

# Engaging Families in Reentry and Demonstrating Improved Outcomes for Family Members of Returning Fathers

November 4, 2015

Presented by



the NATIONAL REENTRY  
RESOURCE CENTER

*A project of the CSG Justice Center*

# The Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center

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- National non-profit, non-partisan membership association of state government officials
- Engages members of all three branches of state government
- Justice Center provides practical, non-partisan advice informed by the best available evidence

[csgjusticecenter.org](http://csgjusticecenter.org)



# The National Reentry Resource Center

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- ▶ The NRRC is a project of the CSG Justice Center and is supported by the Bureau of Justice Assistance.
- ▶ NRRC staff have worked with nearly 600 SCA grantees, including 40 state corrections agencies.
- ▶ The NRRC provides individualized, intensive, and targeted technical assistance training and distance learning to support SCA grantees.

- ✓ Please register for the monthly NRRC newsletter at:  
[csgjusticecenter.org/subscribe](https://csgjusticecenter.org/subscribe)
- ✓ Please share this link with others in your networks who are interested in reentry!

[www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org](https://www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org)

# Presenters

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- ▶ **Dr. Jay Fagan,**  
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*Collaborative Approaches to Public Safety*



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# How far is the reach?

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Under correctional supervision: 6.8 million people at yearend 2013

In state and federal custody: 1.5 million people at yearend 2014

Reentering the community: At least 95 percent of those individuals incarcerated in state prison will return to their communities, with 80 percent under parole supervision

# Imprint on families

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1.7 million minor children  
have a parent who is  
incarcerated

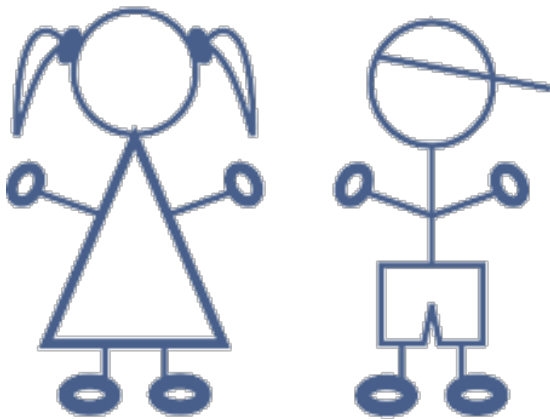
52% of State and  
63% of Federal incarcerated  
individuals have children  
under age 18



One in four women in  
the United States  
currently has a family  
member in prison

# Parenting despite the circumstances

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10 percent of fathers  
in state prison report  
participating in a  
parenting class

44% of parents in state prison were living with their children at the time of their incarceration

59% of fathers never had a personal visit with their children since admission to prison

79% of parents in state prison had some form of contact with their children:

**53% phone | 70% exchanged letters | 41% visits**

# Family relationships are significant

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- ▶ Supportive family relationships are important for successful reentry.
- ▶ Research on parole and prison release success demonstrates that nurture, support, and attachment to the family facilitates community reintegration and reduces recidivism.
- ▶ Families are the greatest source of financial resources, housing, and emotional support prior to release and provide the greatest tangible and emotional support after release.
- ▶ Increased number of visits and receiving visits close to the release date delays the onset of and reduces recidivism.

