

An Evaluation of the Impact of the Full Time Fathers Program on Job Obtainment and Attitude Changes Toward Parenting

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Program Objectives:

1. To enroll 500 non-custodial fathers in a comprehensive family involvement program, during the five year period.
2. To provide training in parenting through Responsible Fatherhood Classes, basic skills (math, reading, and computers), life skills and job readiness, critical thinking and decision-making, and peer-to-peer skill development.
3. To increase father's involvement in their children's lives through family relationship building experiences.
4. To implement an environmental remediation technical skills training leading to certification in Hazmat and Mold Remediation.
5. To provide fathers with assistance for job identification, job searching, and job placement referrals.

Service Delivery

1. Responsible Fatherhood Curriculum (8-10 hours) & Peer Support Groups
2. Case Management (3 sessions) include individualized services plans and agency referrals
3. Weekly Life Skills/Job Readiness (8 hours) classes provide training & access to employment opportunities.
4. Technical Training (3weeks) includes Basic Skills (English, Math, and Computers), Job Readiness, Responsible Fatherhood, and Hazmat Certification.
5. Family day activities give the participants an opportunity to spend time with their children and utilize the skills they've learned in the program.
6. Incentives include: \$50.00 stipend, transportation assistance, lunch (during trainings), & clothes closet.

Results:

- Increased involvement in their children's lives is the most salient of these findings.
- Participants reported an increase in positive thoughts about parenting and spending time with their children.
- Results lend support for continued support and skill building to improve relationships among fathers, other parents and their children.
- Pre-test, in comparison to, post-test indicated the following over the years:
 - Positive attitudes toward other parents.
 - Increased closeness with children.
 - Seeing children more often.
 - Improved attitudes about mothers wanting fathers to have positive and close relationships with their children.
- 46% of the participants in the Full Time Fathers Program (FTFP) (175 out of 377) attained employment. This is 30% below the long term goal of having 50% of participants employed at the completion of the fifth year.

Pre- Test/ Post-Test Questions:

1. How do you feel about being a father?
2. How close do you feel you are to your child (children)?
3. On average, how often do you have contact with your child (children)? **Contact is seeing, talking, or mailing letters to your child.**
4. How proud are you of your child (children)?
5. Overall, how would you describe your relationship with the other parent (mother)?

Importance of Fatherhood Programs

- Louisiana has several programs to aid single/custodial parents in creating a safe, nurturing, and economically stable environment for the children. However, programs that cater to the needs of non-custodial parents (mainly fathers) in this area are scarce.
- Fatherhood programs provide fathers with skills and resources to become more active in their child's lives as well as to become economically stable.
- Programs like FTFP give fathers the opportunity to connect with and learn from other fathers who are in similar situations. It gives them an outlet to express their emotions in a non-judgmental setting.

Lessons Learned/Successes

1. *Unintentional Consequences:* Re-entry was added to promote the effective reintegration of offenders back to their families and into the community.
 - a. FTFP has served 97 inmates in the East Baton Rouge Parish Prison since 2009.
 - b. 8 are still serving original sentences and 6 have been re-incarcerated.
2. *Life Skills/Job Readiness Sessions:* The class was re-formatted to serve participants on a weekly basis, thus increasing interest and participation in the Full Time Fathers Program.
3. *Teaching Style/Structure:* The facilitator used a multi-faced approach to adapt his teaching style to fit the needs of each group and help them feel comfortable, while keeping the content consistent.

Testimonies & Success Stories:

“I'm very honored to be a part of this class. I've been through a lot in my life these past few years. I want to move ahead and be the person I was meant to be. Thank each and everybody for taking the time to try and get my life back on track.”

“The Full Time Fathers Program is very beneficial for it has allowed me an opportunity to re-evaluate my financial and social position. It also forced me to be more efficient with my time.”

T.P. completed the FTFP at East Baton Rouge Parish Prison. He earned a certification in Hazmat was attained employment with Lemoine Industries, working offshore. T.P. recently got married and accredits his ability to form and maintain successful and healthy relationships to the skills he learned in the program.

J.S. completed the Responsible Fatherhood and Job Readiness classes. He did not have contact with his daughter and the mother and had difficulty in obtaining employment due to his criminal history. J.S. was able to re-establish contact with his daughter and began working at a local restaurant. He now has custody of her; fulfilled his child support obligations, and is employed with a railroad company.