

## **MODULE SIX: Engaging Fathers Involved in the Child Welfare System**

### **Learning Objectives**

- Explain the impact of father involvement on safety, permanency, and well-being
- Identify strategies child welfare systems can use to engage fathers
- Describe engagement techniques to involve fathers in the child welfare system

**Time:** 4 hours

### **Materials:**

Digital Story

Robby: <https://youtu.be/n4AR635hNRE>

PowerPoint

Scenario Cards

### **Recommended Textbook:**

Cabrera, N.J., & Tamis-LeMonda, C.S. (Eds). (2013). *Handbook of father involvement: Multidisciplinary perspectives 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. New York, NY: Routledge.

### **Supplemental Resource:**

Mazza, C., & Perry, A.R. (Eds.). (2017). *Fatherhood in America: Social work perspectives on a changing society*. Springfield, IL: Charles C Thomas.

### **Readings and Digital Story:**

Digital Story

Carlos Boyet:

[http://www.nrcpfc.org/nrcpfc/digital\\_stories/PP\\_Boyet\\_C/index.htm](http://www.nrcpfc.org/nrcpfc/digital_stories/PP_Boyet_C/index.htm)

Coakley, T.M. (2013). An appraisal of fathers' perspectives on fatherhood and barriers to their child welfare involvement. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 23, 627-639.

National Family Preservation Network. (2016). *Integrating and sustaining father involvement*. Retrieved from <http://www.nfpn.org/father-involvement/sustaining-father-inv>

	<p>National Fatherhood Initiative. (2016). <i>Father friendly check up</i>. Retrieved from <a href="http://www.fatherhood.org/ffcu">http://www.fatherhood.org/ffcu</a></p> <p>Primus, L. (2017). <i>Changing system &amp; practice to improve outcomes for young fathers, their children and families</i>. Washington, D.C.: Center for Social Policy, Expectant &amp; Parenting Youth in Foster Care Learning Collective. Retrieved from <a href="https://www.cssp.org/pages/body/Changing-Systems-Practice-Young-Fathers.pdf">https://www.cssp.org/pages/body/Changing-Systems-Practice-Young-Fathers.pdf</a></p>
<b>Guided Group Discussion</b>	<p>Use the following questions to lead to guided group discussion about Carlos's digital story and assigned readings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What were your overall reactions to this story?</li> <li>▪ If you were in his position, what would be your perceptions of the child welfare system?</li> <li>▪ How did he utilize informal supports to get custody of his son?</li> <li>▪ If you were working with Carlos at the beginning of his journey in child welfare, how would engage him?</li> <li>▪ How does this digital story relate to assigned readings? What are some commonalities? What are some differences based on the readings?</li> </ul>
<b>Child Welfare and Fatherhood: A Policy Perspective</b>	<p>Review the following information to set a context for this module.</p> <p>Historically, child welfare services have been primarily focused on mothers. Over the past decade, there has been increased interest and attention paid to fathers, their contributions to family stability, and their impact on healthy development of their children. Focus in the field of child welfare has grown to include the identification, location, and involvement of fathers. Many of the children served by child welfare agencies have nonresident fathers.</p> <p>As of June 2016, the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) data estimated that 269,509 children entered foster care during FY 2015. Parental drug abuse accounted for 32% (85,937) of removal from homes, while of 8% (21,006) removals were attributed to parental incarceration, and 6% (14,978) to parental alcohol abuse.</p> <p>Federal legislation entitled the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA) renewed focus on expediting permanency for children in out-of-home placement. Engaging fathers of foster children can be important not only for the potential benefit of a child-father relationship (when</p>

such a relationship does not pose a risk to the child's safety or well-being), but also for making placement decisions and gaining access to resources for the child.

ASFA's increased focus on fathers...

