A Technical Assistance Webinar of the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse
April 22, 2008
2pm – 3:30pm (EDT)

“Promising Practices: Working with Teen Fathers ”

Presenters:

**Nigel Vann:** NRFC Director of Technical Assistance

**Michael Hayes:** Director of Family Strengthening Initiatives, Office of the Attorney General – Texas

**Bobby Verdugo:** Coordinator of Youth Services, Bienvenidos Family Services/National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute
No School Like the “Old School”

Lessons for a New Generation of Teen Father Programs - from the Texas Fragile Families Initiative
Texas Fragile Families Initiative

- 11 site, 4-year demonstration project serving fathers 16 – 24
- Over 1,100 fathers served –
  55% Hispanic/ Latino, 35% Black, 8% White
- Services included
  - Fatherhood education – peer support
  - Workforce development / education
  - Paternity establishment / Child support
  - Team parenting and relationship skills
  - Comprehensive case management
Fathers in TFF

• Key personal characteristics
  – 80% saw their child at least 1x a week
  – 67% still romantically connected to child’s mother
  – > 30% entered program while partner was pregnant
  – 37% still in school
    • of those out of school 51% no H.S. degree or GED
  – 50% unemployed when entering the program
Personal Barriers

- No HS diploma/GED
- No driver's license
- Been incarcerated
- No access to reliable transportation
- No photo id
- No permanent place to live
- Problems reading/writing
- No birth certificate and/or SSN
- Been in alcohol/drug abuse program
“Help Wanted”

- Need help finding a job: 80%
- Parenting skills: 70%
- Education & Training: 60%
- Improving Relationship w/Partner: 30%
- Anger management: 10%
Legal Issues for Teen Fathers

• Paternity establishment
  – Voluntary process vs. Court process
  – Legal rights
  – Link to engagement
• Child Support
  – Informal support
  – Legal obligations
• Custody and access
  – Fatherhood denied?
Successful Program Characteristics

• School based and “team parenting” models
• Consistent staff presence
• Understanding of/and connections to public systems with impact on teen fathers
• Multiple recruitment approaches - flexibility and persistence
• Real collaboration with community agencies that provide the following services:
  • mental health, substance abuse, housing, transportation, child care, family violence, legal services, and basic needs
TFF Recruitment Sources

- Program Staff: 36%
- Health Professional: 19%
- Spouse or Girlfriend: 18%
- School: 16%
- Friend: 11%
Onramps for Teen Fathers

- Prenatal father education
  - Envisioning fatherhood – “birthing the baby in his mind”
  - Addressing his fears – ambivalence toward pregnancy
  - What to expect when she’s expecting
  - Addressing his competition for attention
  - Protective factors and risk factors
  - Prenatal connection most powerful predictor of post-natal involvement
Onramps for Teen Fathers

- Paternity establishment
  - Overwhelming majority at the birth
  - Hospital staff has limited time/resources
  - Reinforces the “do right dad” instinct
  - Address lack of knowledge – misinformation
  - Predictive of ongoing involvement
  - Protects dad’s legal connection to child
Onramps for Teen Fathers

**Education - Employment**

- 3 out of 4 TFF fathers wanted help with a job – ½ wanted help with education
- Juggle immediate needs vs. longer term potentials ($4 per hour between 9th grade and post-secondary education)
- Skills-based training and apprenticeships
  - OJT
- Fathers with criminal history 3 times less likely to be working than those without
Onramps for Teen Fathers

- Parenting support
  - Basic education on parenting with “father flavor”
  - Team parenting and relationship with mother and extended family
  - Acknowledge experience (or lack thereof) being fathered
  - Developmentally and culturally appropriate
  - Mix of group/peer and one on one approaches
Thank you!!

Michael Hayes
Family Strengthening Initiatives,
Office of the Attorney General – TX
Working with Young Latino Fathers: The Con Los Padres Program

Bobby Verdugo, BSW
Bienvenidos Family Services/ National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute
THE NATIONAL LATINO FATHERHOOD AND FAMILY INSTITUTE IS A PROJECT OF BIENVENIDOS CHILDREN’S CENTER, INC., IN COLLABORATION WITH THE NATIONAL COMPADRES NETWORK AND BEHAVIOR ASSESSMENT, INC.
Roadmap

- History
- Challenges
- Strengths
- Recruit, Engage & Connect
- Ceremony and Tradition
- Stories/Activities to Share
- Four Elements of PALABRA

- Challenges for Youth
- New Challenges and Issues
- Young Dads’ Retreat
- Teen Parents Should be Recognized and Acknowledged
- Young Dads and their Children
History

• Needs of the community
  – Why the program was started
  – What services existed
  – Meeting of different agencies and individuals

• Infrastructure was in place for program
  – Bienvenidos already serving families
  – Agency had a relationship with community and other agencies in community
Challenges

- Providing a safe place to meet
- Participants with drug and alcohol issues
- Participants involved in various gangs
- Anger issues
- Violent relationships
- Low job/academic skills
- No “Blueprint” for this type of program
Strengths

- Agency with solid history and good reputation in the community
- Culturally appropriate curriculum and program
- Caring staff
- Connected to growing network of compadres
Recruit, Engage & Connect

- Caring staff who make true, positive connections
- Program Entry Points (moms, community, word-of-mouth, etc)
- Food for Class Meetings
- Parenting instruction
Recruit, Engage & Connect

- Child support
- Custody/visitation
- Establishing paternity
- Counseling and mentoring
- Mediation to deal with relationships
- Outings
Ceremony and Tradition

- Circulo
- Altar (acknowledgement of cultural lessons learned from ancestors)
- Respetar y leer
- Reading and storytelling
- Mascaras
- Buscando balance
Stories/ Activities to Share

- Fatherhood myth
- Dads not sharing; not caring
  - Diapers
  - I agree with that vato
- Alejandro
- Mascaras
- Ceremony and tradition
- Con Los Padres videos
The Four Elements of Palabra

- Keep your Word
- Be a positive example for others
- Do not harm those in your circle
- Responsible for your actions
Challenges

- Some dads still involved in violent relationships
- Some still using or drinking
- Some still in gangs
- Some dropped from program or out of contact
New Challenges and Issues

• Growing legal issues
  – Child support arrearages
  – Criminal records
  – Domestic Violence
  – Immigration

• Changes in welfare laws & policies

• Healthcare (Physical, Mental, & Emotional)

• Substance Abuse
Young Dads Retreat
Teen Parents should be recognized and acknowledged.
California State Assembly
Certificate of Recognition
Presented To:
Gustavo Moreno

IN HONOR OF:
Your commitment to strengthening and preserving your parental and family responsibilities.
Your exemplary display of courage and resolve in overcoming tremendous obstacles to
improve your quality of life is commendable. Best of luck for continued success!

Community and Menino Hospitals of Huntington Park
5th Annual "Cien Los Padres" Program
December 12, 2001

MARCO ANTONIO FERRAIOLI
MEMBER OF THE ASSEMBLY
45th ASSEMBLY DISTRICT
CALIFORNIA STATE LEGISLATURE
Certificate of Congressional Recognition

Presented to

Carlos Reyez

In celebration of your graduation from “Con Los Padres”
and your dedication to being a great father

December 13, 2001

Lucille Roybal-Allard
Member of Congress
Young Dads and their Children
Summary

• Assess the needs of your community
• Assess your resources and what you can or cannot offer
• Be prepared for special needs and issues these young men bring
• How will you attract, serve and make change
• Networking and collaborating is key
• Show them you care!
• ¡Buena Suerte! – Good Luck!
It was an honor to present to you today.
For more information and if you have additional questions or comments, please contact me at:

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