FINAL REPORT

National Quality Improvement Center on Non-Resident Fathers and the Child Welfare System

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Report Submitted by:

American Humane Association

A Partnership of the American Humane Association, American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law, and National Fatherhood Initiative

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Major Activities and Accomplishments

Year I Report and Phase II Implementation Plan

Introduction: A Federal Award for a National Quality Improvement Center on Non-Resident Fathers and the Child Welfare System.

In the fall of 2006, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration of Children Youth and Families awarded the American Humane Association, in collaboration with the American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law and the National Fatherhood Initiative, a five-year cooperative agreement to sponsor research on Non-Resident Fathers (NRFs) in the child welfare system. The project followed the existing Children's Bureau model of a Quality Improvement Center (QIC), and its primary goal is to answer a very basic question, "Is there a difference in child and family outcomes for children in the child welfare system based on the involvement of their NRFs?"

Given the Children's Bureau's mission to promote improved outcomes of child safety, permanency of placement and relationships, and well-being of children and families across the country, it was essential that new and promising approaches to supporting children and families be identified, researched and tested. The Children's Bureau selection of the QIC model to carry out this research responded to the need for participatory, practice driven knowledge development that generates useful evidence, and to the need for effective dissemination of findings and documentation of replicable programs.

There were two phases in the QIC NRF project. Phase I was a comprehensive needs assessment and literature review to identify and uncover the knowledge gaps, service gaps, research priorities and need for experimentation, as well as legal, cultural, or administrative issues that became the priorities for a request for proposals from sites across the country. During the first year, the project partners and a national advisory board of experts in child welfare, fatherhood, child support, child welfare laws and other related disciplines engaged in a collaborative process to assess the gaps in existing knowledge, and clarify the focus of the research that was carried out during the remaining four years. A national request for proposals for research sites was issued by the QIC NRF at the start of Year 2. Phase II began in the second year and included the identification of research sites and implementation of a research design in up to eight sites located nationally, and ongoing dissemination activities. Research aimed at generating findings that could help guide the work of many agencies and professionals.

The project was funded for up to one million dollars yearly over five years starting on October 1, 2006, with grantee match of ten percent. Beginning in year 2, most of the project award was dedicated to funding the sites. The national quality improvement center team, aided by a network of state and national parties, paved the way for fathers to have meaningful involvement in their children's lives while children remain under the supervision of the state, thus helping sustain a critical relationship in the life of a young person. There were three primary project goals:

1. To promote innovation, evidence-based practice improvements, and advancement of knowledge about child welfare outcomes by involving NRFs through experimental research designs testing promising practices.

2. To establish a national problem-solving and collaborative information-sharing network among sub-grantees, the Children's Bureau TA network, public child welfare agencies, private service providers, fatherhood and healthy marriage groups, and other stakeholders about the involvement of NRFs and child welfare outcomes.

3. To build evidence and knowledge that answers the question: "Is there a difference in child and family outcomes based on NRF involvement?" and that points at effective practices related to improvement of child welfare outcomes through involvement of NRFs.

Phase I of the QIC NRF was characterized by three interconnected strategies: 1) a needs assessment and gap analysis based on interactive methods including interviews, specialized focus groups, multi-disciplinary informational summits, and expert advisory board and guest discussions, 2) a comprehensive literature review of social science, legal, programmatic, and research literature, and a review of Child and Family Service Reviews and Program Improvement Plans, and 3) the selection of a research focus to be the basis of a request for applications, sub-awards, and the overall experimental design. These three methods were designed to independently and inter-dependently support the final selections, and to support methods of data collection inclusive of a diversity of audiences and approaches.

To initiate the needs analysis, the QIC NRF studied and adapted a framework from the "What About the Dads" report (Malm, Murray, & Geen, 2006), and structured its knowledge and research along the structural elements of NRF and child welfare agency activities: *Location, Identification, Contact, Engagement, and Interagency Collaboration.* The project research and selection of the most meaningful outcomes and indicators span the five elements of this conceptual framework. For *identification*, we determined meaningful outcomes and indicators to be paternity establishment rates and levels of mother cooperation. For *location*, child welfare agency policy and procedure reviews and the degree of transience of the father represented key indicators or outcomes. For *contact*, the most strategic data elements were child welfare agency training and due diligence, father transience, and quantity and quality of father-caseworker interaction. For *engagement*, the most strategic data elements were father self-reports of father-child relationship quality, father participation levels in community based responsible fathering programs, quality of father-caseworker interaction, and degree of involvement of paternal kin. Lastly, for *interagency collaboration*, the outcomes that represented higher sustainability included a history of formal relationships (i.e., Memoranda of Understanding) with legal and community-based organizations, the frequency of cross-training events, and the availability of funding for cross-system ventures.

During Phase I, the QIC NRF initiated the development of knowledge focusing on improving outcomes for children and families in the child welfare system through Non Resident Father (NRF) involvement. This phase comprised of a needs assessment of knowledge gaps and service challenges that might prevent NRFs from taking an active role in their children's development. With a specialized National Advisory Board (NAB), the QIC NRF conducted 1) a literature review of policies, procedures, and laws, and the current state of knowledge and practice around NRF involvement in child welfare cases; 2) program focus groups; 3) all-State information summits, and 4) key informant interviews. Through qualitative analyses we identified research priorities which drove the experimental design, sub-awards, and selection/funding of 6-8 sites nationally. In addition we developed a Web site and dissemination network. Eight major objectives were established for Phase 1 which drove project activities and events.

Objective 1: Start the operation of the QIC and develop a participatory network to guide the planning phase

Objective 2: Conduct a comprehensive review of existing knowledge on NRF involvement in the child welfare system

Objective 3: Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment and gap analysis to establish priorities for research

Objective 4: Conduct a literature review

Objective 5: Fine tune the QIC topical area and sub-grantee research priorities

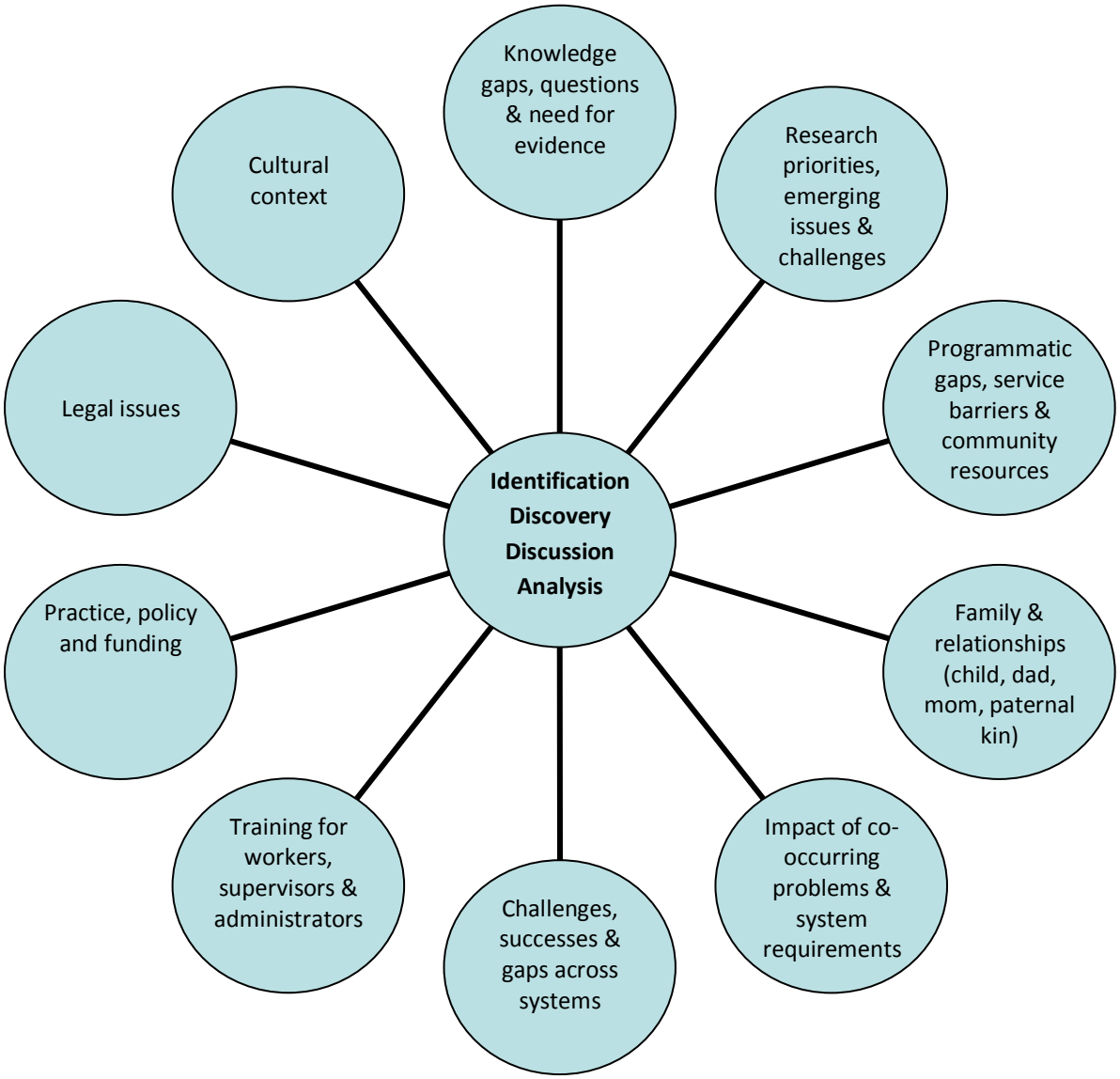
Objective 6: Develop Phase II implementation plan "A"

Objective 7: Present Phase II plan and make revisions to project tools

Objective 8: Carry out the ongoing responsibilities of the cooperative agreement

For the implementation of these activities, the method of data collection was framed within the identification, discovery, discussion, and analysis of an exhaustive array of topics shown in Diagram 1 below.

Figure 1: Data collection elements



The QIC NRF project team completed a review and analysis of Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR) and Program Improvement Plans as submitted by State Child Welfare Programs. In addition, a Comprehensive Literature Review on Non-resident Fathers, Paternal Kin, and the Child Welfare System (July 2007). This review consisted of a close examination of all data related to NRF involvement to identify issues that impede or facilitate child welfare public agencies' intentions of involving NRFs; a state-of-the art knowledge of how the law, and in turn the courts, treat absent fathers in the child welfare system, and a review of applicable research literature and methods. The Phase 1 results, analysis and findings of the interactive data collection activities undertaken by the project and supporting documents are described below:

Summary and Interpretation of the Preliminary Results of Interviews, Focus Groups, and Information Summits

Information gathered through key informant interviews, focus groups and information summits revealed many concerns and suggested remedies. The Issues and Gaps that received the most attention will be discussed, in descending order of frequency, as well as some issues raised only once or twice. Promising practices and suggested avenues will be cited along with the issues, problems and gaps which they, the practices and suggested avenues, address most directly.

Gaps in Policy, Procedure, or Professional Training

Gaps in Policies, Procedures and Training were cited most often in the context of child welfare agency systems, largely in the context of Identifying, locating, and contacting NRF. These gaps were cited by 74 key informants, 53 focus group participants, and 19 summit and symposium participants. Fathers and fatherhood practitioners, as well as CW personnel cited social workers' tendencies to deal only with children's mothers. In many jurisdictions, the father in is not always contacted (indeed, contacting the father is not mandatory for putative fathers), and limited time and resources play as much of a role as other forms of bias.

Citing both promising practices and practice gaps, many informants called for training of social workers in a) the importance of a paternal presence, b) using available data bases (as well as relatives) in identifying and locating fathers, and c) in non-threatening techniques of interacting with fathers. Some informants called for training of personnel in the judicial system as well. Training as a promising practice was cited by 13 key informants, 8 focus group participants, and 11 summit and symposium participants. It is notable 62 informants stated they knew of no promising practices in one or more of the structural elements which informed our inquiries.

Inequitable Treatment of Fathers

Almost as many informants cited inequitable treatment of fathers in the child welfare and judicial systems as cited gaps in policies and procedures, again largely in the context of Identifying, locating, and contacting NRF. As of the most recent compilation of data, these gaps were cited by 72 key informants, and 15 summit and symposium participants. The most common ways "bias against fathers" seems to manifest are: scant effort expended to contact and engage absent fathers; "hoops" a father must jump through to obtain visitation or custody of his child(ren); an innate hostility to fathers on the part of social workers; operation of the IV-D system to the man's detriment (e.g. charging child support when in fact the man is raising the kids); and a perceived lack of male social workers. Many judicial system personnel see themselves as even-handed and acting in the best interests of the child, while social workers acknowledge the inequity in their own system but cite limited time and resources.

Informants call, again, for training for social workers in the importance of fathers in children's lives, training to eliminate bias, and policies and procedures for a more equitable treatment of fathers.

Essential Role of the Mother

The child welfare system often relies on children's mothers to obtain information about fathers. However, relying solely on the mother to gather information about the father may present numerous difficulties. The mother's role in impeding father involvement was cited by 71 key informants, 11 focus group participants and 18 summit and symposium participants. Some mothers may not know enough information about the fathers to be able to help identify or locate them. Informants and participants called for outreach to other relatives and to members of the community, as well as internet-based father locator services. A mother may wish to "protect" the dad from system involvement in order to maintain the stability of an ongoing, informal arrangement.

Participants called for adapting IV-D procedures to meet the needs of both parents, but did not provide much comment about more intractable problems such as the need to avoid the criminal justice system. Participants also called for the prospect and promise of supports for fathers who may otherwise wish to avoid all systems.

Lastly, a mother may wish to protect herself and her child(ren) from bodily or emotional harm. Participants called for a rigorous determination of risk from domestic violence, and, again, for the prospect and promise of emotional supports in dealing with a potentially contentious situation.

Economics

A lack of material well-being and the perceived failure to provide keeps fathers away far more often than simple lack of interest, according to many informants, as cited by 29 key informants, 5 focus group participants and 4 summit and symposium participants.

Many participants called for material and emotional supports for fathers, ranging from job skills training to mentoring to support groups to parenting education. More participants called for various supports for dads than for most other practices, except putting procedures in place and inclusion of other relatives for identifying and locating.

Other Situational Barriers Affecting Fathers

While the father's economic status and its emotional ramifications were cited many times, other situational barriers include geographic separation, incarceration, and a disinterest in parenting.

Participants suggested visitation programs for incarcerated dads. Overcoming geographic separations and extreme disinterest proved more elusive of remedy.

Other Issues and Suggestions

Among the other issues raised were:

- The ability to determine the degree of risk posed to the child by the presence of a violent parent,
- The need for more longitudinal studies on the effects of a benevolent male presence on a child's well-being, and
- The interactions of interventions with racial and cultural characteristics in determining outcomes.

Among practice needs:

- The need for an efficient child locator system in jurisdictions which do not have them,
- The importance of early, timely contacting and engagement,

- The importance of having the father's identity reflected on the birth certificate,
- A stronger male presence in the child welfare system,
- Stronger collaborations among systems, and
- Stronger emphasis on the importance of food, for collaborative gatherings, and for fatherhood support gatherings.

In sum, it is fair to say that the need for supports for Dads, mentoring, group support, training in job skills, as well as training of social workers and the courts, resonate strongly in the child welfare and father servicing communities. Interaction and collaboration among child welfare agencies, court systems and communities raise complex issues, but participants agree these entities need to find ways to communicate and work together towards the best interests of the children.

As noted, the ultimate QIC NRF goal was to positively impact child safety, permanency, and well- being through enhanced services, policy, and child welfare training by involving NRFs and paternal kin. Acknowledging that effective interventions are a subset of effective policies and programs, a framework for essential interventions was developed in which the desired outcomes of the goal could be achieved. The information and data gathered during Phase I informed the development of an intervention framework that features the combination of the following elements. These elements focused the experimentation around Contact and Engagement, with the understanding that the other elements such as Collaboration would be either embedded in the experimentation, or a pre-requisite for programs. Our selection had two distinct practice interventions, which would span policy, protocols, collaboration, workload, training, funding, and other systemic elements. The two selected practice interventions and a summary rationale based on our findings are as follows:

Gender Specific First Contact. Our research indicated that the first contact between the agency and the NRF is a unique opportunity to establish a basis for a positive relationship that is strengths-based, and uses communications that are free of commonly identified negative assumptions about the interest of the father in a relationship with the child. This is an example of quality of father-caseworker interaction. Our review showed that a first contact can be a critical juncture, particularly when it is not engaging of the NRF and is not supportive of a continued father-child relationship. It was perceived that non-supportive attitudes could be present from case workers, legal professionals, or other system workers. Therefore, designing a first contact where the NRFs are contacted by a male worker or peer was a critical and meaningful element worthy of research.

Peer-Led Solution-Focused Intervention. Our research indicated that while many states and jurisdictions have adequate policies, protocols, and professional training in place designed to support the involvement of NRFs, significant barriers arise. These occur when the father is not aware of the existing resources or does not have the ability to overcome the external and personal barriers that impede his progressive work with the system. We found that the perception of general intrinsic motivation by fathers to work with systems is not the biggest barrier, but that once the interaction begins, the frustrations with the system can grow. These frustrations can produce attitudes that prevent positive involvement by the father. A peer-led group would optimize father participation and provide mutual support to address and promote solutions to frustrations that arise.

As described along our findings, programs designed to help the father navigate the system while strengthening collaboration among systems proved helpful. This second key element of the intervention had three components: first, a self-help mutual support group, the core structural element of the model program; second, training which included gender specific parenting, effective co-parenting

in the best interest of children, use of paternal kin as a resource, and workforce readiness; and third, navigation of systems including: child protective services, legal advocacy/courts, child support, and other additional resources applicable to the locality.

Gender specific fist contact and peer-led, solution focused groups were the key elements proposed for a model program for engagement of on-resident fathers. Phase II was planned to provide a rigorous test to determine if the enhancement of services with this model program produced better child outcomes. The implementation plan for Phase II presented data, analysis, and descriptions supporting our selection and plans for the implementation of field experimentation projects that generated evidence on the findings of the QIC NRF study of the first year.

As outlined on the Cooperative Agreement, ten months after the award, the project submitted a **"Version A" of its Phase II Implementation Plan** which was orally presented to the Children's Bureau officers on August 22, 2007 in Washington, DC.

Our presentation included the following areas;

- Approach to Phase I activities.
- A comprehensive literature review, and review and analysis of CFSRs and State Program Improvement Plan documentation.
- The results, analysis and findings of the interactive data collection activities undertaken by the project.
- An updated conceptual framework to guide the knowledge development work of the QIC NRF.
- A logic model presentation that proposed the selected research focus and the selected interventions and guidelines which were the subject of the Request for Application (RFA) and QIC NRF efforts towards research and experimentation.
- A draft RFA to fund the work of 3-4 sites nationally. The RFA included a discussion of the problem and the findings and priorities, aspects of administrative structure, funding, technical assistance (TA), research design, pre and post award TA and site visits, pre-existing requirements, award conditions, and agreements by sites, site evaluation and cross site evaluation requirements, funding purposes and restrictions, dissemination plans and expectations for participation in national activities and networks.
- An overview of sub-award management, and oversight of funded projects.
- The project plan for provision of TA to prospective QIC NRF sub-grantees.
- The plan for provision of support, guidance, and TA to QIC NRF sub-grantees, including cost-benefit analysis and other special aspects.
- The QIC NRF administrative management structure for sub-grantee operation and timely start.
- A list of issues expected in developing and implementing QIC NRF sub-grantee projects.
- A description of the operation of QIC NRF once sub-grantee projects were implemented.
- The approach for formation of consortium and information-sharing network.
- The QIC NRF evaluation plan: data collection infrastructure, institutional review board review, and cross-site evaluation.

- The project plan for dissemination and successful replication.

Version A set the foundation for the focus of Phase II which centered on sub-grantee funding and support for the implementation of proposed research designs, solidification of knowledge building through evaluation, and national dissemination. To the extent supported by funding, the QIC NRF continued along its knowledge building work at the QIC central level as it kept its priority focus on supporting knowledge development at the sub-grantee level and at central level as a function of the sub-grantee activities. For these purposes the project partners identified continued low-cost opportunities for knowledge development that built on the work of the first year, and ultimately assisted the grantees and the national networks on their capacity building regarding NRF involvement in the child welfare system.

The Phase II implementation plan was discussed with the project staff and partners, and a draft of the plan was presented to the NAB for discussion and feedback. The results of the knowledge gathering activities, including the literature review, the findings from the interactive data collection activities, discussions of the NAB and key informant guests directly informed the implementation plan for Phase II.

Supplemental Award for the Enhancement of the QIC NRF

As mentioned earlier, the QIC NRF presented the results of Phase I (year one) of the project to the Children's Bureau in August of 2007 with a comprehensive review of the year one activities including the results of the qualitative research conducted during that period. The response from the Children's Bureau was extremely positive in regard to the initial results and the plan presented for moving into Phase two of the project. As a result of the meeting, the Children's Bureau offered the QIC NRF an additional $250,000 to be applied toward the project. The Children's Bureau requested a proposal regarding the application for the supplemental funds. The American Humane Association and its partner organizations in the QIC NRF, the American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law and the National Fatherhood Initiative, submitted a request to the Children's Bureau for supplemental funding for Year 2 of the Project, to further develop knowledge that was incorporated into the development of a model father engagement program, social marketing research, and a curriculum and training for legal personnel representing NRFs.

The key model father engagement program proposed by the project was designed as a solution-focused, facilitated peer support intervention. The need and justification for proposing a facilitated peer support intervention was based on project research conducted in Phase I. This research indicated that NRFs are often disengaged from the system responsible for caring for their children and are not encouraged to take an active role in the lives of their children. While some states and jurisdictions may have adequate policies, protocols, and professional training developed or in place designed to support the involvement of NRFs, significant barriers arise when the father is not aware of the existing resources or does not have the ability to overcome the external and personal barriers that impede his initial or progressive work within the system. Project research also found that the openness and motivation of NRFs to work with child welfare and legal systems can quickly turn into significant frustrations by not comprehending or being able to navigate systems, particularly when those systems have been used to work with mothers rather than with fathers. These frustrations can produce attitudes that prevent positive involvement by the NRF. Based on this research, the project determined that a facilitated peer support group intervention that encouraged a connection between the NRF and the child welfare system (their caseworker) would optimize NRF participation, aim to sustain willingness to work within the system, demonstrate positive parent-child behavior, and provide mutual support to address and promote timely solutions to overcome frustration. The peer support would focus on solutions and add the element of mutual support for specific issues of individual fathers. In order to develop a program design that would

engage NRFs and increase participant retention the project's priority was to select intervention based on best practices for facilitated peer groups and incorporate existing knowledge and best practices on help-seeking male behaviors.

To develop the facilitated peer support intervention, a father engagement curriculum was created. This curriculum is officially referred to as the **Facilitated Peer Support Intervention.** To ensure the relevancy of the curriculum content experts in facilitated peer support contributed to an inventory of recruitment and retention issues as well as group process principles. AHA staff supplemented the inventory with a pertinent review of the fatherhood literature. A report that included a review of male help seeking behaviors was developed. This information was incorporated into the development of the Facilitated Peer Support Intervention curriculum and training for program facilitators and project staff**.** Another important aspect of the curriculum content was the application of developmental assets (based on work by the Search Institute) intended to enhance the NRF's understanding of child well being. This information provided observable parenting behaviors for the father-child interaction based on proven theory of the 40 Developmental Assets (DA). Application of the DA provided positive male parenting guidelines and informed the discussion during the facilitated peer support program.

In order to provide a comprehensive approach to the overall goal of increasing the engagement of NRFs, the project identified the need to obtain buy-in from the child welfare system. To support this goal social marketing research was conducted to examine the most effective social marketing methodology to engage social workers. The National Fatherhood Initiative worked with a social marketing specialist/consultant/firm to conduct **formative social marketing research** that was used to identify social marketing strategies to increase involvement of NRFs in fathering programs and services offered by child welfare agencies. The specialist/consultant/firm produced a report on the results of the research that included recommendations that were used to guide the social marketing process to better engage the child welfare system. It is important to note that the research focused on the father's perspective and provides a point of view that child welfare professionals may not have previously considered. The research included qualitative (e.g., focus groups and in-depth interviews) and quantitative (e.g., surveys) research.

Similarly the project was also aware, from the research conducted during Phase 1, that the dependency court system provided a very important opportunity to support a positive change in the lack of father engagement. To monopolize on this opportunity, **a curriculum and training for legal personnel representing NRFs** was developed in conjunction with the ABA Center on Children and the Law. This curriculum was developed to enhance the quality of legal representation of indigent parents involved in child welfare legal interventions, develop a discrete part focused on lawyers representing NRFs and gather information from lawyers across the country who represent NRFs on the strategies and practices they use in effectively protecting the legal interests of their father clients and to help facilitate father-child contact, visitation, and where appropriate, custody. This curriculum and training was field tested with attorneys in Washington, D.C., Maryland and California, and QIC staff modified the final curriculum accordingly. Additional information regarding the field testing is included in this report.

National Advisory Board

A very important component of the QIC NRF was the creation of a NAB for this project. During the first year of the QIC NRF the project partners collaborated on the names of individuals that would be submitted to the Federal Children's Bureau for consideration to be appointed to the NAB. It was critical that the board include a broad representation from the following disciplines: law, fatherhood, child

welfare and child protection services, courts, front line practice, research, policy, and academia, among others.

Eleven individuals were initially approved by the Federal Children's Bureau and appointed to the Board. These members were**:** **Scott E. Cade**, Director of the Division of Child Support Enforcement, Albany, NY**;** **John Chacon**, Independent Community Programming Consultant, Austin, Texas**;** **Richard T. Cozzola**, Supervisory Attorney of the Children's Law Project, Chicago, IL; **Susan Dreyfus**, COO, Alliance for Children and Families, Milwaukee, WI; **Patrick F. Fagan**, William H. G. FitzGerald Research Fellow in Family and Cultural Issues, The Heritage Foundation, Washington, DC**;** **Michael Hayes**, Director of Family Strengthening Initiative, Office of Attorney General State of Texas, Austin, TX; **Mark Kiselica**, Ph.D., Professor, Department of Counselor Education, College of New Jersey, Ewing, NJ; **Fernando Mederos**, Director of Special Projects, Fatherhood, Massachusetts Department of Social Services, Boston, MA; **Erwin McEwen**, Director, IL Department of Child and Family Services, Chicago, IL; **Maurice Moore**, Program Associate, Annie E. Casey Foundation, Baltimore, MD; and Honorable **Stephen M. Rubin**, Judge Pro Tempore, Pima County Superior Court, Tucson, AZ. Later in the project representatives from each state grantee was added. These additions included; **Judge James Payne**, Executive Director Indiana Department of Child Services; **Richard Batten**, Family and Fatherhood Specialist Colorado Department of Human Services; **Joel C. Odimba**, PhD, Regional Administrator, Washington State; **Kenneth Thompson**, Fatherhood Specialist, Texas Department of Family Protective Services, and **Gregory Cox**, Chair, QIC NRF National Father's Advisory Council. The full roster for the NAB is in *Appendix A*. This group of individuals also brought a broad national perspective as well as great experience and knowledge. This expertise greatly enhanced the QIC NRF project and helped to guide both phases of the project and provide critical perspectives to the examination of issues, field experimentation, and dissemination planning.

There were six primary roles identified for the NAB; 1) assist in identifying the issues and barriers when involving the NRF in child welfare cases and guide the selection of research focus, 2) in the course of board discussions, inform the QIC and the Children's Bureau regarding multidisciplinary issues and methods that might contribute to comprehensive assessment and experimentation on this topic, 3) guide the direction of the QIC as it relates to its development of resources useful for policy, research, practice, and training for both public and private sectors, 4) guide the direction of the RFP and site selection, 5) act as a resource and provide input to decisions or products circulated between meetings, and 6) represent the work of the QIC as appropriate and interact with QIC staff and sub-grantee project staff in the course of project meetings.

The NAB met approximately twice per year over the five-year grant period. A QIC NRF update was disseminated electronically between meetings to maintain board engagement and communication. Each meeting held was at minimum a full day but most often a day and a half. The meetings were held in Washington DC so that representative from the Federal Children's Bureau could be present for part of the meeting. The first meeting was held on February 13th and 14th 2007. This meeting focused on a review of the project and project goals, NAB members, QIC partners and staff relationship building and discussion regarding the purpose of the board and decisions regarding future meeting logistics.

A conference call was held on May 17th, 2007 with members of the NAB and QIC partners to review the results of information gathering efforts and to gain input regarding gaps in areas and/or audiences that should be targeted for future information gathering activities. Additionally, the conference call was an opportunity to further engage the board and maintain open communication.

The second NAB meeting was held July 10th and 11th 2007 in Washington, DC. The focus of this meeting was to present the preliminary results of the needs assessment and gap analysis performed by the QIC

NRF, narrow the research focus of the project, present the plan for Phase II and obtain input from the board, discuss critical issues regarding sub-awards program design and obtain recommendations, and introduce the Father-Friendly Check Up™ Tool to be implemented at the selected sites. The first day of the QIC NRF partners provided an overview of the Phase I results and activities. The second day was a discussion with the NAB regarding the project research focus, geographical considerations, program content area, issues to be addressed, intervention elements, pre-conditions, population to be served, number of sites, and organizational leadership.

The third NAB meeting was held on December 14, 2007 in Washington, DC. The purpose of this meeting was to review the RFA applicants and make recommendations for funding. Each proposal was reviewed with the board discussing the strengths and challenges of each. As a result of the discussion five applicants were recommended for funding consideration. The board recommended that a due diligence process be developed and implemented, with the five identified applicants, prior to a final decision. Once a final decision was made the board was notified of the funding decision.

The fourth NAB meeting was held October 6th and 7th, 2008 in Kansas City, MO. This meeting was a joint grantee/NAB meeting. This meeting provided the grantee sites the opportunity to present their project design, program implementation strengths and challenges, and research. The NAB was actively engaged in the discussion and provided significant feedback to the grantees.

The fifth NAB meeting was held on August 3, 2009 in Arlington, VA. This meeting included the newly appointed board members who were representing the grantee states. Vicki Turetsky, Executive Director, Child Support Enforcement (CSE) was a guest presenter who spoke about the connection between CSE and Child Protection and the importance of building the collaborative relationship between the two organizations on the federal, state, and local level. This meeting also provided an overview of the project and grantee data collected to date.

The sixth and final NAB meeting was held on July 13th and 14th 2010. This meeting was intended to provide closure to the NAB. The board was updated with current data and research results. Cross-site evaluation data were presented with a discussion regarding the analysis of the data. The board engaged in an active discussion regarding recommendations for future research, policy, and practice in the fatherhood arena. The QIC NRF draft toolkit was presented with an explanation of the "Nine Steps for Effective Father Engagement" which focuses on the elements recommended for effective organizational change to be truly father friendly.

It's important to note that the members of the NAB were very engaged not only during the meetings but also during QIC NRF events. Members participated in Phase I activities, provided individual TA to the QIC and sites, authored articles, and provided guidance and feedback on QIC NRF products. This overview provides only a brief summary of NAB meeting activities. Additional information is available in the NAB meeting minutes.

Fathers Advisory Committee

The QIC NRF wanted the voice of NRFs heard throughout the project to ensure the resources developed, activities planned, and services provided were culturally relevant and appropriate. In particular, the men wanted to ensure that resources were gender and economically relevant. They verified that the look and content of resources and activities appealed to men, especially low-income men. Toward that end the Fathers Advisory Council (FAC) was formed. Members of the FAC included two (2) representatives from each grantee site plus two (2) representatives from non-grantee sites to include Chicago (IL), and Milwaukee (WI). Each grantee site was required to have a local FAC with a parallel role.

On average, members of the FAC were 35-40 yrs. of age; most are African American, unemployed to lower-middle income, and some past experience with the criminal justice and corrections system is common. Some were former substance abuse addicts and lost custody of their children for this reason. All experienced some involvement with the Child Welfare system. Greg Cox (Chicago, IL) served as Chairman and also a member of QIC NRF Advisory Board as a voice for fathers and the QIC NRF FAC. Mr. Cox also became a representative on the NAB as a liaison between the FAC and the NAB.

Six Meetings were held: four (4) at grantee site location plus Kansas City, KS and Washington DC. The purpose of the meetings was to provide leadership, act in an advisory capacity to the QIC NRF project, and be a voice for fathers whose children have been involved in the child welfare system. Each father was provided a $200 dollar per day stipend and all travel costs were covered by the project. Meetings were held during the weekend to avoid interfering with other obligations the fathers might have. When possible the meetings were connected to the grantee meetings so that the program facilitators could also be in attendance at the FAC meetings. The following is a list of the FAC goals as formulated:

Goal: The QIC NRF Father Council will be a national resource to the local QIC NRF grantee sites.

Action: Provide at least one father to act as a liaison between the national and local QIC NRF Council.

Action: Facilitate communication between local sites via conference call.

Goal: Monitor the capacity of local QIC NRF sites to identify and address barriers of fathers of children who have been involved in the child welfare systems.

Action: Continuously evaluate the QIC father's curriculum to see if it is meeting the needs of the fathers.

Goal: Provide coaching and professional development support to local QIC sites (System Navigators).

Action: Create a video that shows fathers who have been successful in navigating the three stages of the child welfare systems 1) entry 2) process 3) completion.

Action: Create products for low literacy level participants.

Action: Develop a mentorship initiative where highly seasoned fathers mentor new fathers entering the child welfare system.

Goal: Ensure that all QIC NRF products contain father friendly language.

Action: Review QIC NRF documents developed for training, TA, dissemination, etc.

Goal: Ensure the design and content of the QIC NRF website is child focused and father friendly.

Action: Provide feedback on the QIC NRF website related to user friendliness, etc.

Action: Develop a designated area on the QIC NRF website for national and local father councils to share their stories, information and resources.

Action: Create a video that incorporates the children's point of view.

Action: Submit at least one article per quarter to QIC newsletter.

Action: Submit articles regularly to local, state and national print media.

Activities

Local Fathers Advisory Councils Efforts

- All sites developed Local FAC with election of officers
- All sites held consistent FAC meetings
- Some sites engaged in community outreach and charitable activities and events
- All sites participated in local, regional and statewide presentations to social/family service community
- Some sites held or planned to participate in meetings with key government agency and political leaders
- Some sites developed a speakers bureau to provide presentations at conferences and in-service training to local child welfare agencies

Review of ABA & QIC Documents (To provide consumer input)

All FAC members provided written feedback & participated in discussion on the following ABA draft documents:

- Bringing Back the Dads Curriculum: Steps In The Juvenile Court Process
- Bringing Back the Dads Curriculum: Navigating the Child Welfare System
- Father Guide #1: Your Rights and Responsibilities
- Father Guide #2: What to Do In Court
- Father Guide #3: What You Should Do Outside of Court

Video-taped Interview of Fathers Experience in Child Welfare System

Most FAC fathers in attendance participated in the interviews. FAC members told their stories and offered advice to other fathers currently in the child welfare system. Common message was—Don't give-up and know your rights.

Fathers represented the following locations: Colorado Springs (CO), Chicago(IL), Indianapolis (IN), Milwaukee(WI), Seattle(WA), and Tarrant County (TX).

Collection of Quotes from QIC Fathers

- "Fathers feel like no one is hearing them or advocating for them."
- "Recruiter/Facilitator needs to listen to the father's needs before "pushing the paperwork or program."
- "Facilitator will initially serve as fathers' source of courage and self-esteem."
- "Many men lack confidence in government programs because of past unfulfilled commitments." from government programs…ex., completed job training program but never received job."
- "Men feel inadequate to face court system alone." "Me vs. The World" mentality."

- "Self-support is critical…If you can't take care of yourself, it's hard to focus on your child or the program."

- "Due to personal father-absence, many men do not have any idea how to be a father…They learn parenting in the process…""Our kids are teaching us how to be parents."

Challenges

Many fathers that participated in FAC meetings did not possess a credit card or have sufficient upfront funds to cover expenses for meals and taxi service—to and from airport. During the first meetings, there was much resistance around moving forward with meeting agenda until expense reimbursement matters were detailed and secured. For select fathers with significantly low means, American Humane provided gift cards for meals and pre-paid shuttle service. On a couple of occasions, Ron Clark (FAC/NFI Consultant) had to secure rooms and meals on his credit card and receive follow-up reimbursement from American Humane.

Some fathers were concerned about childcare expenses they would have to afford while away for FAC meetings. AHA staff provided reimbursement for those expenses where receipts for childcare services were provided.

Some fathers communicated their feelings around "being used". In specific, these select fathers were concerned that lead agencies would experience financial gain from the project and program participants would be "left-out" in the cold with discontinued support and resources at the conclusion of the project.

Many fathers that were unemployed during the initial meetings had to withdraw participation from FAC due to newly secured employment opportunities. They were afraid to take time off and risk losing their jobs.

During initial meetings, Consultant checks were presented to fathers at the conclusion of the 2-day meeting. Due to financial hardship and fathers need/desire to purchase meals, shopping excursions, and reimbursement matters, checks were presented during lunch time on first day. Of special note, some fathers cashed their checks at local predatory check-cashing business due to lack of any type of savings and/or checking account with an established banking institution.

Request for Proposals and Approval Processes

As noted earlier, a goal of the QIC NRF was to support sub-awards to selected grantee sites. These sub-awards would fund research projects to evaluate the impact increased NRF engagement would have on child well-being outcomes. Therefore it became critical that the project conduct a transparent and inclusive process of request for proposals to targeted audiences as well as broadly, provide pre-application TA, and identify third party reviewers for the submitted proposals. The development of the RFA was completed in collaboration with the project partners, the American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law and the National Fatherhood Initiative. In tandem the QIC NRF disseminated the RFA to approximately 30,000 individuals and organizations through direct email or through various internet links and list serves. The RFA was disseminated between October 1 and 3, 2007. A pre-application conference call was held on October 12, 2007 in which approximately 50 individuals participated. A QIC mailbox was created for the potential applicants to submit questions. All questions were reviewed weekly and the responses to the questions were posted on the QIC NRF website. Individual TA was also provided, with all individual questions and answers posted on the QIC NRF website. The deadline for application submission was November 27, 2007. Eight external reviewers were identified based on recommendations from the three project partners. This provided a broad representation from fatherhood programs, legal systems, and the child welfare system across the country. Included in the categories were professionals that had expertise in research and other related areas. An application review protocol and other tools were created for the reviewers to use during the RFA evaluation process. Reviewers received TA through a group conference call and on an individual basis as needed. The eight reviewers were: Kate McGilly, Ph.D., John K. Holton, Ph.D., Richard A. Lewis, Diane Dodson, JD, Jeanne Ferguson, Sharon M. Dossett, Caitlen Daniels, and John Holmberg, Ph.D.

