



NATIONAL FAMILY PRESERVATION NETWORK

*Developing Strong Families by Supporting
Preservation, Reunification, and Fatherhood Initiatives*

NFPN is...

- ✓ A private, nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization founded in 1992.
- ✓ A far-reaching network supported by individuals, businesses, organizations, and foundations sharing NFPN's mission and goals.
- ✓ A proactive board and staff with many years of experience in providing services that strengthen families.

Expertise

NFPN improves well-being of children by:

- ✓ Promoting Intensive Family Preservation Services to keep families together and prevent unnecessary out-of-home

placement of children.

Impact: Nationwide, over 80% of families remain intact after receiving Intensive Family Preservation Services. Every dollar invested in keeping families together saves \$2.54 on placement services.

- ✓ Promoting Intensive Family Reunification Services to successfully and safely reunite children with their families when out-of-home placement has occurred. **Impact:** Several studies by NFPN show that 70% of children have been safely reunified with Intensive Family Reunification Services.

- ✓ Providing assessment tools that measure family functioning with a wide



variety of services. **Impact:** NFPN's assessment tools are used in the child welfare, juvenile justice, mental health, behavioral health, schools, home visiting, and other systems.

- ✓ Encouraging fathers to be involved with their children and thus ensure better outcomes for children. **Impact:** NFPN's father-involvement curricula targeted to frontline workers are unique, research-based, comprehensive, and are also available as online courses.

Leadership

NFPN is the national leader in:

- ✓ **Developing and testing family assessment tools for the child welfare system.** Over 600 agencies around the world use the assessment tools. Each tool has been field-tested successfully to establish reliability and validity. Two of the tools have been ranked as most promising for the child welfare system and are recommended for use

by registries for evidence-based practice.

- ✓ **Developing training materials for frontline workers on father-involvement.** NFPN developed the first-of-its-kind fatherhood training curriculum and successfully completed the first-ever demonstration project showing that with training and assistance, child welfare workers increased their efforts to involve fathers in their children's lives.

Accountability

- ✓ NFPN spends 80% of its funds on programs.
- ✓ NFPN posts annual reports, budget, and privacy policies on its website.

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Our Mission ... is to serve as the primary national voice for the preservation of families. Our mission is achieved through initiatives in the areas of family preservation, reunification, and fatherhood. NFPN offers research-based tools, training, resources, and technical assistance to public and private child- and family-serving agencies.

Agency Policies for Father Involvement

1. Make the agency environment father-friendly in all areas: definition of “parent,” physical environment, outreach, information, service hours, staffing, and funding.
2. Establish paternity, if necessary; identify, locate, and contact the father in every case.
3. Share information with the mother regarding the benefits of the father’s involvement.
4. Provide training for staff on father engagement and involvement, and skills for working with fathers. Training should address ethnic and cultural issues.
5. Treat mothers and fathers equally in all areas, including case planning, services, and placement.
6. Involve the father’s extended family as a support system for the father and as a resource for his children.
7. Set performance standards for practitioners on engaging and involving fathers.
8. Work with other organizations in the community to establish services and support groups for fathers.
9. Advocate for father-involvement policies, resources, and training with public officials, schools and universities, and community organizations.
10. Evaluate father-friendliness of the agency on a regular basis.

Message for Moms

You've put in many years nurturing and raising your child and maybe *all* the responsibility and work has rested on your shoulders. It's commendable that you're doing this on your own, but there may be a resource that you're overlooking. Even if he has many failings and has disappointed you in the past, perhaps your child's father could help out in some way now. There's a lot of new research about the positive effect that fathers have on children. Please take a look at some of the following ways that a father benefits the child that may also be of benefit to you.

Benefits of Involving the Father in the Child's Life

- A father who has a close relationship with his child is more likely to have positive communication with the child's mother.
- If the father and mother have a cordial relationship, fathers help sons learn to respect women and decrease the potential for boys to become violent. These fathers also show girls how to interact with men.
- A father who has a close relationship with his child is more likely to provide economic support for the child.
- Fathers and mothers contribute different things to a child. By 8 weeks of age, infants can tell the difference between a male or female interacting with them. Infants respond in different ways, thus learning to relate to both males and females.
- Children attached to their fathers at age 5 show more self-confidence and less anxiety than children who are less attached to their fathers.
- Children whose fathers play with them form closer, more trusting relationships later in life. Playing with the child is one of the most essential things that a father can do.
- Fathers encourage children to become independent but also set firm limits, thus encouraging self-control. Through "roughhousing" boys learn from fathers a balance between timidity and aggression. Girls develop greater self-esteem and self-confidence through their interaction with fathers.
- Fathers talk to children in a more brief and direct way than mothers, thus helping the child to understand and respond to different styles of communication.
- A father's positive influence continues into adulthood as expressed in the children's social networks, psychological well-being, and educational achievement.

