

# HOW FUNDING FOR FATHERHOOD PROGRAMS HARMED CHILDREN

## A White Paper for Congress

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this White Paper is to alert Congress to the negative consequences for children following two decades of federal funding for fatherhood programs. These programs began with good intentions – namely to encourage noncustodial fathers to pay child support and reduce dependency of women on welfare.

Over two decades, these programs have evolved into a system of welfare for fathers, some of them violent with criminal histories. The programs have promoted fatherhood without regard to the needs of children and their mothers. Rather than becoming employed and paying child support as the programs intended, some violent fathers receive legal help, and get custody of children and child support from the children' mothers. This forces victimized mothers into expensive prolonged litigation, depleting their resources, ultimately leading to deep poverty and the disruption of children's primary attachment.

Two of the programs are up for renewal this year as the *Julia Carson Healthy Marriage Promotion and Responsible Fatherhood Act (Davis)*.<sup>1</sup>

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF FEDERALLY FUNDED FATHERHOOD PROGRAMS

#### 1975

##### **Child Support Enforcement and Paternity Establishment Program of 1975**<sup>2</sup>

*The Child Support Enforcement and Paternity Establishment Program of 1975 established The Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) to "pursue" a parent responsible for the financial support of a child and reduce welfare expenses by collecting child support from non-custodial parents. Since 1981, child support agencies are permitted to collect spousal support. In 1984 they were required to petition for medical support as part of most child support orders. Local family and domestic courts and administrative agencies handle child support establishment and enforcement.*

#### 1996

##### **Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA)**<sup>3</sup>

*The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PL 104-193) specifically eliminated any individual entitlement to or guarantee of assistance and requires work in exchange for time-limited assistance. It created the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, replacing Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC); Job Opportunities and Basic Skill Training; and Emergency Assistance (EA) programs.*

##### **Goals of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)**<sup>4</sup>

The four purposes of the TANF program are to:

1. Provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives.
2. End the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage.
3. Prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and establish an annual numerical goal for preventing and reducing the incidence of these pregnancies.

4. Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

#### **Changes to Child Support Enforcement Program** <sup>5</sup>

PRWORA made about 50 changes to the Child Support Enforcement Program, including requiring States to increase the percentage of fathers identified, establishing an integrated, automated network linking all States to information about the location and assets of parents, requiring States to implement more enforcement techniques, and revising the rules governing the distribution of past due (arrearage) child support payments to former recipients of public assistance. Each State must operate a CSE Program meeting Federal requirements in order to be eligible for TANF funds. <sup>6</sup>

#### **Access and Visitation Program (AVP)** <sup>7</sup>

PRWORA also created the first federally funded fatherhood program – the *Access and Visitation Program* administered through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (DHHS/ACF), Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE). The majority of State Access and Visitation programs are managed by either State Child Support Enforcement Agencies (30) or State Administrative Offices of the Court (12). The goal of the program is to enable States to establish and administer programs to support and facilitate noncustodial parents' access to and visitation of their children. Ten million dollars is allocated to the program.

#### **Specific services authorized by Access and Visitation program** <sup>8</sup>

1. Mediation. May include, but is not limited to, court-connected or community-based services involving professionals (certified and trained as family mediators) who meet with both parents and/or guardians to: a) resolve parenting disputes; b) develop a parenting plan and visitation agreement; and c) increase noncustodial parenting time with children.

2. Counseling. May include, but is not limited to, services provided by mental health professionals who help parents and/or guardians address their interpersonal conflicts by focusing on the best interests of the child.

3. Parent Education. May include, but is not limited to, seminars or classes for providing custodial parents and NCPs with information on a range of issues, such as: a) adverse consequences of divorce and parental conflict on children; b) benefits of co-parenting; c) state custody and visitation guidelines; d) court procedures for filing a motion for visitation; and e) importance of developing a parenting plan, etc.

4. Development of Parenting Plans. May include, but is not limited to, the development of formal or informal parenting plans or parenting agreements through services other than mediation which increase NCP parenting time with children and/or reduce parental conflict over issues related to child access and visitation. Plans may or may not be filed with the court dependent upon the wishes of the parents.

5. Visitation Enforcement Services Supervised Visitation. May include, but is not limited to, monitored, therapeutic, and supervised visitation services for NCPs (usually ordered by the court) who would otherwise be denied access to their children.