# Why engage families?

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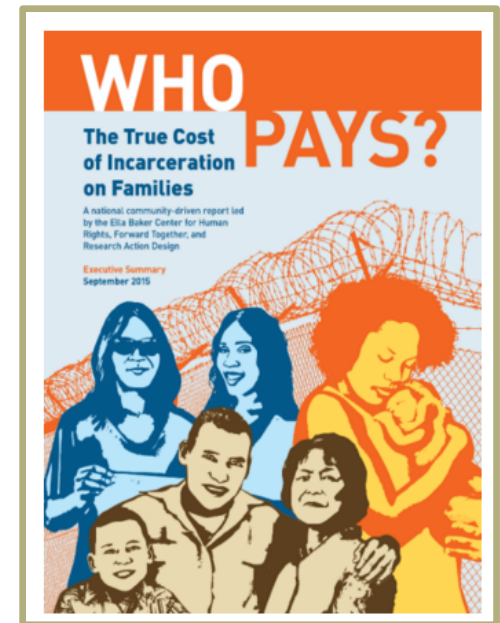
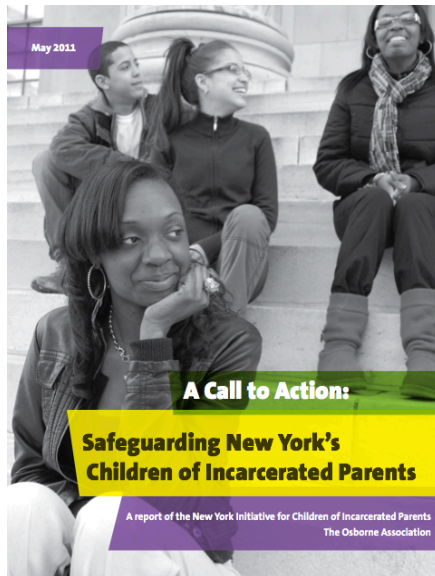
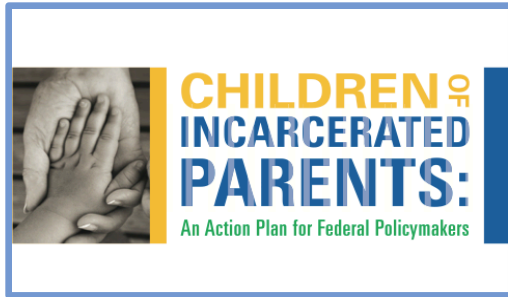
- ▶ Families affected by incarceration face many challenges, some include:
  - ▶ Separation
  - ▶ Economic stress
  - ▶ Stigmatization
  - ▶ Change in relationships and roles/structure
  - ▶ Altered social networks
- ▶ These challenges have been associated with negative outcomes for children.
- ▶ Parental incarceration is recognized as an “adverse childhood experience” (ACE) and can significantly increase the likelihood of long-time negative outcomes for children.

# Strengthening Supportive Resources



LITTLE children

BIG challenges: incarceration



# **Erik Vecere**

## **Vice President of Program Support**

### **National Fatherhood Initiative**



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## **National Fatherhood Initiative®**

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Improving the well-being of children  
by increasing the proportion of children with involved,  
responsible, and committed fathers in their lives.



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# Overview

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- About the InsideOut Dad® and 24/7 Dad® programs
  - How do they fit into the reentry process?
- What have we learned about the power of fatherhood in reentry as a result of these programs?
  - Measuring family outcomes (father, father-mother, father-child)
  - Measuring institutional outcomes (facilities, communities)



