

Dads Matter

Jennifer Bellamy

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ACF Region V Fatherhood Collaboration Group

Promoting Father Involvement in
Home Visiting Services for Vulnerable
Families



UNIVERSITY of
DENVER

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

The Dads Matter Team

- University of Chicago:
 - Neil Guterman
 - Aaron Banman
 - Sandra Mirque Morales
- Partner Organizations:
 - Metropolitan Family Services
 - ChildServ
 - Family Focus
 - SGA Youth and Family Services
 - Catholic Charities
 - Infant Welfare Society of Evanston*

*Participated in Pilot Study Only

Funding Support

- Pilot Study:
 - Pew Center on the States
 - Oscar G. and Elsa S. Mayer Foundation
 - Nathan Cummings Foundation
- Pritzker Early Childhood Foundation
- Robert R. McCormick Foundation
- The Fatherhood Research and Practice Network

Overview

- Fathers as a “Missing Piece” in Home Visiting Services
- Design, development and pilot testing of Dads Matter
- Current project and preliminary findings
- Fatherhood Research and Practice Network

Fathers and Home Visiting

- Fathers have a clear impact on child wellbeing, but low participation in home visiting
- The impact of home visiting is relatively small and tends to erode over time
 - Diminished outcomes among families with domestic violence or low significant other involvement
- Father engagement in services improves and extends many child and family interventions

Design and Development

- Problem analysis and review of the literature on the state of the science.
- Focus groups with fathers, mothers, and home visitors
- Pilot testing in the field with providers of Parents as Teachers, Early Head Start, and Touchpoints models

Dads Matter Intervention

- Enhancement to existing home visiting services
- Flexible modular design:
 - Does not displace current service content
 - Engages both mother and father from the start of services as a “family intervention”
- Biological fathers, who are “engageable” (e.g. geographically accessible, not incarcerated)



Intervention Goals

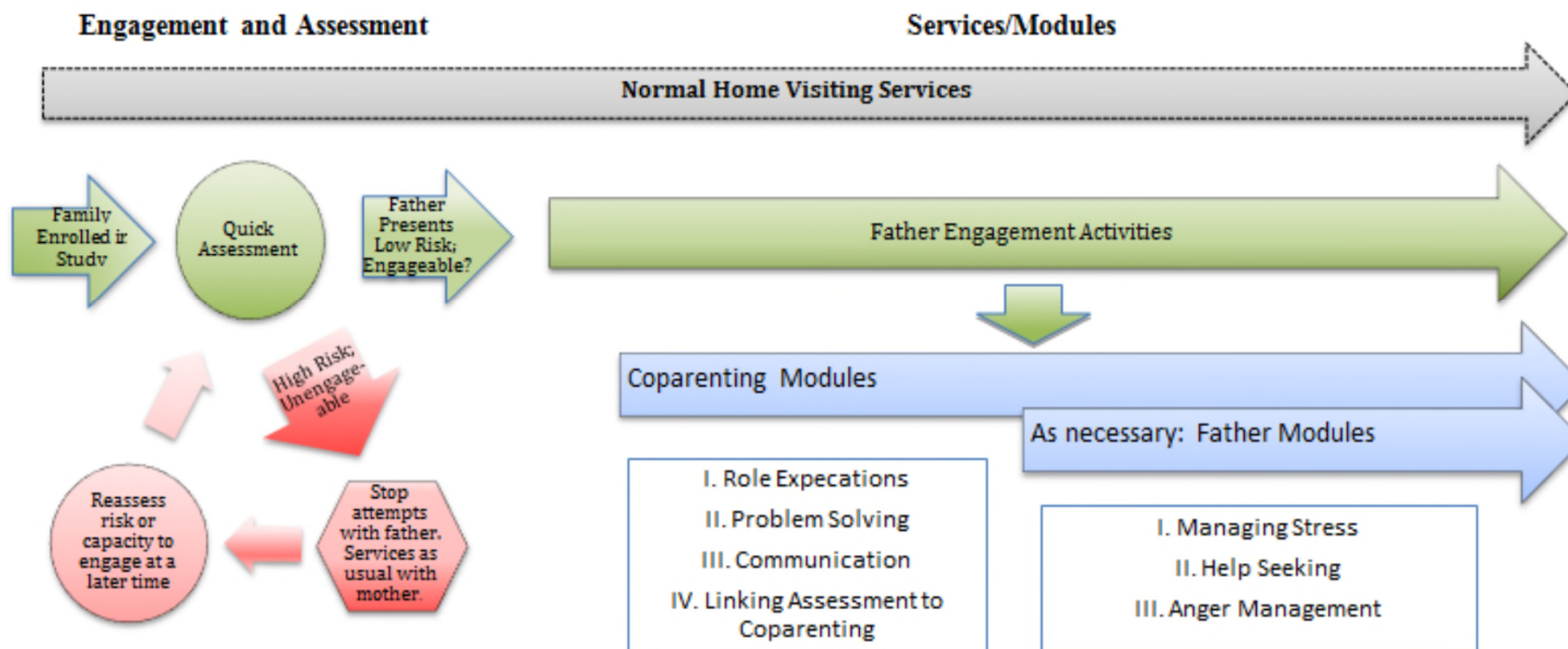
1. Assess father's role in the family
2. Engage fathers in services
3. Build the co-parenting team
4. Provide direct support to the father