6. Neutral Drop-Off/Pick-Up. May include, but is not limited to, services for high-conflict parents and their children in a neutral environment for the safe exchange of a child from one parent to another. These services are often available through community and faith-based organizations and/or supervised visitation centers.

## 1997-2003

### Responsible Fatherhood

From 1997 to 2002, the federal government provided limited funding for the development of Responsible Fatherhood Demonstration Projects administered by DHHS/OCSE. The purpose of these projects was to improve the employment and earnings of underemployed and unemployed noncustodial parents and to motivate them to become more financially and emotionally involved in the lives of their children.

### Healthy Marriage

In 2003, DHHS/ACF launched the Supporting Healthy Marriage Project, a marriage education program designed to help low-income couples strengthen their relationships, and develop more stable and nurturing home environments for their children.

## 2005-2015

### The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (DRA) <sup>9</sup>

*The Deficit Reduction Act of 2006* appropriated \$50 million per year for five years (from 2006 to 2010) for competitive Responsible Fatherhood grants which funded activities to improve father's relationship with their spouses, significant others, and/or the mothers of their children, and to help them to become better parents through counseling, mentoring, mediation, education on parenting skills, and contribute to the financial well-being of their children by providing job training and encouraging child support payments.

These programs were also designed to promote healthy marriage and responsible parenting education, and to fostering economic stability to help fathers overcome barriers that impede them from becoming effective, nurturing parents. Activities include support and advocacy for navigating the legal system through education and encouragement to empower fathers. This may involve helping fathers establish paternity or negotiate visitation agreements, and support groups and assistance to provide encouragement, education, and support to increase the frequency and quality of father-child interactions. There is information on fathers who may have personal barriers including substance abuse or a criminal background, and some programs refer them to services to help with substance abuse prevention, drug and alcohol education and individualized support to prevent and overcome substance abuse, along with support in transition from prison and having incarcerated fathers experience a successful transition to family life and not be re-incarcerated. They are helped to navigate the social service systems on issues such as child support or child welfare. Program staff is trained in the importance of culturally appropriate, "father friendly" services.

### Incarcerated fathers <sup>10</sup>

In 2006, DHHS/ACF began funding 12 Responsible Fatherhood programs focusing on incarcerated and re-entering fathers and their partners. The purpose of these grants was to reduce recidivism and strengthen families through services such as relationship and family counseling, parenting education, mentoring, domestic violence education, employment assistance and financial literacy education.

### The Claims Resolution Act of 2010 <sup>11</sup>

The Responsible Fatherhood Program was renewed in the *Claims Resolution Act of 2010 (Levin)* (HR 4783), which was signed by President Obama into law in December 2010. Funding was increased to \$75 million per year for a further five-year period (from 2011 through 2015) and an additional \$75 million per year was appropriated for another program – the Healthy Marriage Program, which was intended to promote marriage and reduce out of wedlock births.

## Presidential praise for prisoner re-entry programs <sup>12</sup>

President Barack Obama declared: *“Responsible fathering means being present in a child’s life, actively contributing to a child’s healthy development, sharing economic responsibilities, and cooperating with a child’s mother in addressing the full range of a child’s and family’s needs.”*

In particular, the President supported the goals of the Prisoner Re-entry component of the program. “Approximately 700,000 inmates are released from state and federal prisons each year. Once they return home, former incarcerated fathers face challenges as they return to society, including mending relationships with their families, finding housing, and overcoming poor job prospects. Statistics show that about two-thirds of persons released from prison re-offend within three years. To meet these challenges, ACF funded five Community-Centered Responsible Fatherhood Ex-Prisoner Reentry Pilot Projects that are designed to provide healthy marriage, responsible parenting, and economic stability activities for formerly incarcerated parents and their families. These programs aim to improve and strengthen the quality and stability of father, couple, and/or family relationships.” <sup>13</sup>

## PROBLEMS WITH THE FATHERHOOD PROGRAMS

### PROBLEM 1: Lack of Data on Outcomes

In the past ten years, a billion and a half of taxpayer dollars have been allocated to Healthy Marriage Promotion and Responsible Fatherhood programs. Have these programs met TANF goals of ending dependence on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage; preventing and reducing the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies; and encouraging two-parent families?

