



CHILD CARE COORDINATING COUNCIL OF SAN MATEO COUNTY:

FATHER INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM

**FINAL EVALUATION REPORT
JANUARY 2005 - JUNE 2007**

PREPARED BY

**THE CHILDREN'S HEALTH COUNCIL OUTCOMES RESEARCH EVALUATION
SERVICES**



A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

A.1. Goals

The goal of the Father Involvement Program (FIP) is to provide comprehensive, father-focused programs and support services to fathers and male caregivers to help them become more involved in the lives of their young children and families. In addition, FIP promotes father-friendly practices among community-based organizations (CBOs) in San Mateo County.

A.2. Methods and services to meet goals

- 1) Referrals, parent education, and support groups for fathers
- 2) In-service presentations to CBOs to promote father-friendly practices

A.3. Organizational setting in which intervention took place

Services were provided at the Child Care Coordinating Council of San Mateo County, in collaboration with other community-based organizations (CBOs) in San Mateo County that serve fathers with children 0-5.

A.4. Populations served

- 1) Fathers with children 0-5 in San Mateo County
- 2) CBOs in San Mateo County

A.5. Program implementation

The FIP was launched in January 2005 has been active for two project years, with a First Five San Mateo County (F5SMC)-approved extension of the second year (PY1 January 2005 – December 2005; PY2+ January 2006 – June 2007). The FIP has served 347 fathers through referrals, parent education classes, and support groups. More than two hundred referrals (224) were made to community service providers. There were three ongoing father support groups (5 to 10 members in each group) and one ongoing ‘Dad and Me’ playgroup. Three ten-week series of parent education classes were conducted (5 to 7 fathers attending each series). These classes utilized the ‘Dr. Dad’ curriculum (provided by the National Fatherhood Initiative, NFI) and the ‘Strengthening Multi-Ethnic Families and Communities’ curriculum (a violence prevention parent training program provided by Marilyn Steele, Ph.D. from Parenting Across Cultures). To promote father friendly practices, FIP facilitated two roundtable meetings with CBOs and conducted eight presentations about FIP and father-friendly practices in the community.

B. CLIENT DESCRIPTION

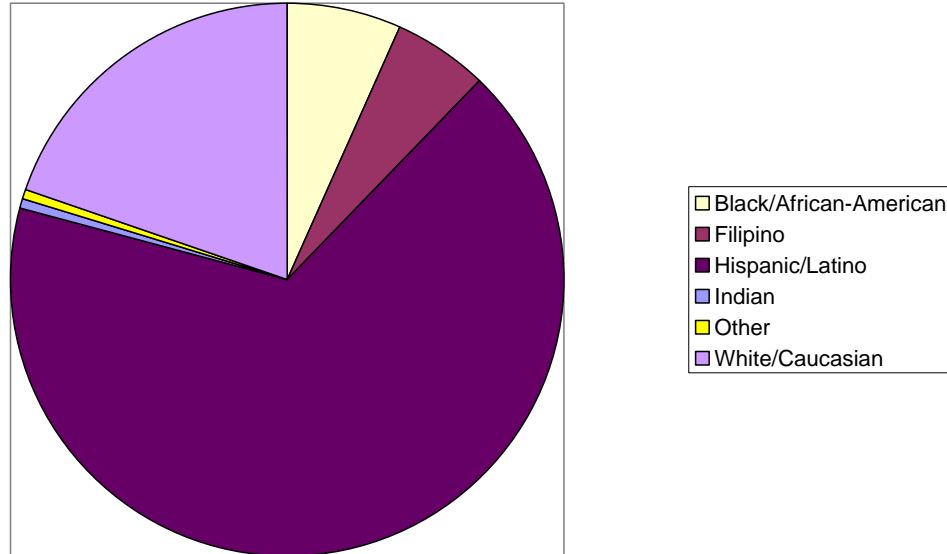
B.1. Number of clients served

A total of 347 fathers received services during the reported period. In PY 1, 205 fathers were served. In PY 2+, 142 fathers were served.

