THE SOLANO COUNTY CAL-WORKS
RESPONSIBLE FATHERS PILOT PROGRAM
VALLEJO, CALIFORNIA

Richard Livingston Jr.
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PROJECT

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THE SOLANO COUNTY CAL-WORKS
REONSIBLE FATHERS PILOT PROGRAM
VALLEJO, CALIFORNIA

A Project

by

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Date: 4/28/06
Abstract

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RESPONSIBLE FATHERS PILOT PROGRAM

by

Richard Livingston, Jr.

Statement of Problem

As a result of the father absence epidemic, and the effects it has on the children in America, the Health and Social Services Department in Solano County implemented the Responsible Father’s Program for participants eligible through their children receiving CalWorks benefits in Vallejo California. This study is an effort to explore some of the issues surrounding the fatherhood role and helping dads rebuild a positive, consistent, and financially supportive relationship with their children. There will also be a brief discussion about the social services agencies and the accessibility or the lack of accessibility to resources for these fragile “fatherless” families. There are a number of children who are impacted in various ways as a result of being raised in a fatherless society. This study will briefly discuss the national platform but primarily focus on the micro level problem in Solano County.
Sources of Data

The data for this study was obtained through both primary and secondary sources. There are a number of written literatures available on fatherhood at the national level, but minimal research on this specific program in Solano and surrounding Counties. To explore the topic further, interviews with the grant/proposal writer and the Responsible Father's Program Social workers were conducted. Various materials and data was collected by Health and Social services staff who may have been directly or indirectly involved with the program.

Conclusions Reached

Children benefit from increased interaction, visitation, and child support from their non-custodial parents as a result of fathers participating in one or more of the Fatherhood Programs that are now available in communities across America. Fathers need to be able to utilize the same social service resources that the mother's have access to, in order to boost self esteem, obtain employment skills, and become more financially able and willing to adequately support their children. Polices, policy makers, private agencies, and special interest groups need to create policies that empower fathers rather than perpetuate fatherlessness. The more we help the non-custodial fathers, the more we help the children of these fragile families.

Bruce L. Bikle, Ph.D

4/28/06
Date

, Committee Chair
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First, I would like to give honor to the Most High GOD, who is the head of my life, whom ALL HONOR is due. Thank you for bringing me through the storms, keeping me strong, blessing me with good health, and keeping my mind in tact. I could have been dead in my grave many times, but your grace and mercy have followed me through all of the days of my life. I also have been fortunate to have been blessed with my beautiful wife Amber Rose Livingston, and our precocious combined children; Jasmine Yaniece Livingston, Richard Dejion Livingston III, Kaleo Klaut, Ali Haq Jr., Isaiah Real Livingston, and the twins, Josuha David Livingston, and Josiah Solomon Livingston. We hold you all very dear to our hearts and will love you through the end of time, thank you so much LORD for loaning them to us for this lifetime. Amber I could not have completed this final project (in the fourth quarter with only seconds on the clock) without your love, time, dedication, sacrifice, and understanding, thank you.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Boys without fathers are almost 40% more likely to use drugs.

Girls without fathers are two times more likely to get pregnant and 53% more likely to commit suicide.

Nationwide, the fastest growing category of parenting is single fathers – up 50% since 1990, to 2 million fathers.

SOURCE: U. S. Department of Health and Human Services

Does the word father refer only to biology, or only to someone who is fully present in his or her child’s life? Can one be considered a father if they are financially present but physically absent? Can one be considered a father if they are physically present but financially absent? Where/How does a father begin to reconnect with his children if they have been separated?

The role of the father has changed dramatically in our society and so has the stigmatism and stresses associated with being a father in America. In past times, being a father was very honorable and prestigious because he was the head of the household, was in charge of the spiritual guidance of the children, and was usually the primary wage earner. In modern times, the job of the father is no longer to be the primary breadwinner, and social norms have changed so much, that the once platinum status of being a father is almost left in the bottom of the barrel. A father can be absent from his child’s life (through no fault of his own), and can be labeled as a “deadbeat dad” when in fact he
might only be a “dead broke dad”. Some fathers may not feel much like a father without money, a job, or medical benefits to offer their children. If a father is underemployed, lacks formal education, is not able to communicate effectively with his children’s mother, has no real relationship with his children, is stripped of his license (driving/professional), where can he turn? If the father has no access to father-tailored programs or therapy services, and did not have a father of his own, how will he survive the stigmatism and stereotypes in a society that has little use for him and now belittles him? In an attempt to answer these questions, Daniels (1998) concluded:

Virtually every major social pathology has been linked to fatherlessness: violent crime, drug and alcohol abuse, truancy, teen-pregnancy, suicide -- all correlate more strongly to fatherlessness than any other single factor. The majority of prisoners, juvenile detention inmates, high school dropouts, pregnant teenagers, adolescent murderers, and rapists all come from fatherless homes.

Kamarack and Galston (1990) added, “the connection is so strong that controlling for fatherlessness erases the relationships between race and crime and between low income and crime.”

By the 1990’s, fatherhood was rapidly becoming the number one social policy issue in America. The NFI, founded by Ken Cranfield, was instrumental with influencing President Bill Clinton to support fatherhood issues. President Clinton stated in 1995 that, "the single biggest social problem in our society may be the growing absence of fathers from their children's homes, because it contributes to so many other social problems (Science and Politics, 2002).
The problem has enormous implications, with some 40% of the nation's children, and 60% of African-American children, live in homes where their fathers are not present (Popenoe, 1993).

Fatherhood was seen as the most serious social problem by almost 80% of respondents to a 1996 Gallup Poll (National Fatherhood Initiative, 1996). In 1997, Congress joined their efforts and created many fatherhood task forces to study the issue. In 1998, the Mayors and Governors Conference also initiated similar programs to promote fatherhood. In 2002, President George W. Bush brought forth a $315 million package for "responsible fatherhood" programs, and in April 2001, Solano County Cal Works Responsible Fathers Program joined the fight for fathers and started a pilot program in Vallejo California.

*Purpose of the Project*

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the impact of the SCHSS RFP. The study will determine if child support payments and visitation of non-custodial fathers increased and became consistent as a result of participation in the program.

*Scope of the Project*

The evaluation is designed to measure and analyze data from June 2000 and the 18 months after the inception of the Solano County Health and Social Services' Responsible Fathers Pilot Program. Only the outcomes measuring fathers' rate of paying child support and increased visitation will be investigated. These are the first and necessary steps in making required modifications to the Solano County RFP, if required, and to measuring the success of that program.
This study will show the effects of a fatherless society through the eyes of the Solano County Health and Social Services (SCHSS) Responsible Fathers Program. The SCHSS Department took a proactive approach at researching the social epidemic of living in a fatherless America and how our children are affected. The study will briefly discuss the national platform but primarily focus on the micro-level program implemented in Solano County.

Significance of the Project

The significance of this study is to show how the absence of a father figure can negatively impact the lives of children (male/female). The study is important because research has shown that families are facing a national crisis that has resulted in poverty, isolation, crime, punishment, substance abuse, physical/sexual abuse, death, and teen-age pregnancy, and an increased risk for sexual diseases for the children of these families. This study should clearly discuss the problem and help address what programs and services can be provided to these fragile families so the current cycle and trends can be prevented in the future. This study will also help us understand what a fatherhood program should consist of in order to strengthen the life of the non-custodial parent, thus strengthening the children in these fragile families. The study will also discuss how these fathers need public policies and systems, child support enforcement, social welfare, and criminal justice that promotes, rather than impedes, responsible parenting.
Limitations of the Project

The research problem is that no formal evaluation of the RFP success has been done to date. Additionally, there were a number of expected outcomes and it is beyond the scope of this research to measure each, so only the outcomes measuring increased visitation and fathers’ rate of paying child support will be investigated.

Given the apparent universality of stereotypical backgrounds, many efforts to fix measuring and evaluating of programs to ascertain real outcomes have been identified. The Solano County Responsible Father’s Program gathered much of this information and was aware of the difficulties associated with this process, and that is why it is important to see if this program can be measured in a way that will tell us if child support payments are increasing in Solano County as a result of the RFP program.
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<td>Partnering Retention Intervention During Employment</td>
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CHAPTER 2

THE ROLE OF THE FATHER

Our understanding and concepts of fatherhood, and the effects of father involvement in the development of the child, have changed over time, so they have been viewed in different ways at different times. The earlier researchers looked at qualitative dimensions (masculinity and dominance), which, over time, sparked more focus on quantifiable dimensions (amount of time fathers spent with their children). These restricted views resulted in less emphasis on other aspects of fatherhood, and further ignored subcultural variation in the definition and understanding of fatherhood.

There are three aspects of fatherhood that are all of central importance in the writings of today: (1) fatherlessness and deadbeat dads, (2) direct interactions between fathers and children, and (3) the relationships between fathers and the mothers of their children. Fatherlessness and deadbeat dads highlight the implicit equation of responsible fatherhood with successful provisioning or breadwinning. The interactive accounts focus on care, discipline, coaching, education, companionship, play and supervision. Mother and father relationships look at family climate, which affects child development and adjustment in profound ways. Researchers and theorists have tended to restrict their focus to individual components of fatherhood, ignoring or paying minimal attention to the interactions between the multiple roles and the ways in which a broader and more inclusive conception of fatherhood might both enrich and change our analysis and understanding. Scholars such as LaRossa (1988), LaRossa, Gordon, Wilson, Bairan, &
Jaret (1991), Mintz (1998), Pleck & Pleck (1997), Rotundo (1993), and Demos, 1982, 1986) all studied historical documents and other writings of fathers to help articulate our past. Their studies help us understand contemporary concern with, and confusion about, fatherhood.

Pleck (1984) talks about four phases or periods over the last two centuries of American social history. In each phase, a different dominant motif became prominent in writing about the role of fathers, and these made other aspects or roles much less important by comparison. These motifs are: The Moral Teacher or Guide, The Breadwinner, The Sex-Role Model, and The New Nurturant Father.

*The Moral Teacher or Guide*

The earliest phase was one that extended from Puritan times, through the Colonial period, and into early years of the Republic. During this lengthy period, the father’s role was predominately defined by responsibility for moral oversight and moral teaching. By popular consensus, fathers were deemed primarily responsible for ensuring that their children grew up with an appropriate sense of values, and these values were acquired principally from the reading of religious materials. To the extent that a broader role was defined, fathers assumed responsibility for the education of children -- not necessarily because education and literacy were valued in their own right (although they might have seen so evaluated by some), but because children had to be literate to read the religious doctrine. Helping children become literate served to advance the father’s role as moral guardian by ensuring that children were academically equipped to adopt and maintain the lessons of the Scriptures. In a detailed and thorough review, Demos (1982) pointed out
that during this era, good fathers were defined as men who provided "a model of good Christian living and whose children were well-versed in the Scriptures."

**The Breadwinner**

Around the time of centralized industrialization, a shift occurred in the dominant conceptualization of the father's role (Pleck, 1984). Instead of being defined in terms of moral teaching, fathers came to be defined largely by their responsibility for breadwinning. This almost entirely one-dimensional conceptualization of the father endured from the mid-nineteenth century through the Great Depression (Pleck, 1984). An analysis of the popular literature of the time, and of letters written between fathers and children during that period, confirms the dominant conception of fathers as breadwinners. This is not to say that other aspects of the father's role, such as presumed responsibility for moral guardianship, had disappeared. Nor does this focus imply that, before industrialization, breadwinning had been insignificant. However, prior to industrialization, mothers and fathers had clearly shared the responsibility of provisioning. After industrialization, breadwinning became the most important and defining characteristic of fatherhood – indeed it was the criterion by which "good fathers" were appraised.

**The Sex-Role Model**

Perhaps as a result of the disruption and dislocation brought about in rapid succession by the Great Depression, the New Deal, and the Second World War, the 1940s brought to prominence a new conceptualization of fatherhood, manifested primarily in a literature that was focused on the inadequacy of many fathers. Although breadwinning
and moral guardianship remained important, focus shifted in the 1930s and early 1940s to the father’s function as a sex-role model, especially for his sons (Pleck, 1981). Many books and articles in the professional and popular literature focused on the need for strong sex-role models, with many professionals concluding that fathers were clearly not doing a good job in this regard (e.g., Levy, 1943; Strecker, 1946; Wylie, 1942). The alleged or apparent inadequacies of fathers were also underscored in celebrated fiction of the time (Ehrenreich & English, 1979). Popular films such as Rebel Without a Cause, (Warner Brothers, 1955) and, later, television shows like All in the Family (CBS Television), portrayed weak and inadequate fathers. Even newspaper cartoons, such as Blondie, (Chic Young), played a role in degrading fathers through ridicule.

**The New Nurturant Father**

Around the mid-1970s a fourth stage emerged. For the first time, many writers and commentators emphasized that fathers could and should be nurturant parents who were actively involved in the day-to-day care of their children. Active parenting was defined as the central component of fatherhood and was implicitly (sometimes even explicitly) portrayed as the yardsticks by which “good fathers” might be assessed. This redefinition of successful fatherhood was popularized in fictional works such as the film Kramer vs. Kramer, and the novel (later made into a film), The World According to Garp. It was natural that professional interest in “the new fatherhood” soon followed. As Griswold (1995) noted, fathers had been exhorted to be more involved in the care of their children since early in the century, but the 1970s marked a change in the relative and defining importance of such behavior.
Many historians identify the beginning of the 20th century as the approximate time that the social sciences, including psychology and sociology, became differentiated from philosophy, biology, and medicine. Not long after this transition, social scientists began to consider the causes and effects of the social roles of fathers during these times. Sigmund Freud's archetypal father was characterized by classic masculine characteristics. Freud (1909, 1924) said that fathers needed to be psychologically strong, dominant within the family, assertive, decisive, and successful as a provider. Within psychoanalytic theory, the father functioned primarily in the context of a motivational system in which boys sought to identify with their fathers. Between the years of 1920 and 1940, research focused on identification, observing how children behaved, acted, or saw themselves as being similar to their fathers (Lynn, 1969; Mussen, 1967). This study looked at masculinity in particular, or personality, more generally, was correlated with some aspect (usually the same aspect) of the son's personality in an effort to evaluate the degree to which identification had been effective. The focus was on qualitative characteristics such as masculinity, dominance, assertiveness, and the like.

