

## Engaging Parents-Video 1-Fostering Fathers

Melia Franklin: Greetings! We are very excited to have such a large audience today. I want to welcome you and thank you for participating. My name is Melia Franklin, and I am your host today. I'm a consultant for the National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement. And this Sunday is Father's Day. And what better time to talk about our topic today of Fostering Fathers' Leadership Skills? We got the very first question in our Q&A was, "How can you make fathers feel a part of the group with limited or no male staff? How can you gain their trust?" And then another question, "Would we give examples of ways that I can use to generate more fatherhood participation in our Head Start activity?" These are great questions, and they are exactly in line with what we're going to present today. We're gonna focus on fathers as advocates and leaders.

Fathers can be an overlooked resource in our family engagement efforts. And we're talking to three experts who will share how they successfully ... how to successfully integrate fathers into your program. In addition to tips and best practices, our experts will introduce you to tools that you can put into action right away to make your program more father friendly. Today's webinar also addresses a key, it's part of a series of engaging parents as advocates and leaders, a webinar series, and this is the first one in which we're going to be highlighting tools and resources and examples of how you can promote equity, responsiveness, and collaboration with diverse families. And it obviously addresses the key part of the Head Start Family Community Engagement framework and the outcomes thereof.

As in many things, Head Start has a strong history of promoting father engagement. Head Start has been a pioneer in family engagement in general, and that's no different with father engagement. So, beginning in the 1990s, Head Start and Early Head Start began a series of male involvement demonstration projects. And as evidence of the positive impact of father engagement grew, so did the commitment of the federal government to making sure this is part of all of the efforts of the Office of Family ... Office of Family Assistance. And so, in 2018, there was a memo, which I've linked in this PowerPoint that urged all federal family serving agencies to prioritize and enhance father engagement. So, I'm going to take you to our first presenter, who is ... who will introduce himself.

Kevin Bremond: Thank you, Melia. My name is Kevin Bremond. I worked for First 5 Alameda County, and I co-founded the Alameda County Fathers Corps back in 2013. I myself am a father. I had my first child when I was 19. My wife and I had our first child when I was 19. She is now gonna be 24 next month, and she just moved out on her own, which is amazing. My middle daughter is 20, and I have a 16-year-old son. So, I've been a father pretty much my entire adult life, and the whole adult part is debatable. But I have been a dad a long time and this work is very close to my heart. I was raised by my father and my stepmom, and he had four amazing brothers who were part of my life, my entire life, and still are a part of my life today. So, I've been surrounded by really brilliant men my entire life. And so, that's why this work is important to me.

And I think it is critical that we do a better job as providers with engaging and supporting and [inaudible]. So, you say why? Why focus on dads? The reality is the data shows that it's important. It leads to improved weight gain in preterm infants, improved breastfeeding rates, higher receptive language skills, and so on. And the reality of a father's role is underappreciated and not acknowledged as critical to the optimum development of children. So, that's another reason why to focus on fathers. Support services have historically focused on the opposite [inaudible] child. So, historically, especially when we talk about early childhood, those services have always focused on supporting the needs of mom and child. And just the reality is there are not, at least in California, in the Bay Area, there are not many places fathers can go for judgment-free support for being the best fathers that they want to be. And the reality is, if we can move the needle on this issue, we can drastically improve the outcomes for children and communities.

So, now I'm going to get into a little bit of background about the Fathers Corps to tell you a little bit how we established ourselves as a program in our own account. Like I said, we were started back in 2013. We began as a learning community for male service providers, so men who work in our communities in a number of different capacities, we wanted to bring them together and provide some training on early childhood and also with a very intentional and unapologetic focus on supporting the needs of fathers. We started off as a cross-systems collaboration between First 5 Alameda County, Alameda County Health Care Services Agency, and Alameda County Social Services Agency. So, like I said, it's a cross-systems collaboration with monetary support from all of those organizations. And we're supported by, from the very beginning, we've been supported by the Alameda County Board of Supervisors.

