The Father Factor: Keeping Fathers Engaged
A Large Percentage of Fathers are Not Involved or Engaged in the Social and Academic Development of their Children

Fathers Provide a Parental Dynamic which is Crucial to Child Development

Children Benefit when Positive Fathers or Father Figures are involved and engaged.
SONGS ABOUT MOTHERS???

SONGS ABOUT FATHERS???

JUST THE TWO OF US!!!
WHY I CHOSE TO CREATE THIS WORKSHOP...

- I decided to combine my 3 important roles in life as an Educator, Counselor, and a Father.
- I know how it feels to be raised in a home without a Father.
- After being an absentee father for 1 ½ years to my daughter, I now have a testimony of the difference of my presence since I became “re-engaged” in her life.
- I now have a son who also and equally deserves the presence of an involved dad.
- I believe “Each one, teach one”...we can all learn from each other.
OBJECTIVES

- Explore Fatherhood in the 21st Century
- Understand Causes and Dangers of Absentee or Non-Engaged Fathers
- Discuss the Importance of a Healthy Father Figure as it relates to child development
- Strategies to Engage Fathers or Father Figures for Family Workers or Education Professionals
“Too many fathers are MIA. Too many Fathers are AWOL… Missing from too many lives and too many homes. They’ve abandoned their responsibilities… And the foundation of our families have suffered because of it!”

–Barak Obama
According to 2009 U.S. Census Bureau

- 1 in every 3 children in America live in Father Absent homes. (33%)

- 1 of every 4 Caucasian children live in Father Absent homes. (25%)

- 1 of every 3 Hispanic children live in Father Absent homes. (34%)

- 2 of every 3 African American children live in Father Absent homes. (64%)

In 1960, only 1 out of 10 children in America lived in father-absent homes. (11%)

FATHERHOOD IN THE 21ST CENTURY

2009 census Bureau via www.fatherhood.org
TOO MANY FATHERS ARE MIA!!

WHY???

Socio-Economic Culture of our Country has changed drastically!!!
CAUSES OF NON ENGAGED OR ABSENT FATHERS

- Out-of-Wedlock Childbearing
- Divorce
- Financial Issues
- Stepfamilies
- Non-Resident Fathers
- Teen Fathers
- Incarcerated Fathers
- Military

www.fatherhood.org
OTHER FACTORS

- Lack of Good Examples of Non-Married Engaged Fathers (Even in mass media)
- Relationship with Mother
- Lack of Emotional Support
- Lack of Recognition
- Single Moms are a Norm
THE COST OF FATHER ABSENCE

- School dropouts
- Substance abuse
- Teen pregnancy
- Crime and violence

+ Academic achievement
+ Gender-specific development
+ General behavioral deficiencies
+ Aggression in male children
The Magic Number
WHAT COMES TO MIND
WHEN YOU HEAR THE WORD
“FATHER”

“MOTHER”
THE FATHER FACTOR

- The FATHER is 50% of the Parental Unit

- Fathers are crucial to the development of our children which ultimately means they are crucial to the state of our future society.

- It’s paramount that you find ways to get them engaged.
It Still Takes a Village
THERE IS NOTHING IN THE WORLD LIKE A GOOD DAD!!!! ....
OTHER FATHER FIGURES

- Positive Male Family Members
- Educators, Counselors, and Coaches
- Leaders of Faith-Based Organizations
- Positive Male Community Members
- Friends of the Child’s Mother
WHY FATHERS MATTER!!!

- Fathers tend to be more playful and physical; essential for body, brain, and social development.
WHY FATHERS MATTER!!!

Fathers are more likely to encourage a child to keep trying, rather than to jump in and assist; develops confidence and self esteem.
WHY FATHERS MATTER!!!

Fathers approach: “Prepare a child for the world”
Mother’s: “Protect them from the world.”

Both approaches help create a sense of courage and persistence, a characteristic which is paramount for a productive and fulfilling life.
WHY FATHERS MATTER!!!

EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS

- Better attendance
- Higher level classes
- Higher grades & test scores
- Post-secondary education
- Better social skills
- Less high risk behaviors
- Stronger career options
WHY FATHERS MATTER!!!