The era of World War II looked at two significant concerns: maternal deprivation and father absence. Maternal deprivation research came from psychologists who were trying to demonstrate that children raised in orphanages or hospital settings were seriously affected by these early circumstances. John Bowlby (1951), a British psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, argued that the absence of motherly love, as represented by access to the continuous care and affection of a single individual in the early months of life, effectively doomed children to serious psychosocial disadvantage. Research by
Sears (1951), concerning the absence of fathers during the war, suggested that children, especially boys, were irrevocably harmed when they grew up in families without their fathers, who were either deployed away from home for long stretches of time, or who had been killed in action. These wartime literatures over-simplified the relationships between traumatic events and the alleged outcomes, and each ignored the many other potential risk factors that might better explain the apparent effects. Critiques of both literatures in the early 1970s detailed the methodological inadequacies (Harzog & Sudia, 1973; Rutter, 1972).

Maternal deprivation research eventually brought out the attachment theory, which is easily the most important theoretical advance in the study of socialization since psychoanalysis (Bowlby, 1958, 1969). The attachment theory led to a single-minded focus and seriously undervalued the potential for influence by others (including fathers, siblings, and peers). This encouraged researchers to explore the impact of variations in the extent of father presence, instead of simply viewing fatherhood as a dichotomous (present vs. absent) construct. The emergent concern with the extent of paternal presence helped promote a quantitative investigation of the variations in the amounts of time that fathers spent with their children. This approach, with the emergence of the feminist movement, helped researchers focus instead on objective dimensions (such as extent of paternal involvement) rather than on the qualitative dimensions (such as masculinity, aggressiveness, dominance, and passivity) that had captured the attention of social scientists in preceding decades. Time-use methodologies were given a rebirth in the 1970s, which further fed the perceived need to evaluate the amount of time that fathers
spend with their children (e.g., Robinson, 1977). In the late 1970s, researchers (Lamb, Pleck, Charnov, & Levine, 1985; 1987; Pleck, 1983; 1997) attempted to determine how much time the average father spent interacting with his children. Given the availability of data, it would seem easy to establish this information, but they found the research more difficult than expected.

A preliminary evaluation of the evidence available in the mid- to late 1970s yielded estimates of time that fathers spent with their children ranging from as little as 37 seconds per day (Rebelsky & Hanks, 1971) to as much as 8 hours per day (DeFrain, 1975). Such dramatic and irreconcilable differences fostered intensive and systematic efforts to understand both why the data were so unreliable and how more reliable estimates could be obtained.

One problem is that the implicit definitions of parental involvement often vary from study to study, with different activities being included in the operational definitions of paternal involvement, making comparisons difficult at best. To make sense of the data, therefore, (Lamb, Pleck, Charnov, & Levine, 1985; 1987) first found it necessary to group the studies with regard to similarities in the implicit definitions of paternal involvement employed. For purposes of analysis, one can distinguish three components of parental involvement, Engagement, Accessibility, and Responsibility.

The first and most restrictive type of paternal involvement is called engagement, or interaction, and involves time spent in actual one-on-one interaction with the child (whether feeding them, helping with homework, or playing games). Such involvement
does not include time spent in child-related housework or time spent sitting in one room while the child plays in the next room.

The second category, accessibility, is comprised of activities characterized by less intense degrees of interaction. Cooking in the kitchen while the child plays in the next room, or even cooking in the kitchen while the child plays at the parent’s feet, are examples of accessibility.

The third type of involvement, responsibility, is the hardest to define, but is perhaps the most important of all, since it reflects the extent which the parent takes ultimate responsibility for the child’s welfare and care. Responsibility involves knowing when the child needs to go to the pediatrician, making the appointment, and making sure that the child meets this appointment. Responsibility involves making childcare and babysitting arrangements, ensuring that the child has clothes to wear, and making arrangements for care and nurturance when the child is sick. It involves more than “helping out” or “babysitting.” Much of the time involved in being a responsible parent is not spent in direct interaction with the child, and thus survey researchers can easily overlook this type of involvement. It is also hard to quantify the personal commitments involved, particularly because the anxiety, worry, and contingency planning that characterize parental responsibility often occur when the parent is ostensibly doing something else.

Instead of comparing figures purporting to measure the amount of time that fathers spend “interacting with” their children, proportional figures must first be computed (i.e., compared with the amount of time that mothers devote to interaction, how
much time do fathers devote to it?). When these proportional figures are compared, the picture becomes much clearer. Surprisingly similar results are obtained in the various studies (Lamb, et al. 1987), despite major differences in the methods used to assess time use (diary versus estimate), the size and regional representation of the samples employed, and the dates when the studies were conducted.

One should first consider figures concerning the involvement of fathers in two-parent families in which mothers are not employed. The data reviewed by Lamb and his colleagues (1987) about such families suggested that the average father spends about 20% to 25% as much time as the mother does in direct interaction or engagement with their children, and about a third as much time being accessible to the children. The largest discrepancy between paternal and maternal involvement was in the area of responsibility. Many studies indicated that fathers assumed essentially no responsibility (as previously defined) for their children's care or rearing.

In two-parent families with employed mothers, the levels of paternal (compared with maternal) engagement and accessibility are both substantially higher than in families with non-employed mothers (Lamb et al., 1987; Pleck, 1983; 1997). Lamb and colleagues reported figures for direct interaction and accessibility averaging 33% and 65% respectively, whereas Pleck's (1997) later review reported that by the early 1990s, those averages had increased to 44% and 66%. As far as responsibility is concerned, however, there was initially no evidence that maternal employment had a major effect on the level of paternal involvement. Even when both mother and father are employed for
30 or more hours per week, the amount of responsibility assumed by fathers appeared as little as when mothers were not employed. The situation changed by the 1990's.

In light of the controversies that have arisen on this score (Hoffman, 1977; Gottfried, Gottfried, & Bathurst, 1988; Pleck, 1983; 1985), it is worth noting that, on average, fathers do not actually spend more time interacting with their children when mothers are employed. Instead, the proportions just cited appear to increase simply because mothers are doing less. Thus, fathers are proportionately more involved when mothers are employed, even though the depth of their involvement, in absolute terms, remains essentially unchanged.

The existing studies that focused on time use, on the other hand, pay scant attention to the quality of maternal and paternal behavior. It is quite possible that maternal employment has led to changes in the types of activities in which fathers engage and increases in the extent of paternal responsibility. Child and family characteristics have much less affect on paternal involvement than one might expect (Pleck, 1983). Both parents spend more time with their children when their children are younger, a trend that, although understandable, contradicts the popular assumption that fathers become more involved as their children get older. Although fathers may know more about older children, feel more comfortable and competent with them, and appear more interested in them, fathers apparently do not spend more time with the older children. In part, this may be because older children no longer want to interact with parents as much, preferring instead to interact with peers or siblings. Popular presumptions are correct, however, so far as the gender of the child is concerned (Lamb, 1981b; 1997c). Fathers are indeed
more interested in, and more involved with, their sons rather than their daughters, tending to spend more time with boys than girls, regardless of the children's ages (Pleck, 1997). Beyond these variations associated with age and gender, there are no consistent regional, ethnic, or religious variations in the amount of time that parents -- whether mothers or fathers -- spend with their children (Pleck, 1983).

In a very comprehensive review, Pleck (1997) examined the data on father involvement obtained from studies conducted during three time periods from the mid-1970s to the early 1990s. Pleck concluded that the average levels of father involvement, whether viewed in absolute or relative terms, had indeed increased. The average father spent approximately one-third as much time as the average mother in direct interaction in the late 1970s. Whereas the average father was accessible to his children about half as much time as the average mother in the earlier surveys, this figure has increased to almost two-thirds as much time by the early 1990s.

Time-use data, however, do not yield good estimates of responsibility. Although there have been increases in the average level of paternal involvement over time, there is a problem with over-interpreting the findings. The studies focused on the amount of time that fathers spend with their children rather than on the content and quality of the interaction. These studies also focused primarily on the children in two-parent families who obviously represent only a portion -- a declining portion -- of the total number of children in this country.

Other researchers have criticized the time-use studies on the grounds that they examine how much time parents spend with their children, while ignoring possible
variations in the content of their interactions. Both observational and survey data have, in fact, long suggested that mothers and fathers engage in rather different types of interactions with their children (Lamb, 1981a; 1981b; 1997a). Mothers' interactions with their children are dominated by caretaking, whereas fathers are behaviorally better defined as playmates. Mothers actually play with their children much more than fathers, but as a proportion of the total amount of child-parent interaction, play is a much more prominent component of father-child interaction. In contrast, caretaking is a more salient component of mother-child interaction. A related point is that these differences are evident from early infancy and persist at least into childhood.

Although mothers are associated with caretaking and fathers with play, we cannot assume that fathers are less capable of childcare. A number of researchers have attempted to investigate the relative competencies of mothers and fathers with respect to caretaking and parenting functions, and the results of these studies are fairly clear (Lamb, 1981a; 1997a; Lamb & Goldberg, 1982). First, they show that, during the newborn period, there are no differences in competence between mothers and fathers -- both parents can do equally well (or equally poor). Contrary to the notion of a maternal instinct, parenting skills are usually acquired "on the job" by both mothers and fathers. However, mothers are "on the job" more than fathers, and not surprisingly, mothers are more sensitive to their children, more in tune with them, and more aware of each child's characteristics and needs. By virtue of their lack of experience, fathers become correspondingly less sensitive and come to feel less confidence in their parenting abilities. Fathers thus continue to defer to and cede responsibility to mothers, whereas
mothers increasingly assume responsibility. In this way, the imbalanced distribution of parental responsibility discussed earlier is consolidated.

When we recognize the diverse roles that fathers are expected to play in different families and communities, it becomes apparent that we must recognize the variety of ways in which fathers can influence their children's development. Clearly, breadwinning remains a key component of the father's role in most segments of society today. Even in the vast majority of families in which there are two wage-earners, the father is still seen as the primary breadwinner, if only because of continuing disparities between the salaries of male and female workers. Economic support of the family constitutes an indirect but important way in which fathers contribute to the rearing and emotional health of their children.

A second important, but indirect, source of influence stems from the father's role as a source of emotional support to the other people, principally the mother, involved in the direct care of children (Parke, Power, & Gottman, 1979). The father functioning as a source of emotional support for the mother and others in the family tends to enhance the quality of the mother-child relationship, and thus facilitates positive adjustment by the children. By contrast, when fathers are unsupportive or when there is conflict between the parents, children often suffer (Cummings & O'Reilly, 1997). Fathers can also affect the quality of family dynamics by being involved in child-related housework, thus easing the mother's workload (Pleck, 1983; 1984; 1985). Paternal involvement in housework may also provide a good role model for children. Fathers also influence their children by interacting with the children directly in the course of caretaking, teaching, play, and one-
on-one interaction with particular children (Lamb, 1981b; 1995). Although fathers
obviously can and do affect their children's development in many ways beyond direct
interaction, most of the research on paternal influences is concerned with these direct
influence patterns (Lamb, 1995; 1997b).

There has been much learned about fatherhood and father involvement over the
past several decades, yet it is clear that we have obtained a much more narrow
understanding of the phenomena than we might have wished. In the next several years, it
will be most important for researchers and theorists to pursue a more complete
understanding of fatherhood and father involvement. Attention should be paid, not only
to direct interaction between fathers and children, but also to fathers' other roles and
responsibilities. Of particular importance are the breadwinning functions, and the
father's influences on child development as mediated by the quality of their relationships
with the children's mothers. We know little about the ways in which these different
aspects of the paternal role are mediated, or the relative importance attributed to these
different roles across subgroups within the society. Presumably, the impact on children
will vary, depending not only on ways that fathers fulfill their various functions, but also
on the extent to which their behavior corresponds with paternal roles that are expected by
relevant family members and others in the immediate community.

Given the proven need for father involvement in so many ways, alarmed
researchers have been drawing attention to the number of children now growing up in
fatherless families, fatherless either because the children were born out-of-wedlock to
single women, or because the families were disrupted by divorce or separation (Popenoe,
Statistics show that more than half of the children in this country spend at least a portion of their childhood in such families, with the proportion continuing to increase each year (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1992).

**The Solano County Problem**

In Solano County, most non-custodial parents (NCP) are fathers. In June 2000, Solano County had 4,368 families with absent fathers receiving support through CalWORKS. Since approximately 44% of the total caseload of absent father families resided in Vallejo, the Responsible Fathers Program (RFP) was piloted in Vallejo, under the leadership of a Social Services Supervisor. The staff included three social workers and one clerical staff member. Studies indicate that many absent fathers experience economic disadvantages and employment barriers, similar to those of the CalWORKS clients. Many fathers also struggle with other issues such as substance abuse, mental disorders, illiteracy, and felony convictions, which frequently result in the father’s unemployment and inability to contribute to his children’s economic and emotional well being. Interventions targeting barriers that impede the fathers’ ability to enter into a stable relationship with the mother(s) of their children can only help the family achieve self-reliance. Stable and caring relationships created in the context of a family are essential for healthy child development.
### Table 1. Solano County H&SS CalWORKs Family Statistics Average for 2000

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Vallejo</th>
<th>Benicia</th>
<th>Fairfield</th>
<th>Suisun</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active Cases</td>
<td>2129</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>1310</td>
<td>1184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absent Fathers</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1. continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Active Cases</th>
<th>Absent Fathers</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vacaville</td>
<td>778</td>
<td>703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dixon</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rio Vista</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>57</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOALS</td>
<td>4860</td>
<td>4364</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Before we can actually thoroughly discuss the Solano County Pilot Program and its origins, we must first have an understanding of the CalWorks program. This is essential since CalWORKs and the DFSS are the funding mechanisms for Solano County’s Responsible Fathers Pilot Program.

