

Section 1

Working Collaboratively for Families: An Interagency Cross-Training Opportunity

Professionals were interested in training opportunities that allowed them to get to know the work of other agencies. This session is a cross-training professional development opportunity that provides an opportunity for 3 groups of professionals who work with families of young children, such as Child Support, Head Start, and Probation and Parole staff to learn about the work of each other's agencies and to build relationships that will allow them to better serve families and fathers. Nearly 100 participants evaluated the training highly, with 85% agreeing that the overall content of the training was very valuable.¹ This session was designed to meet the following goals:

- Begin the process of building relationships between professionals that work with fathers and families.
- Provide an overview of Fathers for Life.
- Provide participants with an overview of the participating agencies (Child Support, Head Start, and Probation and Parole).
- Explore ways to collaborate to better serve fathers and families.

Audience

This half-day session was designed for professional staff from 3 agencies such as Probation and Parole, Child Support, and Head Start. Each session will accommodate between 30 and 40 people forming a cross-section of the three agencies.

Room Set Up

The room should be arranged to accommodate a presenter/facilitator at the front of the room. Participant seating should consist of round tables that will accommodate approximately 6 people.

Facilitators/Presenters

Four presenters will participate in this session. Each of the 3 agencies represented will provide a presenter to deliver a 20-30 minute presentation on the agency. One presenter will be present to provide a brief presentation by a Head Start staff person on Fathers for Life who will also facilitate the session.

Supplies/Materials

Name Tags

Markers

Fathers for Life Handouts

Handouts Provided by Agency Presenters

Flip Chart

A/V as Requested by Agency Presenters

Case Study Handout

Note Cards for each participant

¹ Fuger, K.L et.al. (2008). *Strengthening Families and Fatherhood: Children of Fathers in the Criminal Justice System Project: Final Evaluation Report*. July 1, 2005 – June 30, 2008. University of Missouri-Kansas City, Institute for Human Development. Kansas City, MO.

Fathers for Life

A Head Start Innovation and Improvement Grant Project

Professional Development Session #1

Working Collaboratively for Families

Session Guide

Welcome and Introductions (25 Minutes)

Goal: To welcome the professionals to the session and begin the process of establishing bonds among participants

Facilitator Procedures:

As participants enter the room, greet them and invite them to make a nametag and be seated. Once all participants have arrived, begin the session by introducing yourself and welcoming them to the session. Give participants a brief overview of the agenda and provide them with directions to the restroom facilities.

Give each participant a note card. Ask each person to write one thing on the note card that they hope to gain from this session. Then allow each person to introduce themselves, state the agency they represent and share the item they have included on their note card.

Project Overview (20 Minutes)

Goal: To provide participants with an overview of the Fathers for Life project including a brief description of interventions.

Presenter Procedures:

An overview of the Fathers for Life project will be provided by the Transition Service Coordinator, Grant Manager or Project Coordinator. Participants will be provided with a brochure for the project. Talking points for the project overview are attached.

Agency Presentations (75 Minutes)

Goal: To provide participants with an overview of the function of each agency.

Facilitator Procedures:

The session facilitator will introduce the speakers and provide each speaker with 20-30 minutes for an agency presentation. After each presentation, participants will be allowed time to ask questions before the next presentation is introduced.

Presenter Procedures:

Each agency presenter will provide a 20-30 minute presentation describing their agency. Presentations should include information on how they serve fathers and families along with descriptions of how and when they accept referrals. Following each presentation, the presenter will field questions from the group. At the conclusion of the presentations, the facilitator will dismiss participants for 60 minutes for lunch.

Case Study Exercise (60 Minutes)

Goal: To provide participants with the opportunity to build relationships with one another while exploring ways to better serve families

Facilitator Procedures:

The facilitator should ask the participants to divide into breakout groups. Members of each breakout group will have been predetermined based on geographic area and job function.