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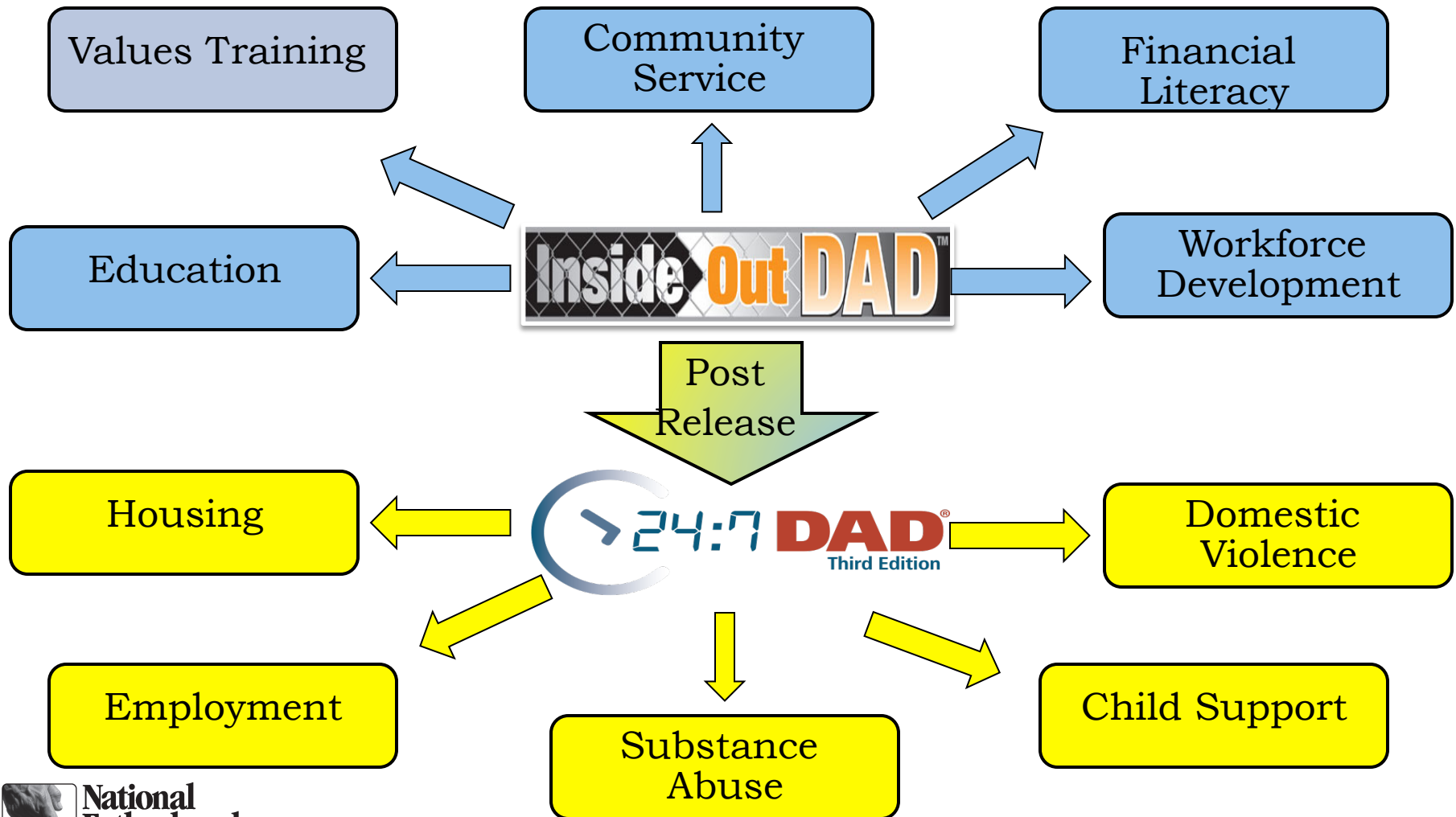
- Pre-release program for incarcerated fathers
- 12 sessions with an another 4 optional reentry sessions
- First the man, then the father
- Evidence-based



- Post-release program for incarcerated fathers and ideal for dads in the community-based setting
- 12 sessions in AM and PM
- First the man, then the father
- Evidence-based
- Used by more federally-funded fatherhood programs than any other curriculum.



# Programs As Part Of A Larger Intervention



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# Programs As Part Of A Larger Intervention

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- Family and community connections are the keys to reducing recidivism.
- Fatherhood Programming provides the offender/ex-offender purpose and motivation for other educational and rehabilitative initiatives.



