



2019 Annual Meeting & Conference

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OCTOBER 28-29, 2019
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Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies. In That Order.

Centering Mother's Voices in Maternal Care.

ENGAGING MEN DURING POSTPARTUM

Including men in every facet of a child's life

WHY INCLUDE FATHERS

- ▶ **During pregnancy.** Based on research findings, fathers indirectly impact fetal development, birth weight, and preterm birth. This is proposed to be primarily through their effect on maternal well-being, stress levels and behaviors during pregnancy. When fathers or partners are involved and supportive of the mother during pregnancy, mothers tend to obtain prenatal care earlier, smoke/drink alcohol/use illicit drugs less, exercise more, and eat healthier while pregnant.^{2, 3} The involvement of fathers during pregnancy has been associated with reduced risk of very low birth weight, small for gestational age, and pre-term birth.⁴ Similarly, when fathers were not involved, pregnancy outcomes were at higher risk for negative birth outcomes.⁴
- ▶ **After delivery.** In the first months of infancy, fathers can influence important maternal behaviors such as breastfeeding. Study findings indicate that when fathers are on board, they have an influence on the decision of mothers to initiate and continue breastfeeding.⁵ Fathers can encourage a positive attitude towards breastfeeding and provide practical support to the mother of their child. Often, fathers want to support breastfeeding and encourage their partners to do so, but they feel left out of breastfeeding education and promotion.

WHY INCLUDE FATHERS CONTINUED... FATHERS AND POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION

- ▶ Fathers can be an important part of helping mothers who are dealing with post-partum depression. It has been observed that a mother is more likely to experience depression if she has a poor relationship with the baby's father, if the father was not present at the time of the baby's birth, if the mother perceives that the father is providing insufficient emotional or practical support, and if the father is being critical, coercive or violent. Among mothers who were satisfied with the father's involvement, the perception of the amount of fathers' care giving is associated with fewer depressive symptoms.

Burgess A. Fathers and Parenting Interventions: What Works? Preliminary Research Findings and Their Applications. The Fatherhood Institute. 2013. Accessed April 27, 2017. Retrieved from <http://www.fatherhoodinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Fathers-and-Parenting-Interventions-What-Works.pdf>

Fagan J, Lee Y. Perceptions and satisfaction with father involvement and adolescent mothers' postpartum depressive symptoms. *Journal of Youth Adolescent*. September 2010; 39(9):1109-21. doi: 10.1007/s10964-009-9444-6

WHY INCLUDE FATHERS CONTINUED...

THE FATHER ABSENCE CRISIS IN AMERICA

There is a crisis in America. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 19.7 million children, more than 1 in 4, live without a father in the home. Consequently, there is a “father factor” in nearly all of the societal ills facing America today. Research shows when a child is raised in a father-absent home, he or she is affected in the following ways...

Source: 2017. U.S. Census Bureau. Data represent children living without a biological, step, or adoptive father.

WHY INCLUDE FATHERS CONTINUED...



WHY INCLUDE FATHERS CONTINUED...



Just the Facts

Individuals from father absent homes are

279%

more likely to carry guns and deal drugs than peers living with their fathers.

SOURCE: Allen, A. N., & Lo, C. C. (2012). Drugs, guns, and disadvantaged youths: Co-occurring behavior and the code of the street. *Crime & Delinquency*, 58(6), 932-953.

National Fatherhood Initiative®

FATHER FACTS SEVENTH EDITION 7

WHY INCLUDE FATHERS CONTINUED...



**JUST THE
FACTS**

Involvement improves their children's overall emotional and social well-being.

**National
Fatherhood
Initiative®**
www.fatherhood.org

SOURCE: Adamsons, K., & Johnson, S. K. (2013). An updated and expanded meta-analysis of nonresident fathering and child well-being. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 27, 589-599.