- Encourages child welfare agencies to use the Federal Parent Locator Service employed by child support enforcement programs to help locate fathers and other relative
- Concurrent planning may prompt earlier efforts to locate fathers because the father, or his relatives, may be identified as a placement resource even while the caseworker seeks to reunify the child with his or her mother.
- A diligent search for the father must be undertaken if adoption becomes the case goal
- Re-emphasis of kin, paternity establishment becomes vital to identifying a father and any of his relatives as potential caregivers

ASFA set forth the principles of safety, permanency, and well-being:

- *Safety*: All children have the right to live in an environment free from abuse and neglect. The safety of children is the paramount concern that must guide child protection efforts.
- *Permanency*: Children need a family and a permanent place to call home. A sense of continuity and connectedness is central to a child's healthy development.
- *Child and family well-being*: Children deserve nurturing families and environments in which their physical, emotional, educational, and social needs are met. Child protection practices must take into account each child's needs and should promote the healthy development of family relationships.

In 2008, The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act ("Fostering Connections"), highlighted four activities that can bring fathers and their paternal kin together for the benefit of their children:

- Kinship navigator programs
- Intensive family finding efforts,
- Family group decision making meetings
- Residential family treatment programs

The first steps to involving non-resident fathers in their children's lives is to identify and locate them. Once fathers are located, they need to be contacted directly, actively engaged in the case management process, and assorted agencies must collaborate across permeable boundaries. Involving fathers, paternal kin, and male relatives in family engagement approaches will benefit children and families by increasing resources and enhancing supportive relationships in their lives.

As mandated in federal legislation The Children's Bureau conducts the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR), which are periodic reviews of state child welfare systems, to achieve three goals:

1. Ensure conformity with federal child welfare requirements
2. Determine what is actually happening to children and families as they are engaged in child welfare services
3. Assist states in helping children and families achieve positive outcomes

The most recent findings from the 2007—2010 Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR) reveal that no state agency met federal standards related to father assessment, engagement, and visitation or service provision. Possible explanations for this service gap include:

- The extra workload required of caseworkers to involve two parents who may not be cohabiting
- Perception that fathers are not interested in being involved
- Lack of resources for fathers who request services and supports

Some mothers may additionally withhold information about father identity or location and discourage father involvement and fathers may feel intimidated by programs and services that seem to be directed toward mothers.

Child welfare jurisdictions should prioritize fatherhood identification, engagement and involvement not only to achieve compliance with CFSR standards, but to contribute to opportunities for improved safety, permanency and well- being outcomes for children, youth, and families.

The following illustrate the importance of father involvement in achieving positive child welfare outcomes:

- Children with highly involved nonresident fathers are discharged from foster care more quickly than children whose fathers are less involved

- Higher likelihood of reunification and a lower likelihood of adoption is associated with nonresident fathers' involvement
- Father involvement is associated with a lower likelihood of subsequent maltreatment allegations among children whose permanency outcome is reunification, typically with their mothers
- Listing the father on the birth certificate is significantly associated with decreased incidence of severe child maltreatment and child fatality, which underscores the importance of identifying fathers

The most critical period for developing fathers' roles in the lives of their children is during the transition from pregnancy to early childhood. Therefore, engaging young fathers throughout the pregnancy and immediately after birth is critical to maintaining both the parenting relationship and the caseworkers' relationship with fathers. Fathers are more likely to stay involved with their children over time if they are involved in the first two years of their lives.

A recent research study highlights the importance of the current public policy debate regarding the potential for more generous income support policy to reduce child maltreatment. Furthermore, they hold implications for the design of interventions with populations at risk for becoming involved with the child welfare system. Changes in child support policy that provided modest increases in income within an economically disadvantaged population reduced the risk of a screened-in report of child maltreatment. This suggests that child maltreatment prevention programs should pay explicit attention to policies in other service systems that may also help mitigate economic hardship among the families that they serve.

Discuss barriers for fathers in the Child Welfare System:

- Historical view of the mother as the primary parent: Child welfare workers are often ill-prepared to identify, engage and support fathers. Fathers may experience treatment that ranges from being an afterthought to being stigmatized and alienated by the agencies making decisions about their children's lives. This general disposition is exacerbated by implicit bias, especially toward young fathers of color, which often predisposes child welfare workers to view these young men as absentee parents or potentially violent partners
- Lack of quality data to inform policy and practice: Child welfare systems often struggle with incomplete case records where many fathers are listed as unknown, which is often a

result of incomplete birth records and caseworkers failing to identify fathers

- *Female orientation of the child welfare system:* Fathers can feel uncomfortable in the child welfare environment because of its strong female orientation. Over 80% of the caseworkers employed in the child welfare system are women. Many female caseworkers can empathize with their women clients, but have difficulty relating to fathers, especially those who are hostile and angry toward the system.
- *Personal issues:* Substance abuse and mental illness
- *Familial issues:* Co-parenting and domestic violence issues
- *Societal factors:* Racism and economic disadvantages
- *Ineffective child welfare agency practices and policies*

