

Fatherhood Programs: Key Study Findings

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 - Action for Children
 - Centers for Families and Children
 - Coleman Professional Services
 - ForeverDads
 - Great Lakes Community Action Partnership
 - Passages
 - Talbert House

Overview

- Background Literature
- Introduction to Study
- Methodology
- Quantitative Findings
- Qualitative Findings
- Discussion

Background Literature

Barriers

- Flexibility of staff work schedules is important, because many of the fathers they serve require evening and weekend visits (Sandstrom et al., 2015).
- Other reported barriers to completion and attendance are scheduling conflicts and transportation availability (Pearson, Fagan, & Kaufman, 2018).

Background Literature

Effectiveness

- Programs with staff who are culturally sensitive and empathetic were the most effective fatherhood programs (Bronte-Tinkew, Burkhauser, & Metz, 2012).
- Positive outcomes for fathers and children can be attributed to participating in responsible fatherhood programs (Holmes et al., 2019; JustPartners, Inc., 2010).

Introduction to Study

- in June, 2018, the *Fatherhood Research and Practice Network Grant Program* awarded the Department of Social Work a *Health and Human Services* subaward to conduct a mixed methods study that involved the 7 agencies funded by the OCF.
- Data Collection Period: July 1, 2018 – May 31, 2019

Methodology

- Fathers from 70 Ohio counties voluntarily took part in the programming and survey completion.
- Survey instruments used:
 - Intake demographic survey
 - Domestic violence screening
 - Pre and post tests
 - Exit survey

1454 enrolled in programming

737 completed all survey instruments

Sample Demographics

- **Most fathers were under the age of 34 (53%).**
- **Race - fathers self-identified as:**
 - White or Caucasian (52.8%)
 - Black or African American (36.7 %)
 - Latino or Hispanic (4.4 %)
- **74% of Fathers – Earned < \$500 in last 30 days**
- **Relationship Status**
 - 13% were married at the time of enrollment
 - 57 % were either never married or currently divorced.

Enrolled & Completed

80% of Classes Completed/Met 50% of Goals

Agency	Enrolled	Completed	% Completed
Talbert House	463	189	41%
Action for Children	259	127	49%
GLCAP	198	156	79%
Passages	196	130	66%
Forever Dads	160	46	29%
The Centers	124	62	50%
Coleman Services	54	27	50%
Totals	1454	737	

Community Dads vs. Incarcerated Dads

Enrolled Fathers (1454)

- 642 Incarcerated (44%)
- 810 Community (56%)

Completed Fathers (737)

- 420 Incarcerated (57%)
- 316 Community (43%)

Satisfaction with Services

Survey Item		Community	Incarcerated
Staff gave help I needed	Mean	4.71	4.68
	SD	0.59	0.55
Staff did good job	Mean	4.78	4.75
	SD	0.48	0.5
My questions were answered	Mean	4.71	4.68
	SD	0.51	0.55
I would recommend the program	Mean	4.77	4.77
	SD	0.52	0.47
Learned information I would apply in my life	Mean	4.7	4.69
	SD	0.55	0.57
Plan to return for more help	Mean	4.31	4.18
	SD	0.9	0.97

Responses Regarding Parenting

**Table 10: Distribution of responses to Item 6 on the Exit Survey:
Parenting**

Item	Community	Incarcerated
Enrolled in fatherhood classes	169	272
Completed fatherhood classes	54	99
Improved communication with my co-parent(s)	52	72
Completed Boot Camp for New Dads or other expectant father program	1	4
Other	7	2

Responses Regarding Employment

Table 13: Distribution of responses to Item 10 on the Exit Survey: Employment

Item	Community
Sent resumes to potential employers	104
Participated in interviews	81
Received job skills training	75
Got a new job	71
Received help getting work clothes	33
Scheduled interviews	14
Other	7

**Table 14: Distribution of responses to Item 11 on the Exit Survey:
Referrals, Education, or Counseling**

Item	Community	Incarcerated
Completed addiction treatment program	23	66
Obtained safe housing	14	NA
Completed Anger Management program	13	16
Other	10	12
Enrolled in vocational or technical program	6	16
Completed Batter Intervention program	1	1
Obtained vocational or technical certification	1	8
Obtained GED	1	18
Obtained HS diploma	NA	2

Qualitative Research

- The qualitative analysis consisted of two separate analyses and sources of data:
 - Two open-ended questions from the exit survey
 - Data from agency staff interviews
- Using thematic analysis, responses were analyzed following guidelines from Braun and Clarke (2006).