Specifically:

- Did more fathers become employed under the programs?
- Did they financially support their children and their mothers?
- Were more parents married before having children?
- Did out-of-wedlock pregnancies drop?
- Were there more two parent families?
- Did more fathers stop using drugs and learn to nurture children?
- Did children benefit from increased time with fathers?
- Were children successful in socializing ex-prisoners to prevent recidivism?

There is no way to know if the programs were successful or not because the government does not keep such data.

“The ACF healthy marriage and responsible fatherhood grantees were not required to conduct any formal or rigorous program evaluation. The Program Announcements required only that all grantees fully participate in quantitative or monitoring activities that capture measurable indicators and outcomes. This means that they were only required to collect data related to their proposed targets and program implementation.” <sup>14</sup>

Data relevant to program outcomes, drawn from other government sources paint the following picture:

### Unemployment rose and fell with the economy.

- In 2008, unemployment rose dramatically during the Great Recession
- 2009 - 2015, unemployment declined after the Recovery Act <sup>15</sup>

### **TANF cash assistance did decline, but deep poverty for children increased.**

- FY 1997, states spent about 23% of TANF funds on other than cash assistance,
- FY 2013, states spent over 66% of TANF funds on other than cash assistance.<sup>16</sup>
- AFDC kept 2.4 million children above half of the poverty line in 1995, while TANF kept only approximately 600,000 children out of deep poverty.<sup>17</sup>
- In 2014, 46.7 million people were in poverty, 2.3% higher than in 2007.<sup>18</sup>

### **Between 2007 and 2011, there was a rise in poverty among working families.**

- Low income working families rose from 28% to 32.1%; and
- Poor working families rose from 8.1% to 10.6%.<sup>19</sup>

### **Out of wedlock births remained the same**

- In 2005, about 40% of births were out of wedlock.<sup>20</sup>
- From 2007 through 2013, about 40% of births were out of wedlock each year.<sup>21</sup>
- In 2014, out of wedlock births dropped for teenagers but increased for women 20 and older. Percentage of births to unmarried women increased significantly in 10 states and declined in 4 states, with insignificant changes in the other 36 states and the District of Columbia.<sup>22</sup>
- 94% of births to college-educated women occur within marriage, virtually unchanged from a generation ago.<sup>23</sup>

### **Marriage rates declined**

- In 2006, the marriage rate was 7.5%<sup>24</sup>
- In 2015, the marriage rate dropped to 6.74%, and from 2008 to 2015, the marriage rate dropped over 13% for women with high school diplomas or less, while the marriage rate for women with college degrees grew from 30% to 36%.<sup>25</sup>

### **Cohabitation increased**

- Cohabitation increased from 4.85 million in 2005 to 7.6 million in 2011<sup>26</sup> and to nearly 8 million in 2014.
- Only 20% of cohabiting couples had children in 2004, which rose to 30% by 2014.<sup>27</sup>
- In 2006–2010, 70% of women with less than a high school diploma cohabited as a first union, as compared with 47% of women with a bachelor's degree or higher.<sup>28</sup>

### **Cohabitation relationships were significantly more unstable than marriages.**

- 62% of cohabitants break up by ten years, whereas a married couple has only a 33% chance of breaking up at the ten year mark.<sup>29</sup>
- 40-50% of first marriages and over 60% of second marriages end in divorce.<sup>30</sup>
- By age three, 48.7% of children born to cohabiting parents experienced separation of their parents, as compared to 11.1% of children born to married couples.<sup>31</sup>

While nearly \$1.5 billion was spent on promoting marriage and responsible fatherhood in the past decade, there is no evidence the programs met TANF's goals or increased children's well being.

## **PROBLEM 2: Lack of Information on how TANF funds are spent**

The US General Accountability Office has done numerous audits on the TANF programs, including Healthy Marriage Promotion and Responsible Fatherhood, including:

2015 April GAO audit found, “In its prior work, GAO recommended that HHS take steps to improve TANF expenditure reporting and identify potential changes to address the lack of incentives in the TANF program.” This funding is allocated in block grants to states, with no oversight as to what states do with the funding.<sup>32</sup>

2014 July GAO audit found “Federal agencies reported an estimated \$105.8 billion in improper payments in fiscal year 2013, a decrease from the prior year revised estimate of \$107.1 billion.”<sup>33</sup>