Focus on the first 4 months of services



Service Flow Chart

DADS MATTER SERVICE FLOWCHART



Pilot Study

- Research Questions:
 - Is the intervention feasible?
 - Can the model be implemented with fidelity?
 - Do fathers and mothers engage in the intervention?
 - What are the estimated effects of the intervention?

Design

- Time lagged comparison group design
 1. Pre and posttest data are collected from 12 “comparison group” families who receive home visiting services as usual
 2. All home visitors and their supervisors are trained in the intervention
 3. Pre and posttest data are collected from 12 “intervention group” families who receive home visiting services enhanced with Dads Matter

Design Cont.

- Training and Supervision:
 - One ½ day clinical training of home visiting staff
 - Manual
 - Ongoing (bi-monthly) supervision
- Fidelity monitoring through home visitor self report on “Parent Service Logs”
- Baseline and 4-month follow up interviews with mother and father and audio recorded verbalizations with infant

Enrollment and Retention

- Comparison Group:
 - 67% of families retained at follow-up (4 lost, moved or untraceable)
- Intervention Group:
 - 100% of families retained at follow-up

Fidelity

- Home visitors were able to implement Dads Matter with fidelity, and changed their practice behavior
- For example:
 - Assessment of fathers went from 6.7% to 100%
 - Father engagement improved from 6.7% to 100%
 - Improvements were clear across all components
- Many modules designed for fathers were also implemented with mothers

Estimated Intervention Effects

- Outcomes suggest:
 - Families who receive home visiting enhanced with Dads matter have better mother-father relationships (more co-parenting, less abusive), less stress, and more father involvement with children
 - Most effects were medium to strong and mother reports generally suggested stronger effects
 - Dads matter increased fathers' verbalizations with the child as observed through audio recordings

Other Learning

- Improved Manual
 - Simplified material
 - More application supports, handouts etc.
- New Train the Trainer Model with stronger clinical supports and training
- Increased Online Supports

Current Project

- 5-Site Randomized Controlled Trial
 - Parents as Teachers, Early Head Start, Healthy Families, BabyTalk
- A total of 200 mothers and 200 fathers will be enrolled in the study
 - Nearing the halfway mark with recruitment
- Data are being collected at baseline, 4-months, and one year follow-up

Project Highlights So Far

- No study dropout so far in either comparison or intervention group
- Fidelity appears to be maintained
- Implementation challenges and future planning
- Challenging worker attitudes and expectations about research and about fathers
- Anecdotally successful with many families, but too early to assess

Contact Information

Jennifer Bellamy

Graduate School of Social Work

University of Denver

(303) 871-2392

Jennifer.Bellamy@du.edu

<http://portfolio.du.edu/Jennifer.Bellamy>



Fatherhood
Research
& Practice
Network

www.frpn.org

Introduction to Fatherhood Research and Practice Network (FRPN)