*California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids program (CalWORKs)*

California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) is a program that provides public assistance to families. CalWORKs offers employment services and time-limited cash assistance. Non-exempt parents must participate in WtW activities, and provide proof that their children are enrolled in school and are immunized against certain diseases (although some exceptions to immunization requirements do exist). CalWORKs recipients who are not required to participate (*exempt parents do not have to meet work hour requirements), in WtW activities may volunteer to take part in the program. Adults in one-parent families must spend at least 32 hours per week in WtW activities. The minimum participation requirement for two-parent families is 35 hours per week. After receiving aid for up to a maximum of 24 months, non-exempt adults must work in unsubsidized employment or participate in community services for the minimum number of hours listed above. Families receiving CalWORKs through HSS automatically receive Med-i-Cal health insurance benefits that cover, dental, medical, vision, pharmacy, and mental health costs. Families are often also eligible for the Food Stamp Program.
Solano WORKS

Solano County's Welfare to Work program is called SolanoWORKs. The purpose of SolanoWORKs is to help prepare non-exempt CalWORKs participants find and retain employment in the local labor market. The HSS Department contracts with the Solano County Office of Education (SCOE), to provide intensive job services to adults receiving CalWORKs, General Assistance (GA), or Food Stamps. This intensive job service includes several components. First is Job Club, which consists of interactive workshops that focus on building self-esteem and job readiness, including writing resumes and learning interview skills.

Next, Job Search builds on the skills learned in Job Club and provides three weeks of supervised job search activities. Partnering Retention Intervention During Employment (PRIDE), has a series of over 50 workshops designed to help participants retain and progress to better employment. In Solano County the PRIDE Workshops are operated in collaboration between The SCOE, WIB, SEC, and the Solano Resource/Ready Centers. CalWORKs Retention Services Program assists and supports employed CalWORKs families who have been discontinued from cash assistance due to their earnings. The retention services program includes mentoring families in their transition from cash aid to self-reliance, and can assist by providing reimbursement for employment related needs such as uniforms, work boots, and mandatory fees and licenses. You may refer to the following website to view the stated information at: Solano County Health & Social Services Intranet website-Employment & Eligibility/CalWorks http://hssstart/fs0_fs_main.htm.
A TYPICAL CASE STUDY

Pamela Wilson (1997) provides a typical case study that uses fictional people who closely resemble many of the youth who need assistance:

THE MOTHER

Benita Johnson is seventeen and delivered her first child yesterday. She stopped going to school about a year ago, a few months before she got pregnant. After Benita stopped going to school, she seemed to drift, spending her days watching talk shows and soap operas and her evenings hanging out with friends or her boyfriend, Jimmy. Benita often felt depressed about her situation.

Once she got pregnant, Benita started feeling better. Although her mother was initially furious with her, she started being more supportive. Benita has found that this pregnancy has given her a sense of purpose. In fact, she’s looking forward to being a mother and plans to go back to school.

THE FATHER

Jimmy Jones is twenty. He lives at home with his mother and three younger sisters and has a distant relationship with his own father, who lives in another state. Although Jimmy finished high school, his reading and writing skills are quite poor. One of Jimmy’s major goals has been to find a job that pays well, but so far he’s only been able to get low-paying, low-skill jobs that just don’t seem to work out for him. At this point he’s been unemployment for six months. Jimmy has also had some legal troubles as a result of some drug dealing activities he got involved in to make money.
When he found out that Benita was pregnant, Jimmy felt scared and depressed. He stayed in his room and didn't talk to anyone for weeks. He knew he really needed to get a job and make some money. The stress was incredible and his relationship with Benita suffered. But now, months later, Jimmy's son has been born. He went to the hospital today and, for the first time in his life, realized he has something/someone to care about. He feels energized about the situation and wants to get things back on track with Benita. Above all, Jimmy wants to be a better father to his son than his father has been to him.

Benita and Jimmy fit the profile of a disproportionate number of young people who become parents at an early age. They are poorly educated and from low-income families. They both face bleak economic prospects and, without help, are not likely to fulfill the obligations of parenthood. What services exists in the community to help Benita become a successful adult and parent? What services exists to help Jimmy become a successful adult and parent?

Unequal Social Supports

In most communities, the answers to these two questions are very different. In the current system (even with welfare reform) Benita can receive financial assistance, food stamps, Medical, childcare, case management and job training to prepare her to become a self-sufficient parent. Since Benita is the person who gave birth and faces the immediate task of providing for the child, she can be easily identified by social services and, in all likelihood, will be anxious to get the support for which she is eligible.
In addition, many communities have services for adolescent mothers that can provide Benita with:

- Connections with at least one caring adult
- Individual counseling to help her clarify her goals and make plans to reach those goals
- Crisis intervention
- Group sessions with other teen mothers to provide peer support
- Parenting education

Jimmy is much less visible than Benita. He will receive no public support, with the possible exception of job training through JTPA. A 1990 GAO report entitled Job Training Partnership Act: Youth Participant Characteristics, Services and Outcomes revealed that hard-to-serve youth such as Jimmy are likely to receive the poorest quality services when they do participate in JTPA programs. Also, JTPA programs typically do not target fathers in any way, so the training available to Jimmy will not offer any support geared to help him become a successful parent.

The only public system that attempts to connect fathers to their children is the OCSE and the connection fostered there is financial only. The traditional OCSE focus on getting non-custodial fathers to declare paternity and pay child support but doesn't recognize that young fathers such as Jimmy typically do not yet have the means to support their children. Without assistance, Jimmy and his peers are unlikely to acquire that means. Unless Jimmy is lucky enough to live in one of the small but growing
number of communities that has specialized support services for young fathers, he will
get no specific help to prepare him to be the kind of father that he wants to be.

THE SOLANO COUNTY PILOT PROJECT

The Solano County Responsible Fathers Program works with the non-custodial
father to help establish a healthy relationship with his child/ren, to establish a stable
relationship with the mother of his children, to improve the ability to financially support
his child/ren, and to have no substantiated felony charges while participating in the
program.

In Solano County, most non-custodial parents are fathers. Many absent fathers
face issues such as substance abuse, mental disorders, illiteracy, and felony convictions,
all of which frequently result in the father's unemployment and inability to contribute to
his children's economic and emotional well being. Activities that are essential
components of the Responsible Fathers Program include assessment, parenting skills,
group and individual counseling, a curriculum designed for non-custodial parents,
cultural sensitivity sessions, a focus on education needs, adult basic education, GED
preparation, and assistance with employment. In addition, non-custodial fathers
participate in workshops offering personal development (values, self-esteem, manhood
issues), child development and parenting skills, relationship issues, health and sexuality,
and violence prevention.

The process of involving the father in the lives of his children requires the
cooperation of the custodial parent. Many of these custodial parents will need assistance
in resolving their own issues before they can deal effectively with the father. Some of the
classes offered to the mother include effective parenting skills, ways to help children cope with separation, divorce, and absence of a biological parent, cooperative team parenting, parents legal rights/responsibilities and community resources, and stress and anger management.

The RFP enables fathers (or any non-custodial parent) to utilize program services available through CalWORKS and the community. The program targets NCP of children who receive assistance from CalWORKS. Since the vast majority of NCP are male, the program helps participants become emotionally and economically supportive of their children. In addition, the program requires professional assessment, case goal-setting, and case planning and intervention methods to inform the father of his role and responsibilities to his children. Interventions with the fathers are designed using family-centered practices aimed at improving family functioning. Where no indication of risk to the child’s safety exists, emphasis is placed on gaining the father’s participation in providing parental care for his children.

The goal of the Responsible Fathers Program is to support and inform non-custodial parents in becoming responsible and helping establish more effective relationships with their child/ren. Since all of the children identified in Vallejo, California were already receiving CalWORKS / SolanoWORKS benefits and services, lists were produced to recruit participants. The Responsible Fathers Program has the following goals: (1) Identify NCPs and reconnect them with their children; (2) Facilitate the NCP’s ability to be a provider for his children; (3) Engage the NCP in employment
activities and job-seeking; and (4) Increase the level and consistency of visitation and child support provided by the NCP.

As an indication of responsible behavior, the father of CalWORKS children is expected to: (1) Establish a healthy relationship with his children; (2) Establish a healthy relationship with the other parent; (3) Improve the ability to financially support his children; and (4) Have no arrests or substantiated felony charges while participating in the program.

Where no indication of risk to the child’s safety exists, emphasis is placed on gaining the father’s participation in providing parental care for his children. The goal of the RFP is to support and inform the NCPs so that they will become responsible and establish an effective relationship with their children. Since a large portion of the total caseload of Solano County absent-father families reside in Vallejo, the RFP was piloted in Vallejo for a period of eighteen months, with the possibility that, if successful, the program would be replicated in other areas of Solano County. The program was first housed in the county welfare building, but a location in downtown Vallejo was sought, to increase public accessibility and decrease the fear or stigmatism associated with fathers coming into the welfare department.

The Inspiration for the Program

In studying the development of the Solano County Department of Health and Social Services (CalWORKs) Fatherhood Program, this researcher was led to Mr. Ben Curtis, who organized the initial groundwork for the Fatherhood grant proposal. This
author interviewed Curtis in October 2002, to obtain vital information on why, how, where, and when this fatherhood movement was implemented in Solano County.

Curtis stated that he was excited about the concept of family reunification after watching the 1974 movie, *Claudine*, produced by Twentieth Century Fox. This film detailed the life of an impoverished African-American resident of Harlem named Roop (played by James Earl Jones) who was employed as a garbage man. Roop did not live with his children but had to give a large portion of his check to his children's mother, even though he was never able to see his children. Roop falls in love with Claudine Price (played by Diahann Carroll). Unmarried, Claudine supports herself and her six children by working as a maid -- albeit secretly, so that she can still qualify for welfare. Garbage man Roop falls in love with Claudine, wants to help her, but becomes overwhelmed and is dealing with so many issues of his own, that running away appears to be the only sanity based choice for him.

When a jealous neighbor tips off Claudine's social worker about their dating and her receiving gifts, the couple is faced with an unannounced visit that suddenly creates a situation that appears to be fraudulent. At this point, they are faced with remaining single, exploring getting married, and possibly jeopardizing the welfare assistance.

The social worker explained to them that if they decided to get married and Roop ever became unemployed, he would have to be added to her welfare case or be charged with fraud. This information was hard to take, because Roop was a hard worker, and he was also paying substantial child support, which was continuously increasing. The thought that it appeared like the system was not supportive of his and Claudine's efforts
of trying to help each other, angered Roop. The stereotype of being a lazy, no good, black man, also bothered him because he was a hard worker who thoroughly enjoyed being employed.

As another child support increase went into effect through his employer, without his permission, it eventually became too difficult for Roop to support himself, in his rundown, hooker-infested apartment. Roop became depressed, started drinking alcohol, moved out of his apartment, and stopped showing up at work.

Despite their being in love, Roop and Claudine’s relationship was difficult and tumultuous, largely because of the pressures of their personal situations, the public assistance agency, employment issues, and financial obligations. The movie gives the impression that the male is useless in the family unless he is working (is not lazy, is not selling drugs, etc) and is the sole financial support of the home. Once a man resides in the home, it was assumed that he would relinquish the state from all financial responsibility of that family. The problems in the movie that created issues for both adults, the children, and the social services agency is what sparked Curtis to begin thinking of the concept of “Fatherhood”.

In 1996, Curtis was employed through Solano County working as a substance abuse specialist. In this position he started collaborating with the California Department of Corrections (CDC), in the Bay Area Services Network (BASN) Program, which focused on parolee substance-abuse treatment. This program gave him an opportunity to witness first hand what the absence of fathers was doing to families. BASN is an
innovative intervention program designed to improve substance-abuse services for high-risk parolees in the San Francisco Bay Area.

At the organizational level, the network has forged closer ties between criminal justice agencies and service providers. At the service level, the program supported individualized coordination and intensive case management for parolees by means of ongoing training for case managers, while ensuring that caseloads were small and qualitatively managed. At the parolee level, these steps are intended to reduce recidivism and relapse to drug and alcohol use during transition from prison back into the community.

Sometime around 1998, when Welfare Reform was a hot topic, Donald Rowe, Director of the Solano County Health and Social Services Department, approached Curtis about exploring existing fatherhood programs. Curtis was encouraged to be fully involved in the development and implementation of this special project.

Curtis first attended various workshops and conferences offered by the National Center for Strategic Nonprofit Planning and Community Leadership (NPCL). The NPCL is a non-profit organization created for charitable and educational purposes. The mission of the NPCL is to improve the governance and administration of non-profit, tax-exempt organizations and strengthen community leadership through family and neighborhood empowerment. The NPCL offers public and customized workshop series to help community based organizations and public agencies better serve young, low-income fathers and fragile families.
Curtis also relied heavily on resources such as David Blankenhorn’s (1995) book, “Fatherless America” and projects described in the appendix of this paper, such as the Bay Area Partners for Fragile Families, the Fathers-At-Work demonstration project, the MELD Program, the National Fatherhood Initiative, and the Promise Keepers. He also received valuable information from the Clinton Administration.

Curtis formulated the proposal between 1998 and 2000. The program was proposed to the Solano County Board of Supervisors and approved on November 07, 2000. The text of the November 07, 2000 Board of Supervisors meeting can be found at http://www.solanocounty.com/Bos/displaydoc.asp?NavID=470&ID=473.

In 2001, Solano County launched a pilot program to identify and assist the fathers of children receiving CalWorks benefits in the Vallejo California area. The Solano County Health and Social Services Department (SCHSS) began to recognize the potential benefit of a program for fathers, and in conjunction with the Department of Child Support Services, instituted a program called the Solano County Responsible Fathers Program, which was to be piloted in Vallejo, California. The SCHSS Department looked at the social problem of fatherlessness on a national level and decided that helping fathers (non-custodial parents) would/could greatly decrease the negative statistics in recent research with regard to children growing up without their fathers.
Responsible Father Social Worker Position

This researcher accepted a position in one of the three Social Worker slots in October of 2002. The other members of the Social Work team were Mike Melser, and James W. Hicks. Cathy Gilmore provided the clerical support, and Shirley Ikenze was the Social Services supervisor. The program started very slowly because it was volunteer-based, and not many men trusted the help RFP was offering, especially since it was housed at the County Welfare Office, where most men perceive to be unwelcome.