B.2. Socio-demographic profile of clients served

With regard to race/ethnicity, the largest percentage of fathers served were Hispanic, followed by White, and Black/African American (Figure B.1).

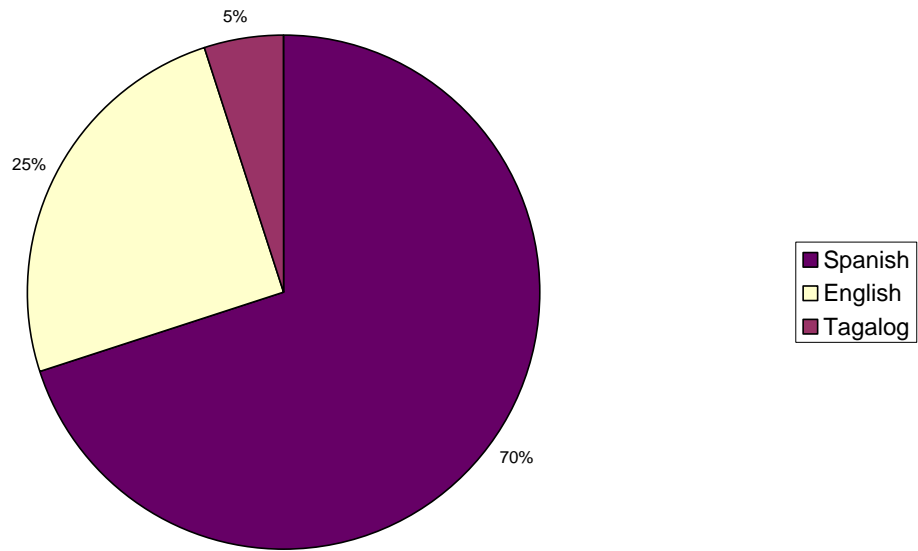
Figure B.1. Participants' Ethnic/Racial Background



In terms of dominant language¹, participating fathers most commonly used Spanish (70%), followed by English (25%), and Tagalog (5%) (Figure B.2).

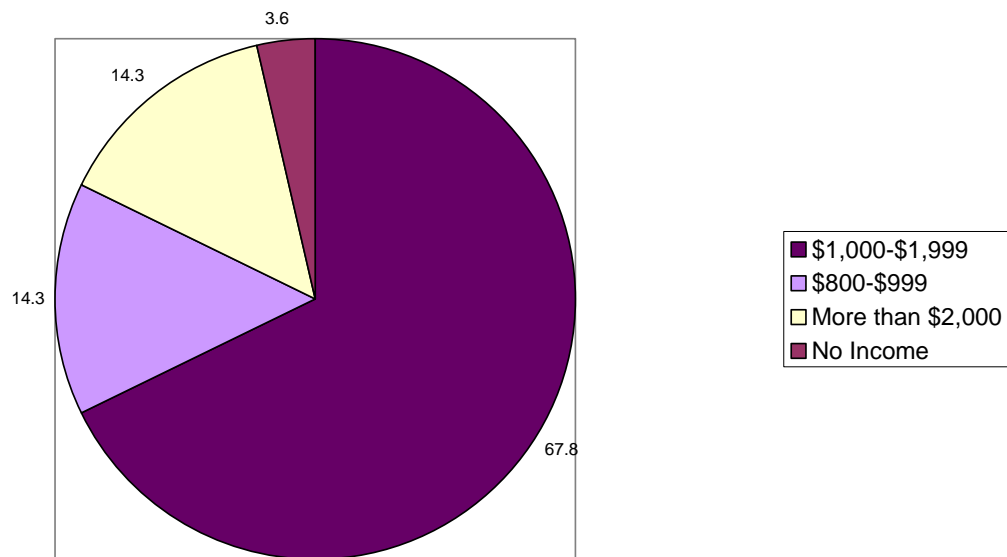
¹ Available data for 204 fathers

Figure B.2. Primary language of clients served



Based on collected data about family income (n= 34) the majority of fathers had low income (Figure B.3)

Figure B.3. Participants' Monthly Gross Income



B.3. Client characteristics that affected their success in the program

The targeted number of fathers served was not met by FIP. This was despite persistent efforts made by FIP service providers, such as advertising at community events and on the radio, collaborating with agencies who served significant numbers of fathers, and providing incentives (e.g., gift cards) for participation and referrals. Information collected via interviews and focus groups with service providers and FIP participants suggests that the population targeted by FIP was not defined well. In addition, respondents mentioned that the focus of FIP services seemed, at times, too broad, too narrow, or problematic.

