Fathers & Families Coalition of America

James C. Rodriguez, M.S.W., Ph.D., Candidate
CEO/President
www.fathersandfamiliescoalition.org

1. Why Invest in Fatherhood?

2. What are elements for successful multi-systems approach (model) to work with fathers and strengthening families?

3. How do collaborations amongst Community Based Organizations; Faith Based Organizations; and Government (all levels) in policy and practice augments positive outcomes for children and families?

Why Invest in Fatherhood?

Why are Fathers Missing?

- The system
- Multiple Families
- No Money, No child
- Operating below the wire
- Child as a pawn
- The thrill is gone
- Adversarial Relationships
- Family Interference
- No model for marriage / Marriage issues
- Spiritual or religious upheaval

Tragedy of Absent Father

- **Fatherhood Fact:** Forty (40%) percent of children in the United States do not have a father living with them in their primary home residence.
- **Fatherhood Fact:** Forty-one (41%) percent of children are born out of wed-lock in the United States.
- **Fatherhood Fact:** 1 out of every 4 children in the United States receives child support.
- **Fatherhood Fact:** 1 out of every 3 children in America lives apart from his or her father
- **Fatherhood Fact:** Over 30,000,000 children in the U.S. do not have a father living with them and over one-third will not see their father at all in the next twelve months.

Tragedy of Absent Father con't

71% of pregnant teenagers lack a father. [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services press release, Friday, March 26, 2006]

Tragedy of Absent Father con't

- **Fatherhood Fact:** If we can educate parents on the differences and benefits we can have improved outcomes for children and reduce fatherlessness.
- **Fatherhood Fact:** In 2008, 41 percent of all births in America were out of wedlock. That's 27% more than in 2002 (CDC data.)
- **Fatherhood Fact:** 1 out of every 4 American children and half of poor children participate in the child support program.
- **Fatherhood Fact:** In 2008, 43 percent of children living with a single mother were poor.

Tragedy of Absent Father con't

70% of juveniles in state operated institutions have no father. [US Department of Justice, Special Report, Sept. 2006]

Tragedy of Absent Father con't

- **Fatherhood Fact:** The number of people in the criminal justice system is at an all-time high. There are almost 2.3 million people in jail and about 800,000 on parole;

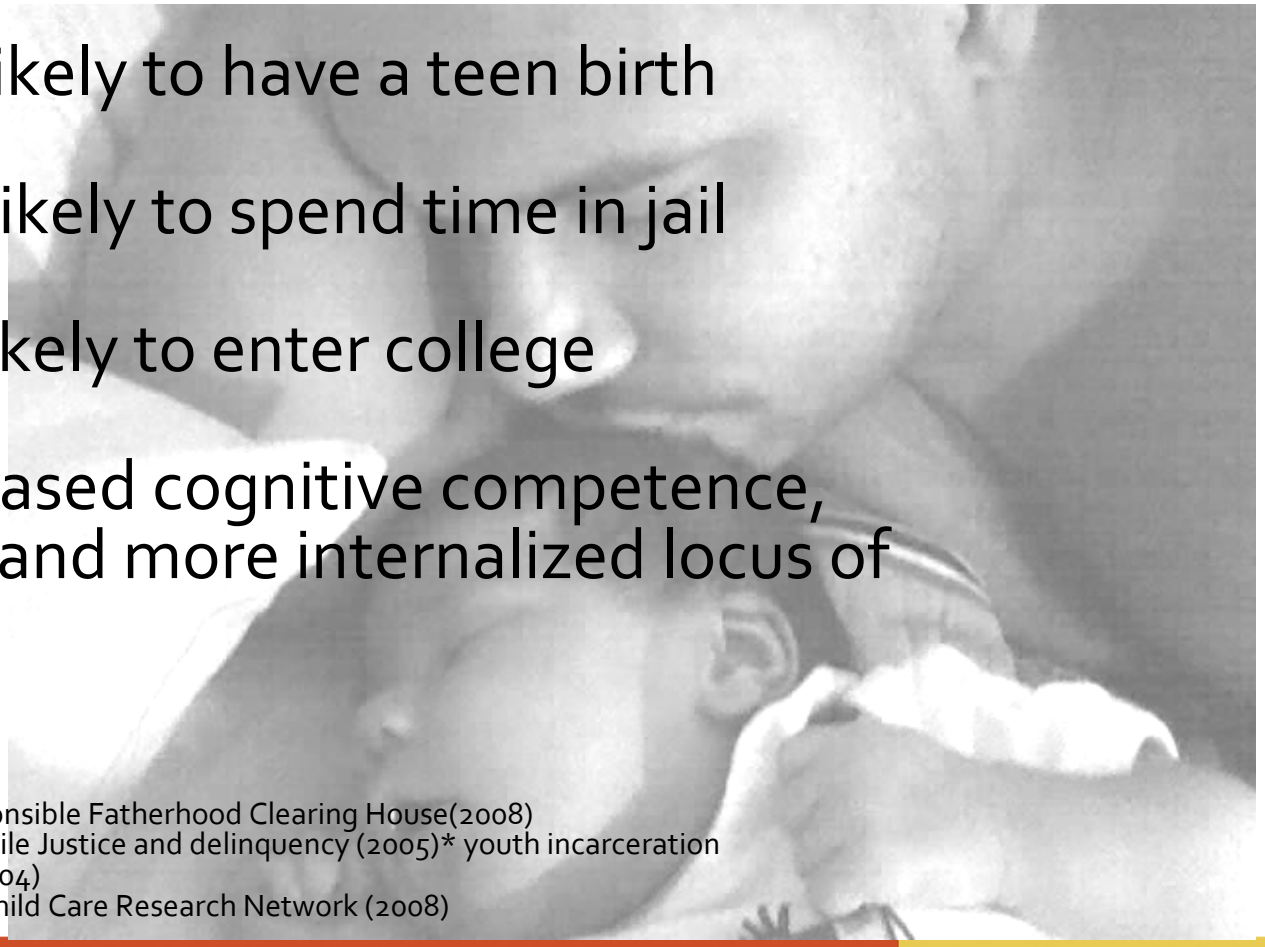
- **Fatherhood Fact:** Almost 7.5 million children have a parent in jail or under correctional supervision—a stunning figure.