Key Team Members & Committees

Temple University

- Jay Fagan, Ph.D., Co-Director
- Rebecca Kaufman, M.S.W., Senior Research Coordinator

Center for Policy Research

- Jessica Pearson, Ph.D., Co-Director
- Nancy Thoennes, Ph.D., Consultant

The Bawmann Group, Denver Colorado

- An integrated marketing communications firm

40 Leading Fatherhood Practitioners and Researchers

- Steering Committee and work groups dealing with economic security, responsible fatherhood, co-parenting and communication





Overview of FRPN

- Five-year, \$4.8 million grant (#90PR0006) to Temple University funded through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, October 2013-September 2018.
 - **Goal #1:** Promote rigorous evaluation of fatherhood programs that serve low-income populations nationwide.
 - **Goal #2:** Provide training and technical assistance to researchers and practitioners to conduct better quality evaluations.
 - **Goal #3:** Disseminate information that leads to effective fatherhood practice and research.





FRPN Funded Projects

- Dr. Jennifer Bellamy (University of Denver, School of Social Work) with Metropolitan Family Services, Chicago, IL. An augmentation of a larger RCT of **Dads Matter**, a fatherhood intervention in home visiting settings, with a focus on the role of the home visitor.
- Dr. Bright Sarfo (MEF Associates) and Mr. Joseph Jones (Center for Urban Families, Baltimore, MD). An RCT of the **Developing All Dads for Manhood and Parenting** (DAD MAP) fatherhood curriculum, a facilitated 16-session program.
- Dr. Paul Lanier (University of North Carolina) and Ms. Patricia Beier (Wayne Action Group for Economic Solvency, WAGES, Goldsboro, NC). An RCT of **Circle of Parents**, a mutual-aid program that uses a peer-support group format.
- Dr. Young-Il Kim (Baylor University, Institute for Studies of Religion) and Dr. Brenda Oyer (The Ridge Project, Inc., McClure, OH). An RCT of **TYRO Dads**, a facilitated, five-week, fatherhood program operated at 11 sites in Ohio.



Next Round of FRPN Awards



Next FRPN Release: January 2016





How FRPN will Build Evaluation Capacity

- Develop materials, videos, webinars and other resources dealing with program evaluation on the FRPN website (www.frpn.org)
 1. Next Webinar: Engaging Mothers and Improving Coparenting Among Unmarried Parents on September 22, 2015, 12:00-1:30PM EST (For registration visit www.frpn.org)
 2. Technical assistance materials:
 - Conducting a Cost Evaluation of Your Fatherhood Program
 - Logic Models
 3. Research Briefs:
 - “Fatherhood Programs: How Involved are Fathers with their Children?” (Aug. 2015)
- Design new outcome measures: such as father engagement, coparenting and child wellbeing and putting them on FRPN website
 1. Current measures
 - Measuring Father-Child Contact
 - Measuring Fathers’ Challenges



How FRPN will Build Evaluation Capacity

- Conduct a one-day certificate program on evaluation research for fatherhood program staff (qualifies for continuing education credit in Social Work)
 - Next Evaluation Certificate Program will be held at the Fathers & Families Coalition of America Conference in February 2016 (For registration see <http://fathersandfamiliescoalition.org>)
- Conduct learning communities with researchers & practitioners interested in evaluation of fatherhood programs
 - The FRPN List-Serve is a place to connect with fatherhood practitioners and researchers. Share best practices, ask questions and communicate experiences in conducting this type of research. (For more information, see www.frpn.org/list-serve)
 - Please feel free to contact the FRPN if you need assistance in locating a researcher (or practitioner) partner



Contact Us



Jay Fagan, Ph.D.

FRPN Co-Director

jfagan@temple.edu

(215) 204-1288



Jessica Pearson, Ph.D.

FRPN Co-Director

jspearson@centerforpolicyresearch.org

(303) 837-1555



Rebecca Kaufman, MSW

FRPN Senior Research Coordinator

rebecca.kaufman@temple.edu

(215) 204-5706