1) Too broad focus. The FIP targeted the general population of fathers with children 0-5 in San Mateo County, without specific attention to background and characteristics (language, culture, marital status, court-related issues). Thus, the audience of a class/workshop could be composed of a heterogeneous group of fathers who joined the classes for different reasons. Some parents attended because their participation was mandated by the court, others attended voluntarily because of their general interest in the parenting topics being presented (not because they had identified any problems with their own parenting). Parents that were mandated to attend usually attended for full series of classes (as a certain number of class hours were required); other parents attended selected courses/classes of interest. Thus, the program targeted a very broad group with the same intervention. As a result, sometimes clients felt that their specific needs were not met.

2) Too narrow focus. The program often was advertised as a program for fathers, not father figures or male caregivers. Thus, important male figures for children 0-5 (brothers, uncles, neighbors, mothers' boyfriends) were not targeted, which might have resulted in lower than expected rates of participation.

3) Problematic focus. The FIP services focused just on fathers, not on both parents. Fathers reported feeling 'singled out', expected to take classes because they had problems with parenting. They also reported feeling that they should not be alone in the class, noting that mothers are considered the most important figure for the development of their children.

Implications of a less-defined client population are discussed in the process evaluation below (see Section D.1.).

C. EVALUATION FINDINGS

The evaluation focuses on outcomes measuring the impact of FIP on fathers served, as well on father-related practices of participating CBOs. Summary of evaluation methods used are presented in Table 1 Appendix 1. We used a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches, such as surveys, focus groups and interviews (see Appendix 1 for study protocols). The main limitation of the evaluation is the small size of the samples in different evaluation studies. There are several reasons for small sample sizes: (1) the number of clients served was relatively low; (2) the population served was difficult to reach (e.g., we tried to reach 113 fathers via follow-up telephone interviews; most of the telephone information was not up to date or parents did not return calls after 3 voice messages, thus we were able to reach only 15 fathers); and, (3) data collection was sporadic (it mainly was the responsibility of service providers who

did not always have the time and energy to complete this task). Thus, the following results should be taken with caution since the number of respondents was very small.