Overcoming Obstacles to Father Involvement

Hopelessness

The parental role is viewed as stagnant—something you have or don't have, as opposed to a role that can be changed or improved upon. Therefore, having failed at it once, fathers may not see the point of trying again and are likely to give up quickly.

Strategies:

- Talk about how parenting is learned, not innate.
- Focus on other things he has learned or accomplished in his life.
- Admit that you are worried he will give up on his kids because he feels so bad about what has happened. Remind him how he and his children will be so sad if he gives up.
- Find supports for him right away: a mentor, family member, clergy, or another father who has been through a similar situation.

Mistrust

A negative history with professional intervention or a negative perception of social services may rightfully bring about feelings of apprehension. Fathers who have had these experiences will be defensive and critical.

Strategies:

- Don't take his defensiveness personally.
- Validate his feelings and perceptions of intervention, and explain how social services has changed its policies and practices to be more supportive of fathers.
- Focus on your shared goal of getting or keeping his children with him.
- Be up-front about the services you can and can not provide, and validate the inadequacies of the system.

Assessing Father Involvement

1. Has paternity been established?

- Yes No

If no, what efforts have been made or are underway to establish paternity?

2. Is the father's location known?

- Yes No

If no, has child support enforcement been contacted for assistance in locating the father?

- Yes No

Check any of the following that apply to the father's location, if known:

- Lives in same general area as the child
 Lives too far away for frequent face-to-face contact with the child
 In jail or prison
 Deceased

3. Is the father the alleged perpetrator of abusing or neglecting the child?

- Yes No

4. Does the father currently have any contact with the child?

- Yes No

If yes, what is the frequency of contact?

- Daily
 Weekly
 Bi-weekly
 Monthly
 Other (please specify) _____

5. Do any of the father's extended family members have any contact with the child?

- Yes No

If yes, list the person(s) and relationship to the father/child:

What is the frequency of contact? _____

If no contacts, what are the barriers? _____

6. Does the father provide direct care for the child?

- Yes No

If yes, list the type of care provided:

- Child stays at father's home on regular basis
 Father baby-sits child
 Father takes child to activities
 Other _____

7. Does the father appropriately discipline the child?

- Yes No Don't know

8. Do the child's mother and father communicate regularly about the child?

- Yes No

Describe the type of interaction between the child's mother and father:

9. Is the father employed?

- Yes No

If yes, list the type of employment:

- Occasional or seasonal
 Part time
 Full time

If the father has less than full time employment, has he been referred to an employment program?

- Yes No

10. Does the father provide financial support for the child?

- Yes No

If yes, list the type of support:

- Child support payments made on regular basis
 Occasional child support
 Occasional gifts or cash

11. Is the father involved in the child's case plan?

Yes No

If yes, are there specific requirements for the father to fulfill?

Yes No

12. Have services been offered to the father?

Yes No

If yes, list the services offered:

13. List any male-oriented programs that the father has been referred to (fatherhood program, gender-specific counseling, social, recreational).

14. Is placement being considered with the father?

Yes No

15. Is placement being considered with the father's family?

Yes No

Father/Child Visits

What does the Research say?

- The first round (2000–2004) of the federal Child and Family Services Reviews showed a close association between parent/child visits and achieving permanency.
- The Child and Family Services Reviews indicated that the more caseworkers included mothers, the more likely they were to include fathers in assessment, services, case planning, and visits.
- A survey of caseworkers in the child welfare system showed that 30% of nonresident fathers visited their children with about 13% doing so on a regular basis (Malm, Murray & Geen, 2006).
- A demonstration project emphasizing father-friendly practice and training for caseworkers to engage fathers showed father/child visits peaked at six months with one-third of the fathers complying with the plan for visiting (English, Brummel & Martens, 2009).

What do Fathers say?