- **Fatherhood Fact:** Minority children are disproportionately affected by father imprisonment—in state prisons, 42% of fathers are African American, and African American children are seven and a half times more likely to have a parent in prison than white children.

Tragedy of Absent Father con't

71% of high school dropouts come from fatherless homes. [National Principals Association Report on the State of High Schools]

Research has found that children who feel a closeness to their fathers are



- 75% less likely to have a teen birth
- 80% less likely to spend time in jail
- twice as likely to enter college
- have increased cognitive competence, empathy, and more internalized locus of control.

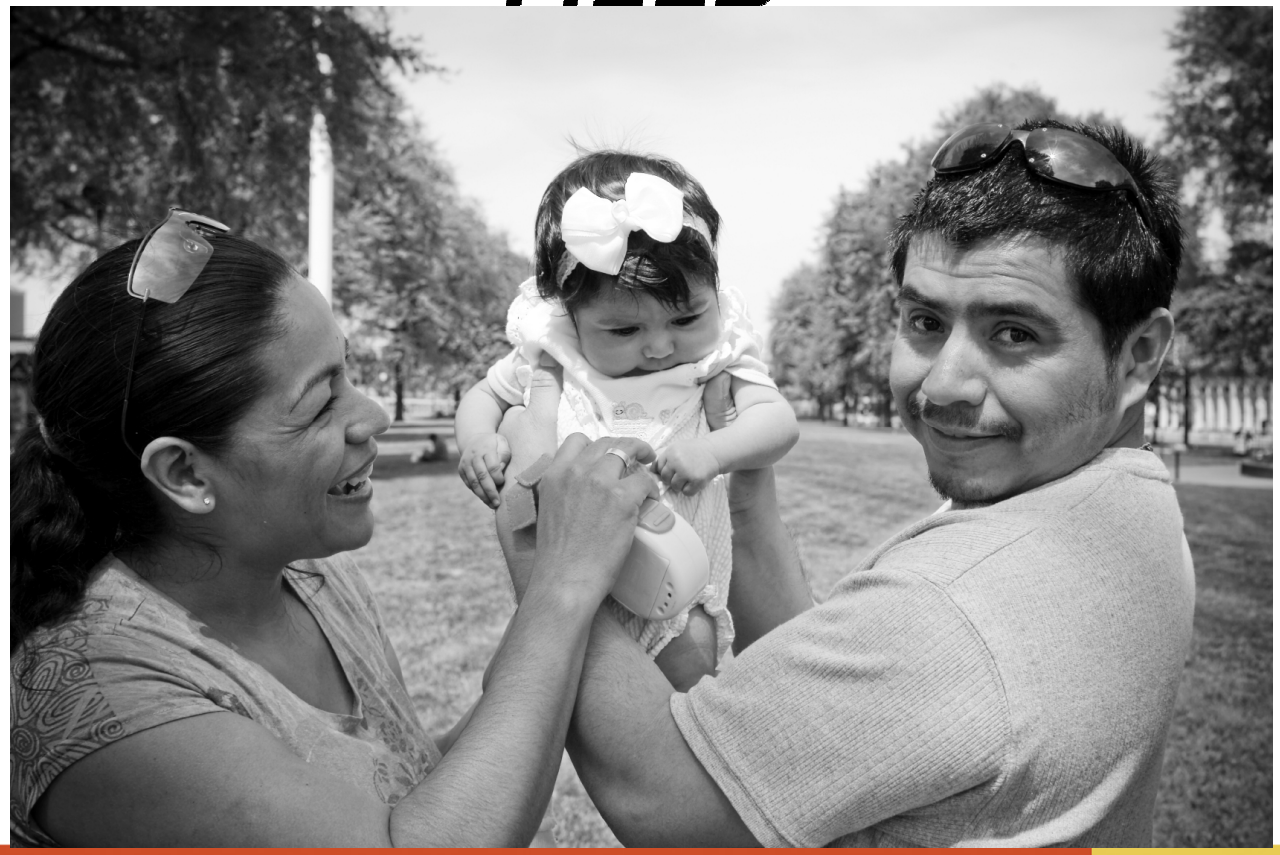
- Source: National Responsible Fatherhood Clearing House(2008)
- Source: Office of Juvenile Justice and delinquency (2005)* youth incarceration
- Source: Lamb, et al (2004)
- Source: NICHD Early Child Care Research Network (2008)

Fathers' Presence Matters

- Predictors suggest that with higher levels of father involvement children benefit with higher levels of child wellbeing and improved quality of the co-parental relationship (Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2004).

- When a father has a healthy relationship with his children, his children are physically, emotionally, and mentally healthier (Amato, 1991; Caldera, 2004).

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE FIELD



Factors That Negatively Affect Father Involvement Include:

- Existing policies, statutes and laws
- Conflicts with the child's mother
- A lack of financial resources
- A lack of education
- A new spouse or partner
- Geographic mobility
  - Staff reluctance
  - Fathers' ambivalence
  - Program barriers

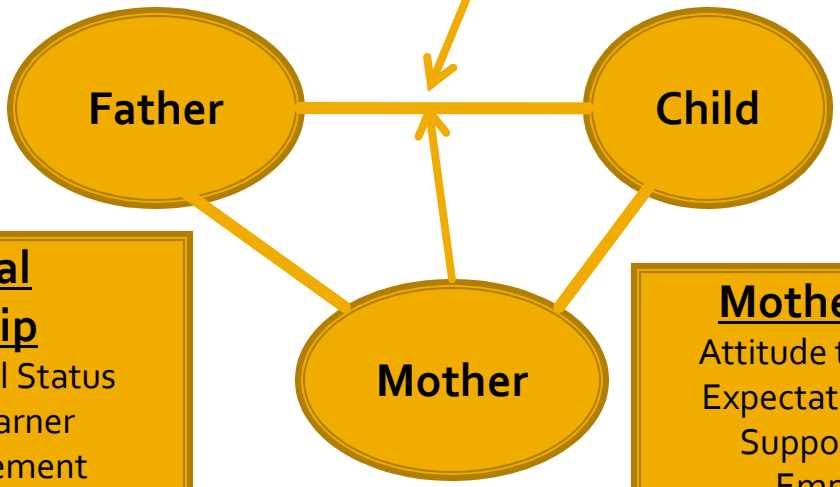
Williams, J.H., Auslander, W., Krebill, C., Haire-Joshu, H., Source, D. (2000, Oct). African American family structure: Are there differences in social, psychological, and economic well-being? Journal of Family Issues 21(7): p. 838-857.

The Model

Contextual Factors
Institutional Practices
Employment Opportunities
Economic Factors
Race/Ethnicity & Challenges
Cultural Expectations
Social Support

Father Factors
Role Identification
Knowledge
Skills
Commitment
Mental Health
Relationship to Own Father
Employment
Characteristics
Residential Status

Child Factors
Attitude toward Father
Behavioral Difficulties
Temperament
Gender
Age
Developmental Status



Co-Parental Relationship
Marital/Non-marital Status
Dual vs. Single Earner
Custodial Arrangement
Relationship Commitment
Cooperation
Mutual Support
Conflict

Mother Factors
Attitude toward Father
Expectations of Father
Support of Father
Employment
Characteristics

Doherty, W.J.; Kouneski, E.F., & Erickson, M.R.
"Responsible Fathering: An Overview & Conceptual Framework"

Practitioner Effective Fatherhood Service Scale

ADAPTED FROM FIF

- Fathering Indicator Categories:

1. Father Presence
2. Caregiving
3. Children's Social Competence and Academic Achievement
4. Cooperative Parenting
5. Father's Healthy Living
6. Material and Financial Contributions

Key Domains - Factors

- Organization fit
- Mission and Vision
- Structure
- Financial Management & Resources
- Customer Relations
- Community Relations

Scale Design

- Measure attitude on how practitioners viewed their organization's responsiveness working with fathers.
- Provide a range of responses to a given question or statement
- Response Categories: Interval variables (Likert Scale)
- -2; -1; 0; 1; & 2
- Descriptive Frequencies (Median, Mean, SD)
- Global Factor Analysis
- Independent T- Test
- *Determine a linear relationship between variables PEARSON*

CLOSING REMARKS