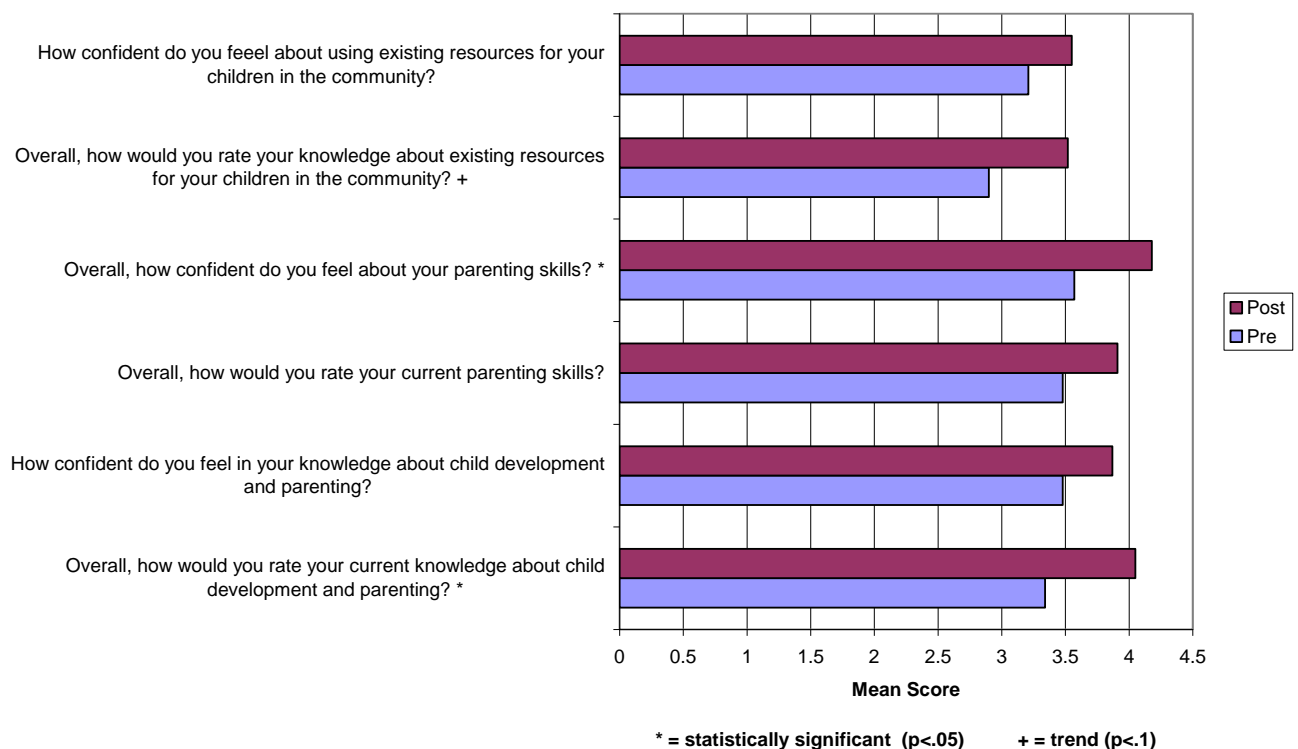
C.1. Father outcomes

C.1.1. Measured outcomes

Desired outcome: 80% of fathers attending parent education classes will report increase understanding of child needs, as measured by pre- and post-class surveys.

Surveys (see Appendix 1) were administered at the beginning and the end of parenting workshop series. Results from collected surveys (n=24) show that because of FIP, fathers improved their knowledge about child development and feel more confident in their parenting (see Figure C.1).

Figure C.1. Self-reported knowledge and skills before and after parent education classes



Desired outcome: 80% of fathers served will report success in accessing needed services, as measured by written or phone surveys.

There were 224 referrals to services were provided to 184 fathers through the Resources and Referral phone lines, walk-ins and community meetings. Referrals and information offered to families most frequently concerned: childcare, Healthy Families insurance program, and family resource information. Phone follow-up surveys (n = 15) showed that all fathers who received referrals reported positive outcomes.

Desired outcome: 80% of fathers attending three or more father support group discussions will report improved understanding of child needs as measured by pre- and post-discussion surveys.

Surveys were developed to be used for measuring the success of the support groups (see Appendix 1). Data were collected from five parents. All of them found the support group very useful.

C.1.2. Satisfaction with the program

As part of the evaluation survey for assessing parent education classes we asked participants to assess the usefulness of the parent workshops and share their ideas for improvements via open-ended questions (n=16). 80-100 percent of the respondents found the information given in the workshops to be useful. Half of these people also reported that they had nothing negative to say about the workshops when asked, “What did you like least?”

“Nothing at all: The program is the best!”

“I liked the whole class.”

“Nothing at all, this is the best parenting class I’ve ever been to.”

Similar trends were reflected in the six month follow-up interviews with the participants (n=15).

“It is an amazing program and hopefully will be able to get more people to participate, so the program can continue.”

“I learned a lot and thought the program was great.”

Program areas that were appreciated by fathers included: (1) focus on emotional needs and feeling of support; (2) instructors’ personal qualities and teaching methods; and (3) workshop content regarding fathering roles and techniques. Fathers also noted that inconvenient workshop meeting times and few participants (which limited discussion) were issues that could be improved.