“ I CANNOT THINK OF ANY NEED
IN CHILDHOOD AS STRONG AS
THE NEED FOR A FATHER’S
PROTECTION ”

-SIGMUND FREUD

OBJECTIVES

1. ESTABLISHING A WELCOME ENVIRONMENT FOR FATHERS
2. INCLUSION OF FATHERS IN INFANT CARE
3. TRAINING STAFF IN A NON-BIASED APPROACH

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ESTABLISHING A WELCOME ENVIRONMENT FOR FATHERS

ESTABLISHING A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT FOR FATHERS

- ▶ Due to a focus on mothering over the last two decades, many maternal and infant health programs (MIH) promote a perception that they are only there to serve women.
- ▶ We must not assume that we know what fathers/men need. We must ask and display an attitude and willingness to learn from and listen to fathers/men
- ▶ We must change the persona of exclusion for men. We must create an environment that welcomes inclusion.

WHAT DO YOUR OFFICE POSTERS LOOK LIKE?



WHAT DO YOUR BROCHURES LOOK LIKE?



Show Your Love. Your body will thank you for it.



What loving steps can you take?

1. Be active for at least 30 minutes every day.
2. Eat healthy foods and get to or maintain a healthy weight.
3. Reduce stress in your life and get mentally healthy.
4. Get regular checkups as recommended by your healthcare provider.
5. Stop smoking, using street drugs or missing prescription drugs. Avoid drinking too much alcohol.
6. Choose an effective form of birth control and use it regularly until you're ready to start a family. Then make sure you are as healthy as possible before becoming pregnant.
7. Take a multivitamin with 400 mcg of folic acid every day.

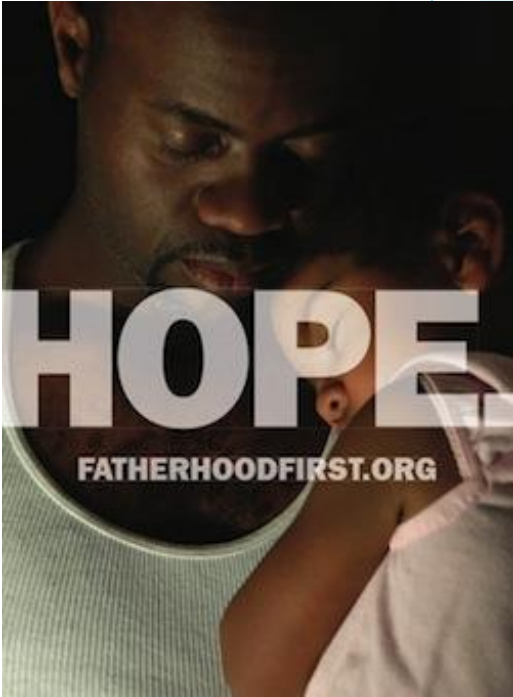
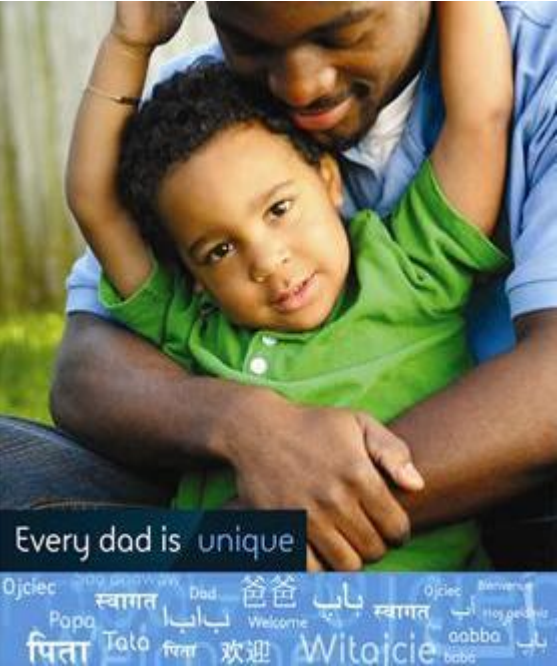


WHAT DOES YOUR OFFICE STAFF LOOK LIKE?



PRACTICE STRATEGICAL INCLUSION BY...

▶ HANGING POSTERS THAT FEATURE MEN



PRACTICE STRATEGICAL INCLUSION BY...