2013 May GAO audit found that TANF role in providing cash assistance has evolved; fewer eligible families receive cash assistance and the composition of the caseload has changed. GAO noted in 2010 that “87 percent of the dramatic decline from 1995 through 2005 in the number of families receiving cash assistance was due a decline in eligible families participating in TANF, rather than increased incomes.”<sup>34</sup>

2011 September, Office of Inspector General audit found that “21 States did not recognize and/or report undistributable child support collections as program income in accordance with Federal requirements.”<sup>35</sup>

2008 September GAO audit of Healthy Marriage Promotion and Responsible Fatherhood found that “HHS uses methods that include site visits and progress reports to monitor grantees, but it lacks mechanisms to identify and target grantees that are not in compliance with grant requirements or are not meeting performance goals, and it also lacks clear and consistent guidance for performing site monitoring visits.”<sup>36</sup>

### **PROBLEM 3: Disregard for the Safety of Women and Children**

No audit has ever investigated safety risks to victims in these programs, but there is ample evidence that the Healthy Marriage Promotion and Responsible Fatherhood and the Access and Visitation programs may actually place women and children in danger.

Grantees are required to disseminate information on domestic violence and child abuse, and work with domestic violence centers, but are not required to ensure safety of victims, maintain stability of child’s current living situation, or protect child’s primary parent attachment, despite understanding that substance abuse and criminal behavior affect children negatively. Proposed improvements in criteria for dealing with domestic violence are laudable, but there are many problems with simply establishing partnerships with the domestic violence community.

### **DANGEROUS GAPS IN THE PROGRAMS**

#### **Evidence-based substance abuse programs for fathers are lacking**

It is understood and acknowledged that former prisoners face significant barriers of substance abuse. Yet the programs do not effectively address these intractable issues that are often associated with familial violence. Passing out literature on domestic violence and child abuse and partnering with domestic violence shelters are hardly sufficient to cause lasting change in incarcerated fathers and keep them from being a potential danger to their children and their children’s mothers.

#### **Job development for fathers with criminal records is lacking**

Instead of focusing on creating job opportunities for fathers with criminal histories and using the highly successful Workforce Investment Act of 1998, these programs duplicate employment programs.

## **Basic safety guarantees for children are lacking**

There is a complete lack of provision to ensure safety of children or adult victims.

The Prisoner Re-Entry program reaches into prisons to bring prisoner fathers into children's lives to prevent prisoner recidivism. Children should not be asked to rehabilitate their fathers. Prisoner fathers have long-standing characteristics that can be dangerous.

As shown by the Adverse Childhood Experiences children who suffer physical, sexual or verbal abuse; physical or emotional neglect; live with substance abusing or mentally ill parents; whose mothers are beaten; or who have parents who were jailed or disappeared will likely become adults with behavioral, psychological and medical problems.<sup>37</sup> It appears the lack of ensuring mother and child safety and attachment while focusing on fathers' access to children has in part created the phenomenon of 58,000 children being removed from safe parents and placed with abusers.<sup>38</sup>

One State Child Access Program Guidance document specifically precludes counseling on issues of substance abuse, domestic violence, and sexual abuse of children, all of which are critical for focusing on children's best interest. The programs instead focus only on interpersonal conflict, not allowing discussion of the very issues that create the interpersonal conflict. Couples are evidently expected to work through conflicts and not mention abuse. At best, this is a naïve approach to counseling.

The guidelines, authored by Debra Pontisso, Program Manager Access and Visitation Grant, Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (who is now the Fathers and Families Coalition National Policy Council Advisor),<sup>39</sup> state the following:

*"Counseling. ...could include, but is not limited to, professional advice or guidance provided to parents by a licensed or certified mental health professional. This provision of service is intended to help parents work through their interpersonal conflicts by focusing on the best interests of the child. Counseling must focus on the issues pertaining to AV issues. Counseling cannot focus on mental health issues, such as alcohol/drug addiction, drug testing, and/or other issues generally addressed in child welfare case plans, etc. Counseling must not focus on domestic violence/batterer's intervention/anger management issues. Job/Employment counseling and services cannot be funded by the AV grant. Psychological/mental health evaluations cannot be funded by the AV grant. If you provide counseling for children, you must be able to demonstrate how this counseling increases the access between the child and the parent. Counseling should not focus on general issues, such as the sexual abuse of children; various reasons why children might have been removed from their parents' custody, etc. It must focus on access and visitation-related issues."<sup>40</sup>*

As the rest of the country works to build a trauma-informed nation,<sup>41</sup> these programs' disregard for children's safety is more than problematic. Forcing children into unsupervised visits with or custody of violent or abusive fathers is unconscionable.