There were two minor challenges in the application review process. The first challenge was narrowing the field of potential proposal reviewers from a national pool of individuals who were representative of the legal/court, child welfare, and fatherhood disciplines and who had not been involved in the project to date. The second challenge was the short turnaround time for the RFA process, (i.e. disseminate the RFA, receive proposals, review, scoring, and recommend sites for funding, and announce the approved grantees). In addition to the short turnaround, the process took place during the holiday season, which made communication difficult at times. While there was extensive interest in the project there was also concern voiced by numerous state child welfare agencies that the rigor of the research would be challenging and some believed they would not have the infrastructure to support the requirements of the project.

A total of nine states submitted applications (Texas, Indiana, Washington, Colorado, Arkansas, Illinois, Oregon, Iowa, and Kentucky). An initial screening was conducted to ensure the applicants met minimal requirement as defined in the RFA. The eight reviewers read and scored each of the nine proposals; the proposal from Illinois was ultimately eliminated because it did not meet the minimal requirements. Technical assistance was provided to the reviewers throughout the process. It was critical that each reviewer receive consistent and thorough instructions to ensure that each review was scored based on the same criteria. An analysis of reviewer reliability was conducted to ensure consistency between the eight reviewers in their ratings of the proposals. This process revealed reliability and concurrence across reviewers with no major inconsistencies that would interfere with the objectivity of the scoring process and subsequent recommendations. While there were differences in scores, reviews from the eight individuals on nine proposals allowed for an overall statistical test of the total score ratings. The results showed that two proposals were clearly recommended for a rule out decision, one based on nonconformity and the other based upon reviewer ratings. Four proposals were recommended for

funding with a fifth proposal as a possible consideration. The following five states were identified as potential QIC sites: Texas, Indiana, Washington, Colorado, and one additional state.

Information on the five sites was presented to the NAB, which prompted rich discussion. Numerous board members were familiar with the state structure, individual organizations applying, or both. This depth of knowledge significantly informed the decision making process. The NAB supported the recommendations for the five sites and concurred that a due diligence process needed to be conducted to determine the final sites. The due diligence process was conducted by AHA using individual phone conference calls with teams from each of the five states. The areas of focus for the conference calls were organizational capacity, participant capacity, intake design, and evaluation/research capacity. A final decision was made based on the combined reviewers scores and recommendations, NAB feedback, and the due diligence process. The four sites approved for funding were Tarrant County, Texas; Marion County, Indiana; King County, Washington; and El Paso County, Colorado**.**

The greatest challenge in this process was the selection of the final four applications. Each of the applicants had strong proposals and could have potentially been approved for funding. The final decision required an extensive analysis and due diligence. After much discussion there were several proposals that appeared to have a greater ability to support the QIC NRF project. The decision for the final approval for funding was intense and laborious, but fair, objective, well documented, and supported. As such, the final selection was extremely difficult in that all of the proposals (with exception of the one disqualified) were very strong and contained rich histories of father involvement, collaborative relationships, and infrastructure strength to support the project.

Grantee Site Activity Summary

In 2008, the American Humane Association, as the project lead for the QIC NRF, funded four research sites; Tarrant County, Texas, Marian County, Indiana, El Paso County, Colorado, and King County, Washington to implement a facilitated peer led curriculum with fathers and build collaborative relationships with other relevant systems, specifically the child welfare system, courts, and child support enforcement. The objective of the research was to determine what the level of impact would be when increasing the involvement of NRFs with their children, while in foster care, on child well-being outcomes. Prior to discussing the efforts of the sites to fully engage NRFs it's important to discuss several barriers that had to be addressed during the initial stages of implementation. The two most notable were the Internal Review Board (IRB) process and the sole source contracting process. In regard to the IRB, both the Indiana and the Washington grantee sites were associated with a university system and were required to respond to the rules governing each respective universities IRB protocol. For example, in Washington, before awarding approval, the project's IRB stated that the initial male contact could not be the first person to contact an NRF to determine his interest in the study. The IRB decided this would be a conflict of interest because the initial male contact is considered part of the research team due to his role of seeking consent and gathering baseline information from the NRF. Thus, the Children's Administration decided that University of Washington School of Social Work graduate students engaged in a practicum at the Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) could support their assigned social worker to assist with location and initial contact using an IRB approved script. AHA formed its own IRB according to federal requirements and applied for approval. I addition, AHA staff trained and obtained Citi-Training certification for IRB compliance. This IRB reviewed the application, suggested modifications of language, and vetted this application. This approval covered the two sites without their own states' IRB, but included among its documentation the approvals granted to Marion Count, IN and to King County, WA.

The second significant barrier involved Texas and the issue of contract sole sourcing. During the application process each applicant was asked to identify providers for evaluation and other key staff. The state child protection system in Tarrant County Texas experienced significant delays in gaining permission to honor the previously planned contracts due to the Office of Procurement rules regarding contract bids. The QIC NRF provided support including strategies for payment to the Tarrant County Fathers Program. Given the State's delay in contract approval the Father's program did not receive reimbursement for services for at least 6 – 8 weeks. The issue was eventually resolved. However, it did create a significant delay in the implementation process.

As noted during the Practice Learning Summit, while each site had significant differences demographically they had more similarities than differences when describing NRFs and the challenges they faced in reaching and engaging them. The strategies they implemented to address these challenges may have differed based on the specific needs of the community they served but the issues related to recruiting and retaining these men in the program were more similar than different. They all agreed NRFs are very fragile and have multiple needs that cause them to be very challenging to reach due to their transient nature, homelessness, criminal history, lack of a support network, feeling of inadequacy, influence of social biases, etc. These challenges were somewhat unexpected even though each site had well established and successful fatherhood programs previous to the QIC NRF project. The fathers served in their previous or current programs were more reachable and ready to participate in the new services the programs offered in comparison to the NRF population identified for the project. Additionally, an important observation in serving these fathers is their differing stages of readiness and emotional availability. Special attention to the specific needs of each father became critical in meeting the fathers "where they are" rather than where they (program staff) wanted them (fathers) to be.

Given this realization it became necessary to identify strategies to reach and engage NRFs differently than other fathers they had previously served.

Secondly, there was a lack of available data that adequately provided information describing NRFs' circumstances and the percentage of NRFs vs. resident fathers involved with the system. One obvious reason for the lack of information is national data collection resources such as AFCARS does not require states to gather data specific to fathers. In fact, much data on family structure captured in the "caretaker status field" appears to be missing or inaccurate. The other significant issue impacting this lack of knowledge is the failure of many child welfare systems to reach NRFs. The grantees acknowledged that when efforts were made by caseworkers to reach any father, regardless of residence, they were superficial with little to no follow up later in the case. All the grantees agree that reaching fathers should be treated with urgency using creative and nonconventional means to locate and communicate with them. The Colorado site began utilizing Facebook and other technological means of communication based on the fathers frequent moves in and out of the county.

Numerous strategies were developed and refined over the course of the project that proved to be promising and worthy of future consideration. One of the initial steps the sites engaged in was the implementation of the Father-Friendly Check Up™. The Father-Friendly Check Up™ is an assessment tool for child welfare organizations developed by the National Fatherhood Initiative. This tool provides a comprehensive assessment of father friendliness on several levels, including organizational, administrative, programmatic, and community levels. The tool was administered in a variety of methods and became the starting point for the grantees and collaborative partners to begin the examination of gaps and initial priority areas to address during the initial implementation phase of the project. As the project progressed the sites used this tool to reassess progress in the areas previously identified and to plan future activities.

Each site participated in cross-system teams that either had father engagement as a focus or added father engagement as a priority issue. The purpose for the father engagement focus was to address system barriers and collectively identify concrete processes, procedures, and protocol to remove the identified barriers. In addition, each site created a FAC to provide feedback on the father engagement curriculum and the activities of the project and make recommendations regarding project issues such as reaching and retaining fathers in the QIC NRF facilitated peer led support group. Ensuring the incorporation of the "father's voice" in all aspects of the project was a priority throughout the life of the project.

The child welfare system was the project lead in each location. Putting child welfare in the lead role was a critical step toward improving the system's engagement of fathers. This proved to be very strategic in providing awareness to the system responsible for serving children and families that fathers were not being reached and involved as previously thought. Additionally, the child welfare system had the authority to identify and implement the changes needed to identify, locate, contact, and refer fathers into the program. Early in the project it became apparent there were numerous system barriers that interfered with the identification and location of eligible NRFs. Moreover, many fathers reported they felt the system had "dismissed" them as unimportant and often treated them with disrespect.

As a result, each site, in collaboration with their partners, examined in detail the reasons for the lack of eligible fathers and concluded that caseworkers were not reaching fathers often as a result of superficial or inadequate efforts. Processes were established to review every child who entered care, identify eligible fathers, and work with caseworkers who had not made efforts to locate and contact the child's father. These processes were helpful in that they identified fathers who otherwise would not have

been involved and helped to identify areas of practice that needed improvement. A strategy adopted by Indiana that proved to be very successful was co-locating a fatherhood specialist in the local child welfare agency. This individual met regularly with caseworkers regarding referrals and provided training to familiarize caseworkers with the program and remind them of the importance of involving fathers. One of the primary reasons he was so well received by the agency was his assisting caseworkers in the "leg work" to locate and contact the fathers. In addition, he was very successful in recruiting NRFs into the program due to his role as the initial contact with the fathers about the program. The fact he was a male and a father was very well received by the fathers who were hesitant to be involved with a system that has the reputation of not being father friendly. This staff position was later adopted by the projects in Texas and Washington.

While the grantees were engaging in a variety of activities the primary activity for the local sites was to serve NRFs in a group setting using the QIC NRF father engagement (facilitated peer-led support group) curriculum that was specifically developed for the QIC NRF project. The curriculum consisted of a 20 week program with 12 structured sessions and 8 unstructured sessions and was implemented by all four grantee sites. The implementation of one curriculum provided program consistency across all sites. While there was some flexibility in the order the sessions were delivered there was a requirement established for all the sites that three of the 12 structured sessions be presented first. The first session provided an overview of the program and the second and third sessions contained information about the child welfare system provided by a child welfare professional. These sessions helped participants learn about a very complicated system and helped them to identify where in the process they are and what they can expect later as they navigate through the system.

This information helped to make the process more concrete, tangible, and less of a mystery. It also provided an opportunity for participants to discuss strategies to address their particular situation and helped to empower the fathers to make better informed decisions. Another area of emphasis was the importance of maintaining a positive relationship with the birth mother of their child/ren. This relationship has the potential to open or close many opportunities for visitation or other types of contact with the father and paternal kin. This seemed to be an area of contention for many of the fathers. The program facilitators learned early in the process the importance of "making space" prior to the first session for unstructured time for the fathers to talk about their situation. The importance of listening and allowing the fathers stories to be heard began building trust and buy in for future participation.

Another important strategy employed by the grantees was training of caseworkers and court staff. Based on the initial low referral rate and the ongoing feedback from the grantees, American Humane Association wanted to develop a father engagement curriculum for caseworkers that would provide knowledge and awareness around gender differences regarding learning, communication, father's perspective, father's role, etc. as it relates to child welfare practice. Included in the training was a panel of NRFs who had experience with the system. These fathers shared their stories, experiences, and perspective. Both the training and panel were very well received by the trainees. Another training that was provided to each site was Family Finding training provided by Kevin Campbell. A Family Finding overview was provided to a larger broader audience in addition to a skill building focused training to smaller specific audiences that focuses on "case mining". Case mining is a concrete relevant process to develop caseworker skill in using the child welfare case file to identify resources that have previously been overlooked. In addition, several of the sites utilized training offered by the American Bar Association, Center on Children and the Law, using a variety of methods and delivery, for attorneys and other judicial staff regarding the project, constitutional rights of NRF, case law, and other relevant

topics. The importance of "buy in" for all levels of staff in and across organizations was critical in mobilizing the project beyond the initial stage of implementation and into future stages of the project.

Above is a brief summary of several key strategies and learning gained by the grantee sites from a collective perspective. Below is a short summary of the grantee site specific activities. The final grantee program and evaluation reports provide additional detail regarding specific site activities.

Title: Fathers Engagement Project

Grantee: Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, Children's Administration, Division of Children and Family Services (Region IV); University of Washington School of Social Work; Divine Alternatives for Dads; and Catalyst for Kids
Contact: Natasha Grossman, Project Director, natasha@u.washington.edu

The QIC NRF awarded one of its four sub-grants to DCFS of the Children's Administration, Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/general/index.asp) to conduct the Fathers Engagement Project in King County (Region IV). Other project partners include the University of Washington School of Social Work (http://depts.washington.edu/sswweb/), Divine Alternatives for Dads (D.A.D.S.) (http://www.aboutdads.org), the Washington State Division of Child Support (http://www.dshs.wa.gov/dcs/), the Office of the Family and Children's Ombudsman (http://www.governor.wa.gov/ofco/), and Catalyst for Kids (http://catalystforkids.org). The Fathers Engagement Project implemented the same model as the other three sub-grants: locating and recruiting nonresident fathers (NRFs) to participate in a 20-week peer support group designed to strengthen the NRFs' engagement with their children who are involved with the child welfare system.

The process for determining if a father may be eligible for the support group occurs upon the child's removal from the home. A DCFS Child Health and Education Track (CHET) worker provides a referral to the project upon the child being placed in out-of-home care. The project's initial male contact then checks with the social worker to determine if the father is an NRF and meets other eligibility requirements (e.g., is not the suspected perpetrator of the maltreatment). If the NRF is potentially eligible, the social worker or his/her graduate student will contact him using information available in the case record or otherwise provided by the NRF. If direct contact information is not available, the social worker or CHET worker may use leads from the case file to track down the NRF. This may include using databases from other agencies, such as the county's child support enforcement office, to find a match or other leads. Additionally, DCFS has a relative search unit that begins reaching out to all known relatives of children within 72 hours of their removal. The unit staff contacts the project if information is gathered about an NRF so that the social worker or graduate student can contact the NRF. Upon contact with the NRF, the social worker or his/her graduate student will, using the approved script, determine if the father is interested in the program. If the father expresses an interest in the project and in meeting with the project's initial male contact, the social worker or graduate student will pass along the father's information to the contact to arrange an in-person meeting. The in-person meeting between the NRF and the initial male contact ideally would occur within 24 hours. At this meeting, the project staffer provides additional information about the project, including an explanation of how it is part of a research study, what the implications of participating are, and that it is voluntary. If the NRF signs the consent form, the project staffer lets him know that the group facilitator will contact him in the following 3 to 4 days to let him know the schedule for the group. In addition, the initial contact tries to complete the initial interview form at this meeting or schedules another meeting to complete it. Noted earlier as part of a practicum experience, graduate students from the Child Welfare Training and Advancement Program at the University of Washington were staffed to make the first male contact with

the NRF. These students were very helpful in the initiation of the engagement process and were able to learn needed information on behalf of their assigned social worker using the IRB-approved script.

Another component of the Fathers Engagement Project was educating DCFS workers regarding the identification and location of NRFs and engaging them in their children's case planning and, in some cases, including them as permanency resources. Staff from the QIC NRF and its contractors provided trainings to DCFS staff regarding the importance of involving NRFs and strategies to do so through two full-day trainings. As part of ongoing education, the local project has hosted "Lunch with Dads" sessions at agency offices to give some of the fathers who have graduated from the program an opportunity to talk about their experiences in an informal setting with workers. Implementing the "Lunch with Dads" sessions has helped workers better understand the fathers' perspectives on their situations and the child welfare system. It also allows the fathers to feel heard by the system. The fathers expressed their appreciation of the project, especially for Mr. Burris, the group facilitator. One father mentioned that Mr. Burris' similar experiences to theirs allowed him to say things to the NRFs that would not be acceptable coming from someone else. Another father said, "I don't think there's anybody that could do it better than LaRon." Another said that without the project he would have given up trying to be involved in his child's child welfare case. A couple fathers attributed the positive outcomes in their cases to the project.

Implementing the "Lunch with Dads" sessions has helped social workers better understand NRFs' perspectives on their situations and the child welfare system. It also allows the NRFs to feel heard by the system. One social worker stated that these sessions have been successful at increasing social worker buy-in. The project also has tried to inform the community and other agencies about its work and the importance of engaging fathers. Project staff and some participating NRFs have spoken to the community through panels similar to the "Lunch with Dads" sessions, including at local conferences and at the Attorney General's office. The group facilitator has also met with various professionals in the community, such as judges and agency commissioners, to promote the project and father engagement.

Support from the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and the relationships developed between the project and DSHS and its agencies have greatly helped the project, in part because DSHS provides its employees time to work on the project. Additionally, project staff, and even participating NRFs, have been able to attend leadership meetings. DCFS has held multiple staff meetings about the project to stress that engaging fathers can be a key factor for cases. These meetings, in conjunction with other agency and project efforts, have helped change the discourse within the agency about the importance of fathers in cases and in the children's lives.

From Washington's perspective a key factor in the project's success is that the county's judicial leadership has supported the project. The bench cards used by the judges in King County's model court include several questions about NRFs, including their level of engagement with the children and the services they are receiving. In addition, the project has helped bring about additional collaboration in the community. This has assisted the organizations and agencies in working together more effectively, knowing more about each other's roles, and being better able to complement each other's services. Examples of this collaboration include Casey Family Services asking project staff to speak about fatherhood issues at a conference and the Division of Child Support asking project staff to attend a transition fair for fathers exiting prison.

Title: Tarrant County (TX) Quality Improvement Center on Non-Resident Fathers and the Child Welfare System (QIC NRF) Sub-grant
Grantee: Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, New Day Services for Children and Families (on behalf of the Fatherhood Coalition of Tarrant County), and Child Trends
Contact: Karen Bird, QIC NRF Project Coordinator for Tarrant County, fatherhoodCTC@gmail.com

The QIC NRF awarded one of its four sub-grants to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) Child Protection Services (CPS) Division (http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Protection/About_Child_Protective_Services/) to conduct a project in Tarrant County, which includes the cities of Fort Worth and Arlington and is adjacent to Dallas County. The CPS Division is partnering with the Fatherhood Coalition of Tarrant County (FCTC) (http://www.tarrantfatherhood.org/), a group of 21 organizations that seeks to support responsible fatherhood and strengthen the role of fathers, men, and families in the lives of children in Tarrant County. Additional project partners include: New Day Services for Children and Families (http://www.newdayservices.org/), a faith-based nonprofit serving as the lead FCTC member for the sub-grant, Workforce Solutions for Tarrant County (http://www.workforcesolutions.net/), an FCTC member that provides job-related assistance to project participants, Child Trends (http://www.childtrends.org/), which is conducting the sub-grant's evaluation, and other members of FCTC on an *ad hoc* basis

The Tarrant County sub-grant's model, like that of the other three sub-grants, consists of locating and recruiting NRFs to participate in 20 weekly fatherhood classes designed to strengthen the NRFs' engagement with their children who are involved with the child welfare system The process for determining if a father may be eligible for the classes begins upon the child's removal from the home. The CPS Grant Coordinator (a grant-funded staff position housed within CPS) reviews the Petition Information Sheet used by CPS workers to document the removal. This form includes fields about the father that match the disqualification factors for the program. If the form is incomplete, the CPS Grant Coordinator will request that the CPS caseworker provide additional information or explain why the fields cannot be completed (e.g., the father's identity is unknown or not provided by the mother). If the NRF's identity is unknown, the CPS Grant Coordinator will keep in touch with the caseworker over the life of the case to determine if his identity and contact information have become known during court hearings, family group conferences, or other case proceedings. She also reminds the caseworker, especially if he or she has recently been assigned the case, to continue to probe the mother, other family members, and others about the father's identity. If an eligible NRF is identified but the caseworker does not have any contact information, the caseworker is asked to coordinate with the CPS Legal Unit to place a notice in a local publication or file an affidavit for a diligent search. The Legal Unit will then forward any known information about the father and other relevant case information to the State's Diligent Search Unit. This unit had primarily been used to search for relatives for older youth in the child welfare system, but the Tarrant County sub-grant reached an agreement with the unit to prioritize search requests for the project. The Diligent Search Unit has since expanded its prioritized searches to all fatherhood cases in Texas. Once a potentially eligible NRF's contact information is found, the CPS Grant Coordinator forwards that information to New Day. A male staffer contacts the NRF by mail or phone to discuss the program, determine if the father wants to participate, and set up a face-to-face meeting. If the NRF decides to participate, the staffer will obtain his informed consent and conduct a baseline interview. The NRF is then assigned to a class cohort. NRFs in need of career services are referred to a caseworker at Workforce Solutions, an organization that provides employment training and support to community members, for free, intensive employment assistance. As an incentive to attend the classes, the Tarrant County sub-grant provides the NRFs with a meal at the beginning of each

class and Wal-Mart gift cards that may be used for gas (most Wal-Mart's) in the area have gas stations) or other expenses.

Early in the implementation process the State office of Texas Child and Family Services created a position within the state system to focus on fatherhood issues. Kenneth Thompson became the state representative and became quickly involved in the Tarrant County QIC NRF site activities. While his focus was much broader than a specific program, he provided support to the project in numerous ways. The least of which was his ability to address specific issues fathers may experience with the CPS system and make recommendations for broader systemic change. He was also very involved with the QIC NRF in his participation in webinars, conferences, workshops, etc.

Texas project staff believes the project has made the greatest impact on the understanding and practice of Child Protective Service staff regarding engaging fathers. The sub-grant conducted several trainings on this topic, including one held in February 2009 for 350 workers from 19 counties. The majority of workers surveyed after the training indicated that they had increased their knowledge about the importance of father involvement and the barriers fathers face with the child welfare system. Other trainings focused on topics such as pulling historical paternal information from case files and locating fathers. Another important training was held on engaging fathers for court-appointed attorneys in child welfare cases, conducted by New Day and the American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law. In October 2009 a workshop for frontline social workers on engaging fathers in child welfare situations, conducted by American Humane and the National Fatherhood Initiative and in May 2010 a skill building training was held for social workers to teach them skill in locating historical paternal information from case records to use in identifying and locating family resources. Additional smaller trainings for groups such as court-appointed special advocates and community social services agencies were also held. An important event was held in April 2010, FCTC sponsored a conference, "Bringing Back the Dads." The focus of the conference was on the importance of responsible father involvement and practical ways to engage fathers. Although the Tarrant County sub-grant did not fund the conference, the QIC NRF and the sub-grant were involved in several ways: six fathers who had completed the program discussed being NRFs and their experiences with the program during a session, American Humane funded a NAB member to serve as a keynote speaker. And American Humane and DFPS staff led breakout sessions.

The Texas site established a FAC to provide input for activities in Region III and throughout the State. This group also provides input on materials created by the Tarrant County site and the QIC NRF. Most council members have participated in the fatherhood classes, but some have just been involved with CPS or attended FOCUS classes. Attendance at the meetings varies; eight fathers attended the council meeting just prior to the site visit. Several of the council members also participate in the National FAC, which is led by the QIC NRF. Texas plans to eventually create a statewide council.

Consistent with the other sites it was assumed an advantage that the program was not directly connected to the CPS. While that proved accurate for several of the sites, it did not prove true for the Texas site. In the beginning of program implementation, program staff highlighted the fact that the Tarrant County project was not part of CPS, but this approach proved not to be successful. However, explaining the program was partnering with CPS worked much better, because the NRFs saw the program as being closer to the system and not just another hoop they had to jump through. Likewise, if CPS told the NRFs that program staff would be contacting them, there was a better chance of a face-to-face meeting or other type of contact. Program staff believe that having CPS alert the NRFs helped build trust in the program.

Approximately mid-way in the project the program hired a full-time staff position to recruit, locate, and contact the NRFs. The workload involved with those tasks was much greater than originally anticipated, and it greatly helped to have someone available full time to the NRFs and CPS. This position provided a resource to social workers who find the task of locating and engaging fathers time consuming and burdensome. This position also provided consistent interaction with the fathers and the social workers.

Another strategy in the Tarrant County project was the coordination with the Diligent Search Unit. This coordination helped to raise awareness among caseworkers regarding the importance of engaging NRFs which in turn assisted the program to locate and contact more fathers. In addition, DFPS hired a full-time CPS Grant Coordinator who works for and at CPS. She determines eligibility, gathers contact information, and routes information between CPS and New Day. Having a CPS staff position be responsible for these specific tasks made the NRF and case information more accessible, alleviates confidentiality concerns that caseworkers may have if providing case information directly to a non-CPS person, and allows for greater contact between the program and CPS staff. Another advantage was the coordination with CPS to have NRF information, including items that reflected eligibility criteria, added to the Petition Information Sheet. This assisted in gathering contact information, prompted caseworkers to seek that information, and made it easier for the CPS Grant Coordinator to quickly determine if an NRF might be eligible and if contact information is available.

Early in the last year of funding the Tarrant County site began exploring strategies for sustainability of the project and the cultural change they began to experience in the CPS system. As with all the grantees they developed projects that would be disseminated and used by CPS and other relevant organizations well beyond the end of the project. Several such resources included a toolkit for caseworkers about the importance of involving NRFs and how to engage them, create a toolkit for NRFs about how to become more involved with their children and navigate the child welfare and judicial systems, develop a video in which participants in the fatherhood classes tell their stories and offer advice to other NRFs, and coordinate with other sites on dissemination projects, including journal articles written by the evaluation teams. In addition, a training believed to assist in the integration of knowledge for social workers and other relevant systems is a training held in May 2010 with Kevin Campbell of the Center for Family Finding and Youth Connectedness about the Family Finding program. This model uses Internet-based search tools to help locate family members (including NRFs) and a Blended Perspective Meeting, during which family members and friends discuss the importance of positive adult connections to the child's development and well-being. This meeting reinforces the importance of family involvement in the family group conference. CPS leadership in Region III, which includes Tarrant County and 18 other counties, has designated funding to continue Family Finding in Tarrant County through 2012.

Title: Engaging Fathers Project
Grantee: Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) (Marion County), Fathers and Families Center, and the Indiana University School of Social Work
Contact: Melinda Wright, Child Welfare Services Manager, Melinda.Wright@dcs.IN.gov

The QIC NRF awarded one of its four sub-grants to the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) (www.in.gov/dcs) to conduct a project in Marion County, which includes Indianapolis, the State's capital and largest city. The model for this project, like that of the other three sub-grants, consisted of locating and recruiting nonresident fathers to participate in 20 weekly fatherhood classes designed to strengthen the fathers' engagement with their children who are involved with the child welfare system. Per QIC NRF requirements, the initial contact for the fathers must be a male. DCS collaborated with the Fathers and Families Center (FFC) (www.fatherresource.org) to implement this project. FFC is a local nonprofit agency that seeks to build the capacity of young fathers and provides fatherhood, workforce,

educational, relationship, and other services. Fathers who go through the QIC NRF program are always eligible for additional FFC services. FFC placed a staff member in the Marion County DCS office to serve as a bridge between the project and Marion County DCS, which helped DCS staff better understand the project and alleviate any concerns about issues such as information sharing and confidentiality. The Indiana University School of Social Work conducted the project's evaluation.

Every 2 to 3 weeks, State-level data staff sent the liaison a list of all removals in Marion County during the previous 45 days. The liaison checked the list for cases in which there was a nonresident father and then conducted a background check for other project criteria that might exclude a father from the program (e.g., being a perpetrator of child maltreatment or domestic violence). Fathers' contact information sometimes was available in the list, but the liaison often had to search for the contact information elsewhere, including the Indiana Child Welfare Information System, child support database, US Search, and even FFC service records. After locating a father's contact information, the liaison tried to contact him via phone calls, letters on FFC letterhead, or visits to his home. Once he made contact, the liaison told the father that he and the project wanted to assist him and explained the program.

Gaining buy-in from child welfare supervisors and caseworkers was a challenge. One reason may be that caseloads were very high, which may make father engagement a lower priority. In addition, it was sometimes difficult to obtain information about the father from the caseworker. Many caseworkers did not have the skills to obtain the contact information from the mothers or follow leads provided, and if a mother did not know the father's location, the caseworker tended not to look for information from other sources. As a result training became an important element to program/service delivery. The project developed an online father engagement training for case managers, which included topics such learning styles. The project also has conducted seven fatherhood panels for DCS audiences across Indiana. During these panels, father participants spoke with case managers and other DCS staff about their experiences. These panels have helped them view fathers as more than a name in the case file and have helped them better understand how they can engage fathers in case planning. Additionally, the National Fatherhood Initiative, a QIC NRF partner, conducted two trainings about father-friendly practice for case managers.

During the initial stages of implementation several DCS staff and project staff completed the Father-Friendly Check Up™. An area they identified as needing attention was the lack of observable father friendliness in their agency lobby and the agency offices. As a result they incorporated several changes including installing a baby changing table in the men's restroom, leaving out literature about fatherhood, and hanging pictures of fathers with their children. They placed framed posters/pictures of fathers with their children in the main lobby area. These pictures were culturally sensitive and were very visible to visitors. Another father friendly strategy implemented in the agency hallways and other visible locations were father engagement reminders with an Indianapolis 500 theme in several places throughout the DCS offices, including: Paper racecars on the walls with speech balloons from the drivers saying: "How many fathers in your caseload have you involved in case planning this month?", "Have you shown genuineness in completing your last Affidavit of Diligent Inquiry for dad?", "Do you express empathy for fathers with criminal records?", and "Do fathers on your caseload have CFTMs [Child and Family Team Meetings] built around them?". Along with the reminders, a bulletin board that compares father engagement rates for cases in Marion County with other regions and the State as a whole was posted. The bulletin board also uses racecars to show the progress and includes reminders, titled "Pit Crew Notes." It was also noted that a good working relationship with the State agency responsible for child welfare is very beneficial. This can help the project obtain data, find the right people to contact about various issues, and be involved in State-level meetings. Additionally, State officials may be able to use their positions to remind others about father engagement or include it in State policy. For example,

the State DCS director sent an email to Marion County DCS staff to remind them about engaging fathers. In addition to training there were additional strategies implemented to better engage case managers.

Early in the project a staff position, who was a FFC employee, was identified as a liaison to be co-located in the DCS office. The liaison helped DCS employees better understand the program, their roles, the resources available to them, and that nonresident fathers may be a viable placement option for the children. Having the liaison based at a DCS office eased caseworkers' concerns about confidentiality and information sharing**.** This assisted case managers in obtaining information and pursuing leads more effectively. This also became a resource for case managers with high case loads. There were several policy changes that were implemented by DCS management, caseworkers are now required to complete affidavits of diligent inquiry that specify that the caseworker has taken certain steps to locate family members, including nonresident fathers, as potential placements. Also, DCS implemented an interactive service referral mapping system that will prompt the Family Case Manager to generate a father engagement referral for a family based on its demographics and other service referrals.

An important program component was the creation of the QIC NRF Fathers Advisory Board. The purpose of this was to ensure the "father's voice" was always heard and incorporated into the activities of the project. It also gave the fathers an opportunity to teach and share their experiences with others. It was noted in the Texas report that fathers reacted more positively if the initial contact made fathers aware of the connection between the program and DHS. In Indiana, however, the liaison realized he had more success calling the fathers from his cell phone rather than the DCS office because fathers might not want a call that originated from DCS.

Title: Non-Resident Fathers in the Child Welfare System (Colorado)
Grantee: Center on Fathering, El Paso County Department of Human Services; Policy Studies Inc.; and Center for Policy Research
Contact: Ken Sanders, Program Director, KenSanders@elpasoco.com

The QIC NRF awarded one of its four sub-grants to the Center on Fathering (COF) (http://dhs.elpasoco.com/Pages/COF.aspx) to conduct a project in El Paso County, Colorado.

The model for this project, like that of the other three sub-grants, consists of locating and recruiting nonresident fathers to participate in 20 weekly fatherhood classes designed to strengthen the fathers' engagement with their children who are involved with the child welfare system. Per QIC NRF requirements, the initial contact for the fathers must be a male.

COF is part of the El Paso County Department of Human Services (DHS) and is tasked with implementing responsible fatherhood activities. Other COF programs include Inside Out Dads for incarcerated fathers, Nurturing Fathers for fathers with current or past domestic violence issues, and Fathers as Providers for fathers needing employment assistance. Other project partners include the Center for Policy Research (http://www.centerforpolicyresearch.org/), which is the evaluator, and Policy Studies Inc. (PSI). PSI (https://www.policy-studies.com/) provides a staff person who serves as a class facilitator and father coach. PSI also is the child support enforcement contractor in El Paso County. It's important to note the connection in El Paso County between the project, DHS, and TANF. An administrative change occurred during the project when the project director was transferred from the Child Protection Program to the TANF program. The connection and collaboration of these organizations enhanced the program and system's response to engaging fathers.

In regard to program recruitment, COF staff review lists of children in out-of-home care in El Paso County to determine if a child's father may be eligible to participate in the program, including whether

the father lives in the home and meets other eligibility requirements (e.g., is not the suspected perpetrator of the maltreatment). The three primary methods for finding removals and father information are the records of the preliminary protective proceedings, reports from the diligent search unit, and TRAILS, which is Colorado's Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System. If a father is potentially eligible after the initial case review, COF staff informs the child welfare caseworker on that case that they would like to contact the father to discuss the project. If the caseworker approves and contact information is available, the Father Coach, who is the initial male contact, contacts the father to determine if he is interested in participating in the project. If the caseworker approves but no contact information is available, COF staff conducts a search to locate him. If the father's contact information is not available, COF staff use a variety of methods, such as utility records or the county attorney's Lexus Nexus database of local court records, to find the information.

The project also obtains this information by sending and receiving the relative resource letters for all child welfare cases, including those for which the father may be ineligible for the program, on behalf of the El Paso County DHS. [The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act (P.L. 110-351), which was enacted in 2008, mandates child welfare agencies to provide notice to adult relatives of a child removed from his or her home of their options to become a placement resource for the child. COF staff searched multiple databases at various times throughout the case to gather contact information for the fathers. This proved to be helpful due to the occasional lag time in entering information into the systems (e.g., a child would be identified as having been removed, but the contact information may not be entered until the next week) and because each database may have different information. COF staff provides any information they receive to the caseworkers and the kinship care unit, which, in turn, provide information to COF if they receive it by other means. By sending the letters and receiving any responses, COF gains a head start in the effort to track down fathers' contact information. Once a father is contacted, the Father Coach explains the project and invites the father to participate. The Father Coach then lets the caseworker know if the father wishes to participate, and maintains contact with the father until his cohort begins.

The Colorado site, consistent with the other QIC sites, experienced difficulty engaging social workers. To help improve those efforts, COF developed training for caseworkers on father engagement. The training included practical advice on topics such as bringing fathers back into the family dynamic, closing the revolving door on cases, and how father-child visits may be different—and should be evaluated differently—than mother-child visits. COF conducted these training sessions at five State academies throughout Colorado, and the content has been incorporated into the regular training for all new caseworkers in El Paso County. Veteran caseworkers are able to attend, too. COF also conducted training for caseworkers on how to use diligent search to locate fathers and paternal relatives. The training included how to maximize the available search engines and provided a cheat sheet on how to use them. To expand knowledge of family finding project staff invited Kevin Campbell of the Center for Family Finding and Youth Connectedness discuss Family Finders program. Attendees included staff from COF, other DHS child welfare staff, the Colorado Promoting Responsible Fatherhood Program of the Colorado Department of Human Services, CASA, child support, TESSA (a local organization that serves victims of domestic violence and sexual assault), and Goodwill Industries of Colorado Springs. Participants learned about Family Finders and discussed their mutual interests and how they could work together. Mr. Campbell returned in February 2011 to train caseworkers on locating and connecting with family members. One creative engagement strategy implemented by the site was the use of social networking websites, such as Facebook and MySpace, to contact and engage the fathers. One of the fathers helped develop the project's Facebook page, which includes articles and other resources for nonresident fathers.

Site Meetings with Grantees

In addition to the individual sub-grantee activities they also participated in QIC NRF planned activities. There were monthly program TA calls with each sub-grantee and a bi-monthly all site TA calls. These calls were intended to provide updates and to answer questions and find solutions to challenges the sub-grantees were facing. The all site calls were an opportunity for the sub-grantees to network and engage in team problem solving. Monthly cross site evaluator calls were held with the sub-grantee evaluators to discuss evaluation and research challenges.

The sub-grantees also participated in grantee meetings. The first grantee meeting, held in **April 22 – 24, 2008** at American Humane headquarters in Denver, Colorado included the QIC partners, the four sub-grantee sites, and consultants. The purpose of the grantee meeting was to coordinate consistent replication of the model curriculum, to establish the site management schedule, and to clarify various provisions of the QIC NRF. This meeting provided the opportunity for the grantee project managers to meet with the American Humane Children's Division Fiscal Director to discuss questions regarding program/fiscal process, procedures, and timeframes. Jason Bohn, the project's Federal Project Officer participated throughout the two-day meeting. This participation is perceived as extremely valuable to the success of the project.

The second grantee meeting but first joint grantee/NAB meeting was held in **October 6-7, 2008** in Kansas City, Missouri. The location was chosen because of its central location and accessibility for the sites, NAB, and project officer. The NAB was included in this grantee meeting so that the sites could utilize the NAB's expertise for TA related to start up barriers. The sites presented background information about their communities and the progress they had made in starting the model intervention sessions. The NAB provided assistance to the sites regarding numerous challenges, such as recruiting NRFs, launching sessions, and dealing with domestic violence. This approach was quite successful with the sites reporting that the advice and input they received from NAB members was extremely beneficial.

The third grantee meeting was held **June 29 – July 1, 2009**. The meeting was hosted by the El Paso County site and held in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Day one of the meeting focused on site updates and how each site has progressed with recruiting fathers. Ron Clark and Jason Bohn gave a summary of the National Father's Advisory Council, which met in Denver, Colorado the weekend prior to the grantee meeting. The day concluded with a tour of Colorado Springs's Department of Human Services and the Center on Fathering. The second day began with a presentation by Lauren Pearl from the Seneca Center for Family Finding and Youth Connectedness. This presentation was an overview of the Family Finding work and a way to introduce the sites to this work. During the final day of the meeting, project directors and facilitators met together while evaluators had a separate discussion. Project directors and facilitators discussed the model intervention. The evaluators' discussion focused on the random assignment and experimental design, the use of placement data, and the focus of the cross-site evaluation.