C.1.3. Contributory factors and significance of findings regarding fathers’ outcomes

Evaluation findings showed that overall FIP positively affected participating fathers. As a result of the program fathers reported improved parenting knowledge and skills. They also reported high satisfaction with the program. Findings also suggested that the main challenge for the program was to recruit participants and maintain their attendance. These challenges were addressed in the process evaluation (see Section D.1.).

C.2. Community-based Organizations

C.2.1. Measured outcomes

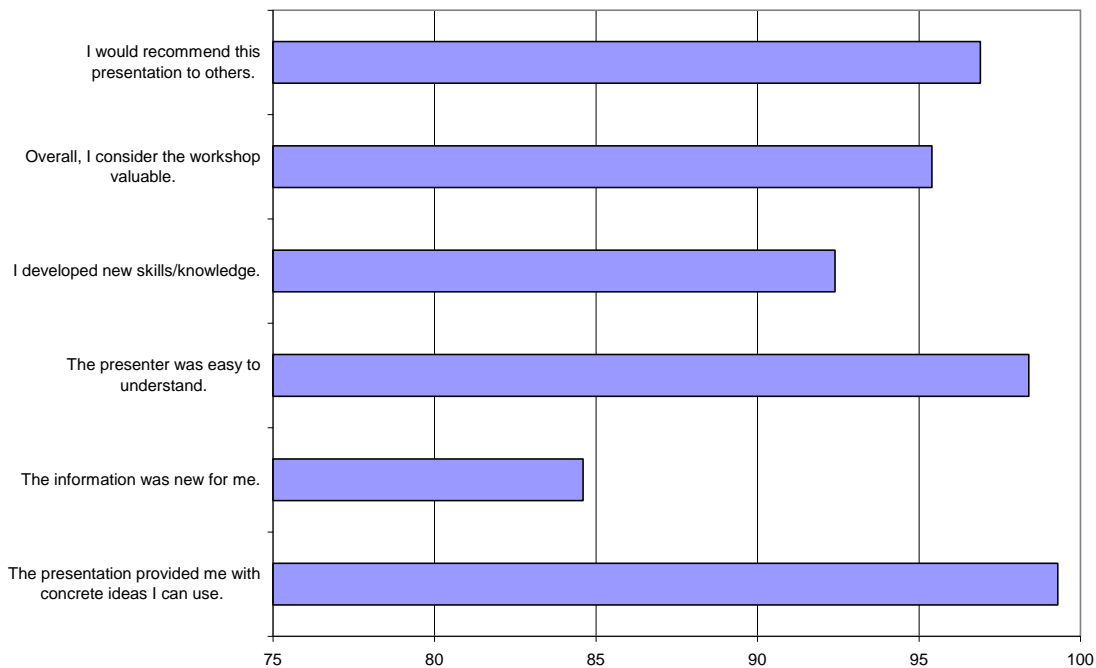
Desired outcome: 80% of participating CBOs will report changes in agency practices to make services more responsive to father needs and will report increases in number of fathers served, as measured by focus group results.

Two roundtable meetings were convened with CBOs; these meetings had very low attendance by CBO representatives. Two focus groups were conducted with participating CBOs, to establish the CBO perspective on FIP and to determine ways to improve FIP. There was very low attendance in the focus groups (first focus group n= 5, second focus group n= 1). Participants shared their difficulties in recruiting fathers and discussed ways to improve collaboration between CBOs to attend better to fathers’ needs. Results of these focus groups are presented in the process evaluation below (see Section D.1.).

C.2.2. Presentations in the community

Eight presentations about FIP and father-friendly practices were made in the community. Evaluation collected after the three of the presentations (see Figure C 2) show very positive feedback of attendees of community meetings.² 90-100% of attendees felt that they developed new skills/knowledge that was useful for them and will recommend the workshop to others.

