



PUBLIC CHILD WELFARE TRAINING ACADEMY

FATHERHOOD LITERATURE REVIEW

Anita Harbert, PhD

Executive Director, Academy for Professional Excellence

Jennifer Tucker-Tatlow, MSW

Director, Academy for Professional Excellence

Prepared by:

Adam Gettinger-Brizuela MA
Paternal Opportunities, Programs & Services (POPS)

Edited by:

Deborah Fitch, MSW
Liz Quinnett, MSW

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6505 Alvarado Road, Suite 107 / San Diego, CA 92120
<http://theacademy.sdsu.edu>



Introduction

This literature review came about as a result of the Fatherhood Initiative, a Federal and statewide effort to address issues of fathers in the child welfare context. Since approximately the time of the Vietnam War, the United States has experienced a dramatic increase in fatherlessness among American children. In addition, fathers have historically been overlooked in child welfare and negative outcomes for children are correlated to this absence.

In the past ten years, especially since 2008, there has come into being an enhanced understanding of the need for more services geared toward father engagement, reunification, involvement, and permanency. All of these goals are in keeping with the child welfare social work aims of safety, permanency and well-being for children.

This particular literature review was deliberately commissioned from a grassroots fathers' advocacy organization in order to illuminate the material from a different perspective. The information is still peer-reviewed, or from official documents, but it was selected by men, fathers, who ask that the reader to open their minds and their hearts to our point of view.

Herein you will find material about social work and child welfare services from a father's perspective, as well as numerous current journal articles and books about counseling men and the politics and legalities of child custody, visitation and support. There is also reference to a new book by two young Harvard anthropologists, both fathers, on the evolution of fatherhood.

It could be said that "children have a right to their fathers, and fathers have a right to their children." Obviously, there are exceptions to this, as there are with mothers, other relatives, and foster parents, but natural fathers rarely pose any threat to their children. On the contrary, when asked, most men say they believe being a father is an important part of being a man. Many male clients will admit that failing at fatherhood has had devastating consequences to them as individuals. As noted in one of our citations, it is part of the social worker's code of ethics to help human beings seek well-being in their lives, without regard to gender. Fathers are no exception.

The men of Paternal Opportunities, Programs & Services, a grassroots organization in San Diego, California, would like to express our deep appreciation to Ms. Elizabeth Quinnett, MSW and Ms. Deborah Fitch, MSW, of the Public Child Welfare Training Academy of the Academy for Professional Excellence, and CalSWEC, the California Social Work Education Center for giving us the opportunity to speak in our own voice. Social work, at its best, is about seeing the good in people and these women, and many other persons, saw the good in us.

American Bar Association. (2009). *Child custody and support: Setting guidelines for child support.*

Retrieved from <http://www.abanet.org/publiced/practical/childsupport.html>.

Basic guidelines from the ABA outlining how child support guidelines are set, (parental income, number of children) what courts consider income, (usually the gross income of both parents) whether a parent can be forced to pay child support (yes, including by wage-deduction), what happens when parents share custody, must a non-custodial parent still pay if the child is with him or her for summer vacation (yes) and who pays for college expenses (usually both parents). The guide also addresses the legal status of gay parents and changes in child support based on legal changes in custody. Custodial parents are generally forbidden to deny visitation to non-custodial parents based solely on inability to pay support. Not intended to be a substitute for actual legal consultation, this reference is designed just to give an outline of how child support orders are structured, and suggestions on what can be considered legal and reasonable under the difficult circumstances of divorce, custody, visitation or support proceedings.

American Coalition for Fathers and Children. (2008). *A shared parenting tool-kit.* Washington, D.C.

Retrieved from <http://www.acfc.org>

The American Coalition for Fathers and Children's mission statement states that it "promotes equal rights (for) ALL parties affected by divorce, and the breakup of a family or establishment of paternity" and that "equal, shared parenting time or joint custody is the optimal custody situation." The 172-page tool-kit includes a systematic arrangement of 12 chapters on families in crisis, family structure, family dissolution, legal viewpoints, children's needs, parents' Constitutional rights to custody, the antagonistic approach, psychological trauma to the child-parent relationship, child support, co-parenting after divorce, second/blended families and civil rights' violations. It also includes useful information on official state offices, attorney referrals, children's resources and missing children's bureaus. The tool-kit makes it a point to focus on the process of family healing, stressing that friendly reconciliation between parents is always beneficial to children, even when reunification is out of the question. It includes some specific topics such as "creative parenting," "false accusations," "parental alienation," "child support enforcement," "enforcing visitation" and "grandparents' rights". The ACFC is a non-profit, volunteer-based organization devoted to protecting and supporting the rights of all family members to care for and relate to one another, regardless of marital status.

American Humane Association, American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law National Fatherhood Initiative. (2007). *Literature Review: Non-resident fathers, paternal kin and the Child Welfare System.* Washington, D. C.: National Quality Improvement Center on Non-Resident Fathers and the Child Welfare System.

