



U.S. Department of Health  
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and Families  
Office of Family Assistance

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## NRFC Technical Assistance Webinar



“Co-Parenting: Helping Fathers and Mothers Work Together in the Best Interests of Their Children”

**Moderator: Nigel Vann**, NRFC Director of Training and Technical Assistance

**Presenters:**

**Afra Vance-White**, Center for Urban Families

**Marie Townsend**, Georgia Dept. of Human Resources

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**Webinar Transcription (provided by Global Crossing)**

Operator: Ladies and gentlemen thank you for standing by. Welcome to the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse Technical Assistance Webinar conference call.

During the presentation all participants will be in a listen-only mode. As a reminder, this conference is being recorded Tuesday, July 22 2008.

I would now like to turn the conference over to Nigel Vann, Director of Training and Technical Assistance. Please go ahead sir.

Nigel Vann: Good afternoon everybody. Let me just make a couple of announcements before I introduce the topic for today.

I just want to point out to everybody that Webinar in August because of the grantee conference being August 11 through 13. So we will send a reminder about that.

But just to let you know the next Webinar will be on September 22 and we're looking at doing that on working with fathers of special needs children. And again, you'll get many reminders about that.



Oh and also on July 24 this Thursday, you should all have received information about a special call on program access, equal access. So if you haven't gotten that, please let me know or your SPO and we'll make sure you get the dial-in info for that one.

So today we're going to speak about co-parenting, helping fathers and mothers work together in the best interest of their children.

And this is certainly a critical issue for any work with fathers. And ideally all children would grow up in a happy nurturing environment with both their biological parents. Unfortunately that's not the case. And it's the main reason that we're engaged in this work I think.

Many of the dads you're working with do have children from previous relationships. So those kids may be living with the mother. They may be living with the dad. They may be living in situations where there's a stepparent in one or both households. They may be going back and forth between mother and father. They might be living with other family members or foster parents.

Whatever the scenario, you know, if the father is nonresidential his children are going to fare better if he develops and maintains a healthy respectful relationship with the residential mother or other caregiver. And that's really the specific key that we're talking about here in terms of co-parenting.

And likewise if the father is the residential parent and the mother is nonresidential again, the children are going to fare better if the father and the mother maintain that good relationship.

Now some of you are working with couples and doing healthy marriage activities. And it's certainly going to be ideal for you to pick up on and incorporate into what you do and even if you're working with a current couple that may well be a co-parent relationship from a previous relationship there.

Most of you are working with the father as your sole point of contact. So you will be sort of listening to this with a certain frame of mind. You certainly can't change the



scope of the program to also work with the mother. You can't add a co-parenting curriculum.

It is important to remember that this is still a fatherhood program. But there certainly is going to be a lot of food for thought for you here.

And I do think, you know, as part of any work that we do with dads around communication and relationship skills that it's really important to help the fathers see the impact of their behavior, their relationship with the mother on their children.

So how they treat, interact with and talk about their child's mother is going to have a significant impact on their children. And, you know, we often don't realize that. So I think we need to make that point with the dads as much as we can.

And once they understand that then we can really help in some ways to apply the skills that they're learning to developable a better relationship with their mother and enjoy more quality time with their kids, in short to be a more respected parent whether or not they live in the same house with their children.

So that's really our focus for this session here. So with that let me pass it over to Jen McHenry just to walk through some of the pinnacle aspects here. And you will see the screen has changed a bit from last time. And then we'll come back and I'll introduce our first presenter. So Jen?

Jen McHenry: Great. Thanks Nigel. What you guys may have noticed as you logged in, we have upgraded our software to a different version of Live Meeting. All of the features that you know and love from last month are still here. They're just (do it) in a slightly different place.

So just to go over how to ask your question another time. If you want to ask a question you can type it in at any point during the presentation. If you think of it in the middle of the slide, four slides in at the very end of a presentation can type in the question. You don't have to wait for us to ask you or invite you to do so.

You'll get a standard answer in response something like thank you for your question that's been submitted to the moderator.

This does one of two things, A it lets, you know - excuse me, one, it lets you know that we've gotten your question; and two, it frees up your lines so to speak, so you can ask another question. So if you have two questions, you want to ask them very rapid fire you will get that chance.

Also, if we don't get a chance to answer your question during this Webinar, please feel free to email your Federal project officer with your question. We'll work to get an answer back to you.

Not to ask a question, the screen's going to look more like this. The first thing you want to do is to click on the work Q&A. So you see that's up towards the top of your screen. And that is right up here.

Then you want to type in the question in the box right where it says type your question here and then just hit Ask.

Also if you want that box to go away just click on your toolbar at the top and the box should disappear. If you want to ask another question just click on Q&A another time.

And just a couple of other technical issues as we move on. If the screen is too small for you if you'd like to take the presentation full screen, you can hit the F5 key on your keyboard.

If you want to ask a question or if you want to take the presentation to be smaller again you can hit the F5 key a second time or the Escape key.

If you have trouble hearing any of the presenters or if there sounds like there's something wrong, use the question and answer function in order to communicate that to us and we'll communicate it to the presenters.

And then just one last thing. If you are interested in getting a copy of the slides if you didn't get them prior to the Webinar or if someone in your office would like a copy and

they did not get them and you were unable to forward them, you can email us at [info@fatherhood.gov](mailto:info@fatherhood.gov) and we'll get those slides to you as soon as we can.

Again, if you have questions, the Q&A button at the top of your screen will get you to us. Thanks. Nigel?

Nigel Vann: Thank you very much Jen. So I'd like to introduce to you our first presenter who's going to be Afra Vance-White. We've got a bit of a Georgia flavor to our presentations today.

In Afra's official biography she describes herself as a high energy achievement oriented individual with a record of seven plus years of growth and accomplishment in a series of progressively responsible positions that began with the state of Georgia.

And in that position she started doing some male involvement work seven or eight years ago I believe. She's now the program coordinator with the Building Strong Families program with - that's operated by the Center for Urban Families in Baltimore City.

Those of you who were at the roundtable the other week in Baltimore, you may have had the chance to meet Afra. So you'll certainly know that she is indeed a high energy achievement oriented individual. And she's certainly been doing a lot of good work with Building Strong Families Program. She comes highly recommended by Joe Jones who you heard speak in the last Webinar.

For those of you who don't know, the building Strong Families Project is another Federal grant that deals with healthy marriage activities specifically for low income unmarried couples who have young children. And Afra will probably be telling you a bit more about that.

So it's a different program model than what most of you are doing. But there's certainly going to be a lot of good ideas here.

So with that I would like to turn the mike over to Ms. Afra Vance-White.

Afra Vance-White: Thank you so much Nigel. Good afternoon. And as Nigel indicated I'm Afra Vance-White. And basically what I'm going to be discussing today is co-parenting 101. I'm going to kind of give you guys the definition of co-parenting and who you would want to target as it relates to the co-parenting and then kind of talk about a co-parenting program that the Center for Urban Families developed back in the late 90s. And to that end let's get started.

What is co-parenting? Well, co-parenting is based on the premise that mothers and fathers need to work together in best interest of their children regardless of their romantic relationship.

