Service Providers

Those providing direct services to fathers and father figures and their children.

Improve the understanding and effectiveness with which providers serve the needs of fathers and father figures.



Systems Leaders

Those overseeing how public, private and nonprofit organizations interact with and support fathers.

Improve policies and practices guiding how public, private and nonprofit organizations serve the needs of fathers and father figures.

Fathers Corps Programs



System Building

Fathers Corps aims to establish a father-friendly system of care by implementing the Father-Friendly Principles and coordinating the Interagency Fatherhood Workgroup.



Capacity Building

Fathers Corps provides tailored training opportunities for programs and providers, enhancing awareness of fathers' needs and challenges through learning communities and individual trainings.



Father Engagement and Support:

Fathers Corps funds father-specific parenting education and support groups for community-based organizations. Additionally, Fathers Corps hosts fatherhood summits, and "Dad-scussion" sessions, a monthly support group.

RE-SHAPING THE NARRATIVE

Program Impact Findings





Impact Findings: Fathers/Father Figures



The principal Fathers Corps activity for fathers are **support group sessions** which are monthly gatherings where fathers engage in discussions on topics either initiated by participants or introduced by facilitators. Some notable impacts of these sessions according to a survey of fathers include:

89% reported improved interactions with their children due to participating in support groups

81% reported being able to apply new parenting practices

78% reported a boost in confidence in their fathering

67% reported expanding their networks of social support





Impact Findings: Service Providers



Service providers were primarily impacted through their participation in **training workshops** on an array of topics related to fathers. Some of the most salient impacts they reported for their organizations are, they:

- 73%** Made fatherhood issues part of their strategic planning efforts
- 69%** Sought or obtained funding to support providing programs or services to fathers
- 56%** Sought greater participation of fathers in their programs
- 48%** Added requirements to serve fathers to RFPs and contracts
- 46%** Modified existing programs to better serve fathers
- 46%** Used new approaches to recruit and retain fathers
- 44%** Added new services specifically for fathers





Impact Findings: Father-Serving Systems

✓ Systems leaders were impacted through their or their staff's participation in **training workshops and other support activities**. They reported the following impacts on their organization:

65% Helped make staff more effective in communicating with and engaging with fathers

60% Led them to make fatherhood issues part of their organizations' strategic plans

55% Saw greater participation of fathers in organization programs

40% Sought or obtained funding to provide programs and services for fathers

40% Planning to offer new services or programs for fathers



Recommendations

For Program Improvement





Recommendations: Fathers/Father Figures



Improve Father Recruitment. To serve more fathers, particularly young fathers, expand recruitment efforts to include a broader array of community outreach activities such as barbecues, car shows, motorcycle meetups, and other community events, as well as advertising through billboards and bus stop signs.



Offer more one-on-one sessions of individualized support. Provide fathers with more one-on-one sessions with program staff. In the evaluation literature, programs offering individualized support and services tended to report better outcomes.



Provide fathers more referrals to services. Fathers participating in FC programs desired a greater level of referrals to supportive services is made available to them. Service providers also sought more training in how to provide such referrals.



Help fathers establish legal parenting time agreements. According to the fatherhood evaluation literature, securing access to their children is one of the primary types of support sought by fathers and one of the most critical ways to keep fathers engaged in program activities over time.



Recommendations: Service Providers



Create a series of workshops that build on each other over time to produce a comprehensive learning experience. This was the highest-rated recommendation among service providers.



Create a comprehensive directory of fatherhood services across Alameda County: The need for a comprehensive directory of fatherhood services across Alameda County was strongly endorsed by both service providers and systems leaders.



Reintroduce a male-specific learning community: Recreating a separate male-only learning community, an idea supported by 49% of surveyed service providers, would provide a safe and constructive space to discuss certain issues specific to male providers serving fathers.





Recommendations: Father-Serving Systems



Facilitate team training, internal team development, and ongoing advising to implement Father-Friendly Principles in public systems: Translating Father-Friendly Principles into actual organizational practice requires greater support, including comprehensive training to help teams internalize and deeply understand the principles and their implications along with strategic advising and coaching for dedicated internal teams.



Offer training and coaching to service provider champions: Provide support to individual service provider champions who advocate for the adoption of Father-Friendly Principles within their organizations.



Establish a partnership with child support services to pilot a program that reduces child support arrears in exchange for completing key milestones in Fathers Corps programs: Such a program partnership could produce strong incentives for program participation and yield positive benefits for children as a result.



Collaborate with community colleges and other educational institutions to integrate content related to serving fathers into certification programs for practitioners: Roughly half of service providers and systems leaders endorsed the idea of working with community colleges to incorporate father-serving content into certification programs for family service providers.

 ForwardChange

FIRST 5
 **ALAMEDA COUNTY**