Our work falls into three very distinct categories. Capacity building. So, we want to build the capacity of providers who are working within these public systems and in our community-based organizations to effectively serve and support the needs of fathers. Research and assessment. We wanted agencies to be able to assess how father friendly they are or are not and – and make adjustments based on that. And then system change. We want to make our social and family support system more father friendly. We want the folks within that system to do a better job of — of intentionally engaging and supporting the needs of fathers. To do that, to support our partners with becoming more father friendly, the Alameda County Fathers Corps in that first-year learning community of men, we identified seven father-friendly principles. Those father-friendly principles were adopted by the Alameda County Board of Supervisors in 2015. In that resolution, they included language that strongly encouraged all social and family and community support programs to not only adopt the father-friendly principles, but to take very concrete steps in – with implementing the father-friendly principles. These principles serve as a roadmap for organizations to effectively serve and support the needs of fathers.

So, these slides, these are just a high level ... that you guys have been sent a link to the full version of the father-friendly principles. But these are just the high level. Include the needs of fathers when you're serving families. Provide father-friendly services when you're serving and working with families. Portray positive images of fathers. A bit of our work here is that we really want to change the narrative around fatherhood, especially when we're talking about black and

brown fathers, we want to change the narrative. A lot of times when we have conversations about black and brown fathers, those conversations start with absenteeism, incarceration, child support, domestic violence, and things like that. So, we want to change the narrative around fatherhood so that the conversations don't start with that. We definitely understand that [indiscernible] domestic violence is something that happens, but that's not [indiscernible] that's not the majority of fathers. So, we wanted to change the narrative of that as well, and I can give you some steps in taking share – share with you some steps we've taken to do that.

Now I'm gonna share some principles and kind of some tips with implementing those principles. One, include the needs of fathers. So, collect contact information from dads. Talk to your fathers. You can also host focus groups with fathers to find out what their needs are. There was a question about how you increase father engagement and foster male engagement. One way is to talk to and find out [indiscernible] ... ask dad if he has any questions or concerns, and then invite fathers to activities. And when I say invite fathers to activities, I'm not talking about [indiscernible] help clean the yard and build a tent or build a [indiscernible] that — that tends to be an issue. Portray positive images of fathers. Like I said, we really [indiscernible] our laser focus on things, the narrative [indiscernible]. We've got to incorporate images of fathers showing them just being dad. To support organizations and programs with the implementation of this father-friendly principles, we've developed a diversity of fatherhood photo bank. That photo bank, we posted photo shoots with probably over 40 families or 50 families in Alameda County. We've uploaded them to a site, and organizations can request access to those images and download those images and use them in their collateral materials but also hang them in their spaces so that when dad walks in, he sees himself represented in all of these pictures and as part of the presentation from that photo bank. Melia has provided the link in the one pager to that photo bank as well. And these are free access. We just ask a couple of questions, your name, your organization, your ZIP code, and how you plan to use the photos. And I'll give you access, we'll send you a PIN number you'll get access to over 800.

[inaudible] Ideally, those positions will be staffed by men. The reality is just, you know, fathers are more open to receiving information from [inaudible]. Examples of those positions are Father Engagement Specialist, Fathers' Advocate/Mentors, and Parenting Liaison. So, communication, building relationships, reaching out to dad, being intentional about it. For the most part, when we've done this work and doing the work over the past seven years, [indiscernible] intentionally, not serving fathers, they're just not intentionally serving fathers. But what we found, especially in early childhood, is, you know, when we were parents, all parents are welcome or a parent group, a lot of times, that does not speak to dad and the folks who show up for that are moms. So, if you want fathers to show up is offering parenting ... I mean, excuse me, father- specific programming [inaudible] fathers and talk to them by hoping [indiscernible] by doing surveys [indiscernible], what it is they're looking for, what they need to be the best parent that they can be.

Train staff on fatherhood issues. The reality is we all have our own life experiences. We all have relationships or don't have relationships with our fathers. Those relationships can be positive, those relationships can be negative. Whichever they are, they influence how we move through

this world, how we engage [indiscernible] and in particular fathers [indiscernible]. My advice is to remain neutral as a provider. You are on the child's side, not mom or dad. Your interest is the best interest, the well-being of the child. Ensure that staff are consistently and effectively engaging [indiscernible] When dads come in, welcome them the same way that moms are. And, you know, if you're an organization that doesn't have a history of serving dads, you know, it may take time for dads to feel comfortable ... that you guys know, you know, persist and effectively [indiscernible] reach out [indiscernible] eventually they will come. And then, like I said, reflect and acknowledge on the baggage and/or bias that you may bring. You don't want that influencing your work. I know how you [indiscernible] fathers.

