

Skills and Strategies for Working with Fathers

**Advanced Skills
Training for the
DFCS Professional**

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Course Information

Course Description

This course focuses on the importance of fathers in children's lives, the current research related to father involvement, and how this information can be applied throughout the child welfare continuum of services. The course includes strategies for identifying, locating, and engaging fathers in the casework process. Additionally, this course is designed to equip social services case managers and supervisors to work successfully with fathers in a wide range of family situations and structures.

Training Goals

As a result of this training, participants will:

- Increase their knowledge about issues unique to working with fathers in child welfare.
- Make every effort to identify, locate, and engage the father of each child on their caseload.
- Involve fathers to the greatest extent possible in the case planning and service provision process.
- Work successfully with fathers in a wide range of family situations and structures.

Learning Objectives

To build toward these goals, the following instructional objectives will be addressed. Participants will be able to:

- Recognize the need and importance of locating absent fathers.
- Recognize the need and importance of engaging fathers, father figures, and paternal relatives.
- Assess personal values in the context of their relationship with their fathers or other significant men in their lives and analyze how these values can influence their work with fathers.
- Identify strategies for identifying and locating absent fathers and completing diligent search requirements.
- Describe the process for paternity establishment and legitimization in Georgia.
- Identify strategies for addressing barriers to engagement with fathers and paternal relatives.

- Identify strategies for engaging mothers around issues of father involvement
- Identify engagement and interviewing techniques to use with fathers.
- Develop strategies to assist fathers in being involved with their children.
- Identify strategies for assessing a father's, or other significant male's, relationship with the child and family.
- Identify characteristics of fathers that are potential resources and potential risks to children.
- Discuss techniques for assessing a father's strengths and needs
- Identify formal and informal support services for fathers
- Describe the attributes of effective services for fathers
- Develop strategies to assist fathers in being involved with their children
- Relate their work with fathers to specific Child and Family Service Review (CFSR) outcomes for child safety, permanency, and well-being.

Training Agendas

Training begins at 9 a.m. and ends at 4 p.m. Each day there will be a morning, afternoon, and lunch break.

DAY ONE

Welcome and Introductions

Section 1: The Importance of Fathers

Section 2: Legal Issues

DAY TWO

Section 3: Engaging Fathers

Section 4: Identifying Fathers' Strengths and Needs

Section 5: Services for Fathers

Closing Activities

Child and Family Service Review (CFSR Issues)

Georgia's 2007 Child and Family Service Review Final Report noted several areas for improving work with children and families. The indicators (i.e. items) listed under each outcome are included in the assessment of the state's achievement for that outcome. Each of these indicators applies to work with fathers.

Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.

NOTE: *The following indicators relate to the agency's efforts to **achieve** the stated permanency goal for a child*

- Item 8: Reunification, guardianship, and placement with relatives
- Item 9: Adoption

Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.

- Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care
- Item 14: Preserving connections
- Item 15: Relative placement
- Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents

Well-Being 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.

- Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents
- Item 18: Child/family involvement in case planning
- Item 20: Worker visits with parent(s)

Research Findings about Father Involvement

Below are some of the research findings about father involvement included in the book, *Father Facts*, published by the National Fatherhood Initiative.

- In a study of 799 families from the National Survey of Families and Households, fathers in two-parent biological families reported spending more time with their children and having higher family cohesion than did fathers in all other types of family structures.
- 63% of black children, 35% of Hispanic children, and 28% of white children are living in homes absent their biological father.
- Half of black children (51%) live with single mothers, compared to one in four Hispanic children (25%), and one in six white children (18%).
- Of the 20.4 million children living with a single parent in 2003, 17.1 million (83%) were living with their mother; 3.4 million (17%) were living with their father.
- Marital status is the strongest predictor of father presence or absence. Compared to children born within marriage, children born to cohabitating parents are three times more likely to experience father absence. Children born to unmarried, non-cohabitating parents are four times as likely to have an absent father.
- When asked to name the “adults you look up to and admire,” only 20% of children in single-parent families named their fathers, as compared with 52% of children in two-parent families.
- In-hospital paternity establishment was connected to a 16% greater chance of financial contributions from the father. Fathers who establish paternity in the hospital were also more likely to be supportive of the mother and were 15% more likely to have seen the child in the last month when compared to fathers who did not establish paternity.
- In a longitudinal study of males 14 to 22 years old, it was found that after controlling for other variables (such as education, race, income, and neighborhood characteristics) boys who grew up outside of intact marriages were, on average, more than twice as likely as other boys to end up in jail. Each year spent without a dad in the home increased the odds of future incarceration by 5%. Boys raised by unmarried mothers were at greatest risk, mostly because they spent the most time in a home without a father. In contrast, boys living with their single father were no more likely to be incarcerated than those living with both parents.

Adapted from: Horn, W.F., & Sylvester, T. (2007). *Father Facts (5th ed.)*. Gaithersburg, MD: National Fatherhood Initiative.

Fatherhood Questionnaire

Test your knowledge about fatherhood research.

1. Research indicates there are no variations in the amount of time and ways that fathers involve themselves with their children when examining the race, ethnic, and cultural background of fathers.
 TRUE FALSE
2. Non-custodial African-American fathers are less likely to spend time with their children than white and Hispanic fathers.
 TRUE FALSE
3. Nearly half of all poor children under the age of 6 live in a father absent household.
 TRUE FALSE
4. 20% of all children who live apart from their fathers have never stepped foot in their father's home.
 TRUE FALSE
5. A father's level of education appears to have no impact on the amount of time he spends with his children.
 TRUE FALSE
6. The United States is the world leader in fatherless families.
 TRUE FALSE
7. Ten million children in the United States have, at some time, had a parent (typically a father) who has been incarcerated.
 TRUE FALSE
8. African-American children are nearly nine times more likely to have a parent in prison than white children.
 TRUE FALSE
9. White fathers typically spend more time playing with their children than do African-American fathers.
 TRUE FALSE
10. About half of all African-American children live in single parent homes with their mothers.
 TRUE FALSE

Self Awareness and Work with Men Exercise



All of us have values, ethics, ideals, and principles that form the framework for our lives. The following seven questions will help you sort through these values in the context of your relationships with men.

1. A motto is a creed that summarizes our approach to life. It often has to do with work ethics, values about life, belief systems, or even a favorite saying. It could be positive or negative. If your father had a motto, what would it be?

2. Other than your biological father, who were important men in your life when you were growing up? What was your relationship with them like?

3. What did these important men teach you about what men are like?

4. If your father was active in your life as you were growing up, what did he teach you that you can embrace? What did he teach you that you want to discard?

5. If your father was not active in your life as you were growing up, how did his absence shape and form who you are today?

6. Think about the role your father played or is playing in your life in general. What impact does it have on your work?

7. What has been the most surprising aspect of this exercise?

Father Definitions in Georgia

- **BIOLOGICAL FATHER:**
The man whose sperm caused the baby to be conceived.
- **PUTATIVE or ALLEGED FATHER:**
A man who someone claims is the biological father of the baby.
- **PRESUMED FATHER:** A man who was married to the baby's mother at the time of the baby's birth, or shortly thereafter.
- **LEGAL FATHER:** A man who:
 - a) Has legally adopted the child.
 - b) Was married to the biological mother of that child at the time the child was conceived or was born, unless such paternity was disproved by a final order.
 - c) Married the legal mother of the child shortly after the child was born and recognized the child as his own.
 - d) Has legitimated the child by a final order.



Importance of Establishing Paternity

Identity	Only if unmarried parents acknowledge paternity will the father's information appear on the child's birth certificate.
Medical	When parents acknowledge paternity, the child will have access to information about medical histories on both sides of his or her family. This is especially important in situations in which the child inherits a medical problem. Additionally, after a father completes a Paternity Acknowledgment, he may be able to add the child to his health insurance policy.
Father-Child Relationship	It is important for a child to know his or her mother and father, and to benefit from a relationship with both parents. Once a child is legitimized, the father is more likely to maintain his relationship with the child. The father's extended family may also be more likely to participate in that child's life.
Adoption	When a father signs the Paternity Acknowledgment Form, his information is automatically entered in the Putative Father Registry. This means that the father gains the right to be notified of any plans to have the child adopted by someone else. This provides an important safeguard for the father, the child, and prospective adoptive parents.
Custody and Visitation	If parents are unmarried at the time of a child's birth, the mother is presumed to have custody. A father cannot petition the court for custody and/or visitation until the child has been legitimized. If the father decides later to seek custody and/or visitation rights, the legitimation portion is complete and will save him both time and money in the judicial process.
Support	Both parents have a responsibility to support their child, both emotionally and financially. If the parents choose to separate and paternity is already decided, it is easier for the mother to obtain child support from the father.

Financial	<p>Acknowledging paternity potentially allows the child to qualify for important financial benefits from the father. Possibilities include social security, pension, retirement, and unemployment benefits; life insurance; veteran's benefits; and inheritance rights in the event that something happens to the father. Social Security serves as an insurance program for the children of workers who become seriously disabled or die. Social Security is, in fact, the government's largest children's program, paying out roughly \$16 billion annually to child beneficiaries under age 18. More children benefit from Social Security than from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). About 3.1 million children under 18 receive benefits because a parent has died, retired, or can no longer work because of disability.</p>
Emotional Health	<p>According to a study conducted by The Bernard L. Pacella Parent Child Center, a "Father's responsiveness to his children and his emotional availability are key characteristics in a child's development...Children whose fathers are available and involved have higher self-esteem, are more autonomous and self assertive. Paternal involvement seems to predict adult adjustment better than...maternal involvement...unquestioningly, fathers can help their children develop a sense of competence, security, and self-control."</p> <p>According to Ohio State University research, "Importance of Fathers in Children's Asset Development," infants whose fathers were closely involved with their care were found to be more cognitively developed at one year of age. Also, fathers' positive and sensitive attitude toward infants were related to their children's problem-solving competence later in life. Clearly, a father's involvement is important to his children's intellectual and emotional development.</p>

Adapted from: Georgia DHR Paternity Program
Two Peachtree St, NW; SU-425; Atlanta, GA 30303-3142 Phone: 706-721-7001
Toll Free: 866-296-8262 Fax: 706-721-6976

For more information on **Paternity Establishment** through the Office of Child Support Services, go to the agency website:
<http://ocss.dhr.georgia.gov/portal/site/DHR-OCSE/menuitem.6c28cdfba73e1fca7da1df8dda1010a0/?vgnextoid=d46a10ad92000010VgnVCM100000bf01010aRCRD>



Working with Men on Paternity Issues

Important questions to ask fathers:

- Were you married to the mother at the time of birth?
- Was the mother married to someone other than you?
- If unmarried, have you ever signed a paternity acknowledgment form?
- Have you had a blood test (DNA test) to establish paternity?
- Are you now or have you ever lived with the child, or let it be known that the child is yours?

Other issues to address with fathers:

- Assess his willingness to go through the process of establishing paternity and legitimization if he has not yet done so.
- Explain how this can be done and explain the difference between establishing paternity and legitimating—this is critical! Only legitimization will give him the opportunity to petition for custody or visitation. If the child is in foster care, he must legitimate in order to be considered as a placement resource or for his relatives to be considered as placement resources.
- Use available resources to assist the father in accomplishing this, including referring the father to legal services if necessary. Refer to Foster Care policy 1003.22 for information on when DFCS can pay for paternity testing.
- Find out his willingness to assist with a search for paternal relatives.

Predictive Factors in Father-Child Involvement



The father's relationship with the mother is the single greatest determinant of significant and successful father involvement.

The father's presence at the birth of his child, visitation after birth, and providing care giving activities are positive clues for continuing involvement.

Earnings capacity will affect the role the father assumes. "The dead-beat dad may be just a penniless dad."

Adapted from: *Practice Notes: The Fatherhood Factor in Permanency Planning*. Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare, University of Minnesota, March 2004.

Working with Different Fathers in Different Situations

Case managers need to adapt their approaches to fit fathers in varying circumstances. There is no single model for fatherhood and no single model for being an involved father. While it is clear that a married father is more likely to be involved in his child's life, fathers in other situations can be and are good fathers as well. The following discussion highlights different father situations and explores relevant case manager issues for each situation while working with families in the child welfare system.

Married Fathers. This is the model most often associated with positive outcomes for children. Child maltreatment may be a sign of a problem in the marriage. At the very least, it signals significant stress upon the marital unit. When working with a family headed by a married mother and father, the case manager must come to understand the status of the marriage. Is it strong and healthy? Is it troubled and, if so, why and how? The condition of the marriage directly influences the children. Furthermore, the child maltreatment may have occurred because of marital problems that caused misdirected anger, stress, and exhaustion.

Cohabiting Parents. A man and a woman living together who have one or more children together display many of the same issues as a married couple. However, the research shows that cohabitation—even and especially when children are involved—is not the same as marriage. For example, one study reveals that when couples marry after cohabiting, they are nearly 50% more likely to divorce eventually as compared to couples that did not live together.

Other research has shown that teenagers being raised by cohabiting parents have more emotional and behavioral problems than peers who are living with married parents. Why there is such a difference in outcomes for couples and children alike in a cohabiting arrangement? This can only be answered by theory and speculation. It may have to do with the view the couple has toward marriage, commitment, and their own relationship. It is theorized that perhaps cohabiting parents, especially men, view the union as more tenuous and perhaps temporary, which suggests that the case manager determine how the cohabiting mother and father view their own relationship, its strength, and its longevity.

Incarcerated Fathers. More and more programs are working with men in prison not only to prepare them for returning to a productive role in society, but just as importantly to prepare them for being a good father upon their return. Many men who are in prison have never had an opportunity to learn how to be good fathers. These programs work with men around issues related to fatherhood not only out of a commitment to connecting men with their children, but also to ensure that men who leave prison are prepared to take an active role in their family. This may be one of the best ways to motivate men to avoid the behaviors that lead them into prison in the first place. A case manager working with a family who has a father currently in

prison may find it valuable to determine where the father is incarcerated, and if one of these programs is currently operating at the facility.

Multiple Fathers. A situation that can be extremely challenging occurs when there are multiple fathers involved in the family. In some families, children are living in the same household, yet have different fathers.

There may be different arrangements:

- The mother is living with children by herself, while the fathers of the children may or may not be involved.
- The mother may be living with the father of one or more of her children, while the father(s) of her other children may or may not be involved.
- The mother may be living with a man who is not the father of any of her children, and the father(s) of her children may or may not be involved.

Obviously, any one of these scenarios presents the potential for tension and confusion over roles. Concerns over who is responsible for the safety of the children, who plays the role of the psychological father—the man who acts, in the eyes of the child, as "dad"—and how other adults are portraying the father to his children will come into play. Financial issues are often a source of tension. Issues of trust between and among the adults are almost sure to arise. As one would expect, it is common for one father to be angry at another over who is responsible for a child being maltreated.

When working with a family with multiple fathers involved, it is important for the case manager to understand the role each man plays in the family dynamic. It is also important to learn how each father views the maltreatment, what led up to it, and who, in his mind, is responsible for the maltreatment occurring. All men living in the household should be part of the process, including family meetings. Whether and when to involve other fathers of children in the household needs to be determined on a case-by-case basis and, like any challenging issue facing a case manager, the input of a supervisor can be a valuable tool. The goal of the entire process, of course, is to achieve safety and permanency for the child. One or all of the fathers who are connected to the family can prove to be a valuable ally in accomplishing this goal—determining which of the fathers and how he or they will be helpful, and how the case manager can support them in being helpful, is the task the case manager faces.

Boyfriends. While he is not the father, a boyfriend may fill the role of father to the child. He may contribute financially to rearing the child. He may be the father of other children in the house, but not of the child who was maltreated. If the father of the child who was maltreated is involved in any way, the father assuredly will have strong feelings about the boyfriend. Much has been written about boyfriends in the house and their role in child maltreatment. Because these men typically do not have the same history of care and nurturing with the child, the same emotional and

normative commitment to the child's welfare, and the same institutionalized role as a father figure as do biological fathers in intact families, boyfriends pose a higher risk to children if they spend time alone with them.

These factors help to explain why mothers' boyfriends are much more likely to be involved in physical or sexual abuse of children than a biological father. In one study of physical abuse, boyfriends accounted for 64% of non-parental abuse, even though boyfriends performed only 2% of non-parental care. Another study found that the odds of child maltreatment were 2.5 times higher in households with a boyfriend living in the home, compared to households with a biological father. The authors of this study concluded that CPS case managers should "focus more of their attention on the high-risk relationship between a surrogate father and the children."

Stepfathers. While research varies, some studies show that stepfathers are more likely to abuse their children physically and sexually. A 1997 study of more than 600 families in upstate New York found that children living with stepfathers were more than three times more likely to be sexually abused than children living in intact families. Another study found that the presence of a stepfather doubles the risk of sexual abuse for girls—either from the stepfather or from another male figure. Analyzing reports of fatal child abuse in the United States, one study found that stepfathers were approximately 60 times more likely than biological fathers to kill their preschool children. While these studies find that stepfathers often invest less in caring for their stepchildren, others cite many examples of caring behaviors by and close relationships with stepparents, suggesting that paternal investment is not restricted only to biological offspring.

This is not to suggest that the case manager should assume the boyfriend or stepfather is a dangerous member of the family. There are, of course, countless stepfathers who step into the role of dad with both competence and caring, and many live-in boyfriends provide both love and structure for the children in the household. It does mean that the case manager needs to recognize that there are unique issues at play when working with a live-in boyfriend or stepfather. It also may mean that, if the perpetrator is the live-in boyfriend or stepfather, there are additional challenges and issues to consider when assessing the safety of the child.