Key Themes from Exit Survey Q7

“If you took a fatherhood class, please list the two most important things you learned.”

Summary of Themes and Frequencies for Question 7

Themes	Total Responses
Parenting Skills and Knowledge	639
Communication	525
Fathering Growth	363
Life Skills and Knowledge	244
Relationships	192
Personal Improvement	131

Quotes – Most Important Things Learned

Parenting Skill and Knowledge

“How to properly punish my child without spanking.”

“I need to let them know that I love them.”

Communication

“How to listen to my children.”

Fathering Growth

“How important I am to my children.”

“Your child’s feelings and needs always come first.”

Key Themes from Exit Survey Q14

“Please share any other thoughts about this program.”

Summary of Themes and Frequencies for Question 14

Theme	Total Responses
Beneficial Aspects of Classes/Program	544
Teachers/Staff	242
Learning	238
Feedback about Program	142
Feelings about Program	140
Suggestions	58

Quotes – Additional Participant Feedback

Beneficial Aspects of Classes/Program

“Very powerful and informative information was transferred.”

Teachers/Staff

“The workers cared and wanted to help me,”

“The facilitator was awesome. Full of wisdom and knowledge he shared.”

Learning

“It let me know it’s not too late to turn my life around.”

Agency Interview Qualitative Data

- The Principal Investigator and Co-PI collected qualitative data from one staff member from each of the seven (7) agencies via face-to-face interviews at or near their location.
- Purpose: *to gather information about agency engagement, programmatic, sequencing differences, and provision of incentives that affected father success.*

Findings from Agency Interviews

Fathers most likely to complete programming

Motivation and a willingness to change

- Fathers who recognized that they needed to take a new path to reach their goals, including wanting to be good fathers, did better.

Fathers with easily removable barriers

- Fathers who see rapid results with easily removable barriers tend to succeed, which is related to motivation.

Father's age

- Fathers between the ages of 30-40 do better than fathers who are younger or older. Fathers older than 40, one observed, tended to have more significant barriers to overcome.

Findings from Agency Interviews

Barriers to completion of fatherhood programs

- Transportation and driver's license
- Schedule conflicts with work or other responsibilities
- Father's mental health, trauma, and substance use disorder

Engagement – Building trust and rapport

- Quickly address father's concerns
- Be mindful of interests & needs
- Text and stay in touch

Findings from Agency Interviews

Social Support – formal and informal

- Fathers with family and friends do better
- Therapeutic for fathers to find friendship in groups
- Therapeutic for fathers to get support from staff & others

Agency and Voice

- Listen and let them know they are heard
- Make them feel important

Goal Setting with Dads

- Identify goals from the beginning and keep setting higher goals -Works

Quotes – From Agency Staff

Engagement

Typically, if we can't help them quickly, they're gone. The key is engagement and we do that through relationships.

Social Support

A lot of these people are isolated. So, the connection between the fathers who have similar issues and difficulties is needed.

Voice

We give voice. The population that comes to us has usually not been heard. They're frustrated and think things are stacked against them.

Quotes – From Agency Staff

- *...the ones who have benefitted the most are the ones who are ready to try things a new way because they see their way is not working for them. They can come from all different walks of life but the common denominator... are those who have the realization that there is a problem, they want to do something about it, and it's bigger than their current resources.*

Discussion

- Fathers were satisfied with the programming and services.
- Fathers were pleased with the kind and caring facilitators and case managers.
- Successful fathers were more likely to have strong social support, be older, have fewer barriers and be motivated.
- The high attrition is normal. Causes have not been examined in the literature. Using our data, we are exploring in-depth factors that impact retention.

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