The fourth grantee meeting was held **October 13-15, 2009**. The meeting was hosted by the Marion County site in Indianapolis, Indiana. Day one of the meeting was designed to provide an administrative overview of project requirements including contractual expectations. The AHA grants manager was available for questions regarding invoicing and budgeting. Day two of the meeting provided an overview of the project objectives with a focus on dissemination. Each sub-grantee is expected to produce dissemination products and resources that can be shared locally and nationally. There was a facilitated discussion regarding expectations, clarification, and examples of products and resources the sub-

grantees might consider. Additionally, there was an emphasis on not duplicating efforts across sites but rather building on the strengths of each site to maximize efforts.

The fifth grantee meeting was held **April 19-20, 2010**. The meeting was hosted by the Tarrant County site and was held in Ft Worth, TX. Day one of the meeting was a QIC NRF overview of activities to date. There was an emphasis on project timelines and significant due dates for data collection, final reports, dissemination products, last cohort recruitment, and discontinuation of service delivery. There was also significant discussion with the sub-grantee evaluators regarding the cross-site evaluation paper to be authored by the evaluators. This paper is also expected for national dissemination.

The sixth and final grantee meeting was held **October 14 – 15, 2010**. The meeting was hosted by the King County site and was held in Seattle, Washington. The focus of this meeting included a review of individual site progress, a presentation of cross-site evaluation results, and a review of plans for dissemination products. The expectations for the content of the sub-grantee final report was presented and discussed. The common theme was the desire to leave a legacy of sustainability.

In concert with the grantee meetings, the National FAC meetings were held so that sub-grantee facilitators and other staff could attend both meetings. The FAC Meeting Dates were: August 18, 2007, Washington, DC, April 5-6, 2008, Kansas City, MO, June 7-29, 2009, Denver, CO, October 10-11, 2009, Indianapolis, April 17-18, 2010, Fort Worth, TX, and, October 16-17, 2010, Seattle, WA. The sub-grantees also participated in workshops, conferences, and webinar presentations.

There were three major events that were sponsored by the QIC NRF held in early 2011. The sub-grantees participated in each of these events. The first event was a Research Summit held in Santa Fe, New Mexico on **January 11-13, 2011**. This event brought together in excess of 40 professionals, including the QIC NRF project evaluators and other research experts in the area of fatherhood, to discuss current research, where gaps exist, and make recommendations for future research efforts.

The second event was a Policy Roundtable on **February 8, 2011** held in Washington, D. C.

Eighty-five professionals, across a variety of disciplines, attended this event which brought together key stakeholders from around the country to discuss both the promise and the challenges to increasing father involvement with children in child welfare and shape recommendations that will be presented to local, state and federal policymakers.

The third event was a Practice Learning Summit also held in Washington, D. C. on **March 30, 2011**. This event brought together the QIC NRF grantees from Colorado, Indiana, Texas, and

Washington and additional key stakeholders to discuss both the promise and the challenges of increasing father engagement. Approximately 50 participants attended.

Training

When a shift in organizational culture is needed training is often used to incorporate a change in knowledge, attitude, skill, practice, etc. The QIC NRF grantee sites became painfully aware early in the implementation phase of the project that a shift in practice was needed. The recruitment of fathers into the program was low and the need to increase the number of referrals of eligible fathers became a priority. QIC NRF staff conducted a review of several existing social worker father engagement trainings. Based on the review of existing trainings, earlier research on male help seeking behaviors, and the specific needs of the grantee sites a decision was made to develop a mid and advanced level skill based father engagement training. The mid-level training had a focus on the gender specific engagement strategies with fathers and also addresses the biases and perceptions that social workers might have related to the NRF's role and the positive benefits NRFs active involvement has on child well-being outcomes. The advanced level training focus was based on the important role that supervisors have in supporting a shift in practice through the mentoring and coaching of staff. This training builds the skill necessary for supervisors and managers to support and guide staff who are "on the ground" implementing the change in practice in the field.

The **Social Worker Engaging Non-resident Fathers Curriculum** is a one-day training developed to build knowledge and skill for social work staff on how to engage absent fathers or father's not residing with their children from a thoughtful and compassionate perspective. This curriculum was developed based on research and informed by pilot testing, key informant interviews, focus groups, information summits, and an exhaustive literature review. The training provides useful and practical skills germane to multiple levels of child welfare including caseworkers, supervisors, administrators, and policy makers and reaches across demographics of participants and clients with a strong emphasis on cultural competency and collaboration across multiple systems and organizations. A significant feature of the curriculum is that it helps participants recognize their own biases and presumptions about men and fathers, provides for reflection opportunities using the Father-Friendly Check Up™ to gauge different aspects of a child welfare agency's organizational culture, and suggests ways to support a practice shift to engage fathers. When possible the training incorporated a fathers' panel to present information about real-life challenges and successes of fathers engaged with the child welfare system and allow participants to ask questions of the fathers to further illuminate how best to work with and engage them.

Noted below are the core competences and objectives of the Social Worker training:

COMPETENCY 1: The participant knows the focus and goals of the QIC NRF project as it connects to the purpose of father engagement training.

> Objective 1a. The participant can describe the specific purpose and goals of the QIC NRF project.

COMPETENCY 2: The participant knows the seven areas of assessment for child welfare agencies and organizations to consider in creating an environment that involves fathers and fosters healthy development of children. The participant is aware of how child welfare agencies or organizations can take active and positive approaches in creating a "father-friendly" environment.

> Objective 2b. The participant can identify how the seven areas of assessment can be used to set goals and priorities that are unique to creating a "father-friendly" environment.

COMPETENCY 3: The participant knows the importance and value of father involvement for social workers, children and families in case practice.

> Objective 3a. The participant can describe how the goals of child welfare case practice intersect with the value of engaging NRFs in their cases.

Objective 3b. The participant can identify the benefits to children when involving NRFs.

Objective 3c. The participant can describe the benefits to mothers when involving NRFs.

COMPETENCY 4: The participant is aware of the importance of culture in understanding male socialization, perceptions and behaviors.

Objective 4a. The participant can explain how personal experience or history may influence cultural viewpoints and the development of male stereotypes.

Objective 4b. The participant can explain how personal assumptions made by social workers may impact the reactions of men and the engagement of fathers.

Objective 4c. The participant can identify ways in which men may seek help.

COMPETENCY 5: The participant knows common challenges to engaging NRFs and how to overcome these challenges with the use of specific and relevant strategies.

Objective 5a. The participant can identify and use specific strategies to address challenges related to expressions of anger by NRFs.

Objective 5b. The participant can identify and use specific strategies to address challenges related to parental conflict that obstruct efforts to engage NRFs.

Objective 5c. The participant can identify and use specific strategies to address challenges related to working with culturally different NRFs and their families.

COMPETENCY 6: The participant understands the use of effective engagement strategies to involve NRFs in the child protection case involving their child(ren).

Objective 6a. Participants can explain the most appropriate strategy to use given the dynamics of the case and the unique experiences of the NRF.

Objective 6b. Participants can craft questions or comments that demonstrate the ability to use engagement strategies, given the dynamics of each case and unique experiences of NRFs.

Objective 6c. Participants can give relevant and useful feedback to other participants as they practice using the engagement strategies.

The Social Worker training was designed so that at the end of the day, participants would think differently about the importance of engaging the NRF, reconsider prevailing perceptions about fathers and men and use strategies that reflect the needs of men and fathers so that participants were more likely to engage fathers in the cases involving their children. Another overarching objective was for participants to think of engaging the father as a collaborative effort in which internal and external system resources could be used rather than feeling as though it was solely the responsibility of the worker to reach out to fathers. Once a welcoming door is open to fathers it will give him the opportunity to be an engaged and involved father and for the child to have his or her father present and available during the time child is involved in with child welfare.

The Supervisors Training Curriculum - **The Work of the Coach: Supervisors Helping to Engage the Non-Resident Father**, was designed to provide participants with knowledge to support a practice shift toward engaging NRFs in child welfare cases involving their children. Supervisors participating in this training will recognize the importance of supervisory practice that is consistent with providing supportive guidance and holding staff accountable for engagement of the NRF.

Noted below are the core competences and objectives of the Supervisors training:

COMPETENCY 1: The participant is able to explain the benefits to the supervisor when social workers actively engage NRFs.

Objective 1a: The participant can describe the relationship between CSFR expectations and engaging NRFs.

Objective 1b: The participant can identify key benefits to supervisors and social workers when fathers are engaged in the case involving their children.

COMPETENCY 2: The participant recognizes the importance of supervisory practice that is consistent with supporting and holding staff accountable for engagement of the NRF.

Objective 2a: The participant can explain how his or her values and perceptions about fathers may relate to and impact the engagement of fathers by his or her staff.

Objective 2b: The participant can describe areas of strength and challenge for both personal and professional development to effectively support staff in the engagement of the NRF.

COMPETENCY 3: The participant can define the concept of parallel process and can identify a shift in practice toward engaging the NRF.

Objective 3a: The participant can explain the parallel process as it relates to the shift in practice to engage the NRF.

Objective 3b: The participant can recognize current practice and the necessary shift in practice to support engaging NRFs.

COMPETENCY 4: The participant can describe and is able to apply communication approaches that reflect knowledge of coaching techniques and father engagement strategies.

Objective 4a: The participant can identify potential challenges and relevant strategies to coach staff to engage the NRF.

Objective 4b: The participant can identify the types of questions that should be asked of staff to support effective coaching practices.

Objective 4c: The participant can demonstrate the ability to infuse father engagement strategies with coaching techniques to foster effective engagement of fathers.

COMPETENCY 5: The participant can demonstrate supervisory practice behavior that is inclusive and supportive of engaging NRFs.

Objective 5a: The participant can articulate effective questions, suggestions, or comments that demonstrate a shift in practice that supports respect for the father and safety, permanency, and well-being of the child(ren).

Objective 5b: The participant can provide relevant and useful feedback to other participants as they practice coaching skills to engage NRFs.

In the **Work of the Coach: Supervisors Helping to Engage the Non-Resident Father**, supervisors will build a critical awareness of their role and a comprehensive set of skills to coach their staff in actively engaging NRFs. Supervisors will also explore how their values, beliefs, and attitudes related to men and fathers influence the practice behavior of their staff. Several practice opportunities are included in the training to support coaching of staff using interactive exercises and dialogue. This curriculum builds from the social worker curriculum in which caseworkers learned about engagement strategies and practices

designed to encourage partnerships with fathers to promote positive outcomes of safety, permanency, and well-being for children.

Literature Review Update

As discussed earlier in the description of Phase I activities, a primary QIC NRF activity was a comprehensive literature review, related to NRF engagement, with a specific focus on social services, judicial system, and fatherhood community programs. The original fatherhood literature review provided important information for the foundation of the QIC NRF research focus and design. Since that time a review of current fatherhood literature was conducted. As a result of the updated review, selected items were identified as notable related to the QIC NRF process and outcome findings. This updated review places the work of the QIC NRF in the context of other research and programs around fatherhood which were conducted at the same time as the QIC NRF site studies were underway. This review treats important studies of the population, then discusses the use (or lack of use) of involvement with child welfare system as an outcome or result of family instability, then discusses program interventions for parents, and lastly outcomes measures within the child welfare context.

The Population

An important piece of work appeared in late 2009 describing the work to date on Fragile Families. In her introduction to the *The Future of Children,* Fall, 2010 volume, McLanahan and her colleagues (McClanahan, Garfinkel, Mincy and Donahue, 2010)[1] describe how the concept of fragile families emerged in the 1990s. "A fragile family is one in which the parents are unwed at the time of their child's birth. These parents may be cohabiting or living apart." Never married, cohabitating or divorced parents fit this definition. Fragile families are distinct from single parent families as well, since the parents may be cohabitating. They note the shift in research away from a sole concern with collection of child support to larger issues of well-being. They note the connection of fragile families to poverty and low socio-economic conditions, though these are related to race and ethnicity.

The basic conclusion of the volume is that there is strong evidence that children of structurally fragile families are not as well off on an array of well-being issues as are other children.

Another important body of work is that of Jay Fagan's program of research at Temple University. Among other items in this program, Fagan and Palm (2004)[2] have produced an extensive work on fathers of young children, including a guide book for fathers that documents the range of relationships that fathers can have with their children. This work places the challenges of child welfare in a larger context.

The Federal Child and Family Services Reviews of States provides a view of findings on the involvement of mothers and fathers in child welfare services.

Child Maltreatment as an Outcome in Studies on the Family

From the QIC NRF perspective, the relative lack of attention to child welfare outcomes is demonstrated in an outcomes table compiled by Waldfogel, Craigie and Brooks-Gunn (2010)[3]. In that table only two of fourteen articles used child maltreatment as an outcome measure (Berger, Paxson, and Waldfogel,

[1] McLanahan, S., Garfinkel, I., Mincy, R.B., and Donahue, E. (2010) Introducing the Issue. *Children's Futures*, Princeton-Brookings: Princeton, N.J. pp. 3-16.
[2] Fagan, J. and Palm, G. (2001) *Fathers and Early Childhood Programs.* Delmar Learning: Clifton Park, N.Y.
[3] Waldfogel, J., Craigie, T., and Brooks-Gunn, J. (2010) Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing. Children's Futures, Princeton-Brookings: Princeton, N.J. pp. 87-112.

2009; Guterman, Lee, Waldfogel and Lee, 2009)[4]. Waldfogel and colleagues used child maltreatment information and the Conflict Tactics Scale to get at harsh parental discipline issues as addressed in the Fragile Families and Child Well Being Survey (FFCWS) protocol. Waldfogel, Craigie, and Brooks-Gunn (2009) do conclude that, "A few studies have taken advantage of the data in FFCWS to examine the effects of family structure on child abuse and neglect." (page 101); they conclude their review with the view that a marital relationship is not so much the issue with predicting child maltreatment as whether or not a male who is not the biological father of the children is in the home.

In the fragile families literature of *The Future of Children* volume, foster care is only addressed in the context of parental incarceration (Wildeman and Western, 2009)[5]. While the QIC NRF results have shown a very high proportion of foster care children coming from homes with no biological father in residence, this is not an outcome attended to in most Fragile Families studies. However, maternal incarceration is more likely than paternal incarceration to be related to child removal outcomes. Wildeman and Western (2009) cite other work that believes the rise in foster care stays in the 1990s was due to increased maternal incarceration. This speaks to the either the lack of involvement of fathers or the lack of personal resources to care for their children for fathers who are involved.

The Child Welfare Context

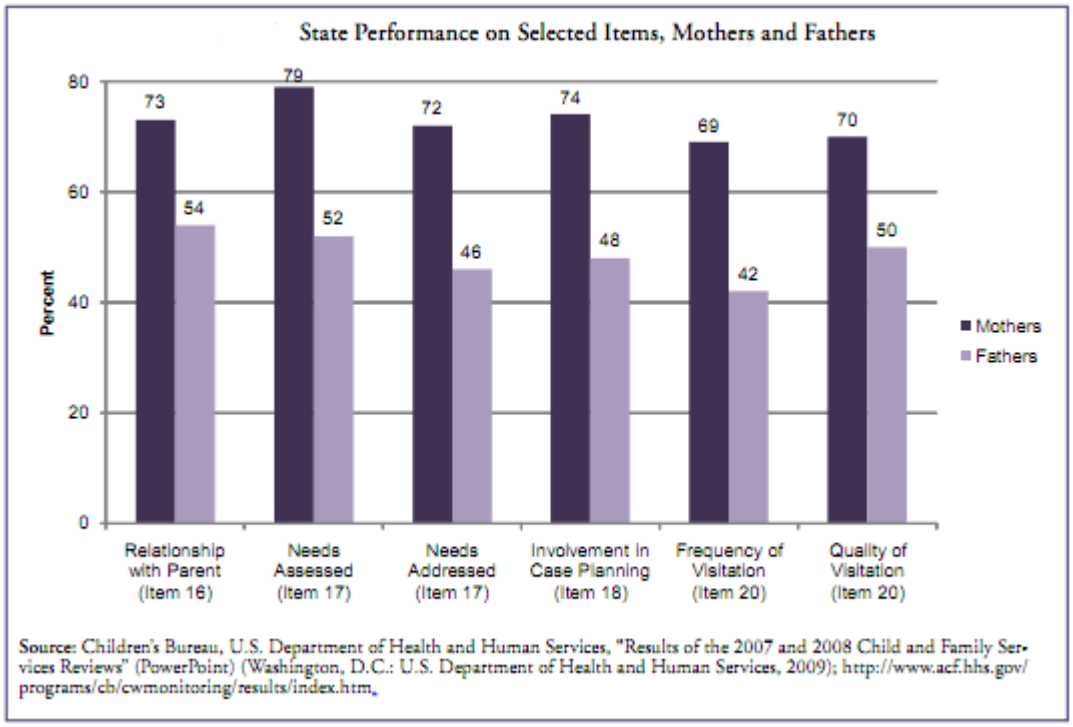
The CFSR results have consistently documented the ongoing lack of father involvement generally and the lack of involvement of NRFs in particular. The second round of federal reviews of state systems have shown a consistent 50% greater adequacy of mother involvement than father involvement across several measures. This was discussed at the QIC NRF policy summit and is described in the summary of that meeting in this report. The Children's Bureau made significant progress in the second round by distinguishing between mothers and fathers rather than addressing "parent involvement" in general. This distinction was highlighted in the National Conference of State Legislature's report on CFSR results[6]. The following *Figure 2* shows the results of case assessments on the six items that address mothers and fathers distinctly. While the item "Relationship with Parent" was adequately addressed for mothers in 73% of the child cases reviewed, there was an assessment of adequacy in only 54% for fathers. These rates show that mothers were adequately addressed 35% more often than fathers ((73%-54%)/54%)). The other five items range from a 40% difference on "Quality of Visitation" to a 64% difference on "Frequency of Visitation." The average proportion difference across the items was 49.97%.

[4] Berger, L., Paxson, C., and Waldfogel, J. Mothers, Men, and Child Protective Services Involvement, Child Maltreatment 14 (2009): 263–76; Guterman, N. B., Lee, Y. L., Waldfogel, J. & Lee, S. L. 2009. Fathers and maternal risk for physical child abuse and neglect, Child Maltreatment, 14, 3, 277-290.

[5] Wildeman, C. and Western, B (2010) Incarceration in Fragile Families. Children's Futures, Princeton-Brookings: Princeton, N.J. pp. 157-178.

[6] Children's Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "Results of the 2007 and 2008 Child and Family Services Reviews" (PowerPoint) (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2009); http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/cwmonitoring/results/index.htm.

Figure 2: State Performance on Selected Items



Source: Children's Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "Results of the 2007 and 2008 Child and Family Services Reviews" (PowerPoint) (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2009); http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/cwmonitoring/results/index.htm.

Program Interventions and Relationships between Parents

Bronte-Tinkew and her colleagues (2007)[7] reviewed a range of fatherhood programs targeting many groups within the general population. Some targeted divorcing parents; others targeted parents of children in early education programs, and one targeted young African-American fathers. Many stressed maintaining family relationships in the face of a divorce, others stressed job readiness and employment, and still others stressed physical and behavioral health. None dealt specifically with child-welfare parents or with the child protection systems. Bronte-Tinkew and her colleagues found that:

Effective programs i) incorporated teaching methods and materials that were appropriate for fathers and the cultures of the populations served . . .; ii) elected teachers or leaders who believed in the program they were implementing and then provided them with training . . . ; iii) had a higher staff-participant ratio; iv) used targeted curricula . . . ; v) used theoretical approaches that have been effective in influencing parenting behaviors in other contexts . . . ; vi) employed a variety of teaching methods designed to focus on the fathers as individuals, and thereby personalized the information . . . ; vii) lasted a sufficient amount of time to complete important core activities adequately . . . ; viii) had staff who engaged in one-on-one relationships with fathers . . . ; ix) encouraged the use of an incentive to fathers and or their families . . . ; and x) replicated their curricula with fidelity. . . . (pp. 11 – 13).

Interestingly, the QIC NRF conformed to each of these principles with the exception of the last. The program has received much attention, and it will be extended to other jurisdictions in all the states

[7] Bronte-Tinkew, J., Carrano, J., Allen, T., Bowie, L., Mbawa, K. and Matthews, G. (2007). Elements of Promising Practice for Fatherhood Programs: Evidence-Based Research Findings on Programs for Fathers. Funded by the ACYF; distributed by the Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse. Retrieved 9/8/2011 from: http://www.louisvilleky.gov/NR/rdonlyres/424404EB-ED86-4840-A8F9-5BEA58A3736D/0/FatherhoodProgram.pdf.

where sites were located. These extensions, however, will not replicate the program exactly. The successful elements will remain. Duration will be shortened to 12 weeks, one of the curriculum modules will be substantially modified, and the intervention will target resident as well as NRFs.

Cowan, Cowan and Knox (2010)[8] recently reviewed program interventions specifically for marriage and fatherhood with the goal of adapting such programs to the needs of fragile families. They make the point that while programs for fathers could benefit from greater attention to the relationship of the father to the mother of his child, none of the interventions address either the living arrangement of the couple or NRF involvement. Cowan and colleagues do stress the range of situations fathers are in regarding the mother of their children and regarding the children themselves. Structurally, the father may never have been married to the mother, currently married and together, married but living apart, or divorced. Independently of the current relationship structure, there may or may not be a current romantic involvement between the mother and the father. These options are occurring at the same time as various options of relationships with the children. The father may or may not have paternity established. Different fathers have different models of desired relationships, too, ranging from no contact with or without tangible support to wanting to have an involved, custodial relationship with the children. Cowan and colleagues conclude that the benefits of interventions conducted as couples formats, that is, both mother and father are involved in the intervention, not only have positive effects for the well-being of the children, but also on the well-being of the mother and father and their co-parenting. This is in the context of lack of control for the living arrangement of the father, so it presumes some current co-parenting relationship. Father only interventions, such as the QIC NRF, also have father and child gains but not the mother and co-parenting gains:

> low-income married couples and unwed couples in fragile families can benefit from father-involvement interventions, especially those that pay attention to the relationship between the father and mother of the child (Cowan *et al*., 2010, p.232).

The QIC NRF father interview protocol does address the relationship of NRFs with the mothers of their children. The father engagement program devotes considerable attention to co-parenting issues. Both child maltreatment reporting and foster care utilization are basic measures in the QIC NRF measurement design, along with matched comparisons with children of fathers not known to be non-resident and participating in the intervention.

The reorientation of the QIC NRF field study to address recruitment issues was consistent with the pilot study findings of English, Brummel and Martens (2009)[9].

Outcomes Measures within the context of the Child Welfare System

The annotated review by the Center on Social Services at University of California Berkeley (2011)[10] has a section on "Fathers and Non-Biological Caregivers." This section cites the Coakley (2008)[11] paper that supports that fundamental tenet of the QIC NRF. She found that the involvement of African American

[8] Cowan, P.A., Cowan, C.P. and Knox, V. (2010) Marriage and Fatherhood Programs. Children's Futures, Princeton-Brookings: Princeton, N.J. pp. 205-231.

[9] English, D. J., Brummel, S., Martens, P. (2009). Fatherhood in the child welfare system: Evaluation of a pilot project to improve father involvement. Journal of Public Child Welfare, 3, 213-234.

[10] *An Annotated Bibliography of Child Maltreatment & Child Welfare Research*: Maltreatment & Child Welfare Research: Systemic Implications. Prepared for the California Department of Social Services by Center of Social Services Research, UC Berkeley, CA

[11] Coakley, T. M. (2008). Examining African American fathers' involvement in permanency planning: An effort to reduce racial disproportionality in the child welfare system. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 30, 407-417.

fathers in permanency planning improved permanency outcomes. This is supported further by Malm and Zielewski (2009)[12], who found that NRF tangible support, intangible support, or both resulted in better reunification outcomes. *More About the Dads*[13], the follow up to the *What About Dads?* child welfare study by Malm and her colleagues at the Urban Institute linked the results to child outcomes.

In reviewing programs for low income fathers, a team from Mathematica has contributed a valuable inventory of measures pertinent to father related interventions (Avellar, Dion, Clarkwest, Zaveri, Asheer, Borradaile, Angus, Novak, Redline, and Zukiewicz. (2011)[14]. This review addressed both process and outcomes measures. The table of outcome domains provides a template to review the QIC NRF design and measures. Review of these measures below relates them to the QIC NRF design.

Of the fatherhood programs reviewed, only the Responsible Fatherhood Program from Baltimore, Maryland specifically addressed fathers whose child was involved in an active child welfare case. The Texas Fragile Families initiative reported that four per cent of its cases had child welfare involvement. All of the QIC NRF cases were child welfare involved with all having had a child removed from the home.

On the measurement side, a review of measurement issues commissioned by ACYF has provided an inventory of measures (Avelar, 2011). The measures of Responsible Fatherhood were collected from program fathers with the exception of Father's Support of Children. The detailed items of measurement domains are presented in Table 1. The measure domain of "Father's Economic self-sufficiency" speaks to the employment issues faced by the majority of the QIC NRF fathers. In the "Father well-being" measure domain, current incarceration was not an initial characteristic of fathers in the QIC NRF due to selection criteria. Incarceration previous to program enrollment or subsequent to program enrollment may have been an issue but was tracked only qualitatively. "Father's Financial Support of Children" was tracked in the QIC NRF only through father self-report. The resources devoted to recruitment and retention of fathers precluded active outreach to child support enforcement data. This was a shortcoming of the data collection effort that should be remedied in the future. Access to child support enforcement data was problematic at the time the QIC NRF started. During the course of the project there was notable change in policy with child support enforcement, and future program evaluation efforts should have access to these data. "Father Involvement" with children was tracked also through father self-report. As the case record review data collection showed, there was not much supervised visitation recorded, while fathers report more contact with their children. This should be further explored in the future. There was no systematic, direct observation of father child interaction. There was tracking if fathers obtained custody of their children.

No direct measures of Parenting Skills were collected either in the measures of responsible fatherhood or in the QIC NRF. These would be a valuable addition to ongoing fatherhood programs targeted to the fragile families or the child welfare population. In the QIC NRF, Father self-report information about relationship with mother of child was obtained. Collecting corroborative information from the mother

[12] Malm, K. E., & Zielewski, E. H. (2009). Nonresident father support and reunification outcomes for children in foster care. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 31, 1010-1018.

[13] Malm, K., Zielewski, E. and Chen, H. (2008) More About the Dads: Exploring Associations between Nonresident Father Involvement and Child Welfare Case Outcomes. Urban Institute, funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, #HHS-100-01-0014. Available at: www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411641_more_dads.pdf

[14] Avellar, Sarah, M., Robin Dion, Andrew Clarkwest, Heather Zaveri, Subuhi Asheer, Kelley Borradaile, Megan Hague Angus, Timothy Novak, Julie Redline, and Marykate Zukiewicz. (2011). Catalog of Research: Programs for Low-Income Fathers, OPRE Report # 2011-20, Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

would add to this information. History of domestic violence was obtained. Given the non-resident status of the fathers in the QIC program, this was not considered a pertinent measure. Child outcomes were taken solely from administrative data related to maltreatment reports and foster care utilization.

Table 1: Domains for Outcomes

Area of Interest	Illustrative Examples
Responsible Fatherhood	
Fathers' Economic Self-Sufficiency	Employment status Earnings or wages Hours worked Part- or full-time status Financial literacy Educational attainment
Fathers' Well-Being	Incarceration Drug/alcohol use Physical health Mental health (for example, depression, anxiety)
Fathers' Financial Support of Children	Paternity establishment Child support paid Compliance with court orders Other monetary or material support of children
Father Involvement	Frequency of contact with children Custodial status Residence with children Father-child interaction
Parenting	
Parenting Skills	Indicators of quality of parenting (for example, child maltreatment, cognitive stimulation, warmth, harsh discipline, monitoring), knowledge of developmental milestones
Inter-Parental Relationship	
Co-Parenting	Joint decision making Quality of co-parenting relationship Activities with both parents and children
Relationship Status and Quality	Relationship status (for example, married, romantically involved) Residential status (cohabiting part time or full time) Length of relationship Relationship quality
Domestic violence*	Violence reported by at least one partner Fear of partner Injuries from partner
Child Outcomes	
Child outcomes	Cognitive Social-emotional Physical health

(from Avellar *et al.,* 2011, p 5}

Drawing upon extensive work with Early Childhood Programs, Fagan and Palm (2004), point to the importance of the father's relationship to the mother of his child (or mothers of children) and to the importance of the different experiences of the men with their children. In addressing the new father roles in the United States, the authors make a strong point about the wide variation found:

Committee Fathers may perform in vastly different ways, depending on the definition of fatherhood to which the father subscribes. The diversity of fatherhood definitions can be unbderstood by examining the historical perspective, cultural and religious influences, and the various permutations of fatherhood types prevalent today. (p. 22)

This diversity of perspectives on fatherhood is consistent with the reports of the men engaged with the QIC sites. Not only do the men have arrays of unique needs but also their reports of hopes and aspirations for what they want to do with their children range from knowng who they are to having full custody. This gets to a critical point about father engagement, that is, to respect the relationship the father wants to have with his child.

Problems and Challenges

Research Design Changes

After the four sites had substantial experience with NRF recruitment from the lists provided to them by local child welfare authorities, the results implied that the initial NRF recruitment assumptions would not be met sufficiently to populate the full experimental design. An original premise of the QIC NRF research design was that there would be adequate recruitment of fathers to populate the engagement intervention and control groups. This premise was based upon several sources of information.

- What About the Dads? cited the caseworker survey interviews as reflecting NRFs were identified in 88% of the child welfare cases, contacted in 55% of child welfare cases, and visited in 30%.
- Recruitment goals were based upon a 50% contact projection and a 50% agreement to participate projection. The contact projection goal was more conservative than the research estimate available. The agreement to participate goal was based on the theoretical 50:50 odds that a NRF either would agree to participate or would not. These goals were presented in the Request for Proposals.
- Sites reported in project proposals that they would have enough cases to satisfy recruitment projections.

In fact, sites were able to obtain contact information or determine timely eligibility on only about 10% of NRFs during the initial quarters of program operation. This was about one-fifth of the NRF contact goal. Of those contacted, voluntary participation agreement was obtained for more than 66%. This validated the agreement to participate. There was a consistency in performance across four geographically separate sites.

After lagging recruitment for 6 months with only modest estimates of reaching original projections, the recruitment deficit could not be reasonably projected to reach the original goals. At the same time, sites were thoroughly documenting the reasons for no contact with fathers. Incarceration, out-of-State residence and no contact information were three prominent reasons.

Discarding the control condition and assigning all voluntary participating fathers to the engagement intervention program became the recruitment strategy. This allowed a clear statement of what was to be offered upon agreement to participate. A case record review conducted after the services to NRFs ended gathered available information about not contacted and contacted but not voluntary participating NRFs.

There was a viable alternative to the experimental design. Participating fathers all had children in foster care. These children could be compared with cohorts of all children with nonparticipating fathers or matched groups of children of non-participating fathers. The children of participating, NRFs would provide sufficient group sizes for such quasi-experimental comparisons. The children of NRFs in these other groups represent comparison opportunities to children of fathers in an engagement intervention program. Cases for these comparison opportunities are available in the administrative data, notably in the AFCARS file records. This comparison would be quasi-experimental rather than experimental since there was no random assignment to group.

Other program changes were made to enhance recruitment. One was a more flexible group start-up time, i.e. joining the group before the second structured session instead of only before the first

structured session, was allowed. Another strategy was to constructively fill the time between recruitment and group start by regular contact. Eliminating other internal barriers, such as recruitment within 45 days of child placement, was also intended to enhance recruitment.

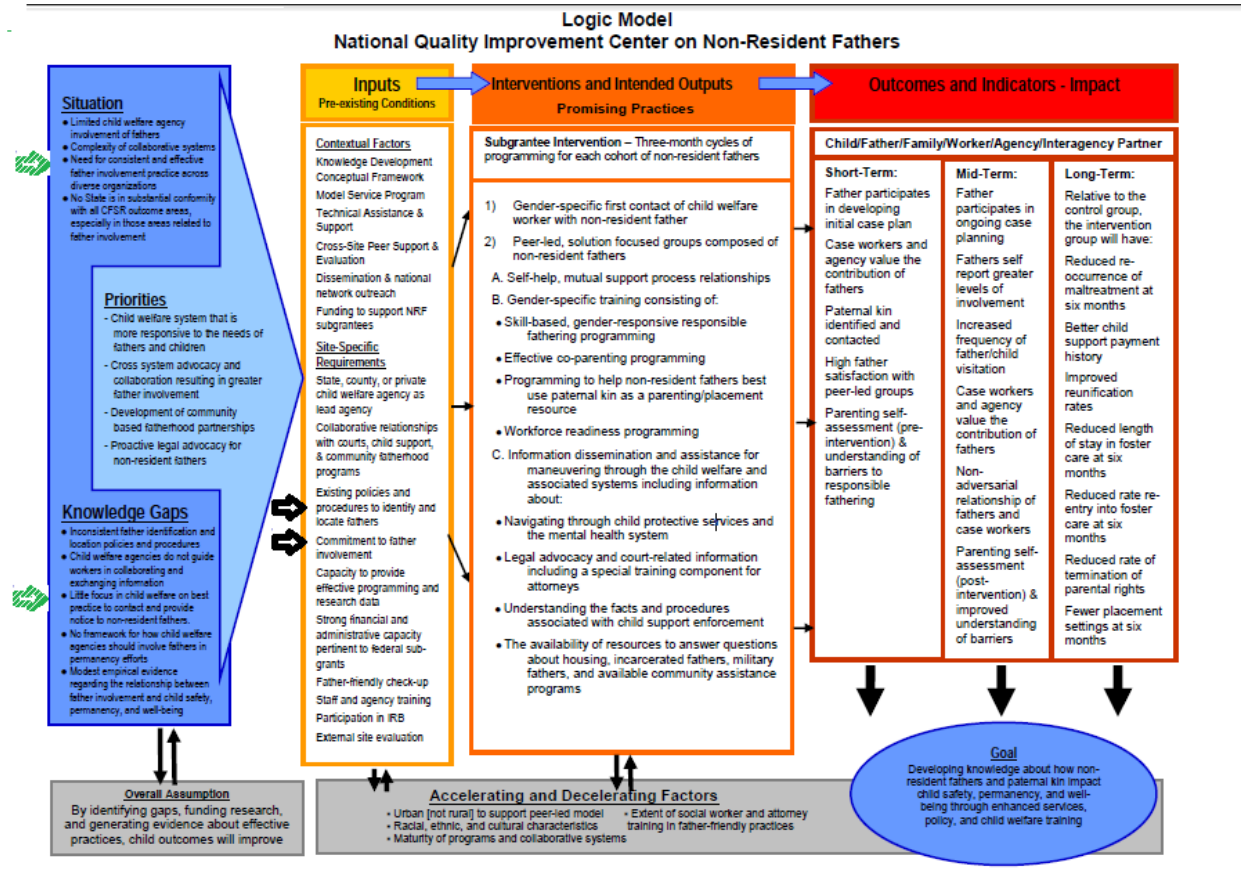
While these changes were anticipated to provide recruitment increases, the increases are unlikely to be sufficient to remediate losses against the original projections. One implication of those findings and the change in procedures and design was that there would be increased attention to the "Situation" and the "Knowledge Gap" portion of the Logic Model. This area addresses the "contact and provide notice to fathers" activities. This proved an important point of focus for the project going forward.

Figure 3 presents the project Logic Model used for the Phase II plan. The two hollow, black arrows in the "Inputs" column represent the key input assumptions for the recruitment of fathers for the experimental design. Sites were recruited based upon:

- Existing policies and procedures to identify and locate fathers
- Commitment to father involvement.

As there was no support for these assumptions, attention was turned to the precursors of these identified in the "Situation" factors and the "Knowledge Gaps" environmental factors. These are highlighted by the green striped, hollow arrows. Increased attention here took the form of reviewing organizational information collection, family finding training, social worker training, and legal oriented training for judges, magistrate and attorneys.

Figure 3: QIC NRF Logic Model



This change from an experimental to a quasi-experimental design responded to the process data results from the field sites. While there are losses of information as a result of the change, many points of analysis remain from the original objectives, and new areas of practice advancement are developing. The firm foundation of multi-site results will lead to increase knowledge about the reaching and engagement of NRFs in child welfare.

Significant Findings and Events

Father-Friendly Checkup™

One of the earliest premises of the QIC NRF was that the organizational context or climate affected the approach to and the delivery of services. This was based on the pioneering work of the project partner, the National Fatherhood Initiative in developing a general *Father-Friendly Checkup ™* inventory applicable to all organizational settings (National Fatherhood Initiative, 2010)[15]. This widely available inventory was adapted to be aptly pertinent for Child Welfare settings. Its intent is to provide an organizational self-assessment so that there can be a plan for improving the quality of the organization's response to fathers

The initial plan for the QIC NRF was that such a self-assessment would "level the playing field" as it were between the participating sites. This initial work would then reduce the variability in site performance and enhance the service provided to NRFs in child welfare settings. All sites used the child welfare version of the Inventory. This adaptation was supported by project funds and is available on the web site. The Father-Friendly Check Up™ for Child Welfare organizations is available at http://site.americanhumane.org/fatherhooddocs/ffcuchildwelfareagencyorg_msco_100108final.pdf . This version gives a complete hard copy of the Inventory, its scoring and the scoring interpretation. This version was adapted for use in child welfare.

The use of the Inventory provided the sites with concrete items about the meaning of Father Friendly. The shared experience of completing the Inventory gave the disparate sites a common language to speak regarding what it meant to be Father Friendly. It provided them an initial opportunity for collaboration on ways to improve their Father Friendly indices as shown in the Florida example described below. Florida was not one of the full sites but cooperated significantly in the development of training and TA approach now expressed in the Ten Steps.

The Inventory has been used in automated form as well. Using a web based survey package, the Tarrant County, Texas site automated the checkup. This has successfully been used in at least two other states. Attachment A presents the results of the Inventory from a large region in Florida, which had a history of engaging with Fathers and performing active family finding. This report provides item detail and graphic interpretation in eight areas from the Inventory:

- Stage of Service,
- Leadership/Administration,
- Policies and Procedures,
- Organizational Behavior,
- Environment/Atmosphere,
- Staff Training and Behavior,
- Community Relations Promoting Fatherhood, and
- Community Perceptions of Organization.

[15] National Fatherhood Initiative (2011) http://www.fatherhood.org/organizations/programs/father-friendly-check-up

These results can also be tallied for agencies within the organization.