- 2004: Researchers in Kentucky sent out a survey to all fathers involved in the child welfare system
- Over 300 fathers responded: a slight majority expressed satisfaction with their contact with the caseworker, invitation to attend meetings regarding their children, perception of being treated politely and professionally by staff, and a conclusion that their children were helped by the agency.
- A majority of fathers responded negatively: to questions about services offered to their family, referring others to the agency for assistance, seeking help in the future from the agency, and receiving services that helped them become better fathers
- 80% of fathers were referred for visits with the child, only 42% actually had visits.
- 40% of fathers would have liked a referral to a father support group, only 9% were referred
- Researchers' recommendations that were adopted: a state information Web site, an annual fatherhood conference, training on father involvement, increased efforts to locate fathers, efforts to improve father parenting, and efforts to involve paternal relatives in placement decisions (Huebner et al, 2008).

Child and Family Services Review (CFSR)

First Round of CFSR

Proxy for Father Involvement in CFSR	States
Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care	16 (30.8%)
Item 17: Needs/services of child, parents, and foster parents	1 (1.9%)
Item 18: Child/family involvement in case planning	5 (9.6%)
Item 20: Worker visits with parents	7 (13.5%)

Agency Assessment

- Conduct an *organizational* self-assessment
- Ask workers to select one case, assigned at least one month previously, and to complete an assessment form on father involvement
- Appoint a Task Force that includes administrators, program managers, supervisors, and workers to review the organizational and worker assessments and prepare findings/recommendations.

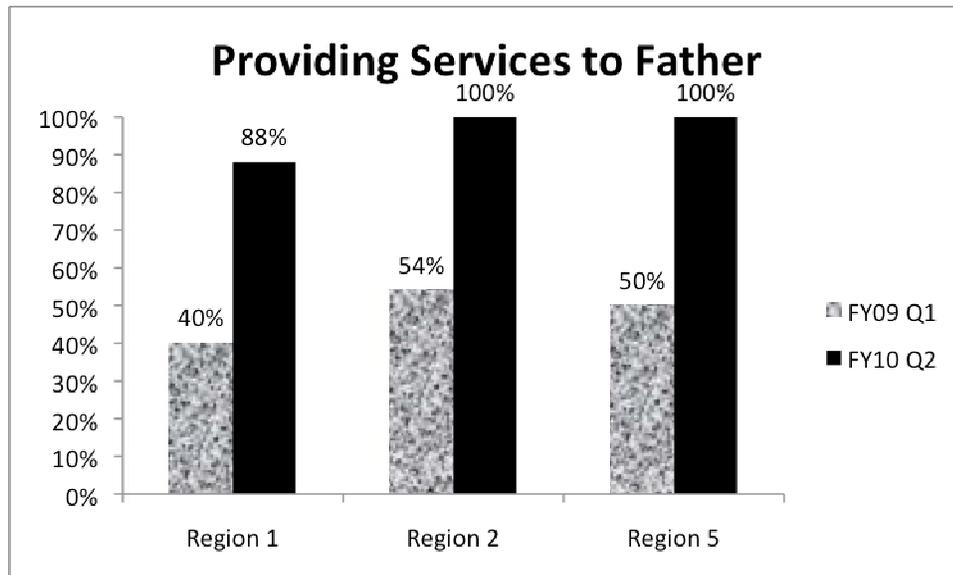
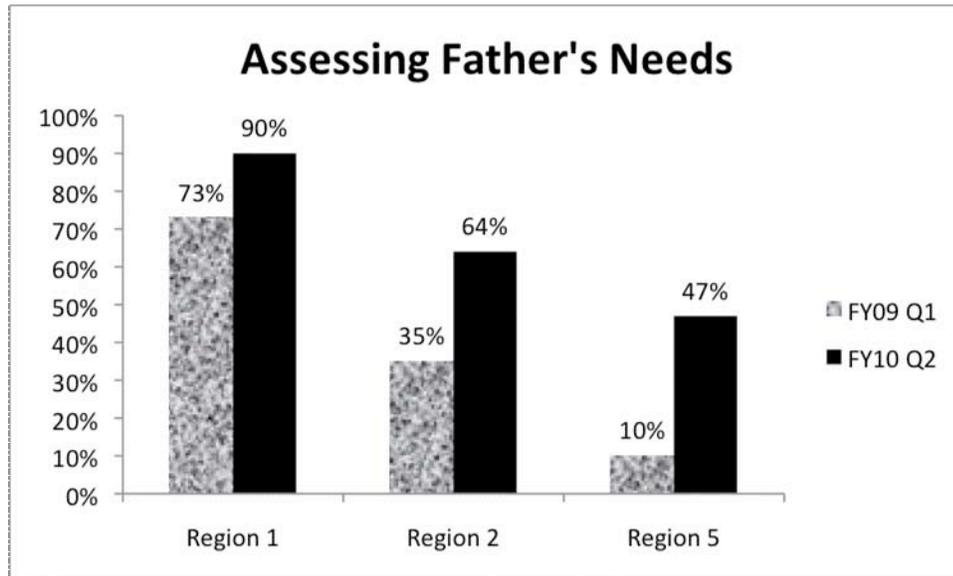
Motivation and Training

