

**ENCOURAGING FATHERS**

JUVENILE TRAINING  
NONCUSTODIAL FATHERS IN A/M/D CASES  
SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT  
MAY 2012

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**ROAD MAP**

- ESTABLISH IMPORTANCE
- WHAT DO WE SEE?
- WHAT KIND OF RELATIONSHIP DO WE WANT TO SEE?
- WHAT CAN WE DO?

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**WHAT'S THE POINT?**

- WHY TALK ABOUT FATHERS? (WHY DO I TALK ABOUT FATHERS?)
- WHAT HAPPENS TO CHILDREN WHO GROW UP WITHOUT FATHERS?
  - 5 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO BE IN POVERTY
  - TWICE AS LIKELY TO DROP OUT OF SCHOOL
  - TWICE AS LIKELY TO BE ABUSED

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### WHAT'S THE POINT?

- CHILDREN WHO GROW UP WITHOUT FATHERS
  - TWICE AS LIKELY TO ABUSE ALCOHOL OR DRUGS
  - MORE LIKELY TO BRING WEAPONS OR DRUGS TO SCHOOL
  - MORE LIKELY TO COMMIT SUICIDE
  - MORE LIKELY TO BECOME PREGNANT

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### WHAT'S THE POINT?

- US CENSUS BUREAU: 25 MILLION CHILDREN LIVE APART FROM THEIR FATHERS. (1/3)
- NC: 27% FAMILIES WITHOUT FATHER
- NC: 31% BABIES BORN OUT OF WEDLOCK
- \$100 BILLION MAN: THE ANNUAL COST OF FATHER ABSENCE!

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### WHAT'S THE POINT?

- IN CASE OF DIVORCE:
  - FEWER THAN HALF OF FATHERS SEE THEIR CHILDREN MORE THAN SEVERAL TIMES A YEAR
  - 20-30% HAVE NOT SEEN KIDS IN THE LAST YEAR
  - 1 OUT OF 3 DADS WHO REMARRY NEVER SEE THEIR CHILDREN FROM A PREVIOUS MARRIAGE
  - CONFLICT: IS IT EASIER JUST TO AVOID?

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### WHAT DO WE SEE?

- **IN YOUR CASELOAD:**
  - DO DADS SHOW UP?
  - DO DADS PARTICIPATE
  - AS A RESULT OF DSS AND COURT INVOLVEMENT, DO DADS ENJOY A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP WITH THEIR CHILDREN?
  - WHAT ARE IMPACTS OF ABSENT/NON-INVOLVED FATHERS THAT YOU SEE?

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### WHAT DO WE WANT TO SEE?

- REUNIFICATION
- BUT MORE: NONCUSTODIAL FATHER NEEDS TO CONNECT.
- WHY?
- IMPOSSIBLE IN MANY CASES?
- ALICE: "THERE IS NO USE TRYING, ONE CAN'T BELIEVE IMPOSSIBLE THINGS."
- QUEEN: "SOMETIMES I'VE BELIEVED AS MANY AS SIX IMPOSSIBLE THINGS BEFORE BREAKFAST."

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### WHAT CAN WE DO?

- CHANGE.
  - WHY?
  - COMMENTS FROM GAL'S ABOUT COURT
- MOTIVATE: DARE TO INSPIRE
- MORE THAN A CASE PLAN, IT'S A LIFE PLAN
- WE, AND THEY, ARE CHARTING THE FUTURE OF CHILDREN (AND THEIR CHILDREN)

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### WHAT CAN WE DO?

- **ENCOURAGE FATHERS**
  - DEVELOPMENT OF CASE PLAN
  - PARTICIPATION IN CASE PLAN
  - VISITATION
  - CHILD AND FAMILY TEAM MEETINGS
  - STOP THE BLAME GAME
  - RESPECT FOR OTHER PARENT
  - TO FOCUS ON CHILD

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### WHAT CAN WE DO?

- **TALK**
  - ENGAGE FATHERS IN COURT
  - LOOK FOR BARRIERS TO RELATIONSHIPS AND INVOLVEMENT
  - WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BARRIERS TO FATHERS BEING INVOLVED?
  - FIND RESOURCES TO OVERCOME BARRIERS. (EX. REFER TO CFCC OR PHOENIX FOR EMPLOYMENT ISSUES)
  - DON'T ASSUME DSS AND GAL HAVE IT COVERED
  - MOTIVATE: MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

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### WHAT CAN WE DO?

