



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Family Assistance



NRFC Webinar Series

Two-Generation Approaches to Working with Fathers Response to Questions

July 20, 2016

Moderator:

- Nigel Vann, National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse (NRFC).

Presenters:

- Wanda N. Walker, Jeremiah Program, Minneapolis, MN.
- Anthony Judkins, Connecticut Department of Social Services, Hartford, CT.
- Keren Cadet, Center for Working Families, Atlanta, GA.
- Rodney Lawrence, Sheltering Arms, Atlanta, GA.

This document addresses questions presented, but not addressed, during this NRFC Webinar. For questions addressed during the webinar, please refer to the Webinar Transcript. For more information contact NRFC via email at info@fatherhood.gov.

Submitted Questions:

Regarding the ethnic and racial breakdown of your programs. Is that something that you have any stats on?

Keren Cadet: Yes, I would say 95 percent of the families we serve are economically disadvantaged as well as African-American. Because of the nature of our location—we're on the southwest side of Atlanta—and that's heavily populated with African-American individuals. So that's the general makeup of our families.

Could you just say a little bit more about how you actually formed a partnership with the Sheltering Arms? What was sort of the catalyst for that and any advice you can offer for others as you form these kind of partnerships?

Keren Cadet: The Center for Working Families has been in existence since 2005, I believe, providing workforce development in this community. The elementary school that we're directly connected to has also been in existence way before that and then Educare.

Rodney Lawrence: Sheltering Arms has been in existence since 1988. The Educare Center was formed in 2010. And pretty much the Annie E. Casey foundation brought us together. They wanted somebody that was experienced in the early childhood. So that's how Sheltering Arms was brought together.

Take Time to Be a Dad Today

Toll-free: 877-4DAD411 (877-432-3411) | Fax: 703-934-3740 | info@fatherhood.gov | www.fatherhood.gov



[facebook.com/fatherhoodgov](https://www.facebook.com/fatherhoodgov)



[@fatherhoodgov](https://twitter.com/fatherhoodgov)

Keren Cadet: Then so when Annie E. Casey connected with Sheltering Arms, since we're pretty much very close in terms of proximity, and we have been actually providing some of the child care services prior to the actual formation, I guess the two-generation framework. Educare - Sheltering Arms brought on the Center for Working Families to meet Annie E. Casey. And then the two-gen family, I guess you want to say, was created. We've been partnered under the new generation umbrella for about three to four years now doing that specific work. But in terms of providing the same services I think we've been doing it for a while. It's just the umbrella of Annie E. Casey kind of brought us all together.

Is the Jeremiah Program only four moms and can you work with guardians as well?

Wanda N. Walker: It is only for mom and their children. They have to have custody of their children.

in terms of the way you determine your outcomes, could you say a little bit more about the type of indicators that you use for the parent and child outcomes?

Wanda N. Walker: For our mothers, we look at their income and work activities, and where they land the degree. We also look at their life skills progression and the skills that they have because we have alumni services and we do an alumni evaluation every year for up to five years. The parents who do well are the ones who can; they have gained those supportive skills, that community support. We also look at progression of skills, responsibilities, and increase in income when they are out of the program. So up to five years. And for the children, we look at kindergarten readiness, we look at third grade a test scores and how they are progressing in school as well. And then emotionally, socially, cognitively as they're going through the program.

In terms of how you measure the life scores. Have you got a standardized assessment tool that you use for that?

Wanda N. Walker: We have what we call an individual development assessment which is a self-reported assessment that the mom take before they start the 16-week empowerment course. And then it is administered annually. We use that tool to direct the life skills classes so we look at the aggregate data and plan for the light-filled classes which we offer 26 weeks of life skills annually. And then that's also used in coaching to help them on to develop their goals while they're in the program.

How you do that with your fathers who may be resistant to joining? Do you provide any incentives for dads to come into the program?

Anthony Judkins: One incentive that we have is for dads who get involved in our fatherhood programs is that, if they have any issues with child support, if they have arrears, once they complete programming in their fatherhood programs, once they can graduate the program, they are eligible for arrear adjustment program, where they can get the state-owed arrears that are due to the state, not the family, reduced if they are involved in the program. It's a continual adjustment that the longer they stay connected to us.

In terms of the community action agency that's in your two-gen demo piece, they're connecting with children, mothers, and fathers under separate silos really, right? And don't necessarily connect all those dots so that's one of the things the project is really working on?

Anthony Judkins: Absolutely. We find it here in our agency. I've sat across from folks for 20 years and we all do our thing because everybody's concentrating on what they do and everyone's good at what they do, but we don't talk enough about the program and how our programs can help each other. Now the common goal for us is really self-sufficiency for the family and if we talk more about what we're doing and how we can kind of interact with each other we will have better outcomes for children and will be more informed about the work that each of us was doing in the agency and that

is one of the attendance of the work that we're doing and really trying to make sure that internally, as well as externally, everyone knows what's going on, who's in the community, who wants to be a partner, who can provide services to these families.