The Environment/Atmosphere items are a natural entry point for discussion. The items reflect the basis of most first impressions of an organization and provide concrete actions that are visible to all. This allows an organization to begin to define itself as father friendly in very tangible ways. Other areas may have more difficulty in developing immediate plans without the dedication of staff time and other resources.

The Inventory is considered to be a critical step in developing a father oriented program. It provides definition as to what is meant by the term “father friendly”, it provides initial activities for the organization to engage in, and it provides a language to speak about father issues. The Inventory is meant to be a face valid set of items that an organization can use as a self-assessment. As such, it can be completed initially by a single informant or a collaborative group, and then discussed by the larger organization to reach consensus. Another approach to self-assessment might be for a poll of key individuals or a census poll of the organization as the basis for consensus building discussions on improvements to be addressed. This latter approach was used in Texas and led to the web based survey approach. To date, there has not been the interest or the resource commitment to develop norms of organizational profiles on a broad basis. This reflects the face valid self-assessment nature of the Inventory.

Father Recruitment

Site staff tracked recruiting efforts and transmitted this information to cross-site evaluators on a regular basis. The recruiting logs sought to ascertain the reasons for the unexpectedly low numbers of fathers recruited and the means employed to find and contact these fathers.

Table 2 shows the general timeframes within which the site recruitment and outreach staff has worked. Colorado and Indiana considered children who had been out of the home for several years, while the sites in Texas and Washington began with 2008 placements.

Table 2: Timeframes: removal dates

		Site			
		CO	IN	TX	WA
N	Valid	462	609	637	571
	Missing	46	11	1	3
Earliest		18-Jan-2004	29-Oct-2008	22-Aug-2008	12-Dec-2008
Most Recent		09-Dec-2009	01-Dec-2009	12-Dec-2009	24-Dec-2009

The pool of potential participants consisted of all fathers of children in foster care (*Table* 3*3*). The pool of eligible participants proved considerably smaller, and the pool of eligible participants who were living in the area and able to be contacted was smaller still. Thus fathers were either withdrawn from or kept in the pool at three levels. At the first level, fathers who were not living in the home from which the child was removed, fathers not deceased, and fathers whose parental rights had not been terminated form the pool of *applicable fathers.* This pool still contained fathers who were unknown, who had not confirmed paternity, or who had not as yet been located. Efforts to identify or locate fathers continued throughout the project.

Fathers who were identified were then vetted for safety and risk. Fathers were said to be "eligible" at this second level if they were not deemed to pose a risk to the child. Fathers were withdrawn from the pool of eligible fathers if they had a record of substantiated child abuse or domestic violence.

At a third level, once the site outreach staff determined a father to be eligible, they tried to find him. Contact information may or may not exist in his CPS file; the contact information that existed may have been out of date or inaccurate. These fathers move around a great deal. Some were found to be homeless. In addition, once fathers were located, they may be out of the area or incarcerated.[16] The fathers who were actually contacted by outreach staff formed only a fraction of those eligible. *Table* 3*3 through Table* 1*1* depict this treatment of the pool.

The pool of potential program participants consisted of fathers of children in foster care. The quarterly progressions reflect the rate at which placements were referred to the program. Startup occurred in late 2008, and at that time there was a constraint against outreach to fathers of children in placement longer than 45 days. The earliest quarter on *Table* 3*3* reflects these two circumstances. Of the four quarters of 2009, the largest number of referrals during a given quarter was 204, in Indiana, while the smallest was 89, in Colorado. Three of the four sites trend upward during the course of implementation,

[16]Incarcerated fathers were not included in this initial intervention, but at least one of the sites hopes to adapt the program to serve the needs of incarcerated fathers and their children.

but Washington peaked during the second quarter of 2009. The total pool as of project end ranged from 846 fathers to 1089.

Table 3: The Pool (3420 in all)

Number removed/referred, by calendar quarter *												
	2008 .03	2008 .04	2009 .01	2009 .02	2009 .03	2009 .04	2010 .01	2010 . 02	2010.3	2010.4	Unspecified Date	Total
CO **	24	87	89	119	134	108	115	84	40	0	46	846
IN	1	49	170	170	204	159	176	93	0	0	57	1079
TX	40	103	101	110	142	152	128	113	128	1	1	1019
WA	0	39	133	167	108	138	149	157	109	0	7	1007

The records of a substantial portion of fathers in the pool showed that they did not reside in the home from which the children were removed. *Table 4* shows the number of NRFs, by site and quarter of referral. The general trend follows that of the pool.

Table 4: Non-Resident Fathers of Children (2916 in all)

Site	2008. 03	2008. 04	2009. 01	2009. 02	2009. 03	2009. 04	2010. 01	2010. 02	2010. 03	2010.. 04	Unspec	Overall
CO	21	54	63	79	91	66	61	54	26	30	3	548
IN	1	2	133	155	192	146	160	80	0	18	0	887
TX	26	79	78	83	103	104	86	81	93	1	13	747
WA	0	35	104	127	78	99	104	112	75	0	0	734

On *Table 5*, each cell represents, for that site and quarter, the percent of NRFs of the entire pool (each would be a wedge in its own site-quarter pie chart, the other wedges being "resident" and "missing"). Thus, for example, in the first quarter of 2009 in Indiana, 133 fathers were non-resident. This represents 78.2% of the total 170 (See *Table 2*.) While overall numbers would trend upward as a result of changes in referral and catchment practice, there is no reason internal to this study to expect the percent of NRFs to trend in any particular direction over several quarter-years. In general Indiana shows the highest percentage of NRFs (perhaps due to their referral process,) while Colorado shows the lowest.

Table 5: Non-Resident Fathers, Percent of Total for each site

	Percent by calendar quarter of removal											
Site	2008. 03	2008. 04	2009.0 1	2009. 02	2009.0 3	2009.0 4	2010. 01	2010. 02	2010. 03	2010. 04	Unspec	Overall
CO	87.5 %	62.1 %	70.8 %	66.4 %	67.9 %	61.1 %	53.0 %	64.3 %	65.0 %	65.2 %	12.5%	64.8%
IN	100.0 %	4.1%	78.2 %	91.2 %	94.1 %	91.8 %	90.9 %	86.0 %	0.0%	31.6 %	0.0%	82.2%
TX	65.0 %	76.7 %	77.2 %	75.5 %	72.5 %	68.4 %	67.2 %	71.7 %	72.7 %	100.0 %	32.5%	73.3%
WA	0.0%	89.7 %	78.2 %	76.0 %	72.2 %	71.7 %	69.8 %	71.3 %	68.8 %	0.0%	0.0%	72.9%

In each site, a handful of fathers were deceased or had relinquished parental rights and therefore were also removed from the pool. *Table 6 and 7* show the numbers and percentages remaining after this

excision (Level 1; *Table 33* below provides elaboration). Eighteen, thirty-four, twenty and forty-one fathers were removed from consideration from site counties in Colorado, Indiana, Texas and Washington, respectively. Numbers of applicable fathers still parallel the trends visible in the overall pool of *Table 2*.

Table 6: Non-Resident Fathers less deceased and TPR: Applicable Fathers (2669 in all)

	Number of applicable fathers, by calendar quarter of removal											
Site	2008 .03	2008 .04	2009 .01	2009 .02	2009 .03	2009 .04	2010 .01	2010 .02	2010 .03	2010 .04	Unspec	Overall
CO	20	53	61	76	87	63	58	51	25	29	24	547
IN	0	2	128	147	184	142	153	69	0	18	0	843
TX	23	76	77	75	98	101	80	79	89	1	39	738
WA	0	35	100	0	51	90	94	101	70	0	0	541

Table 7 reflects the numbers in *Table 6* as percentages of the total pool. Thus, the 128 "applicable" fathers referred in Indiana during the first quarter of 2009 represent 73% of the total 147. Percentages by site by quarter in 2009 now range from 63% to 90% of site/quarter totals. Overall site percentages range from 54% to 78%.

Table 7: Non-Resident Fathers less deceased and TPR: Percent of Total

	Number applicable, by calendar quarter of referral/removal											
Site	2008 .03	2008 .04	2009 .01	2009 .02	2009 .03	2009. 04	2010 .01	2010 .02	2010 .03	2010 .04	Unspec	Overall
CO	83.3%	60.9%	68.5%	63.9%	64.9%	58.3%	50.4%	60.7%	62.5%	63 .0%	100 .0%	64.7%
IN	0 .0%	4.1%	75.3%	86.5%	90.2%	89.3%	86.9%	74.2%	0 .0%	31.6%	0 .0%	78.1%
TX	57.5%	73.8%	76.2%	68.2%	69.0%	66.4%	62.5%	69.9%	69.5%	100 .0%	97.5%	72.4%
WA	0 .0%	89.7%	75.2%	0 .0%	47.2%	65.2%	63.1%	64.3%	64.2%	0 .0%	0 .0%	53.7%

Fathers were further screened for eligibility according to any past records of violence they may have had. *Table 88* reflects the number of NRFs of children in placement, referred by site and quarter, who were alive and had not relinquished parental rights, and who were not deemed a risk to the safety of their children (Level 2). (This eligibility criterion is presented in more detail below.) Note that the numbers follow the trends established by the overall pool.

Table 8: Eligible/Safe Fathers (2439 in all)

	Number of Eligible/safe fathers, by calendar quarter of removal/referral											
Site	2008 .03	2008 .04	2009 .01	2009 .02	2009 .03	2009. 04	2010 .01	2010 .02	2010 .03	2010 .04	Unspec	Overall
CO	19	47	60	69	83	58	54	44	23	28	20	505
IN	0	2	127	144	177	138	148	67	0	18	0	821
TX	18	62	64	63	90	95	71	73	76	1	23	636
WA	0	26	93	0	42	84	85	84	63	0	0	477

From *Table 9 to Table 11*, the pool consists only of *applicable* fathers, thus here the denominator changes. Almost all *applicable* fathers were also safe. Percentages by quarter range from 74% to 100% (values of 0 excluded); Overall percentages of applicable range from 82% to 99%. Thus in our Indiana example, 127 fathers constitute over 99% of the 128 applicable fathers referred in Marion County in the 1st quarter of 2009.

Table 9: Percent of Applicable Fathers who were Eligible/Safe

	Percent Eligible/Safe, by calendar quarter of removal/referral											
Site	2008 .03	2008 .04	2009 .01	2009 .02	2009 .03	2009	2010 .01	2010 .02	2010 .03	2010 .04	Unspec	Overall
CO	95 .0%	88.7%	98.4%	90.8%	95.4%	92.1%	93.1%	86.3%	92 .0%	96.6%	100 .0%	92.3%
IN	0 .0%	100 .0%	99.2%	98 .0%	96.2%	97.2%	96.7%	97.1%	0 .0%	100 .0%	0 .0%	97.4%
TX	78.3%	81.6%	83.1%	84 .0%	91.8%	94.1%	88.8%	92.4%	85.4%	100 .0%	100 .0%	86.2%
WA	0 .0%	74.3%	93 .0%	0 .0%	82.4%	93.3%	90.4%	83.2%	90 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	88.2%

With *Table 8* and *Table 99* above we have counts, by quarter and by site, of those fathers who were considered eligible for the program (plus a few who were unknown and therefore not yet eliminated.) Of these, only a fraction is ultimately contacted by program outreach staff. Of the fathers counted in the tables above, some had moved out of the area, others were incarcerated, and for still others, there is no contact information on record. Project outreach staff who had worked with and shadowed case workers report that despite policy and protocols for due diligence, case workers rarely press children's caregivers for information about absent or NRFs. *Table* shows, again by site and by quarter, how many fathers were considered applicable, eligible, domiciled within the county region, and able to be contacted (Level 3). Thus, of the 127 applicable fathers in Indiana for the first quarter of 2009, 67 were able to be contacted by outreach staff, a difference representative of all quarters in all sites. Numbers of contactable fathers considered ranged from 91 to 351. (Note that since the recruitment data bases were updated as fathers were contacted, and since sites elected to revisit the earliest referrals once the time constraint of 45 days was lifted, this table will not necessarily reflect changes in family finding practice.)

Table10: Fathers who were Eligible/Safe and having valid Contact Information[17] (791 in all)

	Number Eligible, Safe, and with valid contact information, by calendar quarter of removal/referral											
	2008 .03	2008 .04	2009 .01	2009 .02	2009 .03	2009	2010 .01	2010 .02	2010 .03	2010 .04	Unspec	Overall
CO	1	4	9	11	6	12	15	9	8	0	16	91
IN	0	2	67	65	77	51	58	19	0	0	12	351
TX	8	29	32	19	37	39	28	30	34	0	0	256
WA	0	4	23	0	11	28	27	0	0	0	0	93

Table 11 shows the percent of applicable fathers, for each site-quarter, who had been contacted to participate in the program. Thus, for Indiana, first quarter 2009, the 67 fathers accessible represent 52% of the 127 applicable fathers. Overall (across quarters) accessible fathers range from 17% of applicable fathers to 42% of applicable fathers, with the caveat that for Colorado, the count of eligible fathers with valid contact information was constructed from the site's explicit report rather than from the "contact information available" variable(s) as in the other three sites. These percentages reflect the fact that

[17] Contact information is counted as valid until found to be otherwise, at which point it is recoded.

most NRFs of children in the foster care system were difficult to locate. Facilitators who shadowed case workers reported that given the scarcity of resources which plagues most agencies, case workers elect not to search for fathers very hard. This is the stage at which the pool shrinks most drastically.

Table 11 - Percent of Applicable Fathers who were Eligible/Safe and had valid contact information

	Number Referred/Removed, by calendar quarter											
Site	2008 .03	2008 .04	2009 .01	2009 .02	2009 .03	2009 .04	2010 .01	2010 .02	2010 .03	Unspecified Date	Overall	& of Total Pool
CO	5 .0%	7.5%	14.8%	14.5%	6.9%	19 .0%	25.9%	17.6%	32 .0%	55.2%	16.6%	10.8%
IN	0 .0%	100 .0%	52.3%	44.2%	41.8%	35.9%	37.9%	27.5%	0 .0%	66.7%	41.6%	32.5%
TX	34.8%	38.2%	41.6%	25.3%	37.8%	38.6%	35 .0%	38 .0%	38.2%	0 .0%	34.7%	25.1%
WA	0 .0%	11.4%	23 .0%	0 .0%	21.6%	31.1%	28.7%	0 .0%	0 .0%	0 .0%	17.2%	9.2%

* This figure for Colorado was taken from the values of this variable in the Colorado Data base. In the others, this figure was calculated based on a combination of variables on eligibility, availability of contact information, and residency outside of jurisdiction; thus Colorado's fathers were proven accessible.

This section on outreach and recruitment reports on barriers to engagement, strategies to overcome these barriers, and level of effort necessary to make contact with fathers. It will be recalled that the 45-day constraint was lifted. *Table 22* reflects the number of days between referral/removal and first successful contact. While the median number of days falls below 45 for all sites but one, the means imply that the number of fathers contacted after 45 days justifies lifting the constraint. With adequate contact information, fathers can be reached by a program representative within a week of removal/referral (minimum days to contact). The table also shows that locating and contacting fathers can also take over a year. In three sites, of those fathers contacted, half were contacted within in 5 to 7 weeks, while in Washington, half were contacted in less than 25 days.

Table 22: Days from Referral to Contact

	Site			
	CO	IN	TX	WA
N	40	130	101	42
Missing	806	949	918	965
Mean	65.88	68.72	43.97	50.81
Median	31.50	44	31	25
Mode	23	43	21	8
Minimum	4	3	7	0
Maximum	281	479	330	287

The remaining tables elaborate on the process of and barriers to father engagement. *Table 33* elaborates on *Table 6 and 7*, showing for each site across quarters the number and percent of fathers withdrawn from the pool due to decease or termination of parental rights. Compared to the numbers of fathers either incarcerated or out of jurisdiction, these numbers were low. Percents with termination of parental rights range from just under three-quarters of one percent to 2% (just under 1% overall), while percents deceased range from 1.7% to 3.5% (2.7% overall).

Table 33: Number and Percent of Fathers Withdrawn from pool of Applicable fathers due to Decease or Termination of Parental Rights (Percents were percents of total (Table 3))

	Number of Fathers			Percent of total Pool		
Site	**TPR**	**Deceased**	**Overall**	**% TPR**	**%Deceased**	**Overall %**
CO	10	**14**	**24**	1.18%	1.65%	2.84%
IN	8	**38**	**46**	0.74%	3.52%	4.26%
TX	9	**26**	**35**	0.88%	2.55%	3.43%
WA	22	**30**	**52**	2.18%	2.98%	5.16%
Total	49	108	157	1.24%	2.73%	3.97%

The Eligible-because- Applicable-and-Safe variable was constructed by assigning a value of 0 if fathers were shown to have a history of domestic violence, child abuse or other safety issues. A total of 210 fathers were eliminated due to such concerns (8% of applicable). Washington shows the largest number and percentage of eliminations, while Indiana shows the smallest.

Table 44: Reasons for Safety Disqualification

	Number of Fathers				Percent of Site Applicable Fathers*			
Site	Domestic Violence-exceptions allowed; use discretion	child abuse and/or neglect charges	Other safety concerns (restraining order, etc..)	Overall (Note: 3 categories were not mutually exclusive)	Domestic Violence-exceptions allowed; use discretion	child abuse and/or neglect charges	Other safety concerns (restraining order, etc..) use discretion	Overall Percent
CO	20	29	13	38	3.7%	5.3%	2.4%	6.9%
IN	5	7	28	22	0.6%	0.8%	3.3%	2.6%
TX	10	48	28	86	1.4%	6.5%	3.8%	11.7%
WA	24	242	0	64	4.4%	44.7%	0 .0%	11.8%
Total	59	326	69	210	2.2%	12.2%	2.6%	7.87%

Calculated in Excel

* Washington project staff categorizes child abuse/neglect under "other safety concerns".

As shown by *Table 55*, the number of fathers eliminated by distance exceeds that of fathers eliminated due to considerations of safety or due to incarceration (not set up in our data base to be mutually exclusive). Numbers of fathers on record as incarcerated range from 55 to 165. The number of fathers out of jurisdiction range from 127 to 190. Of all barriers to father engagement, more fathers fall into the categories of "unable to locate" and "out of jurisdiction" than into any other.

Table 55: Out of Jurisdiction, Incarceration (note: these were not mutually exclusive)

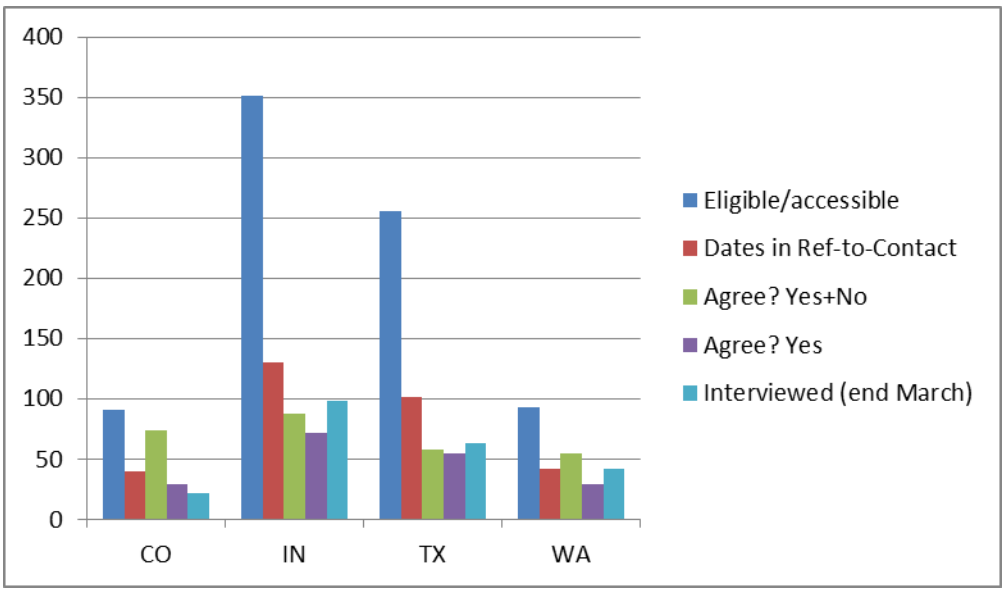
	Number of Fathers			Percent of Site Applicable Fathers		
Site	Incarcerated, All Quarters	Out of Jurisdiction	Other (incl unable to locate)	Incarcerated, All Quarters	Out of Jurisdiction	Other (incl unable to locate)
CO	55	164	18	10.1%	30 .0%	3.3%
IN	165	127	142	19.6%	15.1%	16.8%
TX	112	159	182	15.2%	21.5%	24.7%
WA	87	190	190	16.1%	35.1%	35.1%
	419	640	532	15.7%	24 .0%	19.9%

Under one-third of fathers who were eligible with valid contact information were actually interviewed. The foregoing tables profile the barriers to identification and location of prospective program fathers. *Table 66* below will show that even when a father is able to be found, project staff get through to only a fraction of those fathers; fewer still give a definite answer, fewer still agree, and of those who agree, not all were represented among those interviewed. While it is logical that a given cell not exceed that above it, the extent of reduction will prove significant.

Table 66: Fathers contacted and engaged

Crosswalks:	Source	CO	IN	TX	WA	X-site Totals
Eligible_accessible	Recr	91	351	256	93	791
Dates in Ref-to-Contact	Recr	40	130	101	42	313
Agree? Yes+No	Recr	74	88	58	55	275
Agree? Yes	Recr	29	72	55	29	185
Interviewed (end May)	Int	22	98	63	42	225
Percent of eligible who were actually interviewed		24.18%	27.92%	24.61%	45.16%	**28.45%**

Figure 3: Fathers Contacted and Engaged



Implications for Practice

The QIC comes to a close amid a growing trend toward more intensive family finding activities. Many of these initiatives are stressing the importance of including fathers and paternal family in the outreach process. This project has shown us that family finding practice, particularly with respect to NRFs, needs to proceed in an ongoing manner throughout the life of a case. Discussions with outreach staff and facilitators have yielded the following observations:

- If a father is initially unknown, the establishment of a positive, trusting relationship between case worker and known family members may result in the eventual disclosure of father's identity and whereabouts. Such disclosures should be documented and acted upon no matter when they occur during the life of a case.
- It may take many tries by phone to make contact with a father.
- Contact information should be updated as needed.
- Many fathers move out of jurisdiction. At present there is not much inter-jurisdictional cooperation to strengthen relationships of children in care with fathers living out of jurisdiction.

- Strengthening relationships between incarcerated fathers and their children can benefit both.
- If male first contact is with a male who clearly seeks to ease a father's journey through the child welfare system, fathers will respond positively.

Outreach staff employed many techniques to find and engage fathers. They suggest that outreach staff:

- Call fathers
- Invite them to talk
- Invite them to a meal
- Offer help with transportation
- Offer help with clothing
- Assess their needs
- Meet their needs.

Challenges include:

- Distance
- Incarceration
- Temperament and Safety
- Mistrust of System
- Multi-system involvement
- Animosity between Mothers and Fathers
- Health
- Drugs
- Employment
- Transportation
- Job-Readiness

Curriculum Process Results

Background and Introduction

At the end of the first year of the QIC NRF, the Children's Bureau awarded the QIC NRF a supplemental grant, which was used for the development of a 12-module curriculum for the peer-led support group.[18] The sessions formed the core of the model intervention, which was designed to last for 20 weeks including the 12 sessions as outlined in the curriculum, and 8 additional weeks focusing on topics of the fathers' own choosing.

Among the activities site and cross-site evaluators conducted to assess the effectiveness of the program and to examine barriers, strategies and knowledge for future iterations and replications of the program, a weekly Facilitator Feedback Survey formed part of the ongoing formative evaluation of the NRF model program intervention (see Appendix B). With this survey, facilitators and evaluators assessed the twelve structured and eight semi-structured peer-led sessions, and provided recommendations regarding future program modifications and improvements. QIC NRF staff sent a weekly reminder to all site facilitators and site evaluators with information about accessing the online formative survey through *Survey Monkey*, a web-based survey tool. Each week (in theory), site facilitators completed this brief online survey about the particular sessions that were implemented at their research and demonstration sites during the preceding week. The online survey included standard evaluative items and ratings from week to week, as well as the ability to respond to open-ended questions for each session.

Throughout the term of the project, facilitators provided information to the QIC NRF research and training staff regarding the challenges and successes of implementing the model program intervention. Evaluators examined the choices made by fathers, both in the ordering of sessions 4 – 12, and in the choice of topics for Sessions 13 – 20. Evaluators also sought information on time allocation, degree of engagement, unusual behavior on the part of fathers, and the use of guest speakers.

This section will present findings on choice of session, ratings, engagement, and time allocation, followed by a qualitative section presenting facilitator feedback on each module through their open-ended comments. These sub-sections will be followed by a discussion and conclusion.

Findings

In general, Facilitators have conducted 473 curriculum sessions of the NRF model program intervention across the four research and demonstration sites. Implementation of sessions began in December 2008, and session facilitators have provided model intervention feedback in an accumulated fashion continuously for more than three years (see *Table 17*).

[18] *A copy of the curriculum is available at: www.FatherhoodQIC.org*

Table 17: Number of Curriculum Sessions and Cohorts by Site

Site	Number of Curriculum Sessions	Number of Cohorts	Percent of Total Curriculum Sessions
CO	105	6	22%
IN	127	11	27%
TX	130	11	27%
WA	111	6	23%
Totals	473	34	100%

The 473 total curriculum sessions represented 11 cohorts of non-residents fathers in Texas and Indiana, and by six cohorts in both Colorado and Washington. Thus, for the purposes of this paper, the unit of observation is the session-occurrence. Given that there was a total of 34 cohorts across sites, each session-module should have been conducted 34 times. However, sessions were cancelled; most were made up, but some topics were not held. Since fathers were allowed to choose the order of the module topics, frequency of modules provides some indication of the choices made by participants and facilitators.

Table 18: Frequency of Curriculum Modules or Topics

Frequency Rank	Name of Module or Topic	Frequency of Implementation	Percent of Total
1	Dad as Part of the Solution: Overview of the Child Welfare System	35	7.4%
2	Dad as Healthy Parent: Taking Care of You	32	6.8%
3	Dad as Planner: Service Planning in the Child Welfare System	32	6.8%
4	Dad as Provider: Supporting Your Children	31	6.6%
5	Dad as Worker: Workforce Readiness	31	6.6%
6	Dad as Part of Children's Placement: Visiting With Your Children	30	6.3%
7	Introduction Session	30	6.3%
8	Dad as Part of the Juvenile Court Process: Legal Advocacy and Court Etiquette	27	5.7%
9	Dad as Team Player: Shared Parenting	26	5.5%
10	Dad as Community Member: Identifying and Accessing Resources	24	5.1%
11	Dad as Cultural Guide: The Role of Culture in Parenting	23	4.9%
12	Dad as Parent: Understanding Your Children	19	4.0%
13	Session was part of final 8 weeks	133 (=16 for each week-slot)	28.1% (=4% for each slot)
	Total	473	100.0%

Of the prescribed 12 curriculum session modules, program designers required three sessions to be implemented first. These three were the *Introduction Session*, *Dad as Part of the Solution: Overview of the Child Welfare System*, and *Dad as Planner: Service Planning in the Child Welfare System.* Thus as anticipated site staff implemented *Dad as Part of the Solution: Overview of the Child Welfare System* (7.4%), *as Healthy Parent: Taking Care of You* (6.8%), and *Dad as Planner: Service Planning in the Child Welfare System* (6.8%) relatively frequently. Site staff and participants chose *Dad as Provider: Supporting Your Children* (6.6%), *Dad as Worker: Workforce Readiness* (6.6%), and *Dad as part of Children's Placement: Visiting with Your Child (6.3%)* equally, and the remaining five sessions constituted approximately one-quarter (25.9%) of the remaining recorded sessions.

Participants' Choices based on perceived needs

Evaluators assumed that for the sessions immediately following the first three, fathers would choose the modules which addressed their immediate needs. *Table 19* below shows the frequency of sessions chosen for the fourth and fifth weeks. There is considerable variety in the choices, but it is clear that facilitators and participants showed a keen interest early on in the Juvenile Court Process, Visitation, and Health and Support.

Table 19: Frequency of Modules Chosen for Early Sessions

Module/Topic	Week 4	Week 5
Dad as Part of the Juvenile Court Process	9	3
Dad as Part of Childs Placement	6	6
Dad as Healthy Parent	4	2
Dad as Parent	4	1
Dad as Provider	4	5
Dad as Cultural Guide	2	3
Dad as Worker	2	2
Dad as Community Member	1	4
Dad as Planner	1	
Dad as Team Player		2
Other		1

As each cohort neared its 12th session the cohort would discuss and determine the topics of the last 8 sessions. They could either return to a module which they felt merited further discussion, they could further explore a topic previously covered, they could conduct modules from other curricula (Texas conducted several sessions of their *Fathers Offering Children Unfailing Support* (FOCUS) curriculum) or they could examine a topic not covered in the other curriculum modules. Their choices for these last eight weeks indicated a perceived need for practical help around job search and job readiness, budgeting and personal finance, and non-abusive ways to discipline a child. *Table 20* shows the topics chosen for these last 8 weeks, along with the frequencies of these topics. Fathers chose job readiness and budgeting/finance most readily. The frequencies also show an interest in conflict and anger management, the leadership, planning and decision making that fatherhood entails, child safety, and discipline.

Table 20: Topics covered during the last 8 weeks

Chosen Topic	Frequency
Job Search and Job Readiness	14
Close out and Graduation	10
Budgeting and Finance	8
Fatherhood leadership planning and decision making	7
Anger Stress Conflict Management	6
Child Safety	6
Discipline	6
Follow-up	6
Legal	6
Child Support	5
Health	5
Parenting	5
Pursuit of Happiness	5
Movie	4
Next steps	4
The Family	4
Practical Matters	3
Ethics	2
Fathers Advisory Council	2
Generational Differences	2
Life mapping	2
Marriage	2
Self-Discovery	2
Other	14

In the survey, for each session conducted, facilitators made a global judgment and rated the quality of each session's facilitated discussions and activities as a whole. Across all 466 sessions (13 were unrated), facilitators rated discussions and activities very highly on a scale of (1) poor to (5) excellent, with a mean rating of 4.4 out of 5.0. Specific sessions were rated as poor in just 2 of the 466 sessions: One was the Introduction Session, and the other was Dad as Community Member: Identifying and Accessing Resources. On average, the highest rated session was Dad as Part of the Solution: Overview of the Child Welfare System (*M* = 4.69), followed by two of the flexible group-selected alternative sessions, Dad as Planner: Service Planning in the Child Welfare System (*M* = 4.50), Dad as Part of the Juvenile Court Process: Legal Advocacy and Court Etiquette (*M* = 4.48), Dad as Cultural Guide: the Role of Culture in Parenting (*M* = 4.48), and the "other" sessions (*M* = 4.48) (All other sessions were clustered around the mean).

Table 21: Mean Facilitator Overall Ratings for Fatherhood Sessions Across All Sites

Rank	Module/Topic	N	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Mean Rating
1	Dad as Part of the Solution (overview)	35	.52979	3	5	4.69
2	Dad as Planner	32	.71842	2	5	4.50
3	Dad as Part of the Juvenile Court Process	27	.64273	3	5	4.48
4	Dad as Cultural Guide	23	.51075	4	5	4.48
5	Other (Session was Part of the Last 8 weeks)	130	.62525	3	5	4.48
6	Dad as Provider	30	.56832	3	5.00	4.43
7	Dad as Parent	18	.60768	3	5	4.39
8	Dad as Worker	31	.70938	3	5	4.35
9	Dad as Team Player	26	.73589	2	5	4.31
10	Dad as Healthy Parent	31	.69251	3	5	4.29
11	Introduction session	29	.88918	1	5	4.17
12	Dad as Community Member	24	1.31876	1	5	4.00
13	Dad as Part of Childs Placement	30	.74278	2	5	4.00
	Overall	466	.72474	1	5	4.38

Facilitators could comment on their ratings, and comments showed what the facilitators were considering as they rated the sessions. Those who rated their sessions highly (excellent) praised the guest speakers, the discussion, the relevance of the topic, and the fathers' questions. Those who rated their sessions less highly mentioned low attendance ("only one dad"), irrelevance of subject matter to those present, and the participants' reserve (usually during the first session).

Additionally, for each session, the facilitators rated the level of participant engagement that they had observed. Overall, across the 451 reported sessions (22 were unrated), the facilitators rated very highly the level of engagement of the NRF participants (overall *M* = 4.43) on a scale of (1) not engaged at all to (5) fully engaged. No facilitator rated any single session's engagement level as "not engaged at all." As

shown in *Table 22*, the session with the highest rated level of active engagement was Dad as Part of the Solution: Overview of the Child Welfare System (*M* = 4.74); that with the lowest was Dad as Part of Children's Placement: Visiting With Your Children (*M* = 4.07), although all sessions were highly regarded (see *Table 21*). Level of engagement often figured in the facilitators' comments, as discussed below.

Table 22: Mean Facilitator Engagement Ratings for Fatherhood Sessions across All Sites

Rank	Module/Topic	N	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Mean Rating
1	Dad as Part of the Solution: Overview of the Child Welfare System	35	.505	3.00	5.00	4.74
2	Dad as Planner: Service Planning in the Child Welfare System	31	.551	3.00	5.00	4.65
3	Session was part of final 8 weeks (Sessions 13-20)	117	.609	1.00	5.00	4.55
4	Dad as Parent: Understanding Your Children	19	.513	4.00	5.00	4.53
5	Dad as Part of the Juvenile Court Process: Legal Advocacy and Court Etiquette	26	.647	3.00	5.00	4.46
6	Dad as Cultural Guide: The Role of Culture in Parenting	22	.596	3.00	5.00	4.45
7	Dad as Community Member: Identifying and Accessing Resources	24	.770	3.00	5.00	4.38
8	Introduction session	29	.614	3.00	5.00	4.34
9	Dad as Provider: Supporting Your Children	30	.837	2.00	5.00	4.30
10	Dad as Team Player: Shared Parenting	26	.724	3.00	5.00	4.27
11	Dad as Worker: Workforce Readiness	31	.729	3.00	5.00	4.26
12	Dad as Healthy Parent: Taking Care of You	31	.669	3.00	5.00	4.23
13	Dad as Part of Children's Placement: Visiting With Your Children	30	.828	2.00	5.00	4.07
	Overall	451	.674	1.00	5.00	4.43

In 205 of the total reported sessions (43 %), an interactive guest expert co-facilitated (e.g., child support specialist, parent educator, legal liaison, nurse, attorney, case worker, workforce center manager). The overall session and father engagement ratings were reported to be particularly high when guest speakers were present (overall means=4.57 and 4.54, respectively, for overall rating and engagement with a guest speaker, as compared to 4.25 and 4.30, respectively, without a guest speaker). Evaluators performed a cross-tabulation and chi-square test. The difference was shown to be highly significant ($p < .000$). Facilitator comments also stressed fathers' enthusiasm and active questioning of guest speakers during the sessions with guest speakers. One facilitator commented "the facilitator for this session is great; he really gets the men to interact. As they asked the more difficult questions light bulbs start

going off in these fathers head and they are now ready to get more information," after the "*Dad as Planner*" session.

In 402 of the total reported sessions (85.0 %), facilitators indicated that there was adequate time to complete all of the session's activities and facilitated discussions. There was no clear pattern to sessions where it was reported that there was not enough time to finish the session, other than it was generally reported in weeks one and two when facilitators and fathers were new to the process of implementing the model program intervention. Further, overall ratings were not appreciably reduced in the relatively small percentage of sessions where facilitators reported inadequate time to complete the week's session (overall means=4.48 and 4.49, respectively, for overall rating and engagement). In fact, intense and lively engagement can be expected to cause a given session to run overtime,

Lastly, although very rare, in 10 separate sessions and across three different sites it was reported that a father experienced unusual stress or sadness during the sessions (e.g., a father showed a lot of emotion; a father laid his head down; a father appeared under the influence of drugs or alcohol). Facilitators indicated in qualitative comments that in many of these situations other peer fathers and the facilitator were able to offer words of encouragement and mutual support to assist the fathers in moving towards acceptance and reconciliation (see *Table 23*).

Table 23: Frequency of Unusual Behavioral Incidents by Module/Topic

Module/Topic	Total number of sessions with unusual incidents
Dad as Healthy Parent: Taking Care of You	3
Dad as Parent: Understanding Your Children	1
Dad as Part of Children's Placement: Visiting With Your Children	1
Dad as Part of the Juvenile Court Process: Legal Advocacy and Court Etiquette	1
Dad as Part of the Solution: Overview of the Child Welfare System	2
Dad as Provider: Supporting Your Children	1
Session was part of final 8 weeks	1
Total	10

Feedback on Specific Modules

The most useful information on the modules come from the facilitators' open-ended comments. These indicate which modules went smoothly, which encountered resistance, which have different impacts on different audiences, and which are most subject to change and in what direction. In this section each

module is discussed in terms of some of these comments. Comments on specific modules show that not all groups are equal. Particularly with some small groups, information relevant to one group is not so relevant to another.

Introduction

Although several facilitators commented that interaction proceeded slowly during the first session and that fathers showed some reserve at first, they (the facilitators) also acknowledged that the session proved useful in establishing expectations and allowing fathers to tell their stories:

> "Love this getting to know you session- although I don't think I'll ever get all the way through to the video. Session sets the stage for good discussion and expectations. Questions draw out strength-based responses, provide opportunities to address pain [and] diffuse tension."

Facilitators also noted that fathers came to this first meeting with highly emotional stories to tell, and suggested that more time be allocated to allow fathers to air their stories and feelings at the outset.

Dad as Part of the Solution

Sessions on this topic greatly benefitted from guest facilitators from the child welfare agencies. These speakers elicit and answer many questions from the fathers; facilitator comments praised the guests in superlative terms.

> "Dads consistently voiced appreciation for someone taking the time to explain their role in the system, as well as understanding the steps. Also mentioned their "place" in the process."

> "Some of the men needed this session so badly that I had to skip the introduction to get right to this session. The reason for doing this was because the men said this is what they desperately needed during the first week."

One facilitator commented that this topic could fill three weeks. Several facilitators noted that there was great deal of information in the plan, and most of these pieces of information provoked questions. Thus facilitators felt challenged in "getting through the material", which they felt was important, without "cutting the dads off".