Adapted from: Rosenberg, J., & Wilcox, W. B. (2006). *The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children*. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. Office of Child Abuse and Neglect, User Manual Series.
<http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/fatherhood.pdf>

Strategies for Enlisting Mothers' Support

Case managers can use these strategies to enlist mothers' support in locating and engaging fathers. These strategies apply to mothers as well as to maternal relatives.

- Explain that the father has a legal right to see his children (legal fathers).
- Explain that children have a right to get to know their father.
- Encourage mothers to look beyond her personal issues with the father and consider the lifetime benefits to the child that might come out of the father's connection (e.g. survivors and disability benefits, inheritance, health history, emotional support, etc.).
- Provide mother with concrete examples of situations that might occur in the future, where both she and the child will need the father. For example, mothers may want fathers to re-enter the picture and share parenting when children become teens and are engaging in high-risk behavior.
- Listen to what the mother is saying (or not saying) about the father.
- Assure mother that safety is always the top priority.
- Remember there are two sides to every story.
- Do not expect things to be perfect.
- Use supervised contact as a strategy to ensure child safety.

Messages for Mothers

These are some messages case managers need to communicate to mothers concerning their children and their children's father.

Every child has an irreplaceable biological father

Your child has a tie to his or her biological father that can never be broken. If you refuse to talk about a father who is absent from the home, it will merely arouse your child's curiosity and result in the child creating fantasies about the father. An honest discussion, appropriate for the child's age, is the best place to start in acknowledging the role of the father in the child's life.

Every child needs a relationship with his or her father

Your child will develop a way of relating to his or her father even if the child never sees him, and this relationship will affect the child throughout his or her life. Either the relationship that the child develops will be healthy in terms of the way the child views the father, himself, and for girls – the way she will view future men in her life; or, the relationship will be unhealthy. Choose healthy. To the greatest extent possible, the relationship should be face-to-face, nurtured, and encouraged.



You are the gatekeeper – open the gate!

Mothers have to place reasonable limits on access to children when the father is absent from the home, but total denial of access is seldom justified. A father can relieve the mother of some of the emotional, physical, disciplinary, and financial burdens of child rearing. Not only will the child benefit from the father's involvement, but you will too.

The father has strengths, use them

Fathers relate to children differently than do mothers. They tend to be more involved in play, enforcing rules, and expressing concerns about the child's long-term future. Identifying a father's strengths and encouraging him will help both the father and the child establish a productive relationship.

Interview Observation Sheet

Case Manager and Ms. Young

Skill/Technique	Examples/Observations from Interview
Addressed family member by name	
Communicated purpose of interview	
Made efforts to develop rapport (e.g. small talk, compliments, offering needed resources, etc.)	
Noticed family member's communication style and adjust own style accordingly	
Acknowledged and responded to cultural differences	
Allowed family member to tell the story in his or her own words, then asked clarifying questions	
Displayed non-judgmental attitude (reflected in both non-verbal and verbal communication)	
Used different types of questions appropriately (e.g. open, closed, coping, relationship, exception-finding, etc.)	
Used active listening skills such as: reflection, summarization, paraphrasing, minimal encouragers	
Responded appropriately to anger, hostility, "attitude"	
Gave specific messages related to the importance of the father's involvement	
Attempted to gather information about the status and quality of relationships within the family	
Attempted to identify and address barriers to the father's involvement	

Strategies to Address Barriers to Father Involvement

Prevent: It is important to emphasize to men their responsibility as fathers. By doing this, you can help to prevent further child maltreatment and emotional harm to children.

Strategy: Help fathers understand the importance of father involvement and the negative consequences children experience through fatherlessness and inadequate fathering.

What can I do to implement this strategy?

Prepare: Fathers must have the knowledge, skills, and financial resources available to adequately care for their children.

Strategy: Connect dads to appropriate resources and services. In addition to job training, many dads can benefit from referral to housing assistance programs, parenting classes, specialized co-parenting programs for single and divorced fathers, programs for incarcerated and previously incarcerated fathers, and programs to address mental health, substance abuse, anger management, or domestic violence programs.

What can I do to implement this strategy?

Establish: Absent fathers need to establish their relationship with their children.

Strategy: Encourage and support fathers in establishing paternity and legitimating their children. This applies across all DFCS program areas, not just in foster care. Also, help fathers to establish their relationship beyond just the legal relationship.

What can I do to implement this strategy?

Involve: Case managers can facilitate the engagement process by setting the stage for fathers to effectively connect with their children. Involve fathers in the child's life and involve the father in the case process.

Strategy: Make efforts to ensure the father is involved to the extent possible in the family's/child's case plan. Also, help to set the stage for long-term involvement of the father beyond the life of your case.

What can I do to implement this strategy?

Support: Fathers need ongoing support. As their involvement increases, so will their responsibilities and possibly their stress level.

Strategy: Aid fathers by helping them identify supports that will continue to be available beyond the "life" of this case.

What can I do to implement this strategy?

Advice for Fathers

Case managers should communicate the following to fathers, especially non-custodial fathers.

Respect the mother of your children.

Regardless of your feelings for the mother of your children, you need to treat her with respect—for the sake of your children. Children are happier and feel more secure when their parents get along. You should ignore negative comments, compliment the mother when you can, and keep the lines of communication open. Try to seek common ground with mothers around common goals for your children, and never criticize your children's mother in front of the children.

Something is better than nothing.

If you have provided no emotional or financial support to the child in the past, anything you can offer is better than nothing. For example, providing care for an active toddler even for a few hours gives the mother time to rest. Or, buying a child a pair of shoes indicates that you understand you have financial responsibilities. Time is the most important gift to your child. Spending time with a child communicates to the child your love and concern in a way that nothing else (presents, money, promises) can.

Keep your promises.

Children who have endured divorce or the breakup of a parental relationship often feel abandoned and distrustful of the adults in their lives. You need to be careful to nurture or restore your children's faith in adults and you, in particular. Therefore, keep the promises you make to their children. You have to earn your children's trust by keeping your word.

Don't be a "Disneyland Dad."

Nonresidential fathers are often tempted to play "Disneyland Dad," that is, to spend virtually all the time they have with their children in fun activities. You need to challenge your children to grow in virtue and spend time doing ordinary things with them. Help your children with homework, have them do chores around their home, and tuck them into bed on a school night. You will discover more about your children amidst the ordinary struggles of daily life than you will eating popcorn with them in a darkened movie theater.



In addition, the father who never moves into the fathering relationship is creating problems for the children and their mother. The mother does not want to be the only disciplinarian or the only one saying “no”. When you remain the “weekend warrior” who is there only for the good times, the mother may become resentful and less inclined to allow visits. Take on responsibilities of a father if you want your children and their mother to accept you as one.

Stay in regular contact.

Nonresidential fathers should stay in regular contact with their children. If you live locally, you should be faithful about seeing your children on a given day. If you do not live close by you should be faithful about calling or sending a letter or email to your children on a weekly basis. Children thrive on maintaining regular contact with their fathers. This advice holds even for teenagers, who may have to be asked to make sacrifices in their social or sports schedules to spend time with you. In the end, maintaining the father-child bond is more important than a missed game or movie with friends.

Don't be too soft on your kids.

Nonresidential fathers often feel like they should go easy on their children when it comes to discipline. Given the shortness of father-child visits, many fathers do not want to alienate their children by disciplining them for misbehavior, but this is a big mistake. Children will take advantage of your laxity by pushing the behavioral envelope even more. Be a firm, consistent disciplinarian with your children, even if that means that one or two visits are spent largely on discipline. In the long-term, children who are disciplined well are better behaved and more respectful of their fathers than children who are given a free reign.

Take care of your children financially.

Nonresidential fathers need to take at least partial responsibility for the financial welfare of their children. Children who receive regular financial support from their fathers do better educationally and are more confident that their father is there for them and their family. You should pay child support on time and be flexible enough to help your children when unforeseen expenses come up. If possible, you should tell your teens that you will help pay for college or vocational training. If employment or child support is a problem, ask for help. Ask for assistance in locating and accessing programs that will help with job-skills and job placement.

Note: This advice draws on educational material from The Children's Trust Fund of Massachusetts, The National Fatherhood Initiative, the National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families, and the National Center for Fathering.

Adapted from: Rosenberg, J., & Wilcox, W. B. (2006). *The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children*. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. Office of Child Abuse and Neglect, User Manual Series.

<http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/fatherhood.pdf>

Interview Observation Sheet

Case Manager and Mr. Howard

Skill/Technique	Examples/Observations from Interview
Addressed family member by name	
Communicated purpose of interview	
Made efforts to develop rapport (e.g. small talk, compliments, offering needed resources, etc.)	
Noticed family member's communication style and adjust own style accordingly	
Acknowledged and responded to cultural differences	
Allowed family member to tell the story in his or her own words, then asked clarifying questions	
Displayed non-judgmental attitude (reflected in both non-verbal and verbal communication)	
Used different types of questions appropriately (e.g. open, closed, coping, relationship, exception-finding, etc.)	
Used active listening skills such as: reflection, summarization, paraphrasing, minimal encouragers	
Responded appropriately to anger, hostility, "attitude"	
Gave specific messages related to the importance of the father's involvement	
Attempted to gather information about the status and quality of relationships within the family	
Attempted to identify and address barriers to the father's involvement	

Engaging a Specific Father Exercise



Think about a specific family on your caseload and respond to the following questions.

1. Why is it important for me to locate (if non-custodial) and engage the children's father?

2. Why is it important for me to locate and engage the children's paternal relatives?

3. What steps have I taken to find this father or his relatives? What additional steps can I take?

4. What do I know about this father that may help or hinder my efforts to engage him in his child's life and in the case process?

5. What advice or information can I share with this father (or with paternal relatives) that will help him (or his relatives) become more engaged with the children?

6. What advice or information can I share with the children's mother to help promote the father's involvement?

7. List specific ideas for involving this father in the Family Plan.

8. What strengths do I see in this father?

9. What concerns or needs do I see in this father?

10. What resources can I offer this father?

Interviewing Fathers

For **fathers who live in the home**, case managers should address the following topics:

- What role does the father view himself playing in the family?
- How does the father view the maltreatment? Does he see it as a failure on his part?
- Is there anything he believes he could have done differently to prevent the maltreatment?
- What father role models, if any, has he had? What was this role model like? How does the father think his role model would have handled the situation that led to the maltreatment?
- What is the father's view of discipline? What role does aggression and anger play? Is he open to learning new ways of discipline?
- What is the quality of the relationship with the child's mother?
- Who are the other men in the family? How does the father view these men?
- What is the father's current level of interaction with the children?

Additional issues to explore with **fathers who live outside the child's home**:

- What is the current living arrangement of the father in relation to the home in which his child lives?
- Is there another man living in the home with the child? How does the child's father view this man and his relationship with his child and the mother of his child?
- How often does the father see his child? If and when he does see the child, what is the nature of the interaction?

Adapted from: Rosenberg, J., & Wilcox, W. B. (2006). *The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children*. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. Office of Child Abuse and Neglect, User Manual Series.
<http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/fatherhood.pdf>

Men, Fathers, Dads, Boyfriends: Resource or Liability

Factors to Consider

History of violent behavior

- prior restraining orders
- criminal record
- frequency/severity of abuse in current and past intimate relationships
- violence towards others outside of intimate relationships
- threats to kill others or self

State of mind

- obsession with significant others
- increased risk-taking
- ignoring consequences
- depression
- desperation

Individual factors that reduce behavioral controls of perpetrator

- substance abuse
- certain medications
- evidence of a serious mental disorder, such as paranoid schizophrenia or bipolar disorder

Situational factors

- presence of other significant stressors (e.g. recent loss like job, family member, significant relationship)
- access to weapons
- past failures to respond appropriately to interventions

Men, Fathers, Dads, Boyfriends: Resource or Liability (continued)

Interview Questions to Consider

Remember that rapport is paramount in obtaining accurate information. Rapport must be established and questions asked in a respectful manner. The following questions may be helpful when trying to access a father's level of risk to children.

Significant Relationships

- Describe your relationship with your partner.
- How would you describe your partner?
- What do you do when you and your partner disagree?

Problem Solving Abilities

- What do you do when things don't go well? How do you manage your frustrations?
- How do you and your partner manage your household duties and income?
- Do you and your partner ever yell at each other? Do you and your partner call each other degrading names or put each other down?
- Have you ever physically harmed or used force on anyone in your family? In what way? When?
- Have you ever threatened to harm or kill yourself, your partner, your children, or your pet?
- Have you ever threatened or used a weapon or gun against your partner? Do you have access to a weapon or gun?
- Have the police ever come to your home? If so, why? What happened?
- Have you ever been arrested, charged, or convicted of a domestic violence assault? If so, what happened?

Quality of Relationship with Children

- How would you describe your children?
- What kinds of things do you expect from your children?
- How do you discipline your children? Have you ever lost control while disciplining, or felt you disciplined your children too harshly?

Men, Fathers, Dads, Boyfriends: Resource or Liability (continued)

Risk Factors

- Did you ever see either of your parents harmed by a spouse or significant other? If so, what did you do and how did it make you feel?
- Were you ever harmed as a child?
- When was the last time you drank or used an illegal substance? How much?
- Have you ever attended a substance abuse program or been arrested for DUI?
- Have you ever been treated for depression?
- Have you previously been violent with your partner? With others?
- Have you experienced pervasive thoughts of homicide or suicide? Attempts?

Adapted from: Domestic Violence Training Program, Simmons School of Social Work, Massachusetts NASW Committee on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault (2002).

Adapted from: Bragg, H. L., (2003) *Child Protection in Families Experiencing Domestic Violence*, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. Office of Child Abuse and Neglect, User Manual Series, Child Gateway Information Gateway.

What are Strengths?

- What people have learned about themselves, others, and their world
- Personal qualities, traits, and virtues
- What people know about the world around them
- The talents people have
- Cultural and personal stories and lore
- Pride
- The community

Types of Strengths

Mitigating Strengths: strengths that serve to protect children from threats to safety. They can be persons, environmental factors, or other interventions that serve as a protective barrier between a safety threat and the child.

Risk Reducing Strengths: strengths that serve to reduce the likelihood of maltreatment in the future. They can include a client's positive experience in treatment in the past; personal qualities, attitudes or values; family and community resources that have a positive impact on the resolution of problems.

Well-being Related Strengths: strengths that are neither mitigating nor risk reducing, but serve to enhance or support the family's overall quality of life. They include employment; health and access to health care; housing; transportation; etc.

Neutral Strengths: positive qualities or conditions in the family that do not directly act to mitigate safety threats, reduce risk, or enhance well-being.

Strengths to Build Upon

The following is a list of possible factors to look for when assessing families. If these factors are present, case managers can help parents to build upon these strengths. These can form the basis of a strengths-based assessment that leads to effective service planning.

Parenting

- Parents acknowledge that there is a problem and are willing and open to intervention.
- Parents can recall something regarding their child that is a good memory.
- Parents make a clear verbal statement that they love their children.
- Parents can still laugh about some of the things that their children are doing; can find the humor and tenderness in the frustrations.
- Parents are willing to try new parenting ideas.
- Parents are aware what issues create tension.
- Parents are able to reach out to family members or neighbors who can provide relief from some of the day-to-day stressors of parenting.
- Parents are willing and able to parent (physically and mentally).
- Parents have the strength and courage to say that someone else would do this better—and we would like to be apart of deciding whom it should be.
- Parents, while uncomfortable, do what it takes to meet child's needs—regardless of own feelings of pride.

Support System

- Parents have connections and support systems. These people are clearly there for the family, and parents are capable of reaching out to these people when necessary.
- Parents are involved with activities outside the home (including community activities such as church and PTA, fraternal organizations, hobbies, etc.).

Understanding Needs of the Child

- Child goes to parents to get needs met.
- Child appears to feel safe with parents.
- Child has toys that are age appropriate.

- Child appears to be happy, has friends, and is well adjusted.
- Family has sought out mental health services for the child, if indicated.
- Parents follow recommendations of mental health professionals.
- Parents voice concern and ask for help with the child's behavior or health needs.
- If non-custodial, parent is providing financial and/or emotional support to the children.

Parent's Emotional and Mental Health

- Parent is seeking mental health treatment.
- Parent consistently follows recommendations from therapist.
- If issues with substance abuse:
 - Parent is able to change behaviors and associations (able to walk away from negative alliances).
 - Parent admits using and has frank conversations about use.
 - Parent expresses concerns about personal use.
 - Treatment was successful and parent maintains sobriety.
 - Attends AA, NA, or other support group.

Parental Relationship

- Parents are able to identify methods for non-violent resolution of conflicts and can provide examples of times they have successfully used these methods.
- Parents are able to successfully negotiate parenting and household duties.
- Parent expresses positive regard for the other parent.
- If there is violence in the home/relationship:
 - Non-offending parent protects child.
 - Offending parent can admit problem with power and control and expresses a desire to change.

Employment/Vocational/Education

- Parent has held a job for one year or longer.
- Parent is or has participated in job training, GED classes, technical training, or higher education classes.
- Parent has successfully completed job training or GED/education.
- Parent completed high school.

Basic Needs (housing, food, shelter)

- Parents are able to meet their basic needs either on their own or with assistance from community or agency services.
- Parents are creative in finding supports to meet child's needs—have a strong sense of community options.
- Family has stable housing that is affordable for their income.

Medical/Dental

- Parents are able to verbalize child's medical conditions—know what the child needs.
- Parents have a plan for caring for child's medical needs.
- Parents maintains their own health by having check ups.
- Parents maintain their child's immunizations and regular medical check ups.
- Parents and child visit a dentist regularly.
- Parents and child are healthy.