## **Protection of children's primary parent attachment is lacking.**

Since it is difficult to find a job with a criminal record, there is a huge financial incentive for ex-prisoners to gain custody of their children and have the children's mothers pay them child support. One attorney called children "little walking bags of money".<sup>42</sup>

Multiple studies show that 70% of violent men who go to court for custody are awarded custody. Children are removed from their mothers with no regard for their attachment needs. These children whose attachment needs are disrupted and disregarded sustain lifelong severe disorders. One could also question the advisability of having a child attach to a person with a criminal record of violence and anti-social behavior, regardless of the parental relationship. Adoption demonstrates clearly that children do very well when they are removed from dangerous parents and raised in safety.

### **Parity for mothers using federally funded programs is lacking**

When mothers go to federally funded fatherhood programs, they report that they are turned away because of their gender. This is an illegal misuse of federal funds.

### **Prohibition against providing fathers with legal services is lacking**

Fathers are being provided legal services regarding child support and related legal issues. This should not be part of any federal program.

*The Responsible Fatherhood Programs in the Parents and Children Together (PACT) Evaluation* (2015) by M. Robin Dion, Heather Zaveri, and Pamela Holcomb describe the situation clearly. “RF programs in PACT offered a broad array of services that went beyond the three core areas of parenting and fatherhood, economic stability, and healthy relationships.” Page 18 describes the provision of child support and legal advice and advocacy to fathers..” <sup>43</sup>

“Issues related to child support and related legal issues are a major source of concern for most enrolled fathers. Each program partners with one or more local child support enforcement agencies to help address these issues. Representatives from the child support agency provide information to fathers about how to navigate the system, typically during group workshop sessions. The partnerships also pave the way for advocacy by program staff on behalf of some participating fathers. ... To further assist fathers with paternity, child support, custody, and parenting time agreements, some of the programs offer legal services. These legal services are typically in high demand, and the amount of support programs can provide is extremely limited. Although not covered under the federal HMRF grant, fathers at one program can receive free advice from an in-house legal clinic, and for a fee, legal representation. At another program, fathers can receive pro bono legal advice through partnership with a local legal aid society. Although slots are limited, the agency can sometimes represent fathers. One of the programs has taken a serious step to provide reliable information to fathers about the importance of, and steps to, establishing parenting time agreements. During a 2-day orientation to the fatherhood program, staff from the local legal aid society spends an afternoon presenting information on the benefits of parenting time agreements and how fathers can petition the court to legally establish such an agreement. Fathers’ rights and responsibilities are discussed, and fathers receive a booklet with forms and additional information.” <sup>44</sup>

### **Promotion of junk science designed to discredit child victims**

Contracts for Access and Visitation Grants between the Office of the Attorney General of the State of Texas and a number of Texas counties claim that pursuant to 42 U.S.C. Sec 669b, which enables states to establish and administer programs to support and facilitate noncustodial parents’ access to and visitation of their children, one or more of certain services must be included under SCOPE OF WORK AND PART RESPONSIBILITY. The services claimed by this contract include parental alienation counseling, reunification, and litigation to enforce visitation. (Copies of these contracts are available upon request.)

In fact, the enabling legislation does not mention parental alienation, reunification or litigation. The Leadership Council on Child Abuse and Interpersonal Violence has described parental alienation theory as “unsophisticated, pseudoscientific theory [which] explains a child’s estrangement from one parent or allegations of abuse at the hands of one parent by blaming the other. The theory, developed by the late Richard A. Gardner, M.D.,<sup>45</sup> portrays the preferred parent (usually the mother under PAS) as an evil “alienator” who is virtually solely responsible for turning a vulnerable child against their estranged parent (usually the father under PAS) <sup>46</sup>

Despite the fact that many of the assumptions underlying parental alienation theory have repeatedly been disproven scientifically, the simplistic solution required by this approach is to separate the child from the parent they prefer and place them with the parent they reject or report as having abused

them. This process is sometimes facilitated through “reunification” therapy, which has been described as “reminiscent of the kind of brainwashing techniques used in prison camps where deprivation and isolation are used to coerce false confessions and to force ideological changes in captives.” Reunification therapy can be traumatic for children and may lead to long-term emotional disturbance.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Do not reauthorize HMPRF and AV programs**

We strongly recommend that Congress not reauthorize the Healthy Marriage Promotion and Responsible Fatherhood, and Access and Visitation programs. They are not successful in meeting TANF goals. There is no evidence children’s lives have improved as a result of these interventions. There is evidence that children’s lives have worsened. The programs are failing children on many levels. Furthermore, it appears the programs are contributing to gross waste, fraud and abuse of taxpayer dollars.