Dad as Parent: Understanding Your Children

Many iterations of this topic had guest speakers, to whom facilitators and participants responded with great enthusiasm. One facilitator commented "best week ever!" Specific comments noted the growing understanding of child development and age-appropriate expectations:

> "The fathers involved in this session were able to gain an understanding of their children. They enjoyed the discussion on what children should be expected to do at what stage in life."

> "Got creative this week trying to drive home the issue of kids needing different things at different ages. Watched a strength-based video clip of a father dealing with a little girl's fear effectively. Afterward, we identified the "Tools" this father used."

Dad as Planner

Comments on the sessions on this topic varied with the groups. As with the other topic modules pertaining to the child welfare agency, having a guest facilitator helped fathers to further understand the system. Facilitators valued the detailed presentation of a case plan, as some fathers "had never seen a case plan." One facilitator wrote:

> "This is the tools sessions and the men realize this real early so they become very attentive. The co-facilitator in this session gives them a whole new perspective on dealing with the department.

Facilitators here and elsewhere commented occasionally on low attendance. They also noted that fathers have some trouble with role-play as an instructional technique.

Juvenile Court System

Facilitators emphatically endorsed this module/topic and noted fathers' almost uniformly high engagement:

> "This is the part when men really perk up and they ask some questions that some lawyers would not answer. Patrick is great at trying to give them what they need even if it means look further than him for the answer."

Most of the sessions on this topic featured guest speakers, usually lawyers. One facilitator suggested, "Find the best lawyer you can for this segment." Another indicated that this topic should be allotted two weeks.

In general, facilitators' comments indicated a tendency to extend the discussion beyond conduct and etiquette in the courtroom, as implied by the title of the session, to a thorough review of the fathers' rights.

Dad as Provider

This session supported and informed fathers in their dealings with child support enforcement. Some groups had no support orders, so this session seemed irrelevant. Most groups, however, were comprised of fathers with orders, and so this session engaged them. The emotional tenor of these sessions, understandably, was not always positive; the success of the session often rested with the skill of the guest facilitator.

> "This week has historically been touchy depending on I suppose how much the fathers owe. So everyone is not enthused during this session. . . . Child Support has never been the best session but my co facilitator is great at keeping the crowd friendly."

One facilitator had a practical suggestion:

> "We should probably have some modification paper work handy so the child support worker can kind of help the men at least know what they are looking for when they are filling out the paper work".

Dad as Team Player

This session covered co-parenting and constructive interactions with the child's mother. As one might expect, some angry feelings surfaced,

> "The fathers in this group have been very vocal about issues they have with their children's mother, so this discussion helped focus the fathers to understand that they may not have to like the mother, but have to at least work with them for the child involved."

> "Overall the fathers in this group were pretty well engaged. The men in this group are kind of young so they were a little confrontational when talking about respecting and dealing with their child's mother."

One facilitator noted that the material in this module is applicable beyond the relationship between parents:

> "We as men need a lot of help being team players sometimes. I have found that this subject can be expanded easily to cover not only team player within this context but also to include other relationships."

Another commented that issues around co-parenting could fill an entire 20-week curriculum by itself.

Dad as Part of the Community

Comments on Dad as Part of the Community varied widely across sites and cohorts. This module elicited some incisive, critical comments from the facilitators. The basic plan for this topic seemed to be somewhat inapposite; either the material was too basic or the use of the phone book seemed incompatible with the dads' patterns of cell phone usage. The facilitators wrote:

> "The session was a little too basic for our audience. They are familiar with using the internet and cell phones and the exercises had them working with phone books. They already knew most of the resources that they covered. Learning about 211 was the most [useful element in the session]."

> "It is my opinion that this section should be reworked to reflect what these men would like to be, and not just what we think they should be."

In many cohorts, however, the information was useful to the participants, particularly when facilitators and participants broadened the content to include pathways to community leadership and the benefits to children of a strong community. Facilitators wrote:

> "The fathers in the group enjoyed learning about opportunities in the community to do things with their children for little or no cost. They also appreciated the conversation on where to find different services in the community."

> "We did a part 2 to this curriculum with me doing the follow up from Marvin's previous week. The class dug deeper into the meaning of community leadership, and more so what prevents men from being active in the community."

> "It needs to be changed from community member to community leaders in my opinion and the men can tell you why if you ask them. I think it is wrong to assume these men are not already community members and that they don't know how to ask for help."

> "As part of this session most of these guys came to the Father Advisory meeting. On a Saturday so when we did this session they were on fire concerning community."

Dad as Part of Child's Placement

This session dealt mostly with visitation. Again, the impact and responses depended on the audiences. There were no suggestions to expand the sessions, and the subject matter does not appear to have elicited the strong emotions arising out of some of the other sessions. The comments included below illustrate the differences in responses:

> "Visiting is the one thing these fathers have been doing pretty regularly so this session is not needed by a lot of these men. But we keep it interesting by exploring improvements that can be made."

"I have often found that this session is kind of a hard one to facilitate. Generally there is not a whole lot of discussion. However, this group made the best of the topic in discussing some of the things they have done with their child while they visit."

"Excellent tools and simple to follow. Helps fathers see the visitation issue from perspective of child and other players while giving him tools to make visitation time about parenting time."

"Great discussion. The dads were very interested in this session and had many questions for the subject matter expert."

Dad as Healthy Parent

Facilitators felt that although sessions on this topic are sometimes difficult to lead, the topic is ultimately rewarding. Fathers are sometimes resistant to discussing their own unhealthy practices, and facilitators' language reflected the sense of heavy labor. The comment on stressors exemplifies several others as well. Although the topic of substance abuse proved laborious, fathers responded positively to the identification and management of stressors.

"This is the heavy lifting week and everyone does not want to work this hard. For me this is where you pay for your meal so to speak so I don't expect all the dads to participate fully."

"This is the session that has probably been altered the most, simply because of what I have learned from the previous groups. When the men are happy with this session I know I did not put enough weight on the bar so to speak."

"This is where barriers are broken and men really began to know each other, and trust each other."

"Fathers were able to discuss what some of the stresses they face on a daily basis. This was truly a healing time for some of them. The other group members were able to support the others as they tried to share what they faced."

"After doing this session three times, I have come to a conclusion that this is one of my favorite sessions to lead. The fathers really like the rock activity, because it allows them the opportunity to see what stressors are affecting their life on a daily basis."

Dad as Worker

Differing audiences elicited differing responses for this topic. Groups consisting of unemployed fathers welcomed the information and support. The rare groups consisting solely of employed fathers found much of the material too basic for them, with the sole exception of a group whose facilitator channeled the discussion into career paths and professional development.

Facilitators in general found mixed groups challenging, but one group welcomed the sharing of experience by a seasoned member of the workforce:

"We only had two guys in class this week, but I felt the discussion went really well. One gentleman has worked in the same place for 10 years, so he was able to share some things that have led to his longevity in staying in the same place. . . "

Facilitators called for more material specific to convicted felons' search for employment. While conventional job search techniques present closed doors to convicted felons, there are resources devoted to employment for felons, and these should be shared if necessary.

In general, the fact that fathers frequently chose this subject matter for weeks 13 – 20 bears testimony to its vital importance to these dads. Success in the face of diverse audiences rests on the ability of the facilitator to assess the needs of any given group and tailor the session to these needs. Perhaps future versions of this module could include alternative plans and exercises.

Dad as Cultural Guide

Fathers commented that at first the concept of culture as presented in the curriculum was hard to understand. Sessions with guest speakers elicited comments of "fascinating. . ." One facilitator remarked:

> "The fathers really enjoyed this session. They thought it was a good opportunity to think about who they are, and what they can pass along to their children in way of family heritage."

Facilitators also suggested that the "writers might include more questions for each activity as conversations extenders."

Discussion

Facilitators rated the father-selected flexible sessions 13-20, very highly. Sessions one to 12 followed a facilitator training guide script and included timed activities. By contrast, in sessions 13 to 20 the participants selected topics for further learning and study. As indicated previously, many of these topics were a continuation of topics covered in sessions 1-12 but with added benefit such as résumé creation, dealing with stress and pressure, getting along with mothers, and a special graduation ceremony session. Further, some of the father-selected sessions were very innovative, and included more information from guest presenters and facilitators about communication, leadership, love and logic, anger, and personality types. Facilitators rated these sessions on average 4.48, with a rank of 5.

An anomalous finding in the ongoing formative analysis of the model program intervention curriculum sessions was that particular sessions were rated highly overall, but engagement ratings were relatively lower (or vice versa). Although the bivariate correlation of the overall session ratings and father engagement was relatively high ($r=.59$, $p < .01$), there were ranking differences among the sessions that should be examined in future research (see *Table 24*). For example, while Dad as Parent, Dad as Community Member, and the Introduction were given relatively low ranks in terms of overall ratings, perceived father engagement was somewhat higher. In particular, Dad as Parent was ranked low overall (Rank=8), but engagement was relatively high (Rank=4). In Dad as Parent, there is one uniquely positive, fun and highly interactive group activity--What do Kids Need?--and it is hypothesized that the enthusiasm of the facilitator in addition to the appealing activity raises engagement levels for this specific session. In the future, each session will have to be analyzed individually, activity-by-activity, to examine the reasons for relative differences in ranking. (Highlighted modules show relatively disparate rankings.)

Table 24: Relative Ranks of each Curriculum Session Based on Mean Ratings by Facilitators

Session	Rating Rank	Engagement Rank
Dad as Part of the Solution: Overview of the Child Welfare System	1	1
Dad as Planner: Service Planning in the Child Welfare System	3	2
Session was part of final 8 weeks (Sessions 13-20)	2	3
Dad as Parent: Understanding Your Children	8	4
Dad as Cultural Guide: The Role of Culture in Parenting	4	5
Dad as Part of the Juvenile Court Process: Legal Advocacy and Court Etiquette	5	6
Dad as Community Member: Identifying and Accessing Resources	13	7
Introduction Session	11	8
Dad as Worker: Workforce Readiness	6	9
Dad as Provider: Supporting Your Children	7	10
Dad as Team Player: Shared Parenting	9	11
Dad as Healthy Parent: Taking Care of You	10	12
Dad as Part of Children's Placement: Visiting With Your Children	12	13

One implementation challenge has been the relatively small size of each session cohort, and several facilitators even commented, “I wish I had more men to work with,” and “The exercise does not work well with a small number of dads.” The sessions were developed for maximum peer group facilitated learning; this may have been due to the fact that fewer NRFs than originally anticipated were eligible to participate due to stringent eligibility requirements of the research design and other recruiting challenges documented by the four demonstration sites throughout the lifecycle of this project. As each demonstration site and other interested agencies in the U.S. expand implementation and funding to serve NRFs, resident fathers, teen fathers, incarcerated fathers, and other heretofore difficult to reach fathers, larger father peer groups will be better able to share an array of experiences and benefit from a greater diversity of life experiences.

Conclusion

Findings show that these peer-led support sessions are informative and rewarding for participants. Formative results of the online weekly facilitator feedback survey show that the facilitators perceived the model program intervention to be successful in engaging NRFs in discussion and active learning sessions. More than 100 open-ended qualitative comments from session facilitators indicated that fathers were highly engaged and the sessions were interesting and productive (e.g., “Another great session!”; “Excellent class”; “The guest presenter did an outstanding job!”; “Dads were able to receive a lot of new information”).

Based on mean ratings and rankings, the session Dad as Part of the Solution: Overview of the Child Welfare System was ranked first in both overall ratings and engagement. In particular, this session included a presentation by a guest child welfare professional, and handouts consisted of extremely useful materials including a customizable "map" of Steps of the Child Welfare System, a "Dictionary for Dads" of child welfare terminology, and a list of the "Players" who work in the child welfare system. This session, as well as Dad as Planner: Service Planning in the Child Welfare System, provided fathers with father-friendly background information about the child welfare system, presented in an interesting and highly interactive medium.

From the facilitators' comments, guest experts' contributions are vital to the success of this program. Facilitators noted that fathers eagerly questioned these experts on their respective fields and received a rich array of valuable information.

Fathers' responses to some of the modules indicate where more work is needed. In particular, facilitators called for more attention to be paid to substance abuse and to employment for felons. They also indicated that the modules on co-parenting and child support brought up some deep emotions and acute distress. These authors feel that future iterations of peer-led support groups for fathers should further explore and develop ways to give emotional support to both mothers and fathers as they deal with each other for the good of their children.

Lastly, it became apparent that not all groups have equal needs or respond to material the same way. A flexible approach to facilitation and cache of alternative exercises and materials will help meet the fathers "where they are" and support them in the nurturing of their children.

Father Self-Report

This section offers a description of the fathers who signed up for the program at each site.[19] This information comes largely from the three interviews taken from fathers in the program. The first interview provides baseline information around demographics, interaction with their children, interaction with their children's mothers, interaction with the child welfare systems, and interaction with other systems. Interviews 2 (after 8 weeks) and 3 (after 16 weeks) provide information on how fathers' interaction with children and system may have changed. As of the end of the program, 228 fathers had been interviewed at least once, 89 had given the second interview, and 79 had given the third.

During the first six months of operation, however, all four sites reported contacting fathers in numbers far lower than expected (due to challenges discussed in detail later in this section). The QIC NRF decided to change its research design from a random assignment control study to a mixed-methods quasi-experimental design and, recognizing that this low enrollment itself presented a significant set of issues, the QIC NRF and site staff turned their attention to outreach activities. Elsewhere in these pages is a detailed report on the recruitment of fathers.

In the meantime, the evaluation staff of the QIC NRF continued to assess the group of fathers who were contacted and who did sign up for the program. Site evaluators[20] sent data from father interviews on 228 fathers in all. More fathers were interviewed but found to be ineligible. This section examines the NRFs of children in foster care who actually enrolled in the program (although many did not attend the sessions). It profiles the fathers and examines whether the nature of their interaction with the mothers of their children, their interaction with their children, and their interaction with the child welfare systems has changed during the course of the program.

Interestingly, in those areas where there is no significant change from baseline to subsequent interviews, the baseline figures were higher than expected, possibly higher than the general population of NRFs of children in foster care. These high baseline figures invite a discussion of this group of fathers as a distinct sub-population of NRFs of children in the foster care system, of how they may be served, and, by implication, how the other subpopulations may be served. The next section outlines the methods of this study, followed by a general profile of the characteristics of fathers in the child welfare system, and then by sections devoted to outputs and results, discussion and conclusions.

Several variables are used as possible mediating factors for the father outcomes. These include father health, father transportation, and father interaction with the child support system. Several factors are used as both short-term outcomes and mediating factors for the father outcomes. During the final phase of the project, tests of significance for change measures and for the influence of mediating factors depend on the nature of data that we have received. We ended with smaller numbers than we had hoped, and for the continuous variables, the distributions do not prove normal. Hence significance will most likely be demonstrated by non-parametric statistics.

Methods

While other parts of the study involve comparison groups derived from state automated child welfare information system ("SACWIS") data, this section is confined to a piece of the study which can best be

[19] Much of this material also appears in an article (Reynolds 2011) in the forthcoming issue of *Protecting Children.*

[20] The author wishes to thank the site evaluators and staff for their collection, management and submittal of data on a regular and timely basis. Their input and discussion, also on a regular basis, has proven to be invaluable.

termed quasi-experimental, following a single-group inter-temporal design. The findings cited here come from father self-reports based on interviews as described below.

The evaluators maintained, among others, two data bases centering on fathers, one on all fathers of children entering foster care in the four site counties (the "recruitment data base" or "recruiting log"), and one on fathers who had been contacted and who agreed to participate in the program (referred to as "program father data base," "interview data base" or "father self-report data base"). The recruitment data base was maintained by collaboration between the outreach staff and evaluators at each site and was submitted to the QIC NRF cross-site evaluators on a regular basis throughout the program. This data base served to profile of the pool in general, barriers to reaching and engaging fathers, and the efforts of outreach staff to overcome these barriers. This data base has 3,951 records representing the entire pool of fathers of children in foster care. Of these, 2,810 fathers were considered "applicable." Applicable fathers were those who were non-resident, non-deceased, and still in possession of parental rights. Unknown fathers were considered applicable unless found to be otherwise. Finally, 842 of the *applicable* fathers were in the region, had contact information ("accessible fathers"), and were free of safety concerns.

The second data base, the program father data base, contained the self-reports of the 228 fathers who signed up for the program. At each site, either the outreach staff or session facilitator interviewed the fathers who consented to participate in the program. The majority of father-centered outcomes data came directly from these father self-reports. The interviewers filled out a protocol for each interview and sent these to the evaluation team at each site. Site evaluators then entered these data into a data base and sent them periodically to the cross-site evaluators. Father-related data were collected at intake (T1, baseline), eight weeks into the program (T2, short-term outcomes), and at or close to exit from the program (T3, intermediate-term outcomes, approximately 16 weeks after program start). These variables measured the outcomes of father attitudes toward – and ease of interaction with -- the Child Welfare systems, as well as nature and quality of engagement with their children in foster care. Facilitators were asked to supplement the father interview data base with attendance records for each program father.

A further data base was derived from the father interview data base (the "long child file"), which measured father-child interactions and support for each child, 320 children in all, less two children termed "not part of the investigation."

The evaluators summarized and analyzed change scores and correlations using largely non-parametric statistics, as the low sample sizes and non-normal distributions did not permit many of the parametric analyses the evaluators had hoped to perform.

Background and General Characteristics of Fathers

The pool in general: fathers of children in foster care

During the initial stages of the project, QIC NRF staff estimated that roughly one-half to three quarters of the children in foster care would have been removed from homes without biological fathers.[21] As mentioned above, sites kept a recruiting log accounting for every father of every child removed from the home during the period of operation (August, 2008 – September, 2010). According to these logs, about three-quarters of children removed from their homes were removed from homes where their biological

[21] This estimate was based on an estimate in Malm, Murray and Geen, 2006, in turn based on an examination of FFY 2002 AFCARS files.

father was not present. Of these NRFs, many were incarcerated (14%), many had moved out of jurisdiction (22%), many had no reliable contact information (21%), some presented a safety risk to the child (13%), and some were completely unknown. Thus, of the NRFs noted in the logs, only one-quarter were eventually contacted.[22]

Program Fathers: Baseline Data and Mediating Factors

We begin with a summary of the demographic and baseline characteristics of program fathers. The fathers who enrolled in the program numbered 22 in Colorado, 98 in Indiana, 67 in Texas, and 41 in Washington. Their median age was 28, and the median age at birth of first child was 24. *Table 25* shows demographic characteristics for these fathers. The most populous site (Indiana) drove the cross-site averages, but not all sites paralleled the central tendency. The range column shows considerable variation across sites with respect to age, full-time employment, educational attainment, and race/ethnicity.

[22]Site evaluators report extensively on the barriers to identification, locating and contacting fathers and the strategies used to overcome these barriers elsewhere in the forthcoming issue of *Protecting Children.* (Thoennes, Harper, et al 2011).

Demographic Characteristics

Table 25: Father Characteristics

Characteristic	Statistic	Range of Site Statistics
Median Age	28	26 – 36
Median Age at Birth of First Child	24	21 – 32
Modal Employment Status: Unemployed, looking	48%	29% - 59%
Percent Employed Full-time	21%	17% - 32%
Education: Percent with less than 12 years	54%	29% - 73%
Percent with 12 Years	23%	10% - 37%
Percent with more than 12 Years	23%	16% - 33%
Race/Ethnicity: Percent African American	53.6%	31.8% - 65.3%
Race/Ethnicity: Percent White	31%	28.6% - 59.1%
Race/Ethnicity: Percent Hispanic	8%	1% - 28%
Race/Ethnicity: Percent Native American	6%	3% - 16%
Race/Ethnicity: Percent Asian	<1%	2% of a single site
Race/Ethnicity: Percent Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1%	7% of a single site

The number of children a father has may influence the quality of his interactions or his support. Almost three quarters of program fathers have one child, 18% have two children, and 10% have three, four, or five combined. Based on mothers' first names, ten program fathers have children by more than one mother; fathers reported more than one mother at only two of the four sites.

While multi-partner fertility is often cited as a complicating factor in father support and involvement, relatively few of these fathers were in this situation. This figure is lower than the 59% cited by Turney & Carlson (2010) for a similar population or the 8% for a "representative sample of American men." (Guzzo & Furstenburg, 2007).

Table 76: Fathers with 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 children, based on presence or absence of child's age

	Site				
	CO	IN	TX	WA	Overall
1 Child	15	69	49	33	166
2 Children	4	20	12	4	40
3 Children	2	5	5	3	15
4 Children	1	3	1	1	6
5 Children		1			1
Total	22	98	67	41	228

* Based on Population of Child age variable. Fathers with missing values in the ch1 age field were still considered to have (at least) one child.

Table 27: Percent of Fathers with 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 children, based on presence or absence of child's age

	Percent of Fathers				
	CO	IN	TX	WA	Overall Percent
1 Child	68%	70%	73%	80%	72.8%
2 Children	18%	20%	18%	10%	17.5%
3 Children	9%	5%	7%	7%	6.6%
4 Children	5%	3%	1%	2%	2.6%
5 Children		1%			0.4%
Total	100 %	100%	100%	100%	100.0%

This study concentrates on children in placement; many of the father-child interaction indicators were measured with placed children only. *Table 28* below shows the distribution of children of the program fathers with respect to the children's living situation. These frequencies were taken using all children mentioned by fathers in the interviews. With the exception of Texas, as many children of program fathers are placed with relatives as with non-relative foster parents, and only two children have been

designated “not involved in investigation”. These two are in fact younger children with older half-siblings in care.

Table 28: Placement Status (by Site)

	Number of Children in given situation				
	Site				
Placement Situation	CO	IN	TX	WA	Overall
out-of-home placement	14	55	77	18	164
under investigation, not placed		1			1
living with relative, CPS	14	63	5	24	106
living with relative, informally				2	2
Other	1			5	6
was in care, now home	1	10	8	1	20
not involved in investigation		2			2
living with father	3	10	2	3	18
Missing				1	1
Total	33	141	92	54	320

Table 29: Placement Status (Percent by Site)

	Percent of Children in given situation				
	Site				
Placement Situation	CO	IN	TX	WA	Overall
out-of-home placement	42.4%	39.0%	83.7%	33.3%	51.3%
under investigation, not placed		0.7%			0.3%
living with relative, CPS	42.4%	44.7%	5.4%	44.4%	33.1%
living with relative, informally				3.7%	0.6%
Other	3.0%			9.3%	1.9%
was in care, now home	3.0%	7.1%	8.7%	1.9%	6.3%
not involved in investigation		1.4%			0.6%
living with father	9.1%	7.1%	2.2%	5.6%	5.6%
Missing				1.9%	0.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

A father's age may be a mediating factor in father-outcomes around take-up, interaction with children, and interaction with systems. A general profile of fathers' ages reveals that the ages range from 17 (the youngest permissible) to 60.

Table 30: Father Ages as of October 31, 2009 (In decimalized years)

		CO	IN	TX	WA
N	Valid	21	98	67	39
	Missing	1			2
Mean		33	28	31	36
Median		31	26	27	36
Minimum		20	18	17	19
Maximum		50	58	60	57

Half of all program fathers are in their twenties, while just under a quarter are in their 30s.

Table 31: Distribution of Father Ages

	Number of Fathers in Age Category Site				
	CO	IN	TX	WA	Overall
In his teens		8	6	1	15
In his twenties	9	64	31	10	114
In his thirties	7	18	15	16	56
In his forties	4	4	10	9	27
In his fifties (including 60)	1	4	5	3	13
Missing	1			2	3
Total	22	98	67	41	228

Table 32: Percent of Father Ages

	Percent				
	Site				
	CO	IN	TX	WA	Overall
In his teens		8%	9%	2%	6.58%
In his twenties	41%	65%	46%	24%	50.00%
In his thirties	32%	18%	22%	39%	24.56%
In his forties	18%	4%	15%	22%	11.84%
In his fifties (including 60)	5%	4%	7%	7%	5.70%
Missing	5%			5%	1.32%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Fathers with 12 years of education are considered to be high school graduates. Educational patterns vary across sites. In Colorado, 8 fathers had fewer than 12 years of education, 5 had twelve, while 4 reported education beyond high school. In Indiana, 72 fathers had less than 12 years of education, 10 fathers had 12, and 16 fathers had beyond 12. In Texas, 28 fathers had less than 12 years of education, 23 had 12, and 16 had more. In Washington, 12 fathers had fewer than 12 years of education, 14 had 12, and 14 had more. Note that the percent of program fathers whose education falls short of 12 years varies substantially from site to site, from 28% to 73%. The percent of fathers receiving more than 12 years ranges from 16% to 33%.

Table 33: Years of Education

Years of education	Number of Fathers			
	Site			
	CO	IN	TX	WA
5	1			
6	1			2
7		3	1	
8		7	1	3
9	1	16	6	1
10	1	30	6	2
11	4	16	14	4
12	5	10	23	14
13	2	7	5	4
14	2	7	5	7
15		1	3	2
16	1		2	1
18		1		
20			1	
Missing	4			1
Total	22	98	67	41

Table 34: Years of Education

Years of education	Cumulative Percent of Site Fathers			
	Site			
	CO	IN	TX	WA
5	6%			
6	11%			5%
7		3%	1%	
8		10%	3%	13%
9	17%	27%	12%	15%
10	22%	57%	21%	20%
11	44%	73%	42%	30%
12	72%	84%	76%	65%
13	83%	91%	84%	75%
14	94%	98%	91%	93%
15		99%	96%	98%
16	100%		99%	100%
18		100%		
20			100%	
Missing				
Percent with greater than 12 years	27.8%	16.3%	23.9%	35.0%

For all sites, more fathers reported to be unemployed but looking for work than in any other category. Those employed full-time ranged from 18% (just over one-sixth) to 32% (just under one-third). The "other" category was explained as disability.

Table 35: Employment

	Number of Fathers			
	Site			
	CO	IN	TX	WA
Employed full-time	7	18	16	8
Regular part-time	1	8	5	5
Self-employed			5	1
Temp/odd jobs		3	5	
Unempl, in training	1	1		
Unempl, looking	9	58	27	12
Unempl, not looking	1	2		11
Student	3	2	3	1
Other		6	6	3
Missing				
Total	22	98	67	41

Table 36: Percent Employed

	Percent Site			
	CO	IN	TX	WA
Employed full-time	31.8%	18.4%	23.9%	19.5%
Regular part-time	4.5%	8.2%	7.5%	12.2%
Self-employed			7.5%	2.4%
Temp/odd jobs		3.1%	7.5%	
Unempl, in training	4.5%	1.0%		
Unempl, looking	40.9%	59.2%	40.3%	29.3%
Unempl, not looking	4.5%	2.0%		26.8%
Student	13.6%	2.0%	4.5%	2.4%
Other		6.1%	9.0%	7.3%
Missing				
Total	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

Overall, more fathers self-reported as African Americans than any other racial category, followed by White. There are 18 Hispanic fathers, 14 American Indian/Alaska Natives, one Asian, three Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders and one Persian. Race/ethnicity will figure in the general profile are considered as a possible mediating factor in father and child outcomes.

Table 37: Race/Ethnicity

	Frequency				
	Site				
	CO	IN	TX	WA	Overall
White	13	32	19	18	82
Black	7	64	33	18	122
AI/AN	1	4	2	7	14
Asian			1		1
Haw/PI				3	3
Hisp	5	1	11	1	18

Note: these categories are not mutually exclusive

Housing, Health, Substance Abuse, Mental Health, and Transportation

There are many challenges facing NRFs of children in foster care, factors which could influence their participation in the intervention and their outcomes around interaction with mothers, children, and system. As mentioned above, program fathers were interviewed three times, once at consent, once after 8 weeks, and once after 16 weeks. The first interview sought two sorts of information: identifying and contextual information, and baseline information to be used in order to assess results. The contextual information contained in this section profiles the fathers and describes the factors which may have mediated the results.

While the recruitment logs reveal that housing difficulties often impeded contact (many fathers not contacted were noted to be "homeless"), this study did not gather information on housing from program fathers. Since only fathers able to be contacted were included in the program, the program selected for some degree of stability in housing.

Ill health can certainly serve as a barrier to participation and to engagement with one's children. During the first of three interviews, fathers were asked about their health. Overall, 43% report themselves to be in excellent health, while an additional 29% report good health. 20% report themselves to be in "average" health, while only 7% report below average or poor health. Fathers were also asked whether any visits with children had been cancelled due to illness or injury, and few reported that they had. Again, as with housing, it is possible that selection bias in favor of healthy fathers may skew findings with respect to health and health-related outcomes.

Table 38: Father Health at 1st Interview

	Frequency Site				
	CO	IN	TX	WA	Overall
Poor				2	2
Below average	1	6	3	4	14
Average	1	21	14	10	46
Good	6	27	20	13	66
Excellent	13	44	30	11	98
Missing	1			1	2
Total	22	98	67	41	228

Table 39: Father Health at 1st Interview

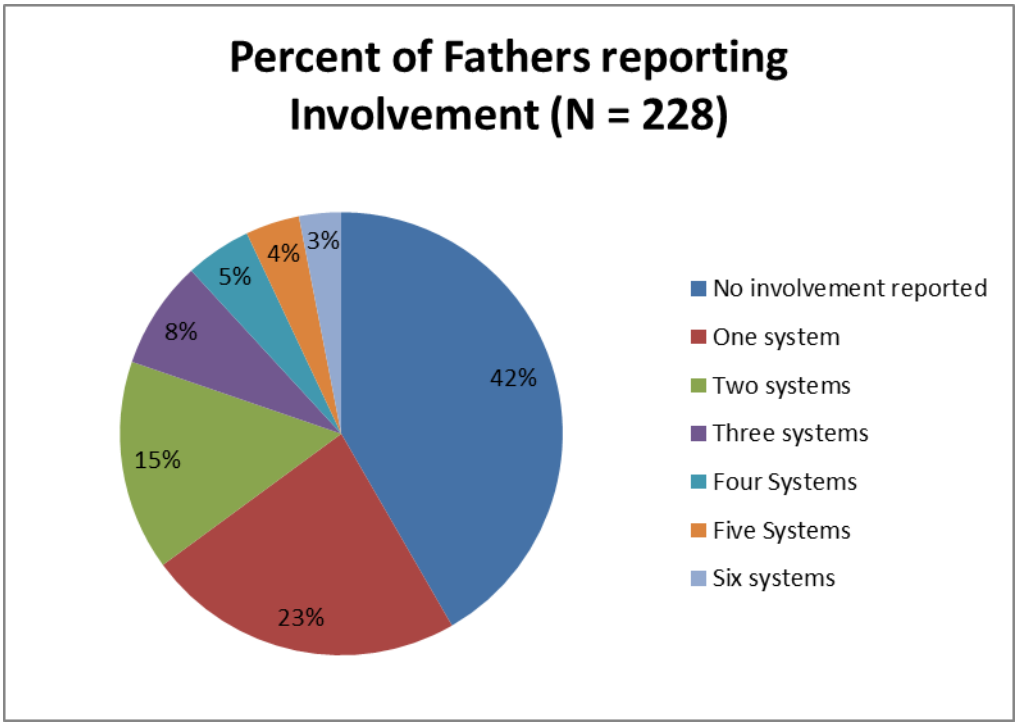
	Percent Site				
	CO	IN	TX	WA	Overall %
Poor				4.9%	0.9%
Below average	4.5%	6.1%	4.5%	9.8%	6.1%
Average	4.5%	21.4%	20.9%	24.4%	20.2%
Good	27.3%	27.6%	29.9%	31.7%	28.9%
Excellent	59.1%	44.9%	44.8%	26.8%	43.0%
Missing	4.5%			2.4%	0.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Some context questions were deferred to the second interview, as staff deemed them too invasive for the first. Fathers were asked at the second interview to provide information on substance abuse and mental health treatment. Of the 96 fathers who responded, 39 fathers (41%), reported receiving treatment for substance abuse at some point in their lives, and 38% of those responding reported seeing a counselor for mental health issues.

Limited mobility can affect program participation, visitation, and other activities related to involvement with children or self-care. 30% of program fathers reported they had a car; the remaining fathers took public transportation, borrowed cars, accepted rides from family, walked, or rode bicycles or motorcycles. The four sites were in urban areas, thus participants had some means of transportation at their disposal.

During Phase I, the needs assessment phase of the QIC NRF project, many informants cited complexity of system interaction as a possible mediating factor for participating in the program and for engagement with children. In order to assess take-up factors, fathers were asked, in the three interviews, whether they had dealings with TANF administrations, law enforcement, corrections, the court system, legal aid, an employment service, or any other agency, since last interview. Since two sites elected not to pose these questions at first interview a variable was created for each system with a value of "1" if fathers had answered yes to the given questions either at base line or at the second interview. This new series was summed to determine if fathers were interacting with several systems at once concurrently with their participation in the program. As *Figure 4* shows, roughly 45% of fathers reported involvement with at least two agencies. While these multiple involvements presumably complicate fathers' lives, not all interactions or changes in interaction are affected by these complexities

Figure 4: Involvement with other agencies (excluding CSE)



Another important ecological factor in a father's engagement with his children and in a father's interaction with a system is the extent to which he provides **support for the child's household** and the

forms of that support. These interactions are complex. An antagonistic relationship with the formal apparatus of child support mandates (the courts and child support enforcement) may contribute to a father's reticence in dealing with the child protection system. On the other hand, fathers' active support in more than one form at baseline should strongly correlate with number of visits and can be expected to be a strong predictor of various forms of engagement. Thirdly, family size could either impede or reinforce regular and active support.

Apart from support as an ecological baseline factor, support also forms part of a theory of change in father engagement. Thus, as is shown below with visitation, an increase in various forms of support among program fathers were also considered among measurable outcomes.

The support variables consist of 6 binary types of unofficial support plus one formal child support variable (none/some/all). These seven are replicated in all three time frames and for up to 5 children. Child support variables are summarized and analyzed using the "long" child file created from the father interviews. Thus, this reporting should be read in terms of number (or percent) of children whose fathers reported a given type of support. Frequencies were taken of types of unofficial report, broken down in turn by site, by order of child, and by number of children of a given father. Variables summing types of support were also created and summarized.

Summaries by Site

Across sites, numbers of children having fathers paying the full amount of court ordered child support range from 1 child to 21 children, which 21 children represent 15% of the children at that site.

Table 40: Formal Child Support Compliance*

	Numbers of children receiving /not receiving support Site				
	CO	IN	TX	WA	Total Children
does not pay	5	89	70	18	182
pay sometimes, pay some		19	5	5	29
always pay full amount	4	21	16	8	49
Missing	24	12	1	23	73
Total	33	141	92	54	320

Table 41 below suggests that for three-quarters of program children, court ordered child support is an issue for their fathers. For one quarter, it is not. Note that only 13% of program children have fathers court ordered and paying in full.

Table 41: Percent of Children for whom Child Support is in Compliance

	CO	IN	TX	WA	Overall Percent
does not pay	15.2%	63.1%	76.1%	33.3%	56.9%
pay sometimes, pay some		13.5%	5.4%	9.3%	9.1%
always pay full amount	12.1%	14.9%	17.4%	14.8%	15.3%
Missing	72.7%	8.5%	1.1%	42.6%	22.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

*The interview specifies these questions to be answered if child support is court ordered. (Sites are asked to verify that these assumptions are correct.)

Table 428*42* shows the number of children of fathers providing a given form of unofficial child support. Since these are not mutually exclusive they do not sum to a predetermined total (each is a wedge in its own pie). More children received, according to their fathers, in-kind support than any other kind, followed by unofficial monetary donations. This preponderance held across sites with the exception of Colorado, 12 of whose program children received monetary support, more than any other.

Table 428: Types of Support

	Numbers of children whose fathers report providing Support				
Type of Unofficial contribution	Site				
	CO	IN	TX	WA	Overall
In-Kind (food-clothing)	10	124	61	34	229
Money	12	84	39	30	165
Overnight Care	5	70	8	12	95
Rent	4	38	11	19	72
Day Care	1	4	2	12	19
Medical expenses		4	4	11	19

Table 43 gives the within-site percentages of children receiving a given type of support, according to their fathers. Almost three-quarters of children are reported to receive in-kind contributions from their fathers; over half receive (or their mothers receive) money. Medical expenses and day care are the least frequently provided.

Table 43: Within-Site Percentages of Children receiving a Given Type of Support

	Numbers of children whose fathers report providing Support				
Type of Unofficial contribution	Site				
	CO	IN	TX	WA	Overall
In-Kind (food-clothing)	30.3%	87.9%	66.3%	63.0%	74.1%
Money	36.4%	59.6%	42.4%	55.6%	53.4%
Overnight Care	15.2%	49.6%	8.7%	22.2%	30.7%
Rent	12.1%	27.0%	12.0%	35.2%	23.3%
Day Care	3.0%	2.8%	2.2%	22.2%	6.1%
Medical expenses		2.8%	4.3%	20.4%	6.1%

Summaries by number of children of a given father

These summaries were repeated across sites but broken out according to family size. For example, 29% of only-children received overnight care, according to their fathers; 31% of children who were one of two received overnight care, and 32% of children who were one of three received overnight care.

Table 44: Within-Family Group Size Percents of Children Receiving Type of Support.

	Family Group				
	1 Child	2 Children	3 Children	4 Children	5 Children
In-Kind (food-clothing)	69.7%	72.6%	81.8%	85.7%	100.0%
Money	51.3%	50.0%	63.6%	42.9%	
Overnight Care	28.9%	30.6%	31.8%	28.6%	100.0%
Rent	19.7%	27.4%	31.8%	42.9%	
Medical expenses	7.5%	1.6%	4.5%		
Day Care	6.1%	4.8%	9.1%		

Degree of engagement has been measured by the combination of types of support given by fathers. Overall, types of support show a bi-modal pattern. Fathers of 76 out of 309 children reported no support, while fathers of 92 reported two types. Colorado and Washington show a clear preponderance in the "none" category, while Indiana and Texas show fathers of more children reporting two types than any other category.

Table 45: How Many Types of Support Received by Children

	CO	IN	TX	WA	Total
None	18	17	25	16	76
One type	8	10	26	7	51
Two types	2	53	30	7	92
Three types		39	6	8	53
Four types	5	19	4	9	37
Five types		3	1	5	9
Six Types				2	2
Total	33	141	92	54	320

Table 46: Percent of Children Receiving Support in Number of Types Specified

	CO	IN	TX	WA	Overall
None	54.5%	12.1%	27.2%	29.6%	23.8%
One type	24.2%	7.1%	28.3%	13.0%	15.9%
Two types	6.1%	37.6%	32.6%	13.0%	28.8%
Three types		27.7%	6.5%	14.8%	16.6%
Four types	15.2%	13.5%	4.3%	16.7%	11.6%
Five types		2.1%	1.1%	9.3%	2.8%
Six Types				3.7%	0.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Program Outputs and Outcomes

Staff plans to use attendance in two ways: first, to measure effectiveness of the outreach and of the sessions themselves, and second, to measure outcomes as mediated by dosage. The data base has binary variables for each of the sessions, by number.