- ▶ PLACING MAGAZINES IN THE WAITING AREA THAT WOULD GENERALLY INTEREST FATHERS/MEN



HEART OF GEORGIA HEALTHY START FATHERS AMONG MEN (FAM) PROGRAM

- ▶ ORGANIZATIONS CAN ALSO CREATE A SPACE FOR MEN BY PARTNERING WITH A LOCAL BARBERSHOP. FATHERS AMONG MEN HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN HOSTING MONTHLY “SHOPTALKS” AT TOP OF THE LINE BARBERSHOP IN DUBLIN, GEORGIA.



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SHOPTALK

ENGAGING MEN AT THE BARBERSHOP

- ▶ BEGAN MAY 2019. PROVIDES A COMFORTABLE PLACE FOR MEN TO COMMUNICATE.
- ▶ HAS GROWN SIGNIFICANTLY AND HAS EVEN HAD THE ATTENDANCE OF CITY COUNCILMEN
- ▶ HAS GAINED LOCAL ATTENTION FROM NEWS AGENCIES
- ▶ BASED ON 24/7 DAD CURRICULUM NATIONAL FATHERHOOD INITIATIVE
- ▶ PROMOTES RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR FATHERS AND CHILDREN
- ▶ INCREASES FATHERS AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING IN THE LIVES OF THEIR CHILDREN
- ▶ PROMOTES A SUPPORT GROUP FOR MEN STRIVING TO BE EXCELLENT FATHERS

SHOPTALK 13WMAZ NEWS



SHOPTALK MEETINGS



Shoptalk provides food, laughter, information, and a great support group for men/fathers.

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INCLUSION OF FATHERS IN INFANT CARE

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INCLUSION OF FATHERS IN INFANT CARE

- ▶ The evidence demonstrating fathers' potential to positively influence their children's health, social success and academic achievements is now robust and compelling. A key feature of studies examining parental influences on child development published in the last five years is the separation of independent father and mother effects. A fathers' influence on children's cognitive development, social skills, mental health, literacy and maths achievement is found to be separate to that of mothers', to operate in different pathways to that of mothers or to compensate for deficiencies in mothers' parenting. This evidence does not, overall, show fathers' influence as superior to that of mothers but as a separate, important factor in children's successful transition through infancy to adulthood

Cabrera, Fagan, Wight, & Schadler, 2011;
Pouget, Serbin, Stack, & Schwartzman, 2011; Pears, Kim, Capaldi, Kerr, & Fisher, 2012;
Herbert, Harvey, Lugo-Cuelas, & Breaux, 2013; Majdandžić, Möller, de Vente, Bögels, & van den Boom, 2014.

BARRIERS TO INFANT CARE

- ▶ Socially, women are seen as being the primary party in reproductive health, especially for pregnancy and early childhood. As a result, barriers exist at various levels of society, including individual, family, community, institutional and policy levels
- ▶ On a personal level, socio-economic issues such as
 - ▶ Lack of employment
 - ▶ Current/past incarceration
 - ▶ Multiple child support responsibilities can impact fathers' ability to be supportive of the family. These issues have been known to impact fathers' sense of inadequacy, which in turn can lead to avoidance of responsibilities they feel they cannot address. This sense of inadequacy can also result from their own lack of male role models during their upbringing.

Alio AP, Lewis CA, Scarborough K, Harris K, Fiscella K. A community perspective on the role of fathers during pregnancy: a qualitative study. *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth*. 2013;13:60. doi:10.1186/1471-2393-13-60

Maternal & Infant Health Center of Excellence June 2017

Rationale and Strategies for Engaging Fathers in Maternal and Infant Health Programs: A Summary of Promising Practices Prepared by Amina Alio PHD page 4,5.

BARRIERS TO INFANT CARE CONTINUED...

- ▶ For new fathers, the lack of experience and possibly not having a father themselves, can lead to fears of responsibility, or of the unknown territory of fatherhood
- ▶ The fathers may not live near their child or the mother carrying their child. This may prevent fathers from being engaged in their child's life or from participating in a maternal and infant health program.

BARRIERS TO INFANT CARE CONTINUED...