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# InsideOut Dad®'s Impact on Family Outcomes

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- Pre-release work sets up everything that happens post-release
- Recruitment of fathers is much easier pre-release



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# InsideOut Dad®'s Impact on Family Outcomes

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## ■ Rutgers Study

- InsideOut Dad facilitated in 3 different NJ facilities
- Included a control and intervention group
- Pre and post surveys
- Program graduate interviews
- Staff interviews



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# InsideOut Dad®'s Impact on Family Outcomes

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## ■ Rutgers Study

- Improved attitudes on fathering
- Increased calls to children
- Very specific lessons remained with fathers



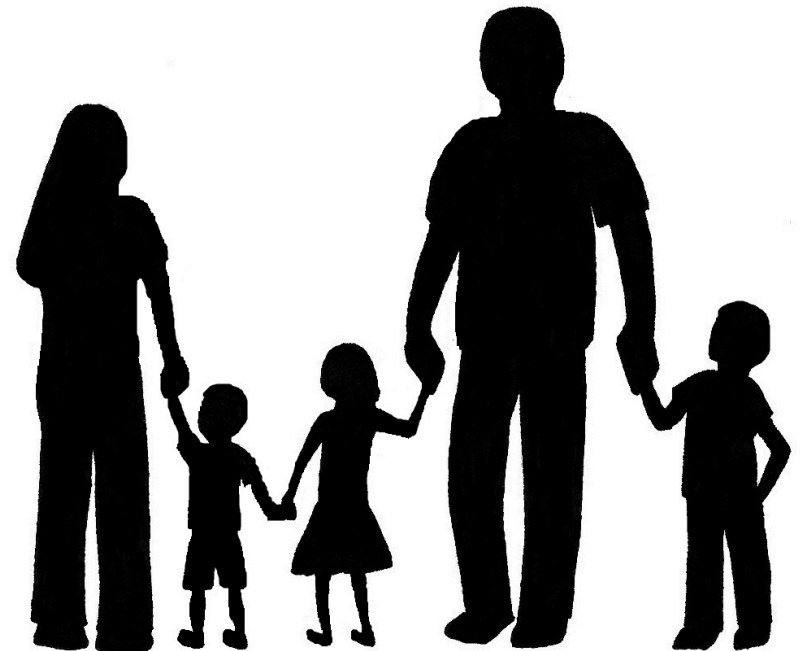
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# 24/7 Dad®'s Impact on Family Outcomes

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- Critical to connect dads with a similar fatherhood program post release
- Where the “rubber hit the road” with family outcomes



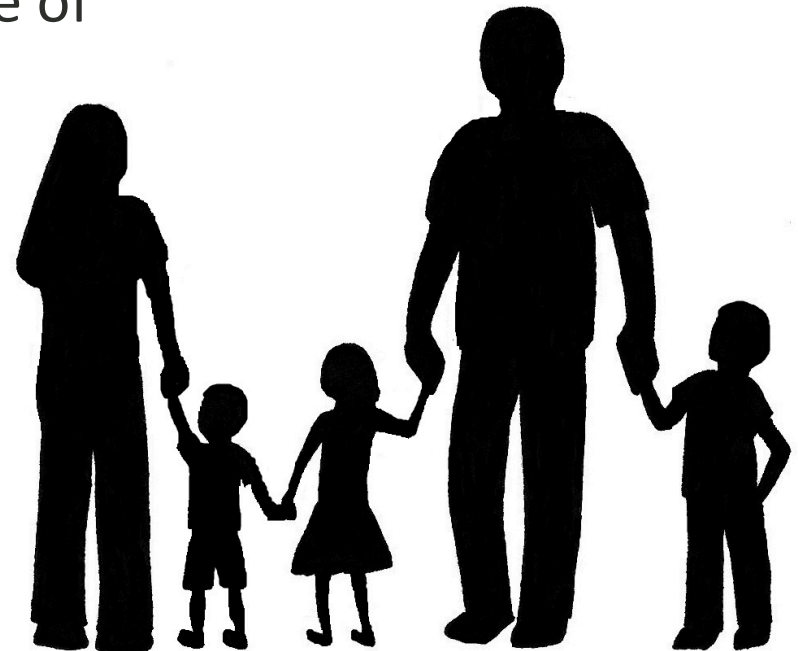
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# 24/7 Dad®'s Impact on Family Outcomes

## ■ 5 Protective Factors

- Parental resilience
- Social connections
- Knowledge of parenting & child development
- Social & emotional competence of children



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# 24/7 Dad®'s Impact on Family Outcomes

## ■ University of Hawai'i Study

- Follows four cohorts
- Fathers completed an enrollment packet
- Fathers assigned to control or intervention group
- Data collected at beginning, end, and six weeks after the program
- Fathers completed a post-program packet



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# 24/7 Dad®'s Impact on Family Outcomes

## ■ University of Hawai'i Study

- Fathers are significantly more likely to be involved in tasks expected of contemporary fathers
- Higher rate of change in father involvement over time
- Improved quality of the father-mother relationship



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# Challenges of Measuring Family Outcomes

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- Cost
- Access to other family members
- Willingness of other family members
- Getting needed sample size



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# Addressing Family Outcome Challenges

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- Partner with local colleges and universities
- Build evaluation into proposals
- Do what you can
- Offer incentives to evaluation participants
- Structure evaluation to be ongoing



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# Impact on Institutional/Community Outcomes

- Reduces recidivism

- Indiana DOC – 23.83% vs. 37.9%
- Nebraska DOC – 7.7% recidivism
- Kentucky DOC – 16% vs. 37%

- Reduces number of disciplinary infractions in correctional facilities

- Kentucky DOC – 86% reduction



# Resources

## ■ Free resources at:

<http://www.fatherhood.org/free-resources>

- Resources for dads
- Fatherhood research
- Resources for organizations
- Public Service Announcements
- NFI program-related resources
- Helpful links for organizations
  - Board development
  - Evaluation tools
  - Finding federal grants



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# Selecting measures

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After determining appropriate outcomes for the program, the next step is to consider possible measurement tools.

- ▶ FRPN strongly recommends that practitioners consult with researchers about this matter. Researchers have been trained to evaluate the quality of measurement tools.

# Selecting measures

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If multiple programs use the same outcome measures, it becomes possible to compare across programs.

Using instruments that have already been tested can help ensure that the questions are understood and measure what they propose to measure.

# Selecting measures

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- ▶ The following are criteria to consider when selecting measures:
  - ▶ Is the measure appropriate for the population of fathers being evaluated? For example, does the measure use words that are familiar to the population?
  - ▶ Are the items clear and easy to answer? Negatively worded items can be confusing.

# Selecting measures

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- ▶ The following are criteria to consider when selecting measures:
  - ▶ Does the measure consist of a single item? Single item measures may not be sufficient. On the other hand, measures that include too many items may lead to participant fatigue.
  - ▶ Does the measure have adequate variance? That is, do all of the fathers tend to give the same response to an item? For example, do all fathers respond “strongly agree” to a question?

# Selecting measures

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- ▶ Another challenge is that the existing measures may be appropriate for some fathers in your program but not for others. For example, you may serve fathers whose children range in age from birth to young adulthood. Existing fatherhood measures are typically designed to be relevant to children of a particular developmental period (e.g., infancy). Researchers and practitioners may have to select several measures and match them to the age of children.

# FRPN developed a new coparenting measure

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- ▶ We conducted in-depth qualitative interviews with fathers regarding their experiences with coparenting,
  - ▶ the ways in which they and the child's mother engage in coparenting,
  - ▶ the challenges they experience in attempting to coparent with the mother,
  - ▶ and ways in which they and the child's mother are able to coparent successfully.

# Measuring coparenting

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- ▶ We recruited 71 participants through nine different fatherhood programs in five cities that serve low-income, primarily unmarried nonresidential fathers

# Measuring coparenting

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A major coparenting theme for fathers was their perception that the mother undermines them as a father.

- ▶ Gatekeeping was a very common coparenting theme mentioned by fathers. The focus groups revealed both restrictive and facilitative gatekeeping behaviors and attitudes.