Table 47 provides some indication of the fathers' attendance patterns. In Texas, for example, 34 fathers are on record as attending no sessions; one is on record as attending one session, with slightly greater numbers attending 3, 5, 6, and 7 sessions. Only one father in Texas attended all eight of the first eight sessions. In general, of those fathers who attended sessions, more attended 6 – 7 sessions than attended fewer or more.

Attendance:

Basic to measuring the impacts of any intervention is "take-up", defined by the degree to which participants avail themselves of services or comply with requirements. Attendance records show that retention of fathers participating proved problematic. The original sample of fathers consisted of 228 fathers. For each father interviewed, the number of sessions attended was summed. 93 fathers took the first interview but attended no sessions (41%). Of those who did attend at least one session (N = 127), one-quarter attended fewer than 7, half attended fewer than 11 (the median), one quarter attended 16 or more sessions. Three fathers attended all 20 sessions.

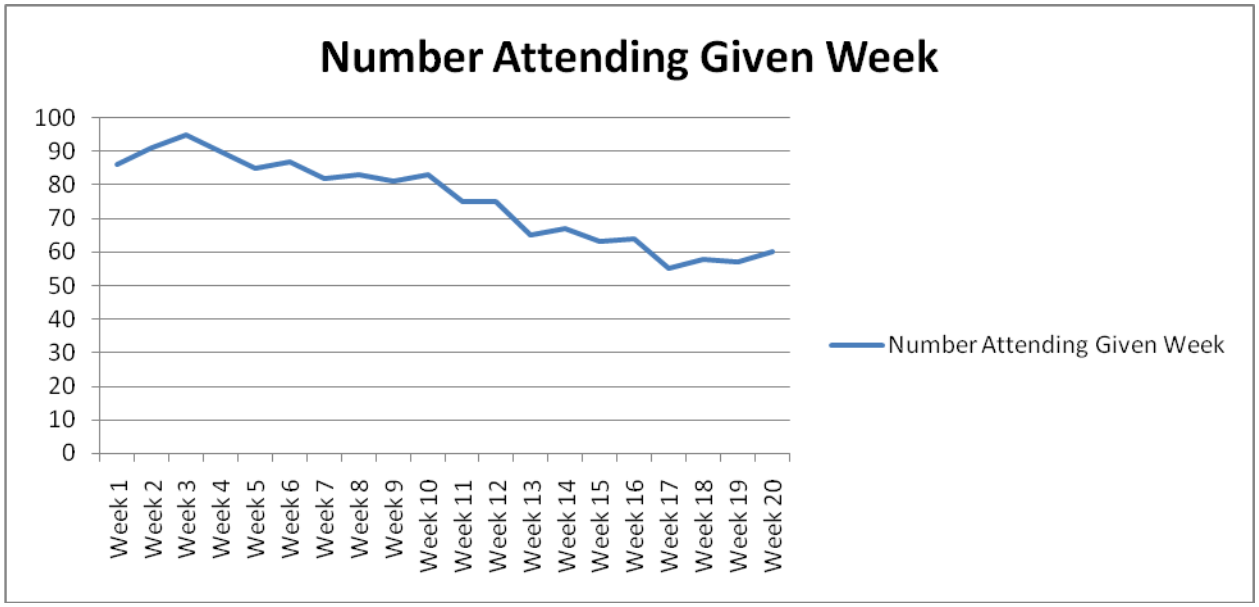
For each week number, the total attending was also summed across cohorts. Of those who attended, more fathers (95 fathers, or 42%) attended week three than any other. The last week drew 60 attendees, or 26% of program fathers. In spite of the steep attrition, facilitators report engagement among those who attended (see Frankel and Reynolds, 2011) to be high.

Table 47: Attendance: Number of Sessions Attended out of the First Eight

	Frequency				
	Site				
	CO	IN	TX	WA	Overall
None	5	42	34	18	99
1 session		7	1	1	9
2 sessions		2			2
3 sessions	1	2	6	2	11
4 sessions	1	4	3	6	14
5 sessions	3	6	7	5	21
6 sessions	4	11	9	1	25
7 sessions	4	17	6	7	34
all 8 sessions	4	7	1	1	13
Missing value in all					
Total (not sum of above)	22	98	67	41	228
Missing value in at least one of the 8 sessions	17	56	33	23	129

As shown in *Figure 5*, the attrition is gradual, with attendance hovering in the 70's for several weeks before falling away. Approximately one-quarter of program fathers attended week 12. These attrition results do not differ markedly from other social welfare programs. One study of substance abuse programs cited a completion range from 18% to 25% depending on treatment modality (Wickizer *et al*. 1999), and Johnson and colleagues' metastudy (2008) of parenting education cited a "high rate of attrition" for a program which it determined to be promising (Johnson et al., 2008, p. 220). One fatherhood program evaluator cited a 30% completion rate over 13 weeks (Roy & Dyson, 2010).

Figure 5: General attendance



Attendance figures are also compiled for each father and summarized. As *Table 48* indicates, many fathers dropped out initially. Out of those 105 fathers who attended fewer than 3 sessions, 99 attended no sessions. Thus, the steepest attrition occurred during the interval between sign-up and first session.

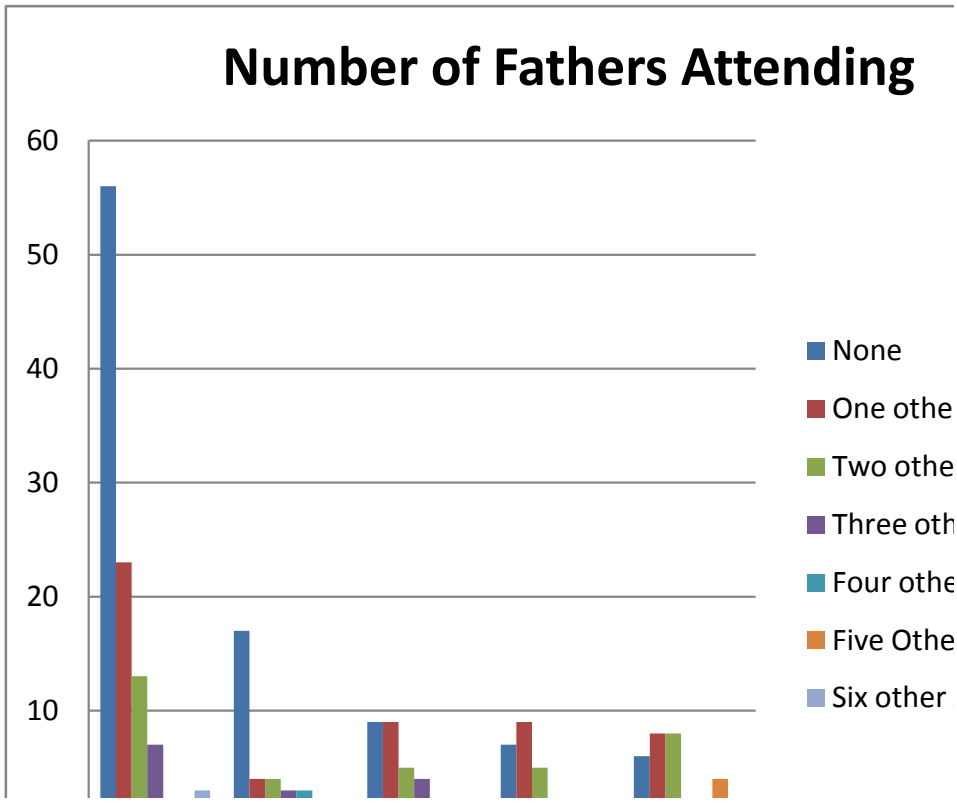
Table 48: Participant Attendance

Attendance*(Mean sessions attended = 6.59)*	
Number of sessions attended by a given father	Number of Fathers attending
Under three sessions	105
3 through 8 sessions	32
4 through 12 sessions	33
13 through 16 sessions	28
17 through 20 sessions	30
Total	228

How do the challenges facing fathers affect their attendance? During Phase I of the QIC NRF project, informants cited such barriers to engagement as lack of transportation and complexity of system involvement, and QIC NRF staff included these in the interview protocols as possible factors which may influence attendance. Fathers were asked if they drove their own car or motorcycle, and if not what form of transportation they used. Transportation and agency complexity as captured in the father interviews were cross-tabulated with attendance to determine if either of these factors bore a

significant relationship to attendance. Transportation bore no significant relationship with attendance,[23] while complexity did bear a significant relationship to attendance, but not in the expected direction. The significance was driven by those attending no sessions, the majority of which had no other system involvement. In fact among those fathers attending more than eight sessions, differences in system complexity were hardly apparent, as shown in *Figure 6*. No other demographic or environmental factor has been found to exhibit any statistical relationship with attendance.

Figure 6: Participant Attendance by Complexity of System Involvement



The following table shows the interview counts based on the presence or absence of an interview date; this basis may result in undercounting. Of the 228 fathers interviewed at cohort start, 89 had an interview date at 8 weeks, and 79 were interviewed at 16 weeks or sometime thereafter.

[23] The absence of any statistical relationship between transportation and attendance may be explained by the pains taken by the sites to meet the participants' needs. Fathers were given gas cards and/or bus passes as incentives to continue participation.

Table 49: Numbers Reporting

	Site				
	CO	IN	TX	WA	Overall
First Interview N	15	98	67	41	221
Second Interview N	9	48	20	12	89
Third Interview N	6	39	11	23	79

Baseline Interactions

Interaction with mothers at baseline

The baseline interview contained four questions designed to assess relationship and interaction with the mothers of program fathers' children. Fathers were asked to characterize the past relationship at its strongest (married, committed relationship, on-again-off-again, casual, hardly knew her), present relationship (committed relationship, steady but not exclusive, casual, just friends, not friends), how they get along (very well, moderately well, not well, not badly, not well, very badly, no interaction), and how many times spoken with mother in the past 3 months.

Although it is beyond the scope of this study to exhaustively explore the complexities of the interaction of parents in the face of a breach, four variables treat the fathers' relationship with their children's mothers. One characterizes the past relationship between parents, one characterizes the present relationship, one characterizes their interaction, and one captures the number of times fathers have spoken to mothers in a given length of time. In addition, change in these variables across time periods will be considered as outcomes as well.

Nearly half (49%) of fathers characterize their past relationship with mothers as a committed relationship, and this was the most frequent response in all sites. Add to this the 15% of fathers who reported having been married, and the percentage of committed relationships inclusive of marriage is 63%. Beyond that, however, patterns differ across sites. In Indiana and Washington, the next most populous category was "on-again, off-again", while in Colorado and Texas the next most populous category was "married". Overall, only 5% of fathers reported "I hardly knew her". One should draw inferences with caution, however, as the fathers in this program were those most readily found. Program evaluators speculate that the fact that such a high proportion of these fathers report having been married or committed to their children's mothers may bear some relation to their accessibility.

Figure 7: Past Relationship with Mothers at Baseline

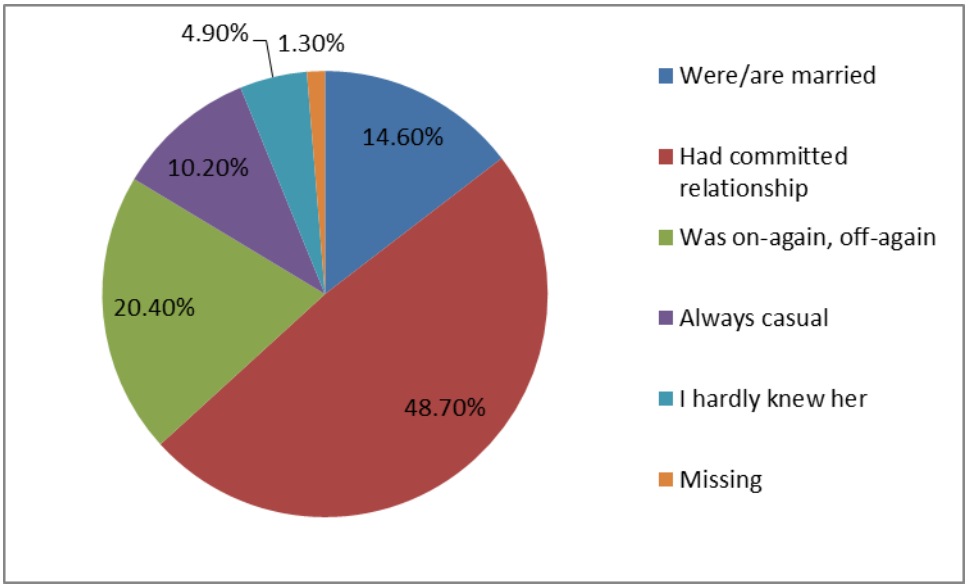


Table 50: Past Relationship with Mother of First Child at Baseline

	Number of Fathers Site				
	CO	IN	TX	WA	Overall
Were/are married	7	10	10	6	33
Had committed relationship	11	47	39	14	111
Was on-again, off-again	3	22	8	12	45
Always casual		17	6	2	25
I hardly knew her	1	2	4	4	11
Missing				3	3
Total	22	98	67	41	228

Table 51 - Past Relationship with Mother of First Child at Baseline

	Percent of Fathers Site				
	CO	IN	TX	WA	Overall Percent
Were/are married	31.8%	10.2%	14.9%	14.6%	14.5%
Had committed relationship	50.0%	48.0%	58.2%	34.1%	48.7%
Was on-again, off-again	13.6%	22.4%	11.9%	29.3%	19.7%
Always casual		17.3%	9.0%	4.9%	11.0%
I hardly knew her	4.5%	2.0%	6.0%	9.8%	4.8%
Missing				7.3%	1.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Fathers characterize their current relationship with benign neutrality as well (*Figure 8*).

The most populous category (39%) for present relationship is “really just friends,” and the second most populous (33%) is “not friends”. Interestingly, two sites follow (drive) this pattern, while two sites differ. Some report having a committed relationship with their children’s mothers (15%).

Figure 8: Present Relationship with Mothers at Baseline

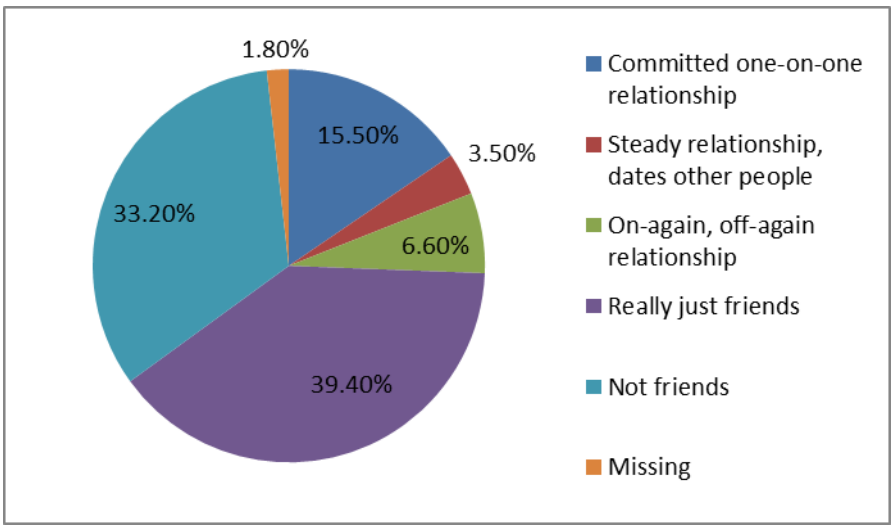


Table 52: Present Relationship with Mother of First Child at Baseline

	Number of Fathers				
	Site				
	CO	IN	TX	WA	Overall
Committed one-on-one relationship	4	11	11	8	34
Steady relationship, dates other people	1	1		6	8
On-again, off-again relationship	1	3	6	7	17
Really just friends	7	49	26	7	89
Not friends	7	34	24	11	76
Missing	2			2	4
Total	22	98	67	41	228

Table 53: Present Relationship with Mother of First Child at Baseline

	Percent of Site Fathers				
	Site				
	CO	IN	TX	WA	Overall
Committed one-on-one relationship	18.2%	11.2%	16.4%	19.5%	14.9%
Steady relationship, dates other people	4.5%	1.0%		14.6%	3.5%
On-again, off-again relationship	4.5%	3.1%	9.0%	17.1%	7.5%
Really just friends	31.8%	50.0%	38.8%	17.1%	39.0%
Not friends	31.8%	34.7%	35.8%	26.8%	33.3%
Missing	9.1%			4.9%	1.8%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Present interaction patterns cannot be generalized across sites. While overall more fathers reported in the neutral category ("not well, not badly"), this category does not clearly predominate in any of the sites. In Colorado, 7 out of 19 reported they got along with the mother of the first child very well; in Indiana equal numbers (27) reported getting along "not well, not badly" and having "no interaction"; in Texas, almost 18 out of 67 reported "very well", while 14 reported "not well, not badly"; and in Washington, 9 fathers reported they got along "very well" with mothers of the first child. It is interesting to note that over half of the fathers reported a better-than-antagonistic relationship with the mothers of their first children.

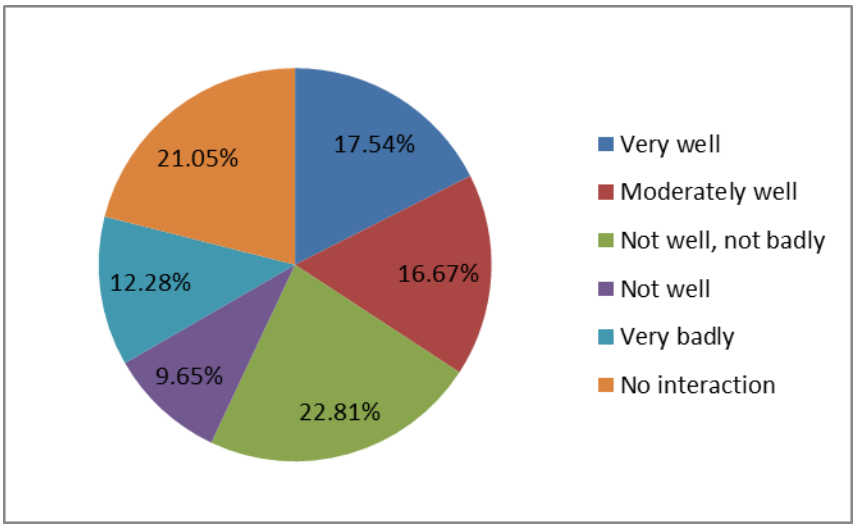
Table 54: How Father Gets Along with Mother of First Child

	Number of Fathers Site				
	CO	IN	TX	WA	Overall
Very well	7	6	18	9	40
Moderately well	4	16	13	5	38
Not well, not badly	3	27	14	8	52
Not well	2	8	6	6	22
Very badly	1	14	8	5	28
No interaction	5	27	8	8	48
Missing					
Total	22	98	67	41	228

Table 55: How Father Gets Along with Mother of First Child

	Percent Site				
	CO	IN	TX	WA	Overall Percent
Very well	31.8%	6.1%	26.9%	22.0%	17.5%
Moderately well	18.2%	16.3%	19.4%	12.2%	16.7%
Not well, not badly	13.6%	27.6%	20.9%	19.5%	22.8%
Not well	9.1%	8.2%	9.0%	14.6%	9.6%
Very badly	4.5%	14.3%	11.9%	12.2%	12.3%
No interaction	22.7%	27.6%	11.9%	19.5%	21.1%
Missing					
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Figure 9: Get Along?



The final variable measuring father-mother interaction counts communication events. At first interview, fathers were asked how many times they had spoken with their children's mothers in the past three months. This variable shows a bi-modal pattern. At the low end, 34% of fathers had spoken to the

mothers of their children once, twice, or not at all, while 14% of fathers report conversation on a daily basis.[24] As shown on **Error! Reference source not found.**, half of all fathers spoke with the mothers of their children under six times. Sites vary considerably as to median and modal number of communication events. A table breaking down these frequencies for the four sites is included here, as it shows how the sites vary in mean and median numbers. It is beyond the scope of this study to discern the reasons for this variation. If this study is replicated some general tendencies may emerge, or regional differences in conditioning factors may be found to account for these differences.

Table 56: How many times spoken with mothers of children in last three months (First Interview)

	Site				
	CO	IN	TX	WA	Overall
N =	13	98	59	30	200
Number not Responding to this question	9		8	11	28
Mean	11.69	22.40	30.92	23.97	24.45
Median	1.00	10.00	10.00	3.00	6.00
Minimum	0	0	0	0	0
Maximum	90	90	236	100	236

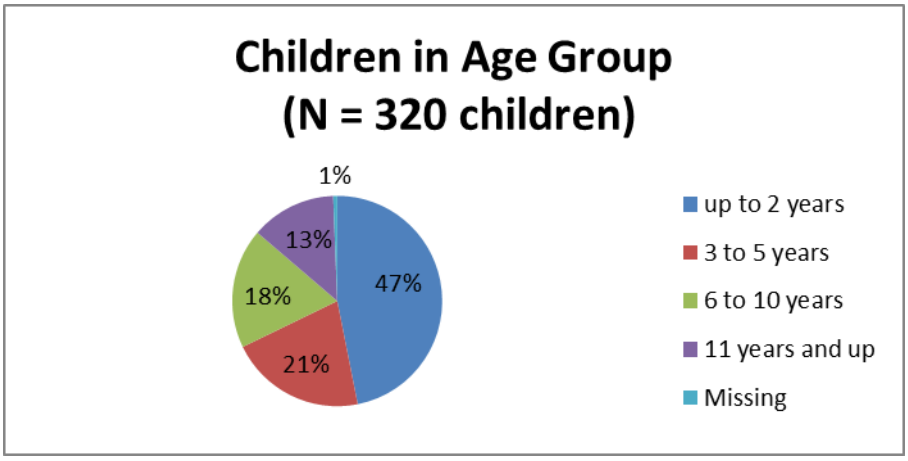
Interaction with children

The fathers' interaction with their children was assessed at baseline and in the two subsequent interviews. Measurable indicators included the frequency of father-child visits and the degree to which fathers had observed their children's tastes and development. Open ended questions probed activities and topics of conversation while visiting. In addition, fathers were asked if they had visited their children's school.

Almost half of the children of program fathers were either infants or toddlers, and an additional 21% were very young. The median age of these children was three years, whereas the median age of children at first removal in the four states in general is seven years.[25] Many of the questions asked of fathers to elicit their reports of child interaction and other parenting activities are not relevant to children in the youngest age group. Hence in some analyses the evaluators selected for children for whom the question was appropriate.

[24] Full frequency table is available upon request.
[25] Foster Care extract, FFY 2009, for the states of Colorado, Indiana, Texas, and Washington.

Figure 10: Ages of Program Children



At baseline, most fathers in this population could name 3 activities their children enjoyed. Evaluators summarized these measures using the long child file and the father file, measuring the responses for the oldest child. The responses patterns were similar, and eldest child percentages are given here. Evaluators selected for fathers of oldest children 3 years of age or older. At baseline 99 fathers responded. Of those responding 83% fathers named three activities, while 4% of those responding named none.

Frequency of visits with children at baseline showed a high degree of dispersion. Fathers were asked at baseline how often they had visited their children in the past month. Visits with oldest child were measured. Of the 225 fathers responding to that question, 21% reported no visits, 20% reported fewer than one visit per week, 32% reported once or twice a week, 8% reported three or four times a week, 3% reported four to six times a week, and 15% reported daily visits. Thus, a third reported weekly visits, over a third reported infrequent or no visits, while a quarter reported visits more than once a week. Interestingly, many of these were clustered at the daily end.

At baseline, 39 fathers reported having visited their children's school, constituting 17% of the total number of fathers and 41% of school-age children (children over five years of age).

Interaction with CPS

At the baseline interviews, fathers were asked several questions about their interaction with the child protective services (CPS) agency: whether they felt they had been treated fairly; whether they had been interviewed; whether they knew their case worker's name; whether they had expressed an interest in serving as a placement resource for their child; and whether CPS had expressed an interest in placing the child with them.

In three of the four sites, over half of program fathers report having been interviewed by CPS agencies at the time of their children's placement. There are no figures available to evaluators with respect to the number of non-program fathers interviewed.

Table 57: Did the Child Protection agency Interview you at the time of placement?

	Number of Fathers (Within-Site Percent of Fathers)				
	CO	IN	TX	WA	Overall
No	6 (34.7%)	34 (34.7%)	29 (43.3%)	14 (34.1%)	83 (36.4%)
Yes	14 (65.3%)	64 (65.3%	37 (55.2%)	27 (65.9%)	142 (62.3%)
Missing	2 (9.1%)		1 (1.5%)		3 (1.3%)
Total	22 (100%)	98 (100%)	67 (100%)	41 (100%)	228 (100%)

Fathers' interaction with CPS is a key element in the program and in the curriculum. As fathers become more skilled in navigating through the child welfare system they may develop more positive interactions. The perceptions of how they were treated at baseline run the full gamut of responses. Overall, more fathers indicated they were treated "very fairly " than in any other category, but this was the most frequent response in only one of the four sites – Indiana. Texas' most frequent responses were "ok" and "very fairly," and Washington's most frequent response was "not at all fairly". This question was asked again in two sites at sixteen weeks, but of the 43 fathers who have taken the third interview, 26 responded to this question:11 "not at all fairly",4 "unfairly on the whole", 4 "ok", 2 "fairly" and 7 "very fairly." Interestingly, two fathers who had characterized their treatment as "very fairly" at baseline characterized treatment at sixteen weeks as "not at all fairly."

Table 58: Treatment by CPS

	Number of Fathers				
	Site				
	CO	IN	TX	WA	Overall
No contact with Agency		33			33
not at all fairly	4	11	9	13	37
unfairly on the whole		3	10	2	15
Ok	4	19	16	9	48
fairly on the whole	1	6	4	5	16
very fairly	4	25	15	10	54
comments		1			1
Missing	9		13	2	24
Total	22	98	67	41	228

Table 59: Treatment by CPS - Percent

	Percent of Fathers				
	Site				
	CO	IN	TX	WA	Overall
No contact with agency		33.67%			
not at all fairly	18.18%	11.22%	13.43%	31.71%	16.23%
unfairly on the whole		3.06%	14.93%	4.88%	6.58%
ok	18.18%	19.39%	23.88%	21.95%	21.05%
fairly on the whole	4.55%	6.12%	5.97%	12.20%	7.02%
very fairly	18.18%	25.51%	22.39%	24.39%	23.68%
comments		1.02%			0.44%
Missing	40.91%		19.40%	4.88%	11%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The degree to which fathers are included in planning can be measured from both the fathers' and the agencies' perspectives. Fathers were asked to report on whether the agency had interviewed them at the time of their child's placement. Of the fathers who agreed to join the program, 142, or 62%, report having been interviewed by CPS. To put this proportion in the larger perspective, however, these 142 fathers constitute roughly 5% of applicable fathers considered by the four sites to date.

Table 60: Did the Child Protection agency Interview you at the time of placement?

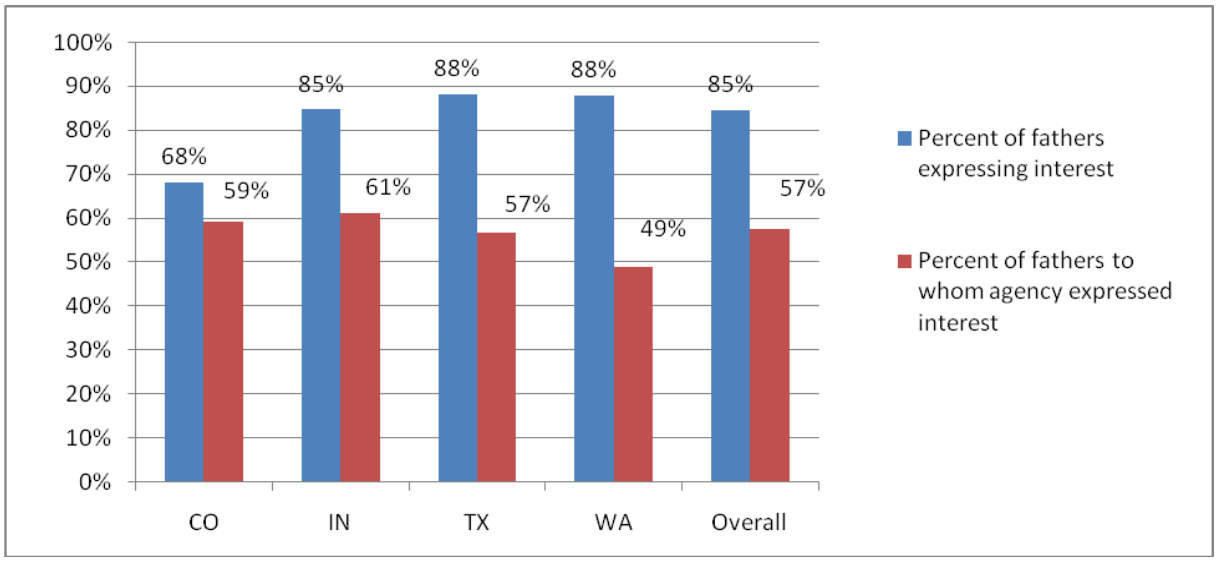
	Number of Fathers (Within-Site Percent of Fathers)				
	CO	IN	TX	WA	Overall
No	6 (27.3%)	34 (34.7%)	29 (43.3%)	14 (34.1%)	83 (36.4%)
Yes	14 (63.6%)	64 (65.3%	37 (55.2%)	27 (65.9%)	142 (62.3%)
Missing	2 (9.1%)		1 (1.5%)		3 (1.3%)
Total	22 (100%)	98 (100%)	67 (100%)	41 (100%)	228 (100%)

As for variation among sites, these proportions show less than one would expect. Demographic variables differed among sites more than did this one. In three sites, just under two-thirds of program fathers reported that CPS interviewed them, while in the remaining site those interviewed come to just over one-half.

Two other aspects of fathers' interaction with system were whether the father expressed interest in having the child live with him, and whether CPS expressed interest in placing the child with the father. As

Figure indicates, 85% of fathers interviewed at baseline for the QIC NRF expressed an interest in having their children live with them. Percentages range from 68% to 88%. There is no way of knowing how many fathers not contacted by the QIC expressed such an interest.

Figure 11: Interest in Placement (temporary or permanent) of Children with Father



Changes

Interaction with Mothers

In all three sets of interviews, the interviewers asked participating fathers how many times the father had spoken with his child's mother over the past three months. The median number of times the fathers reported speaking with the mothers of their children at first interview was 6; at the second interview the median was 4; at the third, the median was 2. [26] These tendencies suggest that attention should be paid to the issue of the damping of impact in general, and to support for the emotional issues between parents in particular. It should be noted that these changes were not found to be statistically significant. Replications of this project with higher numbers may show a different result.

Table 61: Times Spoken with Mother, at 2nd and 3rd interview

Times spoken with mother of 1st child			
	Times spoken with Mother at baseline (N= 200 fathers)	2nd interview, times spoken with mother, since last intv. (N=92 fathers)	3rd interview, times spoken with mother, since last intv. (N=68 fathers)
Median	6	4	2
Minimum	.00	.00	.00
Maximum	> 120	> 120	> 120

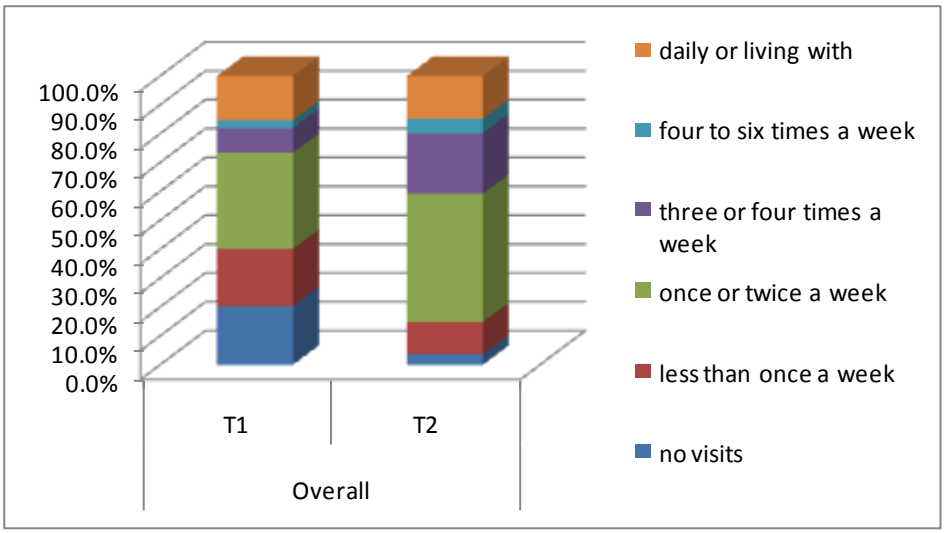
Interaction with Children

As fathers become involved with their children, it is hoped that visits become more regular and more frequent. Data measuring the number of visits reported by program fathers in the month before referral show 41% of children had either no visits with their father or visits occurring less than once a week (93 out of 228 fathers). At the time of the second interview – eight weeks after the first session, 17 % of children received visits less frequently than once a week (15 out of 89 fathers). High numbers of visits per month equated to daily visits, twice daily visits, or residential proximity. (Some fathers are in fact living with the relative in whose care the child has been placed.

Since many of the fathers reflected in *Figure 12* did not have a second interview, percentages to be compared are the "valid percents" or percents only of those whose values are known. Although patterns varied among the individual sites, *Figure 12* shows that the percent of fathers reporting no visits with their children is greatly diminished from baseline to second interview and the percentage of fathers reporting weekly visits increased, as has the percentage of those visiting three or four times per week.

[26] The means, on the other hand, are driven by outliers. At the first interview, fathers reported speaking with the mothers of their eldest children 24 times on average during the past three months. At the second interview fathers reported speaking with their children's mothers on average 17 times since last interview (usually two months). The application of a weight of 1.5 (3/2) to the second interview figure yields an average of about 25. Among those interviewed a third time, fathers report speaking to the mothers of their eldest children on average 27 times. Evaluators at one site represented this figure as several hundred times (since last interview) for two fathers who spoke to their children's mothers several times daily, hence the discrepancy between means and medians.

Figure 12 – Fathers' Frequency of Visitation



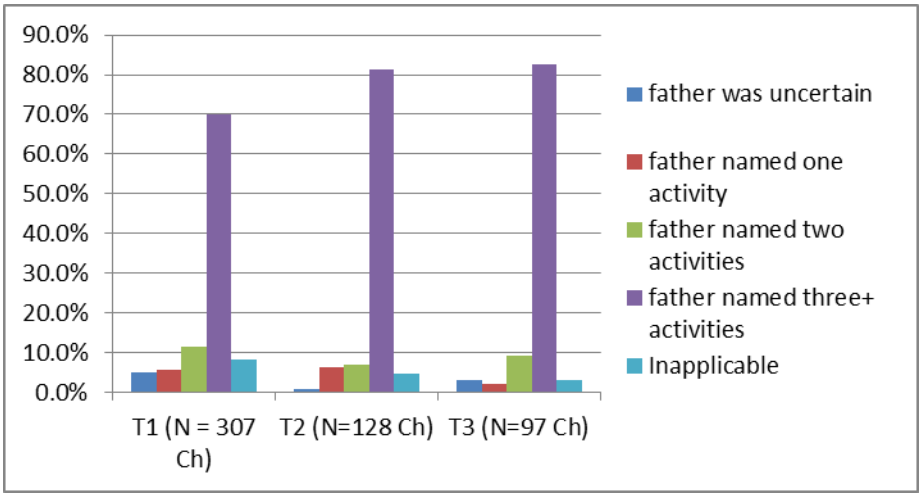
In order to free the comparison of selection bias, a weight of 2 was applied to the baseline number of visits, and a comparison was performed only among fathers who took both the first and second interviews. Of the 228 fathers in the data base, 79 were found to have reported a number of visits in both T1 and T2. A paired sample T-test was performed on these 79 fathers to assess the significance of the difference in mean number of visits. Even with the weighting, the mean number of visits at baseline had been 15, while the mean number of visits for these 79 men at T2 was 29. This difference was found to be significant at a level of .000 (M1 = 14.63, M2=28.54; t = -3.842; p = .000.) This means that the probability was less than one-thousandth that this difference occurred by chance.

In the three interviews, staff asked fathers to name their children's favorite things to do as a way of measuring how well fathers knew their children. The evaluators coded responses according to how many activities a father could name and whether he seemed uncertain (as perceived by the interviewer). Again, since so many of the children of program fathers were very young, responses could not be expected for all of them. Notwithstanding this expected diminution in response, fathers of more than 70% of 301 children (responses were missing for 19 of the 320 children) at baseline were able to name three activities their child enjoyed. *Figure 13* shows the naming frequencies for percents of program children.

The differences in ability to name activities were not significant according to the Wilcoxon signed- rank text; however, the direction of the movements, however small, is encouraging. The percent of children whose fathers were able to name three activities increased over time, while the percent of children whose fathers seemed uncertain decreased. By the third interview, the percent of children whose fathers who seemed uncertain or could only name one activity decreased to less than 5%.[27]

[27] These numbers should be interpreted with caution, as attrition could contribute to a selection bias in favor of those fathers with knowledge of their children.

Figure 13: Activity-naming (N = children)



Evaluators performed a second comparison using responses only from fathers regarding their eldest children who had given all three interviews and whose responses were not inapplicable due to age of the child (N = 50 fathers). A cross-tabulation between the first and third interviews showed that while three fathers either seemed uncertain or could name one activity at baseline, all 50 fathers in this group named at least two activities in the third interview. A Pearson's Chi-Square test revealed significance at the 5% level ($p < .049$).

