



Fathers and Their Role in Child Development and Pediatrics

Krishnan Subrahmanian MD, MPhil
Pediatrician and Father

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Mother-Baby Program

Mission:

*To save lives and support families by strengthening the emotional health **and** parenting capacity of pregnant women and mothers*



Hennepin County
Medical Center

Where The Streams Meet: Opportunities For Healing

*Downstream intervention
for mother*

*Parent's urgent mental
health needs*

and

*Child's urgent
developmental needs for
support and protection*



*Upstream intervention for
children*



Common Reasons to Visit a Pediatrician
prempediatrics.com



Tell Your Pediatrician at a Well Visit
verywellfamily.com



AAP Schedule of Well-Child Care Visits ...
healthychildren.org



Expecting a Pediatrician Visit | Hoag ...
hoagmedicalgroup.com



Well-Child* check ...
mansoorpediatrics.com



Your Child's Health Checklist for the ...
mom.com



the Pediatrician During COVID-19 ...
thebump.com



Maximize Your Visit to the Ped...
paremap.com



to ask a pediatrician at well visits ...
riseandshine.childrensnational.org



Why Should You Visit a Pediatrician for ...
indianarepedso.com



Your Pediatrician Visit ...
careloop.com



Well-Baby Visits for Your Baby | Parents
parents.com



My Child to the Pediatrician During ...
hackensackmeridianhealth.org



Prep for Pediatric Endo Visit | HC...
hcamidwest.com



First Pediatrician Visit
findarepdoc.com



When to Visit a Pediatrician ...
dignarephealth.com



to Ask Your Pediatrician at Newborn Visits
whatsonspec.com



Check-Ups During COVID-19 ...
qualitycareforchildren.org



Fears About Doctor Visits ...
scripps.org



Keys to Making Your Pediatricians Visit ...
fopediatrics.com



Preparing for a Visit to the ...
parenting.mountsinai.org

Objectives

- Identify the multiple roles of fathers
- Argue that fathers are ultimately good for child development
- Hear from Hennepin fathers
- Discuss concrete steps we can take to support and promote father involvement and care of children



Gay Dads Kissing by J. Ross Baughman, 1983 (NMAH, gift of J. Ross Baughman)

The Role of Fathers

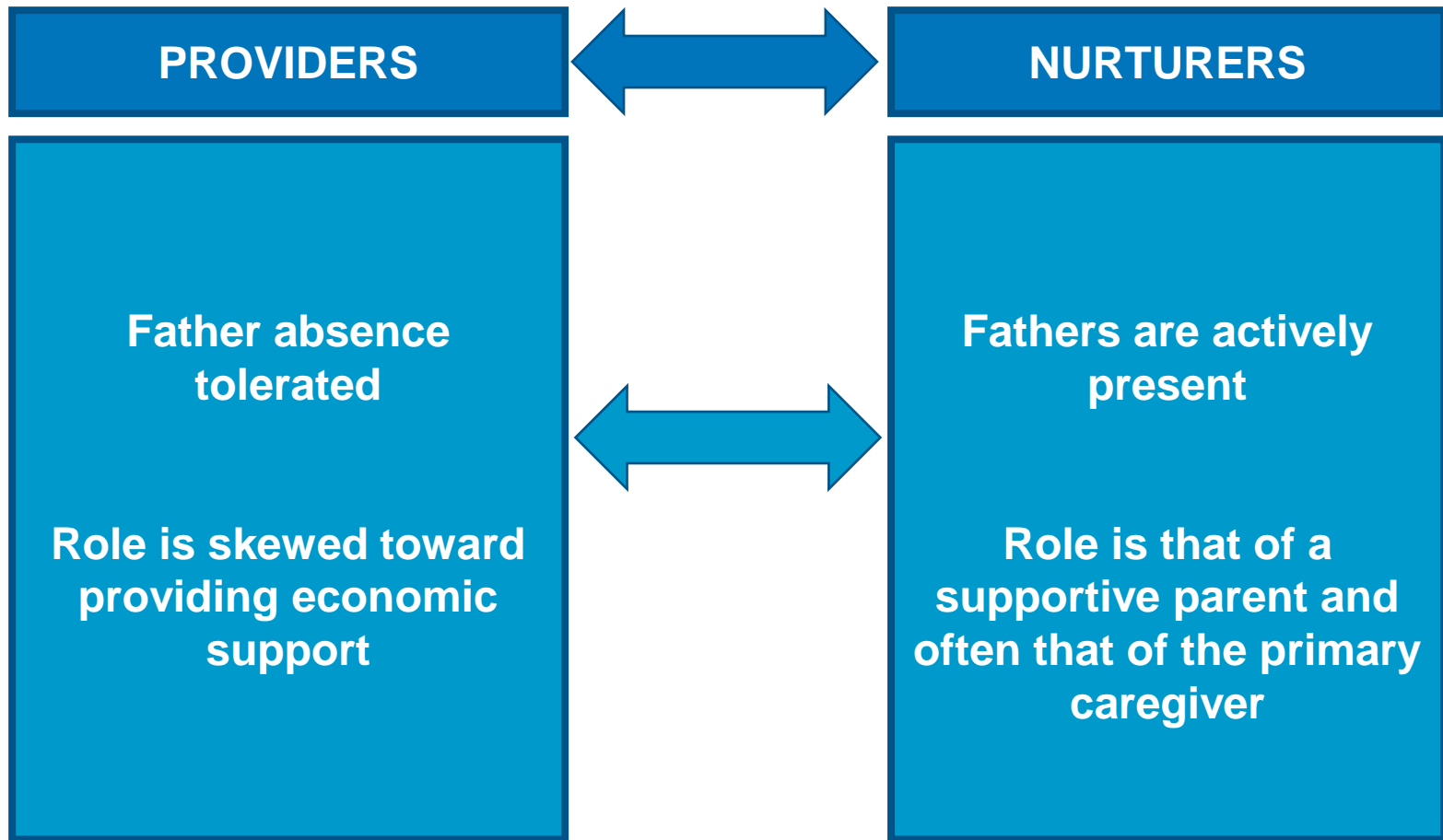
Fathers do something.