The Quality Improvement Center is a five-year project to support a research-based and outcome-focused approach to inform best practices related to father involvement and the engagement of non-resident fathers and the paternal family with the child welfare system. The ultimate purpose of the Center is to determine the impact of non-resident father involvement in child welfare outcomes such as child safety, permanence and well-being. The Center's purpose is being implemented in two phases, the first of which includes identifying sub-themes, knowledge and service gaps, research priorities and experimental design. The second phase (now underway) focuses on the implementation of the research design at several sites throughout the country and the development of a dissemination process that will

provide current information to policymakers, researchers, administrators, and practitioners in the field. This report cites “What About the Dads?” a 2006 survey for the federal government conducted by the Urban Institute. Telephone interviews with 1,222 child welfare agency caseworkers with open cases of children removed from homes *where their fathers did not reside* revealed that 88% of the non-resident fathers were known to the agency, 55% of them were contacted by the caseworker, 30% of the non-resident fathers visited their children and 28% of the non-resident fathers expressed a desire to obtain custody of their children. It was noted that 70% of these caseworkers had received some form of training on engaging fathers, and that those who had received such training were more likely to have located and contacted the fathers. The report recommends that all child welfare agencies 1) search for non-resident fathers as soon as possible in these cases, 2) train caseworkers specifically in how to locate, identify and involve non-resident fathers, and 3) develop models for engaging them constructively. The importance of identifying, contacting and engaging non-resident fathers in cases of maltreatment is underscored by the raw statistics on child maltreatment. Data based on 28 states for 2005 reveals that 20.8% of all child victims lived with either their mother alone, or with their mother and another adult, while 11.1% lived with their married parents and only 2.2% lived with their father or their father and another adult (USDHHS Data). The 128-page document divides the available literature into five distinct categories.

Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. (2009). *Identifying, interviewing and intervening: Fathers and the Illinois child welfare system*. Retrieved from <http://www.chapinhall.org>.

Very thorough example of an in-depth, scholarly look at the role of fathers in a state welfare system. This powerful 49-page document takes a hard look at the needs, strengths and deficiencies in the Illinois child-welfare system, as they relate to father absence and engagement. Seven researchers from the University of Chicago collaborated to create this document, which includes charts and graphs to illustrate its points.

Dowd, P. (2009). *Enhanced representation for non-resident fathers in child welfare proceedings: Engaging non-resident fathers in the court process. National Quality Improvement Center News*.

The author, an attorney with the Washington State Public Defender’s Office, states that child welfare laws, practices and biases adversely affect non-resident fathers and often hinder them from engaging or uniting with their children. Barriers that can prevent fathers from engaging in their children’s cases include rampant failure to notify non-resident fathers of the proceedings, maternal “gatekeeping” including refusing to cooperate in identifying or locating fathers, caseworker difficulties with or lack of experience with fathers, judicial preference for reunification with the former primary caretaker, and family preservation services not being offered to non-resident fathers. The article reminds readers that, barring aggravating circumstances, federal law requires state child welfare agencies to make reasonable efforts to provide services to prevent the unnecessary removal of a child from his or her home, and to make every effort possible to allow the child who has been removed an opportunity to be reunited with either of his parents. By working with fathers, social workers can identify and address the barriers to the father’s ability to access services. Many fathers do not see themselves as a placement resource for their own children because they are unaware that services are available to assist them throughout the case

and afterwards, if they become the child's primary caregiver. Studies suggest that many such fathers are willing to take their children into their homes, even if they are re-married, when given the opportunity.

Furman, R. (2010). *Social work practice with men at risk*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Noted social work theorist and practitioner Rich Furman's new book delves deeply into men's culture as well as the male psyche in an attempt to help social workers understand the differences that can impede equitable service delivery. Using scholarly research and citing numerous case examples, Furman candidly discusses complex and formidable issues such as male violence, mental illness including compulsive disorders, prison, male rape and addiction. The author notes that undiagnosed mental illness or untreated grief and loss among men may lie at the root of many of their problems and behaviors. Not only does Furman spell out that men's needs as individuals can be as compelling as anyone's, he strongly suggests that addressing them can have a wider socio-ecological impact. Furman devotes the concluding chapter of the book to "What is Right About Men?"

Gallagher, M. (1998). *Do black fathers matter?* Retrieved from <http://www.ejfi.org/family/family-73.htm>

A powerful editorial opinion which bluntly challenges rarely-spoken stereotypes about African Americans and their history. The author poses the tough question: "Was the Welfare State complicit in dismantling Black family, church and community cohesion?" The author points out that even in the midst of the unimaginable inhumanity of slavery, most African Americans married and lived as families. After liberation, Black families, congregations and communities became even stronger. In 1960, 75% of all Black children were born to couples married for life. Most African American infants even today are born to romantically-committed couples. African Americans are much more similar to than different from all other Americans. Their high divorce rate parallels the high general divorce rate. A higher percentage of children born out of wedlock suggests a different social norm, but that does not mean these children are less loved. African American families are often assessed to be "at-risk," but the disproportionality of Black children in the "system," like having so many Black men in prison, indicates institutional racism.