In the child welfare system, attention has been heightened towards services to **young fathers in the system**. Young fathers—foster youth themselves, those exiting out of foster care, and those whose children are in foster care—continue to be excluded from discussions about child welfare policy and practice. Young fathers of color in particular are often invisible in discussions about positive parenting and early childhood development.

Policies for young fathers in care should apply a trauma-informed, multigenerational, and intersectional lens to fatherhood work in child welfare systems. All aspects of young fathers' identities—including their race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, marital status, disability status and socioeconomic status—must be acknowledged and supported

Review the unique challenges faced by young fathers:

- The lack of attention to the dual roles and needs of young fathers who are simultaneously navigating a transition to adulthood while learning to parent;
- The invisibility of young fathers in child welfare systems and the dearth of opportunities for them to support the well-being of their children and families;

- The lack of data on the characteristics and needs of young fathers; and
- The lack of cross-system collaboration among the education, juvenile/criminal justice, early childhood education (ECE), child support enforcement, health care, homeless services, housing and mental health systems to support young fathers and their families.

Review the following policy recommendations:

- *Father-inclusive organizational culture*: Revise agency forms and materials and adjust physical spaces to promote father-friendliness and inclusion
- *Father identification*: Require the identification of young fathers as early as possible during pregnancy using all available resources for identification
- *Father-focused practice*: Issue policy and practice guidance that removes barriers to father engagement and creates opportunities for active and positive involvement in children's lives
- *Family time*: Ensure that young fathers have access to frequent and quality visits with their children
- *Coparenting*: Require the exploration of coparenting with young fathers and provide referrals for coparenting supports where appropriate and safe to do so
- *Father-focused services*: Ensure access to equitable services for young fathers that are developmentally and trauma-informed
- *Undocumented fathers*: Require that when young fathers are identified as undocumented, caseworkers develop a strategy and work with immigration attorneys to obtain legal recognition of parenthood and legal status and incorporate it within case plans and transition services
- *Incarcerated fathers*: Require the engagement and involvement of incarcerated young fathers in case planning, including the facilitation of meaningful contact or visits with their children
- *Intimate partner violence (IPV)*: Ensure that the relationship between young offending fathers and their children is supported and maintained unless it is not safe for the child and mother

**Digital Story—  
Robby**

Show Robby’s digital story highlighting the effects of growing up in foster care and becoming a father.

Show Robby’s Digital Story. Use the following questions to guide discussion:

- How does Robby’s journey through two foster care systems impact how he experiences the world?
- What are some key events in Robby’s life that he identifies as having a great impact on him?
- What are some of the images that stood out for you?
- What can the child welfare system learn from Robby’s story?
- What does the child welfare system have to do differently to prepare young people as they transition into adulthood?
- How might these life experiences impact how he has approached fatherhood?

**Child Welfare  
Systems  
Engagement**

Involving non-resident fathers in the lives of their children becomes an even greater challenge when these children are involved in the public child welfare system. This is especially true in cases where the child has been removed from the home and placed in a non-relative or stranger’s care. Reunifying children with their birth families, as quickly as possible, without jeopardizing the children’s safety, is the first priority. However, identifying family resources, especially non-resident fathers and paternal relatives, continues to be a challenge for the child welfare system.

Refer students to the reading Father-Friendly Check Up (National Fatherhood Initiative, 2016) and explain that it was developed as a tool to help agencies take an active and positive approach in creating an environment that involves non- resident fathers and fosters the healthy development of children. The assessment consists of seven categories that agencies can use to determine if their organization is “father-friendly” and make the necessary changes to follow best practice.