- ▶ The relationship with the mother has been identified as an important barrier to fathers' involvement. These complex and sensitive relationships make it difficult for fathers but also for MIH programs: the mother serves as the gatekeeper to the father being invited or engaged in the program.
- ▶ There are many cultural variations in perceptions of fatherhood and fathers in communities. Many myths exist about African American, Latino, Native American or fathers from poor communities in general. Mothers and MIH staff may transfer these beliefs onto the way in which they deal with fathers, giving the men little chance to become honestly engaged. With the high rates of incarcerations and high rates of single motherhood in many minority and communities with high poverty, the assumption is often that these men are “dead-beat dads” that should be ignored.

INSTITUTIONAL AND POLICY BARRIERS

- ▶ Institutions providing MIH services are focused on women and fathers are not expected to be involved in preconception, prenatal, postnatal or inter-conception care.
- ▶ Overarching policies and laws also reflect the tendency to focus on mother and child, rather than the family as a whole, and do not favor men at all.
 - ▶ government programs for aid to families with children have traditionally penalized families where the father is present, regardless of his own income or employment situation.
 - ▶ laws may discourage mothers from reporting paternity, in order to either protect the father or so that their assistance is not reduced as a result.

INSTITUTIONAL AND POLICY BARRIERS CONTINUED...

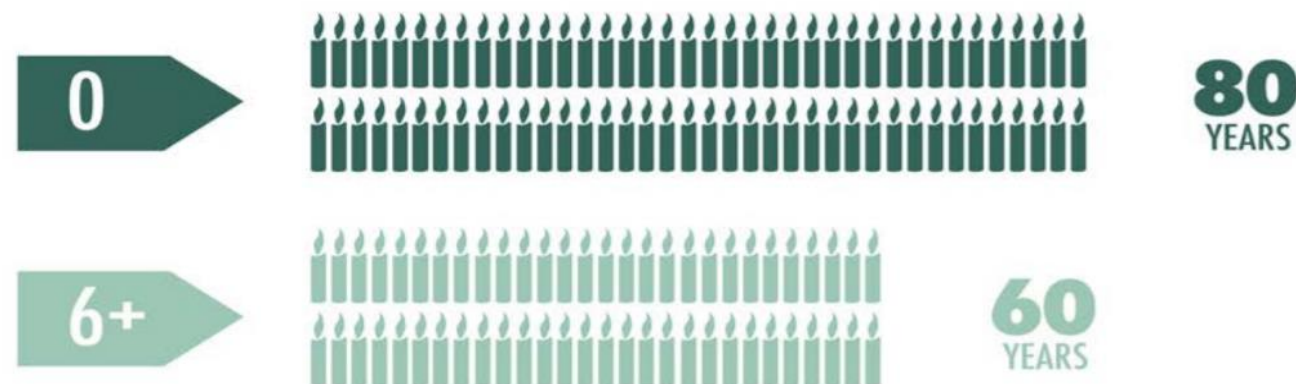
- ▶ With regards to MIH, the lack of funding for fatherhood programs is an important barrier that impacts:
- ▶ Staff training
- ▶ Hiring of male coordinators
- ▶ Providing father-focused activities
- ▶ Engaging in outreach activities specifically targeting fathers.

FATHERLESSNESS A CONTRIBUTING FACTOR TO ADVERSE CHILD EXPERIENCES (ACES)

Adverse Childhood Experiences-looking at how ACEs affect our lives and society ACE Study Child Welfare Information Gateway Economic Cost of Child Abuse and Neglect Essentials for Childhood

LIFE EXPECTANCY

People with six or more ACEs died nearly **20 years earlier on average** than those without ACEs.



ECONOMIC TOLL

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates the lifetime costs associated with child maltreatment at **\$124 billion**.



INTENTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR MATERNAL AND INFANT HEALTH PROGRAMS TO PROMOTE FATHER INCLUSION

- ▶ Define the target male population
 - ▶ Who does your program wish to engage, fathers of the infants served, partners of the mothers served, fathers in the community, adolescent fathers, incarcerated fathers, or another population of fathers? Biological fathers or father-figures?
- ▶ If possible, hire a male as your fatherhood coordinator
- ▶ Tailor the message:
 - ▶ Are your messages and incentives for participation tailored to men/fathers?
- ▶ Identify partners and community resources for fathers/men: should you engage men in your program, to what agencies can you refer them for services needed?

INTENTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR MATERNAL AND INFANT HEALTH PROGRAMS TO PROMOTE FATHER INCLUSION

- ▶ Select outreach strategies:
 - ▶ Where and how can you reach your target population of men or fathers?
- ▶ Assess program progress:
 - ▶ how well are you engaging fathers targeted? What outreach strategies, messages, activities, etc., work and what needs to be improved upon?
- ▶ REMEMBER SOMEONE MUST HAVE A PASSION FOR FATHERHOOD
 - ▶ Passion is defined as a barely controllable emotion
 - ▶ Without passion most fatherhood programs will focus on numbers instead of fathers

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TRAINING STAFF IN A NON-BIASED APPROACH

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- ▶ Does the entire staff understand the role fathers play in the lives of children?
- ▶ If there is no male on staff, are the females trained specifically to work with men?
- ▶ What biases may be influencing your efforts to work with men?
- ▶ Is there a dedicated person for the fatherhood program?
- ▶ Do Case Managers promote the use of the fatherhood program?
- ▶ Does the staff stereotype fathers?

TRAINING STAFF

TIPS FOR WOMEN WORKING WITH DADS

- ▶ Hear men out. Find out their interests.
- ▶ Do more facilitation of the discussion than teaching the content.
- ▶ Be prepared for some men to challenge your work in this field.
- ▶ Ask “What do you think?” instead of “How do you feel?”
- ▶ Keep discussions solution-focused instead of idea or sharing focused.
- ▶ Promote the message that dads can go to prenatal and well baby visits.

TRAINING STAFF

TIPS FOR WOMEN WORKING WITH DADS

- ▶ Start with the assumption that fathers are important to their families and really want to be a part of the group.
- ▶ Have a sense of humor.
- ▶ Try to make ice-breakers activity-based and relevant to the topic at hand.

TIPS FROM MEN WHO HAVE BEEN IN WOMEN LED GROUPS

- Do not openly challenge a man to openly respond in front of the class or group.
- Men like to be direct and to the point.
- Allow men to be the expert on their own lives and families.
- Be patient and curious about what men have to say. Learn from men as they learn from you.

TRAINING STAFF

COMMUNICATING WITH FATHERS

- ▶ It is imperative that women and men who communicate with fathers display speech that recognizes them as essential parts of the family.
- ▶ According to the Zero to Three National Parent Survey (2016), many fathers report feeling frustrated or shut out by well-meaning comments. The survey highlighted one father who felt upset by people's references to his spending time with his children as babysitting: "Give me the credit and support I deserve. When I'm with my kids, don't assume I'm the temporary helper. I'm not "babysitting" my own kids; they need me and I love being a dad. I feel like my life started when I became a father. But too often, I feel judged - by strangers, by family members and even by my child's mom. When I feel stressed and overwhelmed, I don't feel like I get enough support. Like most dads, I'm not in it for the credit, but I'm not getting the credit I deserve."

TRAINING STAFF CONTINUED...

- ▶ One of the primary reasons for the challenges female staff face in working effectively with fathers is the tendency of people to gravitate toward, spend time with, and be most comfortable around others who are similar. This fact extends to gender. Research in early childhood programs, for example, shows that women are more comfortable working with women.
- ▶ This quite natural gender-based tension can extend to relationships between female social workers and the men and fathers their organizations serve. This tension can also be heightened by the personal histories women have with the men and fathers in their own lives. **Female social workers may unconsciously bring “baggage” from poor relationships they have with men and fathers in their own lives into their work with the men and fathers served by their organizations**

Fagan, J. (1996). Principles for developing male involvement programs in early childhood settings: a personal experience. *Young Children*, 51 (4) 64-71.

TRAINING STAFF CONTINUED...