Training with the NPCL, researching, and visiting surrounding county fatherhood programs all consumed the initial stage of the new position. Initial tasks included putting together a PowerPoint presentation to introduce the program, defining our social worker roles, considering recruitment strategies for participants, attending training on the fatherhood curriculum, building alliances, formulating monthly meetings with community partners, as well as starting a weekly men’s therapy group.

Many clients not fitting the specific criterion categories came into the office for assessment, direction, and resources. Although we could meet with them, the ineligible men were unable to access the financially based services. The services ranged from paying school tuition/books, the purchasing of job interview clothing, resources for therapy, and the ability to get repairs completed on an automobile they could not afford to fix, which impeded them from working. The services that were available to these men through the case managing social workers were information and knowledge on their rights and new laws pertaining to fatherhood, empowerment, encouragement, advocacy, a listening ear, moral support, and participation in the weekly men’s groups.

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This researcher enjoyed this type of social work because it was hands-on, raw and uncut, meeting the client right where they were. It was personally enriching to literally take men by the hand -- men recently released from incarceration -- and teach them how to advocate for themselves, to seek employment, to take advantage of resources and services, and to gain some form of legal rights to visitation with their children. I was able to foster hope within them that things would be different for them because of our involvement. Initially, a consensus of most of the men was their feeling that the system would somehow “chew them up and spit them out”. Eventually though, some men began to become very empowered. Going to all of the initial appointments with the young fathers, working with them to regain licenses, and teaching them how to talk, listen, or play with their children were personally very rewarding moments. Where else can you work, teach, play, empower, learn, and get paid, all at the same time? There was a clear distinction between the role of the adversarial social worker at Children Protective Services and the same social worker’s role in the Responsible Fathers Program, so positive by being assistance- and empowerment based.

Two of the social workers and the social services supervisor in the program came from Children’s Protective Services (CPS), so the staff was allowed to facilitate supervised visitation (for CPS, if involved) when the courts were skeptical about the initial contact of the fathers with the children. Due to the support of the Responsible Fathers staff, the fathers in the community began to trust the program, which was finally receiving a positive word-of-mouth exposure from fathers who took a chance at trusting the program. Other fathers, technically not eligible to participate in the program, began
to come in for help. The staff never turned anyone away without inviting them to the men's group or providing them with some type of other community resource. The program also provided many tangible incentives to come into the office. These incentives included continuous raffles, tickets to the movies, gifts for the fathers to give to their children, and gift certificates to restaurants. Fathers felt good about being able to have tangible things to do/give their children on visits or outings that they may have never been able to afford. The program appeared to be coming to life right before our very eyes. Fathers in the Vallejo area began to talk with other participants who were utilizing the father-based services and successfully reconnecting with their children.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Various methods for gathering data were considered when the study began. Initially a survey questionnaire was considered which was intended to draw on the responses of the fathers participating in the weekly support group facilitated by the Responsible Fathers Program staff. The support groups convened each Wednesday night at 6:00 p.m. Permission to conduct the survey was granted through the management of Solano County Health and Social Services. The survey consisted of twelve questions that were either multiple-choice or requiring short written answers. The survey was anonymous and could be filled out in a relatively short period of time.

The survey did not function as the important tool we anticipated. There were not many initial group participants available, and those that were available were the same ones week after week. This researcher attended a number of the weekly groups, which yielded no more than five half-completed surveys. Some of the fathers may have had trouble reading the survey, some may not have been willing to express their feelings, some may not have wanted to participate in fear of child support judgments against them, and others simply may have just started the reconnection process with their children.

This researcher looked at the possibility of handing out the survey at the CalWORKs orientations for the mothers, in another attempt to obtain information about the fathers. The mothers were very skeptical, and did not want to give out specific information regarding the fathers whereabouts but were very willing to take information
back to the fathers or give it to people or family members who could contact them. This also proved unsuccessful and was eliminated from the process of data collection.

Due to the small initial sample size, and to the lack of information received, this researcher decided to exclude the survey data from this report, but will include a copy of the survey form, for future research use, in the Appendix F of this project.

Programs in Other Counties

Another obstacle of gathering research information was the lack of written material on specific county-based fatherhood programs which were contracted out or which were planned but lacked funding. A majority of the other well-known programs are non-profits or programs that have secured funding through foundations.

In researching the surrounding counties regarding fatherhood programs, Mike Melser called different localities to elicit any existing information on what others were planning, doing, or had done in the past. Alameda County had no current non-custodial parent or Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) fatherhood program. Alameda uses one-stop centers and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) for employment services. Alameda County started a Fatherhood Advisory Council that never really was able to get off the ground. The Alameda source was Stephen Shaw of the Malachi Project and Alien Temple Church.

Contra Costa County was involved in a non-custodial pareht employment/training program called CO-OP, which provided Job Club/Job Search, Vocational Training, basic employment skills training and continued education. The program also included assistance resolving child support issues, support groups and supportive services. The
program eventually ended due to funding. Resources currently used for non-custodial parents are Employment and Training One-Stops such as EASTBay WORKs. The Contra Costa source was Ben Mosley from CalWORKs. This researcher did not have access to any information regarding the start-up, day-to-day operations, or closing of the Contra Costa non-custodial program.

Sacramento County considered implementing a non-custodial program but it never happened. Cal-Learned only works with custodial teen parents by offering parenting classes and a host of additional services. The Sacramento County source was Ms. Ivy who is a Program Specialist.

San Francisco City/County works with DCSS where they offer the NET Program (Non-Custodial Parent Employment and Training). The program involves court supervision and may allow the existing child support order to be reduced to a zero status while participating; with small incremental increases depending on employment. The program provides support groups and utilizes the resources of the CalWORKs and General Assistance (GA) programs. These programs can be financial engines for men receiving employment and/or vocational training. The San Francisco source was J. Molina from DCSS.

San Mateo County is very proactive and had a Fatherhood Collaborative, chaired by the Director of Children Family Services, Mark Lane. The collaborative is a mix of 15 County and Community members. The collaborative has developed a strategic plan, needs assessment, and action plans for fathers. The Collaborative consists of four subcommittees.
Sonoma County contracts out their non-custodial parent program to a CBO called the Parenting Institute. The program enrolls 15-20 participants per month, has monthly support group meetings, and has been very effective in increasing father involvement and child support payments. The program was diligently looking for new funding, as theirs was due to end in June of 2004. The Sonoma County source was Kathy Hallbran who is a contract/Program Specialist.

Yolo County had no current non-custodial parent or Dept of Child Support (DCSS) fatherhood program. Yolo County utilizes the services provided by One-Stop centers and Employment Development Department (E.D.D.) for job services. The Yolo County source was R. Lister from DCSS.

*Solano County Data*

Efforts to research within Solano County with hopes of ascertaining fatherhood knowledge through Solano Community College, Planned Parenthood, and Hogan High Schools PAPA Program, transpired to no avail. Non-custodial programs were not the focus in Solano County before the Responsible Fathers Program.

The most essential resource of information was the Solano County Health and Social Services (RFP) social workers, office assistants, and supervisory staff. Curtis was also very instrumental in providing information regarding the foundation and purpose for the birth of the program. Curtis provided the researcher with the proposal brought to the County Board of Supervisors as well as his story of personal inspiration and motivation to make the RFP a reality in Solano County.
We planned to collect data and track information necessary for monthly reporting of individual and family assessments, service plans, employment data, felony convictions and compliance with support orders. We discussed the use of a questionnaire, individual sessions, group process, public records and voluntary disclosure to measure the NCP’s participation in the program. The project evaluation consisted of comparing the Pre- and Post-Test Results of participants in Vallejo before and after participation. The researcher checked and compared data from the beginning of the Responsible Fathers Program, and again, 18 months after its implementation to see if the level and consistency of child support payments of the non-custodial parent increased. Only the outcomes measuring fathers’ rates of paying child support and those who increased visitation were investigated. These are the first and necessary steps in making required modifications to the Solano County RFP if required, and to measuring the success of that program. The other statistics are listed for future calculation and evaluation of the Responsible Fathers Program but are not a basis of this particular study.

The statistics for the program were placed on a monthly tracking from that was tallied and transferred to a H&SS Director’s Statistical Report, which calculates three-year totals for Solano County’s management team.
<table>
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<th>Total Active Cases</th>
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<td>Custodial Parent Services</td>
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H & SS Director's Statistical Report  
CalWORKs Responsible Fathers Program

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Total Exempt Cases
The numbers calculated in this evaluation are a reflection of the participants that decided to involve themselves in the completely voluntary Responsible Fathers Program. The total number of absent fathers with children receiving CalWORKs in Vallejo do not reflect the total sample size of this study because not all participated in this program. Once a father started participating, his statistics could be tracked to determine if involvement made a difference.

There was an explicit time factor involved, which limited further attempts for continued contacts to obtain a larger sampling or additional data. This is very important to mention in regards to further research, and could have also been a contributory factor for the lack of past research for implementation of these programs.

It is also important to mention that not all of the non-custodial parents are men (fathers). The researcher observed a common cause among non-custodial parents in general, as there were some female non-custodial parents (mothers) inquiring about services.
CHAPTER 4
FINDINGS

This was an exploratory study to acquire some additional information about absent fathers and issues concerning them, and hopefully to gain some insight into ways of serving this sector of our society more effectively. The data gathered was essential in determining if visitation and child support payments increased due to participation in the RFP.

In Solano County, most NCPs are fathers. In June 2000, Solano County had 4,368 families with absent fathers on CalWORKS (90% of the total number of families). Approximately 44% (1,921.92) of the total caseload of absent-father families resided in Vallejo.

With the information collected from June 2000 and comparing it to the eighteen-month span of the RFP, it showed approximately 183 (about 9.52%) fathers who increased visitation, and 99 (about 5.15%) NCPs who were actively paying child support.

Even though the numbers appear relatively low compared to the total number of absent fathers in Vallejo California (1,921.92), they still represent something quite phenomenal as the community and the fathers were beginning to embark on a journey that could have a significant effect on the residents of Vallejo, California. The fathers began to trust the RFP and the system began to assist the fathers in a way that never before seemed possible.
The actual numbers of fathers (in general), coming into the RFP for assistance, reached a total of 2,553 from inception to the eighteen-month mark. A majority of these fathers obliviously were not eligible to meet the strict criteria of the program but were able to utilize the men's group and take advantage of the information and referral services that the Responsible Fathers Program has to offer.

The empowerment, training, therapy, case management, support groups, Fathers Day ceremonies, constant incentives, mentorship, employment assistance, child support assistance, and access to resources allowed the men to reconnect with their most prized possessions -- their children. In some rare cases, the parents were encouraged and/or offered program-sponsored therapy services for marriage counseling, if marriage or remarriage was a goal.

This study focused on the results of the NCP increasing visitation and the consistency and frequency of their child support payments, which did increase. This means that because of participation in the Responsible Fathers pilot program, there were 5.15% more children being visited and supported by their fathers in the Vallejo area alone. If this program is replicated throughout Solano County, research shows that participation, access, availability, child support, visitation, and responsibility will in fact, increase.

The numbers showed a small increase when compared to the data collected in June 2000, but showed significant increases when data was calculated with trackable participation. It was very difficult to track the total number of fathers who originally made up the 1,921.92 since they were anonymous, even though we knew they existed.
The latter formula appeared to be somewhat more reflective of the real potential of increases, since we could actually measure (from inception) how many people participated, and how many showed increases by the 18-month marker.

This researcher also wanted to track the statistics of those fathers who actually participated in the program. Once a father started participating, his statistics could be accurately tracked and calculated to determine if involvement made a difference.

The information collected from the measurable first month of the RFP to the eighteen-month marker, looking at the total number of absent fathers participating in the RFP, showed a change from 3 to 183 (98.36%) fathers who increased visitation, and a change of from 1 to 99 (98.98%) NCPs who began actively paying child support.

The H&SS Director’s Statistical Report calculated the following:

\[
(\text{Active Cases (03) [227], Intake Cases (02) [64], Information/Referral (27) [2553], Increased Visitation (03) [183], NCPs paying child support (01) [99], Assessments (not eligible) (3) [88], Job Placements (01) [31], Arrests/Convictions (0) [04].})
\]

The numbers above are a reflection of the participants that decided to involve themselves in the RFP. The total numbers of absent fathers with children receiving CalWORKs in Vallejo do not reflect the total sample size of this particular part of the study because not all the absent fathers measured from the June 2000 figure, which was 1,921.92, actually participated.
• Participation for the first three months (Oct 01 to Dec 01), of the program, showed a total of 18 fathers increasing visitation, which averaged 6 a month.

• Participation for the next twelve months (Jan 02 to Dec 02), of the program, showed a total of 74 fathers increasing visitation, which averaged 6 a month.

• Participation for the last four months (Jan 03 to April 03), which was the 18-month marker of the program, showed a total of 91 fathers increasing visitation, which averaged 22.75 for those 4 months of 2003 alone.

• Participation for the first three months (Oct 01 to Dec 01), of the program, showed a total of 2 NCPs paying child support, which averaged 1 a month.

• Participation for the next twelve months (Jan 02 to Dec 02), of the program, showed a total of 48 NCPs paying child support, which averaged 4 a month.

• Participation for the last four months (Jan 03 to April 03), which was the 18-month marker of the program, showed a total of 49 NCPs paying child support, which averaged 12.25 for those 4 months of 2003 alone.
INTERVIEWS

Interview With Social Worker III (Case Manager of the Responsible Father's Program)
Mike Melser. Via e-mail 01/17/06

1. Correct Spelling of your name, and title, and date you first started

“Michael Melser
Social Worker III
Date Started 4/01/01”

2. You were there at RFP from the very beginning, what was that like, what kind of training did you attend, what were your initial duties?

“Working in a new program brings a lot of excitement and challenges. Initially, I spent a great deal of time researching fatherhood issues and the importance of father involvement. Also, much time was spent meeting with people in other counties who were working in fatherhood and related programs. I also attended the NPCL Practitioner training as well as completing the CPS Core training classes. I also was able to attend the NPCL International Fatherhood Conference in Washington D.C.