And it's important to realize that unlike divorcing parents, never married parents have no state or local policies or jurisdiction that they can have like a legal process to facilitate their ability to raise their children jointly.

So co-parenting kind of provides that for parents who never married who kind of need to still communicate effectively for their children for the sake of their children.

Who do I target in co-parenting? Well your target audience would be never married parents or newly married parents with children from previous relationships, father and mothers attempting to connect or reconnect with their children, fathers and mothers in need of mediation as it relates to visitation.

Co-parenting is very versatile as it relates to who can benefit from the information. Even intact couples can learn how to resolve conflict and communicate effectively for the best interest of their children. And that's important to remember.

If you're interested in actually facilitating a co-parenting program you need to have strong partnerships and no where to recruit from. To that end, you recruitment strategies can be street outreach, community and family health centers, Department of Social Services, Head Start centers, the family court, child support agencies and high schools.

There's a lot of high schools here in Baltimore that have -there are some that are just for pregnant women and there are some that have childcare facilities on site.

And recruiting for co-parenting is a little different than recruiting for a couple's program and or a fatherhood program because you're not confined to one particular group or individual.

You can really, if you see a parent, if you see a mom on the street who has a kid you can ask her if she's with her father. If you see a father you can ask him if he's interested in learning how to resolve conflict and communicate effectively in the best interests of their children.

It may still be difficult and to get them to participate but it's kind of you're not held within the constraints of some of the programs that you are currently operating. So that's a beautiful thing.

Now what I'm going to do is really talk to you in-depth about the 50-50 Parenting Program. The 50-50 Parenting Program is a co-parenting program that the Center for Urban Families developed. And I'm sure that there's other co-parenting curriculums available to be utilized. And Nigel will provide you all with a list of co-parenting resources at the end of the presentation.

However, I'm going to speak on the 50-50 parenting program as I indicated was developed by the Center for Urban Families in the late 90s and we implemented in 2003. And this really predates the healthy relationship and marriage program and the funding that came out. It kind of was the impetus to even going into healthy relationships in marriage.

And this was a pilot program that was researched and studied. It was examined and evaluated.

And I wanted to start with talking about the intake process. And as you guys - as we go into this, feel free to ask me questions and Nigel will let me know and I'll answer any questions that you have.

One important thing about co-parenting is it's very important to really get a clear sense of each individual's background as it relates to what the mother and father feel about each other and about parenting in general.

And as indicated in the slide, parents really are asked a series of open ended questions. And these intakes can take up to two hours. Most of the time now with our intakes where the intakes are 30 minutes.

So I know this sounds really time consuming but it really helps you to have insight into both parents dreams and hopes for their children, what they're currently experiencing with their - with the parent of their other child and what their problems are in their relationship current and past.

So the intakes we'll talk about family structure, current relationship status, experiences of parenting, parental roles, expectation of other parents, hopes and dreams and program information and expectations.

The curriculum is really designed to be facilitated by both a male and a female. The cohorts are actually ran in ten-week intervals. And couples meet once a week for two hours.

There are ten workshops and they're comprised of six gender specific sessions and four joint sessions.

And this is so you can kind of get a feel for where the father's coming from and a feel for where the mother's coming from. So it kind of gives the father a chance in his male-only sessions to discuss with his mail facilitator issues that he's had with his baby's mother and vice-versa for the mother.

It's gives them that opportunity to have a sounding board prior to be coming together to discuss their issues in a team format.

Now the beautiful thing about this design is that it really gives not only the parents an opportunity to have a sounding board, but it gives the facilitator a chance to see their work firsthand.

So you have these individual sessions where parents really are kind of learning information such as what's in the best interest of their child, how to become a 50-50 parent. And then they come back in the joint session to sharing dreams for their children's future.

And so that kind of helps them already we're watching them actually learn how to communicate effectively with each other right there in session.

It's a short curriculum. So ten weeks is a really good time frame. And then you have other topics like re-framing, enhancing your relationship with your child's mother or father, communicating as a 50-50 parenting as you see is a joint session, resolving conflict in relationship, solving problems of 50-50 parents which is also a joint session, keeping conflict under control.

And it all culminates with the creating of a parenting agreement. And this basically is the whole purpose for the program is for parents to come together, develop a parenting agreement that really speaks to everything that your child would have to go through - visitation, child support and such.

I'm going to really talk in detail about the parenting agreement. But this really helps parents kind of have a framework to start working with the mother of their child or the father of their child.

Fathers really like this program because what it does for them is kind of it helps them feel like they have leverage, leverage as it relates to the court system when it's - when we start talking about visitation and child support. And the parenting plan, the beautiful thing about it is it can be used as legal binding document if notarized. And we work with family courts to develop this agreement.

And for any of you guys who are in the audience who are divorced, it might look familiar because it's a very similar to what the divorced couple would utilize when dealing with child support and visitation.

So to that end, the elements of a parenting agreement. Okay.

So as I indicated, this provides the parents the opportunity to work together collectively addressing issues and resolving parenting issues.

The plan consists of behavior guidelines and agreements that will support parent's interaction and dialogue.

Parents make decisions concerning physical and legal custody, weekend and holiday visitation schedules. We even talk about vacation schedules - winter, summer, spring breaks, children's birthdays where both parents participate where they alternate each year, how does it work.

And we also give the parents an opportunity to if they want to tweak it they have plenty of room to tweak the plan as they feel fit as long as they both agree to it.

We talk about child support. If they're already ordered by the Office of Child Support to pay, how much is that and how often are they going to pay it.

If they don't want to do child support, because what you'll find is a lot of couples don't - I should - I hate to call them couples because they're no longer couples. But a lot of parents do not want to go through the Office of Child Support especially if you're serving African Americans. We have an innate distrust for the legal system for some odd reason. So they like to kind of work out agreements on their own.

What this provides you with the opportunity to work an agreement on your own but still have a binding document so that that something happens and one of the individuals in the relationship decides not to go with that plan you have legal recourse action. And so it's a really - it really helps a lot of our parents.

There also is a session for major decisions, you know, education decisions, non-emergency healthcare, spiritual religious upbringing - all of those things. Who will be the primary decision maker? Will it be the mother, father or both?

We talk about moving. If someone was moving with a child within 60 days or a parent was moving who doesn't have physical custody, how would that look, how would that work?

We talk about sharing information and the importance of sharing information and any other terms that they see fit.

The most important part of the parenting plan I would have to say is - are mutual respect. All throughout the curriculum, the ten weeks, the parents are educated on how - the importance of respecting each other not only within the group setting but also at home with - in front of the children.

You never want to say anything derogatory in front of your children about your - their parent. And we're really foster that and promote that and teach that.

And the beautiful thing about 50-50 parenting is that just like with some of your programs we provided child care, transportation and dinner. So what would happen is kids sometimes who haven't seen their fathers in months or weeks actually had a chance in group to see their father. And that was just the best experience for them. I've never seen children so happy to see their parent.

And it was a great time for the father. The father felt less pressure coming to the center to visit their child in this environment, in this co-parenting environment which was a very good thing. And it really taught the parents how to have that mutual respect for each other and the kids really benefited from it.