Figure C.2. Feedback about presentataions in community (n=63)



D. Additional Findings

D.1. Process evaluation

² No significant differences were found between the attendees of different presentations and all the results are presented in the same Figure

As mentioned above, the biggest challenge for 4Cs and participating CBOs was to recruit fathers to participate in the program. To understand this challenge, process evaluation efforts employed the following strategies: phone interviews with participating fathers; focus group with participants in the fathers' educational workshops; focus group with participating CBOs, interviews with FIP service providers. We addressed perceived obstacles and opportunities for program improvement in this process evaluation.

D.1.1. Perceived obstacles

Comments from Participating Fathers

Most respondents did not report problems accessing the services, although four noted that the lack of participants in their particular program became an issue, because the programs were subsequently discontinued, or because participants themselves had to recruit others. Other problems mentioned include possible transportation issues and a suggestion for an evening program to avoid conflict with work.

Comments from Service Providers

Some major obstacles are: lack of time and availability; presence of the program at school and child care centers because most of the fathers are not so involved with these institutions; lack of male involvement generally, as some families just don't have dads or other males involved in the children's lives; and language access for ESL families, especially non-Spanish speakers. Most of the service providers mentioned the cultural stereotype about fatherhood as a major issues. As put in the words of the program coordinator,

“Culture is another obstacle to male involvement, and here I don't refer to any specific culture in terms of ethnicity or nationality, but rather the culture of the world which socializes us that children's child care, schooling and social-emotional development are much more the role of the mother than the father. The men aren't used to this function, so it is a major challenge to change that culture or that norm and get them to internalize this role as just as theirs just as much as the women's”.

D.1.2. Opportunities for program improvement: Recruitment

Comments from Participating Fathers

The following recruitment methods were suggested by interviewed fathers: posting information at courthouses, child support services, social services offices, libraries, community centers, childcare centers and schools, San Mateo groups, and the use of radio advertising. Any advertising should emphasize that the program is free.

Comments from Service Providers

Service providers made a number of suggestions that could be pursued to address recruitment challenges.

- Establish a core group of men to build the foundation of the program and build recruitment around them
- Utilize participants and graduates to assist in the recruitment process
- Connect with the court system and juvenile/probation

- Soften the recruitment presentation, less about the parenting classes and more about the benefits, incentives and activities offered
- Consistent outreaching, talk, talk, talk
- Utilize Americorp or college interns to strictly focus on recruiting
- Focus on reunification programs to recruit
- Be flexible with workshop/support group hours
- Acquire free donations of clothing, etc. from corporations willing to donate
- Enroll couples to beef up male involvement
- Go through moms to get dads

D.1.3. Opportunities for program improvement: Additional services for fathers

Comments from Participating Fathers

Participating fathers suggested that other needed services include: (1) counseling for domestic violence issues; and (2) additional information concerning child behavior problems, family communication, and child education (e.g., about preschools). Two respondents also suggested a greater degree of partnering with other community programs and organizations, such as other 4Cs service programs or Samaritan House.

Comments from Service Providers

Service providers suggested that other services needed by fathers include:

- Legal professionals to provide information regarding child support and visitation orders as well as legal assistance to fathers
- Child care assistance for fathers attending parent support meetings
- Male community advocates
- Vocational job assistance
- Spanish-speaking male advocates to represent the population

D.1.4. Opportunities for program improvement: CBO collaboration

According to service providers, collaboration among CBOs could be improved by (1) utilizing the Fatherhood Collaborative Program (e.g., establish a website link, connecting all father involvement programs to one site and use the website links to access information about each organization and its services); and, (2) increasing communication (e.g., convene quarterly meetings to brainstorm and communicate ideas; establish e-mail distribution list for community announcements, mail-out flyer announcing program changes or class schedules to all participating CBOs).

D.2. Other issues

Another issue brought by service providers was of organizational, systemic character. There are several organizations offering the same services (parenting classes, support groups), which makes it hard to collaborate when they compete between each other to get fathers. An additional organizational challenge, mentioned by the FIP coordinator, was that FIP was not completely incorporated into 4Cs services; The program was described as a ‘step-child’ of 4Cs. The program coordinator felt that a more infused approach as it relates to the day-to-day business of 4Cs was needed to highlight the program. There also was significant staff turnover during FIP duration including change of the leaders of the program and executive management, which impeded the continuity and consistency of service provision.