Gray, P., & Anderson, K. (2010). *Fatherhood: Evolution and human paternal behavior*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Two young anthropologists created this amazing volume while they were both physically in the process of becoming fathers themselves. The authors speak consciously of their awareness that they have come to understand fatherhood in two significant ways; as scholars and as fathers. The book is groundbreaking in many ways, applying a wise synthesis of sciences, including biology, sociology, paleo-anthropology and archaeology.

Harrington, B., Van Deusen, F., & Ladge, J. (2010). *The new dad: Exploring fatherhood within a career context*. Retrieved from <http://www.bc.edu/cwf>.

A scholarly exploration of the changing roles of men as workers, husbands and fathers in our society, "The New Dad" speaks to the spectacular success of women as workers, and the increasingly important role of fathers as nurturing parents. The authors are keenly aware of the permanently, and radically,

changed dynamics of a society where women are now fully one-half of the wage earners and college graduates. In one generation men have had to “move over” and share the workplace as never before, and “step up” and help rock the cradle as well. The reports points out that it was men who lost 70% of the jobs lost in the recent recession, but, far from blaming women, it indicates that men are very grateful for their wives and partners ability to not just help, but support the family when necessary. Similarly, men, whether working or not, are being expected to take a much more active place in their children’s lives. The report cites many fathers who have work at home or have created flexible schedules so they can share child-care duties with their children’s mothers. The nurturing skills these men learn are not new to mankind, they had simple become rusty from disuse for generations. The fact that men have been thrust into changing roles with respect to childrearing may indicate that “women’s liberation” has perhaps really freed us all. The 36-page report includes the interview protocol used to survey fathers about combining fatherhood and a career as an appendix.

Hoff, P. (2000). *Parental kidnapping: Prevention and remedies*. Retrieved from <http://www.abanet.org/child>.

As a legal consultant to the American Bar Association’s Center on Children and the Law, Patricia Hoff is an internationally-recognized expert on the subject of children’s, and parents’, rights. In this 31-page treatise, Hoff presents what is essentially a legal guide to prevent or respond to parental kidnapping, which is usually called “parental abduction” in California. Having a child suddenly removed from one’s care can be extremely traumatic, for fathers as well as mothers. Children who are whisked off by either parent are usually bewildered, frightened and badly hurt. Even non-custodial parents report feelings of rage, helplessness and depression when children are unexpectedly removed, or taken to an inaccessible place. Hoff is clear on one point in particular: Abduction by a non-custodial parent is a serious crime. She advocates against joint custody orders when an abduction is likely to occur: “While joint custody may be a desirable option for parents who agree to it and can communicate and cooperate, it does not work in all family situations.” The American Bar Association’s family Law Section adopted a Model Joint Custody Statute in 1989 which states that “Joint custody is inappropriate in cases in which spouse abuse, child abuse or parental kidnapping is likely to occur.” When joint custody is ordered, the order should clearly state the arrangements agreed-upon for the child’s residence, since in the absence of a specific order courts may find it difficult to enforce, police may be reluctant to intervene and prosecutors may hesitate to file charges against a parental abductor.

Jenkins, M., & Kinney, E. (2009). *Dads and paternal relatives: Using family group decision making to refocus the child welfare system on the entire family constellation*. *The American Humane FGDM Issues in Brief*. Retrieved from <http://www.americanhumane.org/protecting-children/programs/fatherhood>.

This 4-page summation of a wider issue in child welfare underscores the importance not just of fathers themselves, but of children’s often neglected, excluded or ignored paternal families. The authors examine the general issues related to father involvement, acknowledge the common difficulty of finding and working with fathers, speak to the barriers to father involvement (including hostility from mothers and value judgments by social workers), present the innovative practice of implementing a truly family group decision-making (FGDM) process (including both sides of a child’s family), address the serious

issue of domestic violence and suggest the expansion of the family network to include paternal relatives. Social workers are encouraged to be creative and flexible in their approaches to individual situations. For instance, when a legal “no-contact” and/or restraining order exists between the parents, workers are encouraged to respect the orders, but not “take sides” or read into them that either parent should then be excluded from any social services processes underway. Fathers and mothers can simply meet with the worker separately, and both, unless court ordered otherwise, should be permitted to maintain free access to their children. It is important to bear in mind that children do not necessarily understand adult conflicts, restraining orders, or child support payments, and that many children experience parental absence as abandonment and are traumatized by it. Social workers should also avoid personal or class-based bias and maintain the highest levels of objectivity when it comes serving these families. The article concludes that “dads and paternal relatives should not be sidelined, excluded or marginalized in the lives of their children, and the use of FGDM helps prevent this.” Involved fathers and paternal kin benefits children parents, families and communities by enhancing supportive connections in people’s lives. For more information on fathers, courtesy of the American Humane Society, a 133 year-old organization, go to: <http://www.americanhumane.org/protecting-children/programs/fatherhood>.