My initial duties were to assist in the development of resources to assist Fathers. I was named as the Child Support Liaison and continue to provide monthly reports to DCSS. Also, creation of intake procedures, participation guidelines, and Support Group facilitation were developed.”

3. How did you feel about being housed in the 355 building, was it a barrier or strength in your opinion?

“The Tuolumne site was not accommodating to our clientele as our proximity to the courthouse and Probation/Parole Departments made visits to our office uncomfortable. Also, Tuolumne Street did not offer a comfortable space to meet and interview clients. Our support groups had to be held at an alternate location.”

4. How did you feel about the move to Georgia Street, did it increase or decrease participation?

“The move to Georgia Street increased participation tremendously. The Georgia street office is located at the Bus hub for south Vallejo that provides easy access for the clients. Also, The CalWORKs Job Club/Job Search is located here, which is an excellent resource for our CalWORKs non-custodial parents. We have our own break room and conference room. Additionally, we are able to conduct our support groups at this location.”
5. What do you like most about being a RFP social worker, or How do (you/RFP) feel you made a difference in the Vallejo Community?

"Working in the Responsible Fathers Program is rewarding when you are able to see fathers increase their involvement with their children. It is rewarding to assist a father with child support issues (Driver’s license release, modify orders, adjust arrears) and to see them increase their economic and emotional support of their children."

6. What did you like most about the RFP and what were your biggest challenges?

"Of course, the people here are great! Also, I feel the participants get a great deal out of participation in our weekly support groups. A major challenge is to locate and encourage the non-custodial parents of CalWORKs children to participate. We speak at CalWORKs orientations and get referrals from Child Support, but our numbers are not as great as we feel they should be. Another major challenge at this time is working with the CalWIN computer program to get it to issue supportive services for our participants."

7. Would you change anything, or do you have any recommendations for improvements to any of the program functions?

"I think a collaborative approach to father involvement needs to be implemented. There are organizations who work with fathers within their own organizations, but the programs are not talking, sharing info, resources, support group participation, etc. For example, Black Infant Health has a Role of Men program, Head Start has a Father Involvement component and the High Schools and Health Dept. have programs to assist fathers. A Solano County Fatherhood Collaborative with an Advisory Council could assist with a better delivery system of services to meet fathers' needs."

8. Did you reach your goals, are more fathers participating/interacting consistently and paying child support?

"I don't recall that we set out initially with a goal to assist a certain number of CalWORKs non-custodial parents. We initially started as a Pilot Program in Vallejo and we knew how many CalWORKs families resided in Vallejo. We also assist non-CalWORKs fathers, so we have had an impact."
9. RFP in all of Solano County? How is that going to look (Staff, support, offices, locations)?

"As far as I know, we are continuing with our current activities. It would be great to have staff available up county to assist clients and provide a support group in the future."

10. No names - but tell me about the most lasting impression a father/child involved in the program left on you. Or about a father that appeared too hard to help in the beginning but ended up surprising everyone in the end.

"We had a dad who was recently released from Prison. He was very angry at Child Support, the mother of his child, Parole and a very intimidating individual. He was starting to attend our support groups and eventually began to calm down and think logically. He had a six-year-old daughter whom he was unable to see because the mother would not allow it. Through our program, anger management, drug treatment, parenting classes and much work with the Family Law Facilitator's Office, he was eventually able to begin visits with his child. He is now a very happy and congenial person who we love to see drop by. He is working as a painter and sees his daughter regularly. As a matter of fact, the daughter wants to live with him when he gets adequate housing.

This client spoke at a BOS meeting and brought many to tears with his story."
Interview With Social Worker III (Case Manager of the Responsible Father’s Program)
James Hicks. Via e-mail 01/17/06

1. Correct Spelling of your name, and title, and date you first started

“James W. Hicks
Social Worker III
Date Started 4/01/01”

2. You were there at RFP from the very beginning, what was that like, what kid of training did you attend, what were your initial duties?

“The feelings I experienced in the initial stages of this program were those of relief. I had just left a very stressful assignment and working on this new project was simply refreshing. I attended The Fatherhood Development Course. I visited and interacted with the various similar Fatherhood Programs that were active throughout Northern Ca. My initial duties dealt with marketing the program. Getting the word out to the community about its existence. Going to the various places prospective Fathers would gather and posting informational flyers in those areas. Visiting all of the churches in the Vallejo area and informing them of the program. Meeting with and interviewing non-custodial fathers to determine the reason(s) they did not have an appropriate relationship with their child (ren). Seeking and providing the appropriate resources that have been identified as missing in the lives of the questioned non-custodial parents.”

3. How did you feel about being housed in the 355 building, was it a barrier or strength in your opinion?

“We really did not have a place that was conducive to interviewing the clients. Also being so close to the criminal court building could have deterred some potentially eligible fathers from coming to our office.”

4. How did you feel about the move to Georgia Street, did it increase or decrease participation?

“Participation increased tremendously.”

5. What do you like most about being a RFP social worker or How do (you/RFP) feel you made a difference in the Vallejo Community?

“The sense of assisting in the transitioning of a non-custodial parent to the establishing of an appropriate relationship with a parent and his child(ren). I also liked the fact that I was facilitating the project to bring the child and parent together rather than pulling them apart.”
6. What did you like most about the RFP and what were your biggest challenges?

"As mentioned before, assisting in the reestablishing of an appropriate relationship between a parent and child."

7. Would you change anything, or do you have any recommendations for improvements to any of the program functions?

"The services should be available to all non-custodial parents interested in enhancing their relationship with their children."

8. Did you reach your goals, are more fathers participating/interacting consistently and pay child support?

"I did not have any pre-established goals. Yes, more fathers are paying child support as a result of their participation in the RFP."

9. The program has been expanded to other parts of Solano County, How is that going to look (Staff, support, offices, locations)?

"We have acquired another social worker and the expansion has not created any form of hardship on the current staff. The expansion is actually welcomed."

10. No names -but tell me about the most lasting impression a father/child involved in the program left on you. Or about a father that appeared too hard to help in the beginning but ended up surprising everyone in the end.

"One Father appeared to be a really dangerous character in the beginning. He even boasted how he loves to fight (for the sake of fighting) and it did not matter if he won the fight or not. His physical appearance indicated he was physically fit as he had spent several years in prison. After some coordinating and one-on-one work with this father, it was arranged for him to meet with his child whom he had not seen since he had been released from prison. He appeared to be somewhat nervous and was afraid of being rejected by his child. The child had been told all sorts of negative things about him by the other parent and stepfather. Upon the initial meeting with his child, the child took him by the hand and announced that this was her father and she sat on his lap. From that day forward, this father that initially displayed all of the tendencies of being a bully, became as tame as a lamb. The participants of the RFP SUPPORT GROUP also named him Father of the Year. This event took place over two years ago and this parent continues to have an appropriate relationship with his child. He has become a productive member of his community. It all began when he decided to reestablish his relationship with his child. The vehicle he used was The RFP."
Conclusion

Based on the findings of this evaluation, I have concluded that the Solano County Responsible Fathers Program was a success, due to the constant increases in visitation and child support payments being made by the non-custodial fathers. Through this program, the issues that are plaguing our fatherless children such as violent crime, drug and alcohol abuse, truancy, teen-pregnancy, suicide, becoming prison inmates, being placed in juvenile detention centers, and becoming high school dropouts can be dealt with proactively as the fathers are provided an opportunity to change their lives which will ultimately affect the lives of their children. Fatherlessness issues are so prevalent in some adolescents that they become involved in murderer, rape, and other serious violent crimes.

Providing the fathers (non-custodial parent) with the hope, assistance, and same supportive services that are afforded to the custodial parents, the RFP has leveled the playing field and allowed growth to take place. When these fathers are successful in court by obtaining some legal rights to visitation, are provided with therapy services if needed, to deal with past issues (of not having a father themselves), can have their automobiles fixed to retain employment, may be reissued their licenses, and may also get some special assistance in dealing with on-going and arrears child support, what does a father have to lose by participating?

The Solano County RFP has demonstrated its ability to single handedly become involved with helping these fatherless fragile families in Solano County repair and replenish some very meaningful relationships. Through the dedication, commitment, and
perseverance of the Responsible Fathers line staff and administrators, obstacles with funding, initially being located in an undesirable location, and the tribulations encountered with the recruitment of the fathers to enroll into the program, appear to have become problems of the past. It truly seems to this researcher that the RFP will be serving fathers in different areas of Solano County for years to come. The RFP is truly impacting and making a difference in the lives of our families and children in this community. Fathers are being empowered, and evidence of these changes are prevalent in the local community centers, parks, restaurants, arcades, theaters, and shopping malls, which are being populated by fathers and their children in record numbers.

The fathers in this community are also becoming more informed of new laws and programs that may fit their individual specific needs. Knowledge is power, and knowing to them is half the battle. This new group of reconnected fathers appears to be more aware and willing to seek out programs, mental health services, and other assistance available to remain involved in the lives of their children. Fathers are becoming more responsible in the daily lives of their children as mothers are returning to the workforce and single fathers are also assuming more custodial roles.

If the responsible Fathers Program can continue to enhance and increase the knowledge base of the fathers they serve, and if it can continue to assist in increasing the involvement of these fathers with their children, then visitation, commitment, and child support payments will also continue elevate. The more time fathers spend with their children, the sooner they can bond, and form closer, trusting, relationships.
More fathers are becoming independent, building more of a relationship with their child's mother, gaining more custody rights, becoming employed, utilizing therapy services, and trying to limit arrest as a result of being involved in the Solano County Responsible Fathers Program in Vallejo California. That indeed, is success.
CHAPTER 5

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings in Chapter 4, this researcher feels the RFP can be improved through securing additional funding from private companies or foundations, by soliciting grants, collaborating with and/or co-partnering with surrounding counties. The additional secured funding would allow the program to service all fathers, opposed to only assisting non-custodial fathers with children receiving CalWORKs benefits, in Vallejo.

Additional staff should be added to the program, to ensure that the number of caseload participants are manageable and the quality of service is not lost.

The RFP program should also be available in every city within Solano County. Additional offices or co-located office space should be supplied in other County buildings or rental space should be sought to expand the program and limit barriers to access for fathers within all areas of Solano County.

A more collaborative approach to father involvement needs to be implemented. This should involve implementing a Solano County Fatherhood Collaborative with an Advisory Council, which could assist with a better delivery system of services to meet fathers’ specific needs.

County vehicles assigned specifically to the program for the direct delivery of services to the clients should be accessible and made available at every city location. The County pool cars assigned to the RFP, should not have to be shared with other programs.

We learned that the absence of a father can have adverse effects on the lives of children in the home, and that the definition of a father takes on many forms because he
must now assume many different roles. The roles of the father have changed dramatically throughout the years and the past prestige once given to fathers has been replaced with belittlement and public scrutiny. Fathers influence their children by interacting directly in the course of caretaking, play, teaching, and one-on-one interaction. Fathers also have to compete with the evolving dynamics of a changing world where they can not always be the sole financial support or breadwinner, provide the emotional support for everyone in the household, work all day, and play sports with everybody during his spare time. Today's father has many weaknesses, insecurities, vulnerabilities, and disabilities that clash with his macho ego. Many fathers wrestle with fear and pride and their sense of never wanting to appear to need help for themselves.

Future researchers may want to explore, evaluate, and measure, all of the outcomes for the Solano County Responsible Fathers Program. There should also be some follow-up in terms of seeing how well the program is doing with its statistics 5 to 7 years down the road. Future research may also try to link local and national programs and their resources together in efforts of figuring out ways to get new or additional funding sources that will maintain communities filled with fatherhood services.

This researcher would also like to see surveys done with the children of participants to accurately evaluate what specific assistance was given, which best practices worked, and how much increase and consistency actually occurred over a specific time span.

Fatherhood programs and agencies that provide a safe environment and reliable assistance for these fathers are changing the lives of these fragile children. When you
help the fathers, you directly help the children. Programs that offer tangible services and help promote legislation to advance the fatherhood movement are making a difference in the lives of children. We have also learned that the political climate has changed. The focus on fatherhood and specific funding sources for fatherhood programs is dwindling. Figuring out how to secure funding and being able to provide wrap-around services to the fathers is key to saving our generation of fatherless children who may one day become fathers to children that they do not care for. Finally, we discovered that if fathers have programs that are helping them keep licenses, providing employment and vocational services, assisting with illiteracy issues, and are supportively specific to their needs, they will in turn increase their visitation and financial support to their children. Our society needs to think more preventively, be more proactive, and continue to recognize how important the role of the father is in the lives of their children. If our society does not figure out a way to fund and continue to provide opportunities, assistance, and options for our fathers, it will have disastrous consequences on the children of these fragile families. Men really do intuitively want to do right by their children, and when they feel confident, and have the means to support their children, feel it is an honor to do so.

If the researcher were to implement a program, it's only requirement would be that the participants would have to be a father. The program would not use eligibility requirements that use income, race, or social class to determine entrance into the program. The philosophy would be that if you were a father, than there would be some resource available to assist you in your fatherhood role. The program would do an
individual assessment on each father and determine the case-by-case individualized services needed for that specific family. Programs would be sensitive and specific to fathers that are married, separated, divorced, widowed, single, incarcerated, step fathers, foster fathers, adoptive fathers, or military families. The program would also like to assist the children retain, secure, or seek benefits (retirement, pension, social security, victim of crime, etc.) for those fathers that are deceased due to a violent crime (murder) or sudden accidental death.