I have to tell you that one of the couples who participated in this, the father was getting married to a new woman who he actually was - they were expecting a child.

And the mother and the father from the 50-50 Parenting Program had not communicated in so long that when they got together the children were very happy to see him.

And when he got married the - they were able to work it out so that the children could actually be in his wedding. In fact, I went to the wedding and so did the mom. So the

old babies mom - excuse me, that's what we call them basically - was able to come. And it was just a very good situation. And that was I think one of our biggest success stories to see them all together, the new wife, the mother of his previous children and the children altogether. It was just a really great thing.

Now with every program there are some pros and cons to parenting program. I'm glad to say there's more pros than cons. But the one pro that I really like is that co-parenting curriculums can be used in conjunction with healthy relationship and marriage curriculum.

And really what that is looking like is you're getting married or you're interested in marriage but you have children from another partner. Your children from another partner and you can be participating in the 50-50 Parenting Program. And your partner that you're going to precede with the rest of your life with can be participating in the Healthy Relationships and Marriage Program.

Co-parenting programs reach a much larger audience than just the Healthy Relationship and Marriage Program, just the Fatherhood program or just a mother's program in the respect that it encompasses everybody. So everybody really can participate.

Co-parenting curriculum definitely supports the data as it relates to family formation resource and the importance of positive co-parenting.

The cons of co-parenting is that people who have experienced domestic violence should not really participate in co-parenting programs. We've ran into a lot of couples who've actually had ex-parte out on their - the parent of their child. And that is a situation that you really do not want to dive into. In fact, I would stay away from it.

Another issue that we have with co-parenting is sometimes can't find father or the mother associated with the child. And so we can't - you can't be effectively co-parenting if that is the case

So those are really the major cons of a co-parenting program.

What the researchers are saying well, basically co-parenting, good. Kids fare better when both of their parents are actively involved in their lives. And co-parenting curriculums are designed to foster them. And this is regardless of their romance relationship.

And that's what the key point of co-parenting is. It's regardless of your romantic relationship. Even though I could tell you that I've had people participate in a co-parenting program who were together in intact relationships and continued on, got married with the mother of their child and are doing very well.

And that's the beautiful thing about it. It just really helps you to communicate more effectively and to resolve conflict in a manner that is healthy that is good for your children.

And the children really, really appreciate that. And you can just see the changes in the children once they have the benefit of both parents and once the parents have come to an understanding and an agreement about how the child is going to be raised.

And I have really never seen anything more effective in bringing fathers back with their children than co-parenting. It's very important in my opinion.

And really, I think that's about it for me. I kind of went fast. But if you guys have any questions, of course feel free to ask me. I'm at the end of the presentation. And I have my email address here.

And I'm thinking my co-presenters are going to really talk about any challenges they have to working in the co-parenting and such so you can kind of get like a hands-on feel more so from them. And that's it. Nigel, back to you.

Nigel Vann: Okay Afra. Thank you very much. There aren't any immediate questions here for you. But I did just want to clarify a couple of points before we go on to the next presentation.

So now you're using the 50-50 in a number of ways. But one way you're using it then is with the building strong families program if there's a relationship - if there's a previous relationship. Is that correct?

Afra Vance-White: Exactly.

Nigel Vann: Okay. And then in the other populations that you're working with, what's your typical point of contact? Is it the dad or the mother?

Afra Vance-White: Well the Center for Urban Families is a father organization firstly. So it's most of the time the father.

Nigel Vann: Okay. And then how have you managed to bring the mothers in to do this co-parenting work?

Afra Vance-White: It's very easy. You'll find that mothers are very interested in having their fathers even with their romantic relationship being a little shaky. What typically happens is that we just contact the mother based on the father for questions.

The mother might have resistance initially. And that's normal because essentially if there's conflict in the relationship. But we're able to talk to her about the program and tell her the benefits of it. And she's the second one there after the father.

And it also - when we tell them that they're able -the children are able to see their fathers, that's always a win-win. You really get surprised even though if the mother really can't stand the father she does still want the father in their child's life. And that's really what we've been finding.

And sometimes she does give resistance. You will get resistance I'm going to tell you. But if your persistence as the person who's dedicated to giving you these kids, having the best interest of these kids at heart that would get the mother to come in. But she - once you tell her about the program she's really in it.

Nigel Vann: Great. Okay, well appreciate that, yes. You know, I'm going to come back to you at the end Afra with some more questions.

One thing I would like to think about actually is, you know, that - to respond to later is recognizing that most of grantees are only going to be working with the father. You know, they're not going to be able to bring the mother in unless they have additional funding.

So if you could just think about some strategies for how they might get some of these messages across even if the mother's not coming in. So I'll let you think on that one and we'll come back to you.

Afra Vance-White: Okay, sounds good.

Nigel Vann: Great. Thanks. So now - oh, and I would like to make one other point now while I think about it. You know, Afra mentioned there that one of the most important things they talk about is this whole notion of mutual respect.

And I think with that and other things here as we talk about co-parenting, you know, we're talking about co-parenting in situations where the parents are not living together. But even where parents are living together, a lot of these things still apply.

And certainly the whole notion of modeling mutual respect for your children is something we want to do whether or not we're together or not.

So let me move on and introduce our next presenter. There's actually going to be two presenters on the line, Sherri Howard who is the Executive Director of the (McLean) County CASA which is the Court Appointed Special Advocates in Georgia.

Sherri's going to be on the line with Marie Townsend. Sherri may or may not chime on. The main presenter here is going to be Marie. And Marie is the Visitation Coordinator for the Middle Georgia Responsible Fatherhood Program Access and Visitation Program.

Now this is one of your fellow grantees. The grantee is actually the Georgia Department of Human Resources Office of Child Support Services. But CASA is their main partner in this work.

And Marie has been working with children in one capacity or another for more than 20 years. She's been in this current position since the grant started about 18 months ago -- getting on two years now.

And her main focus here is to help fathers reconnect and strengthen their relationship with their children and also help them both residential and nonresidential parents to learn more about how to work together for their children's future.

So I had the pleasure to meet (Marie) briefly at the Baltimore Roundtable and got to learn some about the work they're doing. And it's certainly very important work.

For those of you who don't know about the work that I'm - these Court Appointed Special Advocates do in your jurisdictions, it would be well worth finding out.

They're basically court appointed independent advocates where there's child welfare cases. And the majority of people who do this work do it on a voluntary basis. And it's a really important step in just helping to make things better for kids.

So with that let me pass it over to Marie. Again, Sherri's going to be there for any input that is necessary.

So Marie please - and also let me say that Marie's had many, many technological problems getting ready for this this week. So we really appreciate the time and effort that she's put into being available to join us today. Marie?

Marie Townsend: Okay, thanks Nigel. Welcome to everyone. And we're going to be talking to you a little bit more about co-parenting.

We use here in - with our (unintelligible) program a program called the PAVE program. And it's the Parental Access and Visitation Education.

And the content was designed for non-custodial and never married parents to establish a relationship for their children emphasizing the importance of social emotional and financial involvement.

And that is some of the things that we'll be talking about this afternoon with it. And the main focus is going to be effective communication and how parents should make decisions based on the child's best interest and different things like that. So let's get - we'll get going and we'll get started.

So in a co-parent situation you've got - we thought you need to set up a realistic relationship. Basically you need to find - define clear boundaries. For an example, we'll talk about the kids but not each other's lives.

When you're - when it comes to your children and when it comes to parents the most important things are the children, not you and your partner, but the children. So your differences should be set aside when it's time for the other parent to be with the child or even discussing issues about the child.

And another thing is communicate in a businesslike manner. You've got to run this like a business because that's basically how it is now.

Your non-custodial and custodial parents' needs are understanding. You listen without interrupting, be polite, use the (I message), set emotions aside and avoid things that may trigger the ex-spouse anything from that new girlfriend and that new boyfriend or they haven't paid the child support or any of the (things) like that.

Do not use the - you know, don't use the kitchen sink method. You know, keep everything out of the - I'm sorry. I'm ahead of myself there. Slide 4 I'm sorry.

Do things that - you know, don't kitchen sink. In other words don't put anything into one basket at one time. Keep it short, sweet and simple, you know, to the point. Get to the point what you need to know or need to ask that other parent and move on.

Agree on the right time to call a time out. So if you're getting all hot-headed and thinking an argument is going to happen, learn when to walk away, take a few minutes. But don't leave or hang up because that will just fume the other parent and make them a little more frustrated than they should be.



Agree on - take responsibility and learn how to apologize whether you feel like you're right or wrong. We always try to tell you to be the bigger person and say I'm sorry or move on, you know, to make it cool off.

Because both of you could be in the right and both of you could be in the wrong. But when it comes to children you need to work together because that's - the right and wrong needs to go out the window.

We look at it is the - in the child viewpoint it's like a (grief loss) situation. We tell our parents it's almost like a death. You have to go through those stages of death before you can feel like that you are - can move on. Each stage includes different feelings. Children express feelings through their behavior.

Parents also go through stages of grief. Difficulties can occur when parents and children are at different stages. So, you know, you have to take each one of them and look at them differently and take - we call them taking baby steps here.

The stages that you're going to go through is denial. The children and parents are going to both be in denial that this is actually happening especially if it's in a divorce situation because, you know, the children eyes you're going to always be a family.

Because if you ask the child who's in their family they're going to say mommy and daddy and me. They're not going to say me and mommy or me and daddy, but they will get both parents. So they're going to be in denial for a while.

Anger. Anger is another stage that they're going to go through because angry - they're angry at having to experience pain, parents' failure to be together and have a traditional family.

There are changes that may occur. They may blame themselves by thinking that they caused one or the other parents to leave or not be in their lives anymore.

Bargaining, bargaining. There's going to be a last ditch attempt to bring their parents together. You know, they'll beg, plead, I promise I'll do my chores then dad can live here or I can go stay with my dad or see my dad.

If I promise not to back talk then will you come and live with us or can I spend time with you? They'll use anything, anything to be able to see the other parent.

Depression. When a child realizes that their parents will no longer be together and they feel sad, feeling depressed about this family situation, it's very normal.

Staying depressed for a long time, it's not okay. It means the child might need help outside of the family. That doesn't mean in every case. So you just have to look for the different warning signs and different things that trigger that they might be depressed.

Acceptance. Understanding that family situation is permanent. You know, mom and daddy aren't going to live together. They're not getting back together or in the case where the parents were never married, accepting that daddy may disappear for long periods of time or, you know, that there might be someone else in mama's or daddy's lives. But that doesn't mean that mom and daddy doesn't love you any less.

The child's identity. Different things that the child needs to here and feel all the time, one is I love you. A parent cannot say that enough to a child that they know that they're loved that they're still part of the family. This includes relationships with extended family.

You did not cause the changes. You did not cause the non-custodial parent to be gone for a while. You may have a lot of different feelings and I will be here to listen. You may have a lot of different things that's going on.

And that's the one thing that parents need to understand. They need to listen and be there for that child and hear their feelings.

Another thing that we try to explain to these parents that in extended family, be careful bringing in girlfriends and boyfriends especially if they're not going to be in the picture for long periods of time.

And again, they can't say I love you enough. That's the one thing that we, again, we stress.

Supportive parenting. When parenting and developing a relationship with your child it is extremely important to avoid putting that child in difficult roles.

For an example, they're not the messenger. They don't need to be the one that's involved in communications between your parents. Don't ask children to be the carrier (either) between parents. You've got something to say to that other parent or something that you need to give to that other parent, unless the court's involved that you can't be, that's your responsibility as the adults, not the child.

Judge. Respect your child's right to hold each parent in high esteem. Give him a chance to develop his own opinions about the other parent. That sorry daddy is not sorry in that child's eyes. That's their opinion and they need to be the ones that are (calling) that their daddies are perfect just like in every little child's eyes, their parents are perfect.

No matter what's gone on between that relationship with you and the other parent the child does not need to be involved with it.

The reporter. When talking with your child focus on your child's experience and feelings not activities of the other parents. Don't ask your child to report what they did the other parent. That's not for anything to that needs to - you don't need to be coaching that child or begging the child to tell you what went on. That's their time with the non-custodial parent.

Confidant. Don't use your child as just something you talk to as a confidant to if you're upset or angry. Set boundaries with the child to (speak) to help you. Find an adult support person to talk to you.

The child is not the one that needs to be the one to hear about - hear all your problems. Again, that's the other parent, the non-custodial parent, they need to be - form their own opinions and they need to be that that parent is perfect in their eyes.

Active listening. Get ready to listen. Take time. Make eye contact. Suspend judgment and desire to teach or discipline.

Hear what's behind the words. Notice body language and the tone of voice. You can learn a lot about somebody's body language just by watching them, how deep their inner feelings are going and maybe that they need to talk about something or just let something be heard or understood or just let go of something.

Understand. Put yourself in your child's place. You do not have to agree with what your child is saying. You're not - your child is not the one that doesn't like mom and daddy anymore. It's you that's got that problem, not your child.

Respond. Ask questions to make sure you heard correctly. Say back to the child what they've said to you using your own words.

Helping your children adjust. There are times before and right after visit when the non-custodial parents are the most difficult for children. They will typically do things like cry, whine, throw temper tantrums or even run off and hide.

After the visit begins, the child who is experiencing a simple adjustment to change will calm down and be able to play or talk in the usual manner.

Sometimes when kids haven't seen the other parent for long periods of time they will turn their backs to them and shy away from them. This is where we can come in and help the other parents coach the child into being involved with them.

We usually start testing them in areas like a playground or somewhere like that that they have something that they can get up and interact with each other so they won't feel so isolated, nothing around them to divert their attention to that they really do want to be there.

But we get them in situations where they have other things to do. Within a few minutes they are conversing with that other parent and having a good time with each other.

There are things that both parents can do to make this an easier process for children. One thing is keep pickup and drop off times very pleasant. Be on time. Get - return on time.