The seven categories are:

1. *Leadership and organization philosophy*: Assesses how well your organization is doing in establishing the expectation that workers and staff will engage fathers, encouraging healthy father-child relationships, providing adequate funding and staff to effectively serve non- resident fathers, and providing supportive tools, information, policies and programs that help



them in their fathering roles.

2. *Program management policies and procedures:* Assesses whether agency policies and procedures establish clear expectations around identifying, locating and contacting fathers; utilize a parent locator service; and ensure that fathers are consistently treated in a gender-responsive, non- accusatory, non-blaming manner.
3. *Parent-involvement program:* Assesses whether approaches and programs used with non-resident fathers are intended to promote meaningful and sustained father engagement; include a strengths-based approach to working with non-resident fathers; periodically survey fathers to determine their needs, concerns and interests; and ensure staff mirror the fathers served in culture, race, language and age.
4. *Program physical environment:* Assesses whether the organization's physical environment offers materials directed toward fathers; uses father-related images; and offers family restrooms or diaper decks in the men's restrooms.
5. *Staff training and professional development:* Assesses agency staff and their openness to constructive criticism regarding personal biases; whether they are comfortable with differences in parenting styles typical of fathers and mothers; whether they avoid language that is divisive and stereotypical; and whether they seek out fathers in decision-making situations involving the important aspects of children's lives.
6. *Collaboration and organizational networking:* Assesses the organization's promotion of education of courts; its development of good working relationships with child support enforcement offices; and its use of legal systems to better engage fathers.
7. *Community outreach:* Assesses the organization's efforts to reach out to the "community at large"; participate in network coalitions of organizations and leaders that promote responsible fatherhood; and use responsible fatherhood in the community as a preventive measure to reduce the negative outcomes for children.

Conduct a Guided Group Discussion:

Ask students to reflect on their knowledge of the child welfare system:

- How has the child welfare community addressed these seven categories?
- Which categories has the child welfare community shown the greatest development? Give examples

**Engaging Non-Resident Fathers in the Child Welfare System**

- Which categories still need further development?

The social worker–client relationship is central to interventions and engagement that promote positive case resolutions. Creating a relationship with the client that fosters respect, authenticity and growth is based on several key principles. Appalachian Family Innovations developed the six principles of partnership as a new perspective on how we engage clients, create strengths-based relationships with clients and promote change. Embracing these principles, along with others, is important in developing a positive working relationship with the non-resident father in child welfare.

Review the principles of partnership:

- ***Everyone desires respect:*** This principle is based on the idea that all people have worth, and recognizes everyone’s right to self determination — to make their own decisions about their lives. Acceptance of this principle leads one to treat clients with respect and to honor their opinions and worldview. True partnership is impossible without mutual respect.

In addition, equality in the relationship is important. Be aware of actions that are not supportive of treating the client with impartiality and a sense of fairness that requires not generalizing and lumping all fathers into one group.

- ***Partners share power:*** This principle is based on the premise that power differentials create obstacles to partnership. Since society confers power upon the helper, it is the helper’s responsibility to create a partnership with clients, especially those who appear hostile, resistant, etc. Clients do not owe us their cooperation; we must earn it.

One way of doing this is recognizing that it is important to both give and receive. Social workers are “receiving” a lot of personal and often uncomfortable information about the client. Try to level the field a bit by “giving” a bit of information through the sharing of stories that are humanizing and normalizing. Appropriate self-disclosure is a very powerful tool in building worker-client relationships.

- ***Everyone has strengths:*** This principle recognizes that all people have many resources, past successes, abilities, talents, dreams, etc. that provide the raw material for solutions and future success. As “helpers” we become involved with people

because of their problems; these problems then become a filter that obscures our ability to see strengths. Acceptance of this principle doesn't mean that one ignores or minimizes problems; it means that one works hard to identify strengths as well as problems so that the helper and the client have a more balanced, accurate and hopeful picture.

Though it may be difficult, try to visualize how the father may view the social worker. Broadening your perspective can be done by asking, "What would it be like to be him right now?" "How might I feel?" "How might I respond?" etc. In this way, you can seek to reframe what may present as a negative into a strength.