E. SUMMARY

Overall, the results of the evaluation show that FIP has positively affected fathers who were served through referrals, parent education classes, and support groups. As a result of the FIP educational classes, fathers reported significant increases in their knowledge and parenting skills. Most parents who were surveyed expressed high satisfaction with FIP, especially with the parent education workshops (especially related to course content and course instructors), as well as with the focus on their emotional needs and support.

The biggest challenge for 4Cs and the participating CBOs was to recruit fathers to participate in the program and to support their continued attendance. Results of the process evaluation showed that some of the reasons for low attendance are related to a less-defined client population, lack of coordination among services, and organizational challenges (between CBOs and within 4Cs). On the whole, the program evaluation demonstrated that the provision of services to low-income fathers and male caregivers in San Mateo County is complex and challenging. It requires thoughtful planning as well as a deep and detailed understanding of the population to be served, their specific needs, and the services proposed to meet those needs. Notably, the program evaluation design could have been strengthened if process evaluation questions and strategies had been incorporated from the outset.

Appendix 1.

Table 1. FIP Outcomes Evaluation Methods.

Desired Outcomes	Indicators	Data Collection Tools	Data Analysis Strategies	Sample
Fathers				
Increased access to needed services	Number of resources and programs to which the family is connected	1) FIC database 2) Telephone survey with fathers served	1) Frequency distributions 2) Qualitative analyses	1) NA 2) 114 fathers served by FIP were contacted. 15 interviews were conducted
Improved father understanding of child needs	Parenting knowledge, skills, and attitudes	Father's Parenting Survey (pre- and post-FIP)	1) Descriptive statistics 2) Reliability analyses	Pre- and post-FIP surveys (n = 24) show that, because of FIP, fathers improved their knowledge about child development and felt more confident in their parenting (see Appendix 1)
Increased participation in father support groups	Attendance of support groups for three months or longer	Attendance logs	Descriptive statistics	25 fathers participated in 3 support groups.
Improved father sense of support	Father perceived sense of support	Fathers Support Group Survey	Descriptive statistics	5 respondents
Community-based organizations				
Increased knowledge about father-friendly practices	CBO representatives reports on improved knowledge	Survey	Descriptive Statistics	63 participants of 3 community meetings
Improved collaboration among CBOs		Focus Group	Qualitative analyses	2 focus groups with 6 CBO representatives

Evaluation Surveys and Protocols

1. Parent Education Classes Survey

Father Involvement Program Questionnaire

The Children's Health Council

1. Please tell us a little bit about you.

Your Birth Date: _____
Last

Your Mother's Initials: First ____ Middle ____

Marital Status: Married _____ Divorced _____ Separated _____ Single _____

2. Overall, how would you rate your current knowledge about child development and parenting (circle one number)?

Not at all					Very
Knowledgeable					Knowledgeable
1	2	3	4	5	

3. How confident do you feel in your knowledge about child development and parenting (circle one number)?

Not at all					Very
confident					Confident
1	2	3	4	5	

4. Overall, how would you rate your current parenting skills (circle one number)?

Not at all					Very
Adequate					Adequate
1	2	3	4	5	

5. Overall, how confident do you feel about your parenting skills (circle one number)?

Not at all					Very
Confident					Confident
1	2	3	4	5	

6. Overall, how would you rate your knowledge about existing resources for your children in the community (circle one number)?