Consider your child's perspective. Communicate about special needs. If the child has food allergies or allergic to anything, has different medicines or anything like that, you need to know that up front not at the time that something's going to happen and emergency situation comes up.

Have a routine schedule. Whether you like that other parent's schedule, that is the schedule that we try to tell our non-custodial parents they need to follow.

You might not like the child have to go to bed at 9 o'clock that's what the custodial parent likes them to do. You might not like the way that they told them they couldn't go to the mall or different things like that. But you have to respect and discipline on the same lines that the other parent does because the child needs consistency. And if both parents still are consistent in some way it will show stability with the children.

Both parents should be home for the child. In this situation if a child is going to be visiting, they need their own room. They need their own space. They need somewhere to lay their head down that they call their own.

So that they have a - you know, adults like to escape into their own private worlds. So this is what the kids need to do. But they need to be there to help decorate the room or make it their - put their own touches to it.

Again discipline. Discipline and limit setting based on the age of the child. I mean that's one thing, how to use time outs. How that is used to remove the child from something that they are enjoying when they are unable to follow the rules. It demonstrates to the child that misbehavior leads to negative consequences, not being able to do something that they like to do. It's not meant to shame the child.

Guidelines for time outs. One minute for every age of the child. For example, if the child is 3 years old he gets 3 minutes of time out.



Do not not discipline the child because that just makes things worse when they go back home. Because one of the things they'll tell them, the other parent, well my mama let me do it or my daddy let me do it. Again, you have to be consistent with the discipline and the guidelines of the other parent.

Recognizing problems. This is a tough time for your child. The changes that they've gone through and adjustments they will be asked to make in the future have different feelings.

An example is like (grief remorse) stuff we talked about. Knowing when to get help from a professional, it's a very important parenting skill.

The general guidelines to look for, behavior occurring since the family changes that are present in various situations, the same behavior (unintelligible) over a period of time. Behavior changes are dramatic. These changes leave you feeling like I cannot cope.

In conclusion of that, all of these parenting skills will take time to learn. Remember to be patient with yourself and your child but continue to make an effort to use these new skills to avoid getting stuck in a - in negative parenting behavior.

In addition to learning how to (spot) your child's behavior equally important to understand why. Children might be acting the way they are. The (unintelligible) here of the child's family will look at a family change from the perspective of a child. This will enable you to better understand what is going on with your child.

What is a family? Parents and children answer this question differently. Children need to know that they're part of the family. Parents need to understand that even though that their adult relationship as partners has ended the child's family must continue. Parenting is a lifelong responsibility.

This scenario, a therapist was sitting in a - with a non-custodial father and custodial mother and his five year old child. The parents set up parenting plans for the visitation. The therapist asked the non-custodial father do you see the custodial

parent and yourself as the child's family. The father said no way. She's not part of my family.

Then the therapist asked the custodial mother. She said the same thing. He ain't part of my family. But then when she asked the child the therapist (moved) the parents alone and then she asked the child and then the therapist asked the child who's in your family? The child proudly responds to the therapist I have a mommy, daddy and me. That's my family.

So in that child's eyes that's still their family regardless if they're together or not.

Ideally the family would consist of two involved parents and extended family. They may also be introduced of a parent's significant other and additionally a stepparent.

While these adults can be wonderful in addition to a child's life, there's something parents need to know and keep in mind when they're dating or remarrying. One is don't bring a partner into the situation that's not going to be there for the long haul.

Your children don't need to (invite) your date or anybody you have a relationship with. Because if they're only going to be in that child's life for 5 minutes (unintelligible), that child doesn't (need). Because they don't need to be getting that consistent routine and then 5 minutes later that other person is gone.

And so unless it is somebody, a permanent relationship, don't bring the parent - that child into it.

Stepparents, who should be in charge? I'm sorry forgetting the phone.

Stepparents, who should be in charge? The biological parents should state in charge of discipline while demonstrating respect for the feelings and needs of the stepparent.

In other words, that the custodial parent is the one that's still in charge of the biological (parent).



That is the one thing. I might be the step mama or the step daddy in that situation but the real parent is the one that's still in charge.

(Unintelligible) and conflicts may prohibit children from forming quick attachments. Don't expect that child to be loving and respecting right away. It takes time. You've got to - they've got to use baby steps.

But stepparents can serve as an additional role model or supporter and an adult friend. Stepparents should not think to replace biological fathers or parents. So that's the one thing that you need - that stepparent needs to make the child understand that they're not here to replace their biological parents.

Special consideration. Non-custodial parents who have not yet established their relationship with their child need to accomplish the goals of the (unintelligible) before adding the dimension of a new adult to their child's life. Again, this requires special conditions.

Focus on your child and your child parent relationship. Accept your child's family. Your child's needs a supportive father who can help him or her grow up.

Do not prevent your child to have affection or respect for the other parent should you feel who ruined your life. Whatever the feeling between you and the other parent, you are both family for your child. That's one thing you have to remember.

And another thing is be patient. Some children have been exposed to repeated parent child-like relationships. The dating parents of a custodial parent. Help your child understand that your role as a father is permanent. And you have to put forth effort to make it work. You can't expect it to happen overnight. You have to work at it.

The prospective future of co-parenting. Co-parenting is ongoing communication about the children's needs and interests, ongoing decision-making about the children's needs and interests, coming to terms for sharing both time with the children and parental responsibilities.

Okay, co-parents. Okay. Co-parenting might be being at the same event at the same time. Doesn't mean you have to sit by them. That just means you have to sit on the other side of the field if you have to. Being in a family project but co-parenting is not getting needs met rather than focusing on the child's needs.

Remember, you put that child's needs first. Don't rehash problems between you and the co-parent.

Co-parenting differences. This is things the custodial parent - non-custodial parent might be feeling. (Unintelligible) responsibility, having repeated (briefs) and reaction when you're dropping off the child after a visit it's the non custodial parents and then the different one's there.

Co-parenting goals. Co-parenting goals. Allow the children to still have a family. Your children are delicate when their lives are coming apart. Give children something to count on. Model (unintelligible) build to function together and contribute to children's adjustment.

Think of co-parenting this way. You are in a rowboat with your child and you the other parent. And suddenly your child falls into the water without a life jacket on and begins to drowned. What do you do?

Fight it out who you should put the lifejacket on the child? Argue over who should have been watching the child? Blame each other for never having taught the child to swim or jump in the water? I hope you're able to say D, jump in the water.

This last one is references on the curriculum we use. We use like I said, the PAVE curriculum. And there's some information on if you'd like to order the curriculum.

And if you have any questions or any -for me - I'd be glad to answer them. And I'm finished.

Nigel Vann:

Well thank you very much Marie. Sherri did you have anything that you wanted to add?

Marie Townsend: No, she doesn't.

Nigel Vann: Okay, thank you. I did just want to clarify, you know, as we did with Afra sort of the main point or the main sort of (entry) of your program.

I know you're a single income - a single activity responsible parenting grantee. So your main focus is working with the father or I guess you have some mothers in there. But it's usually working with just one parent around access and visitation issues?