- ***Everyone needs to be heard:*** This principle is based on Covey's "seek first to understand," and is accomplished primarily through empathic listening. While empathic listening looks very much like active or reflective listening, what differentiates it is the listener's motivation. Active and reflective listening are techniques that are often used to manage or manipulate someone's behavior so that the listener can advance his own agenda. Empathic listening is motivated by the listener's desire to truly understand someone's point of view — to enter someone's frame of reference — without a personal agenda. When one feels heard and understood, defensiveness and resistance are unnecessary, and solutions can be sought.

Let go of the "expert role." Try to establish some mutual ground between the role of the worker and who the worker is personally. Use statements such as: "none of us is perfect," "Yeah, I recall when...", "I struggle too as a single parent."

- ***Judgments can wait:*** This principle recognizes that once a judgment is made, one's tendency is to stop gathering new information or to interpret in light of the prior judgment. Therefore, since a helper's judgments can have an immense impact on a client's life, it is only fair to delay judgment as long as possible, then to hold it lightly, while remaining open to new information and willing to change one's mind. Acceptance of this principle does not mean that decisions regarding safety cannot be made quickly; it simply requires that ultimate judgments be very well considered.
- ***Partnership is a process:*** This principle recognizes that each of the six principles is part of a greater whole. While each has merit on its own, all are necessary for partnership. Each

principle supports and strengthens the others. In addition, this principle acknowledges that putting the principles into practice consistently is hard. Acceptance of the principles is not enough; it requires intention and attention to practice the principles.

Discuss various approaches to engaging non-resident fathers:

- Assume the non-resident father wants to be involved
- Restore the non-resident father in the child's life
- Individualize each case
- Suspend judgments
- Make room for expressions of anger
- Seek first to understand
- Recognize and acknowledge previous experience with child welfare
- Transparency regarding agency's involvement and the non-resident father's role in the case process
- Acknowledge the power in your position along with empowering the non-resident father
- Identify the non-resident father's strengths
- Increase his understanding of how important his is to his child
- Encourage opportunities for change particularly if he is the person caused the harm
- Ask the non-resident father, "How would you like your child to remember you 10 to 15 years from now?"
- Remind the non-resident father that he is a role model for his child
- Explain agency expectations for the non-resident father.

The following are common challenges in working with non-resident fathers:

- Anger
- Co-parenting and parental conflict
- Working with culturally diverse families

Review the following engagement strategies:

- Start from the assumption that the father wants to be involved, and assist the father in developing a plan to make that happen. Too often, we start from the assumption that the father doesn't want to be involved and will be difficult to engage because traditional culture states that men are the providers and disconnected from their children, and women are the caretakers and nurturers of their children. Many of us may have been unconsciously socialized in adhering to these stereotypes, thus

making the assumption that the father doesn't want to be involved. Changing this initial viewpoint can be a useful first step in your engagement.

- Facilitate the restoration of the father in the life of the child by co-creating goals based on his strengths, not his deficits. The traditional culture of manhood encourages admiring men for their physical strength, occupational status, economic gains and competitive spirit. If the father you are speaking with falls short in some way based upon what he and/or the social worker believes, it can present a barrier to successfully identifying his strengths. Remove those traditional cultural ideals and build in opportunities for success in the case planning by developing short-term goals that are achievable and that foster a feeling of accomplishment.
- Work on a case-by-case basis. Let each father speak for himself. The father may make the assumption that the social worker is assessing him through the lens of “dead beat,” “absent,” “no good” (to use that nomenclature) father. He may present as defensive because of this. Therefore, it is important to ensure that he is aware that you see him for who he is.
- Suspend judgments. You will hear negative things about the father, likely even before you have met him. There are two sides to every story, and the child is depending upon you to hear and evaluate both sides.
- Make room for expressions of anger. Anger is one of the few acceptable emotions for men and may be the only one they are comfortable expressing. There is a difference between expressions of anger, which are quite natural, and threatening behavior.

Use the following to augment the discussion around when to use a specific engagement strategy.