What is a father?

- (n) The man who fertilized an ovum from which a child was born
- (n) A priest
- (v) Cause of a pregnancy resulting in the birth of a child
- (n): A man in relation to his child,
- Father is defined broadly as the male or males identified as most involved in caregiving and committed to the well being of the child, regardless of living situation, marital status or biological relation



Economic Impact on Role of the Father



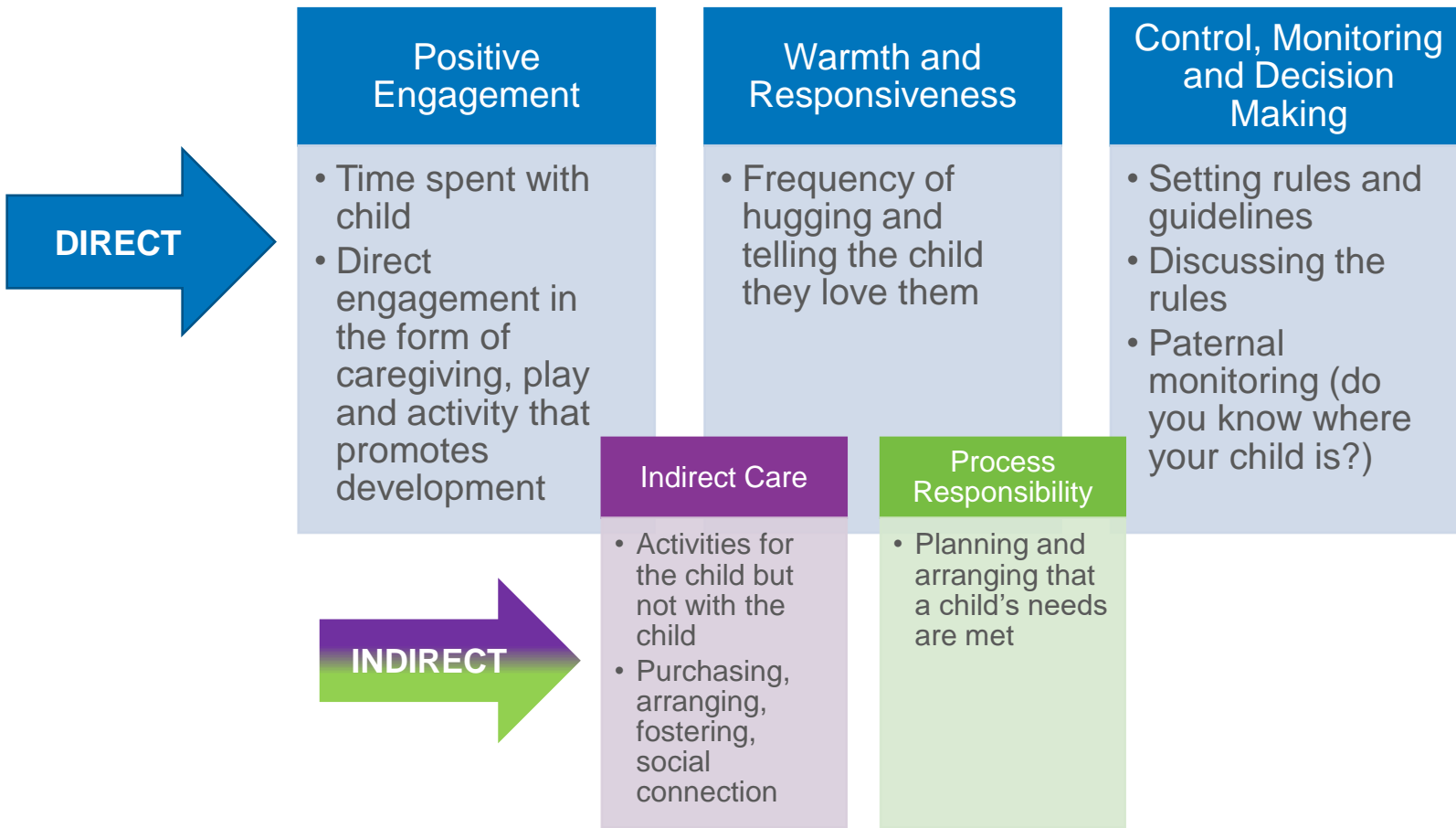
Mythical Roles: Fatherhood and Masculinity