Optimizing Family Strengths

Since the early 1990s, CPS agencies have used Family Group Conferencing or Family Group Decision-making to optimize family strengths in the planning process. In Georgia, this is referred to as Family Team Meetings.

Family Team Meetings bring the family, extended family, and others in the family's social support network together to make decisions regarding how to ensure safety and well-being. The demonstrated benefits of these models include:

- An increased willingness of family members to accept the services suggested in the plan because they were integrally involved in the planning process.
- Maintained family continuity and connection through kinship rather than foster care placements.
- Enhanced relationships between professionals and families resulting in increased job satisfaction of professionals.



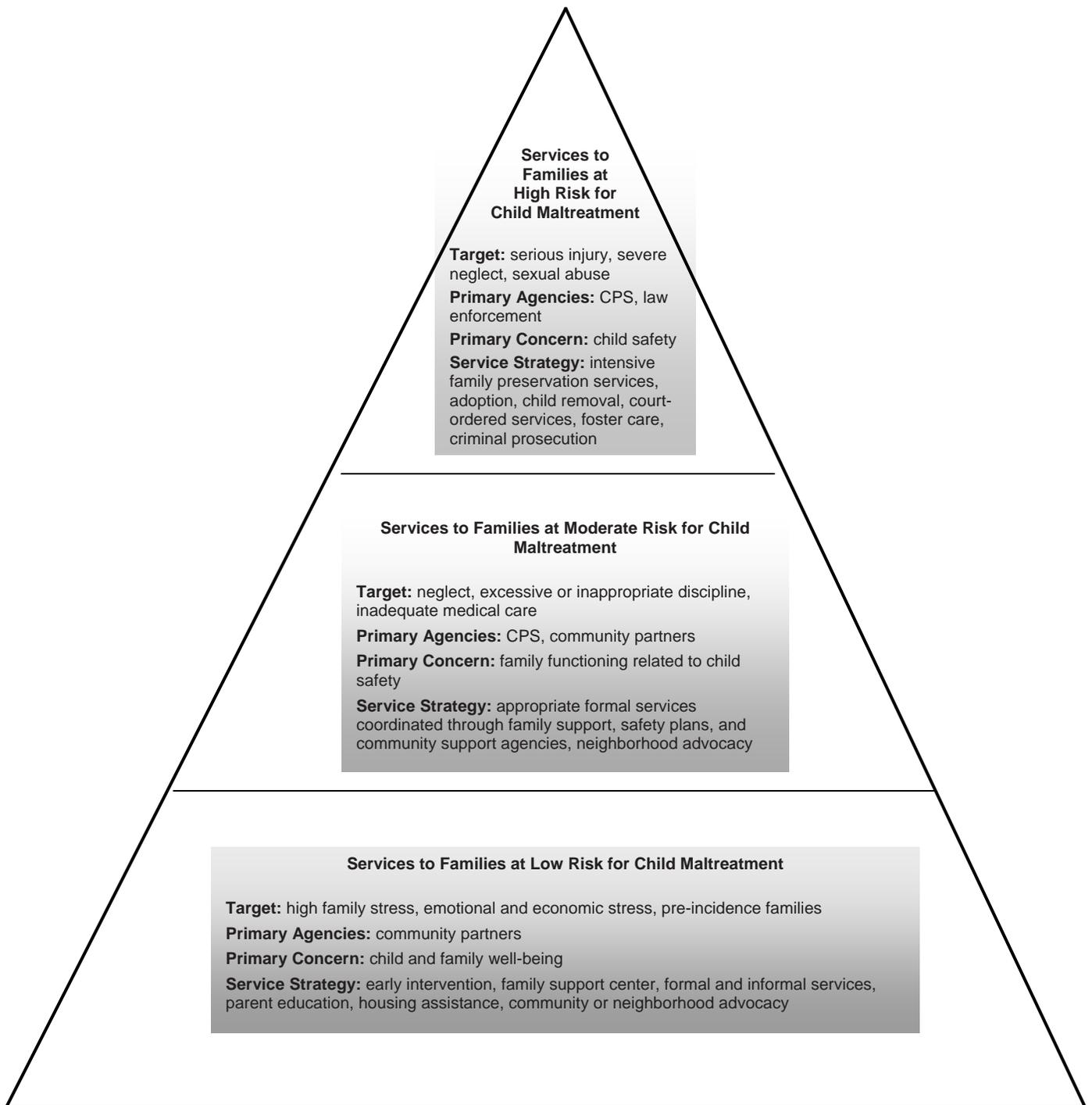
Family meetings can be powerful events. Meetings based on the families' strengths can help them develop a sense of hope and vision for the future. The meetings themselves may also improve family functioning by modeling openness in communication and appropriate problem-solving skills. **Make every effort to include fathers in Family Team Meetings!**

Adapted from: Rosenberg, J., & Wilcox, W. B. (2006). *The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children*. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. Office of Child Abuse and Neglect, User Manual Series.

<http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/fatherhood.pdf>

Child Protection Service Pyramid

The National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators (NAPCWA) developed this conceptual framework for thinking about levels of risk and the corresponding strategy for service provision.



The ABCs of a Father-friendly Environment

- A**ssets of fathers are emphasized, not their deficits.
- B**udget indicates that fathers are a priority.
- C**urricula and educational materials respect the range of fathers being served.
- D**iverse staff reflects the population using your services.
- E**nvironment clearly states that dads and men in families are welcome here.
- F**ather-child bond is emphasized and encouraged.
- G**ender-neutral forms, policies, and procedures are employed.
- H**ands-on learning experiences are components of many activities.
- I**mportance of fathers is promoted but not at the expense of mothers.
- J**ournals, magazines, and reading materials reflect the interests of dads, too.
- K**nowledgeable men are recruited to address sensitive concerns of fathers.
- L**anguage is respectful and affirming of all parents and children.
- M**arketing plan invites many faces of fathers and promotes their full involvement.
- N**eeds of fathers influence the program's growth and development.
- O**utreach staff recruits in locations that all types of fathers frequent.
- P**aternal and maternal parenting styles are recognized and respected.
- Q**uality evaluation tools and procedures that respect fathers are in place.
- R**ecognize and reduce barriers that limit father involvement.
- S**taff receives periodic best practices training to better serve fathers.
- T**argeted services are offered specifically for fathers.
- U**nderstand wide range of fathers' physical and mental health concerns.
- V**alues are emphasized that promote gender reconciliation.
- W**omen's and men's rooms each have a diaper changing station.
- eX**cellent advisory council and active speakers bureau are in place.
- Y**oung fathers are offered services.
- Z**ealous attitude prevails that we are all in this together.

Adapted from: Tift, N. (n.d.). *The ABCs of a father-friendly environment for maternal and child health agencies*. Washington, DC: National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families.

Tips for Managing Services between Various Support Systems

- Get release of information from fathers to get permission for discussion between the various service providers.
 - At the time of referral, brief the service provider fully on the case, the reason for the referral, and the goals and objectives for the father.
- Communicate freely and frequently with the service providers.
 - Maintain contact with any professional or organization to which the father is referred. Ensure that needed services are, in fact, being provided and that progress is being made.
 - Ensure that services provided are supportive of the ultimate goal: safety and permanency for the child.

Service Follow-Up



Intervention and service provision are typically a collaborative effort between CPS and other agencies or individual providers. Consequently, the evaluation of family progress must also be a collaborative venture. Referrals to service providers should clearly specify the number, frequency, and methods of reports expected. The case manager must also clearly communicate expectations for reporting concerns, observable changes, and family progress. It is the case manager's responsibility to ensure the submission of these reports and to request meetings with service providers, if indicated.

A Snapshot: Including Fathers in Family-Centered Child Welfare Services

Engagement. Case managers encourage mothers to identify fathers early in the case. If mothers fail to cooperate, case managers use alternative means to identify and locate fathers (interview relatives and family friends, access TANF and child support information, or use the court if necessary). Fathers are engaged in ways relevant to their situation and sensitive to their culture. Case managers make every effort to gain the support of mothers and reduce any barriers the mother has established that prevents a father's engagement, sometimes using mediation and negotiation. Establish trust and honesty by clearly explaining the current situation of the case, the father's role, the case manager's role, agency expectations, and all policies that are relevant to his case. Continually state willingness and desire to establish and/or maintain the father-child relationship. Family conferencing is effective to bring all adults interested and committed to a child into a planned network of support for safety, permanency, and wellbeing.

To do this means moving beyond typical assumptions about the "right model." Family conferencing is best seen as a comprehensive set of practices for effective family decision making and systemic reform. Strong community partnerships in family conferencing sites, effective strategies to getting the right people to the conference, an authentic family-centered decision-making process, and the integration of family conferencing into child welfare agency practice are necessary.

Safety Planning. Fathers and paternal family members are actively involved in the development of a safety plan based on information and support of team members. Fathers and paternal family members should be considered as informal service providers in the safety plan, for example, as relative (kinship) placement providers or to supervise visits between child and parent(s).

Out-of-Home Placement. Before placing a child in an unrelated home, fathers' and paternal family members' homes are assessed for placement. Fathers are included in the discussion and in determining the best placement for the child. Foster parents, group home staff, residential treatment staff, hospital staff, and adoptive parents are encouraged and supported to build and maintain partnerships with birth or adoptive fathers. The child welfare agency provides services and supports to establish and maintain father-child relations through telephone and mail contact, visitation, and case planning activities.

Assessment. Comprehensive assessments include all family members; therefore, fathers and paternal family members are an active part in the ongoing assessment process. Initial assessments include the strengths, needs, resources/assets, and supports of the father and the paternal family. Services and/or supports needed by the father are also identified. Assessments explore fathers' and paternal family members' willingness and ability to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of the child. The assessment process is ongoing, and information is continually gathered and regularly updated.

Permanency Planning. Fathers are involved in all reviews of the service plan and in the development of the child's permanency plan. Case managers ensure that fathers have a clear understanding of the permanency plan and emphasize the importance of their role in the development and implementation of the plan. Fathers not only receive court notices regarding permanency hearing, but are also contacted by their case manager to discuss the hearing and the agency's recommendations to the court. During this discussion case managers encourage fathers to attend all hearings.

Re-evaluation of Service Plan. Fathers are included in the sharing of information between other family members, children, support teams, and service providers to ensure that intervention strategies can be modified as needed to support positive outcomes. Fathers help monitor service provision and provide continuous feedback to the team so progress and modifications to services are made.

Implementation of Service Plan. Fathers are actively involved in setting goals, and they are encouraged to express their opinions, concerns, requests, or questions about the services needed. Services are created and provided to meet the individualized needs of the father and/or paternal family members. Services must be accessible to working fathers. Father support groups address issues related to fatherhood such as empowering men to take an active role in parenting, emotional issues, child development, and developing key skills such as active listening, anger management, positive discipline, and basic parenting techniques. Service providers emphasize the importance of child relationships with both mother and father.

Adapted from: National Child Welfare Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice (2002). *Best Practice/Next Practice, Father Involvement*.

<http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/downloads/newsletter/BNPNSummer02.pdf>

Selected Readings

Below is a list of selected readings for additional information on father involvement and other related issues addressed in this curriculum.

Bragg, H. L., (2003) *Child Protection in Families Experiencing Domestic Violence*, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. Office of Child Abuse and Neglect, User Manual Series, Child Gateway Information Gateway.

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Feeley, T.J. (2000). *Low-income non-custodial fathers: A child advocate's guide to helping them contribute to the support of their children*. National Association of Child Advocates Issue Brief.

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http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/310944_caring_for_children_3.pdf

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<http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/downloads/newsletter/BPNPSummer02.pdf>

National Institute for Building Long Distance Relationships (2001). *Dads at a distance: An activities handbook for strengthening long distance relationships*. Provo, UT: A&E Family Publishers.

Rosenberg, J., & Wilcox, W. B. (2006). *The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children*. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. Office of Child Abuse and Neglect, User Manual Series.
<http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/fatherhood.pdf>

Wolfgang, L., & Wolfgang, L. D. (1999). *Fathers in Prison: Reuniting Fathers and Their Children*. Stone Creek Publications.

Documenting Diligent Search

The Diligent Search Information page is used by case managers to capture information about potential relative or non-relative placement resources, or other persons in the case as applicable. Prior to adding a diligent search activity, the case manager needs to add relative/non-relative to the Person List page. This will allow the relative/non-relative to populate on the Principals/Collaterals Contacted list on the Contact Detail page and on the Person List page when a Diligent Search is added.

Add Diligent Search Contact

Before completing the Diligent Search page, the case manager adds contact with the relative(s) (or non-relative) on the Contacts Detail page. To start recording a contact click the Contacts/Summaries second level tab.

The system refreshes and the user is navigated to the Contact Search page. To add a contact, the user clicks the Add button.

The screenshot shows the SHINES 2.6 System Test interface. The top navigation bar includes "Log Off", "?", a printer icon, "IDS", and "GHP". Below this is a main menu with tabs: "My Tasks", "Case", "Search", "Intake", "Financial", "Reports", and "Resources". Under the "Case" tab, there are sub-tabs: "Case Summary", "Person", "Contacts/Summaries", "Service Authorization", "Legal", "Child Plans", "Placement", "History", "Foster Care Eligibility", and "Case Management". The "Contacts/Summaries" sub-tab is active, showing "Contact Search List" and "Protective Service Alert".

The main content area is titled "Contact Search List" with a note "conditionally required field". Below this is a "Contact Search" section with a table header:

Date	Type	Purpose	Name	Stage
No records exist.				

At the bottom right of the table area is an "Add" button. Below the table is a "Form Launch" section with a "Forms:" label, a dropdown menu, and a "Launch" button.

Select the Type of contact. Click the Continue button.

The screenshot shows the SHINES 2.6 System Test interface. The top navigation bar includes 'My Tasks', 'Case', 'Search', 'Intake', 'Financial', 'Reports', and 'Resources'. The 'Case' menu is expanded, showing 'Contact Search List' and 'Protective Service Alert'. The main content area is titled 'Contact Detail' and contains a form for 'Contact/Summary Type'. The 'Type' dropdown menu is open, showing the following options: 'Contact', 'Parent/Child Visitation', 'TCM', and 'Transfer Summary'. A 'Continue' button is located to the right of the dropdown.

The system refreshes and the user is navigated to the Contact Detail page. This page allows the user to capture specific information about the contact, including when, where, how and the participants.

The screenshot shows the SHINES 2.6 System Test interface. The top navigation bar includes 'My Tasks', 'Case', 'Search', 'Intake', 'Financial', 'Reports', and 'Resources'. The 'Case' menu is expanded, showing 'Contact Search List' and 'Protective Service Alert'. The main content area is titled 'Contact Detail' and contains a form for 'Contact Information'. The form is filled out with the following information:

- Contact/Summary Type: Contact
- Contacted By: Wilson, Wendy (with a 'Select Staff' button)
- Title: SHINES Program Specialist
- * Contact Date: 3/16/2009 (with a calendar icon)
- * Time: 2:00 PM (with a dropdown menu)
- * Purpose: Diligent Search (with a dropdown menu)
- * Method: Telephone Call (with a dropdown menu)
- Location: DFCS Office (with a dropdown menu)
- Name of Agency: (empty text field)
- Others Contacted: (empty dropdown menu)
- Permission to cross county lines:

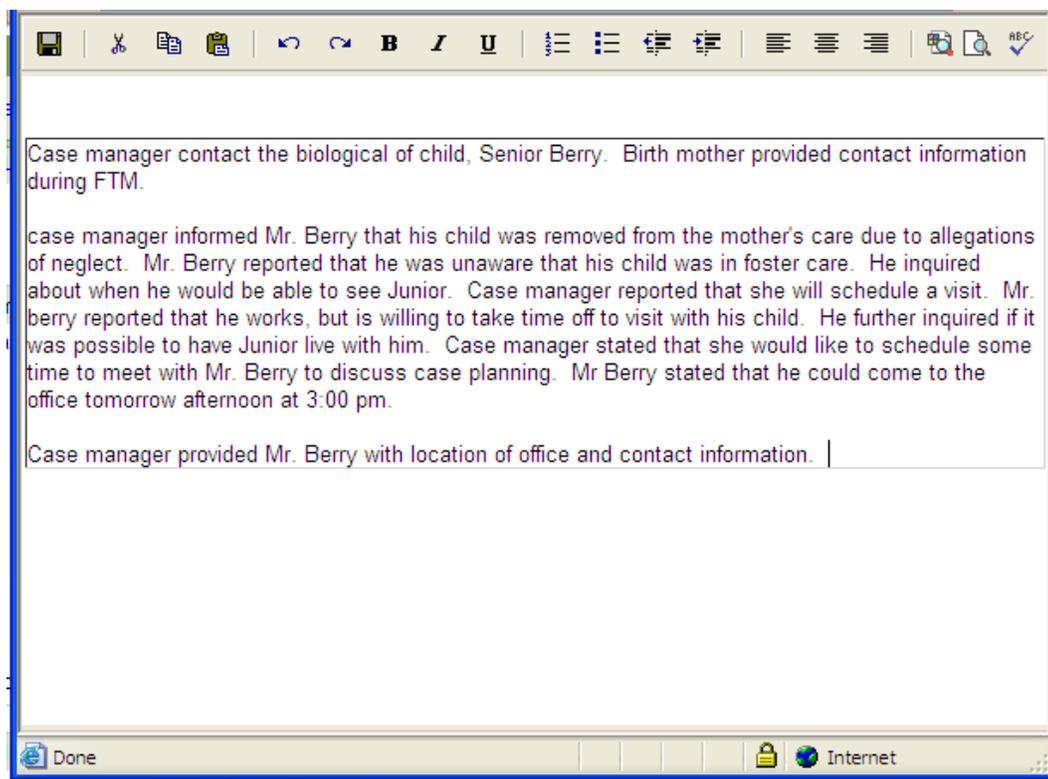
Below the 'Contact Information' section is a table titled 'Principals/Collaterals Contacted' with the following data:

Name	Type	Role	Relation/Interest
<input type="checkbox"/> Berry, Junior	Principal	Primary Child	Son
<input type="checkbox"/> Smith, Mommy	Principal	No Role	Primary Caretaker
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Berry, Senior	Principal	No Role	Biological Father
<input type="checkbox"/> Berry, Granny	Collateral	No Role	Grandparent

A 'Save' button is located at the bottom right of the form. A 'Narrative' button is located at the bottom left of the form.

To complete the page, follow the steps outlined below:

1. Enter Date of Contact. Enter Time of Contact.
2. Enter the Purpose of Contact. The contact Purpose allows staff to specify the reason for the contact. There are 42 choices in the Purpose drop-down field. Select Diligent Search.
3. Enter the Method of the visit. Use the Method field to document the contact method used, e.g., Announced Face to Face, Correspondence, E-mail, Other, Telephone Call, or Unannounced Face to Face.
4. Record the Location of the Visit. Although Location is not a required field, not recording the location may impact reporting.
5. Select the appropriate Principals/Collaterals Contacts – persons involved in the visit (parent and child). Check the box left of the person's name.
6. Save the page before adding the narrative. The page refreshes. Fields on page are saved and grayed out.
7. Click the Narrative button. The Narrative textbox allows the user to add information about parent child interaction, quality of visit, issues around arrival and departure for visit, and the overall outcome of visitation between parent and child.
8. Record the narrative.



Add Diligent Search for Child

The case manager begins adding a diligent search from the child's FCC stage. To record a diligent search event, follow the steps below:

1. Click on the Person tab.
2. Click on the child's name hyperlink.

The screenshot displays the SHINES 2.6 System Test interface. The top navigation bar includes 'Log Off', a help icon, a printer icon, and user roles 'IDS' and 'GHP'. Below this is a main menu with tabs for 'My Tasks', 'Case', 'Search', 'Intake', 'Financial', 'Reports', and 'Resources'. Under the 'Case' tab, there are sub-tabs for 'Case Summary', 'Person', 'Contacts/Summaries', 'Service Authorization', 'Legal', 'Child Plans', 'Placement', 'History', 'Foster Care Eligibility', and 'Case Management'. The 'Person' sub-tab is active, showing case details: Case Name: Smith, Mommy and Stage Name: Berry, Junior. Below this is a 'Person List' table with columns: Name, Merge, Search, Age, Gender, Type, Role, Rel/Int, Special Rel, and Person ID. The table lists four individuals: Berry, Junior (6, M, PRN, PC, Son, 11731769), Smith, Mommy (25, F, PRN, NO, Primary Caretaker, 11731768), Berry, Senior (25, M, PRN, NO, Biological Father, 11731770), and Berry, Granny (55, F, COL, NO, Grandparent, 11731785). At the bottom right of the table area are 'Search' and 'Add' buttons.

Name	Merge	Search	Age	Gender	Type	Role	Rel/Int	Special Rel	Person ID
Berry, Junior	N	V	6	M	PRN	PC	Son		11731769
Smith, Mommy	N	V	25	F	PRN	NO	Primary Caretaker		11731768
Berry, Senior	N	V	25	M	PRN	NO	Biological Father		11731770
Berry, Granny	N	V	55	F	COL	NO	Grandparent		11731785

3. The Person Detail page displays for the child.

My Tasks Case Search Intake Financial Reports Resources

Case Summary Person Contacts/Summaries Service Authorization Legal Child Plans Placement History Foster Care Eligibility Case Management

Person Detail Records Check Citizenship and Identity Health Log Diligent Search Restricted Funds

Name: Berry, Junior Person ID: 11731769 **Person Detail** * required field ‡ conditionally required field

[Expand All](#) [Collapse All](#)

Person Name

‡ First: Junior Middle: Last: Berry Suffix:

Demographics

* Gender:	Male	‡ Marital:	Single, Never Married
Title:		Maiden Name:	
‡ DOB:	01/01/2003	Age:	6 <input type="checkbox"/> Approximate
Language:	English	Living Arrangement:	
Occupation:		Religion:	
‡ DOD:		‡ Reason For Death:	
Additional Comments:	<input type="text"/>		

- Click on the Diligent Search tab.

SHINES 2.6 System Test [Log Off] [?] [] [] [IDS] [GHP]

My Tasks | Case | Search | Intake | Financial | Reports | Resources

Case Summary | Person | Contacts/Summaries | Service Authorization | Legal | Child Plans | Placement | History | Foster Care Eligibility | Case Management

Person Detail | Records Check | Citizenship and Identity | Health Log | Diligent Search | Restricted Funds

Case Name: Smith, Mommy
Name: Berry, Junior

Diligent Search List

Name	Child	Caretaker	Contacted	Visitation	Placement
No records exist.					

[Copy] [Add]

Forms

Forms: [Launch]

- Click the Add button.
- Click the radio button next to the person (relative/non-relative) for whom you are recording the diligent search event. Click the Continue button.

SHINES 2.6 System Test [Log Off] [?] [] [] [IDS] [GHP]

My Tasks | Case | Search | Intake | Financial | Reports | Resources

Case Summary | Person | Contacts/Summaries | Service Authorization | Legal | Child Plans | Placement | History | Foster Care Eligibility | Case Management

Case Name: Smith, Mommy
Stage Name: Berry, Junior

Person List

Name	Merge	Search	Age	Gender	Type	Role	Rel/Int	Special Rel	Person ID
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Berry, Junior	N	V	6	M	PRN	PC	Son		11731769
<input type="radio"/> Smith, Mommy	N	V	25	F	PRN	NO	Primary Caretaker		11731768
<input type="radio"/> Berry, Senior	N	V	25	M	PRN	NO	Biological Father		11731770
<input type="radio"/> Berry, Granny	N	V	55	F	COL	NO	Grandparent		11731785

[Continue]

7. The Diligent Search Information page loads.

SHINES 2.6 System Test Log Off ? IDS GHP

My Tasks **Case** **Search** **Intake** **Financial** **Reports** **Resources**

Case Summary | **Person** | Contacts/Summaries | Service Authorization | Legal | Child Plans | Placement | History | Foster Care Eligibility | Case Management

Person Detail | Records Check | Citizenship and Identity | Health Log | **Diligent Search** | Restricted Funds

Name: Berry, Junior
Person ID: 11731769

Diligent Search Information * required field
‡ conditionally required field

Diligent Search

Contact Person: Berry, Senior

Include in Diligent Search Report

Caretaker Prior to Removal

‡ If previous caretaker, describe why removed:

* Referral Type:

‡ If other, describe:

Referrer's Name:

‡ Was the person successfully contacted? Yes No

‡ If not contacted, why?

‡ Current Outcome of Contact:

‡ Is person willing to be a visitation resource? Yes No

‡ Is the person a potential placement resource? Yes No

‡ If not, why?

‡ Date Relative Care Subsidies Discussed:

Comments:

Save

8. Check the 'Include in Diligent Search Report' box if the information on this page should be included in the report.
9. Indicate if the person contacted was a 'Caretaker Prior to Removal.'
10. Select the Referral Type. If 'Other' enter the referral person's name.

The screenshot shows the SHINES 2.6 System Test interface. The top navigation bar includes 'My Tasks', 'Case', 'Search', 'Intake', 'Financial', 'Reports', and 'Resources'. The 'Case' tab is active, showing sub-tabs for 'Case Summary', 'Person', 'Contacts/Summaries', 'Service Authorization', 'Legal', 'Child Plans', 'Placement', 'History', 'Foster Care Eligibility', and 'Case Management'. The 'Person' sub-tab is selected, displaying 'Person Detail', 'Records Check', 'Citizenship and Identity', 'Health Log', 'Diligent Search', and 'Restricted Funds'. The 'Diligent Search' section is expanded, showing the following information:

Name: Berry, Junior
 Person ID: 11731769

Diligent Search Information

Contact Person: Berry, Senior

Include in Diligent Search Report

Caretaker Prior to Removal

‡ If previous caretaker, describe why removed:

* Referral Type: Family Interview (dropdown menu is open showing options: CCFA Provider, Family Interview, Internet Search, Secondary Referral, State System Search, Other)

‡ If other, describe:

Referrer's Name:

‡ Was the person successfully contacted?

‡ If not contacted, why?

Legend: * required field, ‡ conditionally required field

11. Indicate if contact with the person successful. If not, explain.

12. Indicate the 'Current Outcome of the Contact.' Remember, the relative/non-relative can be considered at a future date as a potential resource for the child.

The screenshot displays the SHINES 2.6 System Test interface. The top navigation bar includes 'Log Off', '?', a printer icon, 'IDS', and 'GHP'. Below this is a menu with 'My Tasks', 'Case', 'Search', 'Intake', 'Financial', 'Reports', and 'Resources'. The 'Case' menu is expanded to show 'Case Summary', 'Person', 'Contacts/Summaries', 'Service Authorization', 'Legal', 'Child Plans', 'Placement', 'History', 'Foster Care Eligibility', and 'Case Management'. The 'Person' sub-menu is selected, leading to 'Person Detail', 'Records Check', 'Citizenship and Identity', 'Health Log', 'Diligent Search', and 'Restricted Funds'. The 'Diligent Search' section is active, showing details for 'Berry, Junior' (Person ID: 11731769). The form includes fields for 'Contact Person' (Berry, Senior), 'Referral Type' (Family Interview), and 'Current Outcome of Contact' (Interested). A legend indicates that '*' denotes a required field and '‡' denotes a conditionally required field.

Diligent Search Information

Name: Berry, Junior
Person ID: 11731769

Diligent Search

Contact Person: Berry, Senior

Include in Diligent Search Report

Caretaker Prior to Removal

‡ If previous caretaker, describe why removed:

* Referral Type: Family Interview

‡ If other, describe:

Referrer's Name:

‡ Was the person successfully contacted? Yes No

‡ If not contacted, why?

‡ Current Outcome of Contact: Interested

‡ Is person willing to be a visitation resource?

‡ Is the person a potential placement resource?

‡ If not, why?

13. Indicate if the person is willing to be a visitation resource.

14. Indicate if the person is a potential placement resource. If not, explain.

15. Document the date the case manager discussed relative care subsidy with the relative/non-relative.

16. Click the Save button.

Person Detail Records Check Citizenship and Identity Health Log **Diligent Search** Restricted Funds

Name: Berry, Junior
Person ID: 11731769

* required field
‡ conditionally required field

Diligent Search Information

Diligent Search

Contact Person: Berry, Senior

Include in Diligent Search Report
 Caretaker Prior to Removal

‡ If previous caretaker, describe why removed:

* Referral Type: Family Interview
‡ If other, describe:

Referrer's Name:

‡ Was the person successfully contacted? Yes No
‡ If not contacted, why?

‡ Current Outcome of Contact: Interested
‡ Is person willing to be a visitation resource? Yes No
‡ Is the person a potential placement resource? Yes No
‡ If not, why?

‡ Date Relative Care Subsidies Discussed:

Comments:

Save

17. The Diligent Search page loads. The relative/non-relative name appears on the Diligent Search List page. Notice the columns on the page – Caretaker, Contacted, Visitation, and Placement.

SHINES 2.6 System Test Log Off ? Print IDS GHP

My Tasks | Case | Search | Intake | Financial | Reports | Resources

Case Summary | **Person** | Contacts/Summaries | Service Authorization | Legal | Child Plans | Placement | History | Foster Care Eligibility | Case Management

Person Detail | Records Check | Citizenship and Identity | Health Log | **Diligent Search** | Restricted Funds

Case Name: Smith, Mommy
Name: Berry, Junior

Diligent Search List

Name	Child	Caretaker	Contacted	Visitation	Placement
Berry, Senior	Berry, Junior		Y	Y	Y
Berry, Granny	Berry, Junior		Y	Y	Y

Copy Add

Forms

Forms: Launch

18. To launch the Diligent Search Report Form, click on the Forms dropdown and click on Diligent Search Report Form. Click on the Launch button.

SHINES 2.6 System Test Log Off ? IDS GHP

My Tasks | Case | Search | Intake | Financial | Reports | Resources

Case Summary | Person | Contacts/Summaries | Service Authorization | Legal | Child Plans | Placement | History | Foster Care Eligibility | Case Management

Person Detail | Records Check | Citizenship and Identity | Health Log | Diligent Search | Restricted Funds

Case Name: Smith, Mommy
Name: Berry, Junior

Diligent Search List

Name	Child	Caretaker	Contacted	Visitation	Placement
Berry, Senior	Berry, Junior		Y	Y	Y
Berry, Granny	Berry, Junior		Y	Y	Y

Copy Add

Forms

Forms: Launch

19. The Diligent Search Report for the child loads. Print the report for case manager and supervisor signatures.

**State of Georgia Diligent Search Report
for Junior Berry**

Date of Report: 03/16/2009
Date child Removed from Home: 03/16/2009
Diligent Search Completed Date:
Diligent Search Ruling Date:

**State of Georgia Diligent Search Report
Diligent Search Contact Information
Fulton County**

Child Name: Junior Berry
Child DOB: 01/01/2003
DFCS Case Number: 11460921

Case Manager Last Name	Case Manager First Name
Wilson	Wendy

Relative of child?	Yes
Relationship Type:	Biological Father
Last name:	Berry
First name:	Senior
Side of family:	
Address:	555 Father's Home
	Atlanta GA 30311
Phone:	4045551111
County of Residence:	Fulton
Was Contact Made?	Y
If not contacted, why?	
Outcome of contact:	Interested
Willing to be a Visitation Resource?	Y
Date Relative/Guardianship Subsidies Discussed:	03/16/2009
Comment:	
Referral Type:	Family Interview
If other referral type, explain	
Referrer's name	
How Contacted?	Telephone Call
Potential Placement?	Y
If not, why?	
Name of DFCS staff that made contact	Wilson,Wendy
Date contacted	03/16/2009

Relative of child?	Yes
Relationship Type:	Grandparent
Last name:	Berry
First name:	Granny
Side of family:	
Address:	555 Grandma Boulevard
	Atlanta GA 30311
Phone:	4045552222
County of Residence:	Fulton
Was Contact Made?	Y
If not contacted, why?	
Outcome of contact:	Interested
Willing to be a Visitation Resource?	Y
Date Relative/Guardianship Subsidies Discussed:	03/16/2009
Comment:	
Referral Type:	Family Interview
If other referral type, explain	
Referrer's name	Mommy Smith
How Contacted?	Telephone Call
Potential Placement?	Y
If not, why?	
Name of DFCS staff that made contact	Wilson,Wendy
Date contacted	03/16/2009

Case Manager's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____
Supervisor's Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

This is an additional screenshot. Use at your discretion.

SHINES 2.6 System Test Log Off ? [Print] [Refresh] [IDS] [GHP]

My Tasks **Case** **Search** **Intake** **Financial** **Reports** **Resources**

Case Summary | **Person** | Contacts/Summaries | Service Authorization | Legal | Child Plans | Placement | History | Foster Care Eligibility | Case Management

Person Detail | Records Check | Citizenship and Identity | Health Log | **Diligent Search** | Restricted Funds

Name: Berry, Junior
Person ID: 11731769

Diligent Search Information * required field
‡ conditionally required field

Diligent Search

Contact Person: Berry, Granny

Include in Diligent Search Report
 Caretaker Prior to Removal

‡ If previous caretaker, describe why removed:

* Referral Type: Family Interview
‡ If other, describe:

Referrer's Name: Mommy Smith

‡ Was the person successfully contacted? Yes No
‡ If not contacted, why?

‡ Current Outcome of Contact: Interested
‡ Is person willing to be a visitation resource? Yes No
‡ Is the person a potential placement resource? Yes No
‡ If not, why?

‡ Date Relative Care Subsidies Discussed: 3/16/2009

Comments:

Save

Recording a Parent/Child Visitation Contact

To start recording a contact between a parent and child, click the Contacts/Summaries second level tab.

The system refreshes and the user is navigated to the Contact Search page. To add a contact, the user clicks the Add button.

Date	Type	Purpose	Name	Stage
03/16/2009	Parent/Child Visitation	Parent Child Visit	Berry,Junior	Foster Care Child

Select the Type of contact. For CPS cases, the user selects Contact.

* Type: [Dropdown Menu] [Continue]

- Contact
- Physician Taking Child into Custody
- Safety Resource Assessment
- Transfer Summary

For foster care/placement cases, the user selects Parent/Child Visitation.

The screenshot shows the SHINES 2.6 System Test interface. The top navigation bar includes 'Log Off', '?', a printer icon, 'IDS', and 'GHP'. Below this is a menu with 'My Tasks', 'Case', 'Search', 'Intake', 'Financial', 'Reports', and 'Resources'. Under 'Case', there are sub-menus for 'Case Summary', 'Person', 'Contacts/Summaries', 'Service Authorization', 'Legal', 'Child Plans', 'Placement', 'History', 'Foster Care Eligibility', and 'Case Management'. The 'Contacts/Summaries' sub-menu is active, showing 'Contact Search List' and 'Protective Service Alert'. The main content area is titled 'Contact Detail' and includes a legend for required fields: '*' for required and '‡' for conditionally required. A form field for '* Type:' has a dropdown menu open, showing options: 'Contact', 'Parent/Child Visitation' (highlighted), 'TCM', and 'Transfer Summary'. A 'Continue' button is visible to the right of the dropdown.