Kendall, J., & Pilnik, L. (2010). *Engaging non-resident fathers in child welfare cases: A guide for court appointed special advocates*. American Humane/American Bar Association, Center on Children and the Law, National Quality Improvement Center. Retrieved from http://www.abanet.org/child/fathers/casa_brief.pdf

A thoroughly researched and meticulously-documented legal and ethical guide geared toward the inclusion of fathers (whether resident or not) in child welfare services and decision-making processes. The introduction is prefaced with a quote from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services’ Children’s Bureau which states: “While it may take extra effort to involve a nonresidential father, it is usually in the child’s best interest to do so.” The authors go on to say that “failing to engage noncustodial (nonresident) fathers in child welfare cases harms children by robbing them of many potential resources. Fathers and paternal relatives may serve as placement resources, provide youth meaningful adult connections, and provide financial, emotional and other support.” The guide offers tips on how to make father inclusion possible.

Knox, V., Cowan, P., Cowan, C. P., & Bildner, E. (2009). *Policies that strengthen fatherhood and family relationships: What do we know and what do we need to know?* Retrieved from <http://www.MDRC/Berekely.Fatherhoodpolicyissues.pdf>.

This treatise provides a wide overview of the extensive research being conducted by UC Berkeley psychology professors Carolyn Pape Cowan and Philip A. Cowan. Other researchers who contributed to this major undertaking included Virginia Knox and Elana Bildner. A total of five policy papers were presented in September, 2009, at a conference about “Young Disadvantaged Men: Fathers, Families, Poverty and Policy.” The Cowans, et al, conducted their research at various sites, including five in California in a project called Supporting Father Involvement. The population studied was predominantly Mexican-American, reflecting the demographics of the region and the paucity of information on families of color. (An upcoming study will focus on African American fathers and families.) The study and control groups were composed largely of married couples, and the research was conducted in three phases. The study’s conclusions are not dramatic, but sobering. It is clear from this project’s findings that children

who grow up in poverty are also more likely to grow up fatherless, and vice versa. Widening gaps in father involvement in many children's lives appears to beget an intergenerational cycle of experiential fatherlessness for the children and childlessness for the men. The paper reviews evidence on two different strategies for addressing this major social and human problem: relationship skills-building programs for intact couples and programs that strengthen father involvement whether or not he lives with the children's mother. The Cowan's conclude the research suggests strongly that relationship-building and fatherhood programs can have a beneficial effect on both co-parenting and fathers' engagement, resulting in improved overall well-being for the children.

Kohl, P. (2007). *Unsuccessful in-home child welfare service plans following a maltreatment investigation: Racial & ethnic differences*. Casey-CSSP Alliance for Racial Equity in Child Welfare. Retrieved from http://www.cssp.org/major_initiatives/racialEquity.html.

Based on a longitudinal national probability study, this research project by the Casey-CSSP Alliance for Racial Equality in Child Welfare underscores some of the heartbreaking outcomes of our national failure to adequately deal with the glaring disproportion in our child welfare and social services. Focused on unsuccessful in-home child welfare plans following maltreatment reports, the report notes that, nationally, over one-third of all such cases involved African American families, triple the ethnic group's proportion of the population. Statistics show that, across the board, African American children face more negative outcomes than European American or Hispanic children. It states "the joint influences of race and poverty are more likely to contribute to overrepresentation of African Americans in maltreatment reports than (race) alone." Although not specifically focused on father engagement, the report strongly suggests that unequal treatment of African American adults, especially men, results in devastating consequences to the African American children who grow up fatherless as a result.

Levingston, K.D. & V. Turetsky (2007). *Debtors' prison—Prisoners' accumulation of debt as a barrier to reentry*, Washington, D.C.: Center for Law and Social Policy.

The Brennan Center for Justice and the Center for Law and Social Policy in Washington, D.C. worked together to publish this report on the poverty and disproportionality of imprisoned Americans. The 10-page article makes a strong case for the need to reevaluate the fairness of our criminal justice system. In 2006, the New York Bar Association found that 86% of all defendants charged with a felony in the United States were indigent and 60% were either Hispanic or African American (the percentages are significantly higher in California). The article focuses on the amount of debt accumulated by prisoners, most of who are already impoverished before they are sent to prison. Most inmates are parents, including 55% of the men in state prisons, and about half of these incarcerated parents have open child support cases. Prisoners with child support orders are usually held responsible for the payments, even when it is impossible to pay them. Some states refer to jail or prison time as "voluntary unemployment." Since typical child support payments average \$250 per month, and interest accrues during imprisonment, parents owing child support often reenter free society owing \$20,000 or more. Research by the USDHHS Office of Inspector General found that compliance with child support orders was significantly higher when the orders were 15% or less of the parent's income than when they were 20% or more. A study by the Urban Institute in California found that 80% of unpaid child support debt was owed by parents with less than \$15,000 of net annual income, while only 1% of the debt was owed by

those with incomes of \$50,000 or more. This strongly suggests that, public perceptions notwithstanding, non-custodial parents (usually fathers) with the wherewithal to pay child support do so. The authors suggest that states set realistic child support orders based on actual income and realistic assessment of ability to pay; reduce or suspend support obligations during imprisonment, let families participate in the child support process (even on video) and forgive state-owed debt, including repayment of welfare benefits. Child-support arrearages are among the most difficult obstacles for fathers to face. They often prevent them from seeing their children, and frequently result in loss of driver's licenses, preventing them from working.