- **SET:**
  - REASONABLE GOALS: DON'T OVERWHELM
  - "PERFECTION OF MEANS AND CONFUSION OF ENDS SEEMS TO CHARACTERIZE OUR AGE." ALBERT EINSTEIN
  - CLEAR GUIDELINES (NOW NOT THE TIME FOR MISUNDERSTANDING)
  - CASE PLAN THAT ADDRESSES BARRIERS FOR FATHERS TO BE INVOLVED
  - CLEAR TIME PARAMETERS
  - ORDER THAT CLEARLY SETS EXPECTATIONS

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### WHAT CAN WE DO?

- **BE:**
  - HONEST
  - RESPECTFUL
  - SINCERE
  - UNDERSTANDING: SEEK FIRST TO UNDERSTAND, THEN BE UNDERSTOOD.
  - COMMITTED
  - CAREFUL IN TONE OF VOICE AND CHOICE OF WORDS (ESPECIALLY WITH DADS)

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### WHAT CAN WE DO?

- **BE:**
  - A LEADER IN THE COURTROOM
  - TRUE LEADERSHIP ISN'T JUST TELLING WHAT TO DO
    - GUIDE
    - COACH
    - SUPPORT
    - AND YES, DIRECT
  - THE NONCUSTODIAL FATHER NEEDS ALL OF THIS
  - NOT ADVOCACY: LEADERSHIP TO PROMOTE THE BEST INTERESTS OF CHILDREN

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### WHAT CAN WE DO?

- **DO:**
  - LISTEN (AND LOOK LIKE YOU ARE LISTENING)
  - ENGAGE FATHERS
  - THINK ABOUT THE POWER YOU HAVE TO EFFECT CHANGE
  - CONSIDER YOUR LEGACY AS A JUDGE: WHAT KIND OF JUDGE ARE YOU? WHAT IMPACT WILL YOU HAVE?

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### WHAT CAN WE DO?

- DO:
  - LEARN MORE ABOUT WHAT WE DO (YOU ARE HERE, GOOD STEP!)
  - CONSIDER ATTENDING CHILD AND FAMILY TEAM MEETING (NOT IN YOUR CASELOAD)
  - CONSIDER VISITING A GROUP HOME, A TREATMENT CENTER, OTHER RESOURCES (WATCH FOR CONFLICT POSSIBILITY)
  - MY CASE

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### WHAT CAN WE DO?

- DO:
  - SET EXPECTATIONS FOR DSS AND GAL TO CLEARLY IDENTIFY BARRIERS TO INVOLVEMENT OF NONCUSTODIAL FATHERS AND TO MAKE CLEAR CASE PLANS TO ADDRESS THE BARRIERS
  - READ THE REPORTS: OBVIOUS IF YOU DON'T
  - MAKE SURE YOUR ORDERS ARE CLEAR
  - CARE WHAT HAPPENS

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### SUMMARY

- IMPORTANT: CHARTING THE FUTURE OF CHILDREN (AND THEIR CHILDREN)
- IMPORTANT FOR FATHERS TO BE INVOLVED
- CHALLENGE: "IT IS EASIER FOR A FATHER TO HAVE CHILDREN THAN FOR CHILDREN TO HAVE A REAL FATHER." POPE JOHN XIII
- CHALLENGE: "FOR RARELY ARE SONS SIMILAR TO THEIR FATHERS; MOST ARE WORSE, AND A FEW ARE BETTER THAN THEIR FATHERS." HOMER, THE ODYSSEY.

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### SUMMARY

- MAKE INVOLVEMENT BY NONCUSTODIAL FATHERS A REAL GOAL
- VIRGIL: "THEY CAN BECAUSE THEY THINK THEY CAN"
- ENCOURAGE, TALK, SET, DO, BE.
- WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE EMPOWER FATHERS TO DO THE RIGHT THING AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF THEIR CHILDREN?
- GENERATIONAL

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### THE END

- CHARLIE PLUMB STORY
- PHILOSOPHY FOR FATHERS:
  - BATMAN
  - YODA

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