Marie Townsend: Actually we're working with both parents. We are mainly working with the non-custodial parents who (unintelligible) regained visitation with their children where we are educating both parents on the importance of working with that child and working through the differences while that other parent could or could not see the child.

We help them overcome hurdles like we were talking about before with (legitimation). Inside of Georgia we're the last state I believe that recognizes (legitimation).

So here in the state of Georgia we consider the biological father the has (decided to work) with us to pay child support. So we have to work with our parents to get them to (legitimate) their children. So this is some of the issues that we try to work on with the parents.

Nigel Vann: So when you have the curriculum sessions, is that both parents?

Marie Townsend: No we do have females and males in there together when we do our parenting. We do not like to do that because males and females seem to have different experiences and impressions should we say.

So we do like to do them all separately. But we have had both females and males in there.

Nigel Vann: Okay, but basically when you're doing the curriculum you're working just with the nonresidential parent then?

Marie Townsend: Right. But it's not so much the parent for the same child. It's - you know, we don't usually put them in the same room.

Nigel Vann: Okay yes. So there is sort of, you know, I think an important distinction there between what you're doing and what Afra's doing.

So I have got a few questions here for you that have come in. So let me ask these and, you know, both of you can respond to them.

So the first question is do you coach parents on how to address continuing conflicts?

Marie Townsend: Yes we do.

Nigel Vann: Would you like to tell me a little bit about how you do that?

Marie Townsend: On how to coach different conflicts. Well we try to work with them. I'll give you an example.

One of our parents had not seen his kids its in five years - its three boys. And it was the middle school boy - let me back up.

If their age enough that we can talk to them ourselves and get them in a room and talk to the kids to see how they're feeling we will do that.

But an example, we had a child, middle school aged child, child that did not want to see daddy anymore because daddy left the bruise on mama's that had been there for seven years.

Okay, well first off I don't know anybody that has a back - bruise that has been on somebody's back for seven years.

So we went and talked to the mother and found out the situation. She has a bulging disk. She has a bruise on her back. It stays there but the daddy did not do it.

So we had to make the mother understand that she had to be careful of things she was saying because in the same sentence that she was using daddy and the bruise and the child thought that daddy was abusing the mother.

So we tried to make them understand to choose their words carefully and work with them that way.

Takes a lot of (unintelligible) and mediation is what we do.

Nigel Vann: Okay, okay. Afra, how you got any response to that in terms of how you might coach parents to address continuing conflict?

Afra Vance-White: Well what we do in the curriculum is we discuss how to deal with any conflict and how to resolve conflicts. And that's just part of the session.

And then once the ten week sessions are over we are still available to provide mediation services if necessary. And many of the parents still come in to utilize those services.

When they come to an area where they cannot agree on something they actually contact us and help - and we help them work it out.

Nigel Vann: Okay great. This next question is actually referring to the children. Do either of you know about any workshops that might be available for children themselves, you know, to help them deal with the fact that their parents are not together?

Afra Vance-White: Well for us we partner with Head Start organizations. And that was one of the best things about partnering with a Head Start organization. They had therapists on site. And it just happened to be on our bottom floor of where we are located.

And we were able to if we saw children who were really affected based upon the separation of their parents, we were able to send them back to the Head Start that they actually attended.

But a lot of our children who - a lot of our clients were never -since they've never been married and never really cohabited, this was not a big issue for us.

Nigel Vann: Okay. Marie, have you gotten anything like that in your area?

Marie Townsend: Yes we do have counselors that are available if needed for the children and the families to work problems out together. But again like she just said, 90% of our family's are not or have never been married. So we don't usually run into a lot of that problem.

Nigel Vann: Okay. And yes, you know, I remember once having a conversation with a therapist who worked with children of parents going through divorce. And I remember them saying to me you know, there's only so much I can actually do to really help their child. You know, I can't fix these issues unless the parents address their issues. So I think we do have to find ways to cover this on all fronts.

Let me see. We've got some more questions here. Somebody's asking they want to be clear. And I think this was probably something you said Marie but I'm not sure.

But they want to be clear. Are you saying that both parents need to have the same rules and guidelines to stay consistent?

Marie Townsend: Yes they do. Need to stay consistent on how they work with that child and even on homework habits and different things like that. I mean you can't be lenient in one home and not - and be so strict in the other.

Nigel Vann: Yes because obviously you create situations that this person's making - asking the question is they're saying isn't that probably one of the reasons that they're not together anymore in the first place? So I'm just wondering if you have any strategy to how you might do with that.

Marie Townsend: In our situation here we deal with 30-plus percent of our parents that have not - that have never been married. And so a lot of ours are one night standers.

Nigel Vann: Oh okay.

Marie Townsend: And, you know, and it could be a six month relationship or something like that. But yes again, that could be true. That could be why they're not together. But we can't let one parent let the child go out running wild while the other one's trying to be structured.

Nigel Vann: Yes, yes.

Marie Townsend: So that's what - the things we try to tell them.

Nigel Vann: Yes, have you got any input on that Afra?

Afra Vance-White: We just really try to support both parents. I understand the question. You know, it's kind of hard to come to a consensus on especially disciplining a child and something that I might do in my house, the person - my ex-significant other might not do in his.

So really what we do is try to have our couples work together so that they come up with some basic rules.

So yes, sometimes when they go to dad's house dad might give them a lot of sugar. Okay, that's just going to happen. It's life. But they know mom really doesn't play with - about sugar.

So they like going over to dad's house because they get sugar. But when they get to mom's house typically they know that the sugar intake is going to stop. So I mean that's just going to happen. Its life.

Nigel Vann: Okay, Okay. Yes, you know, I mean to me this sort of gets to really part of the crux of the problem I think is that, you know, I think what has to happen for both parents is that they really have to consider key into the impact of what they say and do each other, about each other, the impact of that for the children.

I just wonder have you - either of you got any strategies where you help the parents to see that, you know, so that in a sense it's part of what I say to the grantees that were on the last Webinar we did. You know, I think what we do is we help parents

grow up to a certain extent so that we understand these things. You know, when we haven't grown up we have no idea that when we do certain things our kids see and hear everything.

I'm just wondering do you have any strategies to help parents get in that place.

Afra Vance-White: Well one thing that we do at the Center for Urban Families with our 50-50 Parenting Program is even when parents come back to kind of have mediation because one wants to discipline the child one way, the other wants to discipline them another way or any issue that they may have that they really can't come to a consensus about we always refer back to that parenting agreement that they develop together with both of their thoughts and both of their rules and regulations about how they see their child's life going all on paper.

And when you have that on paper, you know, it's very easy to refer back to them and say well remember when you said this and remember how we came to this conclusion and really just continue to reinforce what they learned in their curriculum sessions.

I mean it's an ongoing process. Any person who's dealing with a significant other that they're no longer with with children would understand that it's not going to always - it's definitely not going to be perfect but you can definitely come to a consensus where I don't think it has to be so much contingent and so much anger.

And that's really what the 50-50 Parenting is all about kind of let's kind of forget about what happened with us and let's focus on the child.