# Measuring coparenting

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Most fathers recognized the importance of establishing an *alliance* with the mother in order to be effective parents. As Eddie stated:

There's got to be a team. There has to be a team. It has to be a team approach.

# Measuring coparenting

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In complex families where there is more than one mother, the parenting alliance involves *working together as a team with more than one mother*.

- ▶ A number of fathers shared that they and the children's mothers have learned to work together, and this requires that the children's mothers communicate with each other. For example, Amir stated:

Yeah, and it's crazy. Now they both talk. Before, they would not communicate. But nowadays, I talk to one and she'll be like, "Yeah, I'll just talk to your other baby mama on Facebook. We talk to each other about the kids"

# Measuring coparenting

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- ▶ Fathers shared a number of instances in which they were *supportive* of the mother or the mother was supportive of them

I always say because she's with him more than I'm with him, she knows more than I know about his situation. So anything she really says, I've always got her back on it.

# Measuring coparenting

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- ▶ Most fathers reported frequent conflict with the mother of their child(ren)

# Synthesis of Data

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- ▶ Our findings reveal that coparenting is a multi-dimensional construct, including both negative and positive components.

# Synthesis of Data

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- ▶ Although the coparenting constructs (i.e., domains) identified in this study appear to be similar to those identified in studies of co-residential parents, we find that the parental behaviors in these coparenting constructs are not always the same. Our findings showed that the undermining and gatekeeping domains include behaviors that appear to be unique for unmarried, nonresidential fathers and mothers.
- ▶ Fathers indicated that some mothers try to *keep the father's new partner from having any involvement with the child*. This gatekeeping behavior is also unlikely to occur among co-residential parents.

# Synthesis of Data

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- ▶ Another significant finding of this study is that coparenting relationships between unmarried, nonresidential mothers and fathers often involved another adult

# Development of a quantitative instrument

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- ▶ Qualitative data were used to develop coparenting questions along each domain of coparenting.

# Sample items

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- ▶ The mother of [NAME OF CHILD] tells me I am doing a good job or otherwise lets me know I am being a good father.
- ▶ The mother of [NAME OF CHILD] undermines me as a father.
- ▶ The mother of [NAME OF CHILD] makes it hard for me to spend time with my youngest child.

# Who should be interviewed

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- ▶ Fathers, of course
- ▶ Mothers, if you have the resources
- ▶ There is often disagreement between mothers and fathers about the quality of the coparenting relationship
  - ▶ By interviewing both, you can assess whether the program has an impact on fathers' and mothers' perceptions of coparenting

# Is coparenting the only aspect of mother-father relationship

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- ▶ NO, the mother-father relationship also involves components that are not related specifically to parenting.
  - ▶ Conflict
  - ▶ Support
  - ▶ Communication
  - ▶ Interpartner violence

# Collection of data

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- ▶ Most programs do not have too many challenges with collecting pretest data.
- ▶ Collection of post-test data is another matter.
  - ▶ You should be prepared to do telephone interviews with fathers at post-test and follow-up.
  - ▶ It may take multiple tries (e.g., 10-15 tries) to complete a post-test or follow-up interview with a father or mother.

# Synthesis of Data

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- ▶ Calls should be made at different times of the day and on weekdays and weekend days.
- ▶ You should obtain multiple telephone numbers, facebook addresses, email addresses.
- ▶ You or the researcher will need to hire staff/volunteers to make these calls IF YOU ARE SERIOUS ABOUT COLLECTING THE DATA.
- ▶ The interviewers will need SUPERVISION.

# Interviewing mothers

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- ▶ If you decide to include mothers in the evaluation, you should have a prepared script that explains why her information is important. For example, “We only feel confident that the program is effective if we interview mothers.”
- ▶ You should also consider what other data you want from her (e.g., mother’s perception of father engagement)

# Questions

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