Malm K., Murray J. and Geen R. (2006). *What about the dads? Child welfare agencies' efforts to identify, locate and involve nonresident fathers*. Washington, D.C.: The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. Retrieved from <http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/06/cw-involve-dads/> .

The Urban Institute undertook this research project, called the "Study of Fathers' Involvement in Permanency Planning and Child Welfare Casework," to provide the federal government's Administration for Children and Families with a description of how well social service agencies could identify, locate and involve non-resident fathers in case decision-making and planning. The study sought to establish how well the agencies, through existing policies and practices, involved non-resident fathers of foster children in the cases, to describe the various methods used by the agencies and identify challenges to involvement, including workers' negative opinions of non-resident fathers. It also sought to identify practices and initiatives that could increase father involvement and explore how child support agencies' information resources might help child welfare agencies locate and contact non-resident fathers. The study was conducted in four states Tennessee, Arizona, Massachusetts and Minnesota using three levels of data collection. Caseworkers were interviewed about 1,958 eligible cases and revealed that 88% of them knew who the non-resident fathers were, 68% at case opening. While some caseworkers did ask the child's mother and other relatives for information on locating non-resident fathers, few caseworkers sought the assistance of the state child support agency. Over half (56%) of the contacted fathers visited their child while he or she was in foster care and 50% of the men contacted by social workers about their child being in foster care expressed an interest in having their children come and live with them. While 45% of the contacted fathers were considered a placement resource, this represented only one-fourth of the total sample. A number of barriers, including substance abuse and incarceration were also identified. As expected, child welfare caseworkers who had received father engagement training were much more likely to locate non-resident fathers, since they used more resources than others, including the fathers' relatives, other workers, public aid records and phone books. The study also reports significant differences in the trained caseworkers with respect to sharing the case plan with the father and engaging him in personal and financial support. These workers were more likely to report that the father was interested in assuming custody and that the agency was considering placement with him.

Martens, P. (2009). *IFPS toolKit: A comprehensive guide for establishing & strengthening Intensive Family Preservation Services*. Buhl, ID: National Family Preservation Network. Retrieved from http://nfpn.org/images/stories/files/ifps_toolkit.pdf

The Intensive Family Preservation Toolkit is a straightforward guide to the process of providing concentrated, in-home services to prevent, whenever possible, the out-of-home placement of American children. The comprehensive 47-page workbook includes a brief history that traces children's social work back to its roots in the New York Children's Aid society of the mid-1800s, on through the White House Conference on Dependent Children in 1909. In 1923, the Children's Aid Society stated that every social agency should be a "homebuilder" not a "homebreaker." The article points out that it was not until over a half-century later, in 1974, that the first model of Intensive Family preservation Services was established through a patented program called "Homebuilders." This was followed by the federal government's Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act in 1980, which requires states to provide *reasonable efforts* to prevent children being removed or make it possible for them to return when removal was necessary. As the article elaborates, IFPS has wide-ranging benefits to children, parents, families, communities and our society as a whole. Better outcomes for children are based on the fact that removed children spend an average of two years away from home, that children are twice as likely to die of abuse in foster care than with their own families, that maltreated children removed from their homes have higher delinquency, arrest, conviction and teen pregnancy rates than maltreated children who remain in their homes, and that children removed from their homes are subject to Post-Traumatic Stress, major depression, substance abuse and suicidality. With appropriate targeting, IFPS diverts over 80% of children from out-of-home placement, but estimates that states provide IFPS to only one child in ten. The article states that IFPS is extremely cost-effective, saving \$2.54 of benefits for every dollar of cost due to reduced out-of-home placement and lowered incidences of neglect and abuse. Citing *Child Trends*, the authors also claim that the states spent at least \$4 billion in Federal Title IV-E funds on foster care in FY2006, but only \$363 million of Title IV-B funds on family preservation and support, reunification and adoption promotion. The overall ratio, then, is approximately \$10 for out-of-home care funding to \$1 of in-home funding. IFPS is considered by experts in the field to be among the most successful family crisis intervention models.

Mincy, R. & Sylvester, K. (2005). *Promoting responsible fatherhood*. Baltimore, MD: The Annie Casey Foundation. Retrieved from http://www.aecf.org/upload/publicationfiles/fatherhood_pages.pdf

Part of a series from the Technical Assistance Resource Center of the Casey Foundation, "Promoting Responsible Fatherhood" is an excellent resource on the Making Connections program. It documents the growth of strong, credible fathers' advocacy organizations including the National Center for Fathering, the National Fatherhood Initiative and the National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families. A groundbreaking piece of literature as recently as 2005, the 38-page publication includes the elements of effective fatherhood programs, listing them as community-based outreach, life-skills training, links to physical and mental health care, education and job training, helping fathers get access to their children, legal services, peer support, parenting and relationship skills training, housing assistance, transportation, and services for formerly incarcerated fathers and their families. The Casey report directly challenges the formerly widely-held stereotype of "deadbeat Dads," which depicted fathers, especially ethnic minority fathers with less money, as unconcerned about their children's welfare. As the report points out, these men are not so much "dead-beat" but "dead-broke."