In all three interviews, interviewers also asked fathers if they had visited their child(ren)'s school as a measure of parental involvement. When asked about school visits with respect to each child, many of the children were found to be too young to attend school. For this reason we examine the visits to the schools of the first (oldest) child of each father. In addition, children too young for school were recoded as "inapplicable." In the first interview, interviewers asked fathers if they had *ever* visited their children's school; in the second and third interviews, the interviewers asked fathers if they had visited the children's school since the last interview.[28] A composite variable was created reflecting whether a father had reported visiting at any of the three time periods. This variable was then cross-tabulated with the baseline variable. As *Table 629: School Visits* shows, at least sixteen fathers who had not visited their children's school prior to the program visited their children's school sometime during the program.

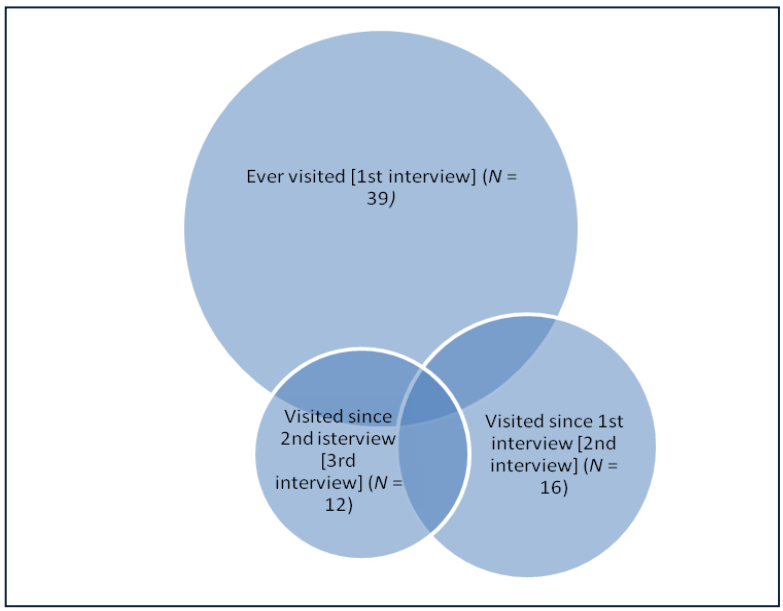
Table 629: School Visits- Fathers reporting visits to school of first child

	Numbers visiting schools	% of Fathers (N = 228)	% of Fathers of school-age children (N=96)
Number/Percent visiting at Baseline	39	17%	41%
Number/Percent ever visiting (baseline, second and third interviews combined)	55	24%	57%

[28] These questions were put to fathers with respect to each child, but evaluators elected to present results by father, using responses to first child query.

Of the 39 fathers who visited their eldest child's school at baseline , seven reported visiting at both first and second interviews, four reported visiting at first and third interviews , four reported visiting at both second and third interviews, and one reported visiting in all three interviews. These figures are reflected in *Figure 14*. Interestingly, the greatest number of fathers reported having ever visited their oldest child's school at baseline, but the number of additional school visits encouraged the evaluators to believe that the program has a positive effect on this particular aspect of father engagement.

Figure 14: Fathers reporting school visits First Child



A logical extension to these measures would be to test for a statistical relationship between fathers' school visits and children's performance in schools. Unfortunately, children's scholastic performance was unavailable to QIC NRF staff.

Interaction with the CPS System

Interviewers also explored fathers' feelings about their interaction with the CPS agency staff. A question relating to "fair treatment" was asked of all program fathers at baseline, and of fathers at two of the four sites at the third interview, and the responses proved surprising to the evaluators. Of the 62 fathers who participated in the third interview at these two sites, 28 responded to this question: 11 "not at all fairly", 4 "unfairly on the whole, 4 "ok", and 2 "fairly" and 7 "very fairly."

As mentioned above, two fathers (both in the same site) who had characterized their treatment as "very fairly" at baseline characterized treatment at sixteen weeks as "not at all fairly," while in the other site three fathers' perceptions moved in a positive direction. While these numbers are too small to permit inferences beyond chance variations, they point to the variability of perceptions through time. The fact that some program fathers have gained custody of their children is a matter of some significance. Exactly how this may relate to program participation is a matter for further study. Does the fact of a father's participation influence the court's decision to award custody, does a specific module help a father negotiate the hurdles, or does the presence of a support system give a father the confidence and strength to proceed through the process? Perhaps in the future the sample sizes will support a path analysis which will reveal how these results are mediated.

Summary of Major Findings

Despite the small numbers, the variations among sites, the substantial attrition rate, and the distributions of the continuous variables, several key findings have emerged:

Take-up: attrition was certainly apparent during the course of the program. The steepest reduction in program attendance, however, occurred between the interview and the first session. In discussions, a facilitator suggested a number of measures to correct this initial loss of participants. In discussion, staff recommended: weekly phone calls prior to session start to keep fathers engaged; reduction of lag time between enrollment and first session; and finally, catchment protocols that permit timely cohort formation.

Interaction with Mothers: while more fathers than expected report non-acrimonious relationships with the mothers of their children, there was no significant change in numbers of times spoken with mothers; the number of times seemed to decrease, in fact.

Visitation: among fathers interviewed at baseline and at eight weeks, the average number of father-child visits weighted for a two-month period was almost double at eight weeks over what it had been at baseline.

Complexity: Ongoing involvement with other systems did not seem to affect father attendance or visitation with children in the way evaluators expected. In fact, involvement with several systems seemed to correlate with higher attendance.

System Interaction: changes in attitudes can go in both directions. As fathers learn to navigate the system they come to know what to expect and how to interact in such a way as to move the process along. On the other hand, increasing clarity of expectations can lead to disappointment if those expectations are not met, or if the system itself suffers a period of instability.

Discussion

These findings must be interpreted with great caution. Although use of a comparison group is brought into play for assessment of safety and permanency outcomes in a separate analysis of administrative data, the self-reported results in this article are measured according to a single-group, inter-temporal design, often considered to be one of the weaker research designs (Johnson, et al., 2008). Moreover, the self-reports of the outcomes variables and correlates constitute a single source. Amato and Gilbreth's 1994 meta-analysis of parenting programs gave scores for methodological rigor to the studies under examination. The present one would have received 2.5 out of 5. Lastly, the data themselves precluded most of the usual parametric analyses and inferential procedures. Did the program select for high-functioning fathers? The evaluators and other QIC NRF staff had some discussion around the characterization of this particular group of fathers.[29] Facilitators who worked with program fathers characterized them as a "fragile population." Program fathers' needs ranged from warm clothing to proper nutrition to job readiness. Some of the baseline statistics, however, surprised us: the degree of commitment and interaction with children's mothers, for example. As discussed in another article within these pages, program fathers most readily chose topics around job readiness, budgeting and household finance in the voluntary sessions of the program.

[29] American Humane Association, Summary of the Research Summit on Father Engagement, February 11-13, 2011, Santa Fe, NM, forthcoming.

For this group, where baseline figures were higher than those in similar populations (Fragile Families,[30] for example) change was slight or not significant. Into this category fall the general relationships with children's mothers, fathers' knowledge of their children, and willingness to serve as placement resources or permanent homes. At baseline, this population of fathers had a preponderance of better-than-neutral interactions with mothers. Perhaps the NRF population as a whole, insofar as they are inaccessible, would register a more neutral and less involved characterization of their relationships. Number of times fathers spoke with mothers did not show the same dramatic increase as did frequency of visitation. In fact the median number of times fathers spoke with the mothers of their eldest children decreased at the third interview. The low numbers of fathers taking the third interview prevent conclusions based on statistical inference, however.

As for interaction with systems, here again baseline figures were "higher" than we were led to expect. One to two-thirds of this group of fathers had been interviewed at baseline. Over three-quarters knew their caseworkers' names and had expressed a desire to serve as a placement resource. Over one-half had been approached by CPS. The interesting results came with the self-reports of fair treatment by the child welfare system. Although numbers are too low to draw sound inferential conclusions (only three sites reported), as many fathers' assessments of fair treatment fell as rose. Conversations with site personnel revealed that over time, case worker turnover can erode a client's trust if continuity is broken. Case management practice should encompass mandated procedures to ensure continuity in the face of high turnover.

Conclusion

The challenges to recruiting fathers to participate in this program have led the QIC staff to consider the distinctions among sub-populations of NRFs of children in foster care. Each population brings with it its own set of challenges, needs, risk factors, and protective factors. These other sup-populations include: fathers living out of jurisdiction (potentially the most similar to the program fathers), incarcerated fathers, fathers with housing less stable than the program group, fathers with problems of health, mental health and substance abuse too serious to allow participation in the program, and fathers who present safety risks for their children.

The explorations of sustainability and replication which took place in the final months of the sites' involvement included, among other things, consideration of serving incarcerated fathers. Discussions have included cross-jurisdictional collaboration in order to provide services and facilitate connections between children and fathers geographically removed. One site has begun replication programs, but is offering participation to resident fathers as well. Finally, as family finding initiatives ramp up, fathers will be found, and fathers found through greater effort may prove to be more challenging to engage. Baseline figures will be lower for other sub-populations, and change may be modest.

These preliminary findings trend toward supporting some of the QIC NRF's working hypotheses: a concerted effort to support fathers in some way contributes to more frequent interactions with their children (as measured by number of visits with children and number of school visits), and fathers' willingness to interact with the child welfare system will result in permanency arrangements entailing close father involvement. These results show promise for future iterations of this and similar programs.

The fathers participating in the program were those for whom the barriers to identification and engagement were either easily surmountable or moderately surmountable. As successor programs

[30] The Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, 1998-present. http://www.fragilefamilies.princeton.edu/index.asp

extend beyond the limits established by this one, many opportunities for future research will present themselves. These include a more comprehensive analysis of the factors mediating outcomes, a path analysis permitting assessment of mediating factors and program elements on father and child outcomes, and comparison of these relationships and outcomes across sub-populations.

Child Outcomes

The QIC NRF has been child centered and father focused since its inception. This has been addressed in presentations of the initial assessment of the field, the development of father resources, curriculum, toolkits, and now by examining the removal history results of children identified during the implementation part of the program in the QIC NRF evaluation sites. The goals of the QIC NRF included the child permanency outcomes of length of stay in foster care and stability of placement.

These outcomes were measured using the SACWIS extracts formatted for the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) data set. Evaluation staff 1) flagged QIC NRF child records in AFCARS to construct the treatment group, and 2) constructed a comparison group from the AFCARS files, using the techniques of propensity score matching. Outcomes between the two groups were then compared.

Construction of the Comparison Group

Child identities were captured through state system identifiers which by themselves were anonymous identifiers. This privacy protection resulted in loss of some information but allowed identification of the AFCARS records for the children of fathers who voluntarily participated in the in the QIC NRF program. The state system identifiers were only linked to the state AFCARS files obtained from the states. This linkage was formulated by obtaining the encrypted version of the child identifier from the states of the sites. This was necessary as the AFCARS state file uses an encrypted version of the state identifier.

Table 1 presents the number of children of NRFs enrolled by program site. Encrypted State identifiers were not always found in the AFCARS file. The percentage match ranged from 74% to 99%. In *Table 63*, AFCARS files for program site counties for Federal Fiscal Years (FFYs) 2010 and 2011, or for the period October 1 2009 through September 30, 2011. This was the period of QIC NRF program implementation. The files contain a unique record for each child in foster care in the four counties during the period. There were more children found to be in foster care than were reported as eligible. This may have been due to the long term foster care children who were not referred to the QIC NRF program. *Table 63* also provides the initial counts of the non-QIC NRF children who entered foster care in the same months as the children whose NRFs enrolled in the QIC intervention program.

Table 63: Child Counts of QIC Related Children and Other Foster Care Entries

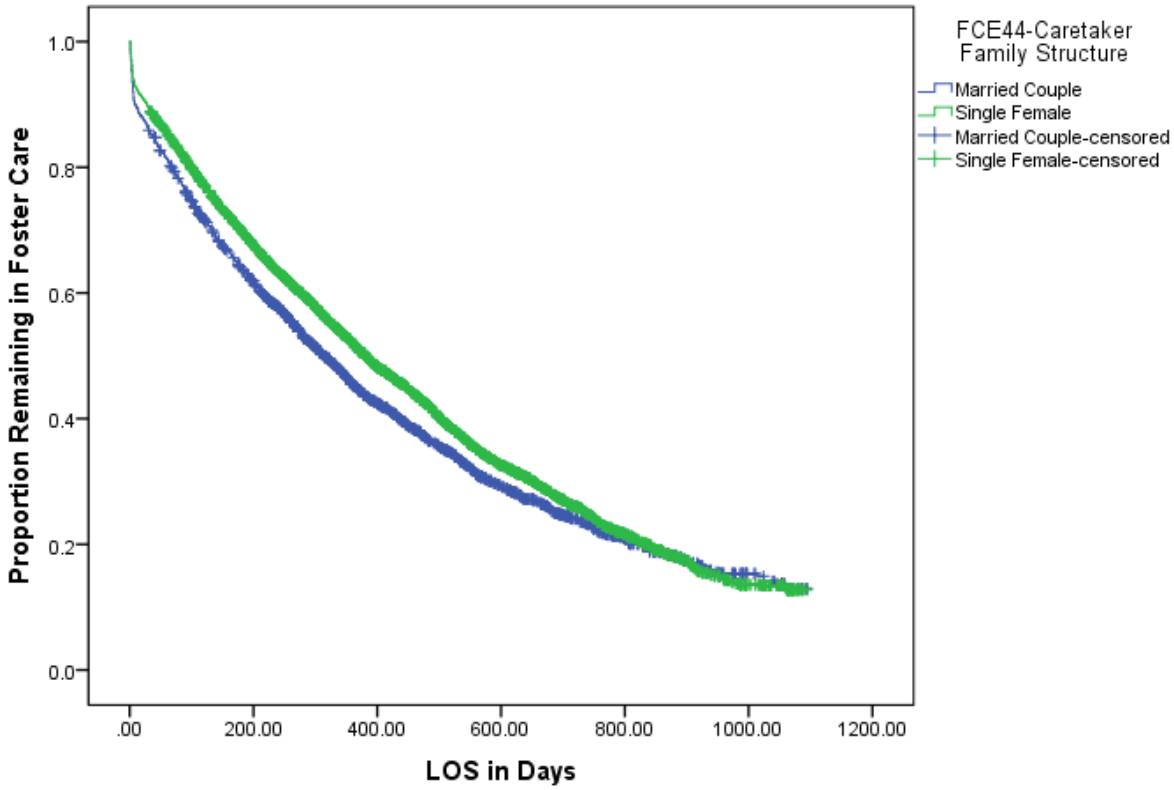
Count

		NRF Flag		Total
		Child Not Included in QIC NRF	Child Included in QIC NRF	
QIC NRF Site	El Paso County Colorado	1,901	27	1,928
	Marion County Indiana	3,650	101	3,751
	Tarrant County Texas	1,345	93	1,438
	King County Washington	1,813	36	1,849
Total		8,709	257	8,966

As stated above, goal of the analysis was to assemble a post hoc comparison group of children with AFCARS records that match to the QIC NRF related children. Single female caretakers of children in foster care are the best approximation of a comparison to NRFs of children in foster care. For example, examination of the multi-year AFCARS data for the counties where QIC NRF sites were located, showed that there are significant differences in length of stay and number of moves in foster care for children of Single Female Caretakers compared to children of Married Couple Caretakers.

As mentioned above children of the Single Female Caretaker group have longer lengths of stay than their counterparts in the Married Couple Caretaker group. This is documentation of the types of issues that prompted interest in non-resident fathers in child welfare in the first place. As shown in *Figure 15*, using the three year AFCARS file for the four counties of this study, there is a significant difference on all Kaplan-Meier tests, indicating that children of single mothers stay in foster care longer than children of married parents (for KM Log Rank (Mantel-Cox), Breslow (Generalized Wilcoxon), Tarone-Ware statistics, all were chi square $p<.001$}.

Figure 15: Length of Stay for Children of Married Couples and Children of Single Mothers



The number of placement moves of children in foster care is significantly different across sites, and there is an interaction between Caretaker Family Status (Single Female Caretaker versus Married Couple Caretakers) and site. *Table 64* presents these Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test results. These results inform about the foster experience for children from homes without a biological father present and form the basis for the initial criteria of comparison group formation, children removed from single female caretaker households.

Table 64: ANOVA Between-Subjects Effects

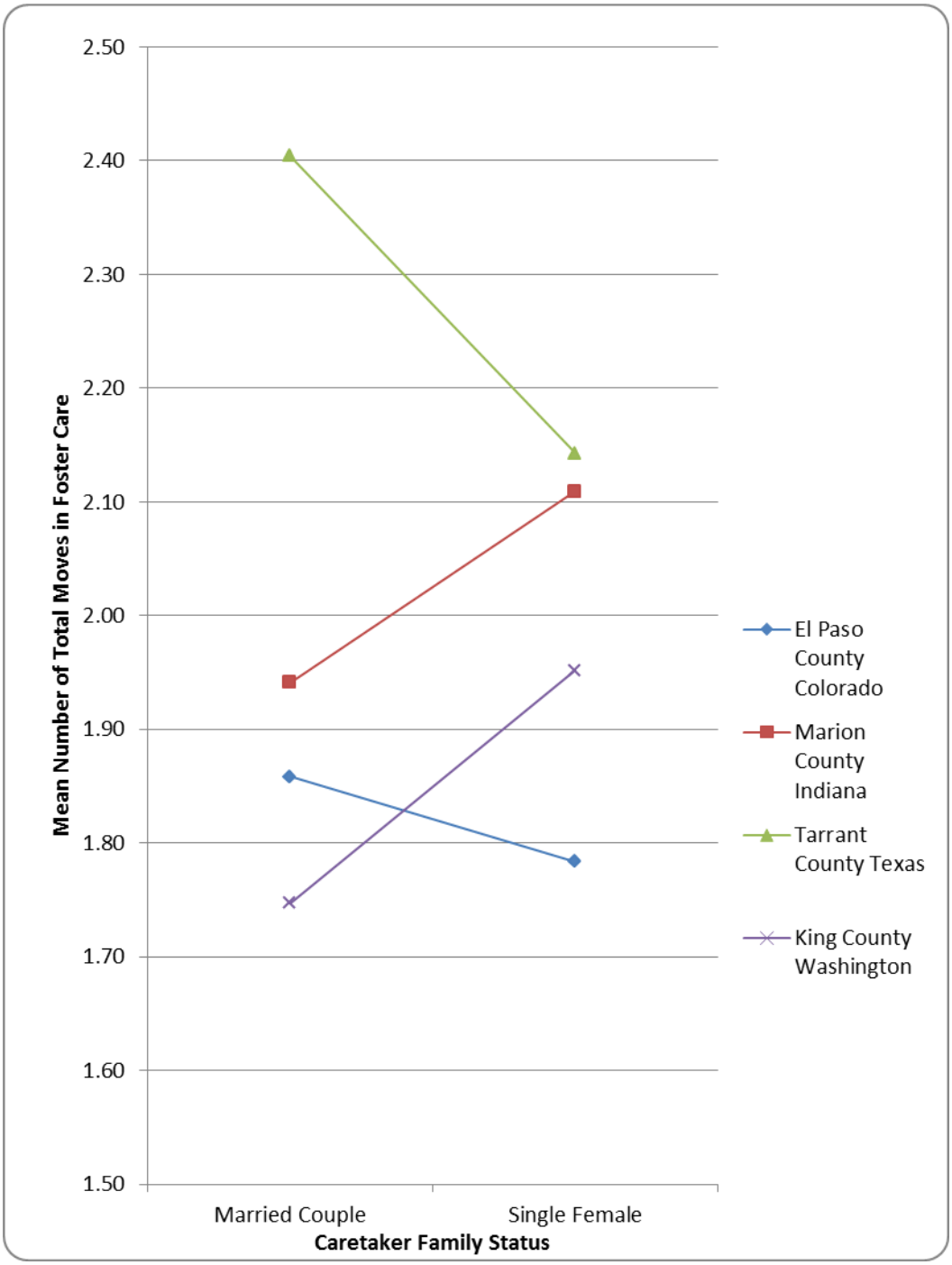
Total Number of Removals From Home To Date

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	99.824[a]	7	14.261	33.456	.000
Intercept	5550.585	1	5550.585	13022.080	.000
Caretaker Family Status	.663	1	.663	1.556	.212
Site	72.634	3	24.211	56.802	.000
Caretaker Family Status * Site	4.248	3	1.416	3.322	.019
Error	2823.867	6625	.426		
Total	14074.000	6633			
Corrected Total	2923.691	6632			

a. R Squared = .034 (Adjusted R Squared = .033)

The main effect for site and the interaction between Caretaker Family Status and site is seen from the plot of means in *Figure 16*. Tarrant County had the largest number of Prior Removals, but far fewer in the Single Female Caretaker group. Marion County and El Paso County had mid-range mean numbers of Total Prior Removals in the Married Couple Caretaker groups. Marion County had a larger mean for the Single Female Caretaker group, while El Paso County had a smaller mean in the Single Female Caretaker group compared to the Married Couple Caretaker group. King County Washington had the least mean number of prior removals in the Married Couple Caretaker group but more in the Single Female Caretaker group. *Figure 16* shows the significantly different patterns of prior removal results across sites for the children of Single Female Caretakers.

Figure 16: Number of Removals by Caretaker Family Status and Site



Comparison of Children With and Without Non-Resident Fathers

Despite potential differences between the Single Female Caretaker group and the population of children indicated as participants in the QIC NRF programs, it was determined to use the Single Female Caretaker group in forming the post hoc, matched comparison groups for QIC NRF related children, the population of children in foster care with a Single Female Caretaker was the starting point for developing a comparison group. However, this remains a limitation in a post-hoc comparison design and could confound the interpretation of the findings.

The next step was to assemble the matched entry cohort, whose counts are also included in *Table 64*. The basis of the entry cohort matching was a foster care entry in the same county during the same period of months as the QIC NRF related children. Since each site had a different start up time frame and a different termination pattern, the earliest and latest month for each site was different. *Table 65* presents the earliest and latest removal dates for children in both groups. One exception is that there were some children in El Paso Colorado group that entered foster care eight months earlier than any other child in the group. The adjustment was to include all entries from their month of entry, but no entries for the intervening months were included in the comparison cohort.

Table 65: Current Removal Dates of Entry Cohorts

	NRF Flag			
	Child Not Included in QIC NRF		Child Included in QIC NRF	
QIC NRF Site	Start Month	End Month	Start Month	End Month
El Paso County Colorado	4/1/2008	8/30/2010	4/29/2008	8/2/2010
Marion County Indiana	7/3/2008	2/25/2011	7/23/2008	2/4/2011
Tarrant County Texas	10/10/2008	9/29/2010	10/7/2008	9/23/2010
King County Washington	9/1/2008	12/29/2010	9/2/2008	12/14/2010

After assembling cohorts of children whose fathers participated in the QIC NRF program, matched comparison groups were assembled.

Due to constraints presented from the protection of human subjects processes, no identifiers of children of nonparticipating fathers were obtained for AFCARS record location purposes. An estimate of the effect of NRFs on foster care utilization was made by examining the utilization and outcome results of children of single mothers and children of married parents.

The next step in matching was to compare the QIC NRF related children with the foster care children of Single Female Caretakers using logistic regression. This analysis was done by site to account for regional demographic and casework characteristics. As can be seen in *Table 65*, different patterns of relevant matching variables were obtained in the significant models for each site. In the interest of space, *Table 66* does not report the non-significant results for four variables: child age 16-17, child race undetermined, visual/hearing diagnosis, and parents died.

Table 66: Binary Logistic Results for Child Related to QIC NRF

	Colorado		Indiana		Texas		Wahington	
	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)
Age_Cat_0_3	.998	7311003.230	.996	71907828.778	.998	50754033.718	.996	23304400.157
Age_Cat_4_7	.998	10624325.311	.996	52961856.495	.998	44050702.024	.996	14330116.576
Age_Cat_8_12	.998	4705420.304	.996	44333276.179	.998	29580125.328	.997	5336320.577
Age_Cat_12_15	.999	2659330.688	.996	26481265.433	.998	13816745.578	.996	24963644.969
Sex of Child	.128	2.030	.687	.919	**.098**	1.652	.547	1.272
Am Ind/ Alaskan Nat	.382	3.004	.337	2.892	.614	2.201	**.008**	**3.742**
Asian	.998	.000	.330	2.911	.993	14579865.000	.738	.666
Blk/AfrAm	.234	.326	.915	.958	.284	1.843	**.025**	**3.210**
Hawaii/PI	.999	.000	.999	.000			.523	2.032
White	.719	1.460	.774	.896	.910	.939	.379	1.552
Hispanic Origin	.096	2.315	**.022**	5.620	.763	1.126	.519	1.535
Clinical Disability	.456		**.038**	.383	.995	25412412.997	.918	
Mental Retardation	1.000	3.854	.998	.000	.999	.000	.999	.000
Other Medical Condition	1.000	1.302	.598	.736	.996	3123331.312	.745	.618
Physical Abuse	.997	.000	.774	.880	.657	1.148	.389	.506
Sexual Abuse	.998	.000	**.019**	3.170	.827	1.159	.997	.000
Neglect	.297	1.622	.597	.760	**.041**	**5.444**	.944	.970
Alcohol Abuse Parent	.104	.154	.999	.000	.393	1.653	.638	.749
Drup Abuse Parent	.065	2.421	.819	.941	.209	1.509	**.027**	**2.547**
Alcohol Abuse Child	.998	.000	.602	1.229	**.004**	**113.014**	.327	3.689
Drug Abuse Child	.066	9.456	.998	.000	.160	8.601	.098	11.242
Child Disability	.999	.000	.998	.000	.913	1.208	**.038**	**34.501**
Child Behavior Problem	.650	.610	.536	.515	.997	.000	.996	.000
Parent in Jail	.204	2.121	.987	1.005	.644	.823	.687	.655
Parent Inability to Cope	**.000**	**12.247**	.480	.653	.133	1.727	.115	2.293
Abandonment	.772	.722	.996	.000	.993	.000	.708	1.380
Relinquishment	.053	11.999	.999	.000				
Housing	.109	2.754	.514	1.247	.299	1.542	.380	.488

Based on the results from *Table 66*, further analyses were conducted to determine the pertinent compositions of the site groups of children related to QIC NRF. OLAP (SPSS On Line Analytic Processing) procedures provided flexible multidimensional tabulations of significant child variables for each site relating to NRF membership in the QIC NRF program. *Table 67*.presents those child results that form the basis for the creation of matched comparison groups.

Table 67: Patterns of Pertinent Child Variables for Children Related to QIC NRF Fathers

El Paso County Colorado	(one pertinent variables, two groups)					
	Parental Inability to Cope				Count	Proportion
1.	Does Not Apply				12	0.44
2.	Applies				15	0.56
				Total	27	
Marion County Indiana	(three pertinent variables, five groups)					
	Child Sex Abuse	Hispanic Ethnicity	Child Clinical Disability			
1.	Does Not Apply	Does Not Apply	Does Not Apply		79	0.78
2.	Applies	Does Not Apply	Does Not Apply		5	0.05
3.	Does Not Apply	Does Not Apply	Applies		14	0.13
4.	Applies	Does Not Apply	Applies		1	0.01
5.	Does Not Apply	Applies	Does Not Apply		2	0.02
				Total	101	
Tarrant County Texas	(two pertinent variables, four groups)					
	Neglect	Child Alcohol Abuse			Count	Proportion
1.	Does Not Apply	Does Not Apply			5	0.05
2.	Does Not Apply	Applies			2	0.02
3.	Applies	Does Not Apply			80	0.86
4.	Applies	Applies			6	0.06
				Total	93	
King County Washington	(four pertinent variables, nine groups)					
	Race Bl/Afr Am	Race AmInd/Al Nat	Drug Abuse Parent	Child Disability	Count	Proportion
1.	Does Not Apply	Does Not Apply	Does Not Apply	Does Not Apply	7	0.19
2.	Does Not Apply	Does Not Apply	Applies	Does Not Apply	4	0.11
3.	Does Not Apply	Applies	Does Not Apply	Does Not Apply	2	0.06
4.	Does Not Apply	Applies	Applies	Does Not Apply	5	0.14
5.	Applies	Does Not Apply	Does Not Apply	Does Not Apply	9	0.25
6.	Applies	Does Not Apply	Applies	Does Not Apply	6	0.17
7.	Applies	Does Not Apply	Applies	Applies	1	0.03
8.	Applies	Applies	Does Not Apply	Does Not Apply	1	0.03
9.	Applies	Applies	Applies	Does Not Apply	1	0.03
				Total	36	

Creation of matched comparison groups for children of nonresident fathers in the QIC NRF intervention program began with the selection of entry cohorts described above. These site level entry cohorts were divided into strata based upon the group definitions within each site described in Table 5. Within each stratum a random sample of cases was drawn. The number of cases for each sample was equal to the number of cases present in the cohort of children related to fathers enrolled in the NRFQIC program. Merging the site files of NRFQIC related children and the sample files of comparison groups produced the master analysis file. *Table 68* presents the size of each group in that file.

Table 68: Counts of Master Analysis File Groups

		NRF Flag		Total
		Not Child of QIC NRF	Child of QIC NRF	
QIC NRF Site	El Paso County Colorado	27	27	54
	Marion County Indiana	101	101	202
	Tarrant County Texas	93	93	186
	King County Washington	36	36	72
Total		257	257	514

Assembly of a comparison group for children of non-resident fathers enrolled in the QIC NRF program provides the opportunity to further examine the Caretaker Family Status variable coding. The question emerges, "Are there reasons the children of single mothers might not be entirely appropriate as the matched comparison group for QIC NRF related children?" One issue here may be the coding of caretaker family structure in the AFCARS file. The records of the QIC NRF children show that they are coded to Caretaker Family Structure Codes in various ways. These codes are plausibly still family structures without a biological father in the household. They point to the independence of the Caretaker Family Structure variable and the absence of a biological father from the home. Whether this is an accurate *Table 69* presents the Caretaker Family Structure results for the QIC NRF analysis file of QIC NRF related children and the children of the matched AFCARS comparison groups.

Outcomes Comparison

Using the master analysis file, three tests were performed. One to determine any difference in prior removal history, another to determine any differences in length of stay in foster care, and a third to assess the number of moves in foster care.

Prior Removal History

To test the number of prior removals from home events of QIC NRF related children compared to the matched group of children of Single Female Caretakers, the SPSS General Linear Model univariate ANOVA procedure with the Number of Prior Removals as the dependent measure and the child QIC NRF variable and the site variable as the fully factorial independent variables produced a significant main effect for site, non-significant interaction of QIC NRF Status and site, and a non-significant effect for QIC NRF status between groups. *Table 69* shows these results.

Table 69: Number of Removals by QIC NRF Status and Site Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Total Number of Removals From Home To Date

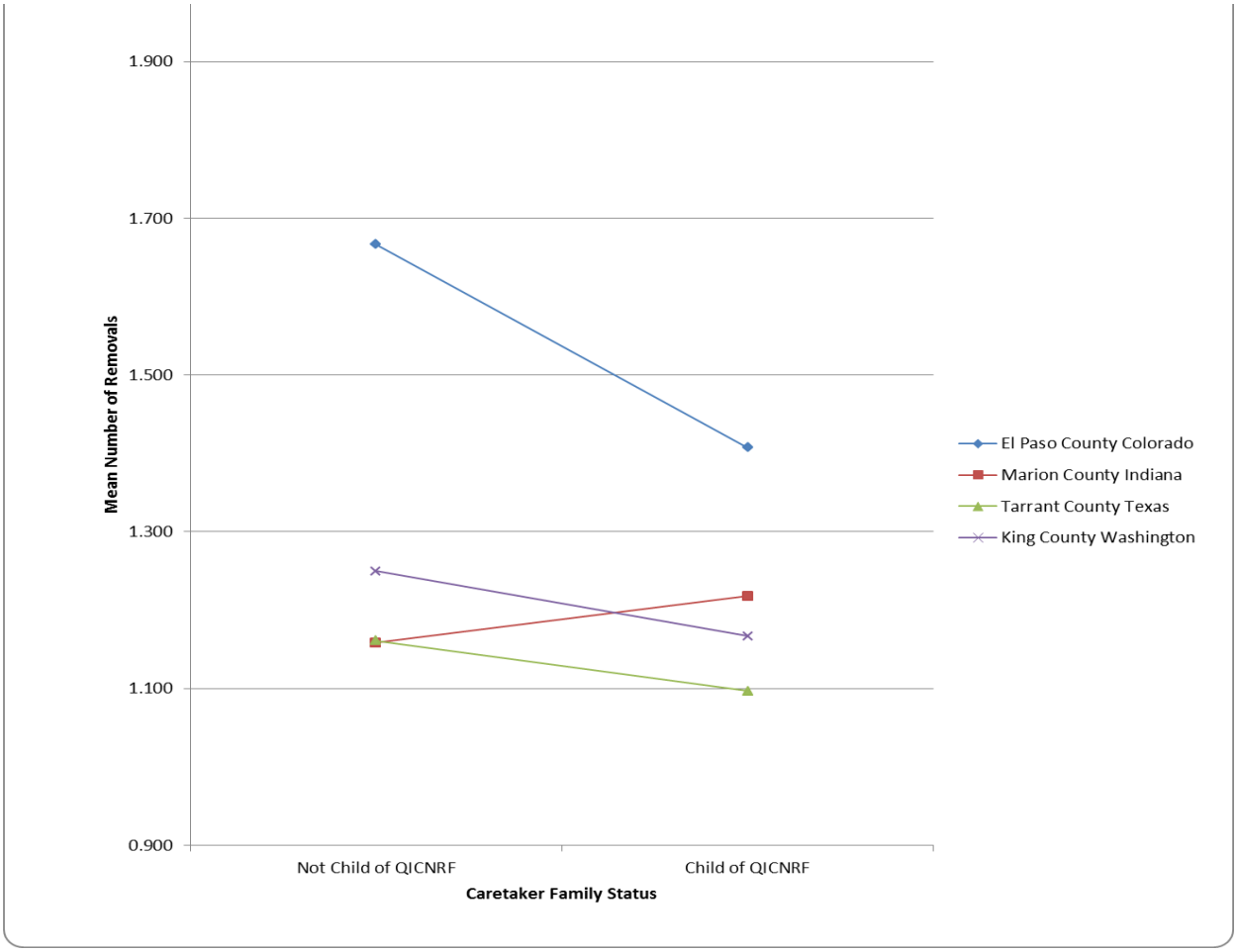
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	8.489[a]	7	1.213	4.883	.000	.063
Intercept	599.733	1	599.733	2415.131	.000	.827
Non-Resident Father	.707	1	.707	2.848	.092	.006
Site	7.084	3	2.361	9.510	.000	.053
Non-Resident Father by Site	1.210	3	.403	1.624	.183	.010
Error	125.651	506	.248			
Total	882.000	514				
Corrected Total	134.140	513				

a. R Squared = .063 (Adjusted R Squared = .050)

The overall power of the analysis using the QIC NRF related children and the matched comparison group (R Squared = .063) was substantially larger than the power obtained for the Analysis of Prior Removals using between group tests of Caretaker Status and site (R Squared = .034). This indicates that the matched group design is effective in accounting for more variance than the general within foster care analyses.

The plot of the results in *Figure 17* clearly shows the differences between the matched groups. El Paso County children had the most removals for Not QIC NRF Related Children and for the QIC NRF related children group. The QIC NRF related children group of El Paso County has a non-significant (t=1.05, p=ns) smaller average number of removals. The King County and Tarrant County QIC NRF related children showed smaller average numbers of Prior Removals than their comparison groups while Marion County QIC NRF related children show a higher average number of Prior Removals than their matched comparison group. This is the significant interaction effect. Overall, the site effect is moistly explained by the El Paso County children having higher average number of Prior Removals than any other site.

Figure 17: Number of Removals by QIC NRF Status and Site



Length of Stay

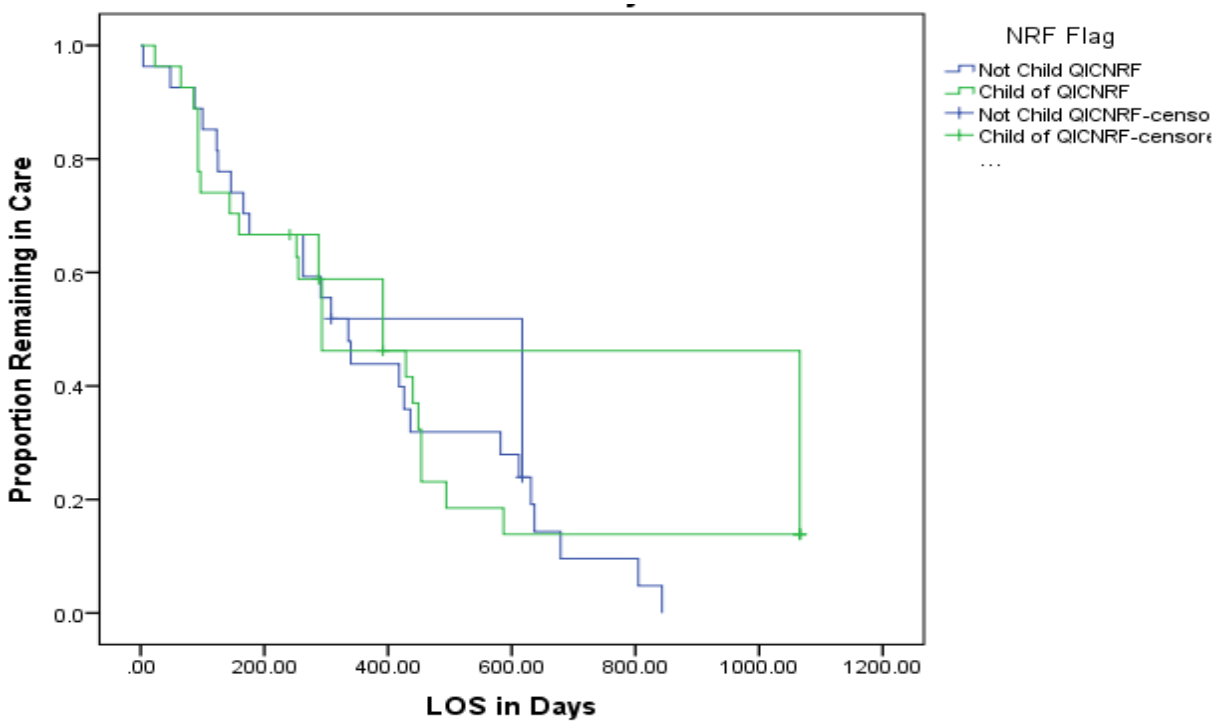
Generally, QIC NRF related children had longer a Length of Stay in foster care than their comparison group members. (LOS)Results of Survival Analysis on LOS across sites and NRFQIC groups yielded significant differences between QIC NRF related Children and children not related to the QIC NRF for King County Washington, and Marion County Indiana. Tarrant County Texas site showed a trend towards a difference. *Table 70* presents the Kaplan-Meier statistics for the sites.