The system refreshes and the user is navigated to the Contact Detail page. This page allows the user to capture specific information about the visit, including when, where and the participants.

The screenshot shows the SHINES 2.6 System Test interface at the 'Contact Detail' page. The top navigation bar is the same as in the previous screenshot. The 'Case' sub-menu is now 'Review Intake', and the 'Contacts/Summaries' sub-menu is active, showing 'Allegation', 'Service Authorization', 'Legal', 'Assessments', 'Custody', and 'Case Management'. The main content area is titled 'Contact Detail' and includes the same legend for required fields. The form is divided into sections:

- Contact Information:**
 - Contact/Summary Type: Contact
 - Contacted By: Wilson, Wendy (with a 'Select Staff' button)
 - Title: SHINES Program Specialist
 - * Contact Date: [text input] [calendar icon]
 - * Time: [text input] AM [dropdown]
 - Attempted
 - * Purpose: [dropdown]
 - * Method: [dropdown]
 - Location: [dropdown]
 - Name of Agency: [text input]
 - ‡ Others Contacted: [dropdown]
 - Permission to cross county lines
- Principals/Collaterals Contacted:**

Name	Type	Role	Relation/Interest
<input type="checkbox"/> Berry, Junior	Principal	Alleged Victim	Son
<input type="checkbox"/> Smith, Mommy	Principal	Alleged Perpetrator	Primary Caretaker
<input type="checkbox"/> Berry, Senior	Principal	No Role	Biological Father

 At the bottom of the form, there is a 'Narrative' text area and a 'Save' button.

- Enter the Method of the visit. Use the Method field to document the contact method used, e.g., Announced Face to Face, Correspondence, E-mail, Other, Telephone Call, or Unannounced Face to Face.

SHINES 2.6 System Test Log Off ? [Icons] IDS GHP

My Tasks Case Search Intake Financial Reports Resources

Case Summary Review Intake Person Contacts/Summaries Allegation Service Authorization Legal Assessments Custody Case Management

Contact Search List Protective Service Alert

Contact Detail

* required field
‡ conditionally required field

Contact Information

Contact/Summary Type: Contact

Contacted By: Wilson, Wendy **Select Staff**

Title: SHINES Program Specialist

* Contact Date: 3/16/2009 * Time: 10:00 AM Attempted

* Purpose: Parent Child Visit

* Method:
 Announced Face to Face
 Correspondence
 E-mail
 Other
 Telephone Call
 Unannounced Face to Face

Location: Name of Agency:

‡ Others Contacted: Permission to cross county lines

Principals/Collaterals Contacted

Name	Type	Role	Relation/Interest
<input type="checkbox"/> Berry, Junior	Principal	Alleged Victim	Son
<input type="checkbox"/> Smith, Mommy	Principal	Alleged Perpetrator	Primary Caretaker
<input type="checkbox"/> Berry, Senior	Principal	No Role	Biological Father

Save

Narrative

4. Record the Location of the Visit.

SHINES 2.6 System Test Log Off ? [Icons] IDS GHP

My Tasks | Case | Search | Intake | Financial | Reports | Resources

Case Summary | Review Intake | Person | **Contacts/Summaries** | Allegation | Service Authorization | Legal | Assessments | Custody | Case Management

Contact Search List | Protective Service Alert

Contact Detail

* required field
‡ conditionally required field

Contact Information

Contact/Summary Type: Contact

Contacted By: Wilson, Wendy **Select Staff**

Title: SHINES Program Specialist

* Contact Date: 3/16/2009 * Time: 10:00 AM Attempted

* Purpose: Parent Child Visit

* Method: Announced Face to Face

Location: Name of Agency:

‡ Others Contacted: Permission to cross county lines

Principals/Collaterals Contacted

Name	Role	Relation/Interest
<input type="checkbox"/> Berry, Junior	Alleged Victim	Son
<input type="checkbox"/> Smith, Mommy	Alleged Perpetrator	Primary Caretaker
<input type="checkbox"/> Berry, Senior	No Role	Biological Father

Save

Narrative

- Select the appropriate Principals/Collaterals Contacts – persons involved in the visit (parent and child). Check the box left of the person’s name.

SHINES 2.6 System Test [Log Off] [?] [] [] [IDS] [GHP]

My Tasks | Case | Search | Intake | Financial | Reports | Resources

Case Summary | Review Intake | Person | **Contacts/Summaries** | Allegation | Service Authorization | Legal | Assessments | Custody | Case Management

Contact Search List | Protective Service Alert

Contact Detail * required field ‡ conditionally required field

Contact Information

Contact/Summary Type: Contact

Contacted By: Wilson, Wendy [Select Staff]

Title: SHINES Program Specialist

* Contact Date: 3/16/2009 * Time: 10:00 AM [Attempted]

* Purpose: Parent Child Visit

* Method: Announced Face to Face

Location: DFCS Office Name of Agency: []

‡ Others Contacted: [] [Permission to cross county lines]

Principals/Collaterals Contacted

Name	Type	Role	Relation/Interest
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Berry, Junior	Principal	Alleged Victim	Son
<input type="checkbox"/> Smith, Mommy	Principal	Alleged Perpetrator	Primary Caretaker
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Berry, Senior	Principal	No Role	Biological Father

[Save]

[Narrative]

- Save the page before adding the narrative. The page refreshes. Fields on page are saved and grayed out.

- Click the Narrative button. The Narrative textbox allows the user to add information about parent child interaction, quality of visit, issues around arrival and departure for visit, and the overall outcome of visitation between parent and child.

SHINES 2.6 System Test Log Off ? IDS GHP

My Tasks Case Search Intake Financial Reports Resources

Case Summary Person **Contacts/Summaries** Service Authorization Legal Child Plans Placement History Foster Care Eligibility Case Management

Contact Search List Protective Service Alert

Contact Detail * required field
‡ conditionally required field

Contact Information

Contact/Summary Type: Parent/Child Visitation
 Contacted By: Wilson,Wendy
 Title: SHINES Program Specialist

* Contact Date: 03/16/2009 * Time: 10:00 AM Attempted

* Purpose: Parent Child Visit

* Method: Announced Face to Face

Location: DFCS Office Name of Agency:

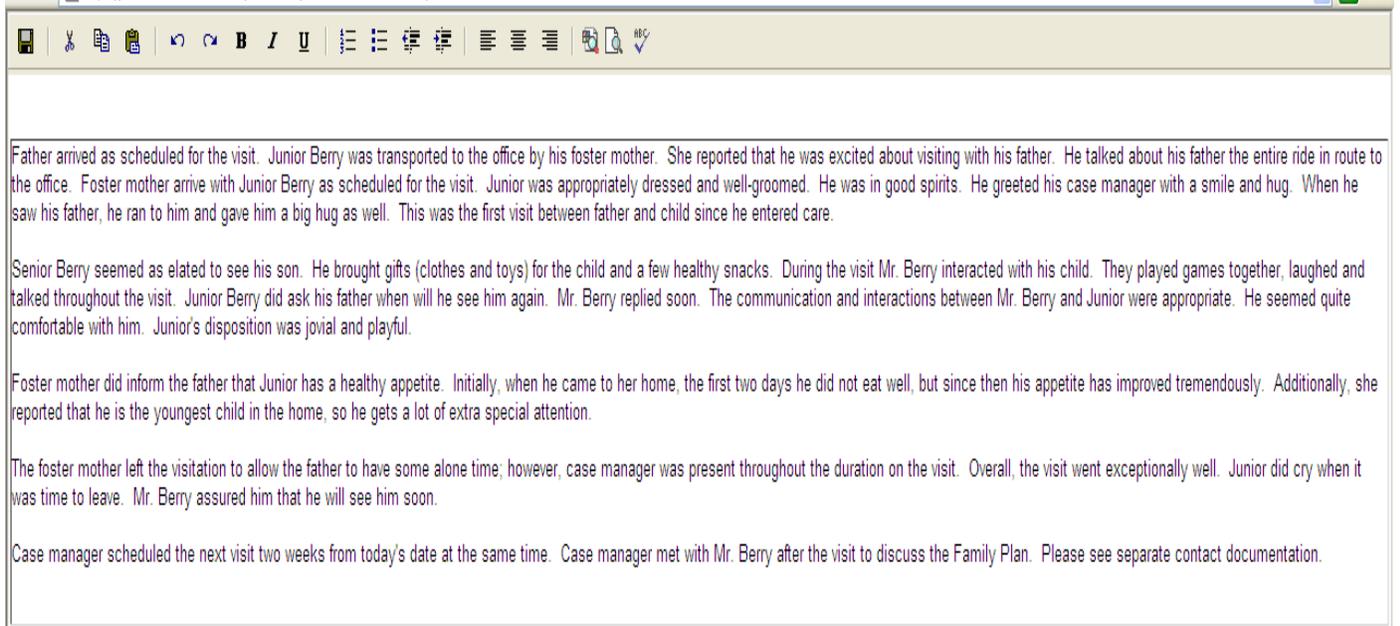
‡ Others Contacted: Permission to cross county lines

Principals/Collaterals Contacted

Name	Type	Role	Relation/Interest
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Berry,Junior	Principal	Primary Child	Son
<input type="checkbox"/> Smith,Mommy	Principal	No Role	Primary Caretaker
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Berry,Senior	Principal	No Role	Biological Father

Narrative

8. Record narrative.



Father arrived as scheduled for the visit. Junior Berry was transported to the office by his foster mother. She reported that he was excited about visiting with his father. He talked about his father the entire ride in route to the office. Foster mother arrive with Junior Berry as scheduled for the visit. Junior was appropriately dressed and well-groomed. He was in good spirits. He greeted his case manager with a smile and hug. When he saw his father, he ran to him and gave him a big hug as well. This was the first visit between father and child since he entered care.

Senior Berry seemed as elated to see his son. He brought gifts (clothes and toys) for the child and a few healthy snacks. During the visit Mr. Berry interacted with his child. They played games together, laughed and talked throughout the visit. Junior Berry did ask his father when will he see him again. Mr. Berry replied soon. The communication and interactions between Mr. Berry and Junior were appropriate. He seemed quite comfortable with him. Junior's disposition was jovial and playful.

Foster mother did inform the father that Junior has a healthy appetite. Initially, when he came to her home, the first two days he did not eat well, but since then his appetite has improved tremendously. Additionally, she reported that he is the youngest child in the home, so he gets a lot of extra special attention.

The foster mother left the visitation to allow the father to have some alone time; however, case manager was present throughout the duration on the visit. Overall, the visit went exceptionally well. Junior did cry when it was time to leave. Mr. Berry assured him that he will see him soon.

Case manager scheduled the next visit two weeks from today's date at the same time. Case manager met with Mr. Berry after the visit to discuss the Family Plan. Please see separate contact documentation.

9. Once case manager completes the narrative, the user clicks the floppy disk icon to save the page. Click the red X in the upper right corner of the page to exit the window. The Contact Detail page will be visible.

10. A check mark will appear right of the Narrative button indicating that a Narrative has been completed for the contact, when the page is refreshed.



11. To add another contact, the user clicks the Contact/Summaries tab and clicks the Add button.

The screenshot displays the SHINES 2.6 System Test interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the SHINES logo, the text "2.6 System Test", and buttons for "Log Off", "?", a printer icon, a refresh icon, "IDS", and "GHP". Below this is a main menu with tabs for "My Tasks", "Case", "Search", "Intake", "Financial", "Reports", and "Resources". Under the "Case" tab, there are sub-tabs: "Case Summary", "Review Intake", "Person", "Contacts/Summaries", "Allegation", "Service Authorization", "Legal", "Assessments", "Custody", and "Case Management". The "Contacts/Summaries" sub-tab is active, showing "Contact Search List" and "Protective Service Alert".

The main content area is titled "Contact Search List" with a "conditionally required field" indicator. Below this is a "Contact Search" section containing a table with the following data:

Date	Type	Purpose	Name	Stage
03/16/2009	Contact	Parent Child Visit		Investigation

At the bottom right of the table area are "Copy" and "Add" buttons. Below the table is a "Form Launch" section with a "Forms:" label, a dropdown menu, and a "Launch" button.

Recording a Case Manager/Parent Visit Contact

To start recording a contact between case manager and parent, click the Contacts/Summaries second level tab.

SHINES 2.6 System Test [Log Off] [?] [] [] [IDS] [GHP]

My Tasks | **Case** | Search | Intake | Financial | Reports | Resources

Case Summary | Person | **Contacts/Summaries** | Service Authorization | Legal | Child Plans | Placement | History | Foster Care Eligibility | Case Management

Contact Search List
Protective Service Alert
Case Name: Berry,Mommy

Case Summary * required field
‡ conditionally required field

Attention:

- You are currently in the Berry,Junior, FCC stage.

[Expand All](#) [Collapse All](#)

Case Information

Case ID:	11376180	County:	Fulton
Status:	Open	Start Date of Case:	04/02/2009

Mrg	Stage Name	Stage	Validated	Level	Opened	Closed	Case Manager	County	Stage ID
<input type="radio"/>	Berry,Mommy	FCF	<input type="checkbox"/>		04/09/2009		Wilson,Wendy	Fulton	11468822
<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Berry,Junior	FCC	<input type="checkbox"/>		04/09/2009		Wilson,Wendy	Fulton	11468821
<input type="radio"/>	Berry,Mommy	INV	<input type="checkbox"/>		04/02/2009		Wilson,Wendy	Fulton	11468642
<input type="radio"/>	Berry,Mommy	INT	<input type="checkbox"/>		04/02/2009	04/02/2009	Wilson,Wendy	Fulton	11468641

Admin Review Appeal **Select Stage**

▶ Special Handling

The system refreshes and the user is navigated to the Contact Search page. To add a contact, the user clicks the Add button.

SHINES 2.6 System Test Log Off ? [Printer Icon] [Refresh Icon] IDS GHP

My Tasks Case Search Intake Financial Reports Resources

Case Summary Person Contacts/Summaries Service Authorization Legal Child Plans Placement History Foster Care Eligibility Case Management

Contact Search List Protective Service Alert

Contact Search List † conditionally required field

▶ Contact Search

Date	Type	Purpose	Name	Stage
No records exist.				

Add

Form Launch

Forms: [Dropdown] Launch

Select the Type of contact, Contact.

SHINES 2.6 System Test Log Off ? [Printer Icon] [Refresh Icon] IDS GHP

My Tasks Case Search Intake Financial Reports Resources

Case Summary Person Contacts/Summaries Service Authorization Legal Child Plans Placement History Foster Care Eligibility Case Management

Contact Search List Protective Service Alert

Contact Detail * required field † conditionally required field

Contact/Summary Type

* Type: [Dropdown] Continue

- Contact
- Parent/Child Visitation
- TCM
- Transfer Summary

The system refreshes and the user is navigated to the Contact Detail page. This page allows the user to capture specific information about the visit, including when, where and the participants.

SHINES 2.6 System Test Log Off ? [Icons] IDS GHP

My Tasks Case Search Intake Financial Reports Resources

Case Summary Person Contacts/Summaries Service Authorization Legal Child Plans Placement History Foster Care Eligibility Case Management

Contact Search List Protective Service Alert

Contact Detail * required field ‡ conditionally required field

Contact Information

Contact/Summary Type: Contact

Contacted By: Wilson,Wendy **Select Staff**

Title: SHINES Program Specialist

* Contact Date: [] [] * Time: [] AM [] Attempted

* Purpose: []

* Method: []

Location: [] Name of Agency: []

‡ Others Contacted: [] Permission to cross county lines

Principals/Collaterals Contacted

Name	Type	Role	Relation/Interest
<input type="checkbox"/> Berry,Junior	Principal	Primary Child	Son
<input type="checkbox"/> Berry,Mommy	Principal	No Role	Primary Caretaker

- Enter the Method of the visit. Use the Method field to document the contact method used, e.g., Announced Face to Face, Correspondence, E-mail, Other, Telephone Call, or Unannounced Face to Face.

SHINES 2.6 System Test Log Off ? 📄 🔍 IDS GHP

My Tasks | Case | Search | Intake | Financial | Reports | Resources

Case Summary | Person | **Contacts/Summaries** | Service Authorization | Legal | Child Plans | Placement | History | Foster Care Eligibility | Case Management

Contact Search List | Protective Service Alert

Contact Detail

* required field
‡ conditionally required field

Contact Information

Contact/Summary Type: Contact

Contacted By: Wilson, Wendy Select Staff

Title: SHINES Program Specialist

* Contact Date: 4/9/2009 📅 * Time: 11:00 AM Attempted

* Purpose: Case Planning

* Method: ⌵

Location: ⌵

‡ Others Contacted: ⌵

Name of Agency:

Permission to cross county lines

Principals/Collaterals Contacted

Name	Type	Role	Relation/Interest
<input type="checkbox"/> Berry, Junior	Principal	Primary Child	Son
<input type="checkbox"/> Berry, Mommy	Principal	No Role	Primary Caretaker

Method List:
 Announced Face to Face
 Correspondence
 E-mail
 Other
 Telephone Call
 Unannounced Face to Face

4. Record the Location of the Visit.

SHINES 2.6 System Test Log Off ? [Printer Icon] [Refresh Icon] IDS GHP

My Tasks | Case | Search | Intake | Financial | Reports | Resources

Case Summary | Person | Contacts/Summaries | Service Authorization | Legal | Child Plans | Placement | History | Foster Care Eligibility | Case Management

Contact Search List | Protective Service Alert

Contact Detail

* required field
‡ conditionally required field

Contact Information

Contact/Summary Type: Contact

Contacted By: Wilson, Wendy Select Staff

Title: SHINES Program Specialist

* Contact Date: 4/9/2009 * Time: 11:00 AM Attempted

* Purpose: Case Planning

* Method: Announced Face to Face

Location: Name of Agency:

‡ Others Contacted: Permission to cross county lines

Principals/Collaterals Contact

Name	Role	Relation/Interest
<input type="checkbox"/> Berry, Junior	Primary Child	Son
<input type="checkbox"/> Berry, Mommy	No Role	Primary Caretaker

Adoptive Home
 Court
 Day Care
 Facility
 Foster Home
 Field
 Hospital
 Law Enforcement
 Other Office
 DFCS Office
Residence
 School
 Other

- Select the appropriate Principals/Collaterals Contacts – person(s) involved in the visit (parent). Check the box left of the person’s name.