Expect father participation. Assume that fathers are involved and want information about their child. In a lot of cases, providers assume the opposite. [indiscernible] about their children. Excuse me. And then design programs for dad. Identify a strategy for staff to engage fathers. Be intentional. It's not just gonna happen. And, like I said earlier, host father-specific parent/child activities. These are some characteristics of successful fatherhood programs. What you name your program speaks to fathers. Like I mentioned, I was a 19-year-old parent, and I can't honestly say that if a program was named Daddy Playgroup, that I would have gone. Dad Cafes have been some successful names of programs. Daddy and Me, those types of things. Just pay attention. I encourage you to pay attention to what you name your programs. I also encourage you, if you're starting a program, to get the fathers involved in naming it, so they can take some ownership. Male facilitators, whenever possible, meet fathers where they are. If a dad is having housing issues or work issues, it's gonna be hard for them to be receptive to these different things that you're bringing in as far as child development or parent education. So, if you can support them with addressing their – their issues that they have going on currently, then you can move forward with your agenda.

Trust and authenticity between provider and dad is key. We can tell in the first 10 seconds of a conversation if you really care about my issues and me being engaged with my ... with our children. Leadership and staff are patient. Now when I say that, I mean, if you're an organization that hasn't had a history of serving dads or providing father-specific programs, you know, it may take some time for dads to attend your group. So, when I say be patient, I mean, give it – give it a chance before you cancel the program. You may have to have one or two series of events before dads start coming. Just keep that in mind. Nontraditional hours of service. You want dads to participate. Offering a service at 2 o'clock on a Tuesday may not be, well, until this current situation happened, but that may not be the best time. So, think about when you're offering your services. And then incentives. I'd say, you know, get as – get as close to cash as you can get. You know, there's this outlook that you shouldn't have to pay a parent to improve their skills as a parent. [indiscernible] Do what you've got to do to get dad in there. And then provide a compelling enough program that it makes dads want to come back. Because if it takes a \$25 gift card or something to get them through the door, that's a – that's a small price to pay. So, again, just incentives whenever possible. These are some successful outreach strategies.

So, other fathers are good for outreach when you're trying to get dads involved in a program. Male staff, now when I say male staff, don't use your male staff only when it's time for outreach. Get them involved in the planning and programming development, so that they feel bought in. And then again, authentic when you're doing your outreach. Go where dads are, you know, well, where they used to ... Barbershops, schools, labor and delivery, recovery, game shop, sports teams or leagues, that's another place where dads are. Go where dads are. And then also you can partner with other agencies or programs that are – that are doing a good job of engaging men and some of those programs are like workforce development programs, probation and reentry programs, manhood development programs, and then child support, obviously, they do a lot of engaging. We've developed some tools that organizations can use to - to get them thinking about ways that they can be more father-friendly. This is not a "gotcha" tool. What this tool is really for is to get programs and staff thinking about some really practical ways that can improve your engagement with fathers. Identify where you're falling short on your support and engagement of fathers. So, the father-friendly organizational assessment tool, which, again, are tied – was tied directly to the father-friendly principles. This is just a little piece of it. So, we've also developed a father-friendly ...

So, after you've assessed how father-friendly your organizational program is or is not, we've also developed a father-friendly principles implementation tool, which provides a step-by-step guide for organizations to implement each of the seven father-friendly principles on a client and practice level, on a staff capacity-building level, and then on a system and policy level. So, each one of the father-friendly principles has very concrete strategies under each of these categories for implementing each of the seven father-friendly principles. So, you can find that on Melia's tip sheet as well. Here's a sample of the implementation tool. So, create conditions so that male staff feel comfortable, valued, and respected within the agency. Create positions to serve fathers' needs and actively recruit men to fill those positions, Include the father-friendly principles in new-hire orientation materials. And then assign a father-friendly principles mentor to all new hires. [indiscernible] example some of the steps that you can take to implement these father-friendly principles.

Melia: Thank you so much. And now we're going to ... So this is, also, you can take more questions for Kevin, when we finish the presenting part and go into the Q&A. Be sure that you download your tip sheet so that you can access all of these tools, including the photo, the free photo bank and the implementation and self-assessment tools for the father-friendly principles. And we are now gonna hear from someone who is from a Head Start program, and I'm going to let him ... in addition, he has brought a father in to talk with us about his experience. So, I'm gonna let him introduce himself.