- The Essential Father hypothesis
- Fatherhood need not be identified with masculinity



Many studies have demonstrated that children's well-being is affected much more by their relationships with their parents, their parents' sense of competence and security, and the presence of social and economic support for the family than by the gender or the sexual orientation of their parents.

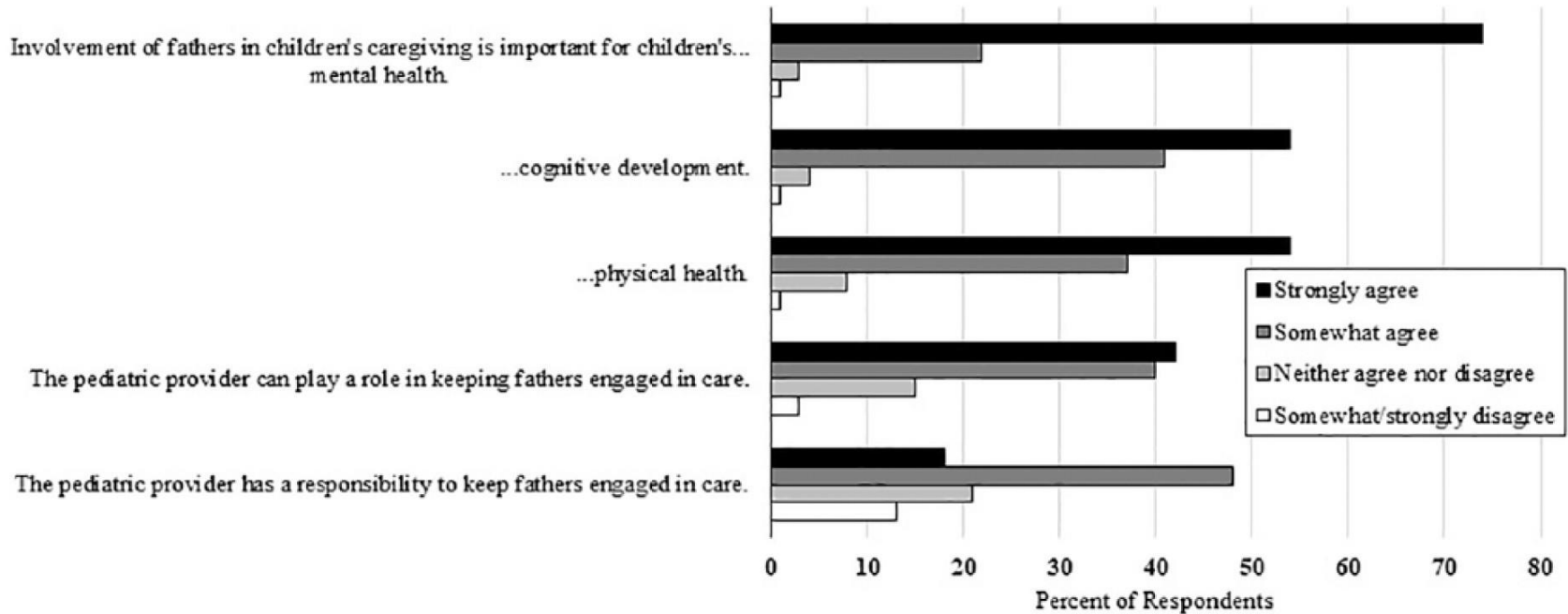
Modeling the Functions of Fatherhood: Pleck and Lamb



Involved Fathers are Good for Everyone

Fathers should father early, often and well

Pediatricians say dads are good...



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Fathers' impact across the age span



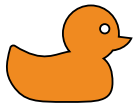
Early Father Involvement is important



Data shows that getting **fathers involved early** in their children's lives **predicts later involvement**



Prenatal involvement **and living with the mother is the strongest predictor** of their involvement by the time a child is aged 5 years



Simple experiences such as bathing demonstrations and skin to skin time **in the first 24 hours** leads to greater paternal involvement



More **time spent** at home with a child **after birth 2 weeks or more are more likely to be involved** in diapering feeding, cleaning **at 9 months**



Father Involvement in Pregnancy is good for Moms

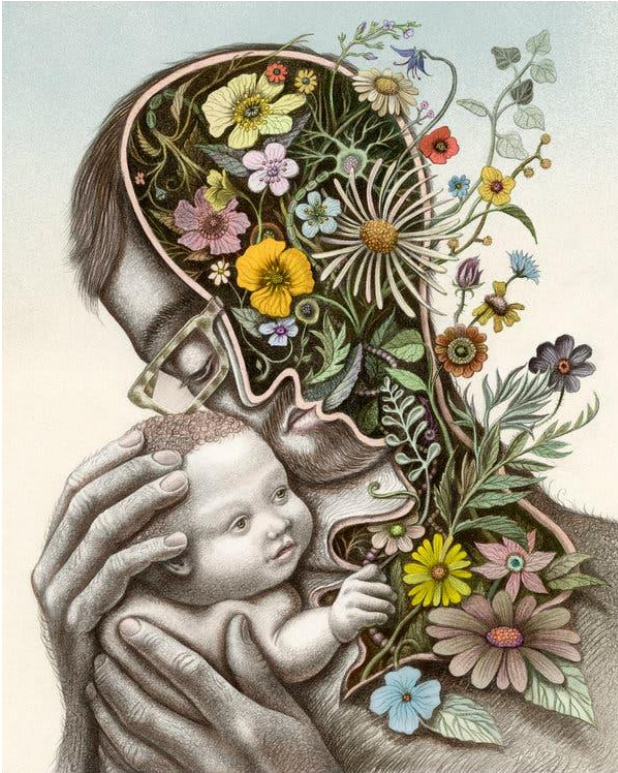
1.5x Likelihood that mothers receive first-trimester prenatal care



Reduction in maternal smoking



Fathers are Good for Infants



- **INVOLVED FATHERS**

- Boost, motor, communication and problem-solving outcomes
- Decreased mental health symptomatology in children 9 years of age
- Mediated through direct effects and even more profoundly through effects on maternal health, wellness and bonding

- **DISENGAGED FATHERS**

- Resulted in behavioral concerns in children as early as age 1

Healthy Fathers are Good For Infants and Vice Versa

Table 2

Emerging Changes for Fathers since the Birth of their Child

Positive Health Behavior Modifications

Positive changes in diet

Increased physical activity

Decreased alcohol usage

Decrease in risky behaviors

Changes in Attitudes

“Being there” for child as motivation

Recognition of children’s needs as taking precedence over father’s needs

Desire to be a good role model

Fathers are Good for School Age Children: Language

- More words and language to the child yield greater benefit to child
- At 3 years of age, father-child communication was a unique predictor of advanced language development
- Moms cater language to known vocabulary. Fathers are more likely to introduce new words expanding language capability



Fathers are good for School Age Children: Risk taking and problem solving “Adventure!”

- **Encourage rough and tumble, rules change, high energy activities**
- **Help kids stay focused when amped up and the introduction of novel enterprise**
- **Father involvement in play with preschoolers predicted decreased externalizing and internalizing behavior**

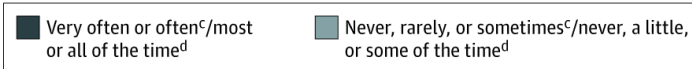


Fathers are good for Adolescents

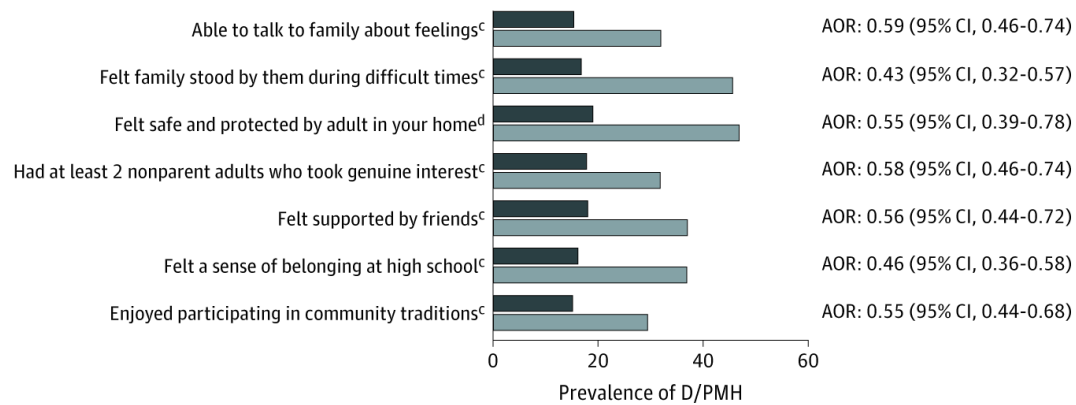
- **Longitudinal Studies and recent meta-analysis have shown father involvement showed less risk behavior and depressive symptoms**
- **Benefits– reduced behavioral problems and enhanced cognitive development, reduced psychosocial problems in adolescent girls**



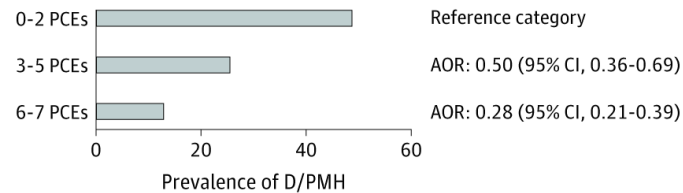
Positive Childhood Experiences



A PCEs, single items^{a,b}



B Cumulative score^{a,b}



Positive Relationships & Experiences
=
Improved Mental Health

Conversation with Hennepin Fathers

Redleaf Conversations



- **OBJECTIVES:**

- Address unique circumstances faced by father figures in Minnesota's cultural communities
- Identify opportunities for new resources, programs, services, and practices that will better serve father figures and families
- Improve upon the quality of engagement with fathers and father figures in the pediatrics department and Redleaf Center for Family Healing

- **INTERVIEWS:**

- 14 conversations with fathers from our clinics as well as father serving organizations

Identities



PROVIDER

"I'm gonna leave a business for my kids. I'm thinking about what business I want to



PROTECTOR

go into once I take off, but I want to leave something for them. That, that. I do feel like a protector. That, that. It's definitely calmed me down... I used to never feel that way before. I'm not that kind of guy, some guys are like that to get in a lot of altercations back in the day. So now I don't want to do anything that with their girlfriends and wives, but would you please be using a light or a my wife is with my kids and that's what whatever the case may be [?!] and that's what sorta manages her own s!@#. With a daughter you feel a lot more responsible, and that you need to protect." —



FAMILY MAN

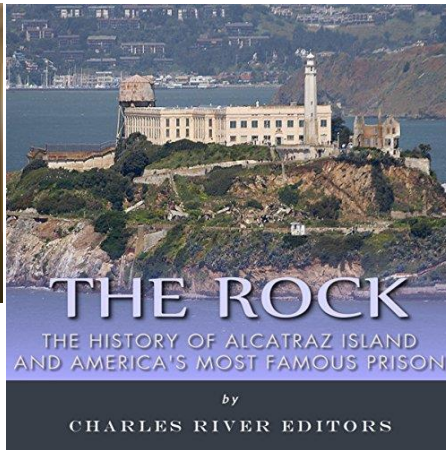
Stereotypes



THE CHECKBOOK



THE ROCK



THE BELT

Legal System and Custody Rights



PARENTAGE



SOCIAL SERVICE SYSTEM

Actions may include:

- [Contempt proceedings for non-payment of support](#)
- [Credit bureau reporting](#)
- [Federal criminal prosecution](#)
- [Interest charging](#)
- [Levy or seizure of financial assets](#)
- [Passport holds](#)
- [Student grant holds](#)

License suspension

- [Driver's license](#)
- [Occupational license](#)
- [Recreational license](#)

Tax refund offsets (intercepts)

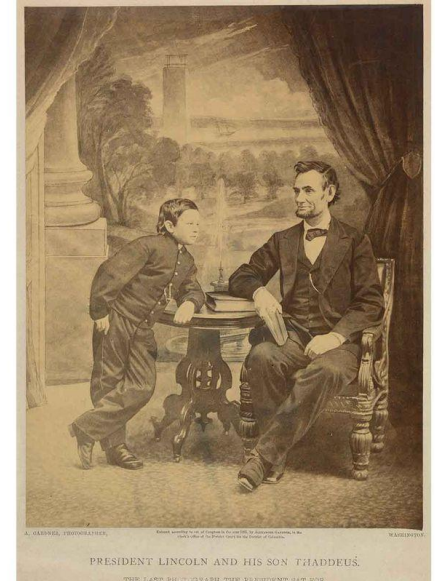
- [Federal tax refund offset](#)
- [State tax refund offset](#)

Healthcare System



Recommendations from Hennepin Dads

- **ACKNOWLEDGE FATHERS** and create spaces that welcome them
- **ENGAGE** fathers **DURING** the **PRENATAL** period
- **ENCOURAGE** the development of a healthy **CO-PARENTING** dynamic
- Seek ways to better **ENGAGE** fathers, especially **BIPOC AND LOW-INCOME FATHERS**
- Be prepared to **CONNECT MEN WITH RESOURCES** and services that may fall outside your scope, and make sure they're supported in their journey
- Create **FATHER SPECIFIC PROGRAMMING**



The Work for us at Hennepin

Clinical Strategy For All Fathers


3

Create Menu Of Targeted Interventions
(for fathers with special circumstances)

2

Identify Best Practices
(conduct paternal depression screening for example)

1



Identify, Create, Share Interventions
(fact sheets, hand outs, general tools and resources)

FATHERHOOD RESOURCES

RESOURCES FOR DADS

- <https://www.fatherhood.gov/for-dads>

RESOURCES FOR DADS, PROVIDERS AND PROGRAMS

- [40+ Top Fatherhood Resources - The Annie E. Casey Foundation \(aecf.org\)](https://www.aecf.org/resources/40-top-fatherhood-resources/)
- <https://www.aecf.org/resources/40-top-fatherhood-resources/>

MINNESOTA FAMILY AND FATHER NETWORK: LIST OF RESOURCES

- [Fathers | Minnesota Fathers & Families Network \(mnfathers.org\)](https://www.mnfathers.org/fathers/)
- <https://www.mnfathers.org/fathers/>

Clinical Strategy For All Fathers

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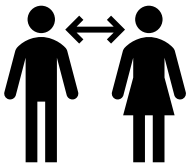
Guidelines for Practice: The Basics



- Welcome fathers and **express appreciation for attending a clinic visit**; actively engage fathers beginning with prenatal visit.
- Introduce yourself to both parents during a clinical visit **and politely explore the father's relationship** to the mother to assess type of relationship and the personal beliefs of the father
- Emphasize to fathers they are role models for their children and therefore **encourage them to model positive behavior** such as using seat belts in cars and helmets with bikes and limiting behavior such as alcohol, tobacco and other substance use.



- Educate fathers about **how to support mothers who are breastfeeding**.
- Encourage the early participation of fathers in the care of children particularly alone time with children to **build father's confidence and develop his own style of interaction**. Talk to fathers about skills they may find lacking



- Inform and **discuss with parents the normal responses that fathers will have** in becoming a father, including elation, fatigue and challenges including those to intimacy and the sexual relationship.
- Discuss how the **parents are adapting to parenthood** after each child; encourage them to continue to engage in activities without the children.

Guidelines for Practice: Advanced Conversations

- Recognize possible differences in parenting style between the mother and father
 - Serve as mediator without siding with either parent to discuss differences
- Discuss family composition
 - Cultural beliefs about fathering
 - Role of men in families
 - Division of childcare tasks within the family
 - Physical health of each parent (update vaccines and encourage health)
- Ascertain when it might be important to include both parents when needing permission for performing a medical procedure on a child.
 - Try to include fathers in written communications about the child, such as test results

Guidelines for Practice: Systemic and Procedural Steps



REVIEW vaccines for both parents to keep them up-to-date on vaccines such as flu and pertussis



SCREEN fathers for perinatal depression



IDENTIFY current and necessary future public policies that support fathers' involvement with their children, such as promoting the FMLA and flexible work schedule (HF1278)

Father Friendly Checkup

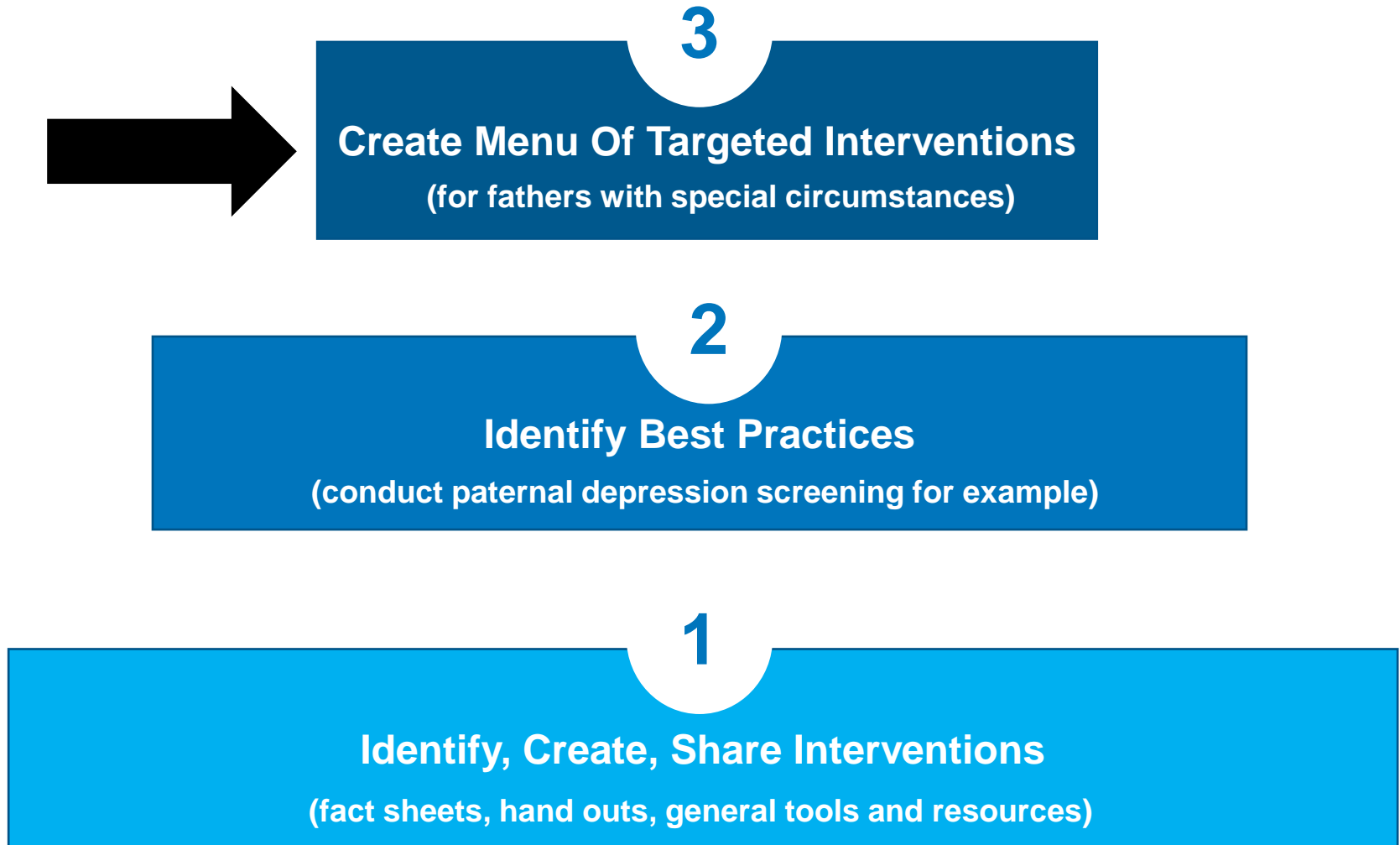
We think we do this, but data says we don't