- ▶ The entire staff must understand the challenges facing fathers and mothers, which ultimately become challenges to social services.
 - ▶ Tensions between mothers and fathers, especially when those relationships have a history of abuse or violence.
 - ▶ Locating and maintaining contact with non-custodial and non-residential fathers.
 - ▶ Lack of knowledge about the desire of most fathers to be involved in the lives of their children and the challenges these fathers face in becoming involved.
 - ▶ Relationships mothers may have with men who are not their children's fathers (e.g. boyfriends who live with mothers) and how those relationships can complicate the relationships between mothers and the fathers, as well as, the relationships between the fathers and their children.
 - ▶ Working with mothers who have children by multiple fathers.

TRAINING STAFF CONTINUED...

- ▶ All of these factors make it much easier for program staff to default to working primarily or exclusively with mothers and not reach out to fathers or other significant men in children's lives (e.g. father figures).

- ▶ THIS CAUSES THE ENTIRE FAMILY TO **MISS OUT!**

- ▶ **Mothers miss out** on a healthier relationship with their children's fathers and, most important, the additional support fathers bring that will give mothers more energy to be better parents.
- ▶ **Fathers miss out** on skill building opportunities that can help them be more involved, responsible, and committed fathers.
- ▶ **Children miss out** on the unique and irreplaceable role that both mothers and fathers bring to the parenting process.

TRAINING STAFF CONTINUED...

- ▶ Choose a curriculum and set up training for your staff.
 - ▶ Curriculums without training are useless.
 - ▶ The fatherhood staff must grasp the best practices of the curriculum and possess the ability to communicate this information to other case managers that work with mothers.
 - ▶ “Train the trainer” programs such as 24/7 Dad A.M./P.M. provide excellent resources and support for working with fathers.
 - ▶ Importantly, it is a must that you designate an individual/team to the work of fatherhood.
 - ▶ Understand that building a fatherhood program is labor intensive.

TRAINING STAFF CONTINUED...

FATHERS AMONG MEN MODEL

- ▶ Fathers Among Men (FAM) began program building in January 2019.
- ▶ As of October 2019, we have 63 fathers in our program.
- ▶ We have established:
 - ▶ An intake/enrollment form for our program.
 - ▶ Filing system to keep records for each father. This includes logging information into Well Family System.
 - ▶ Shoptalk support meetings: 24/7 Dad A.M.
 - ▶ Recreational Outings: Atlanta Hawks game April 2019.
 - ▶ Home visits for fathers
 - ▶ Gas cards/haircut cards as rewards for those who attend shoptalk meetings.
 - ▶ Continued contact with maternal case managers to improve father involvement.
 - ▶ High School fatherhood classes for fathers in high school.
 - ▶ Department of Juvenile Justice pre-fatherhood classes for at risk youth
 - ▶ Work with local YDC to provide pre-fatherhood/manhood classes for incarcerated youth
 - ▶ Partnership with Reaching Our Brothers Everywhere (ROBE) to promote breastfeeding with fathers.

ATLANTA HAWKS TRIP APRIL 2019



INDIANA PACERS VS ATLANTA HAWKS

WRAP UP

FATHERS ARE IMPORTANT AND MUST BE INCLUDED IN THE LIVES OF
FAMILIES

FATHERS ARE
IMPORTANT

FATHERS ARE
NEEDED

FATHERS MAKE
A DIFFERENCE

JUST THE FACTS

Children living
without their
father in the
home are
47%
more likely to
live in poverty.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Health
& Human Services (2012).
Information on poverty and income
statistics: A summary of 2012
current population survey data.
Retrieved from:
[http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/12/Poverty
AndIncomeEst/ib.cfm](http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/12/PovertyAndIncomeEst/ib.cfm)

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Fatherhood
Initiative[®]**

www.fatherhood.org



FATHERS
ARE
IMPORTANT

FATHERS
ARE NEEDED

FATHERS
MAKE A
DIFFERENCE

Just the Facts

**1 in 4
children
live in
a home
without
a dad.**

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau. (2015). C3. Living arrangements of children under 18 years/1 and marital status of parents, by age, sex, race, and hispanic origin/2 and selected characteristics of the child for all children: 2014. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau.

National
Fatherhood
Initiative®

FATHER FACTS

SEVENTH EDITION

7

**FATHERS ARE
IMPORTANT**

**FATHERS ARE
NEEDED**

**FATHERS MAKE
A DIFFERENCE**



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