### **If programs are reauthorized, the programs must be drastically amended**

If Congress decides to reauthorize these big government social engineering intrusions into families, Congress must set in place:

1. Clear and unequivocal protection measures for children, particularly in cases involving child sexual abuse. A father with a history of substance abuse should be able to see his child without supervision only after he has been completely abstinent from drugs and alcohol for over one year and he agrees to submit to random drug testing (as many employers require). A father with a criminal record of violence should be required to complete a batterer/violence treatment program and receive a certification from the program that he is able to safely visit his children unsupervised. To protect a child who reports a crime of sexual abuse, assault or battery to a government official and names the father as the accused, there should be no contact between the accused and the child until a criminal trial is held, to eliminate witness tampering. The child should have the right to remain with the mother if she is able and willing to protect the child.
2. Explicit statements by grantees that they will not provide any legal advice or referrals, particularly advice or referrals about child support or custody.
3. Changes to child support policies regarding child support arrearages that accumulate while the fathers are in prison where they cannot work. This forces ex-prisoners into a life of hopelessness from which they can never hope to escape and only encourages them to return to crime or to initiate a custody battle with the mother of their children. Neither of these outcomes helps the children for whom they owe support.
4. A policy that all employment programs under TANF, particularly job creation programs specifically for ex-prisoners, are part of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, created to consolidate, coordinate, and improve employment, training, literacy, and vocational rehabilitation programs, and create one-stop delivery systems to improve the delivery of services. PRWORA does not appear to currently intersect with this comprehensive employment act. [www.doleta.gov/regs/statutes/wialaw.txt](http://www.doleta.gov/regs/statutes/wialaw.txt)
5. A Promising Practices Guide and Technical Assistance provided to grantees, with the goal of streamlining creating consistent approaches. The MSF-IP (prisoner re-entry) grantees

encountered difficulties establishing partnerships with the domestic violence community, and had varying degrees of success, along with inconsistencies in approach across projects.

6. An explicit ban on counseling methods that blame victims, including theories such as parental alienation or junk science such as parental alienation syndrome.
7. A commitment to evidence-based practice, which requires outcome evaluation by independent researchers using state-of-the-art methodology to determine the impact of the program on specific outcomes based on the needs of each of the recipients. Data collection on number of families served and services provided is not sufficient to evaluate a program. Data collection that would show the success or failure of the programs would include how programs were designed to meet TANF goals of ending dependence on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage; preventing and reducing the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies; and encouraging two-parent families.

Examples of program success indicators would include:

- o percentage of increase in two parent families;
- o number of parents who were married before having children;
- o percentage of decrease in out-of-wedlock pregnancies;
- o number of fathers who become employed under the programs
- o number of fathers who financially supported their children;
- o number of fathers who remained abstinent from alcohol and drugs;
- o number of hours each father spent with his child/ren during the year;
- o number of fathers who learned to nurture children and how this was measured;
- o number of children who benefited from increased time with fathers;
- o number of fathers who reestablished a good relationship with mothers;
- o number of fathers who petitioned for custody and their reasons;
- o number of mothers who were reinjured by the fathers;
- o number of children who were reinjured by the fathers;
- o number of ex-prisoners rearrested within 3 years of beginning the programs

Studies should employ rigorous methodology. Adequate designs require credible comparison groups or randomized controlled trials.

Recommended Reading:

*Beyond the Hostage Child: Towards Empowering Protective Parents* by Leora Rosen, Ph.D.  
*Motherless America: Confronting Welfare's Fatherhood Custody Program* by Doreen Ludwig  
*Domestic Violence, Abuse and Child Custody: Legal Strategies and Policy Issues* by Mo Hannah Ph.D. and Barry Goldstein J.D.  
*Mothers on Trial: The Battle for Children and Custody* by Phyllis Chesler

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