The program would consist of three levels that would require an eight-month time frame for completion of each level as the total time in the program would be two years to obtain the fatherhood certificate of completion. Level one would assist the fathers with their basic needs like food, shelter, and clothing. As the fathers progress through levels two and three the services become more based on need and more intensive with a focus on making the father successful in all areas of his underdevelopment. Child support assistance or suspension of payments while participating in the program would be available in the program. If a father voluntarily quit the program prematurely, child support payment would resume immediately. Childcare assistance and family therapy are possible components. Employment assistance and or vocational training (or could be an on-the-job training situation) as well as transportation assistance that looks at providing bus passes, bicycles, taxi assistance, or opportunities to earn donated automobile will be assessed by need. If an individual's professional or drivers license has been suspended or invalidated, they could utilize License assistance if they were participants of the program as an incentive to seeking and/or retaining employment. Opportunities to have
professional clothing (suits, shoes, ties, etc.) bought is also part of the program. Therapy for the father and children as well as the mother of the children will be available in efforts of creating some type of family plan that details expectations and maps out visitation and custody. Constant incentives in the form of gift certificates, family vacations, specialized prizes will be won during special events of the program so fathers have tangible things to give and do with their children that they may have never had an opportunity to do before.

Each father will have completed his High School Diploma, GED, or Vocational certificate program, have suitable housing subsidized or unsubsidized, completed job workshops, completed a resume, have interview clothing, be employed, understand his legal right to child visitation, completed a parenting class, a cooking and home economics course, budgeting class, have medical insurance or med-i-cal benefits for their children, will have taken a beginners computer class, and be actively involved in their children's lives at home and at school. If CPS issues were present at intake, than a required number of supervised visitations will be required to obtain higher levels in the program. Cooperation with the CPS agency in mitigating risk factors will become part of the fatherhood programs case management. Participants will have completed a required number of individual and family therapy hours, have completed a medication, substance abuse, mental health, physical, and dental assessment.

Upon completion of the program (while on level three) participants will be considered for a housing assistance grant (we pay the first/last/deposit on an apartment or house rental) and will assist in the down payment on a reasonable automobile if employed and no automobile was purchased by the participant up to this point.
Opportunities to have child support arrearages (back child support) reduced or depleted and involvement in the graduated step plan for paying on-going child support payments upon successful completion is arranged also. The graduated step plan allows an initial low amount of child support that increases periodically as employment status or raises elevates for the first year after completing the program successfully. After a year the amounts adjust to the state guidelines.

The father and his child/ren may participate in the yearly father’s day celebration and family picnic, which is sponsored by the fatherhood program in the local community.
APPENDIX A:
A RESPONSIBLE FATHER'S SUCCESS STORY

SUCCESS STORY: Responsible Fatherhood

Michael Lawrence came to the CAWORKS Responsible Fathers Program (RFP) through a referral from his Child Protective Services (CPS) Social Worker. During the weekend prior to Mr. Lawrence coming to the RFP Office, he and his wife -- who were living in a local motel with their minor child -- became engaged in a verbal confrontation. Michael could see that the situation was beginning to spin out of control, so he did what he had learned several years before in an anger management class. He removed himself from the motel room to allow his wife time to settle down. While he was away from the room, his wife called CPS and told them she was about to have a break down and was unable to further care for their child. CPS responded and Michael Lawrence's child was placed in foster care.

Mr. Lawrence became aware of what had happened when he returned to the motel. He contacted CPS but was not offered the opportunity to care for his child. The RFP received a referral on Michael Lawrence and within two days he came to the RFP Office. He told the RFP Social Worker that he was unclear about what CPS expected of him and the Social Worker thoroughly went over his CPS Case Plan and answered all of his questions. He provided some more background about himself. He had a domestic-violence case on his record from over 10 years ago. He had completed a 52 week Domestic Violence program and had been sober for eight years. He was very concerned about his child's well being.

Michael participated in the RFP Men's Support Group faithfully and consistently. He met all of his CPS and RFP appointments and any time he had a conflict, would notify his RFP Social Worker well in advance. Through his dedication and effort, Michael proved himself to be worthy of consideration for taking custody of his child. Throughout his participation in the Responsible Fathers Program, he kept his focus on his relationship with his child. The bond between Michael and his child continued to grow and that strengthening relationship was clearly observed during visits and court appearances.

There were several incidents when his wife would contact him and attempt to engage him in some form of verbal confrontation. Michael never took the bait. He remained focused and was supported by both his family members and members of the men's support group. Michael obtained a suitable apartment and furnished it appropriately. He went to work at several locations to support himself. Mr. Lawrence made all of his scheduled court appearances and the reports submitted by the social workers from both the Responsible Fathers Program and Child Protective Services indicated that Michael had more than satisfactorily demonstrated his ability to appropriately care and provide for his child. As a result, Michael Lawrence was awarded the custody of his child and the relationship has continued to grow.

As of this time, Michael Lawrence continues to care and provide for his child in a manner that's second to none. Various persons in the community who have observed Michael Lawrence and his child together are often heard sharing positive comments about them. Michael Lawrence's referral to the Responsible Fathers Program was a significant factor that led him and his child being reunited and having the loving, caring relationship that exists today.

*The story is true but the names and certain details have been changed to protect the privacy of this client and his family.*
APPENDIX B:

A SURVEY OF CURRENT NATIONAL AND REGIONAL PROGRAMS

1. The National Fatherhood Initiative

The National Fatherhood Initiative (NFI) was founded in 1994 to lead a society-wide movement to confront the problem of father absence. The following information was taken from the organization's promotional information on the web (2006):

In 1993, Don Eberly, a former White House advisor and civil society scholar, arranged a meeting of prominent thinkers to discuss the growing problem of father absence in America. Mindful of the limitations of government social policy, Eberly also wanted to talk about the importance of civil society and cultural mores in contributing to positive social change.

"We realized," said Wade F. Horn, a child psychologist who later became NFI’s President, "that the growing absence of fathers was the most consequential social trend in our culture—for families and for civil society. But public policy is a weak instrument for reversing the trend; the answer is in the broader culture."

The attendees agreed that there needed to be an organization that would stimulate a broad-based social movement to combat father absence and promote responsible fatherhood. And thus the idea for the National Fatherhood Initiative (NFI) was born, grounded in the following propositions:

- Fathers make unique and irreplaceable contributions to the lives of children
- Father absence produces negative outcomes for their children
- Societies which fail to reinforce a cultural ideal of responsible fatherhood get increasing amounts of father absence
Widespread fatherlessness is the most socially consequential problem of our time.

NFI made its national debut in 1994. In 1996, NFI's national headquarters were established in Gaithersburg, Maryland. The next few years saw NFI grow in size and reach, with an expanded resource center, contract work in Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Texas, and a privately funded regional initiative in Pittsburgh.

NFI's mission is to improve the well-being of children by increasing the proportion of children growing up with involved, responsible, and committed fathers. They do this by:

- Educating and inspiring all people, especially fathers, through public awareness campaigns, research, and other resources.
- Equipping and developing leaders of national, state, and community fatherhood initiatives through curricula, training, and technical assistance.
- Engaging every sector of society through strategic alliances and partnerships.

Some of the innovative programs of the NFI include: maintaining an expansive resource center, extending services to military families, creating internet connections for children and their dads, reducing the rates of recidivism in prisons, engaging expectant fathers before their children are born, creating strategic partnerships in the community, and working with government officials from the city level to the national level.
2. The Partners for Fragile Families

The Partners for Fragile Families (PFF) (2006) is the first comprehensive national initiative designed to help poor, single fathers pull themselves out of poverty and build stronger links to their children and their children’s mothers. PFF was established in 1996 to provide support for these "fragile families", which are defined as low-income, never-married parents and their children. Pilot programs have shown that many of the fathers in these families are involved with their children during the early childhood years. However, research indicates that this involvement tends to dissipate over time, often with negative consequences for children.

PFF’s specific goals are to:

- Help never-married fathers assume legal, financial and emotional responsibility for their children.

- Build and increase the range of services provided by community-based fatherhood programs.

- Promote and facilitate the development of family-friendly policies, programs and cooperative agreements between service providers and public agents.

Partners for Fragile Families reflects lessons learned from previous attempts at assistance, and its practices have been culled from over forty years of social policy research and experimentation in this area. The PFF is a collaborative effort funded by grants from the National Partnership for Community Leadership. It currently operates in ten test cities, the programs conducted by public and private groups, grass roots
community-based organizations, federal and state child support enforcement agencies and private employers.

In the fall of 1997, the Partners for Fragile Families project was expanded to include a specific, long term emphasis on the development of services for fathers and fragile families in nine counties in Northern California: Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano and Sonoma. This nine-county program was called the Bay Area Partners for Fragile Families (2006). The primary objectives of the project over a three-year period were to:

- Build the capacity of diverse community-based organizations in the nine-county area to effectively serve low-skilled economically disadvantaged, never-married, non-custodial fathers.
- Help never-married fathers assume legal, financial and emotional responsibility to their children.
- Encourage the development of partnerships between community-based organizations and public welfare and child support enforcement agencies to address the needs of fragile families.
- Encourage and demonstrate the flexible use of social welfare dollars to meet the self-sufficiency needs of disadvantaged mothers and fathers and reduce their dependence on public assistance.

3. Fathers at Work (Mott Foundation, 2001)

The Fathers at Work Initiative (FWI) was a 3.5-year, $10,200,000 million program designed to improve the labor market participation and earnings of young, low
income, non-custodial fathers. The FWI sought to illustrate that these men need public policies and systems, child support enforcement, social welfare, and criminal justice that promote, rather than impede, responsible parenting.

Our local Site Demonstration Program, in Richmond, California, was administered by Rubicon Programs, Inc. It is a new three-year program that provides career training and advancement, child support services, and fatherhood development training to non-custodial fathers ages 17-30. The program is funded nationally by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation.

4. MELD for Young Dads (2006)

Weekly parenting support and information groups, facilitated by men who were young fathers themselves. Childcare, food, and transportation are provided. In addition to their young dads program, they offer African American Young Moms programs. Meld also provides curriculum, training, technical assistance, and support to organizations forming their own programs. Some funding is available for this.

Meld is a national non-profit family service organization based in Minneapolis, and with major programs throughout the Midwest. Meld has been making a positive difference for 30 years in the lives of families with children—nurturing the crucial connections between parents and children by building skills, knowledge, support systems, and confidence. Through this work with Meld, parents get what they need to raise nurtured, competent children.
Meld offers training for professional, paraprofessional, and volunteer family service providers to help them build skills for program development, group facilitation, and home visitation.

With field-tested publications, Meld provides ongoing, hands-on help for family service providers and the parents they serve. Meld has created more than 150 publications that provide information regarding child development, child guidance, health, family management, and personal growth.

Meld was formed in 1973 to meet the needs of new parents in the Twin Cities. Research indicated that society isolated parents from the information and support they needed to be effective. Meld's initial program incorporated the best information available about adult education, family management and early childhood education. Early success led communities to ask Meld to adapt the program to reach populations raising children in high-stress conditions, such as adolescent mothers and immigrants/refugees.

As the field of family support grew, Meld was called upon to share its experience and knowledge nationwide. Meld responded during the 1990s by developing training services for practitioners and publications for both parents and professionals in the field.

Today, Meld offers educational and support programs for parents, trains family service providers to apply best practices in their work with families, and publishes a broad range of products for parents and those who work with them. These services and products help parents set goals and make decisions for their education, work and family
life that increase their self-confidence, self-sufficiency and ability to successfully manage a family.

Meld has been replicated in 20 states. Today, Meld has 96 affiliates and nine networks, including the District of Columbia.

5. Promise Keepers (2006)

Promise Keepers is a Christian evangelical ministry dedicated to uniting men to become "godly influences" in the world. The name "Promise Keepers" is derived from the concept that in Christ, God kept all of the promises that he made to mankind, and therefore, Christian men must rely upon God as the original Promise Keeper to keep their promises as well. Millions of men have participated in conferences and other gatherings since 1990 when Promise Keepers first began.

According to the Promise Keepers' website, the organization is dedicated to igniting and uniting men to be passionate followers of Jesus Christ through the effective communication of the following "Seven Promises:"

1. A Promise Keeper is committed to honoring Jesus Christ through worship, prayer and obedience to God's Word in the power of the Holy Spirit.

2. A Promise Keeper is committed to pursuing vital relationships with a few other men, understanding that he needs brothers to help him keep his promises.

3. A Promise Keeper is committed to practicing spiritual, moral, ethical, and sexual purity.

4. A Promise Keeper is committed to building strong marriages and families through love, protection and biblical values.
5. A Promise Keeper is committed to supporting the mission of his church by honoring and praying for his pastor, and by actively giving his time and resources.

6. A Promise Keeper is committed to reaching beyond any racial and denominational barriers to demonstrate the power of biblical unity.

7. A Promise Keeper is committed to influencing his world, being obedient to the Great Commandment (see Mark 12:30-31) and the Great Commission (see Matthew 28:19-20).

Promise Keepers teaches that a sovereign move of God's Spirit is stirring the hearts of men. In a world of negotiable values, confused identities, and distorted priorities, men are encountering God's Word, embracing their identities as His sons, and investing in meaningful relationships with God, their families and each other.
APPENDIX C: THE NATIONAL FATHERHOOD INITIATIVE

Programs and Additional Information

Nationwide Public Education. To date, NFI's public service announcements (PSAs), produced in partnership with the Ad Council, have garnered over $360 million in donated media. In 2003, the campaign received the 4th most donated media ($50 million) of over 40 Ad Council campaigns. Over the life of the campaign, the ads have generated more than 200,000 requests for information, technical assistance, and resource materials.

In December of 2004, NFI released a series of television PSAs called "Moments." The three "Moments" spots show that the simple moments that dads share with their children are of great importance. As 2005 progresses the "Moments" ads are getting placements in television outlets throughout the country.

NFI's current print advertisement, "Instructions," received two second place and one first place prizes from The Detroit News and Detroit Free Press for creativity, concept, and execution. "Instructions" has gotten placements in O, The Oprah Magazine, Parade, Fortune, and has been placed in several other nationally distributed publications.

Earned Media. In addition to op-ed pieces in The Washington Post, The Philadelphia Inquirer, and many other regional and local newspapers, NFI has also appeared on FOX News Channel, BET, and three times on The Oprah Winfrey Show. After a powerful first show entitled, "The Secret Thoughts of Fathers," NFI President Roland Warren was invited back to participate in Oprah's follow-up show. The nation heard testimonies of couples whose lives had changed dramatically because of what they had learned about responsible fatherhood from the first show. A marriage on the brink of
divorce was saved. Couples began communicating more deeply about their children and their concerns. But more than this, story after story showed how children’s lives were being saved from the terrible consequences of father absence.