- Schedule a meeting with all staff to review the findings and recommendations of the Task Force and to announce that the agency is committed to increasing father involvement.
- Announce a kick-off event with a motivational fatherhood speaker. Involve and publicly commend staff who are strong supporters of father involvement.
- Within a month of the kick-off event, schedule the first training for workers and supervisors on father involvement

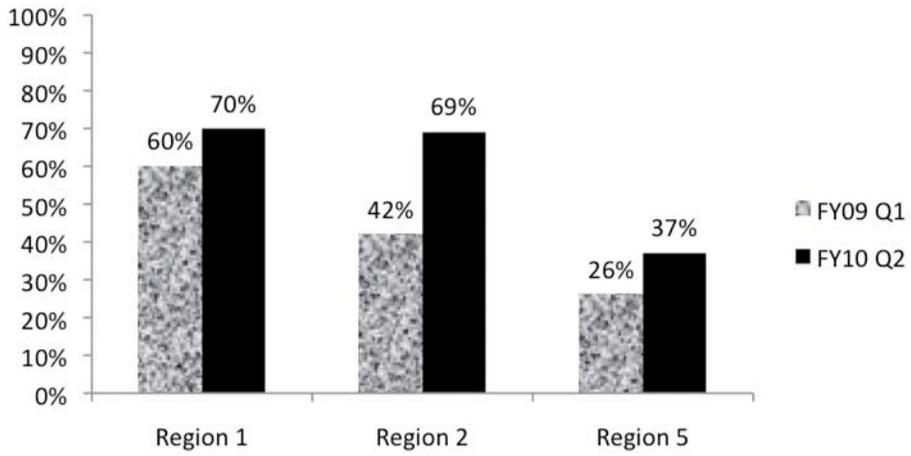
Reinforcement and Instilling Cultural Change

- Schedule additional training 3–6 months after initial training. This training should focus more on skill building and other specific needs for training that workers identify.
- Develop a form for workers to use that documents father-involvement—it can be the same or similar to the initial assessment form that workers completed
- Ask supervisors to inquire about the father’s involvement in every case plan/review and parent-child visitation schedule.
- Coordinate with community fatherhood organizations and programs for referrals and to develop other needed programs to serve fathers.
- Develop agency policies that make father involvement an integral part of agency culture and expectations

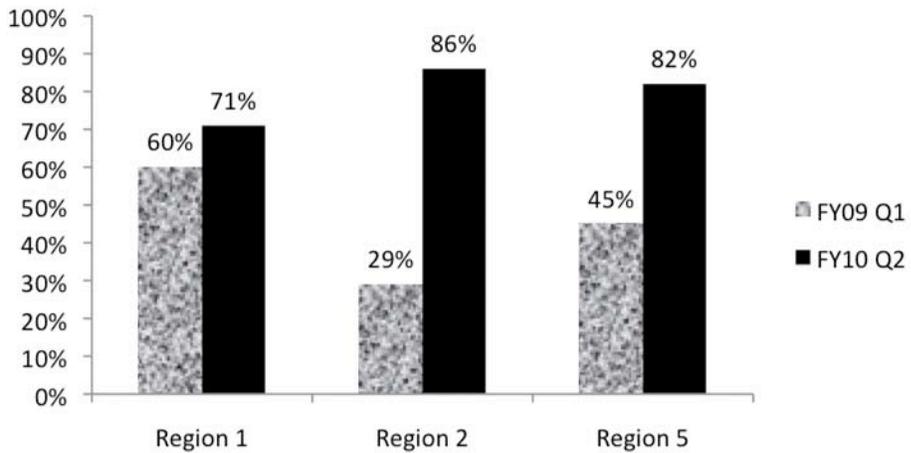
Results



Involving Father in Case Planning



Quality of Visits With Father



Frequency of Visits With Father

