

2024 Fatherhood Summit

Table Group Discussion Consolidated Notes

Child Welfare

Barriers -

- Bias against dads' motives and suitable parent
- Implicit bias and harmful rhetoric
 - "men don't care"
 - "they're aggressive"
- Unfairness/bias against men/dads parent daughter = disaster
- Prejudice against dad by CPS/DCYF
- No faith in men – dads are the only ones who have to prove they are a good parent
- Dads are prejudged – they can work hard to complete all the requirements and still not get the child when mom is not complying with the plan and gets sole custody.
- Opinion formed based on how it looks on paper, not on who the dad is
- Stigma against single dads
- Biased psych evaluations
- Adding more and more requirements to fathers – double standard
- Dads have to jump through so many hoops to prove to be a fit father
- Alienation once you have entered the system
- System does not understand the importance of the father relationship
- System needs to take a step back and learn that parents are the experts on their families

- Accusations kept on record despite being acquitted
- Length of time it takes to be reunified with child
- Inefficient process – CPI certified parental improvement

- Social workers hold too much power
- Social worker burnout and too many cases to really know you
- Caseload size is a problem

- Lack of sensitivity towards fathers
- Lack of cultural knowledge and humility
- Lack of culturally appropriate services and providers
- Families need providers who look like them and understand their journey

- Fathers have to search out services they get less help
- Services don't fit father's work hours
- Not suitable for single dads
- No inpatient treatment for dads with kids
- No appropriate services for parents with mental health issues or disability

- No services available to complete requirements for plans to be reunited with the child
- Lack of community support for fathers most community things led by Moms who don't want dad there
- Law for file for termination of parental rights
- Why isn't the State following the law when citizens have to?
- Financial incentive for the State to have kids in fostercare
- Federal v. State mandates don't make sense or align
- Need more data on dads in the system including reunification
- Fathers living in different states from children is even more complicated

What government Can do Better -

- Legal help with parent plans
- Need help in navigating the legal system
- Address the underlying needs and services to help parents
- Bias & inconsistency in perceptions and therefore court reports and outcomes skewed
- CASA / GALs, social workers need to be more self-aware of implicit biases
- Better trained Courthouse Facilitators to support child welfare involved families
- We'd like to see less "assumption" that parents are adversarial or it should be a fight
- Get back to old school social work values
 - Start where the parent/families are
 - Listen more/talk less
 - Basic need address first
- Be more client/user friendly
- Continue to be curious
- More fathers in provider agencies
- Revise language that is used when talking about child, parents, and kin
- Law changes as to substances and training and thought about dangers of use
- Expand strengthen families and family navigator statewide to all facilities
- Parent navigators in all DOC
- Cross collaboration with DCYF and DOC
- System should work with community groups that already exist
- Be accepting and supportive of groups that are doing good practice
- Find easier ways for community programs to get contracted/funded
- Have parent/caregiver retreats
- Peer support groups are effective
- More peer mentors for dads and make stronger local social connections
- Reflective supervision for child welfare workers
- In all decisions – include LIVED EXPERIENCE
- Fatherhood Cafés across the state – Keep doing them!

Hoping to See -

- Wish more DCYF SW, CASA/GAL, Parent Attorneys would have attended
- Better advertising/marketing of the summit
- More community vendors
- Want to see more fathers here
- Disappointed that the father who won the award wasn't here.
- The men that were here from the prison should have been allowed to wear street cloths and socialize more
- Highlighting/connecting programs already occurring in the state
 - Where can we connect/contract with what is working
- Map of all the organizations doing the work
- More conversation time

What excited you the most -

- The dads panel was AMAZING!
- The woman from Ohio utilizing TANF 3 & 4
- The awards were inspiring
- Table conversations/engagement were good
- Networking opportunities.