Roland was also invited to moderate a roundtable discussion on husbands and fathers that was published in *O, The Oprah Magazine*. Such exposure is instrumental in reaching sectors of society that will be instrumental in creating a society-wide movement to confront father absence.

*Outreach projects – Innovative Communication*

**Golden Dads.** A project that continues to have a great impact on our culture is NFI’s “Golden Dads” campaign. The campaign was inspired by the 2002 Rendezvous Entertainment release, *Golden Slumbers, a Father’s Lullabye*. In collaboration with Rendezvous Entertainment, NFI recognizes “every day” dads on the streets of several major U.S. cities. Fathers spotted spending quality time with their children in the Golden Dad cities are approached on the spot and given an award package containing various prizes and practical tools to increase father involvement.

To launch the 2003 campaign, a special press conference was held in Beverly Hills to award “celebrity” dads. The recipients who participated included Jason Alexander, Stephen Collins, Joshua Malina, Tony Plana, Bob Saget, Alan Thicke, Randy Jackson, and David Benoit.

The 2004 campaign built on the success of the 2003 campaign, and two celebrity press conferences were held, one in LA and one in Washington, DC, to launch the campaign on both coasts. 1,000 dads were caught on Father’s Day weekend.
In 2005, Rendezvous Entertainment will release *Golden Slumbers, a Father's Love*, and the Golden Dads campaign will be held in 20 locations across the country, awarding 10,000 dads. Dads will be awarded with samplers from the new album as well as prizes to help them be better dads.

The Golden Dads campaign is key in generating public awareness of responsible fatherhood. It has received press coverage on several national television networks and programs including the 'E!' Network and Entertainment Tonight.

**Internet education and outreach.** Our efforts to educate the public continue to expand through both electronic and print media. NFI’s “Dad E-mail” is a weekly email service that includes news and information relevant to fatherhood issues, advice for fathers to “sharpen” their fathering skills, as well as regular updates of NFI events, conferences, and fatherhood forums. The list has grown from 2,500 recipients in 2001 to over 10,000 in 2005.

Our redesigned NFI website (www.fatherhood.org) continues to be an extremely effective tool for reaching out to individual fathers, organizations, and public policy leaders. NFI recently redesigned the site to be more useful for our three main constituencies. Now, the site includes:

- Daily updates of the most recent news on fatherhood
- Articles and research
- Training information
- “Fatherly advice”
- On-line bookstore of all NFI resources
- Membership opportunities

The National Fatherhood Clearinghouse and Resource Center

Our Resource Center (NFCRC) is responsible for administering NFI’s curricula and workshops to reach fathers as well assisting local organizations in starting and operating an effective fatherhood programs. The NFCRC is also the center of educational material distribution and all technical assistance.

Although educating America and reaching large numbers of fathers and families through our broader public education efforts is important, this work must be complimented and reinforced through a strategy to equip fathers with the tools and information they need to be responsible players in the lives of their children. Again, since effectuating a positive change in behavior is the only way to win this battle, a large part of our responsibility is to give fathers the tools they need to change.

Resources to Reach Fathers

In order to reach fathers at this micro-level, NFI is incorporating a grassroots strategy that will involve fathers in programs or support groups within their own communities. Through use of our “Community Starter Kit” – NFI has already seen a shift in the total number of fatherhood programs that exist. Currently, well over 2,500 fatherhood programs exist and there are as many, if not more, that have incorporated a fatherhood component in the work they were already doing in their community.

Curricula

NFI has also enhanced and expanded its curricula to reach fathers in very specialized sections of society as outlined below.
NFI Reconnects Military Families

Deployed Fathers and Families™

NFI is proud to be serving our troops on the front lines with our Military Fathers Program. Deployment and the rigors of military life cause military families to experience high rates of stress, divorce, and severe disconnect with their children. Through our Deployed Fathers and Families™ (DFF) guide, NFI is seeking to educate families about ways they can stay connected and strong during deployment.

This guide teaches active and reserve military units and their families how to prepare for and adjust to the changes associated with father absence due to deployment. The program is designed to work with military personnel and their families during three distinct stages of service:

- As they prepare for deployment.
- While they are serving.
- When they return home upon the completion of a mission.

The DFF guide teaches military fathers how to plan and prepare for the everyday decisions and the unexpected changes that will arise during their absence. This includes communication skills to use during deployment and ease the transition upon the father’s return.

In 2002, we were able to operate DFF programs at Charleston AFB, Langley AFB, Norfolk AFB, and the 124th Security Forces Air National Guard Base in Boise, Idaho. By implementing the “train the trainer” model, NFI is able to reach many more military fathers through Family Services personnel on respective bases. Members of the
base’s Family Services will be responsible for distributing the DFF guide as well as furnishing additional resources to work with the troops and their families during deployment.

“Drop Dad a Line”

In conjunction with this program, at the end of March 2003, NFI began its “Drop Dad a Line” e-mail campaign. This project gives children the opportunity to send their military father an e-mail message that can also be posted on NFI’s website for the public to see. The unique aspect of this project is that when he retrieves his message from the NFI website, he can click on a link that directs him to our “Tips for Deployed Dads.” These tips suggest ways to stay connected with their families while they are deployed. By adding this feature, NFI is able not only to facilitate communication between children and their fathers but also to encourage Deployed Dads to stay connected with their children.

NFI Works to Reduce the Recidivism Rate in Prisons

Long Distance Dads™. Long Distance Dads™ (LDD) is NFI’s incarcerated fathers program. Correctional facilities’ staff, parole officers and volunteer leaders are trained in the curriculum and then train inmates to lead the small groups.

Inmates are taught communication skills and fathering techniques to foster a positive father-child relationship both while the father is in prison and upon his release. One unique attribute of the program is that it is peer-led. In other words, inmates who have gone through the program lead other inmates as mentors in the process of learning to re-connect with their children.
Because a majority of prisoners were raised in fatherless homes, this program is vital to stopping the cycle of intergenerational crime. Preliminary evaluations have found that fathers who are re-connected to their children while they are in prison are less likely to be re-incarcerated after their release.

Due to the extremely positive feedback from the inmates and the institutions, NFI has been able to more than double the number of institutions in which the program is administered. Over 300 representatives from state correctional institutions in 23 states have been trained in LDD. The 69 facilities currently using the LDD curricula represent over 15,000 inmates across the country and LDD is also being used in Canada, Great Britain and West Africa.

The program is ready to be implemented in every correctional facility in the United States and plans are underway in 2003 to propose use of LDD to at least ten different state’s Department of Corrections as well as collaborating with the Federal Bureau of Prisons to implement this curriculum in federal institutions as well.

**NFI Starts New Cycle of Father Involvement**

**Doctor Dad™**

Research shows that fathers are most open to information and practical skill building before their first child is born. Data equally shows that fathers who are engaged in their children’s lives when the child is an infant are the most likely to continue to stay involved in the lives of their children later on. Therefore, NFI designed a curriculum especially for new or “expectant” fathers of all backgrounds - from teen fathers to suburban dads-to-be. Designed by a physician and a registered nurse, Doctor Dad™ is a
unique workshop taught by certified healthcare professionals. This curriculum gives fathers the health and safety tips for providing the daily care that their infants and toddlers require. Fathers learn strategies to:

- improve their childcare practices
- create a safe home, and
- help form positive relationships with their children

They also learn basic medical knowledge, ensuring that they can handle the majority of medical situations that may arise. Topics covered include: child development, nursing a sick child, home safety, and common childhood ailments.

Doctor Dad™ has been accredited by Pennsylvania State University as a course for non-credit or continuing education units (CEUs) and NFI is also in the process of field-testing the curriculum with independent medical evaluators to prepare for its complete review.

Last year, Doctor Dad™ was presented to 40 different organizations with over 20 healthcare professionals attending. Within the next year, NFI would like to develop a Father’s Companion Handbook that dads could take home with their newborn babies in addition to exploring possible partnerships with La Maze International to complement their pre- and para-natal classes.

Already this year, two trainings are scheduled for California’s Adolescent Family Life program and Early Head Start of Massachusetts is considering using the curriculum within their thirty programs throughout the state. Eventually, NFI hopes to institute regional trainers in order to build more capacity.
Directions for Dads CD-ROM

We are also pleased to announce the completion of NFI's "Directions for Dads" CD-ROM - a goal we had hoped to reach this year. A highly interactive media instruction tool, this CD gives dads comprehensive information and advice on how to be involved in their child's life. Already, we have over 16,000 requests for this material and plan to reach 20,000 by year-end.

Workshops

Workshops are designed to build the skills of community-based organizations in delivering fatherhood programming through topics such as:

- Social Marketing – Father Friendly Check-up™
- Starting a Fatherhood Group – Community Starter Kit©
- Ways to Raise™ (teaching groups how to raise their own funding more effectively)
- Outcomes Based Evaluations (providing groups with the tools they need to measure their success)

Throughout 2002 and into 2003, we have seen an increase in the NFCRC's distribution and delivery of fatherhood programming. Both curricula and workshop trainings and distribution have increased. We are encouraged to know that more fathers are being reached by NFI's materials and are taking the initiative to become better dads.
**Affiliate Program**

There are more than 60 million fathers in America. NFI’s goal to reach every one can only be accomplished through enlisting the help of reputable, well-run organizations. Therefore, in addition to our own Resource Center reaching individual fathers, a greater effort has been made to reach out to multiple communities in long lasting and solid ways through our Affiliates program. This program is designed to:

- Cultivate effective grassroots efforts around fatherhood.
- Foster strong partnerships with like-minded organizations.
- Provide guidance and leadership in the fatherhood field.
- Allow organizations to draw upon NFI’s extensive experience.
- Provide greater access to NFI products and services at a reduced cost.

NFI’s Affiliate program is instrumental in increasing the capacity and effectiveness of community based organizations doing fatherhood work in their cities and states. Since the beginning of 2002, NFI more than doubled our number of Affiliates by adding 21 new organizations to our program bringing the total number to 30. These groups represent 14 states and the District of Columbia and serve populations in small rural areas as well as large urban centers.

**Strategic Partnerships**

The third and final part of the NFI strategy is to reach fathers through engaging the different sectors of society in which they are involved. In order to reach these different sectors, NFI must partner with groups in the social service, faith and business communities that already have an infrastructure and reach into these sectors.
An exciting development in this area is our collaborative work that has begun with the YMCA. NFI has installed "responsible fatherhood kiosks" in several Pittsburgh area YMCAs and trained their staff to better serve the needs of fathers. We are hoping to implement this project nationwide.

In addition, we have endeavored to integrate our Affiliate Program with these collaborations. For example, we are encouraging our affiliates to participate in the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation’s Boating and Fishing week by holding these types of events in their own communities. We have seen a great positive response to this project. By offering more opportunities to reconnect fathers with children in creative ways through our Affiliate Program and various collaborations, NFI is increasing its reach into every part of culture and society.

**Policy Leaders**

Another sector of society that NFI continues to work with is government. NFI is currently working with four bi-partisan task forces:

- Bi-Partisan Task Force of Mayors
- Bi-Partisan Task Force of Governors
- Bi-Partisan Task Force of U.S. Senators
- Bi-Partisan Task Force of U.S. Representatives.

With the appointment of a Public Affairs Manager, this is an area that has seen tremendous growth. Our congressional task force (House and Senate) currently has 81 active members and our Mayors and Governors number 43 members. NFI staff ensures
that task force members are updated and informed on the problem of father absence.

These legislators also seek

the counsel of NFI as they work to promote involved, responsible and committed fatherhood through legislation and in their states and cities.

In September 2002 and March 2003 we held Legislative Briefings for the House of Representatives and the United States Senate respectively. Over 70 different members were represented and a number of new members joined the task forces.
APPENDIX D: THE FATHERS-AT-WORK INITIATIVE

Below is the testimony of Jeffery M. Johnson, Ph.D., President and CEO, National Partnership for Community leadership, before the Subcommittee on Human resources of the House Committee on Ways and Means, U.S. Congress, February 20, 2005:

The Fathers-at-Work initiative was a six-city joint project of NPCL and Public Private/Ventures funded by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. It targeted and served older fathers, 25 years old and older, with a focus on fathers who had experienced significant encounters with the criminal justice system. It also sought to take advantage of the relationships that NPCL had developed with state and local child support enforcement leaders in support of socially and economically challenged dads. This project just ended and data collection and analysis will be forthcoming over the next year. Over a period of three years, F@W, as we affectionately called it, served over 700 of the most chronically challenged fathers in the six sites.

The PFF Site Demonstration was a three-year, 10 city experiment, created through a partnership between local community-based organizations and child support enforcement agencies. The goal of the partnership was to create a support system that would address the myriad of personal, relational, and financial needs faced by young (16-25 years of age) low-income, fathers in fragile families. To help the young father, the PFF project sought to get the father to establish legal paternity, improve his education level, increase job skills, and pay child support.
Since 2001, more than 4,500 “dead-broke dads” have taken advantage of employment training, parenting plans, job placement and GED testing services, according to the most recent findings from the Partnership for Fragile Families Site Demonstration project (PFF). With the help of these partnerships, “fragile fathers” are pulling themselves out of poverty, creating stronger relationships with their children, becoming productive citizens and giving back to their communities. Initial data confirm that while these children are faced with difficult domestic realities, PFF-fostered partnerships can build system capacity and deliver the tools necessary to strengthen families, fathers, and their futures.

This ten-city demonstration project was designed to promote increased cooperation and informed decision-making among organizations that work with fragile families. PFF recognized that neither government nor private agencies could do this work alone. Therefore, the four key goals of PFF were to:

- Help community-based organizations and government agencies productively leverage their information and resources as partners in order to better discern and respond to the needs of children in fragile families;
- Strengthen disadvantaged, particularly fragile families, in the interest of children;
- Help support both parents in their efforts to become providers for their children; and
• Promote family-friendly income security and other social policies that acknowledge and encourage the contributions of both parents, even those parents without physical custody.