Minnesota Fathers & Families Network. (2010). *Making connections: Evaluation use by father-serving programs*. University of Minnesota Center for Urban and Regional Affairs.

An excellent example of father inclusion and fatherhood services evaluation, this 13-page report was researched and compiled on behalf of the Minnesota Fathers & Families Network by the University of Minnesota. The key objective was determining how Minnesota's fatherhood-service programs were using program assessments, evaluations, outcome data and evidence-based practices to support their work. The researchers sent out surveys early in 2010 to 72 social service and educational organizations that serve fathers in Minnesota. They received a good response rate of 44%, but comparisons with a 2006 study indicated that although there was an increase in father-serving programs throughout the state, the need for such programs had grown even more. Another major change was the large increase in respondents that provide parent education (64% in 2006 to 80% in 2010). Changes included a significant decrease in the agencies and organizations providing activities (from 59% to 44%), and steep declines in those providing supervised visits (from 28% to 8%) and health education and health care services (down from 36% in 2008 to 4% in 2010). Another striking finding was that many father-service organizations (40%) indicated that they were "unsure what a logic model is." Since a logic model typically includes the resources, activities, outputs, outcomes and goals of a program, it presents what the program intends to do and what impacts it hopes or expects to have. One-quarter of the respondents did not have written goals or objectives for their father-serving program, 40% had no operating evaluation process, and many did not seem to understand the difference between outputs and outcomes. The survey results reveal an interesting mixture of fathers' services in Minnesota. Parent education was widely offered and is viewed as a vital tool for educating fathers on positive male socialization and provides role models for father engagement with children. The survey also "revealed a paucity of services that address many of the most significant barriers to healthy father-child relationships." Mediation and co-parenting skills were only provided by 20% of the respondents, while supervised visitation, chemical-dependency/drug abuse prevention and housing were provided by only 8% to 12% of the respondents. The survey revealed a serious knowledge gap with respect to the logic model and program evaluation. The Minnesota Fathers & Families Network concluded that it can help fill the education gap by providing evaluation training and assistance.

National Center for Fathering. (2009). *Fathering court: Getting to the heart of child support*. Kansas City, MO: National Parent Teacher Association.

A 14-page document prepared by Fathers.com, the National Center for Fathering, "Fathering Court" presents an exciting new alternative to both the exclusion and the hunting down and prosecution of fathers whose child support is in arrearage. As the article points out, 25 million American children live apart from their fathers, and nearly 10 million of those fathers struggle to meet their financial obligations. Since child support payments are cumulative, and accrue interest, many men have become inundated by the sheer magnitude of the arrearages. Child support arrearages tend to create tension and conflict between fathers and mothers, often resulting in alienation rather than co-parenting. Sometimes the conflicts precipitate total estrangement and father absence, which children experience as abandonment. The criminalization of poverty, in the case of non-custodial parents, usually fathers, actually makes it more difficult for them to secure employment and advance in their lives. Many have been jailed for non-payment, further setting them back, and helping no one. Fathering Courts seek to provide pathways to responsible fatherhood by suspending prosecution and incarceration of persons with significant arrearages, while at the same time providing job development services. As the article

states, this can save communities millions of dollars in the provision of direct services, and no one can measure the true value of what is saved when a man is helped to become a tax-paying provider.

National Center for Fathering. (2009). *Survey of fathers' involvement in children's learning: Summary of study findings*. Kansas City, MO: National Parent Teacher Association.

A short summary of longitudinal study findings, the 4-page "Survey of Fathers' Involvement" has a wealth of information. A collaboration by the National Center for Fathering (NCF) and the National PTA, the report is based on data collected through a single-stage, random-dial, national phone survey of 1,000 adults. The study found that in the last 10 years, fathers have significantly increased their involvement with school-aged children, including walking or taking them to school (54%, up 16 points), visiting the classroom (41%, up 11 points), attending class events (35%, up 11 points) and volunteering at their child's school (28%, up 8 points.) Fathers also significantly increased their interaction with school personnel, attending parent-teacher conferences (77%, up from 69%) and school-based parents' meetings (59%, up 12 points). When respondents were asked how often they (as fathers), or the child's father, praised their child for good schoolwork, 86% said at least once or twice per month, 86% discussed the child's school progress with the child's mother, 78% helped their child with their homework and 75% participated in an extracurricular activity with the child. All of these percentages increased between 1999 and 2009. With respect to father awareness, 87% of the fathers polled stated that they were confident that their child was safe in school, and 75% reported having discussed school safety issues with their child. Over 78% knew the name of their child's teacher and 79% knew the name of the child's doctor.

National Fatherhood Initiative. (2006). *Pop's Culture: A national survey of dads' attitudes on fathering*. Retrieved from <http://www.fatherhood.org/Document.Doc?id=139>

Based on a telephone survey of 701 American fathers, aged 18 to 68, with at least one natural or adopted child the 29-page survey yields some interesting findings. Demographically, well over 80% of the respondents were married, and 90% lived with their child. Fully 99% of the men agreed that being a father was an important part of being the man that they are and 94% "strongly agreed." Still, 91% of the respondents agreed that there is a father-absence crisis in this country. The answer to this question varied considerably, with the very young, affluent and less religious fathers being less likely to see a father-absence crisis than older or religious fathers, and, especially, the poor. A little over half of the respondents stated that they were adequately prepared to become fathers when their first child was born, but 78% felt that they now have the necessary skills and knowledge to be good fathers. One somewhat surprising statistic was the response to questions about whether fathers had sought advice on fathering from other men. While over 68% of the unmarried fathers had sought advice on fathering from other men, almost 80% of the married fathers had also done so. The survey states that one of the most important recent developments in our society has been growth of the awareness that responsible fatherhood is critical to the well-being and happiness of children, men, families and society as a whole.

National Fatherhood Initiative. (2009). *Mama says: A national survey of mothers' attitudes on fathering*. Retrieved from <http://www.fatherhood.org/Document.Doc?id=128>.

A follow-up to “Pop’s Culture: A National Survey of Dad’s Attitudes on Fathering,” “Mama Says” reports on data collected through a national survey of 1,533 American mothers over 18 years old. The women were asked a series of questions concerning their attitudes toward the fathers of their children as well as about fathering in general. Not surprisingly, the women who lived with the fathers of their children gave them overwhelmingly high marks, while those who did not cohabit with their children’s fathers mostly had extremely negative opinions of them. An overwhelming majority of these mothers (93%) agreed that there is a father absence crisis in our country. A majority (65%) of all the women respondents, including those who were happily married or partnered, said that fathers were replaceable, and that a woman or another man could be an adequate substitute for an absent or uninvolved father. As the article’s authors point out, such beliefs are likely to contribute to father absence and lack of father involvement. It is noted in a graph on page 18 that the percentage of mothers who agree that fathers are replaceable varies from a high of 27% for those with a high school education or less to 5% for those with advanced degrees.

Ooms, T., Boggess, J., Menard, A., Myrick, M., Roberts, P., Tweedie, J., & Wilson, P. (2006). *Building bridges between healthy marriage, responsible fatherhood, and domestic violence programs*. Center for Law and Social Policy. Retrieved from <http://www.clasp.org>.

A legal and policy-oriented publication geared to a national conference, “Building Bridges” promoted the concept of healthy families in part by seeking to open a dialogue among various human services providers. The publication challenges the status quo in which groups that serve healthy marriage may seem to find themselves in conflict or competition with those promoting responsible fatherhood or an end to domestic and interpersonal violence. Although now four years old, the 19-page guide provides an excellent perspective on this serious, and still troublesome, issue.

Rector, R. (2010). *Married fathers: America’s greatest weapon against child poverty*. Retrieved from <http://report.heritage.org/wm2934>.

A conservative writer makes a strong case that marriage is a critical factor in the incidence of child poverty in the United States. Citing U.S. Census statistics, he states that the poverty rate for married couples with children was 6.4%, versus 35.6% for families headed by single parents. Being reared in an intact family by married parents “reduces a child’s probability of living in poverty by 80%.” When married couples are compared to single parents with the same educational level, the married couples have a poverty rate that is 70% lower. Stating that marriage is rapidly declining in America, he points out that in 1963, 93% of American children were born to married parents and claims that percentage has been reduced to 59%. Openly anti-liberal, the author makes thought-provoking observations for social workers. He notes that most of the 1.7 million U.S. children born out of wedlock in 2008 were born to young women (not teen-agers) with high school degrees or less. Rector strongly refutes the idea that the millions of single mothers in America are ignorant about or have no access to birth control, claiming to have data that demonstrates that the majority of the children born to these women are wanted. He states that most unmarried fathers are employed at the time their children are born and that “... if poor single mothers were married to the actual fathers of their children, two-thirds of them would be immediately lifted out of poverty.” He notes that college-educated women seldom bear children out of wedlock and that America is becoming a two-caste society, with single parents heading 70% of all poor

families. In 2009, the government provided “\$300 billion in means-tested welfare aid to single parents.” Finally, this author drives home the point that poor people in America want the same things as everyone else; marriage, stability and permanency. He urges the reconsideration of the idea that marriage is somehow irrelevant, insisting that is the time-tested antidote to poverty.

Rhode Island Child Welfare Institute. (2009). *Rhode Island resource manual for dads*. Retrieved from <http://www.ric.edu/cwi/pdf/RIResourceManualforDads.pdf>.

An excellent model of a comprehensive resource manual for fathers and practitioners. The authors say naming it “for Dads” was an organic idea from one of the client fathers. The 36-page manual was co-sponsored by the Child Welfare Fatherhood Project at the Rhode Island Child Welfare Institute with help of the Rhode Island College School of Social Work and printed by a local copy center. The resource manual includes sections on services, agencies, legal representation, transportation information and free activities for fathers and children.

Rodriguez, J. (2009). *Practitioners effective fatherhood services scale*. Arizona Fathers & Families Coalition of America. Retrieved from <http://www.azffc.org>.

A Power Point presentation which illustrates self-assessment and progress in the field.