SHINES 2.6 System Test Log Off ? IDS GHP

My Tasks | Case | Search | Intake | Financial | Reports | Resources

Case Summary | Person | **Contacts/Summaries** | Service Authorization | Legal | Child Plans | Placement | History | Foster Care Eligibility | Case Management

Contact Search List | Protective Service Alert

Contact Detail

* required field
‡ conditionally required field

Contact Information

Contact/Summary Type: Contact

Contacted By: Wilson, Wendy Select Staff

Title: SHINES Program Specialist

* Contact Date: 4/9/2009 Time: 11:00 AM Attempted

* Purpose: Case Planning

* Method: Announced Face to Face

Location: Residence Name of Agency:

‡ Others Contacted: Permission to cross county lines

Principals/Collaterals Contacted

Name	Type	Role	Relation/Interest
<input type="checkbox"/> Berry, Junior	Principal	Primary Child	Son
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Berry, Mommy	Principal	No Role	Primary Caretaker

- Save the page before adding the narrative. The page refreshes. Fields on page are saved and grayed out.

SHINES 2.6 System Test Log Off ? IDS GHP

My Tasks | Case | Search | Intake | Financial | Reports | Resources

Case Summary | Person | **Contacts/Summaries** | Service Authorization | Legal | Child Plans | Placement | History | Foster Care Eligibility | Case Management

Contact Search List | Protective Service Alert

Contact Detail

* required field
‡ conditionally required field

Contact Information

Contact/Summary Type: Contact
 Contacted By: Wilson,Wendy
 Title: SHINES Program Specialist

* Contact Date: 04/09/2009 * Time: 11:00 AM Attempted

* Purpose: Case Planning
 * Method: Announced Face to Face

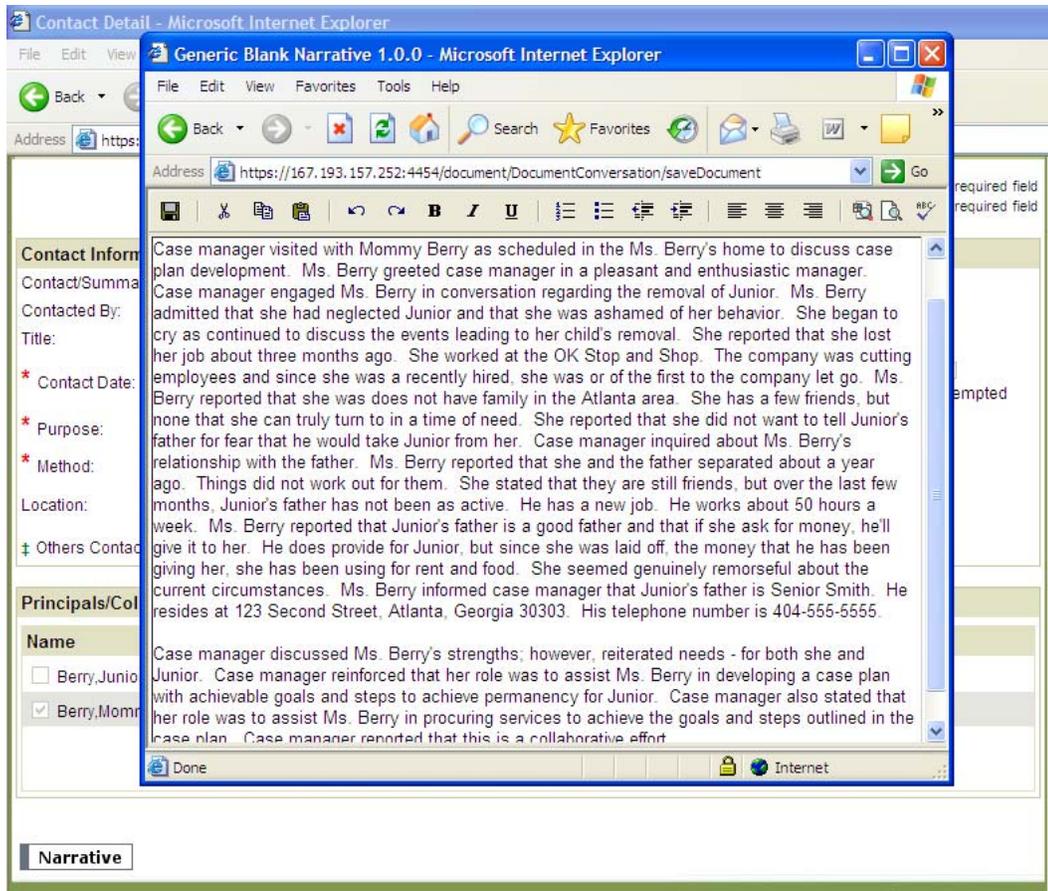
Location: Residence Name of Agency:

‡ Others Contacted: Permission to cross county lines

Principals/Collaterals Contacted

Name	Type	Role	Relation/Interest
<input type="checkbox"/> Berry,Junior	Principal	Primary Child	Son
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Berry,Mommy	Principal	No Role	Primary Caretaker

- Click the Narrative button. The Narrative textbox allows the user to add information about visit between the case manager and parent, including issues related to the case, permanency for child, case plan goals and steps, juvenile court event(s), services, etc.
- Record narrative.



9. Once case manager completes the narrative, the user clicks the floppy disk icon to save the page. Click the red X in the upper right corner of the page to exit the window. The Contact Detail page will be visible.
10. A check mark will appear right of the Narrative button indicating that a Narrative has been completed for the contact, when the page is refreshed.



11. the contact entered will appear on the Contact Search List page.

 A screenshot of the SHINES 2.6 System Test web application. The interface includes a top navigation bar with the SHINES logo, system test version, and user options (Log Off, ?, printer, IDS, GHP). Below this is a main menu with tabs for My Tasks, Case, Search, Intake, Financial, Reports, and Resources. The 'Case' tab is active, showing sub-links for Case Summary, Person, Contacts/Summaries, Service Authorization, Legal, Child Plans, Placement, History, Foster Care Eligibility, and Case Management. The 'Contact Search List' link is highlighted. The main content area is titled 'Contact Search List' and contains a 'Contact Search' section with a table. The table has columns for Date, Type, Purpose, Name, and Stage. One entry is visible: Date 04/09/2009, Type Contact, Purpose Case Planning, Name Berry, Mommy, and Stage Foster Care Child. Below the table are 'Copy' and 'Add' buttons. At the bottom, there is a 'Form Launch' section with a dropdown menu and a 'Launch' button.

Date	Type	Purpose	Name	Stage
04/09/2009	Contact	Case Planning	Berry, Mommy	Foster Care Child

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Engaging Fathers in Child Welfare Cases: A Case Manager's Perspective

by Donna Hornsby, MSW

A while ago, I inherited a combined ongoing child protective services and foster care case. The case had been opened for more than six years prior to my involvement. The two children who had been living with their mother had recently joined a third sibling in foster care. All three children had different fathers. The mother refused to tell me anything about the children's fathers. One of the children, "Marissa" had no mention of her father or paternal family in the case narrative, but when reviewing Marissa's file, I found a man's name on the case information sheet. I contacted child support regarding this and was told that paternity had not only been established, but the

father had been paying child support for several years. I located the father immediately and without difficulty. He was extremely upset that his child had entered foster care and that he had not been informed prior to the dispositional hearing.

He came into my office that day with his wife and two youngest children and filed a petition for custody. We planned a visit for him and Marissa for that afternoon. We also made arrangements for him to meet the child's therapist and begin sessions. He was very interested in Marissa's schoolwork so we scheduled a meeting for him to talk with Marissa's school's principal, her teacher, and her school guidance counselor. I explained to him the agency's case planning process, which requires all interested parties (family members and service providers) to attend. He expressed his desire to attend these meetings, but said he could not miss any more work. Together we decided that we would meet once a month at 8:00 p.m. to accommodate his work schedule. Not only did the father and his wife attend each of these meetings, but so did the therapist, school counselor, and foster parent. After conducting a comprehensive family assessment and home study, Marissa was returned to her father. The father's home provided a safe and stable living environment, which her mother's could not. The child's basic needs were met within the father's home. The father continued the child's therapy sessions by arranging his own payment plan with the therapist, he met regularly with the school, and he maintained contact with me even after his case had been closed. The father also arranged for the three siblings to continue having contact after he was awarded custody of his child.

How did I engage this father? First, I reassured him of my desire to help him strengthen his relationship with his child. I allowed him to express his anger about not being informed earlier about Marissa's entry into foster care and was able to

validate those feelings. I accommodated his work schedule, which showed him my respect, understanding, and commitment to his involvement in the case planning process.

Best practices in social work tells us that our work with families should be based on a holistic approach, which requires engagement of *all* family members and individuals that play a role in the family. Yet, when I think about families with whom I have worked, I realize how few fathers were involved with case planning and more importantly how few were involved with their children. While I am proud of the outcome in Marissa's case, her case is, unfortunately, atypical. Why have my successes with fathers been so limited?

Although I have experienced success in engaging fathers in some cases, I see many barriers to engaging fathers in most child welfare cases. I find it much easier to work with mothers. To begin with, you clearly know that they are a biological parent of the child. Most of my cases require DNA testing to establish paternity, which can be a long process depending on the current relationship between mother and father. If the mother and father are no longer involved in a relationship, the father's role in the child's life decreases. Many mothers provide false information or request that the father have no contact with the child. Therefore, it is difficult to know the truth about either parent and to balance the mother's wishes versus the best interest of the child.

Interestingly, agency "culture" is often more supportive of mothers. Most posters, brochures, flyers, and public service announcements focus on the needs of mothers and their children. The limited print media that is geared toward fathers is usually punitive and frequently related to child support enforcement. While I understand and accept the child support regulations, the obligation to report fathers to child support undermines engaging them in the child welfare processes. Many of the alleged and legal fathers in my caseload refused to be involved or keep in contact with the agency to avoid child support obligations. Furthermore, many of the fathers in these cases were unemployed or were low wage earners barely making ends meet.

There are few resources specifically for fathers. The parenting classes and support groups in my community are all designed for mothers. While we do have in-home providers who work with both or either parent, the service providers in the community are focused on the relationships between mothers and their children. It takes a very special father to be the only man attending a parenting class or nutrition program. Also, many fathers in my caseload worked long hours and need services to be provided during nontraditional work hours.

Another barrier in the engagement process is related to caseload size. Federal, state, and local policies have added to the paper work load of case managers, which pacts the time available to work with children and their families. I have worked in several different child welfare offices. In one office the focus was the paper work, the numbers, and the data. In another office the focus was the practice with families,

and little attention was paid to the paper work or the numbers. I found that when my caseload was high there was no way to do either good case practice or adequate paperwork. Yet when caseloads are manageable, caseworkers can find ways to balance good case practice and meet paperwork requirements. When I was able to balance these two competing obligations, I could devote more time to engaging all family members, including fathers, and I got to really know the children in my caseload. Case managers need to learn and use good time management and organizational skills; supervisors need to learn ways to assist their staff in these areas. Finally, when faced with these barriers and often a high caseload, I realize I put less effort into engaging fathers in the case process. It was just more difficult.

Engaging fathers in child welfare cases is a complex issue. We need to change many things in child welfare policy and how we educate and train workers. High caseloads and competing demands on workers play a significant role in whether or not “real work” is done with fathers. Societal beliefs and agency culture are just as important to working with fathers. To successfully engage fathers, workers need training to dispel many of the myths related to “absent fathers” believed by not only case managers but society as a whole. While it is easy to jump to conclusions about why a father is not involved with a child, we must consider whether we have adequately assessed the father’s current situation and his reasons for lack of involvement.

Are we using our skills as social workers to earn the respect and trust of the individual? It is our job to create a safe environment for the children as well as the parents. Case managers need adequate training that will give them the skills to build respect and trust between the child welfare system and fathers. Agency staff— from directors to case aides—need to increase the focus on the importance of improving the father-child relationship and the benefits to the child. To better meet the needs of children in child welfare, we must engage fathers and paternal family members early in the case work processes. We need to conduct comprehensive family histories and assessments of all family members—identifying each member’s strengths and needs. Fathers and paternal family members need our support and encouragement in case planning and case implementation. Finally, we must provide and create services that address the individualized needs of fathers and other paternal family members.

Donna Hornsby has an MSW in Policy, Planning, and Administration Practice from Virginia Commonwealth University. She prepared this article for us while conducting research related to children involved in the foster care system, with particular focus on the overrepresentation of African American children in the foster care system. Ms. Hornsby joined the staff of the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice as a Child Welfare Specialist in June 2002.

Adapted from: Best Practice/Next Practice, Father Involvement, National Child Welfare Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice, Summer 2002. Retrieved from <http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/downloads/newsletter/BPNPSummer02.pdf>

Diligent Search Resources: Online Search Engines

The following web sites may be the start for an online search for missing persons. Many more sites may be found by typing in “search for missing persons” on your internet browser. Some organizations may charge a nominal fee.

<http://www.whitepages.com>

<http://www.anywho.com/>

<http://reversephonedirectory.com>

<http://www.locateamerica.com>

<http://www.people-finder.com>

<http://www.advsearch.com/person.htm>

<http://www.uslocate.com>

<http://www.aaronspi.com>

<http://www.amerifind.com>

http://www.alphagp.com/missing_persons/index.html

www.zabasearch.com (address locator from public utilities)

Georgia Dept of Corrections:

<http://www.dcor.state.ga.us/GDC/OffenderQuery/jsp/OffQryForm.jsp?Institution>

Federal Bureau of Prisons: <http://www.bop.gov/iloc2/LocateInmate.jsp>

Sex Offender database: <http://www.familywatchdog.us/>

Fatherhood Resources on Web

Center for Urban Fathers

The Center for Urban Families (CFUF) is a nationally recognized organization with a mission to assist individuals in regaining the personal power needed to benefit their families and communities. CFUF's integrated programs target four specific areas: family services, workforce development, responsible fatherhood, and program planning and evaluation.

<http://www.cfuf.org/>

The Center for Family Policy and Practice

The Center for Family Policy and Practice (CFFPP) is a nationally-focused public policy organization conducting policy research, technical assistance, training, litigation, and public education in order to focus attention on the barriers faced by never-married, low-income fathers and their families.

<http://www.cffpp.org/>

Child Trends

Child Trends is a nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization providing social science research to those who serve children and youth. To advance its mission, Child Trends collects and analyzes data; conducts, synthesizes, and disseminates research; designs and evaluates programs; and develops and tests promising approaches to research in the field.

<http://www.childtrends.org/>

Child Welfare League of America

The Child Welfare League of America (CWLA), the nation's oldest and largest membership-based child welfare organization, has been known and respected as a champion for children since 1920. The primary objective of CWLA, is Making Children a National Priority.

<http://www.cwla.org>

Family and Corrections Network

Family and Corrections Network is a national network devoted to families of prisoners. The Network has published information on children of prisoners, parenting programs for prisoners, prison visiting, incarcerated fathers, hospitality programs, and a variety of other topics.

<http://www.fcnetwork.org/>

The Fathers Network

The Fathers Network is a program based in the state of Washington whose mission it is to celebrate and support fathers and families raising children with special health care needs and developmental disabilities.

<http://www.fathersnetwork.org/>

Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study

The Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study is an initiative of The Bendheim Thoman Center for Research on Child Wellbeing (CRCW) at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University. The Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study is following a longitudinal birth cohort of nearly 5,000 children born in the U.S. at the end of the 20th century. The study provides new information on the capabilities and relationships of parents, particularly unwed parents, as well as the effects of parental resources and public policies on children's wellbeing.

<http://www.fragilefamilies.princeton.edu/>

Minnesota Fathers & Families Network

The mission of the Minnesota Fathers & Families Network, as a statewide network, is to initiate, promote, and support effective programs and to educate on public policy to enhance the responsible involvement of fathers in the lives of children, families, and the community.

<http://www.mnfathers.org/default.htm>

National Center for Fathering

The National Center for Fathering was founded in 1990 by Dr. Ken Canfield to conduct research on fathers and fathering and to develop practical resources to prepare dads for nearly every fathering situation.

<http://www.fathers.com/>

National Fatherhood Initiative

National Fatherhood Initiative's mission is to improve the well being of children by increasing the proportion of children growing up with involved, responsible, and committed fathers.

<http://www.fatherhood.org/>

National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families

The National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families, Inc. (NPNFF) is a national individual membership organization whose mission is to build the profession of practitioners working to increase the responsible involvement of fathers in the lives of their children.