During the conduct of the Partners for Fragile Families Site Demonstration Project, the PFF sites recruited 6,525 fathers. Intake was accomplished on 4,650. Of those going through the intake process, approximately 3,350 were PFF eligible, met the age requirement of between 16-25 years old. Those that were not PFF eligible were referred to alternative programs, or, in the case of the more established programs, served with other resources. Of the 1,523 fathers enrolled in the total program:

• 29% were employed at intake;

• Average hourly wages at intake was $7.43;

• 44% were between the ages of 16 and 20 years old;

• 56% were between 21 to 25 years old;

• 78% had less than 12th grade education;

• 68% were African American, 13% Hispanic, 8% Caucasian, 2% Native American, and 1% Asian; and

• 42% had spent time in jail or prison, or had been convicted of misdemeanors or felony, or on probation or parole.
Fathers that participated in the PFF project were the most economically and socially challenged of the low-income fathers distribution. Their average income was less than $4,000 annually, when gainfully employed. They are chronically unemployed, hard to employ, and present to community-based responsible fatherhood development programs with trauma and multiple needs.

Services Requested by PFF Fathers

The vast majority of PFF participants came through the doors of the PFF programs in crisis. Most came looking for employment, but upon intake and assessment they were to found to have multiple and varying needs. Services requested by fathers were as follows:

- 68% wanted job assistance;
- 42% of those employed wanted help in a better job with more stability;
- 22% wanted help in creating and sustaining a relationship with their children;
- 28% wanted help in improving their relationship with their significant other;
- 64% requested educational assistance to increase their skill levels and better prepare them for employment opportunities;
- 45% wanted to improve their parenting skills;
- 30% wanted help with child support issues;
- 20% wanted anger management training; and
• 25% wanted health services.

Services Received by PFF Fathers

Through a collaborative case management model that agencies developed for the PFF project, the programs were able to meet the service requests of fathers coming through their doors. While participants requested the above-mentioned services, they received additional assistance identified as part of the assessment process and subsequent conversations with participants. Additional services received by PFF participants include:

• 15% received housing assistance;

• 29% received substance abuse training;

• 5% received legal assistance on other than child support issues (Parking fines, DWI, suspension of drivers' licenses...etc.);

• 3% mental health treatment;

• 5% dental treatment;

• 60% peer support;

• 3% family and community violence;

• 3% financial literacy;

• 22% child custody; and

• 13% visitation.
PFF Milestones

As of December 2003, the PFF sites have attained the formal end of the conduct of the PFF Demonstration, the following milestones:

- 40% of participants established paternity;
- 28% of participants without orders, established child support orders;
- 59% of participants are paying child support, above the national average;
- 71% of participants went from paying $0 to paying an average of $124 monthly;
- 40% of participants initiated Parenting Plans;
- 3% of participants married;
- 7% of participants completed their GED; and
- 48% (of the 71% unemployed at intake) placed in full or part time jobs.

Future Directions for Fatherhood Programs

We have learned a great deal over the last six years in our work with low-income fathers and their fragile families. We have learned a lot about what works and what doesn’t work with this population. We have formed, and are continuing to form unprecedented, mutually beneficial partnerships that will shape the future for children of fragile families in low-income communities by improving the manner in which services are delivered to their entire family. With a stable public funding stream, that supports the work of practitioners in the field, we can continue to do this work and do so much more.
These are programs like those of the Northern Virginia Urban League, the DC Fatherhood Initiative, and the Northern Virginia Regional Fatherhood Coalition, who operate on "shoe string" budgets and the good hearts of volunteers to work with young fathers.

**The Partners for Fragile Families Site Demonstration**

Beginning September 2000 and ending December 2003, The Partners for Fragile Families Site Demonstration (PFF) was the first national initiative working at the federal, state and local levels to help poor, single fathers pull themselves out of poverty and build stronger links to their children and their children's mothers. This is where we took "family values" from bumper-sticker platitude to meaningful program action. With child well-being always at its center, PFF held that children are best served by two loving parents who can support their children. This means that programs serving low-income families must work together to strengthen, train, build the skill levels and assist each individual, mother and father, towards the goals of financial self-sufficiency, cooperative parenting and being productive community members.

In order to assist low-income families and their biological children, federal, state, local and private programs operating at all levels, must work in concert with one another, to share information, resources, and the objective of child well-being. To that end, Partners for Fragile Families formed unprecedented partnerships among grassroots community-based organizations and child support enforcement agencies to assist young, low-income, unmarried parents – particularly underserved dads – so they could assume financial, emotional and legal responsibility for their children. The three-year, ten-city
demonstration project was designed to promote increased cooperation and informed decision-making among organizations that work with fragile families. PFF recognized that neither government nor private agencies could do this work alone. Therefore, the four key goals of PFF were to:

- Help community-based organizations and government agencies productively leverage their information and resources as partners in order to better discern and respond to the needs of children in fragile families;
- Strengthen disadvantaged, particularly fragile families, in the interest of children;
- Help support both parents in their efforts to become providers for their children; and
- Promote family-friendly income security and other social policies that acknowledge and encourage the contributions of both parents, even those parents without physical custody.

Who did PFF Target?

There are nearly four million fathers of children on welfare, or “fragile fathers” without custody, who are under-educated, unemployed and make so little money that they themselves are eligible for food stamps. Young, poor dads are often willing but unable to assume financial responsibility for their children. In fact, 29 percent of fragile dads actually manage to pay some child support, a clear demonstration that they are trying to do the right thing. And one study showed that poor, single fathers said that they saw their children once a week, took them to the doctor, and reported bathing, feeding, dressing and playing with their children. These men are not “deadbeat dads,” they are “dead-
broke dads.” Only 27 percent of poor single fathers had full-time, year-round jobs in 1990. The average annual income of young, poor single fathers was under $10,000 in 1990 and 60 percent of these men earned less than the individual poverty level of $6,800. Forty-three percent of fragile dads did not finish high school and had no access to employment and training services.

PFF targeted fathers who faced many of the same challenges as welfare mothers. The difference is that where mothers had access to a variety of public assistance programs including employment training, fathers have not. If fathers were to successfully share the responsibilities of parenthood and become both self- and family-supporting, they needed help similar to that offered to moms. The goal of PFF was to produce a fatherhood system that would help strengthen the involvement of fathers in the lives of their children.

**PFF Three Year Participant Findings**

During the conduct of the Partners for Fragile Families Site Demonstration Project, the PFF sites recruited 6,525 fathers. Intake was accomplished on 4,650. Of those going through the intake process, approximately 3,350 were PFF eligible, met the age requirement of between 16-25 years old. Those that were not PFF eligible were referred to alternative programs, or, in the case of the more established programs, served with other resources. Of the 1,523 fathers enrolled in the program:

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**PFF Milestones**

As of December 2003, the formal end of the conduct of the PFF Demonstration, the following milestones has been attained by the PFF sites:

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• 40% of participants initiated Parenting Plans;
• 3% of participants married;
• 7% of participants completed their GED; and
• 48% (of the 71% unemployed at intake) placed in full or part time jobs.

APPENDIX E:

SOLANO COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

Mission Statement

"Our mission is to effectively and efficiently provide child support services to the children and families of Solano County."

Department Description and Functionality

OUR SERVICES

Every child has the right to financial and emotional support from both parents. The Child Support program, authorized under Title IV-D of the Social Security Act, provides services to assist parents in their mutual obligation to financially support and provide health insurance for their children.

The Solano County Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) assists children and parents by establishing and enforcing child support orders. Our FREE services are available to all parents and guardians and include:

- Locating the parent that is absent from the home
- Establishing paternity (fatherhood), child support and medical support orders
- Enforcing support orders
- Collecting and distributing support
- Modifying existing child support orders

FAMILY LAW FACILITATOR'S OFFICE

The Solano County Family Law Facilitator's Office is available to help people representing themselves in Family Law matters. The Family Law Facilitator is available to provide information and assistance free of charge to those individuals who choose to proceed with their cases without an attorney. More information can be found on their...
SERVICES NOT OFFERED

The Solano County DCSS serves in the public interest and does not represent either parent or the children. If a parent wishes to be represented, she/he may contact a private attorney or legal aid agency. Other services not provided by this office include:

- Divorce
- Custody
- Visitation
- Restraining orders
- Establishing spousal support orders

THE CHILD SUPPORT PROCESS

Anyone who has a child support and/or medical support order, or wants to establish such an order, can apply for child support enforcement services by completing an application. If a child receives CalWORKs, Foster Care, or Medi-Cal benefits, the Department of Health and Social Services will automatically refer the case to this office and a case will be opened. The following steps outline the child support process:

STEP 1: Open a Child Support Case

Any parent or guardian of a child in need of support may open a case with the Solano County DCSS. An application for services can be found under Forms and Brochures on this website or you can contact our office for an application. Once the completed application is received by our office, you will be contacted within ten (10) days from case opening. Please provide as much information as possible on the application.
The Solano County DCSS needs to locate the non-custodial parent to get an order for support, establish paternity or enforce a child support order. If the non-custodial parent's location is not known, this office has access to various resources to attempt to gather information including: employment/unemployment records, credit reporting agency records, social services records, motor vehicle registration and driver's license records, United States Postal Services, current and previous employers, current and previous utility companies, law enforcement agencies, parole and probation offices, state licensing boards and military records.

Paternity or fatherhood must be established before the court will order child support. If the child is conceived during marriage, paternity does not need to be established. When an unmarried woman has a child, paternity should be established to provide the child with the same legal rights as a child born to married parents.

To establish a new child support and medical support order, our office will get a court order by first filing a Summons and Complaint. The Summons and Complaint will include information about the child's paternity and the amount of child support requested. The Summons and Complaint and a blank answer form are personally served to the non-custodial parent, who then has 30 days to file a response with the court.
Child Support is determined using guidelines established by California law. Child support guidelines are based on both parent's monthly income (allowing for certain deductions) and the amount of time the child is cared for by each parent.

STEP 5: Enforcing a Support Order

Once a child support order is obtained, a Wage Assignment and National Medical Support Notice are served to the non-custodial parent's employer. Regular child support payments will then be withheld from the non-custodial parent's wages.

If a non-custodial parent is late or fails to pay court ordered child support, the Solano County DCSS has several enforcement tools to collect the support including: credit reporting, passport denial, property liens, suspending licenses, Franchise Tax Board Child Support Collections Program and income tax refund intercepts.

STEP 6: Collecting and Distributing

Once a child support payment is received by this office from either the non-custodial parent, the non-custodial parent's employer or through another enforcement method, DCSS will distribute the payment within two (2) business days.

Families that are receiving public assistance through CalWorks or Foster Care assign their rights to child support to the county. Child support collected goes toward paying for these benefits.

STEP 7: Modifying Existing Child Support

Either parent may request a review for a modification of child support. A significant change in circumstances, such as a change in custody, change in income or change in visitation may warrant a modification review. If appropriate, our office will initiate
modification proceedings, which may result in an increase or decrease in child support ordered.

**STEP 8: Case Closure**

A custodial party who is not receiving CalWORKS or Medi-cal benefits may request closure of the non-welfare portion of the case. The request must be in writing and sent to the Fairfield Office.

A custodial party who is currently receiving CalWORKS or Medi-cal benefits may not request case closure.

A non-custodial parent may request closure if she/he initially opened the case and the custodial party and child(ren) are not receiving CalWORKS or Medi-cal benefits. The request must be in writing and sent to the Fairfield Office.

**Ombudsperson Program**

An Ombudsperson is available to assist parents, employers and the community. An Ombudsperson will provide information about the child support program, resolve issues and answer questions.

The Ombudsperson Program also helps parties through the Complaint Resolution process and State Hearing, and helps arrange for special accommodations and interpreters needed at State Hearings. The Ombudsperson Program evaluates customer satisfaction and suggests ways to resolve concerns and improve customer service. Our Ombudsperson will work to resolve complaints about:

- Customer service
- Timeliness of service
- Payment and billing issues
- Decisions to close a child support case
APPENDIX F.
THE RESPONSIBLE FATHERS PROGRAM SURVEY FORM

The Solano County Health & Social Services CalWORKs
Responsible Fathers Survey

This survey is intended to get raw data (information) regarding your experience with the Responsible Fathers Program. This survey is being conducted to complete a theses project at California State University Sacramento. This information is not a requirement of the Responsible Fathers Program and is completely voluntary. The survey will not ask for your name which will allow your answers to remain anonymous. Thank you for your valuable time and consideration in completing this survey.

Please circle the correct answer or fill in the blank when asked.

1. Are you a father who has children receiving CalWORKs in Vallejo, California?
   YES or NO

2. Are you a Custodial or Non Custodial Parent or Both? (you may live with some and some may alternate schedules)
   ___ Custodial   ___ Non-Custodial   ___ Both

3. Are you a father who has children involved in Children's Protective Services (CPS)?
   YES or NO

4. Are you involved in the Responsible Fathers Program because you are a mandatory or voluntary participant?
   ___ Mandatory   ___ Voluntary

5. If Mandatory, who ordered you to participate?
   ___ CPS  ___ Family Law Court  ___ District Attorney  ___ Probation/Parole  ___ Other

6. How many children do you have?
   ___ 1 to 2   ___ 3 to 4   ___ 5 to 6   ___ 7 to 8   ___ 9 to 10   ___ 11 or more
APPENDIX F. (Continued)

7. How many of your children live in Vallejo, California?

__________________________

8. Were you paying child support prior to being involved in the Responsible Fathers Program?

YES or NO

9. Since being involved with the Responsible Fathers Program did you start or increase child support payments on any of your children's cases?

____ I started paying child support

____ I increased my child support payments.

10. If yes to question #9, how much of an increase in payments and on how many of your children's cases did child support start or increase?

How much increase __________ How many Cases __________

11. Do you think you involvement in the Responsible Fathers Program has changed your views on starting or increasing your child support payments?

YES or NO

12. If yes to #11, how?

How?

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

Thank you for completing this survey
REFERENCES


U.S. Department of Health and Human Services