Are any of the programs that any of you are working with—are there any services for school-aged or adolescent children?

Wanda N. Walker: Our program primarily focuses on six weeks to five years. However, if parents are in the program and let's say they enter the program, and they have a three-year-old, they're working on a B.A. Then, that kid is going to be seven or seven-and-a-half, so we are slowly beginning to focus some of the services in the evenings. We do have older programming for those children but those kids are usually going off campus to school and doing after school activities and then coming back on campus.

Rodney Lawrence: With our fatherhood program, we go all the way up to the fifth grade. Just with the early development part is just the Educare Center, but as far as the connection with resources and with Center for Working Families we carry past that age and then when things come in, resources come in, that we have that's for the older kids, we work with that with the elementary school. So we still are connected and we move on because even the doubt that's kept is kept from birth all the way up to the fifth grade.

What agencies provide the child care subsidy. Is it workforce solutions?

Keren Cadet: No, the Center for Working Families, we're the ones who receive state funding and with that we administer the subsidy. So we have an application process, we have a review process. Oftentimes, it's referrals from Sheltering Arms. Families will go there directly for child care and then they're referred to us. So if they meet our different criteria which is residency income as well as active status with our agency, then we can possibly allocate the childcare subsidy for that child. And the child also has to be within a certain age range for us to be able to pay for that subsidy.

Do any of you offer any training for individuals who would like to implement or learn how to bring such great information to their own communities? Anyone thought about that?

Wanda N. Walker: Well we only do it through expansion for cities who are interested in bringing a Jeremiah Program. However, we are interested in starting to do some consulting work so it could be workable.

Are any of the programs using social media to outreach to dads or to keep them engaged when you're working with them? Using Facebook or Twitter or anything else?

Keren Cadet: Well, our general information is available through our website. I believe our HT uses Twitter. So anytime we have activities we try to get that information out there for families to kind of know what's going on and we have a text blast system that we use. Sheltering Arms uses different forms of communication to their families whenever there's activity going on on campus.

Anthony Judkins: For us in Connecticut we use our state website but what works best for our programs is really is word of mouth. A lot of information when guys are going to programming and they're getting help that feels like help. They tell everybody in their neighborhood they're getting help and everybody comes after that so it's really word of mouth. We've spent a lot of money on advertising in the past. When we have our annual meetings with the program sites and the participants we ask them about the program and what we can we do. They don't say, they used to say when we first started we need billboards and we need this and that. They don't need that anymore because everybody knows what the program is about. So it's really word of



mouth and building that trust.

Regarding language, what language can be used for fathers to outreach rather than noncustodial? Or just in general when you try to engage a dad, any kind of language things to avoid?

Wanda N. Walker: One of the things, the words that I dislike is single mom/parent because a child has two parents. So one of the things we say here in my program and that I push is primary parent. And then we use co-parent a lot. And that was a fine term for the moms but once we actually started to have that be a part of our program vocabulary they picked up on it and they really embrace that term. Because if they're really trying to do it together they're both parents.

When I was doing my research we asked the moms how important they thought it was for a dad, a biological dad, to be involved in—alarmed me you know like a mentor pot and I was like oh my gosh. Because there is research that says that's great, but there is research that talked about that biological dad and so that's why we are working very hard to have moms to understand the importance of it being that child's biological father involved if it is at all possible and to make that relationship amicable for the well-being of the child.

Keren Cadet: I think it's referring to them as parents makes a difference. For our agency we often say participant which doesn't delineate whether or not they're male or female. Just the person that we're engaged with. I think just having that, I guess, gender-neutral term at the agency helps the family feel as if you know you're not taking sides.

Have you got any advice for how they might start doing something a bit more intentional about providing services to the children as well as the fathers? It's easier I think if you're starting from the perspective of working with children to reach out to dads or even working with mothers to reach out to dads. If your primary audience at the moment is dads, any advice for how you start accessing services for the kids of those fathers?

Wanda N. Walker: Engaging fathers and having that conversation around family, the children, the status of that relationship, and starting that educational process. And then being able to advocate or be a bridge to other services. And I think it's important that if at all possible and as soon as possible being able to engage with the child as well somehow to be able to observe those interactions and provide the resources necessary.

Anthony Judkins: With our fatherhood programs we have events around the children and the parents. Where you know it could be a fishing derby and they kind of a check out the parents see what they're doing because what they're doing is we have a father curriculum that we use called 24-7 dads and it's a curriculum where you take the information you learn and you apply it to your family and your children. They try to coincide that with an event and they look at whatever they did the week before she added the family or the father interactions shall and how he kind of handles himself around a child. I also talk about pieces around discipline and how to discipline your child. It's a learning environment for fathers and it's a learning environment for children as well.