Engagement Strategy	This strategy might be useful when...
Start from the assumption that the non-resident father wants to be involved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The father has been absent for a period of time but demonstrates interest in the child's well-being.</li> <li>• The father has not returned your calls; consider that there may be some underlying reasons that you are unaware of.</li> <li>• The mother or someone from the maternal family tells you that the father doesn't want to be involved; however, this has not been directly confirmed.</li> </ul>
Facilitate the restoration of the father in the life of the child by co-creating goals based on the father's strengths, not his deficits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The father feels as though he doesn't have anything to offer his child.</li> <li>• The father has been absent for a period of time and doesn't know how to re-engage in a relationship with his child.</li> <li>• The father is struggling with joblessness, financial issues or multiple demands, or is caring for a new family.</li> </ul>
Treat each case on an individual basis, not based on experiences with other fathers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You have your own personal struggles with fathers or "father figures" in your life.</li> <li>• You have multiple cases in which the fathers are absent and refusing to engage. When this is true, it is important to take a step back and examine how other cases are influencing the decisions in the current case.</li> </ul>
Suspend judgments and listen to all sides. There are two sides to every story. Give the non-resident father an opportunity to give his side.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You have heard a lot of negative things about the father from the mother, maternal family members or even other workers the case was assigned to.</li> <li>• You have your own personal struggles with fathers or "father figures" in your life.</li> <li>• Allegations about the father have been made but not substantiated...weigh out all of the information.</li> <li>• The father has been absent from the child's life.</li> </ul>
Make room for expressions of anger. This emotion in men is socialized as "acceptable." It may be the only one they are comfortable expressing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You detect hostility from the father; acknowledging it may help defuse it.</li> <li>• The father has not been kept informed about his child by the mother or others.</li> <li>• Anger is the only emotion the father feels secure expressing, as it keeps him from feeling vulnerable to others.</li> </ul>



Engagement Strategy	This strategy might be useful when...
Help the non-resident father identify his tangible and non-tangible assets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It appears that the father is struggling with his identity as a father.</li> <li>• The father doesn't believe he has anything to offer his child.</li> <li>• The father is struggling with joblessness or financial issues, and/or is juggling multiple demands.</li> </ul>
Remind the father that he is a role model to his children. Boys learn about manhood from their fathers, and girls get a sense of what to expect from their fathers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The father isn't fully aware of how his presence in his child's life can benefit his child.</li> <li>• It would be helpful for the father to consider what type of messages he wants to send to his child through either his involvement or lack of involvement.</li> </ul>
Acknowledge your power as a caseworker but empower the father to use his assets and his often-hidden power to keep his child safe by remaining engaged and involved. Remember, some men struggle and "present" differently when feeling helpless and hopeless.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The father feels disempowered based on his previous and current life circumstances and the additional perceived "intrusion" of child welfare.</li> <li>• The father feels that the mother has all the power and he can't do anything to the change that; encourage him to look at what he can offer that may be different from what the mother can offer.</li> <li>• The father needs to understand the importance of his involvement to help keep his child safe and promote his or her well-being; let the father know about the benefits of involvement.</li> </ul>
Recognize and acknowledge the previous experiences the father may have had with child welfare workers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The father was removed from his parents and placed in foster care.</li> <li>• The father had a bad experience with his caseworker, judge, probation officer, attorney, etc.</li> <li>• The father has had indirect experience or knowledge of child welfare processes, fostering distrust of system personnel.</li> </ul>
Be clear and transparent about the reasons for the agency's involvement, the father's role throughout the process and agency expectations. Suspicion may be present and he may think he is being sought only to obtain child support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The father doesn't trust the system or those who represent the system.</li> <li>• The father's experience has suggested that he is only needed for the money he can provide.</li> <li>• The father fears he is unable to pay child support because of his own financial challenges.</li> <li>• The father feels shame for his inability to financially provide for his children.</li> </ul>
Engagement Strategy	This strategy might be useful when...
Remind the father of how important he is in the life of his children, how there are some things only he can provide and that his children will carry what he does with them forever.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is important for the father to hear specifics about how he can positively impact his child's life; it is not enough to talk in general terms; the father needs to hear how his presence can benefit the child. Share some of the benefits identified in this training.</li> <li>• The father needs to consider how he would like his child to remember him 10 to 15 years from now.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Case Scenarios</b></p>	<p>Conduct this activity in the following way:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Divide students into five groups and pass out the scenario cards to each group.</li> <li>2) Tell participants to assign a recorder and a reporter from each group.</li> <li>3) Give each group 20 minutes to do the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Review the scenarios assigned to your group.</li> <li>b) Identify the strengths noted based upon what you have read.</li> <li>c) Identify the father's needs...look beyond the surface.</li> <li>d) Identify how to respond to the father's concerns based on his strengths and needs.</li> </ol> </li> <li>4) Reconvene the large group and ask the reporter from each group to read their scenario and identify how they chose to respond to the father.</li> <li>5) Allow 25 to 35 minutes to review responses and debrief.</li> </ol> <p>Summarize with the following information (2016) that practitioners can take to work more successfully with fathers in their individual work:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Review your current caseload to determine how many fathers you are engaging.</li> <li>2) Evaluate whether you spend as much time engaging fathers as you do mothers.</li> <li>3) Identify, locate, and contact the father within one week of referral.</li> <li>4) Assess the father's current level of involvement with the child and what services could strengthen his involvement.</li> <li>5) Share information with the mother about the benefits of involving the child's father.</li> <li>6) Include the father in case planning. Also involve the father's extended family to the greatest extent possible.</li> <li>7) Provide information to the father on child growth and development.</li> <li>8) For non-residential fathers, arrange visits between the father and child.</li> <li>9) Refer the father to support groups and other programs providing services to fathers, including employment services.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Overview of Module Seven</b></p> <p><b>Engaging Fathers in Various Social Services and Systems</b></p>	<p>Karber, E., Aldoney, D., &amp; Cabrera, N. (2017). Fatherhood in America: The context, practice, and gaps in responsible fatherhood programs. In Mazza, C. &amp; Perry, A.R. (Eds.), <i>Fatherhood in America: Social work perspectives on a changing society</i>. (pp. 302-341). Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.</p>



