
Intergenerational Co-parenting: Supporting Young Parents

National Resource Center for Healthy Marriages and Families

Webinar Question and Answer (Q&A)

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Question: Do fathers also go through paternal role attainment to establish their paternal identity, and if so, do the same supports and processes facilitate this?

Answer: *Jacquelyn Mallette, Assistant Professor of Human Development and Family Science at East Carolina University:*

Yes. That is a great question. Yes, there is definitely research on father identity. Fathers do definitely obtain this identity through different, careful processes, but let me say, the relational challenges that they experience and the support that they require are very similar to the way that a mother would establish her identity.

Question: Are there tips for communicating with teen fathers to help explain financially why they're so important when they might be struggling with co-parenting and the visitation or custody as the main issues?

Answer: *Stephanie Toelle, Extension Agent IV-Family & Consumer Sciences, UF/IFAS - Duval County Extension Services:*

I think you would use some of the same techniques for communication, but I think you would reinforce it with some things that would appeal to the father, in terms of how his role can make a difference in terms of his support.

Question: Does anyone have tips for creating parent support groups at schools?

Answer: *Robyn Cenizal, Director, National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families:*

I'll just jump in with a couple of examples. For example, the All Pro Dad program, they work in schools and have been very successful in creating father groups in the schools. The way it works is that there are activities for father and child. Then there is separate session time for just the fathers, where they have an opportunity to treat this supportive atmosphere for dads. That's one example.

I know that many of the Head Start organizations offer parent events, where they try to help create an environment where there can be natural support networks developed. The other thought that comes to mind is, I know, Stephanie, you've done some work around this in the past, where you used Family Treasures to try to create some family groups. You want to talk a little bit about that? The Family Treasures stuff is still available through Extension, isn't it?

Stephanie Toelle, Extension Agent IV-Family & Consumer Sciences, UF/IFAS - Duval County Extension Services:

I believe so. The University of Nebraska Extension produced that. Those were essentially activities that involved the whole family. I recall working with a local United Way full-service school program who worked with parents and the kids involved — middle school and elementary school aged children. They provided a meal. Then we did just some brief introduction to a family strengthening concept. Then we did an activity that reinforced it and something that was fun. We had different props and gadgets to manipulate. Everybody had a part of it. I think you can grow from there, build some excitement and maybe have other opportunities that branch out from that that involve the family.

Robyn Cenizal, Director, National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families:

One of the most important things about engaging parents in the school environment or any other environment is that you have to keep in mind adult learner concepts. Adults want to participate in things that they view to be relevant, and they can see the immediate translation of whatever this is into their practical lives. It needs to feel like it's something that they would want to participate in, and it needs to be promoted as a value to them and a value to their kids for them to participate.

Question: Are there resources that you might recommend to parents who have had a surprise pregnancy?

Answer: *Robyn Cenizal, Director, National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families:*

I would definitely say, first of all, check the Resource Center library. I'm sure we have some resources in there that might be helpful in that regard. Also, I would encourage [you] to look for Cooperative Extension programs in your communities that may offer parenting classes or parenting support programs.

There are also a lot of resources for kinship caregivers, which might also provide some additional supports. We have a lot of grandparents raising grandchildren, and sometimes there are a lot of resources through Extension to support some of that. But I would certainly suggest, start with communication skills, and feel free to visit the Virtual Training Center and complete the communication skills mini course before you start having those all-important conversations about that topic.

Stephanie Toelle, Extension Agent IV-Family & Consumer Sciences, UF/IFAS - Duval County Extension Services:

That's great. Speaking of kinship, I recall the weblink that's online there, Zero to Three, had a link particular to kinship caregivers. That would be another one to check out.
