



Engaging Fathers to Strengthen Families **A Note from the Director**

June 18th is Father's Day, when we recognize the vital role that fathers and father-figures play in children's developmental support networks. Today's family structures are diverse. Many men do not live with their biological children, and many act as father-figures in blended households. Regardless of living arrangements, most want to be actively and positively involved in the lives of their biological and/or non-biological children. Schools and social service providers need to be intentional about creating father-friendly environments to engage them, and use outreach strategies that welcome multidimensional families. I hope the tips and resources provided below will support you in engaging fathers as a valuable part of the family.

Best Regards,
Robyn Cenizal, CFLE, Project Director

Tip of the Month

Your monthly tip to strengthen the relationships of those you serve. Share it - Post it - Pass it on!

Fathers play an important role in family life and the healthy development of their children. This is true whether parents are married, cohabiting, romantically involved, or co-parenting. In recent years, there has been an increasing focus on involving fathers in services for families, such as early childhood education and home visiting. Here are some [practical tips from Fathers Incorporated](#) for service providers seeking to engage fathers:

- **Respect:** Recognize and articulate the importance of fathers' relationships with their child(ren) and partner/co-parent.
- **Access:** Address any barriers to father involvement and establish a framework and criteria for the inclusion of fathers in services.
- **Build Capacity:** Recruit male staff, develop partnerships with other agencies, and invest in staff training to better serve fathers.

Featured Resources

The Resource Center's [Virtual Library](#) has collected more than 1,500 materials in a variety of formats including fact sheets, research-to-practice briefs, brochures, pamphlets, training resources, program reports or evaluations, and research materials.

- **One Big Happy "Blended Family:" Tips to Help Fathers Co-Parent Effectively**
One way to support fathers' family involvement is to assist them with effective co-parenting. Encouraging healthy relationship skill-building and healthy parenting can help blended families experience less conflict. This tip sheet for navigating relationships with co-parents can be shared with fathers or printed and used as a handout in program offices or at events.
- **Father Involvement in Early Childhood Programs**
This brief from the Minnesota Fathers & Families Network outlines the benefits and importance of father engagement in early childhood education programs. It describes the ways that fathers typically do (and don't) get involved in their children's programs, and provides concrete recommendations and success stories from organizations that are effectively engaging dads.
- **Approaches to Father Engagement and Fathers' Experiences in Home Visiting Programs**
Early childhood home visiting programs typically target pregnant women and

mothers of young children, but increasing attention is being given to the practice of engaging fathers as well. This study aimed to understand how home visiting programs engage fathers, what fathers' experiences are in those programs, and the perceived benefits of fathers' participation.

Events

The Resource Center's [Events Calendar](#) offers a listing of Resource Center events and other national, regional, and community-wide events that might be of interest. Upcoming events include:

- **NCFR Webinar: Practical Skills for Family Life Educators to Invoke, Evoke, and Provoke Cultural Engagement, July 20, 2017**

Family life educators work in a variety of environments that require knowledge, skills, and dispositions to engage diverse populations and create learning spaces that are anti-oppressive for all families. Since families are unique both within and between cultural groups, family life educators can best prepare by learning practical skills that invoke an understanding of their own cultural selves, evoke awareness of societal and individual biases, and provoke cultural engagement with families served. The activities in this webinar will provide skill-building for family life educators, and will lend themselves to replicable activities that family life educators can use with families.

- **2017 NARME Summit, Denver, CO, July 28 - 30, 2017**

The Summit is designed to equip those leading the way for healthy relationship development, family formation, and poverty prevention with the knowledge and strategies to be most effective in the workplace and community. There will be a Pre-Summit Training July 25-27, 2017.

Please attend our presentation and visit our exhibit booth

Feedback and Technical Assistance

To learn more about the Resource Center, visit us at <http://www.healthymarriageandfamilies.org/>.

The National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families supports human service providers as they integrate healthy marriage and relationship education skills into service delivery systems as part of a comprehensive, culturally appropriate, family-centered approach designed to promote self-sufficiency.

If you have suggestions or wish to speak with a Resource Center staff member, please [contact us](#) and we will be happy to assist you. To learn more about free training and technical assistance available to human service agencies, visit our [Training and Technical Assistance page](#).

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