**Appendix 1**

Fathers are a diverse group with unique backgrounds and family circumstances. Therefore, attention should be paid to providing interventions for fathers tailored to meet their needs by addressing the specific challenges they face to become the best parent, partner, and provider they can be. This document provides an overview of six groups of fathers with common circumstances for shared learning, some of the barriers facing them, and existing curricula designed to increase capacity for engaged fathering.

These groups are: fathers seeking skills, non-custodial fathers, fathers re-entering their communities post-incarceration, young fathers (18-24 years of age), fathers involved in safety-net services (like TANF and SNAP), and co-parenting fathers.

**Father Skill-Seekers**

**Goals:**

* Increase parenting and nurturing skills
* Improve child development knowledge
* Ensure capacity to be a resourceful financial provider
* Nurture the strongest possible relationships with a co-parent
* Build networks of social support

Society has too long approached fatherhood services as a solution for deficits; however, in recent years, local programming has shifted toward strategies that support fathers in achieving their parenting, relationship, and economic goals. This is needed support as contemporary fathering requires men to be both physically present and maintain an emotional presence in their children’s lives. In addition to contributing to their children’s economic security, fathers are expected to help foster safe and nurturing environments that support their children’s growth and development. Given that these expectations have grown from cultural shifts, many fatherhood programs contain content and activities that aim to help men reflect on how they were parented so they are better equipped to create new visions to shape their own parenting philosophies and behaviors.

**Possible Curricula:**

* 24/7 Dad (National Fatherhood Initiative)
* On My Shoulders (Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program [PREP])
* Nurturing Fathers Program (NFP)

**Non-Custodial Fathers**

**Goals:**

* Increase fathers’ knowledge of the Family Court System and human services programming
* Increase fathers’ knowledge and navigation of Child Support
* Increase fathers’ time spent with child(ren)
* Provide skills to address gatekeeping challenges

A father with no custodial rights to his child(ren) and who has a broken relationship with the mother of his children will often have little or no involvement in their child’s life. Fatherhood programs that work with non-custodial fathers are designed to provide them with knowledge, skills, and behaviors to address potential maternal gatekeeping, navigate disadvantages in child access, combat limits to the expectations of their father involvement, and equip them to best navigate family systems. While most fathers want to be a part of their children’s lives, many don’t have an effective approach for that engagement nor the skills to convey the importance of their role as Dad. Research-informed curricula, strong social networks, and effective employment solutions can all play a role in providing men with the information and skills they need to be involved, responsible, and committed fathers.

**Possible Curricula**

* 24/7 Dad (National Fatherhood Initiative)
* On My Shoulders (PREP)
* Within My Reach (PREP)

**Re-Entry Fathers**

**Goals:**

* Develop pro-social skills to facilitate release
* Prevent recidivism
* Re-establish familial and positive community connections

Incarcerated fathers face many challenges in maintaining their relationships with their child(ren) and families. In addition to the physical separation and the cost-prohibitive nature of communication technologies for incarcerated persons such as JPAY and Securus, research also indicates that many men cut themselves off from their social and emotional ties with the “outside” world to cope with the pain of being unable to see their loved ones. For many fathers, even after being released, these ties are difficult to fully restore. In other cases, incarcerated men’s co-parents find new partners with whom they want to form unions, which makes the biological fathers’ increased presence undesirable. Moreover, formerly incarcerated fathers must overcome the particularly difficult circumstance of having to become self-sufficient in a labor market that is not favorable to those with a history with the criminal justice system and policy that makes them ineligible for many safety-net programs that could otherwise be leveraged to gain access to much-needed housing, education, and health and mental health services. To address these concerns, re-entering fathers would benefit from interventions that begin helping them before they are released to prepare them for the challenges they will face and that continue to keep them motivated post-release.

**Possible Curricula**

* Inside Out Dad (National Fatherhood Initiative)
* Walking the Line (PREP)
* Creating Lasting Family Connections (COPES) Fatherhood Program: Family Reintegration

**Young Fathers (18-24)**

**Goals:**

* Life skills development
* Establish positive community networks
* Form healthy personal relationships
* Establish economic self-sufficiency by completing their education or establishing a career path
* Delay subsequent children until they are financially and emotionally ready

Young fathers are a diverse group. Due to their age and limited life experiences, these men can be stressed by fatherhood, both economically and relationally. Young dads can often become isolated from social supports that would aid them in successful identity and role development and in building healthy relationships with their child(ren) and partner or co-parent. Economic and psychological barriers to building these relationships increase the risks for family instability, income loss, paternal depression, and harsh parenting. Therefore, Fatherhood Programming can help fathers increase their capacity for engaged parenting by providing educational insights and skills training, as well as connecting them to community supports that can reduce the impact of involvement-inhibiting barriers. When young dads engage in such programming, they can develop healthier communication skills, maintain better co-parenting relationships with their child’s mother, improve their life skills, graduate from high school or earn a GED, and complete additional education or skills needed to get a quality job. All of these combine to support fathers who are both engaged with their children and equipped to be good providers, thus increasing their capacity for being an active and engaged part of their child’s life.

**Possible Curricula**

* Love Notes (Dibble Institute)
* Parenting and Paternity Awareness (PAPA)
* Manhood 2.0 (Promundo)
* Fatherhood Development Curriculum (National Partnership for Community Leadership)

**Fathers Involved with DHS (TANF, Child Welfare, SNAP, etc.)**

**Goals:**

* Improve economic self-sufficiency
* Improve long-term planning
* Increase awareness of community resources

Fathers may be financially vulnerable for a variety of reasons. These include but are not limited to limited education, gaps in employment, poor executive functioning skills, and even a lack of hope. This can lead to cycles of generational poverty that not only stress our social systems but also limit the quality of life for a father and his child(ren). Responsible Fatherhood education can improve a father’s long-term planning, make him aware of resources in his community that can assist him in decreasing his reliance on governmental support, and lead to his economic self-sufficiency.

**Possible Curricula**

* On My Shoulders (PREP)
* Within My Reach (PREP)
* 24/7 Dad (National Fatherhood Initiative)
* Nurturing Father’s Program (NFP)
* Bringing Back the Dads (National Quality Improvement Center)

**Co-Parenting Fathers**

**Goals:**

* Improve cooperation between fathers and mothers (or other co-parents)
* Reduce interparental conflict
* Reduce harsh parenting and child behavior problems
* Improve child support compliance (non-custodial fathers)

The quality of the co-parenting relationship is widely known as one of the greatest contributing factors shaping father involvement. Therefore, programs that assist fathers in enhancing their ability to develop positive, respectful, and functional relationships with their child’s mother are important mechanisms to increase paternal involvement.

**Possible Curricula**

* Supporting Father Involvement/Parents as Partners (Cowans/ Pruett)
* Enhancing Parenting Skills through Effective Co-parenting Relationship (NPCL)