Matt Haviland: Thank you, Melia. Hello, everybody. My name is Matt. I am the Parent Leadership and Male Engagement Specialist at Head Start for Kent County. Kent County is west Michigan. We are the greater Grand Rapids area. Personally, I am a father. to a 14-year-old daughter who just graduated from eighth grade, and my wife and I are actually in the, currently in the home study phase of the adoption process. And we are looking to adopt an infant domestically. So, I am going to be starting all over here soon. I'm going to have a high schooler

and a baby at some point. So, I am deep in fatherhood. But I've been working with dads in some capacity or another since 2008. I actually ran an organization for single fathers for 10 years as well, and now I'm over at Head Start. Head Start for Kent County, we serve just over 1,600 families. We have 13 preschool sites around our county. Four of those buildings are Early Head Start classrooms. Those are our infant/toddler classrooms. We have a home visiting program that, give or take, fluctuates a little bit but serves about 100 families on a regular basis. We've been recognized in a couple areas. One of them is, we've been recognized nationally by the Office of Head Start for outstanding collaboration with our statewide pre-K program. Our county now has one application and a 1-800 number for all state and locally funded pre-K programs. As a result of this, about 75% of eligible 4-year-olds in the Grand Rapids area are now receiving pre-K services. So, that has been a community collaboration. Also, our data and outcomes department has been working with the National Head Start Association on developing a data playbook for Head Start to use.

A few things I'm gonna touch on in my portion here, some of them might be a little overlapped with Kevin's as well. But we really want to emphasize and drive some of these points home. The importance and the value of the male engagement position, which is part of what I do. Father-specific programming, finding creative ways to reach out and to connect with the dads, big or small. Fatherhood competency training, otherwise known as something like professional development. We're going to be talking about unconscious bias. And leadership and career pathways for the fathers or for parents, as well creating avenues for parents to come in as volunteers, perhaps as a parent leader in your organization, and possibly even, as will be the case when Travis talks, even pursuing a career in the field as well. The male engagement position was piloted in 2007 at our agency. The gentleman who originally piloted it, he is now our operations director. After him, my coworker and colleague, Deborah Conley, she ran the fatherhood position for multiple years, did a fantastic job amongst all the other things she carries at the office. And I came on board in 2017, again, as the male engagement and also the parent leadership specialist.

We have a lot of different ways that we reach out to dads, but two of the biggest ways have been through the dads' cafes. Kevin talked about parent cafes or dads' cafes. Dads' cafes are the same as the parent cafes, just the questions are more geared towards the men. But it's a great, great way not only to build relationships with the fathers in your program, but also for the men to build relationships with each other because it's in a small group setting. And there's a two-way communication. I love the idea of partnering with our parents and having a two-way communication instead of us dictating and, kind of, you know, speaking or talking to in a one-way, for us to partner with them.

Cafes are also a great way to identify potential volunteers and parent leaders. And what we created a couple years ago is called a family volunteer opportunity sheet. And really, it just has all the different opportunities of the ways parents or caregivers can get involved in our organization. Some might be inevitably just a tiny, minimal commitment. Some might be a much larger commitment, like a Parent Policy Council, and it lays out all the descriptions and then the parents can sign up and then we reach out to them afterwards and contact them.

Another one and probably our biggest portion for getting fathers and father figures into the school program, we modeled this after the Watchdogs program. And what this is, it's really a threefold win. It's a win-win-win. The first one is the fathers and the children get some great bonding time in the school. The father can come in or the father figure – dads, grandpas, uncles, significant others, older brothers – just male father figures. So, they get to be in the child's world and see what the child does on a regular basis. It also, of course, provides a positive male influence for children who might not have that at home. And anytime you have extra adults on property, it's just extra security because you have an extra set of eyes.

I mentioned we're going to address unconscious bias. This is from an article from Dr. J. Fagan. He is the co-director of the Fatherhood Research and Practice Network. Now he pulled this quote for a couple of our PD sessions, and he states, "One of the primary reasons for the challenges female staff face in working effectively with fathers is the tendency of people to gravitate toward, spend time with, and be more comfortable around others who are similar. This fact extends to gender." It goes on to say, I have it in my notes here, that research in early childhood programs, for example, shows that women are more comfortable working with women. Early childhood is a very ... men are very far and few between. It is a very ... the vast majority are women, especially in the classrooms and in the sites. So we want to address unconscious bias. We want to promote inclusive communication and outreach strategies when it comes to serving the fathers and father figures in our program.