Rosin, H. (July/August 2010). *The end of men*. Atlantic Monthly. [Online]. Retrieved from <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2010/07/the-end-of-men/8135>.

Although sensationally-titled, this 19-page article was written by a prominent woman journalist and is neither tongue-in-cheek nor silly nor anti-male. In fact, it seems to be oddly sympathetic to men, and backs up its premise with serious documentation. The author chronicles how women have, in fact, outpaced men all over the world and particularly in American society. She states that in 2010, for the first time American history, women now hold most of the nation’s jobs. Women now dominate colleges and professional schools, earning three out of five of the bachelor’s degrees awarded this past spring, and 60% of all Master’s degrees. The author claims that the American working class is also becoming a “matriarchy, with men increasingly absent from the home and women making all the decisions.”

San Diego County Board of Supervisors. (2009). *San Diego County report on children & families*. Retrieved from www.sdcountyreportcard.org.

An excellent resource on San Diego County’s children and families, replete with current statistics and narrative summaries on prenatal care, low birth weight, breastfeeding, births to teens, immunization, school attendance and achievement, obesity, substance abuse, juvenile crime and probation, youth DUI, poverty, food stamps, domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, child victims of violent crimes, and childhood mortality. Expert demographers at the Children’s Institute in Pacific Beach have compiled a panoramic “snapshot” of San Diego County’s children and families in 2008. The report indicates progress in some areas, but also tells the truth about worsening trends such as youth suicide attempts. The 94-page document includes full-color charts and graphs that clarify the copious information. Hard copies are available from the Children’s Initiative, (858) 581-5880, or electronically from the website listed above.

Shapiro, A., & Krysik, J. (2010). Finding fathers in social work research and practice. *Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics*, 7(1). Retrieved from <http://www.socialworker.com/jswve/spring2010/4findingfathers.pdf>.

A scholarly article which appeared in a professional journal for social workers, "Finding Fathers in Social Work" acknowledges that the inclusion of fathers is consistent with social work ethics. Citing the preamble of the National Association of Social Workers' Code of ethics, the authors quote "the primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people." They also note that the NASW Code was revised in 2008 to specifically prohibit discrimination by social workers based on gender, among other criteria, and thus guaranteeing equal treatment of fathers as parents. The 8-page article is itself a five-year review of five social work journals and one family-focused interdisciplinary journal in order to document inclusion of fathers in social work research and practice. The authors conclude that there exists a "relative deficiency of father inclusion in both social work practice and family focused research." This implies that more education in this area is needed in order for social workers to be able to better do their jobs and conform to their own ethics.

Turetsky, V. (2009). *The Responsible Fatherhood and Healthy Families Act of 2007: Can we put poor men to work?* Washington, D. C.: American Enterprise Institute.

The Responsible Fatherhood and Healthy Families Act of 2009 was the reintroduction to the U.S. Senate of a bill (S. 3607) originally introduced in 2006 by Senator Birch Bayh and then-Senator Barack Obama. The Bayh-Obama-Davis bill contains provisions for healthy marriage and responsible fatherhood grants, child support (funding, distribution and debt), employment programs, non-custodial parent earned income tax credit and state policy review commissions. It also increases TANF funding to \$200, with a responsible fatherhood set-aside of \$100 million. It expands allowable fatherhood activities to promote healthy relationships and break the cycle of early parenting. New healthy partnership grants (\$75 million over 3 years) to prevent domestic violence are also part of the bill. The bill eliminates the \$25 annual parental service fee and allows 100% family distribution of child support collected. Significantly, states may no longer consider incarceration as "voluntary unemployment" which often leads to huge arrearages. Economic opportunity grants include court/child support supervised employment programs for non-custodial parents (\$45 million over 3 years), transitional jobs (Dept. of Labor \$105 million/3 years) plus public/private career pathways partnerships (\$105 million over 3 years). Eligibility: Non-custodial parents, including ex-offenders, with 1) barriers to employment, 2) history of child support non-payment, and 3) in need of employment to pay child support. Non-custodial parent households will be able to claim a food stamp deduction or exclusion for child support paid. Nationwide implementation of programs based on this new legislation could result in the creation of not just jobs, but thousands of new taxpayers, and a significant reduction in public funds expended to feed and clothe children who have parents. Research has shown what human societies have instinctively known for centuries: People love their kids and want to care for them.

United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau. (2010). *Father engagement: 2005 – present*. Retrieved from <http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/teleconferences/3-10-10/Father%20Engagement%20Bibliography.pdf>

A federally-contracted bibliography with titles including Stephenson's Q Methodology (QM) for Assessing Child-Father Attachment, Advocating for Non-Resident Fathers, Fatherhood in the Child Welfare System, Engaging Fathers in the Child Protective Process, Fathering with Multiple Partners, A National Study of Male Involvement Among Families in Contact with the Welfare System, Working with African American Fathers, Representing Incarcerated Nonresident Fathers in Child Welfare Cases, Couple Relationship Quality and Co-Parenting, Fathers and Child Maltreatment, Fathers and Alcohol Abuse, Father Friendly Check-Up for Child Welfare Agencies, and a Basic Fatherhood Curriculum Package.