



PROFESSIONAL *Excellence*

ADVANCED SKILLS TRAINING FOR
THE DFCS PROFESSIONAL

Georgia State University

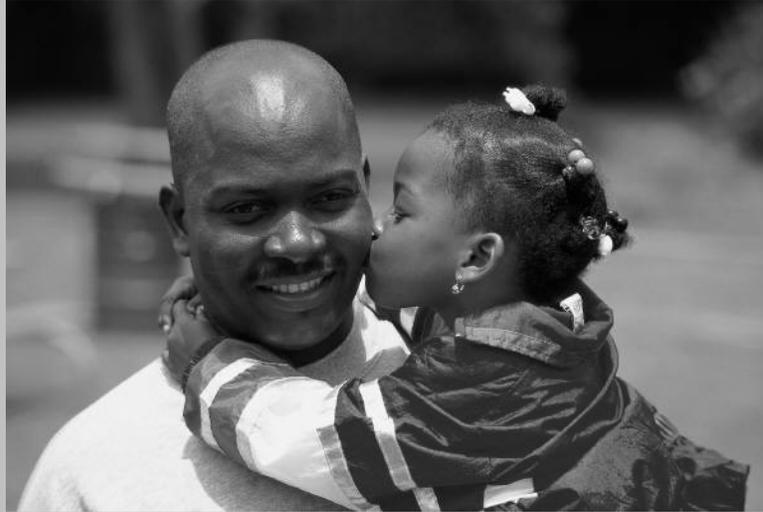


Skills and Strategies for Working with Fathers

Course Overview

Developed for:
Georgia Department of Human Resources
Division of Family and Children Services

Developed by:
Professional Excellent Project
Georgia State University School of Social Work
Atlanta, Georgia



Skills and Strategies for Working with Fathers

Course Overview

**Advanced Skills
Training for the
DFCS
Professional**

Acknowledgments

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Course Information

Rationale:

Fathers play a critical role in the development and growth of their children. Far too frequently, however, fathers are a missing piece in a child's life. The critical importance of a father's involvement with his children is supported by research and is a current focus of the child welfare system.

While many of the issues facing fathers as they try to be good parents are the same as those facing mothers, how fathers perceive and react to these issues is usually different and is often grounded in cultural views of manhood and fatherhood. In addition, the abuse of a child raises unique feelings and reactions in a father. Whether the father is the perpetrator or not, the abuse of a child can be a direct affront to how a father views himself as a man and a father. How well a case manager understands these reactions and how effectively the case manager can address them will make a major difference when trying to help an abusing father become a protecting one, or when engaging a father as an ally in addressing the dynamics that led to the child's maltreatment.

To this end, this course was developed to assist case managers with identifying, locating, engaging and involving fathers in the child welfare case process.

Course Description

This course focuses on the importance of fathers in children's lives, the current research related to father involvement, and how this information can be applied throughout the child welfare continuum of services. The course includes strategies for identifying, locating and engaging fathers in the casework process, and is designed to equip Social Services case managers and supervisors to work successfully with fathers in a wide range of family situations and structures.

Target Audience

This course is designed primarily for direct service practitioners in Social Services. This includes Social Services case managers and supervisors. New case managers should have completed their new worker training series and achieved certification.

Length of Training/Professional Development Credit

This is a 2-day course. Training hours are from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. 11 hours of professional development credit will be awarded for successful completion of the course.

Training Goals

As a result of this training, participants will:

- Increase their knowledge about issues unique to working with fathers
- Make every effort to identify, locate, and engage the father of each child on their caseload
- Involve fathers to the greatest extent possible in the case planning and service provision process
- Work successfully with fathers in a wide range of family situations and structures.

Learning Objectives

To build toward these goals, the following instructional objectives will be addressed. Participants will be able to:

- Recognize the need and importance of locating absent fathers
- Recognize the need and importance of engaging fathers, father figures, and paternal relatives
- Assess personal values in the context of their relationship with their fathers or other significant men in their lives and analyze how these values can influence their work with fathers
- Identify strategies for locating absent fathers and completing diligent search requirements
- Describe the process for paternity establishment and legitimization in Georgia
- Identify strategies for addressing barriers to engagement with fathers and paternal relatives
- Identify engagement and interviewing techniques to use with fathers
- Develop strategies to assist fathers in being involved with their children
- Identify formal and informal support services for fathers
- Describe the attributes of effective services for fathers
- Develop strategies to assist fathers in being involved with their children
- Identify strategies for assessing a father's, or other significant male's, relationship with the child and family
- Identify characteristics of fathers that are potential resources and potential risks to children
- Assess a father's strengths, needs, and potential as a placement resource
- Relate their work with fathers to specific CFSR outcomes for child safety, permanency and well-being

Child and Family Service Review (CFSR Issues)

Georgia's 2007 Child and Family Service Review Final Report noted several areas for improving work with children and families. The indicators (i.e. items) listed under each outcome are included in the assessment of the state's achievement of that outcome. Each of these indicators applies to work with fathers.

Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations. Note: The following indicators relate to the agency's efforts to **achieve** the stated permanency goal for a child

Item 8: Reunification, guardianship and placement with relatives

Item 9: Adoption

Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.

Item 13: Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care

Item 14: Preserving connections

Item 15: Relative placement

Item 16: Relationship of child in care with parents

Well-Being 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.

Item 17: Needs and services of child, parents, and foster parents

Item 18: Child/family involvement in case planning

Item 20: Worker visits with parent(s)

Topic Outline

Section 1: Welcome and Introduction

Welcome and trainer introduction

Participant introductions and learning needs

Learning objectives and agenda

In Section 1, the trainer will:

- Welcome participants to the training, introduce himself and have workshop participants introduce themselves.
- Have participants identify their learning needs and training expectations.
- Review the learning objectives and agenda for the training.
- Explain and administer the Pre-Post Self-assessment. Participants complete the Before Training section of the assessment.

Section 2: The Importance of Fathers

Importance of Father Involvement and the Impact of Father Absence

Fathers' Roles

Research on Fatherhood and Father Involvement

Self-awareness and Work with Men

Video: A Dad's View

CFSR Connection

In Section 2, the trainer will:

- Explain the impact of father absence on children's well-being.
- Facilitate an activity on views concerning fathers' roles,
- Facilitate an activity on research related to fatherhood practices across different cultures and socioeconomic levels.
- Facilitate an individual activity and group discussion on participants' relationships with their fathers and father figures.
- Show a video and lead a discussion about the fathers' perspective on father involvement.
- Review list of CFRS issues and connect CFRS to course content.

Section 3: Legal Issues

Introduction & Definitions

Diligent Search

Paternity and Legitimization

Fathers in Different Situations

In Section 3, the trainer will:

- Facilitate a discussion about strategies for identifying, locating and contacting absent fathers.
- Present information about diligent search requirements and strategies.
- Facilitate a discussion about the process for paternity establishment and legitimization in Georgia.
- Facilitate a discussion about working with fathers in different family situations (i.e. married, stepfathers, boyfriends, incarcerated).
- Facilitate the first Buzz Group meeting (i.e. small group breakout session)

Section 4: Engaging Fathers

Barriers to Father Involvement

Mothers as Gatekeepers

Video - Skill Demonstration: Talking with mothers about the importance of father involvement

Strategies for Addressing Barriers to Father Involvement

Video - Skill Demonstration: Engaging fathers

Helping Fathers Engage with their Children

In Section 4, the trainer will:

- Assist participants in identifying barriers to father involvement.
- Present information on barriers identified through research.
- Use a videotaped role play to facilitate a discussion on addressing barriers presented by mothers.
- Facilitate a discussion on strategies for addressing barriers to father involvement.
- Use a videotaped role-play to demonstrate effective interviewing and engagement skills for fathers.
- Facilitate an individual activity on applying the course content to a father identified by each participant.
- Share information on how case managers can help fathers move toward more involvement with their children.
- Facilitate the second Buzz Group meeting (i.e. small group breakout session).

Section 5: Identifying Fathers' Strengths and Needs

Fathers and Child Maltreatment

Assessing Risk

Assessing Strengths and Needs

Video - Skill Demonstration: Discussing permanency and placement options

In Section 5, the trainer will:

- Present information on fathers and their impact on child maltreatment.
- Facilitate a discussion on assessing a father's role in child maltreatment and assessing possible risks to children.
- Present information on assessment using a strengths-based perspective.
- Use a videotaped role-play to facilitate a discussion on assessing a father's strengths, needs, and potential as a placement resource.

Section 6: Services for Fathers

Effective Fatherhood Programs

Services and Community Resources

Case Manager as a Resource

In Section 6, the trainer will:

- Facilitate a discussion about the importance of involving fathers in case planning.
- Present information on the attributes of effective services for fathers.
- Facilitate a discussion about identifying and referring fathers to community resources and support services.
- Facilitate a discussion about how case managers can be a resource to fathers.
- Discuss resources included in the participant guide that case managers can use and share with fathers.
- Facilitate the final Buzz Group meeting (i.e. small group breakout session).

Closing Activities

In the closing activities, the trainer will:

- Facilitate a large discussion in which each buzz group reports their findings related to their assigned father category.
- Provide an opportunity for participants to relate what they learned to their work with a specific father on their caseload.
- Instruct participants to complete the After Training Section of the pre-post self-assessment and the course evaluation.