Before we get on to the next slide here, I have a question for our audience. Now we do have a good amount of people on this call today. We are about 2,500 strong today. So congratulations. Thank you for everybody that's here. But here's my question for you. Did you hear about the restaurant on the moon? No? Well, you know what, the food was good, but there was no atmosphere. So you see, we got thousands of people on this call all around the nation. And I can hear the groaning going all across the United States right now. But I put that in there because you know what, we're on a fatherhood webinar. And it's Father's Day week, so we have to have at least one good dad joke in there. But I do have a reason for that, and it's really to ask the question, what sort of atmosphere are you portraying in your agency? Kevin talked about having visuals and eye contact with staff and the fathers and addressing the fathers directly. So, let's be aware and cognizant of that. I've asked a couple of our dads before to do kind of like a secret shopper approach, where they just come in as normal, drop off their children, maybe take a walk through the site but to give me kind of a secret feedback. If you know secret shoppers, like, in a restaurant or a bank, and what it is, is kind of like a customer perspective, and they can kind of relay some feedback on how they are greeted, received, talked to. Do they feel like they're spoken to in the same way that the moms are? Do they see father-friendly material throughout the site? So, I recommend that you do consider maybe getting some customer feedback, if you will. Don't tip off anybody in your site about that, but use the dads as a secret shopper.

There's also a portion that's not on the screen, but I pulled this from the Early Childhood National Newsletter, and it states, "In order to partner with fathers staff, must be willing to recognize when their own beliefs and backgrounds are forming their expectations and learn

how to let those go." So, the recommendations that they gave were that you reflect with a supervisor, going back to our poll that we just had a minute ago, learn about the many ways that men approach their role as fathers. Remember, men don't parent worse, they parent differently. So, get to know how dads parent and even past that in different cultures, there's different ways that men parent in different cultures. So, reflecting on that and understanding, perhaps, educating in the population that you serve, and look for the strengths in the dads, also in the parents. We're always so quick to look for flaws or weaknesses in people. But let's look for the strengths. Now the staff awareness survey that we have in the – in the back supporting documents that we refer to in the poll, you could do it alone and you could reflect on it. Perhaps it could be a one-on-one exercise with your supervisor. For the directors, managers and supervisors that are on the webinar, I would encourage you maybe to do it as a group or a large-group discussion during your department and team meetings. I also highly recommend that you do regular professional development training on serving fathers, fatherhood, and fatherhood competency. If you don't have somebody in your house that can lead it, my recommendation is to get a father expert from your area to lead the training.

We want to give fathers ownership through collaboration. Think of the word partnership. If you're taking word or taking notes today, write down the word partnership, we should be doing this with all of our parents as well. Helping dads move from involved to engaged. They might be involved, they might be present and active, dropping off, picking up at conferences, perhaps at a parents' meeting, family engagement nights. But let's move them into engaged. Give them a purpose. When dads know the value of them being involved, that really gives them a purpose. Case in point: I called one time about a year or two ago, I had a gentleman who was interested in volunteering in the site. He answered the phone at the house and I said, "Hi, this is Matt from Head Start," and he said, "Here's my wife." And he handed the phone to her and I paused, and I was like, "OK," so she got on the phone, I'm like, "Can you please put him on the phone? I'm trying to talk to him." But case in point, he heard Head Start and he just automatically deferred it over to her. So, we want to give them a purpose and let them know why it matters when they're involved. Work with them, again, be patient, you know, look for their strengths, know a man's sense of learning style and how he parents. And there are just so many benefits to parent leadership in general. When parents are leaders, active leaders, in their children's school, the community, at home, those parents are more confident and assertive.