<http://www.npnff.org/>

United States Department of Health and Human Services

The United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) web site is devoted to promoting responsible fatherhood. It is a rich source of programs and studies.

<http://fatherhood.hhs.gov>

Zero to Three

Zero to Three's mission is to support the healthy development and well-being of infants, toddlers, and their families.

<http://www.zerotothree.org/>

Service Resources in Georgia

Clayton County Fatherhood Initiative Partnership

Dissemination of evidence-based information, as well as the implementation of educational and practical programming geared to the ongoing needs of regional fathers and families served.

Program areas include: parenting education for fathers; marriage, relationship and/or divorce education; support groups for stay-at-home and/or single fathers; programs for incarcerated fathers; and job skills training and job placement programs with fatherhood components.

<http://www.ccfip.org>

Georgia Fatherhood Program

Non-custodial parents who owe child support through Office of Child Support Services (OCSS) but are unable to pay. Services provided include education, training, and job placement

<http://fatherhood.georgia.gov>

Click on link, Fatherhood Coordinators, for a listing of programs associated with Georgia Technical Colleges across the state.

Office of Child Support Services - Child Access and Visitation Services

Information about child access and visitation programs across the state

<http://www.ocse.dhr.georgia.gov/portal/site/DHR-OCSE/menuitem.f3ca900e75789bd18e738510da1010a0/?vgnnextoid=4c6a10ad9200010VqnVCM100000bf01010aRCRD>

Child Access and Visitation Services Eligibility

- Persons with active cases through the Office of Child Support Services.
- Non-custodial parents or custodial parents may call for services.
- The father OR the mother should live within the localities above and the other parent must reside within the State of Georgia. (Some exceptions allowed in Columbus and Augusta)

Services include:

- Case intake and assessment
- Group parenting education
- Counseling/individual education
- Mediations and the development of parenting plans
- Supervised visitation
- Neutral drop off/pick up sites for child visitation

Organizations providing Child Access and Visitation Services through DHR Office of Child Support Services (current as of February 2008):

Metro Atlanta

Family First, Inc. 404-853-2844

DeKalb County

Mediation Services DeKalb Dispute Resolution Center 404-370-8193.

Middle Georgia

TLC CASA, Inc. 478-275-8100

Augusta

Southeastern Behavioral Health Services 706-364-7272

Columbus

Project Rebound, Inc. 706-221-4830

Macon

Morningstar Treatment Services 478-621-0991

Savannah

Parent and Child of Union Mission, Inc. 912-238-2777 Ext. 106

Georgia Commission on Family Violence

Certified Family Violence Intervention Programs. Listing available from this website:

<http://www.dcor.state.ga.us/pdf/certifiedFVIPs.pdf>

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Tips for Fathers

- Take it slow – Get to know your children and don't expect everything to be perfect immediately. It may take some time to mend this relationship, but don't give up.
- Be consistent – Follow the rules that the children are familiar with. Find out what time they go to bed, what they eat for breakfast, any fears they have, and other crucial details about their lives. Maintain these routines when the children are with you.
- Get support – Everyone is overwhelmed with the changes in their family – you, your children, your extended family, your partner. Get support to deal with the stress you are under. Reach out to a clergy member, neighbor, or friend, when you need to talk about the stress you are experiencing. Seek professional counseling before things begin to spiral out of control.
- Learn as much as you can about child development, communication skills, and discipline techniques. Your child may have entered a new stage while you were away from him/her, and you need to know how to deal with him/her effectively. If you took parenting classes, review the materials you received, or take another class.
- Libraries have many books on parenting that you can borrow.
- Listen to your children – Make time to give each child attention every day. Resist the urge to substitute giving “things” for giving “time.”
- Start with today – You cannot change the past, so start today as the new and better parent you are NOW.
- Take care of yourself. Pay attention to your own needs for rest, proper nutrition, adult relationships, and respite from your children.
- Give yourself and your children time to adjust. You are forming a new family, with healthier lives than you had before your children were placed in foster care. It takes time, love, and patience to put all the pieces together.
- It is important that you remain involved in parenting through visits with your children.
- Be on time and consistently attend your visits. If your child is in foster care placement, ask if you can write or call your child, speak to his foster parents, or have other types of interactions with your child.
- Reassure your child but be honest about what the future may hold. Don't make promises you are unable to keep.
- Show your child he is important to you. Listen to what your children are telling you during the visits – take an interest in their school, friends, and activities.

- Be positive. Visits with your children are not a time to talk to case managers, criticize services, your child's mother, or foster parents, or react negatively to the situation. Use the time to talk with, read to, and play with your children.
- A father can be psychologically available to his child, whether or not they live in the same household.
- Fathers are important in providing children with a sense of their culture and history – with their genealogical connectedness.
- Be a good role model for your child.
- It is the quality of the relationship you have with your child, whether you physically live with your child or not, that is important to them. They want to be loved and valued by you.
- Take the opportunity to hug your children.

Father Child Reunion Tips

In his book, *The Prodigal Father*, Mark Bryan, himself a once absent dad, shares suggestions that fathers can use in reconnecting with their children.

These include:

- Stay relaxed. Your child will be curious and most likely will want to get to know you.
- Choose a comfortable setting for your first contact (when possible).
- Keep the meeting simple. Have minimal expectations. First meetings should not be too long.
- Listen. Be open to what your child has to say. Avoid getting defensive.
- Think ahead. What do you want to say to your child?
- Plan a next visit. This will be reassuring to the child.
- Don't bad mouth your children's mother. Avoid this at all costs.
- Move Slowly! Don't rush the relationship.
- Don't expect to be treated like a returning hero. Your child needs time to deal with the situation and feelings.
- Be careful what you promise. The relationship needs to be rebuilt. It takes time to establish trust.
- If the child is old enough to understand, address your absence but avoid attempting to justify it. Do not blame others for not being there. Reassure your child that you will be there for him or her.

Adapted from: Bryan, Mark. *Prodigal Fathers: Reuniting Fathers and Their Children*. New York, NY: Three Rivers Press, 1998.

Keys to Good Discipline

- Set clear rules and enforce them.
- Be consistent.
- Never give into a tantrum. This will only teach children that tantrums work and will encourage more and louder tantrums in the future.
- Keep anger out of discipline. This also helps the parent refrain from either inappropriate or excessive discipline.
- Do not confuse bad behavior with a bad child. Parents need to verbalize to children that it's the bad behavior they don't like, not the child.
- Use time-outs and other appropriate consequences.
- Praise good behavior.
- Combine rules and limit setting with explanations.
- Telling children why rules are what they are, and why they are being punished helps them learn what is and is not acceptable behavior.



Four questions to ask yourself

- ✓ Did I teach or did I express anger?
- ✓ Was my response consistent with our family rules?
- ✓ Did the consequence suit the misbehavior?
- ✓ Was there any possibility my response could have hurt my child?

Adapted from: Rosenberg, J., & Wilcox, W. B. (2006). *The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children*. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. Office of Child Abuse and Neglect, User Manual Series.

<http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/fatherhood.pdf>

Child Development Activity

Prepare seven index cards. Label each one with one of the following categories:

1. Newborn
2. 1 to 4 months
3. 4 to 8 months
4. 8 to 12 months
5. 12 to 18 months
6. 18 to 24 months
7. 2 to 3 years old

Prepare seven additional cards with the titles and descriptions of children at each of these stages.

1. **Heads-Up.** I'm new to the world and need time to adjust. I sleep a lot. I need love and care. I need to be held, fed, and comforted when I cry so that I can learn to trust that people will take care of me.
2. **The Looker.** I'm beginning to look around and explore with my eyes in a new way. I move my body from stomach to back. I'm beginning to put objects in my mouth.
3. **The Creeper-Crawler.** I'm sitting up with little or no support. I'm beginning to creep and crawl. I crawl to objects and explore them by putting them in my mouth or shaking them.
4. **The Cruiser.** I pull myself up to a standing position and use furniture to support myself while I walk around the room. I may begin to walk during this time. I like to try new things like turning the knobs on the TV, stereo, or pulling on the handles of the cabinets.
5. **The Walker.** I can walk and spend most of the time trying to push and pull things around the room. I can reach for an object that is in a high place by pushing a chair close to the object, then I climb on the chair, and then reach what I want.
6. **The Doer.** I am exploring everything. I'm getting into cabinets and drawers. I am dumping containers. Sometimes I put things I dump back into the containers. I like playing in water and being messy. I sometimes play in the toilet bowl.
7. **The Tester.** I like to ask questions that start with how come, why, and what for. I like to do things for myself. I repeat everything I hear.

Lay out the seven age-range cards in chronological order. Mix up the seven description cards and work with the father to match the descriptions to the correct age group.

Fathers and Child Development

Certain behaviors are normal for children at certain ages. The following are activities a father can do with his child to promote healthy developmental growth.

Birth to 3 Months

- Offer me a finger to hold. Listen to me and learn my responses. Smile and touch me when you talk to me. Tell me I am wonderful.
- Develop trust. Gently hold me while talking in sweet encouraging tones. Call me by name and make eye contact.



- Pick me up when I cry and reassure me. Do not leave me alone crying and give me the impression that no one cares for me.
 - Learn how to soothe me and meet my needs before I cry.
 - Gently rub my back, sing to me, play music for me, or bounce me gently to music. I am sensitive to sound, so keep music low.
 - Hold me securely in new places and protect me.
 - Keep me clean, well fed, and clothed appropriately for temperature.
- Give me colorful toys that make interesting sounds.
 - Sucking calms me, so let me suck my fingers or a pacifier. Be gentle and do not interrupt my sucking by pulling or jiggling something I am sucking on.

3 to 6 Months

- During bath time, try washing me in a sitting position; help me sit up for 5-10 minutes. I may also want to sit up and play. Help me keep my back straight while I sit for 5-10 minutes.
- Give me safe healthy finger foods at 5-6 months (e.g., crackers).
- Lay me on a blanket on the floor and let me roll and reach.
- Spend time with me (toy play, smile, nod, talk, and laugh).



- Give me toys or attention when I need a distraction.
- Respond to my fears and cries by holding, talking to, and reassuring me. Tell me what I'm feeling, and that it's okay.
- Talk to me, sing to me, or give me my favorite toy at diaper changing time. Don't scold, make loud noises, or frowning faces.
- Keep me in the back seat in my car seat, even if I complain. Distract me with some toys and reassure me. Put my seat where I can see outside.
- Avoid separating me from you for days. I need consistent, reliable relationships, so if you leave me for long periods, expect me to be more attached to you for a while and to need more reassurance.

6 to 12 Months

- Play peek-a-boo, puppets, wave bye-bye; teach me words and colors, even if I can't repeat the words right now.
- Have a regular bedtime routine. Slow my activity an hour before bedtime; rock me, pat my back, and bring my favorite blanket. Once dry, fed, and well prepared for bed, leave me with a kiss. Ignore my cries for a few minutes until I am asleep.



- Encourage physical exploration within your eyesight.
 - Keep dangerous objects away from me and baby-proof my environment. Be there to comfort me when I get hurt.
 - Help me stand by holding my hands. Make sure my heels are flat.
- I may purposefully drop and throw things as an experiment. Give me safe things to drop and throw.
 - Open a cupboard in the kitchen kept safe for my exploration. Keep only non-breakable objects that are baby-friendly.
 - Give me something interesting on my tray to explore at mealtime (e.g., cooked spaghetti, spoons.)
 - Do not force me to eat, and understand that I am learning and will be messy with my food.

12 to 24 Months

- Learning to walk takes time. Hold my hand and encourage me to take steps when I am ready—do not rush me.
- If I grab, hit, or bite when I am mad, do not scold me or hit me. Teach me words to use instead of hurting others.
- It will take time before I am able to do many things. Set limits because I will break rules many times before I learn. “No!” is not enough; please explain why (e.g., “The stove is too HOT!” Move me and show me a safe place to play).
- Give me choices whenever possible. Do not say “no” too often, and distract me if I am refusing some thing. Reward me for good behavior. Ignore my “no” if I do not get a choice.
- Let me scribble with thick washable crayons or felt markers; tape a paper to the table so it does not slip.
- Compare colors and sizes with me (big spoon, red balloon).
- Read to me. Tell me about the story; let me pat the pages and make noises; help me learn to turn pages by half lifting one.
- Building blocks, sandboxes, ride and pull toys, jack-in-the-boxes, music toys, and balls are very important learning tools.
- Understand that “me” and “mine” are important before I can learn about “you” and “yours.” Set up a box that is mine.
- Teach me about not hurting others and about sharing, but do not shame me. Be patient, and encourage my empathy for others.



24-36 Months

- Let me do it myself when possible. Let me feed myself, even if I am messy. Give me two choices when you can.
- Let me make choices about the food I eat, and let me refuse food. Reduce in-between snacks so I will be hungry at mealtimes. Do not use food as a reward or punishment.
- Teach me about dangerous things (matches, knives, strangers, stray animals, cars, etc.) There should be significant consequences for dangerous behavior after giving warnings.
- Naps are still important to reduce cranky and moody behavior.



- Give me a warning that it will soon be time to move along.
 - Do not hurry me too much; I need patience and time to learn.
 - Read to me, color with me, and teach me games.
 - If there is a new baby, remember I will be jealous. Assure me of your love, give me special time, and let me help with the baby.
 - Tell me what I am feeling, comfort me, and don't scold me.
 - Offer a hand when I am in a new situation. (This substitutes for picking me up.) Do not insist I have to grow up.
-
- Blow bubbles for me. Teach me to catch and throw a ball.
 - Respect my fears and do not force me into fearful situations. Comfort me and encourage me that there is nothing to fear.

Potty Training Tips



- No age is exact for toilet training. Watch for me to grimace at dirty diapers, show you my wet pants, and stay dry for up to two hours. I need to be verbal enough to understand toilet training
- Change me as soon as possible; tell me it is nice to be clean.
- Let me have a toy to keep me happy and busy on the potty-chair. Put me on the potty briefly at first (up to 5 minutes).
- Praise my efforts and encourage me to let you know when I need to go potty.
- Teach me the family words for toilet training.
- Dress me in ways to remove clothing; be patient, never scold me; visit the potty before going somewhere; help me wipe, teach me to wash my hands, and show me how to flush.

Tantrum Tips

- Learning warning signs and distract me. Don't expect too much.
- Since tantrums are a release of frustrated feelings and a way to get attention, ignore me if I am in a safe place Do not reward tantrums. Stay calm and leave me, reassuring me you will be back when I am quiet. When I stop, talk to me; tell me what I am feeling. Help me express my frustration in words.



3-5 Years

- Discuss physical gender differences with me. Teach me the proper names for body parts without shame. If I am old enough to ask the question, I am old enough to understand the answer. Do not give me more information than I ask for.
- Create a home library with interesting books about heroines and heroes, fables, and fun stories. Read to me every day, and let me point to pictures, fill in missing words, predict what happens next, and discuss the ideas in the book. Understand when I want my favorites repeatedly.
- Remember, rewards works better than punishment. Have a sticker chart, give balloons, pennies for the bank, etc.
- Play children's music; sing, clap, and dance with me.
- Encourage physical involvement and imaginative expression (e.g., "Itsy-Bitsy Spider" and "I'm a Little Teapot").
- Teach me to count, sing my ABCs, and write my name with lots of patience. This will take time and repetition.
- I need a bike or tricycle, balls, clay, and play space with toys.
- Plant a garden or a pot from seed. Help me water it and watch it grow. Pick flowers for my table and let me eat the vegetables.
- Follow a routine at bedtime. Show me the clock and tell me it is time for bed. Let me pick out my bath toys, choose my pajamas, read me a story, etc.



- Spend time with me. Sing me a song; rub my back. Kiss me, say goodnight, and I love you.
- Give me permission to say "no" to adults that make me feel uncomfortable. Talk with me and get to know how I am feeling.

5 to 8 Years

- Discuss physical gender differences with me. If I am old enough to ask the question, I am old enough to understand the answer. Do not give me more information than I ask for.
- Create a home library with interesting books about heroines and heroes, fables, and fun stories. Read to me every day, and let me read a part of each book; discuss the ideas in the book.
- Remember, rewards works better than punishment. Have a sticker chart, give balloons, pennies for the bank, etc.
- Play board games with me.
- Sing, draw, and cook with me.
- Teach me new things with lots of patience. This will take time and repetition. I need a bike or tricycle, balls, clay, and play space with toys.
- Plant a garden or a pot from seed. Help me water it and watch it grow. Pick flowers for my table and let me eat the vegetables.
- Let me help with chores around the house.



8 to 12 Years

- Allow lights on after bedtime if I am reading a book. Check out a new library book each time a book is read. Used bookstores are also economical resources. Let me choose.



- Turn off the TV and play a game with me or talk things over. Do not let me watch PG-13 or R rated movies.
- Bake cookies with me; we can wear aprons, and do not get too upset about how messy the kitchen becomes.
- Provide an allowance contingent on performing household chores. Encourage saving money in a piggy bank, and give me bonuses for a good attitude and/or an exceptional job done.
- Teach me cards and board games I can play with my friends.

- Encourage outside play (e.g., jump rope, skates, balls, etc.) Draw a hopscotch grid on the sidewalk with chalk.
- Teach me about nurturing by giving me responsibility for a family pet. Understand I may forget and remind me.
- I need to know how to swim to stay safe in water.
- Teach me about nature through camping, hiking, and going to the zoo.
- Let me organize a water fight with the hose and balloons.
- Establish family traditions. Remind me about what we did last year. Tell me why it is important.