Each group of 6 participants should sit together at a table. Each group should be given flip chart paper, markers and a copy of Case Study Exercise #1. Individual group members should take 5-10 minutes to respond to the questions on the Case Study Exercise. After members have considered the questions individually, answers should be shared within the small group. One person from each group should record important details from the case study discussion. These will be shared with the large group during Group Report Out.

After completing Case Study #1, groups will be provided with Case Study Exercise #2 if time allows. The group should use the same process used with the first exercise.

Group Report Out (30 Minutes)

Goal: To provide the opportunity for groups to share what they have learned about each others agencies and the potential to collaborate to better serve families.

Facilitator Procedures:

The facilitator will ask each group to choose a reporter. Each group will have the opportunity to report on what they discussed for each of the case studies provided. The facilitator will post flip chart paper outlining the discussions.

Wrap-Up and Dismissal

Goal: To provide closure to the training experience and encourage future interaction among participants.

Facilitator Procedures:

The facilitator will provide closure to the training by drawing on common themes that were uncovered in the exercise. The facilitator will encourage the group to continue to build relationships as they work to better serve fathers and families. The Transition Service Coordinator will distribute business cards indicating that questions about the Fathers for Life project can be directed to him.

Fathers for Life

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**Professional Development Session #1
Working Collaboratively for Families**

Case Study Exercise #1

Stan is a 27 year-old father who was incarcerated for 18 months for possessing and selling drugs. He has just been released from the facility and is returning to the town where his children and ex-wife are living. Stan has two daughters. His youngest daughter Ana is 3 years old and his oldest daughter Maria is 6 years old. Ana is currently enrolled in Head Start and Maria is in kindergarten. His relationship with the girls' mother Valerie is very strained. She is bitter about the choices Stan has made and did not allow the girls to visit Stan while he was incarcerated. Stan was unable to keep up with his child support while he was incarcerated and has no significant job prospects when he returns home. Stan has previously worked as a carpenter but a back injury that occurred prior to his incarceration makes it difficult to continue in this line of work. Stan will be staying with his brother temporarily because he has no other housing options. Though he is thankful to have a place to stay he realizes these arrangements are not ideal given that his brother lives in a one bedroom apartment and engages in many of the behaviors that landed Stan in prison. He desperately wants to be involved with his children but knows that Valerie will not be supportive of the relationship.

1. Describe how your agency would serve this family?
2. List the services your agency provides that could benefit this family?
3. What services does your agency provide specifically for this father?
4. What other community services would you refer this family to?
5. How could all of the agencies represented today work collaboratively to better serve this family?

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**Professional Development Session #1
Working Collaboratively for Families**

Case Study Exercise #2

Rick is a 23 year old father of 2 who is currently under the supervision of Probation and Parole. Rick has an 18 month old daughter with his current girlfriend Shelly and a 3 year old son with ex-girlfriend Tamara. Since being released 2 months ago, Rick has been unable to obtain a job that pays more than minimum wage. He is living with Shelly in a three bedroom apartment but they are concerned that they will not be able to continue to afford the apartment unless one of them can secure a job that pays more than they are currently making. Finding a job is further limited by the fact that neither of them has reliable transportation to and from work. Rick wants a relationship with his son but Tamara will not allow him to see the little boy until he can pay his child support. Shelly and Rick are really struggling to stay above water especially given the medical bills that are accumulating as a result of their daughter's struggles with severe asthma. They are feeling hopeless and don't know where to turn.

1. How would your agency serve this family?
2. What services does your agency provide that could benefit this family?
3. What services does your agency provide specifically for this father?
4. What other community services would you refer this family to?
5. How could all of the agencies represented today work collaboratively to better serve this family?

Fathers for Life

Professional Development Session

Working Collaboratively for Families

Date
Location

10:00 a.m. – 10:25 a.m.	Welcome and Introductions
10:25 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.	Fathers for Life Overview
10:45 a.m. – 12:00 noon	Agency Presentations
12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.	Lunch on your own
1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.	Case Study Exercise
2:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.	Group Report Out
2:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Wrap Up and Dismiss

Handouts:

Fathers for Life Brochures

Case Studies

Handouts provided by agency representatives