And once they get that and once we reinforce it it's easy for them to kind of - I mean we're going to all blow up. But then they're going to kind of come back down and realize okay, let's do it this way and let's kind of come to a compromise.

Nigel Vann: Okay.

Marie Townsend: That's kind of basically what we try to do too. But we try to work with the parents to make them understand that they've got to work together and one of them got to step

up and be the bigger person for the child and that there are compromises in the situation.

And we have to teach them which battles that they do and don't need to compromise on. You know, and basically they've got to work together for the child. They've got to come together somehow and with - between mediation or counseling or just one on one individual education with them we try to do - make them understand that their focus is that child and their differences are different.

And they've got to step up. One of them's got to be the big person to make it work for everybody.

Nigel Vann: Okay yes. You know, it does seem to me this is really key to making this work and obviously it's going to take time for it to get there, you know.

Marie Townsend: Right. It doesn't happen overnight.

Afra Vance-White: It does not.

Marie Townsend: (Unintelligible) every day, every single day for hours and a time and over the same subject and eventually six months down the road it finally clicks with them hey I should have done what you asked me to do from day one.

Nigel Vann: Yes. Yes. And I guess that's also sort of core to a lot of this work that we do with that. We have to remember that things aren't going to necessarily change overnight and as practitioners not get frustrated by that and try and see that longer term picture even if we never actually see those outcomes while I'm in the program. It is a tough one, yes.

Marie Townsend: Right. We call them baby steps.

Nigel Vann: Baby steps. Okay, yes.

Marie Townsend: Instead of giant steps you've got to take baby steps and it will eventually come.

Nigel Vann: Yes, yes. I've got another question here that's saying I'm not quite sure I understand this. You may have to see if you can't explain this for me.

But how often do you find yourselves encouraging parallel parenting rather than co-parenting? I'm not quite sure what we mean by parallel parenting. Can anyone take a stab at that?

Afra Vance-White: I've never heard of it. I'm interested.

Marie Townsend: Never heard of it either.

Nigel Vann: Now, I mean I would guess, you know, we're talking about parallel parenting where the two parents are doing things on their own but they're not really coming together on it.

Afra Vance-White: Oh and I would say that that would not be conducive for the child. I think that a child needs to see cohesiveness between their parents in order to kind of feel comfortable with both parents.

So I would not encourage parallel parenting in that respect if that's what they meant by it.

Nigel Vann: Okay.

Marie Townsend: Yes they do need to see some consistency in the parenting. To meet parallel parenting is almost the same as co-parenting.

Nigel Vann: Okay.

Marie Townsend: You have to do it together.

Nigel Vann: Okay, okay. And if a person who asked that question wants to send in any clarification for that at this time we can come back to that.

But - so how about - and this is probably more for you Marie. I don't know if you deal with this Afra, but how do you handle situations where visitation is denied?

Marie Townsend: We never give up. We're consistently calling the parent, the other parent and trying to work with them and see -let them see how important it is for that child to be in both the parents' lives.

If we've got a mother that is adamant of no, no, no, we'll give her a break for a while and then we'll get back with her and try to just keep on talking to her.

And one of the main things that we try to tell her at first that we're going to supervise that visit if it makes her feel better. And we're going to be right there with that parent helping that child to adjust and the parents to adjust. And we're not going to put that child in any situation that child does not need to be in.

And another thing we encourage is the parenting, you know, the parent curriculum. We encourage them to participate in that. Because sometimes when you let the other parents know the motive, that the non-custodial parent or the father has taken a parenting class, sometimes that makes them feel better.

And basically our parenting class is a co-parenting. It teaches them how to get along for the good of the kid.

But again, we never give up. We are persistent on these parents. We had a daddy tell us the other day the child turned a year old and we've been trying for the year to let this mother - let him see the child. And she finally let the child - let him see the child on his birthday.

But we stayed on the child's mother and, you know, we were just like give it a chance and let's see if it will work out and basically they'll come around but then we're not going to stop so...

Nigel Vann: Okay so what would you do if the nonresidential parent was asking for visitation but that was denied by the court? Is there any way you can still work with...

Marie Townsend: If it's denied by the court we can do anything about it.

Nigel Vann: Yes, okay.

Marie Townsend: If they've got some kind of order that the court says no, we encourage them to get an attorney and to pursue it on their own.

Nigel Vann: Okay.

Marie Townsend: We can't go against court orders.

Nigel Vann: So now is this ever a factor for you Afra in terms of visitation?

Afra Vance-White: Well yes, we actually -we work family court. We develop a partnership with the family court for exactly this reason or for the non-custodial parent being denied visitation. The court would actually refer that parent to us to go through the - and the couple to go through the 50-50 Parenting Program so they could develop a parenting plan.

They would go back to court. The judge would review it. And based on our recommendations he might amend his decision.

Nigel Vann: Okay.

Afra Vance-White: He/she might amend it.

Nigel Vann: Okay interesting, interesting, yes. I have another question here that's specifically to you Afra. It's says this is talking about domestic violence. And I think Marie did address this.

But this question is regarding the 50-50 parenting curriculum, is domestic violence or previous domestic violence within the relationship, is that a factor for program eligibility or participation?

Afra Vance-White: It definitely is. If there was - if the relationship disintegrated based upon violence we really do not bring those individuals together to co-parents. I mean that's just a safety

precaution that we take and that's something that we've discussed with our domestic violence partner.

Now if they're in - and we've also ran into cases where the father was really interested in doing the 50-50 parenting program. And when I contacted the mother she told me that there was an ex parte out against him. We also do not deal in that. And that is for the safety of the victim.

Nigel Vann: Okay great. Yes. And obviously, you know, as part of these grants we've all got to be very aware of that.

Afra Vance-White: Yes.

Nigel Vann: We did get a following up from the person who asked question about parallel parenting. And they're saying that parallel parenting is indicated when party's living apart cannot come to terms on the main issues of how to parent. It makes sense when co-parenting is not an option and the child needs support.

So it's basically, you know, if we can't do co-parenting then there would, you know, be the possibility of...

Afra Vance-White: Well I would just say the whole purpose of the 50-50 Parenting Program is to bring the parents together who cannot come to an agreement.

So, you know, I still think it would we - I don't think that it's a bad end situation. I don't think all hope is lost just because when parents can't come to an agreement.

I've seen it with my own eyes where they have come to an agreement and they co-parent their children. And I think that as the resource indicates that is the best method as it relates to developing and emotionally, healthy mature child.

Nigel Vann: Okay.

Marie Townsend: And that's how we (agree) with our PAVE curriculum. Again, that's what it's being to teach them to co-parenting to work with the other parent and for the healthiness of the child.

And that the parallel parenting is not an issue if you take this curriculum and work with it and both parents are working together.

In our situation a lot it's not the mother - the father that's the issue. It's the mother that we have to really work on to do the co-parenting.

So our dads are willing. So once they get through the curriculum and we're working with them they think that the co-parenting is a good situation and we don't have that problem.

Nigel Vann: Okay . So I guess the message is, you know, don't give up too easy right? Only go to the parallel situation as a very last resort.

Marie Townsend: Right.