Strategies for Child Safety

- Know where I am at all times. Teach me to check in and give me timelines.
- Provide clear instructions to me about what you believe is safe, and supervise my activities.
- Make my house safe, friendly, and child centered. Children can visit under your watchful eye.
- Get to know the parents in my neighborhood and my friends' parents.
- Teach me to keep away from places that are unsafe.
- Give me permission to say, "My mom or dad wants me home," or "My mom will not let me," if I need to make an excuse to get out of an uncomfortable or pressure situation.
- Teach me about drugs, alcohol, smoking, and teen pregnancy. Let me tell you how I feel about these things.
- Teach me how to value myself and care for myself. Value me.
- Teach me to be cautious of overly friendly adults or strangers.
- Ask me how I am feeling. Listen. Keep communication open.
- Be reliable and predictable, and create a safe place for me to put my trust.
- Forgive me when I fail, and apologize when you have let me down. Teach me about respect by modeling it.
- Teach me about my bright future and celebrate each accomplishment along the way. Give me vision.



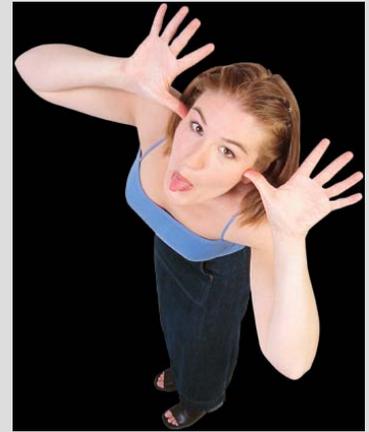
12 to 18 Years

- Be clear about what you expect of me. Set curfews and know where I am at all times. Make sure I check-in frequently.
- Start with small freedoms, assuring me that larger freedoms will be allowed once I've proven myself capable of the smaller ones.
- Allow me to have privacy by giving me a lock on my door, a journal, and by knocking before entering my room. My lock is a privilege, as long as I open the door when you knock.
- Allow me to have my own music in my room.
- Encourage me to express my feelings in writing and verbally. It is okay to be angry, but not mean.
- When I speak, listen to the feeling underneath, along with the words. Am I scared? Or hurting?
- Peers are very important for me. Allow me to talk on the phone and have friends over. Let me organize a slumber party, pool party, or homework session. Allow my friends and me to take over the living room for an evening.
- Let me wear what I like as part of self-expression. Go shopping with me to buy clothes we both like.
- Encourage volunteer or paid work. I need to build a resume. Instill responsibility and polite public behaviors.
- Support and encourage me to gain a special talent early in my teen years (dance, music, drama, sports, art, etc.).



Strategies for Dealing with Conflict

- Understand my need for developing a separate self, and do not take my struggles to gain independence personally.
- Understand that I still need supervision, guidance, and protection, even if I push you away or am critical of you. Troubled children often report a parent does not “love them enough” to wonder where they are or what they do.
- Acknowledge my feelings and maintain consistent consequences for my disobedience of clear limits you set.
- Always relate consequences to my disobedience (e.g., if an hour late, set the next curfew time an hour earlier.)
- When I make mistakes, disobey, or lose my temper when you set limits, know that this is normal. Do not give up. Reassure me that you still care and will not give up on me.
- Give me another chance. I want your love and approval and I will keep trying.
- Reassure me that you are still proud of me.
- Give me a vision for who I can become. Give me a reason why I should make healthy positive choices.
- Maintain communication and physical affection.



The references, *Child Development Activity* and *Fathers and Child Development* were adapted from the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Training Program 305: Engaging Absent Fathers.

Activities for Fathering

A father can do any of the following quality-time activities with – or for – his child:

1. Send a card on birthday and holidays.
2. Call on the phone to wish child happy birthday, holiday, or any day.
3. Help with homework.
4. Read a book with his child.
5. Go to a ball game.
6. Go to a movie.
7. Go to a school event.
8. Go to a park.
9. Take a walk.
10. Watch an appropriate show on television.
11. Build something together (ex: a birdhouse).
12. Prepare and plant a garden.
13. Play a board game.
14. Put a puzzle together.
15. Toss a football or baseball.
16. Put a model airplane together.
17. Send flowers.
18. Go shopping.
19. Read the comics in the newspaper together.
20. Go to the library.
21. Ask a question such as “Why do you think the sky is blue?”.
22. Do a clean-up project together.
23. Go to a local tourist attraction.
24. Cook dinner together.
25. Make cookies or brownies.
26. Change the furniture in a room (let the arrangement be your child’s suggestion).
27. Get a bird book and go bird watching. See how many different birds you can find.
28. Write a poem together.
29. Make up a story together.
30. Play school. Let your child be the teacher.
31. With magnetic letters write notes back & forth to each other on the refrigerator.
32. Make finger Jell-O and cut it into crazy shapes with a cookie cutter.
33. Build a sand castle at the beach or sandbox.
34. Start a hobby together such as collecting stamps or postcards.
35. Play tic-tac-toe.
36. Create a scavenger hunt list for your child to find.
37. Go to a yard sale and pick up some cool books.
38. Go to yard sales and see who can spot the weirdest object for sale.
39. Make hand puppets out of socks and create a puppet show.
40. Create a dream vacation (you do not have actually to go on it to have fun creating it).

TEN WAYS TO BE A BETTER DAD

1. **Respect Your Children's Mother**

One of the best things a father can do for his children is to respect their mother. If you are married, keep your marriage strong and vital. If you are not married, it is still important to respect and support the mother of your children. A father and mother who respect each other and let their children know it provide a secure environment for them. When children see their parents respecting each other, they are more likely to feel that they are also accepted and respected.

2. **Spend Time with Your Children**

How a father spends his time tells his children what is important to him. If you always seem too busy for your children, they will feel neglected no matter what you say. Treasuring children often means sacrificing other things, but it is essential to spend time with your children. Kids grow up so quickly. Missed opportunities are lost forever.

3. **Earn the Right to Be Heard**

All too often, the only time a father speaks to his children is when they have done something wrong. That is why so many children cringe when their mother says, "Your father wants to talk with you." Begin talking with your kids when they are very young so that difficult subjects will be easier to handle as they get older. Take time and listen to their ideas and problems.

4. **Discipline with Love**

All children need guidance and discipline, not as punishment, but to set reasonable limits. Remind your children of the consequences of their actions and provide meaningful rewards for desirable behavior. Fathers who discipline in a calm and fair manner show love for their children.

5. **Be a Role Model**

Fathers are role models to their kids whether they realize it or not. A girl who spends time with a loving father grows up knowing she deserves to be treated with respect by boys, and what to look for in a husband. Fathers can teach sons what is important in life by demonstrating honesty, humility, and responsibility.

6. **Be a Teacher**

Too many fathers think teaching is something others do, but a father who teaches his children about right and wrong, and encourages them to do their best, will see his children make good choices. Involved fathers use everyday examples to help their children learn the basic lessons of life.

7. Eat Together as a Family

Sharing a meal together (breakfast, lunch, or dinner) can be an important part of healthy family life. In addition to providing some structure in a busy day, it gives kids the chance to talk about what they are doing and want to do. It is also a good time for fathers to listen and give advice. Most importantly, it is a time for families to be together each day.

8. Read to Your Children

In a world where television often dominates the lives of children, it is important that fathers make the effort to read to their children. Children learn best by doing and reading, as well as seeing and hearing. Begin reading to your children when they are very young. When they are older, encourage them to read on their own. Instilling your children with a love for reading is one of the best ways to ensure they will have a lifetime of personal and career growth.

9. Show Affection

Children need the security that comes from knowing they are wanted, accepted, and loved by their family. Parents, especially fathers, need to feel both comfortable and willing to hug their children. Showing affection everyday is the best way to let your children know that you love them.

10. Realize That a Father's Job Is Never Done

Even after children are grown and ready to leave home, they still look to their fathers for wisdom and advice. Whether it is continued schooling, a new job, or a wedding, fathers continue to play an essential part in the lives of their children as they grow and, perhaps, marry and build their own families.

Adapted from: National Fatherhood Initiative. (n.d.). *10 ways to be a better dad* [On-line]. Available: <https://www.fatherhood.org/10ways.asp>

Online Web Sites for Fathers

The following are some of the thousands of electronic sites available that contain information fathers may find beneficial:

Sesame Street Magazine provides a variety of information and activities. Dads can also type in parenting concerns and areas of interest and receive tips and suggestions.

<http://www.ctw.org/parents/advice>

Provides a wealth of activities dads can do with their children.

<http://www.childfun.com>

Dads can access a variety of information on the stages of development. Developmental checklists are available from birth through six.

<http://www.growingchild.com/milestones.html>

This is the web site for the National Fatherhood Initiative. Information is provided on a wealth of father-related topics and the importance of fathers. Information can be obtained and special fathering populations such as incarcerated fathers, single fathers, etc. Fathers can sign up for emails on parenting tips and updates on issues of importance to dads.

<http://www.fatherhood.org>

Similar to the National Fatherhood Initiative, this web site provides information of interest to fathers.

<http://www.fathers.com>

A wide variety of fatherhood articles are available for fathers to read.

<http://www.fathermag.com/news>

Tips for Dads: Practical Tips for Knowing Your Child— Nontrivial Questions

It is amazing what things men commit to memory, for example, key statistics for the Atlanta Braves or Chicago Bulls, specifications for next year's Corvette, or lyrics to songs from 20 years ago. However, many dads can't answer even simple questions about their children who are as important as anyone or anything in their lives.

Here are some questions fathers can ask their children. Some may be easy, some are not, but this is not just trivia. These questions provide a marker for how aware a father is of his child and his or her world. A healthy awareness will help in so many areas of fathering. It can be as simple as going out for a soda and asking about his child's friends at school and what they like to do together. This should not turn this into an interrogation. A child can tell whether the questioner is genuinely interested or simply collecting data that may be used against him or her later. It is simply to get to know more about the various aspects of the child's life. Some examples of appropriate questions include:

- Who is your child's all-time hero?
- What is your child's most prized possession?
- Who is his or her best friend?
- What causes your child to lose sleep?
- What were your child's greatest achievements and disappointments in the last year?
- What is your child's favorite meal?
- What would your child like to do when he or she grows up?
- If your child had \$20 to spend, what would he or she buy?
- What does your child most like to do with you?
- What is the most important thing you need to discuss with your child in the next 6 months?

Even for the most aware fathers, these questions may serve as a wake-up call. After asking such questions, a father may decide he needs to sit down with his child and find out more about what makes him or her tick. It could lead to a great discussion about who he or she is and hopes to become. Fathers also should listen to their child's friends, teachers, coaches, and, especially, their mothers. All of these people see a different side of the child, and they will give dads insights they would have never noticed on their own.

Adapted from: Rosenberg, J., & Wilcox, W. B. (2006). *The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children*. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. Office of Child Abuse and Neglect, User Manual Series.

<http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/fatherhood.pdf>

Twenty Long Distance Activities for Dads at a Distance

The *Dads at a Distance* web site has been designed to help fathers who are business travelers, military men, non-custodial fathers, airline pilots, travel guides, traveling salesmen, railroad workers, truckers, professional athletes, musicians/entertainers, actors, corporate executives, and any other fathers who have to be away from their children to maintain and strengthen the relationships they have with their children while they are away.

1. Go to the mall and have a photo of yourself put on a pillowcase and then send it to your child. If you have a favorite cologne, you might want to put a little bit on the pillowcase to remind your child of you.
2. Purchase or make stickers of your child's name and stick them over the names of a character in one of their favorite books. You also can get a picture of your child's face and place it over the character's face.
3. Make a video or audiotape of you reading bedtime stories. Send them to your child along with the book.
4. Arrange for flowers or pizza to be delivered to your child before or after a special event (e.g., a play, recital, or sports game). Include a note telling them how proud you are of their accomplishment.
5. Send a package containing all the things your child will need if he or she gets sick. For example, you could send a can of chicken noodle soup, a special blanket or pillowcase, a video or audiotape wishing them a speedy recovery, crossword puzzles, or a stuffed animal.
6. Send home a photo documentary of what you do all day when you are away. Be sure to include things like what you eat and how you travel. Things that you might think are boring, your kids will be very interested in seeing. Have your child do the same.
7. Have a star officially named after your child.
8. Send a postcard attack. (Send a postcard everyday for a week straight; try to send postcards from unique places).
9. If both you and your child have access to cell phones, then go fishing with them from a distance.
10. Include surprises within your letters: fast food wrappers, foreign currency, pencil shavings, coasters, Band-Aids, your own art, flower petals, Sunday comics, sand, fortunes from cookies, newspaper clippings, stamps, or old shoe laces.
11. If both you and your child have access to the Internet, then go on a virtual field trip together. Be sure to use a chat program so you can communicate with each other while looking at the web sites. A couple of places to start

would be NASA's web site at <http://www.nasa.gov> or the PBS web site at <http://www.pbs.org>.

12. Find unique things to write your letters on, for example, things your child likes—a favorite color of paper, stickers, or pictures of things they like; fun objects—coaster, napkins, paper tray liners at restaurants, air sickness bags, old handkerchiefs, or pictures of you or of favorite spots; paper cut into special shapes (holiday shapes like shamrocks or hearts); or puzzles (cut your finished letter into pieces; try sending one piece at a time).
13. Send home some money so that your child can go to the ice cream parlor. Be sure to send a special letter along that can only be read at the ice cream parlor. If you both have access to cell phones, then you can both be at a ice cream parlor talking over your ice cream.
14. Write a newsletter (have a regular issue of your own family newsletter with columns about each child, family events, and exciting news).
15. If your child does not already have access to a speakerphone, then buy one. Set the phone in the middle of the room, and you will be able to have dinner with them, be there as they brush their teeth, and get ready for bed.
16. Start a letter and take it with you throughout the day. Add a sentence every now and then and be sure to add where you are when you write the different sentences (i.e., an elevator, taxi, or café).
17. Play internet games together like Jeopardy or Wheel of Fortune. Other games that can be found on the Internet include golf, card games, chess, checkers, and strategy games.
18. Make a package that contains cookie cutters and the non-perishable ingredients of your child's favorite cookie so you can "help" them bake while you are away.
19. Choose a photo from your photo album that you can send to your child and then write a letter explaining the events surrounding it. Also, if both you and your child have access to the Internet, have a family home page.
20. Begin a life's lessons booklet. Each week write down a few of the lessons you have learned in life and how you learned those lessons. When the booklet is full, send it to your child to use as he or she begins or continues the journey of life.
21. Before you leave home next time, hide some treasure (notes of appreciation, videos of you reading stories, candy, or toys) around the house. Be sure to draw a treasure map of where you have hidden these things, and then mail it home. If your child has a portable phone, then you can talk to them and give hints as they hunt for the treasure. If you are not living with your child, you can still do this activity by mailing the treasures ahead of time to the person who is taking care of your child.

More activities and resources for long distance dads and their families can be found at *Dads at a Distance* web site at <http://www.daads.com>.

Adapted from: The National Long Distance Relationship Building Institute. (2001). *20 long distance activities for dads at a distance* [On-line].
Available: www.daads.com/fathering.html.

Tips from a Father in Prison

The following is a list of suggestions that you can use to maintain the attachment to your children from inside a prison.

1. Even if your relationship with the mother of your children is over, you need to establish and maintain a positive relationship with her. For the sake of your children, try to find ways to connect with her respectfully.
2. Do not expect big changes right away from your family members. Take your time.
3. Find out about policies regarding how you can connect with your child—visitation, letters, telephone calls, and audiotapes. Ask your prison chaplain, counselor, or other staff.
4. Develop a plan and follow it on how often you will connect with your child.
5. When explaining to your children why you are not living with them, be honest but respect their ability to understand it according to their age.
6. When telling your children how important they are to you, do not be surprised if they do not respond the way you want them to. Children are often angry that you did something wrong that prevents you from being with them.
7. To establish and maintain your family relationships, be ready to make amends and apologize to them.
8. Find ways to support your children emotionally, financially, and spiritually as much as possible.
9. Your family and children need to be able to rely on you if you say you will call or write regularly, so be consistent in your approach and contact schedule.
10. Be realistic about goals and expectations. Do not expect too much, too soon from them.
11. Remember family celebrations, special occasions, and cultural events. If you have a hobby or crafts at prison, make gifts or draw pictures and make them into a coloring book.
12. If at all possible, purchase small items for your children through the commissary or mail order catalogs.
13. Use your time constructively. Get your GED, or take parenting classes, anger management, adult continuing education classes, anything that betters yourself.
14. Some prisons allow you to purchase and make video or audiotapes. Use these to tell stories, share memories, and bedtime stories. Have your children listen to it when they miss you.

15. Before your release date, clear up any legal problems that may be pending such as your driving record, credit problems, or child support.
16. Your children might not know how to say exactly what they are feeling and thinking, so be patient with them.
17. Make a realistic plan and follow through, no matter how bad things get, when re-connecting with your children after you are released from jail.
18. While you are still in prison, research programs that might help you reach your goals once released. Seek out programs about parenting, housing, jobs, legal problems, or credit problems.
19. Work with other prison fathers trying to connect with their children from inside prison.
20. Get some counseling from the appropriate staff (psychologist, chaplain, case manager, correctional counselor).
21. Think about how you want to be a parent and your future as a dad and make decisions about that future. Look at your own relationship with your dad to see what was learned, good and bad.
22. Go to the prison library, take the time to read what you can to try to learn about being a better dad. Try to read as much as you can about father/child relationships.
23. Check out some of the other resources in the Incarcerated Fathers Library.

For more help for incarcerated parents and their families, please visit the *Family and Corrections Network* at <http://www.fcnetwork.org>.