



Healthy Start Benchmarks:

Increase the proportion of Healthy Start women participants that demonstrate father and/or partner involvement (e.g., attend appointments, classes, infant/child care) during pregnancy to 90%.

Increase the proportion of Healthy Start women participants that demonstrate father and/or partner involvement (e.g., attend appointments, classes, infant/child care) with their child participant to 80%.

Rationale

Father involvement has an impact on both pregnancy and infant outcomes. The term “father involvement” includes fathers, father figures and partners of mothers. The father, father figure or partner can, for example, participate in childbirth classes, prenatal and pediatric medical appointments, and infant care. Father involvement during pregnancy has been shown to reduce risks of preterm birth, fetal growth restriction, and low birth weight, and promote maternal prenatal health.

Early male involvement in children’s lives has been shown to have a positive effect on both sons and daughters in several areas. It is associated with future academic success, reduces the chance of delinquency, and decreases the incidence of substance abuse.

This Resource Sheet provides recommended strategies and a selection of resources and evidence-based practices to aid Healthy Start grantee organizations, partners and staff in developing or refining their father/male involvement program, activities or initiatives.



*Supporting communities to
give every child a Healthy Start.*

Healthy Start EPIC Center



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Program Level Strategies

Build capacity for father/male engagement

Strategies	Select Resources & Evidence-Based Practices
<p>Conduct an organizational assessment that includes conversations with staff and fathers as well as program data.</p> <p>Assess your setting for “father-friendliness”—is it welcoming and comfortable for males?</p> <p>Establish a program vision that values fathers/male partners as members of cultural and ethnic groups in the community.</p> <p>Revise program policies and data collection to reflect activities for and by men.</p> <p>Provide ongoing training/professional development opportunities for staff, and supervisory supports.</p> <p>Conduct staff training that explores staff experiences/relationships with men or fathers that may impact staff’s professional interactions.</p> <p>Educate staff on importance of father involvement for the health and development of both children and mothers.</p> <p>Have discussions at staff meetings or retreat to reflect on attitudes toward and experience with father engagement and to challenge stereotypes.</p> <p>Develop a fatherhood team of staff and parents to manage father-specific programming.</p>	<p>Head Start Father Engagement Birth to Five Programming Guide</p> <p>Father-Friendly Check-Up</p> <p>Responsible Fatherhood Toolkit</p> <p>Promundo:Program P</p> <p>Bringing Fathers In Factsheets</p> <p>Engaging Low-Income Fathers in Home Visiting: Approaches, Challenges, and Strategies</p>



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Program Level Strategies

Build capacity for father/male engagement (continued)

Strategies	Select Resources & Evidence-Based Practices
<p>Have a designated male engagement coordinator on staff.</p> <p>Engage fathers/male partners to help with recruitment and outreach to new fathers/male partners, participate on the CAN as well as in other community forums.</p> <p>Integrate services for fathers with the rest of the HS program--instead of making male services an add-on.</p> <p>Conduct a needs assessment specific to the service needs and priorities of males/fathers.</p> <p>Establish referral relationships with health and social service providers and community-based organizations that offer services and programs for males.</p> <p>Set goals to reach targeted outcomes for father/male engagement activities and services.</p> <p>Evaluate father-focused services and make necessary adjustments and modifications.</p>	<p>Head Start Father Engagement Birth to Five Programming Guide</p> <p>Father-Friendly Check-Up</p> <p>Responsible Fatherhood Toolkit</p> <p>Promundo:Program P</p> <p>Bringing Fathers In Factsheets</p> <p>Engaging Low-Income Fathers in Home Visiting: Approaches, Challenges, and Strategies</p>



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Individual & Family Level Strategies

Provide services, education and support tailored specifically for fathers/males, and promote co-parenting of infants and children

Strategies	Select Resources & Evidence-Based Practices
<p>Conduct home visits with fathers and schedule them at a time convenient for the father.</p> <p>Hire male mentors to conduct home visits with fathers.</p> <p>When scheduling home visits with the mom, try to schedule at a time that is convenient for the father/ male partner as well.</p> <p>Individualize home visits to engage fathers, and “meet fathers where they are.”</p> <p>Have a care coordinator who works with only men.</p> <p>Invite fathers directly, not only through the mother.</p> <p>Involve fathers across all perinatal phases--preconception, prenatal, postpartum and parenting.</p> <p>Conduct reproductive life planning and preconception health activities with men as well as women, and with couples together when possible.</p> <p>Focus on co-parenting, mother and father working together to care for and raise the children.</p> <p>Use evidence-based curricula designed to engage, educate and empower fathers.</p> <p>Connect fathers to a range of services that they want, not only health care and education but job training and employment services, financial literacy, etc.</p> <p>Provide father and couple education on pregnancy and childbirth and what to expect.</p> <p>Educate fathers on child development and their central role.</p>	<p>Engaging Low-Income Fathers in Home Visiting: Approaches, Challenges, and Strategies.</p> <p>Promundo:Program P</p> <p>National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families</p> <p>Strong Families/Healthy Relationships Resources</p> <p>CDC’s Information for Men on Preconception Health and Health Care</p> <p>Common Sense Parenting</p> <p>The Nurturing Fathers Program</p> <p>InsideOut Dad</p> <p>Boot Camp for New Dads</p> <p>24/7 Dad</p> <p>Growing Great Kids: Prenatal to 36 Months Curriculum</p> <p>Family Spirit</p>



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Community Level Strategies

Work with community partners to develop and promote father-friendly services, policies and events

Strategies	Select Resources & Evidence-Based Practices
<p>Include father/male indicators/data in your community needs assessment.</p> <p>Develop a local network with supportive individuals, organizations, and agencies.</p> <p>Consider incentives to market enhanced services for fathers and to create a reservoir of community goodwill.</p> <p>Advocate for parental leave.</p> <p>Add father-friendly services and improved integration of health and social services for men to your CAN's list of priorities.</p> <p>Host community events specifically for fathers, such as fatherhood breakfasts, barbershop talks.</p> <p>Host community events for fathers and children such as playground meet-ups or dads and kids social.</p> <p>Host community events for families, such as family fun days, family reading days/literacy events.</p>	<p>Promundo:Program P</p> <p>Changing Systems & Practice to Improve Outcomes for Young Fathers, Their Children & Their Families</p>



Healthy Start EPIC Center Webinar Resources:

[Hear From Your Peers: Fatherhood Programs: Assessing Readiness & Sustainability](#)

[Hear From Your Peer: Fatherhood Programs and Initiatives: Male Engagement](#)

This Resource Sheet can be accessed electronically: <http://healthystartepic.org/>