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## SCENARIO CARDS

### Scenario 1 – Father states...

I appreciate you all trying to help my kid and everything, but I don't have anything to offer them. I've been struggling to keep a job, all I can get right now is temp work and most times that isn't enough. I'm living with my brother and his wife because I got evicted from my own place. I wish I could be involved with my two kids but I just don't know. I feel like a failure (as a man).

### Scenario 2 – Father states...

You met my baby's mom right? So, you know she's crazy. I can't fool around with her. I'll end up going to jail. She is always threatening to call the police on me. Yeah, we get into fights and sometimes it gets physical... she pushes me and I push her back off me. She throws stuff at me, screams at me and I end up leaving her alone for a few days to let her cool off. I love my baby girl and all, but I don't know. How can I be in her life if we are always arguing around her, that can't be good for a baby right?

### Scenario 3 – Father states...

I know how the welfare works. I got placed in foster care when I was a kid. I don't trust you people to do anything for me or anything for my kid. I just want you out of our lives. I know his mom made a mistake and all leaving him alone for a time, but that can't be as bad as sending him to foster care. I know what it was like. You all are going to make us jump through a bunch of hoops and it still won't be good enough. You keep him in foster care with people that don't care about him and are there just to collect a paycheck, just like you. There isn't anything you can offer me other than letting my kid out of foster care.

### Scenario 4 – Father states...

I really can't help you all out. I have two other children I have to take care of and I can't afford to be ordered to pay more child support. I'm barely making it now. I do love my kids, I want you to know that and I will do what I can for them but honestly, I am afraid of

what might happen if I get involved in all this. I nearly lost my job. I have a steady job now and I don't want to end up back in jail so I think it's best for me to say out of this.

**Scenario 5 – Father states...**

You don't understand how my family works. I got spankings when I was a kid and that's the best way I know how to teach a kid. Nowadays other people want to get involved in what is family business. I know it was the school that called you and they need to mind their own business, too. My son is 7 years old and when he does wrong he needs to get a whipping. I don't want him out there gang-banging, dealing drugs and all that. I need to teach him now. None of you people understand that. A few marks on his behind are better than a gunshot in his gut.

**Scenario 6 – Father states...**

I just recently learned that I had a child. She told me that she doesn't want, nor does she need me to be involved, in the baby's life. I have a very busy life with many work demands. I don't know that I am ready to start a family yet so I am trying to respect her desire and move forward with what I believe is best for me.