<i>When the father is present at the child's clinic visit, how often do you . . .</i>			
. . . express appreciation to fathers for their attendance at clinic visits?	30	28	42
. . . explore the father's cultural traditions and personal beliefs about his role in caring for the child?	12	27	61
. . . encourage fathers to assume some roles early on in the care of the child?	55	27	18
. . . ask fathers what skills they feel they are lacking?	4	16	80
. . . provide fathers with local or online resources to support them in gaining confidence and skills in parenting?	4	18	78
. . . educate fathers about the practicalities of breastfeeding and how to support mothers' nursing?	27	24	49
. . . encourage fathers to participating in feeding and skin-to-skin care?	32	30	39
. . . screen fathers for perinatal depression?	5	10	85
<i>Whether or not the father is present at the visit, in your practice, how often do you . . .</i>			
. . . review the need for parents to keep up-to-date on adult vaccines and recommend any needed vaccines, such as pertussis and influenza immunizations?	52	25	23
. . . specifically promote the use of policies such as the Family Medical Leave Act and flexible work schedules as ways to balance employment and family responsibilities?	18	32	50
. . . explore the division of child care tasks within the family?	40	33	27
. . . explore the relationship between the parents?	31	35	34
. . . encourage mothers to let the father be involved and learn from his own mistakes?	20	34	46

Table 2. Queried Father Engagement Practices Assessed by 5-Point Likert-Type Scale (n = 23) and Frequencies of Each Response.



Clinical Strategy For All Fathers



Richness and Diversity in Father Programming

TABLE 5 Recommendations for Father-Inclusive Perinatal Parent Education Programs

1. Father-inclusive perinatal parent education programs should employ a family systems approach by involving both the father and mother⁶⁰
2. When possible, programs should employ men or male-female teams as facilitators^{47,48}
3. Consider employing facilitators that mirror the characteristics (eg, ethnicity or race, age, culture, language) of the fathers being served^{61,62}
4. Train facilitators to welcome, engage, and directly speak with fathers^{6,15,63}
5. Include father-only group sessions to provide a safe space for men to express their feelings, combat social isolation, and receive peer support^{38,60}
6. Use a strengths-based perspective by focusing and building on the positive characteristics fathers bring to parenting^{60,63,64}
7. Implement programs that are tailored to fathers' parenting needs (for example, programs that are sensitive to the needs of nonresidential fathers)^{62,64}
8. Consider whether aspects of the clinical environment are welcoming and friendly to fathers (eg, pictures of men with infants, magazines for fathers and mothers in the waiting room)⁶⁵
9. Include in the curriculum content related to improving the coparenting relationship between the father and mother^{15,60}
10. Allow room for fathers and mothers to discuss topics that are most relevant to their parenting circumstances and needs⁶⁰
11. Develop special events that celebrate fathers and fatherhood⁶⁴
12. Provide literature, such as brochures, to fathers that contain educational content related to infant care and development, stress management, and community-based resources⁶⁴
13. Educate mothers about the importance of father involvement on child development and well-being⁶
14. Consider providing child care, financial incentives, meals, and/or transportation^{60,65}
15. Deliver programs during times (eg, evenings or weekends) when it is convenient for fathers to participate^{62,64}
16. Offer parent education along with other services, such as employment assistance, General Education Development test preparation, and support to address mental health and substance abuse problems^{65,66}
17. When welcomed, use mobile technology, such as text messages, as reminders for program sessions, check-ins, and follow-ups (especially after a father misses a session)⁶⁰

FATHERHOOD PROGRAMS

The Father's Project	All Parents welcome
The African American Men Project	African American men, 18+ who live in Minneapolis
Sanctuary Church	Faith Based in Minneapolis
Mad Dads	Community Based Organization dedicated to violence Prevention
The Daddy Book	A month by Month Book to help fathers with development, skills
Handbook of the Streets	
Ohio Commission on Fatherhood	Lots of Handouts
Urban Ventures Groups	Colin Powell Center in Minneapolis has classes in Spanish and English

+ MVNA

CONCLUSIONS

- Fathers have an important role that has been shaped by economics and is increasingly about engagement and warmth
- Early intervention matters. And children at all ages benefit.
- Hennepin fathers are asking for outreach and programming to start at prenatal care and onwards
- The AAP guidelines offer concrete steps for all of us
- There are many resources to help support fathers in the Twin Cities community