Travis is a great example of that. They model positive behaviors for their families, and they influence their children take on age-appropriate roles. Couple ways that we do that at our sites is we have the Watchdogs program, but we also have the Top Dog. I try to get at least one or two guys at each site that acts as a liaison. We have 13 preschools, I cannot be in 13 preschools at once, obviously. So, what I do is try to identify a couple guys who can be a point person for me. I also highly rely on the staff and the teachers and the site supervisors. If there is a father interested in getting involved more, for them to get his information and relay it over to me as well. And then the Parent Sub program, which Travis is a part of, we actually have a way now where our parents can fill out a formal employment application. They go through a formal interview process and, if they are approved or hired, they will actually go through a real background check, and then they are able to work as on-call substitute teachers in our sites.



This is a great thing because, one, it helps ... They can supplement their income through that, and it also develops a pool of parents for us that helps out if we are short staffed. But the cool thing in the male engagement portion is when I came on board a few years ago, we had roughly 200 teachers, give or take. We only had one or two full-time men in the classrooms. Now we have male staff, but actually in the classrooms. And through the Parent Sub program, pre-quarantine, before middle of March, we actually had about five or six guys working in the classroom now. We about tripled our male teacher population. It's still a drop in the bucket, but it is a drop in the right way.

And the last portion for me, build off what you have. If you know the SWOT acronym, it stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Within your organization, being realistic with the resources you have – the staff power, the financial resources at the time – what are your strengths, your weaknesses, your opportunities, and your threats? To start with, why, you can look that up on YouTube or online, but basically, most organizations know what they do and how they do it, but very few people know why they do what they do. But the speaker that presented this, start with "why," says that you should start at that laser focus in the middle. If you're thinking of a bull's eye, the "why" being the dead center, start with your "why" and build back with the "how" and the "what." And then lastly, to get men involved, look for opportunities outside to hire and recruit male staff. Does your promotional material, I mean, look at your brochures, are men reflected in that? Go to job and career fairs, you know, and talk to these guys. Say, "Have you ever seriously considered a career in early childhood?" The answer is, most of the time, gonna be no. But, you know, start to plant that seed, and if you have the opportunity, have male staff present at that – at those as well. So, that's my time for this portion. I am going to turn it over to Travis for a few minutes. He's gonna tell his story.

Travis Jones: Thank you, Matt. Hi, I'm Travis Jones. I am a ... I am involved with Head Start in a few ways. I have been part of the Watch D.O.G.S program going on three years, starting next school year. I am also a parent substitute teacher. I probably would not have got as involved when I did if it was not for one of my son's teachers. Her name was Cookie. Miss Cookie would ask me every day that she saw me drop my son off, to give Watch D.O.G.S a try. "When are you gonna sign up?" She would not take no for an answer.

As I was spending my first day in the classroom as a Watch D.O.G, I decided to make it at least once-a-week thing. Sometimes I did as many days as I could. I began getting a lot of encouragement from my family and from Miss Cookie to look into getting in the early childhood field as a teacher. My Head Start last year opened an opportunity for parents to become Head Start substitute teachers. So, that's when I applied and became a part-time teacher. I am glad that I was encouraged and decided to go into the classroom because I have learned many different ways to approach many situations that can help and help me as a better parent and, I believe, in ways a better father. It also showed me different ways to involve my children in everyday tasks that I may not have thought of on my own.

I remember how my children reacted the day I got my teacher badge from Head Start. Both my kids became very excited that they wanted to hold it and they did not want to return it. My son

told me that he was happy and proud that daddy was a teacher. So, with my overall experiences, I would highly recommend for staff to try to reach out to all father figures as possible. Let mothers know the options for fathers. Because, honestly, my second biggest encouragement that got me out of my box came from my wife. For any fathers or father figures, I would highly recommend to just try one day. Children love males in the classroom, and you might just enjoy it like I did.

Matt: Thank you, Travis. It's been an absolute pleasure to watch Travis. And did you hear what he said? Just try one day. And thank goodness for Miss Cookie. Everybody might have a Miss Cookie, and Miss Cookie got Travis in the door, and here he is three years later, and he's by far one of our most involved parents. So, I'm just gonna wrap up here, and we're gonna get to the last poll and Melia will come back on. Let me ask you a question, though. What's your "why"? We've talked about the "whats," we've talked about the "hows," but what's your "why"? Why a male engagement position? Why a fatherhood program? Why more men in the sites? So, we can look at the big reasons or the big picture. Well, what is your "why"?