Nigel Vann: Okay. One more question here asking do either of you ever deal with parental abduction cases?

Afra Vance-White: No.

Marie Townsend: No.

Nigel Vann: Okay. Have you got any thoughts on how you might do that? You know, say you were working with the father and that the mother actually absconds with the child? How might you counsel him? How might your work with them on that?

Marie Townsend: We don't touch that. I mean because that's a situation where law enforcement needs to be involved.

Afra Vance-White: Yes.

Marie Townsend: You know, so if we know that that's the situation that the daddy has or the mother say - let's say has abducted the child and we know it, we would immediately get the law enforcement involved.

Nigel Vann: Okay. And I guess just sort of just reacting as a program support for the father, you know?

Marie Townsend: Right.

Nigel Vann: Okay. And let me see. We're getting a bit close on time here. I did have a couple of other questions I was going to ask you. Let me just ask you this one quickly.

What about ways to engage the extended family, you know, the notion that this is sort of beyond co-parenting is actually team parenting when you have extended family on both sides that can still be involved in the life of the child? Do you get to deal with that at all?

Afra Vance-White: Well we - you can go.

Well we - what we do with 50-50 parent is we have events. We call them Village Nights. And we invite anybody associated with the family. So you have grandmom from both sides. You have everybody there. And these are events that are quarterly just to provide additional support for both parents.

Marie Townsend: We just - we have events where we try to - again, in our situation in our area our parents are barely speaking to each other.

So we are - our first goal is to get them parenting and speaking to each other. And then eventually we try to work in that they're doing events together whether they're coordinated by us or on their own.

So, you know, our first goal is to be in the same room with each other.

Nigel Vann: Okay, well thank you very much. So I'd like to thank both of our presenters heartily there.

Jen, could we move to the next slide? I just wanted to show folks the resources we had?

This is just - yes I think one thing that's probably key in doing this work is if you have resources that you can make available to your fathers. And these are just four books that I've used in - well I've used the first three. The last one is a new one for me.

But these are books that I've used in work and I've seen other people use them. So I think they're just good resources for you as practitioners to have a look at and perhaps to share with fathers as well.

The first one is particularly for dads who are going through divorce. The chap who wrote this, Steven Ashley, he runs a network of programs in California where guys just come together and they talk to each other, support each other in what they're going through and learn to do things in the best interest of the kids, not to be confrontational with the mother, to develop a respectful relationship and I think is an excellent little book.

And the same for (Bill Cratty)'s book. It's very much on the same lines. But some real practical stuff that speaks directly to dads.

(Book) is a Ricci Isolina. I hope I'm pronouncing that right. But that book, Mom's house, Dad's House, A Complete Guide for Parents Who Are Separated, Divorced or Remarried.

I've used that a lot in work. There's one thing in particular there that I really like that's called a family bill of rights. And it just puts out some ideas that parents can agree on or disagree on but come to some consensus on what they're going to see as a family bill of rights.

A couple of things real quickly there are that -- and these are just suggestions to the parents -- but every child has a right to a meaningful, nurturing relationship with each parent.

Every parent and child has the right to call themselves a family regardless of how the child's time is divided, a right to contribute to the raising of his or her child and so on. There's some neat ideas like that in there.

And this final book I have not seen it yet but it's been strongly recommended to me by folks who are doing this work in England. And so there's - you can actually get that from Amazon.com. I did go and check that yesterday. But it comes strongly recommended. That's all I know about it.

So (Jane), could you take us to the survey to get people's responses?

Jen McHenry: Sure Nigel, absolutely. And what we're about to do is just ask you guys four quick questions to let us know how we're doing. So this is the first question.

I have a better understanding of what co-parenting refers to in the context of responsible fatherhood. And I just ask that you select one of the choices below - strongly agree, agree, unsure, disagree and strongly disagree.

And to select (unintelligible). And the question is I have better understanding of what co-parenting refers to in the context of responsible fatherhood. I'm going to give you just a couple more seconds to answer.

Okay great. Now we'll move on to Question 2.

Question 2 is I have a better understanding of how to work with parents to develop more effective communication with each other. Again, I have a better understanding of how to work parents to develop more effective communication with each other.

And the choices are strongly agree, agree, unsure, disagree and strongly disagree. I'll give you just a couple more seconds to answer that one as well.

Okay and Question Number 3, I have a better understanding on how to work with parents to develop strategies, to share decision making, resolve conflict and consistently give children access to both parents and their extended family.

Again, I have a better understanding on how to work with parents to develop strategies to share decision-making, resolve conflicts and consistently give children access to both parents and their extended family.

And the choices again are strongly agree, agree, unsure, disagree and strongly disagreed.

Okay, and we're going to move on to the last question, Question Number 4.

The advice and suggestions regarding how to incorporate co-parenting into my responsible fatherhood program were helpful to me.

And strongly agree, agree, unsure, disagree, strongly disagree.

The advice and suggestions regarding how to incorporate co-parenting into my responsible fatherhood program were helpful to me.

Okay. Well thank you very much and we'll turn it back over to Nigel.

Nigel Vann:

Okay thank you Jen. And one other thing that I should've said when I was talking about the resources they are, don't forget to go to National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse.

And if you go down to the library section there and just enter co-parenting, it will kick out quite a few resources for you to read more about this.

And course as always any questions, any follow-up questions or if anything was not clear or if you'd like to get some clarification on from this Webinar or other things, then just email us at [info@fatherhood.gov](mailto:info@fatherhood.gov).

Also if have turnover in your organization and for some reason you or someone else is not getting the listserv notices that come out, please email us again at [info@fatherhood.gov](mailto:info@fatherhood.gov) so we can update the contact info for you and make sure you're getting that in a timely way. But that's particularly important for this Thursday when

we're having this meeting that's mandatory OFA call to talk to you about the program access, equal access issues.

So if, you know, if you're not getting them the correct email address please do let us know.

Is there another slides Jen with the info on - yes, okay. And this is just information on the upcoming grantee conference where we look forward to getting to see project directors and evaluators or other key staff people you may be bringing along with you.

And if you've not gotten the email with information about this again, that's because you must've had an email change and we haven't updated the listserv.

But if you've not gotten that information yet, I know I did get a couple enquiries from folks, just tells you where you can get information particularly on booking the hotel. And again feel free to email [info@fatherhood.gov](mailto:info@fatherhood.gov) with any questions on that.

Let me say again for anybody who may have joined us late that there will not be a Webinar in August because we will be getting together so closely to that date with this conference for the grantee conference.

So the next Webinar is scheduled for the fourth Tuesday in September which is September the 22nd. And we will be focusing on working with fathers of special needs children.

And, you know, you may think I'm not doing that. But I would strongly encourage everybody to key into that because is out there who are dealing with these issues and you need to know how to do with that as well, where to make these sales to.

So I think that's going to be a very important Webinar for us. And I believe that's all I have for you.

So I'd like to thank our presenters one more time. And please stay in touch and we look forward to seeing you all down the road somewhere. Thank you all very much.

Operator: Ladies and gentlemen that does conclude the conference call for today. We thank you for your participation and ask that you please disconnect your line.

END