- More Support for Mother, Child, and Family Unit.
- Children are less likely to be abused or neglected.
- Children, Women, and Communities have a better sense of security.
- Chances of Poverty or Homelessness Decrease
- Children have more motivation, promise and a more positive outlook on life.
“MY FATHER DIDN’T TELL ME HOW TO LIVE...
He Lived and Let Me Watch Him Do It!”
For Some... Being a Great Father is a PROCESS!!
GOALS FOR OUR FATHERS

EFFORT  TIME
SUPPORT  LOVE
ROLE OF FAMILY WORKERS AND EDUCATORS

- Seek first to understand rather than to be understood.

- Try to Refrain from Judgmental Statements or Body Language about Father Involvement

- Help Create a Network of Support for the Mother and Father

- Create a “draw” for Fathers of all backgrounds to be Engaged
YOUR EXPERIENCES: WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO ENGAGE FATHERS???

What Barriers Have you Encountered???
WHAT GETS IN THE WAY OF INVOLVEMENT?

- Time
- Financial Issues/Multiple Jobs
- Fatigue/Stress Levels
- Past Unfavorable Experiences with Schools, etc.
- Cultural Differences/Language
- Not Interested
- Thinks Involvement is for the Mothers
- School/Entity May Not Be Committed to Parent Involvement
BREAKING DOWN THE BARRIERS!!!

BRAINSTORM ACTIVITY

- Brainstorm and Write Down Some Activities, Handouts, Programs, and other Initiatives to Break Down the Discussed Barriers and Get Fathers Involved.

- Transfer Your Finalized Ideas to the Chart Paper and Prepare to Share with the Group.

- Write down your Favorite Ideas in Your Notes to Implement in Your School!!!
Lifting the Barriers

- Make Experiences Enjoyable and Relevant
- Provide tip sheets and other helpful information for Dads.
- Host workshops on topics meaningful to them and children’s success and ask them to participate.
- Survey your Fathers for Interest and Availability
- Provide Specific Opportunities for Men to Volunteer
- Create a Fatherhood Support Group (Catchy Name)
KEEPING FATHERS ENGAGED!
WHAT TO CONSIDER...

- Know the difference between getting a father engaged as opposed to keeping a father engaged. Remember it’s a PROCESS for some.

- Make sure the father you are attempting to engage is a HEALTHY FATHER FIGURE or has the strong potential to be a HEALTHY FATHER FIGURE.
HELPING FATHERS DEVELOP

- FATHERS WHO ARE NOT CONSIDERED A HEALTHY FATHER FIGURE CAN BE TRAINED TO BECOME ONE
KEEPING FATHERS ENGAGED!
WHAT TO CONSIDER...

- Provide as many examples of a Healthy Father Figures as you can to the fathers you serve (Notable Figures if Possible)
ENGAGE FATHERS (SOCIAL WORKERS)

- SET EXPECTATIONS!!! Ask your client if there is a Father or Father Figure
- Help Client Identify Potential Father Figures
- Survey the Availability of BOTH Parental Figures and Schedule Sessions Accordingly.
- Research and Provide Strategies, Exercises, and Activities that Aid in the Development of Fathers
- Create an Atmosphere Where Fathers are Comfortable and Receptive
ENGAGE FATHERS (EDUCATORS)

- SET EXPECTATIONS!!! Charge your Fathers at the beginning of the school year to be engaged
- Create survey specifically for Fathers
- Host father friendly or father “themed” events (involve the children)
- Provide information on fathers impact on child’s academic and overall performance
- Provide fatherhood development workshops or programs
ENGAGE FATHERS (SINGLE MOTHERS)

- BE PATIENT!!! BUT consistently & strategically remind dad of the importance of his presence.
- Identify Other Potential Father Figures.
- Put your child in programs to enrich their self-esteem and self-image.
- Offer assistance in the development of the father if possible.
- Surround your child with as much family and love as possible.
Think OUTSIDE THE BOX!

MAKE IT EDUCATIONAL AND ENTERTAINING

Have Fun With It!!!
USEFUL WEBSITES

www.NJPIRC.org
www.partnershipschools.org
www.fatherhood.org
www.fathers.com
www.fathersforum.com
www.projectfatherhood.org
www.nfpn.org/fatherhood/