Not at all					Very
Knowledgeable					Knowledgeable
1	2	3	4	5	

7. How confident do you feel about using existing resources for your children in the community (circle one number)?

Not at all					Very
confident					Confident
1	2	3	4	5	

8. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?
 (Circle one number; 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree)

	Strongly Disagree				Strong Agree
	1	2	3	4	5
I get more satisfaction of being a parent than I thought I would					
Sometimes my child/children really bother(s) or annoy(s) me.					
Parenting is such a big job, it cuts me off from other people					
Being a parent is one of the best parts of my life					
I don't have as much patience with my child/children as I should					
Being a parent is harder than I thought it would be					
I feel overwhelmed by my responsibilities as a parent					
I often feel angry with my child/children					
I have more fun with my child/children than with anyone else					
A man can be a good father even he doesn't live with his child/children					
I honestly believe I have all the skills necessary to be a good father					
Having a good life is more important than being a father					
Mothers are better parents than fathers					

9. There are many different aspects of fatherhood. Please tell us how important the following aspects are in being a good father: (Circle one number ; 1 – not at all important, 5 – very important)

	Not at all Important				Very Important
	1	2	3	4	5
Providing financial support					
Teaching about life					
Providing direct care, such as feeding and dressing					

Disciplining and being an authority figure	1	2	3	4	5
Providing love	1	2	3	4	5

10. Now tell us how well you do each of these things for your child/children, considering your situation (Circle one number; 1 – not at all well, 5 – very well)

	1	2	3	4	5
Providing financial support	1	2	3	4	5
Teaching about life	1	2	3	4	5
Providing direct care, such as feeding and dressing	1	2	3	4	5
Disciplining and being an authority figure	1	2	3	4	5
Providing love	1	2	3	4	5

11. Thinking about the last 2 days that you were with your child/children, can you tell us:

a) How much time did you spend with the child? _____

b) What did you do? (check as many as apply)

___ Play together

___ Reading and/or homework support

___ Disciplining

___ Taking care of the child (helping with a bath, putting the child to bed, etc.)

___ Praise and affection

___ Helped with errands

Other (please write in) _____

2. FATHER SUPPORT GROUP SURVEY

People sometimes look to others for companionship, assistance, or other types of support. How much did the Father Support Group provide you with each of the following kinds of support?

	Not at all	Less than expected	As much as expected	More than expected	Didn't need this kind of support
1. A group with people to listen to you when you need to talk?					
2. A group with people to give you good advice about a problem or difficult decision?					
3. A group with people who show you warmth and friendliness?					
4. A group with people to provide you information about parenting?					
5. A group with people to provide you information about your child's daily life experiences (e.g., with siblings, with peers, at school, at day care)?					
6.. A group with people to provide you information about resources in community (e.g. day care, early intervention or education, financial support)?					

8. In general, how useful did you find the Father Support Group?....Of little use Somewhat useful
Very useful

9. Could you have used more support than you received?..... Yes
No

If yes, how so?

10. Could you have used more resource or other information than you received?..... Yes
No

If yes, what types?

11. How many Father Support Group meetings have you attended?

12. Would you attend the Father Support Group again?..... Yes
No

13. Would you recommend the Family Support Group to others?..... Yes
No

14. Who referred you to the Family Support Group?

Please circle the responses that best describe you.

Your relationship to your child: **Parent** **Other relative** **Guardian** **Foster Parent**
Other _____

Your Race/Ethnicity: **African American** **Asian/Pacific Islander** **Latino** **White**
Other _____

3. QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEWS FOR FIP FATHER'S INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM

1. Do you remember the first time when you contacted the FIP (4Cs, Mario Castellanos. Gregory?)?
2. What was the issue that FIP helped you with?
3. What was the outcome of this issue?
4. Was the information or the referral for services provided by FIP helpful?
5. How we can improve FIP?

4. FATHER INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM WOKSHOP/PRESENTATION EVALUATION FORM

Date _____ Location: _____

Topic of Workshop/Training: _____

Rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements (circle one).

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The presentation/ workshop provided me with concrete ideas I can use	1	2	3	4
The information was new for me	1	2	3	4
The presenter was easy to understand	1	2	3	4
I developed new skills/knowledge	1	2	3	4
Overall, I consider the workshop valuable	1	2	3	4
I would recommend this presentation to others	1	2	3	4

Tell us about you:

Age _____ Marital Status: _____ Gender: _____

Number of Children _____ Ethnicity _____

Comments: