An Evaluation of the Impact of the Full-Time Fathers Program on Job Attainment and Attitudes Toward Parenting

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Purpose

1. Provide an overview of the Full-Time Fathers Program (FTFP).
2. Identify the characteristics of fathers who participate in the FTFP.
3. Overview of the results of the program.
4. Highlight strengths & barriers.
5. Discuss the implications for practice.

Introduction

- Children who live absent their biological fathers are, on average, at least two to three times more likely to be poor, use drugs, experience educational, emotional and behavioral problems, and to engage in criminal behavior (National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse, 2009).
- Over 50% of children in Louisiana live in a single-mother household and below the poverty line (Hope Networks, 2000).
- In Louisiana, over $21 million dollars is used to provide assistance through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (TANF) to over 10,000 families (Administration for Children & Families, 2008).
- $21 million of the $39 million in child support was collected (55.6%) and 56% of the cumulative arrears were collected ($6.7 million out of $1.2 billion) (Louisiana Department of Social Services, 2011)
- The Southern University Full Time Fathers Program (FTFP) recognized the need for more involved, responsible fathers and put a plan into action that would aid non-custodial fathers in improving their relationships with their children by assisting them in overcoming obstacles and barriers to being effective nurturing parents.

Program Overview

- Eligibility Requirements:
  - Have at least one (1) child under the age of 18 who does not live with you.
  - Reside in the Greater Baton Rouge area
  - Meet the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) income guidelines
- Responsible Fatherhood Training
- Peer Discussions
- Technical Training
  - Basic Math, Literacy, & Computer Skills
  - Life Skills & Job Readiness Skills
  - Specialized Training in Hazardous Waste
  - Financial Literacy & Legal Assistance
  - Clothing & Transportation Assistance

Program Goals

1. To increase the father's involvement in their by children's lives;
2. To provide job training, workshops, counseling, and job placement services to reduce the dependency of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work and marriage, and
3. To encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

Research Methodology

- Pre-test post-test design
- Non-experimental research design
- Cases were omitted if participants did not complete the pretest and posttest.

Measurement

- Data collected using an Intake Form and an Assessment form.
- A pretest/posttest survey was also used to capture information on attitudes and behaviors about fathering, as well as program evaluation information.
- Excel spreadsheet was used to track participant's employment.

Research Methodology

Data Analyses

•Frequency distributions and percentages were tabulated for demographic & employment data.

•Chi-square tests were used to analyze pretest posttest attitudes and behaviors data.

Characteristics of Participants

Educational Level	Year 1 (N=39)	Year 2 (N=79)	Year 3 (N=88)	Year 4 (N=105)	Year 5 (N=57)
Less than 12 years of education	51.3%	40.5%	53.4%	35.2%	24.6%
High School Diploma/GED	46.2%	51.9%	36.4%	51.5%	64.9%
Some college/technical degree	2.6%	5.1%	9.1%	11.4%	8.8%
College degree	0%	2.5%	1.1%	1.9%	1.8%

Marital Status	Year 1 (N=39)	Year 2 (N=79)	Year 3 (N=88)	Year 4 (N=105)	Year 5 (N=58)
Legally married and living with spouse	Not Avail.	6.3%	12.5%	14.3%	6.9%
Separated	Not Avail.	12.7%	14.8%	11.4%	8.6%
Divorced	Not Avail.	13.9%	13.6%	16.2%	15.5%
Never Married	Not Avail.	67.1%	58.0%	58.1%	69.0%

Characteristics of Participants

Employment history during the 12 months prior to program participation	Year 1 (N=39)	Year 2 (N=79)	Year 3 (N=86)	Year 4 (N=103)	Year 5 (N=57)
Employed full-time	59.0%	29.1%	53.5%	31.1%	29.8%
Employed part-time	*	21.5%	8.1%	9.7%	15.8%
Employed on a temporary basis/worked at pick-up or occasional jobs	23.1%	24.1%	23.3%	32.0%	26.3%
Did not work	16.2%	25.3%	15.1%	27.2%	28.1%

* Indicates limited data available.

Results

- Pre-test 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.

Results

Types of Employment (N = 175)	N (%)
Cashier, clerical, tax preparer, sales, assistant manager, offset printer	8(5%)
Construction worker, concrete finisher, carpenter, painter, contractor, remodeling	14 (8%)
Cook, fast food preparer	21 (12%)
Environmental/Hazmat	45 (26%)
General laborer, stock/bus boy, dishwasher, fast-food worker	27 (15%)
Lawn maintenance, landscaping, garbage collector	2 (1%)
Other	20 (11%)
Pipe fitter, electrician, plumber	13 (7%)
Technician, tire repair, service station worker, mechanic	10 (6%)
Warehouse duties, load and unload	15 (9%)

Average Pay	
Year 1	14.33
Year 2	10.62
Year 3	9.75
Year 4	12.73
Year 5	11.86

Findings

- The highest employed field was in Environmental/Hazmat jobs with 26%.
  - Given the increased need for trained workers to respond to disasters, placement in this field included a vast variety of jobs in Louisiana and the adjacent states.
- Despite the downfall of the local economy and participant's barriers to employment, 46% of the participants in the Full Time Fathers Program (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.

Findings

- 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.

Findings

- Recruitment and retention efforts improved across the 5 years of the program
- Year 4 experienced a higher level of success with job placement due to the Hazmat training coinciding with the Gulf Oil Spill
- Stability of staff during the last 3 years improved continuity and staff morale

Strengths

- Increased number of participants each year
- Continuity of staff
- Relevant and timely job training
- High rate of job placement
- Good evaluation of instructors
- Ability to place former participants in jobs

Barriers

- Transportation
- Legal History
- Low Educational Achievement
- Alcohol/Substance Abuse History

Implications for Practice

- It is important to have a good fit between staff/instructors and participants.
- Programs should continue to work to improve relationships between both custodial and non-custodial parents.
- Training and employment assistance appear to be the biggest area of concern for program participants. Therefore, job development is also a key component of a successful program.

Conclusion

- Overall, the participants reported positive experiences in the program.
- Many participants indicated that they learned a lot and the program should be longer.
- Furthermore, many fathers reported an increase in positive feelings about fathering and the relationships with their children's other parents. These positive feelings may motivate these fathers to take a more active role in the lives of their children.

References

1. Hope Networks. 2007. Louisiana Facts: Poverty. Retrieved from: http://www.hopenetworks.org/povertylouisiana.htm
2. National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse. 2009. Father Absence. Retrieved from http://www.fatherhood.gov/research/for-your-fathers/father-presence
3. Administration for Children & Families. 2008. Table B1 State Maintenance of Effort (MOE) Expenditures in the TANF Program in FY 2008.
4. Louisiana Department of Social Services. 2011. Support Enforcement Services Monthly Production Report December 2010 Statewide Totals.

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