And then we would be remiss in talking about getting dads involved if we didn't touch on co-parenting. We could spend all day on this. I don't have time, but I do want to talk briefly about co-parenting. I read an article one time that said the single strongest predictor of a father's involvement with his children is the relationship with the mother. Now listen to this. It said it didn't matter whether they were married or divorced, living together or separated, rich or poor, That was the single strongest predictor, which made me wonder if I want to get more dads, I can have pizza parties, I can have science nights, I can do all the big rah-rahs. But if I wanted to get some more dads in the sites, I have to get to the moms, too. So, whatever that looks like in your program, Travis talked about how his wife has supported him, and moms play such a crucial role in fathers getting involved. But again, we did have a question that talked about fostering relationships when it's tense. That happens, we get it, co-parenting is a big piece. So, possibly you could offer some sort of co-parenting resources, co-parenting classes, or even just putting tips, like co-parenting tips, on your social media or in your newsletters. Maybe it's a once a week or once a month thing. Benefits of co-parenting. Did you know when parents communicate, you know, here's XYZ results? So, that's my time. I thank you, everybody, for being here. And hopefully, this will benefit your program and hopefully to see you afterwards as well.

Melia: Thanks so much, Matt and Travis. Great presentation and I know that people want to know so much more and about what you all have said, and we hope that our chat afterwards, many of you will join. I wanted to, before we jump into the wrap-up, I wanted to do one more poll. And this is really your opportunity to plan what you're going to do next. And so it's really the same set of questions that you answered in the beginning about what you were doing but based on what you learned today. What would be your priority over the next 90 days to improve engagement of fathers and father figures? And these responses are based on the father-friendly principles and obviously there may be very specific things you will take from that. For example, find out what fathers want and need. You may say, well, we're gonna do ... We've done surveys, we're gonna do a focus group or we're gonna do a secret shopper or

something like that. And, definitely, that is the key. And many of you already know that because 50% of you already are saying that that's your priority, that if fathers are gonna get brought in, they're – you're going to need to find out what motivates them and what they would participate in. That's often the key that ownership that both Kevin and Matt talked about how important that is. Another, you know, the rest of them, there's smaller percentages, but one that's – the next one is create leadership roles for fathers. And so I think that's significant that you're looking at a father like Travis and thinking about how can we create roles for fathers who are wanting to step up.

So, we're going to just wrap this up. I know that many of you are probably wanting to know, when will you get your certificates. And so I want to make sure that you know that there'll be an evaluation survey sent to you after the webinar, and you will have an opportunity to respond, and after you respond, your certificate will be sent to you, as many of you are getting ECE credits this way. I want to make sure that you knew that. And just a couple of housekeeping experiences ... Sorry, housekeeping notes before we switch over to the questions. Matt is actually hosting a fatherhood community on MyPeers. Many of you may already know MyPeers, which is on the Head Start resources and knowledge website. And this slide has how you register for an account. You have to wait to be accepted. So, you have two or three days to wait for your email of how to log in. And you can join that and every day get new resources. You'll be able to ask many of the same questions and get answers from Head Start staff all over the country who are interested in engaging fathers as advocates and leaders. But that's a great resource for you.

And I also want to make sure that we give a huge silent round of applause to the Fathers Corps of Alameda County, California, and to Kevin for his leadership in this area and for creating such amazing and accessible tools that I hope you all will use. And to Matt and Travis from Head Start for Kent County in Michigan for your expertise and sharing from your heart, as well as from your experience. Fantastic presentation. And I hope many of you took a lot away from it. And we also wanted to make sure that you knew about a resource to take your family engagement practice to the next level. There is a resource if you sign up to Text4FamilyServices. This is a free text messaging service that was designed for family service providers such as yourselves, and it's also available in Spanish. So, how you get it is you text "PFCE" to the number 22660 to sign up. This will all be sent to you as resources in ... as a follow-up, these slides, et cetera.

So, with that, I also want to thank our incredible listeners. We had, I think, over 2,500. I don't know if we're breaking any records, but that just seems pretty amazing to think of each of you taking one piece of what you learned and putting it into action to create such a ripple effect. So much rich information here and I really applaud our participants. Again, I hope you take this information, and you put it into action and continue to engage in all of the ways that you can to learn more from your peers. And just thank again for you for listening, for your patience with our occasional sound issues and to our presenters for the hard work in preparing and presenting. So, wonderful to have you and thank you for being with us. And with that, we are out.

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