Table 70: Overall Comparisons on Length of Stay of QIC NRF Related Children and Not QIC NRF Related Children

QIC NRF Site		Chi-Square	df	Sig.
El Paso County Colorado	Log Rank (Mantel-Cox)	0.076	1	.782
	Breslow (Generalized Wilcoxon)	.072	1	.789
	Tarone-Ware	.011	1	.918
Marion County Indiana	Log Rank (Mantel-Cox)	9.702	1	.002
	Breslow (Generalized Wilcoxon)	9.729	1	.002
	Tarone-Ware	9.704	1	.002
Tarrant County Texas	Log Rank (Mantel-Cox)	2.332	1	.127
	Breslow (Generalized Wilcoxon)	3.174	1	.075
	Tarone-Ware	2.964	1	.085
King County Washington	Log Rank (Mantel-Cox)	13.702	1	.000
	Breslow (Generalized Wilcoxon)	14.816	1	.000
	Tarone-Ware	14.485	1	.000
Pooled	Log Rank (Mantel-Cox)	5.817	1	.016
	Breslow (Generalized Wilcoxon)	4.031	1	.045
	Tarone-Ware	4.934	1	.026

For the overall (Pooled} test there is the significant effect on all three statistics of the Kaplan-Meier. Figure 16 presents the overall LOS survival plot. This reflects the general effect of the longer LOS periods for the NRFQIC related children. Figure 18 depicts the LOS results for El Paso County Colorado. There were no significant differences in LOS between groups.

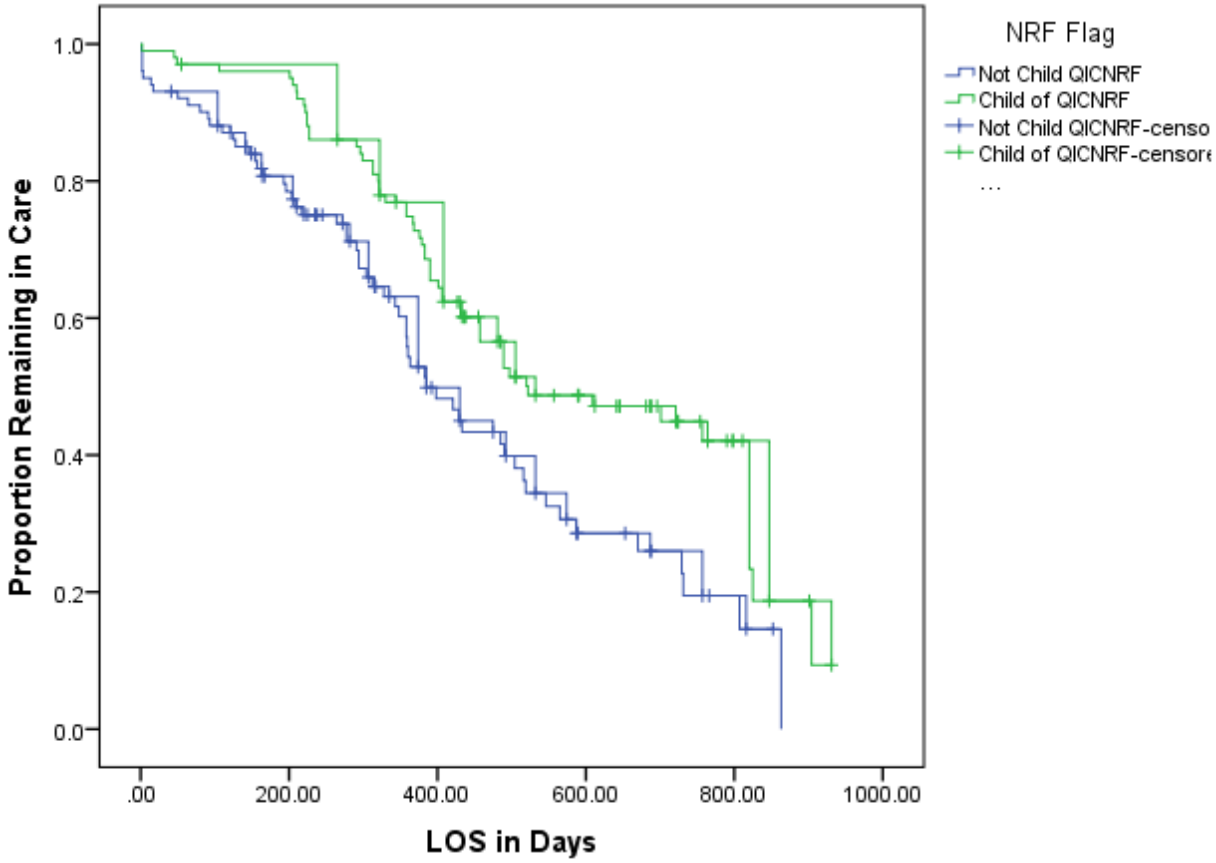
Figure 18: Length of Stay for El Paso County Colorado



For the above graphic display, *Table 70* (previous page) shows that no statistical difference between QIC NRF related children and the matched comparison group of QIC NRF not related children.

On the other hand for the children of Marion County Indiana all tests of differences between the two groups are significant as reported in *Table 70*. *Figure 19* shows that the QIC NRF related children in Marion County Indiana have longer length of stay periods than their comparison cohort. There is a clear separation between the two groups in the proportion of cases reaching the exit event (the terminal event) or having the its observation period end (being censored from the analysis). There is always a higher proportion of QIC NRF related children remaining in care, regardless of the point in time inspected.

Figure 19: Length of Stay for Marion County, Indiana



The same type of finding is seen for the QIC NRF related children of Tarrant County Texas. *Table 70* shows a strong trend toward significant difference between the child groups in that site for two of the statistics. These statistics, the Breslow and the Tarone-Ware, have fewer assumptions about the underlying distribution and may be considered less rigorous. This would be appropriate given the relatively modest sizes of the cohort groups in this analysis. Even very early in the LOS periods, as seen in the upper left corner in the plot labeled *Figure 20*, there are always more QIC NRF related children remaining in care. At about the 18 month, or 500 day point, the LOS exits are about the same for both groups. For the longer periods, which are based upon fewer actual observations of cases remaining in care for that long, the pattern of QIC NRF related children having higher proportion remaining in care resumes.

Figure 20: Length of Stay for Tarrant County, Texas

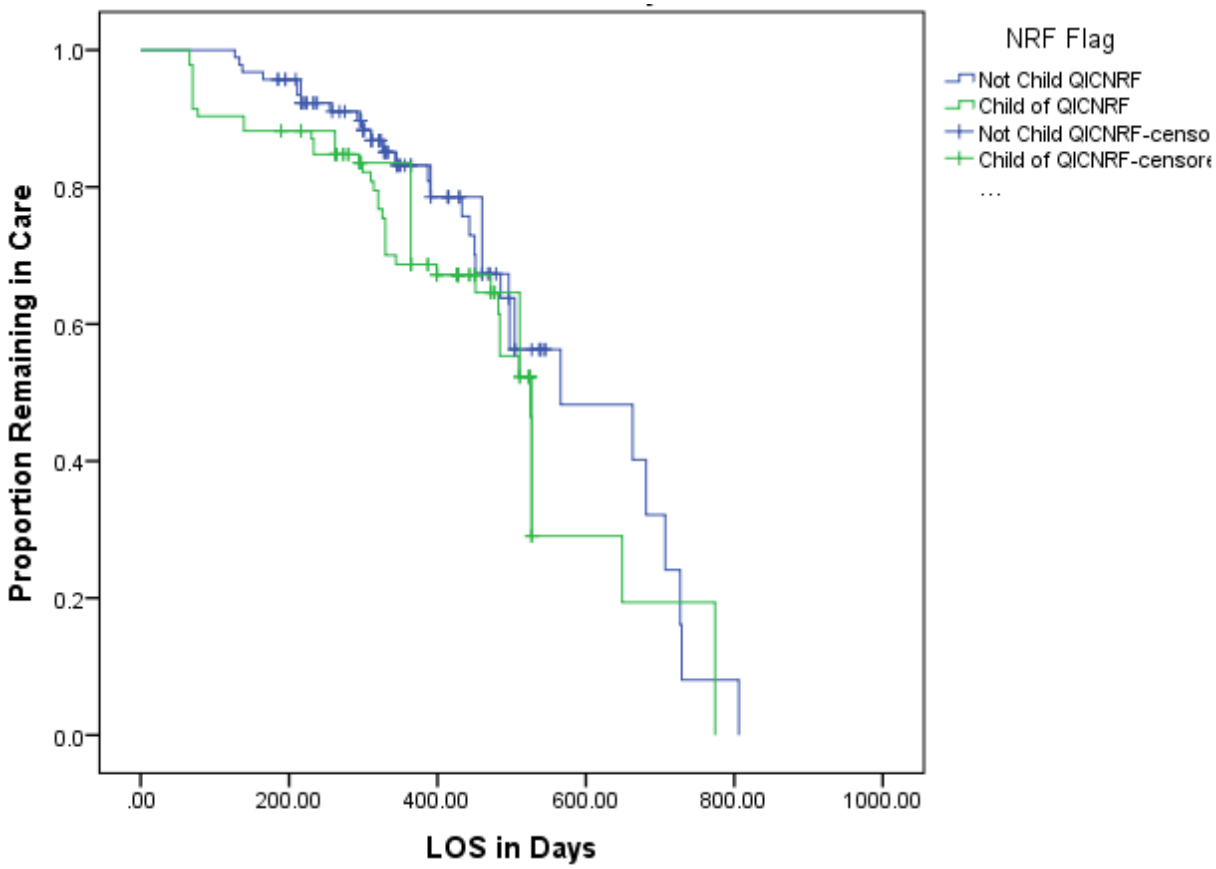
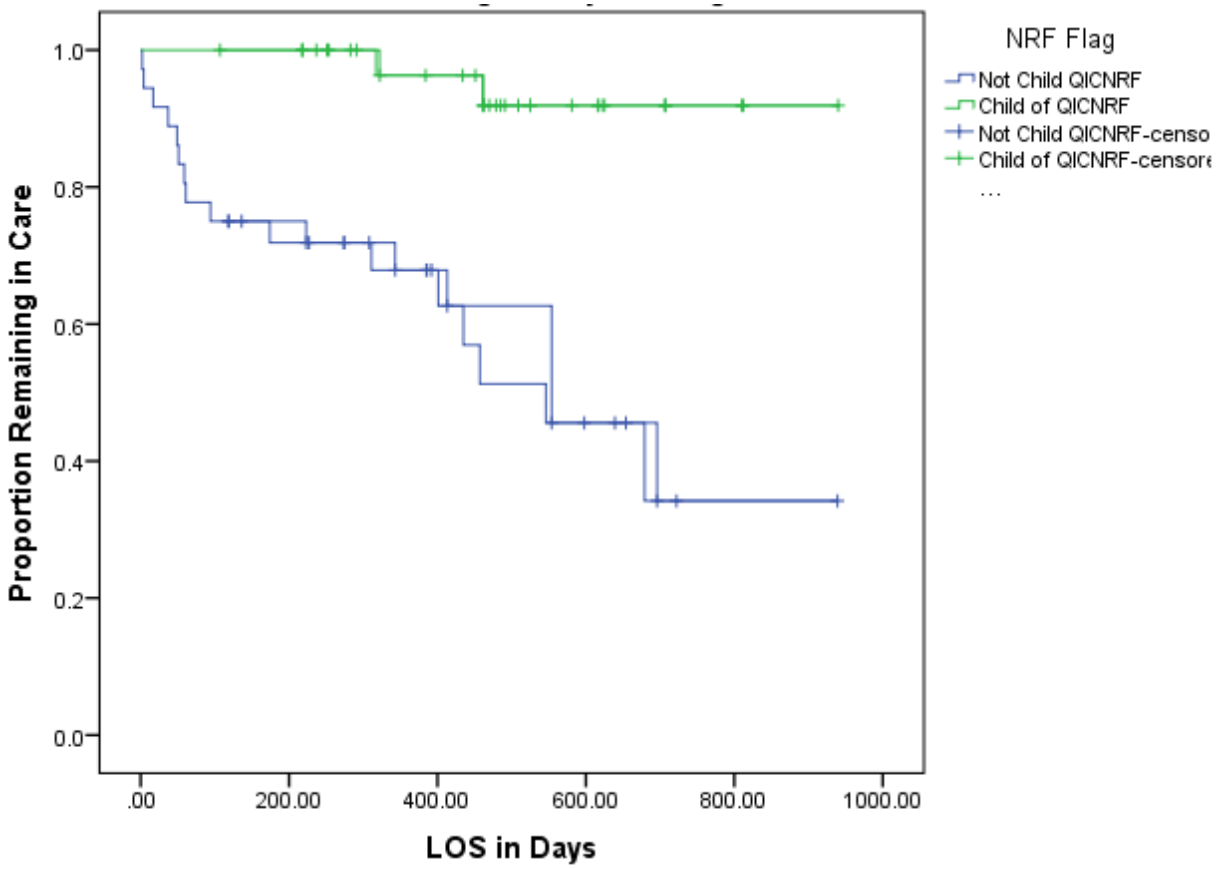


Figure 21 presents the same significant result for King County Washington children. There are significant differences shown on all three tests of Table 4 for the King County Washington children. The effect of having only two recorded on the AFCARS records as having been discharged from foster care during the period is shown by the relatively flat plot with two step downs for the QIC NRF related children group. As a result, the QIC NRF related children group is represented primarily by censored observations, which never had the exit event. The comparison group had 15 exit events for the 36 children in the same time period.

Figure 21: Length of Stay for King County, Washington



The conclusion that can be drawn is that Children of nonresident fathers enrolled in the QIC program do have longer lengths of stay in Foster Care than the matched comparison groups of children of Single Female Caretakers from the same counties.

Number of Placements (Moves) in Foster Care

Analysis of the number of placements in foster care shows a significant site by NRFQIC status interaction. This interaction is accounted for by the fewest number of moves in foster care being shown by the QIC NRF related children. The relatively small number of moves by that group depresses the overall average number of moves by the El Paso County Colorado foster care children sufficiently to produce a significant difference in contrast effects between that site and all others.

To test number of moves in placement, the SPSS General Linear Model univariate ANOVA procedure with the Number of Previous Placements in this Foster Care Episode as the dependent measure and the child QIC NRF variable and the site variable as the fully factorial independent variables produced no significant main effects for site or for QIC NRF status. There is a significant interaction between site and NRFQIC status. *Table 71* shows these results.

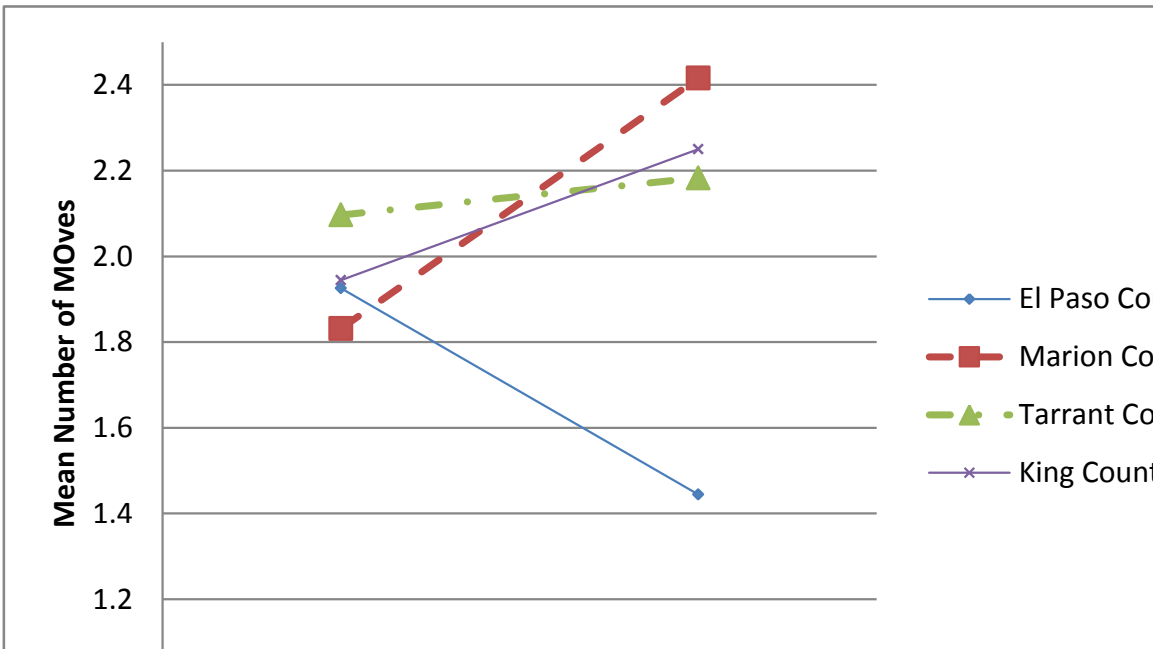
Table 71: Effect of QIC NRF Status and Site on Number of Placement Moves in this Removal Episode

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power[b]
Corrected Model	31.877[a]	7	4.554	2.757	.008	.037	19.298	.913
Intercept	1514.883	1	1514.883	917.065	.000	.644	917.065	1.000
Site	9.490	3	3.163	1.915	.126	.011	5.745	.495
NRF_CH	1.429	1	1.429	.865	.353	.002	.865	.153
Site * NRF_CH	14.167	3	4.722	2.859	.037	.017	8.576	.684
Error	835.852	506	1.652					
Total	3091.000	514						
Corrected Total	867.730	513						

a. R Squared = .037 (Adjusted R Squared = .023)

These results have a less power than did the Prior Removal findings presented in *Table 69*. The significant interaction between the NRFQIC and site is shown in *Figure 22*. While the sites are equivalent in average moves for the Children of Single Mother Caretakers, the QIC NRF related children in the El Paso County Colorado site are substantially lower in average moves in foster care than the other three sites.

Figure 22: Number of Moves in Forster Care by Child Cohort and Site



The child cohort by site interaction is driven by the children from El Paso County Colorado. However, the difference in means between the two cohorts within El Paso County Colorado is not significant *(t=1.404, p= ns) since the there is a relatively small N for each group and the difference between the means of .49 is modestly larger than the standard error of the mean difference with the site, .34. That is, there is a modest N with a wide spread of scores and a modest difference between the means. *Table 72* presents the group means.

Table 72: Means of Number of Previous Placements for this Removal Episode by QIC NRF Status and Site

	Child of QIC NRF		
	Not Child QIC NRF	Child of QIC NRF	Average
El Paso County Colorado	1.9	1.4	1.5
Marion County Indiana	1.8	2.4	2.2
Tarrant County Texas	2.1	2.2	2.3
King County Washington	1.9	2.3	2.2

The difference between the child cohorts in Marion County Indiana is significant (t=-3.01, p<.003). The difference between the child cohorts in Tarrant County Texas is not significant (t=-571, p = ns). . The difference between the child cohorts in King County Washington is not significant (t=-.811, p = ns).

To summarize the outcomes, length of stay was longer for QIC NRF children than for non-QIC NRF children, but these differences were not significant in each site. Stability of placement was greater for QIC NRF children than for non-QIC NRF children, but this difference was significant in only one site.

There was no compelling difference with respect to foster care duration and stability between the children, who were related to NRFs enrolled in the QIC NRF program and a matched group of children of Single Female Caretakers. While there are significant changes reported by fathers, these changes were not paralleled by similar changes in the foster care experiences of the children. A greater period of follow-up and more direct engagement of the fathers in the service plans of the children may produce different results. Development of specific engagement activities as part of fathers' program would provide a clear connection to activities directed towards nonresident fathers and the child welfare experiences of their children.

Dissemination Activities

The QIC NRF has maintained a significant focus on knowledge development and dissemination throughout the life of the project. Somewhat unique to this QIC is the development and dissemination of products and resources as the project matured rather than a later dissemination as the project ended. As gaps in knowledge and resources were identified, the project attempted to fill the gaps so that programs and organizations serving NRFs would have the knowledge accessible to enhance their services. The following is a list of dissemination activities by Federal Fiscal Year.

History of Dissemination Activities

Federal Fiscal Year October 1, 2006- September 30, 2007

During this federal fiscal year the primary activity of the project was to gather available knowledge from program and academic experts in the area of NRF engagement and involvement to identify gaps in knowledge and resources. While dissemination was not a primary activity the project began to develop a network and increase awareness of the project. This occurred in several ways including the formation of the QIC NRF National Advisory Committee and through the knowledge gathering activities such as the summits and focus groups. Additional information regarding this committee and other activities was discussed in earlier areas of this report.

Federal Fiscal Year October 1, 2007 – September 30, 2008

An important activity that occurred during this report period was a two part meeting held in August 2008 with the Federal Children's Bureau. Present for this meeting from American Humane was Sonia Velazquez, Myles Edwards, and Karen Jenkins; NFI's Milton Scott; and ABA's Howard Davidson and Jessica Kendall. This meeting had two audiences. The first meeting was held with Christine Calpin, newly appointed Associate Commissioner, Children's Bureau; the second meeting was a webinar presentation to other interested Children's Bureau staff. These meetings provided the opportunity to debrief both audiences on the QIC NRF project activities, resource development, and to facilitate a discussion regarding strategies for integrating the knowledge developed by the QIC NRF into the broader scope of Children's Bureau work.

Sonia Velazquez, Stefanie Vincent and Lisa Pilnik attended the Children's Bureau's Courts and Agencies Conference in Crystal City, Virginia in December 2007, and were available to answer questions and promote the project at the QIC NRF booth and conference sessions.

In March 2008, Myles Edwards of American Humane and Milt Scott of NFI presented at the Children's Bureau Child Abuse Prevention/Promoting Safe and Stable Families Conference in Baltimore, Maryland. In addition to their presentation, CDs and other materials mentioned previously were disseminated to interested parties. Sonia Velazquez, Stefanie Vincent and Milt Scott attended the Prevent Child Abuse America conference in May 2008. Together they presented the research findings, the design of the model intervention, and the future events of the project. In May 2008, in Kansas City, Missouri, Leslie Wilmot gave a presentation for the Children's Bureau to Regional Directors and guests about Family Group Decision Making and Non-Resident Fathers. In June 2008, the ABA presented at the Iowa State Judges Conference and the Iowa State Bar Conference on better engaging NRFs in child welfare cases. Also in June 2008 Stefanie Vincent and Paul Frankel attended the Colorado Summit on Children and Families in Keystone, Colorado. They presented two sessions on the qualitative research findings of the project as well as the development of the curriculum. Finally in June 2008, Milt Scott and Karen Jenkins presented at the June International Family Group Decision Making Conference (FGDM) on the QIC NRF

project, engaging fathers, and the application of the FGDM process to increase father engagement. In September 2008, Myles Edwards worked with the Quality Improvement Center on Privatization in Child Welfare. He attended a meeting of the NAB, project team.

Federal Fiscal Year October 1, 2008 – September 30, 2009

A key dissemination activity that continued throughout the project was the ongoing development of the QIC NRF website. The QIC continued to use this website to provide resources and information to its sites and the public. The website was regularly updated with new publications, research studies, tools, resources that would be useful to the QIC NRF sites in their implementation of the model intervention. The website also facilitated better understanding and utilization of existing knowledge on father engagement.

In October 2008, the QIC NRF held a joint sub-grantee and NAB meeting in Kansas City, Missouri. This two-day meeting gave the NAB, the federal project officer, the project team, and site members the opportunity to come together, learn from one another, and discuss implementation strategies. The meeting also allowed the NAB to meet with members from the sites and provide consultation on issues pertaining to the project. This joint NAB and site meeting was very successful in that it demonstrated that the project is well underway. This meeting also energized the entire QIC NRF team about the potential positive effects this project may have.

A key product developed for dissemination was a volume of the Protecting Children journal entitled "Bringing Back the Dads: Engaging Non-Resident Fathers in the Child Welfare System". A Call for Abstracts was released in October 2008, abstract submissions were due in November 2008, and articles were selected in December 2008. American Humane accepts abstract submissions that are original and had not been previously published. American Humane employs a blind review process of all abstracts by a guest editor and content reviewers. First drafts of the selected articles were submitted in March 2009. Final articles were submitted in August 2009. The journal contained an introduction, an article on the QIC NRF, and six additional articles. The expected release date was October 2009. The development and dissemination of this key product crossed over two federal fiscal years.

In addition, during this federal fiscal year, two ABA articles were published about father engagement and the QIC NRF. The first article, titled "Why Non-Custodial Fathers in Child Welfare Proceedings Need Legal Representation," appeared in the January – April 2009 issue of Cornerstone magazine, published by the National Legal Aid and Defenders Association. The second article, titled "Engaging Incarcerated Fathers of Children in Foster Care: An Ideal Opportunity for Public/Private Partnership," appeared in the Winter 2009 issue of Insight, published by Grantmakers for Children, Youth, and Families.

Sonia Velazquez and Stefanie Vincent co-authored an article "Promising Interventions for Strengthening Relationships between Non-resident Fathers and their Children," for the Spring 2009 issue of The Source, for their issues dedicated to fatherhood. This is the publication of the AIA National Resource Center.

Three QIC NRF newsletters have been disseminated. In order to reach broader audiences and collaborate with other agencies, each quarterly newsletter concentrates on a specific theme or subject matter related to NRFs in child welfare systems such as child support, the courts and incarceration. In November of 2008, the first edition was released and focused on introducing the project, the need to involve NRFs in child welfare, the project partners and the sites. The winter 2009 volume (released February 2009) centered on the theme of caseworker and NRF engagement. The spring 2009 volume focused on NRFs and the courts/legal system and was released in May 2009. The response to the

newsletters has been very positive and has generated more awareness about the project. Moreover, the contributions made by the sites and the partners have generated a great deal of knowledge.

At the National Court Improvement Conference in Washington, DC in October 2008, Karen Jenkins gave a workshop about the QIC NRF. In November 2008, Jessica Kendall of ABA, Milt Scott of NFI, and Karen Jenkins gave a presentation called Better Engaging Fathers in Child Welfare Cases at the Third Annual Regional Child Welfare Conference in Miami, Florida. Also in November 2008, Lisa Pilnik and Milt Scott attended the National Legal Aid and Defenders Association in Washington, DC. They gave a presentation entitled Why Fathers Need Legal Representation in Child Welfare Cases. In December 2008, Myles Edwards and Ron Clark of NFI gave a presentation to government and nonprofit child welfare leaders in Circuit 5, in Ocala, Florida. This one-day training focused on fatherhood and child welfare. Also in December 2008, the QIC NRF display was brought to the TA Conference in Washington, DC; Myles Edwards was present at the conference to speak with professionals and answer questions.

In December 2008 Sonia Velazquez and Myles Edwards, together with Jessica Kendall and Howard Davidson represented the project at the T/TA National Network Meeting convened by the Children's Bureau in DC and disseminated information on the progress of the project. In addition, Ron Clark of NFI and Myles Edwards delivered two one-day introductory sessions to administrators and supervisors in Florida Circuit 5 in December 2008. These sessions served as a system wide start to a local fatherhood initiative. This event is also referenced under the "Dissemination" session, which follows this section. This ongoing working relationship with the Florida, Circuit 5 child welfare service provider has produced opportunities to expand the knowledge base of the Father Friendly Checkup, pilot an introduction to the QIC NRF approach, and conduct a test social worker training.

In April of 2009, the QIC NRF enjoyed a significant presence at the 17th National OCAN conference in Atlanta, GA. Paul Frankel and Stefanie Vincent presented on the process of engagement, and Joanna Reynolds and Paul Frankel presented on the challenges to recruitment which were then emerging.

Fiscal Year October 1, 2009 – September 30, 2010

In addition, American Humane Association attended and presented on the QIC NRF project in Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Washington, D.C. American Humane Association continued to disseminate the QIC NRF newsletter, website flyer, project abstract, and call for papers, to diverse list serves and professional organizations across the nation. Moreover, the ABA has continued to distribute hard copies of the book Representing Non-resident Fathers in Child Welfare Court Cases, and the ABA had over 18,400 visits to the QIC NRF's website main page between October 1, 2009 and September 30, 2010. QIC NRF materials were distributed at conferences in Burlington, Chattanooga, Philadelphia, Richmond, Tampa, and many other cities, as well as at the recent project site meeting in Seattle.

Between October 1, 2010 and December 31, 2010 the QIC's main-page website (www.fatherhoodqic.org) received over 1, 000 visits (2011 data is not available at this time because of the ABA recent switch to a new web hosting platform). During the same period, the practice brief for children's attorneys and GAL attorneys received approximately 1,000 visits and the companion CASA brief received approximately 600. We also had approximately 400 views of the video vignettes placed on the site for judges on identifying and engaging fathers.

American Humane Association provided information and TA to more than 50 organizations, Counties, and States. Furthermore, we have participated in approximately 40 presentations and other events, and have disseminated QIC NRF information throughout the U.S. By leveraging the good work of the QIC

NRF and its sites, the project partners are developing strategies for sustainability and proposals for continued funding, support, and resources. Moreover, the presence and leadership of the QIC NRF at every meeting of Casey Family Programs' National Fatherhood and Child Welfare Network meetings and webinars, has enhanced the visibility and accessibility of the QIC NRF. Many of the opportunities for presentations and training resulted from requests from child welfare and judicial leadership, and from other policy makers, to enhance their work in the engagement of fathers in the child welfare and court systems.

American Humane also provided information and TA in Florida and the Leadership Team of the Court Improvement Project in Pennsylvania. Both of these opportunities were a result from requests from the child welfare and court leadership in those states to enhance their work in the engagement of fathers in the child welfare and court systems.

In addition to the dissemination directly connected to the QIC NRF the National Fatherhood Initiative (NFI) provided ongoing TA to external customers (fathers and social service staff) and addressed inquiries about father engagement and child welfare challenges. NFI has promoted the QIC NRF products and services at approximately 10 unrelated state and national fatherhood presentations. NFI staff also frequently refers customers and potential clients to the QIC NRF website for resources.

In Fiscal Year October 1, 2010 – September 30, 2011

The American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law (ABA), National Fatherhood Initiative (NFI), and American Humane Association (AHA) engaged in many diverse dissemination activities during this reporting period. AHA dissemination activities include caseworker training in Tarrant County, Texas; three roundtables on research, policy and practice respectively; and a well-attended workshop at the 12th Annual National Fatherhood and Families Conference in early March. AHA attended and presented on the QIC NRF project in Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Washington, D.C. AHA continued to disseminate the QIC NRF newsletter, website flyer, project abstract, and call for papers, to diverse list serves and professional organizations across the nation.

Between October 1, 2010 and December 31, 2010 the QIC's main-page website (www.fatherhoodqic.org) received over 1, 000 visits (2011 data is not available at this time because of the ABA recent switch to a new web hosting platform). During the same period, the practice brief for children's attorneys and GAL attorneys received approximately 1,000 visits and the companion CASA brief received approximately 600. We also had approximately 400 views of the video vignettes placed on the site for judges on identifying and engaging fathers. Through the ABA's participation in various trainings, both for QIC sites and in other jurisdictions, the ABA has distributed numerous copies of its practice briefs, book on representing fathers and the QIC newsletters on the legal and child support systems. The ABA has distributed approximately 380 copies of these materials.

In Fiscal Year October 1, 2011 – September 30, 2012 (No Cost Extension)

A no-cost extension was granted to the QIC NRF to complete pertinent products for the project. Four products were the focus during this time. The first is the *Protecting Children* journal dedicated to the QIC NRF. The journal had three content reviewers: Debra Gilmore, Jessica Kendall and Lisa Pilnik. The journal includes 11 articles on various aspects of the project and is available on the website. The purpose of this issue is to share new knowledge on the engagement of NRFs, including promising caseworker, legal and judicial best practices, raises awareness to reduce barriers to engagement and explores policies that impact the engagement of NRFs. The journal is on the website and has been disseminated broadly through email solicitations. The second product was the curriculum for coaching supervisors that was

discussed earlier. The third is this final report and the last product is the tool kit that will leave behind the learnings of this project, fully described below.

Tool Kit

The QIC NRF web-based toolkit is based on a nine step development model. Engagement of NRFs is a challenge and a valuable opportunity for child welfare services. The potential to address the well-being of children and address safety and permanency issues is enormous. The contents of this toolkit will help increase knowledge about father engagement and at the same time provide tools, tips and resources to support the developmental process for organizations, case workers and attorneys engaged in child welfare practice as well as the fathers being served.

The nine step development model includes:

1. **Leadership and Organizational Philosophy**

Review organizational readiness with senior management. The will and commitment of the staff starts with a practice model that values fathers and paternal relatives. Establish organizational expectations and accountability for all staff regarding father involvement. Incorporate into staff training an overview of nonresident fathers in child welfare for all new staff, supervisors and administrators. Incorporate the importance of father involvement into new worker orientations. Introduction to fatherhood issues should be more than information transmittal and needs to be both a personal and a professional experience.

2. **Program Management Policies and Procedures**

Review current organizational policies and procedures to identify the gaps between policy and practice. Make adjustments as needed and educate and disseminate to re-enforce the commitment to involving fathers. Look for opportunities within current staff such as program specialist to provide guidance and/or lead the father involvement focus that reflects all areas of practice. Oftentimes there are pockets of fatherhood activities or related activities that logically and logistically support fatherhood issues in child welfare.

3. **Organizational and Community Assessment**

Perform an assessment of organizational climate around fatherhood issues in both the public child welfare agency and community based organizations that serve child welfare families. It is critical that the practice within community programs (often a contracted provider) is aligned with the public child welfare agency that is referring the family. The Father Friendly Checkup for Child Welfare is a tool that explicitly addresses these nine broad steps. It is available as a fully automated survey with organizational and staff role flags. This tool will identify areas that need attention and strategic planning for improvement. In order to be genuine in changing a culture to value and seek out a father's involvement there must be a foundation built or (plans to build) that values and actively involves all family members.

4. **Parent and Family Involvement Practices**

Examine agency practice related to family involvement and identify models of practice currently implemented. Assess the comprehensiveness of the models to actively engage and partner with families to identify solutions that will address concerns and issues. Specific practices that speak to issues of 'fathers', not 'parents' in general, gives concrete activities to make a values framework real.

5. **Program Physical Environment**

Does your organization's physical environment reflect and reinforce the values held by staff that fathers are welcome? Is your waiting room gender neutral or gender balanced? Pictures and magazines, types of furniture, and even wall colors give messages that everyone pick up. The stress of uncomfortable and different situations can heighten these messages.

6. **Staff Training and Professional Development**

Changing organizational culture begins the first day staff is hired and throughout the duration of their employment. New staff orientation, introductory or basic training, intermediate training and advanced training provide a continuum of knowledge development that supports competency and skill development. Regardless of the area of practice effective father engagement crosses all program and practice areas. Training for caseworkers addressing the Identification and Location, and Engagement of nonresident fathers is a critical component to the change process.

7. **Collaboration and Organizational Networking**

Many systems, organizations, programs, etc. touch the lives of families. Fathers are no exception. However, many programs have a maternal focus and fail to identify and address the concrete, more immediate, needs of fathers. It is through the collaboration with the Court System, Child Support Enforcement System, Community providers, and other human services systems that opportunities for education can be identified to better understand the needs and motivation of fathers and build the services and supports needed. This is particularly true given the multiple needs many fathers bring to child welfare settings.

8. **Community Outreach**

Provide awareness to the community that will increase their understanding of the dynamics that impact a father's lack of involvement, framing the right message, which will communicate to selected audiences most effectively. Changing the perspective from "dead beat" to "dead broke" and mobilizing the community around the support of fathers involvement with their children is the ultimate goal.

9. **Information and Data Support Systems**

Information system support development. Creation of fatherhood data fields, population of existing data fields and information reports all need to work well to understand what is occurring with fathers in child welfare. Regular reporting about fathers and father related issues can be an effective change strategy by itself. The facts of father absence in child welfare are startling. There is an astounding prevalence of NRFs for homes that children come from when they have been taken into substitute care. This has been and still is a hidden fact of child welfare. How many other critical points of leverage are missed because of a lack of data and information about fathers in child welfare.

All Fathers are Important; Plan for a Fatherhood Quality Improvement Program that addresses all fathers. Quality Improvement methods can be invaluable in producing change once there is a sound foundation of values. Timely and accurate baseline data about father involvement and father effects on child outcomes are critical to such methods. This is one example of the interconnectedness of these nine steps.

As individuals move through the toolkit, take note of how each of the items in this toolkit can help you and your organization use these nine steps to develop in the work of engaging fathers involved in the child welfare system.

The toolkit is designed with audience perspectives in mind. Additionally, with the wealth of resources and information developed by the QIC NRF and resources from partner agencies, a supplemental section is included to support the development of organizations in the nine areas identified.

- Fathers and the Child Welfare
- Fathers and the Community
- Fathers and Courts
- Toolkit Supplements

This is a web-based toolkit so each segment will provide links to materials that would be useful for each audience group with cross-references to material that may be useful to more than one audience group.

Toolkit users will experience a user friendly design with drop down menus that clearly identify how material will be useful to them along with pictures and graphics that reflect children and fathers.

Legal Products

Federal and state governments are increasingly focusing on father involvement. There has been little focus, however, on how the legal community can better engage nonresident fathers in child welfare cases. Failing to include fathers keeps courts from making fully informed decisions and prevents children from having every possible resource available to them. Over the five years of the QIC NRF, in addition to providing the training and TA discussed elsewhere in this report, project staff has developed numerous products designed to help judges, attorneys and other professionals recognize the importance of fathers and better engage NRFs in the child welfare court process. The materials developed by the QIC NRF for the legal community include:

Advocating for Fathers in Child Welfare Court Cases

This book is a much needed resource for public defenders' offices and solo practitioners representing parents. The authors offer practical strategies to lawyers and judges to help them protect father's constitutional rights; advocate for and engage fathers in and out-of-court; overcome barriers to father participation such as child support, incarceration, immigration status, and criminal history; and address unique ethical issues. Most of the chapters in this book originally appeared as a series of articles in the ABA's *Child Law Practice*. The book also includes a father's story of his family's involvement with the child welfare court process and features an appendix with useful information and resources including sample questions and checklists for attorneys to use when meeting with their NRF clients, tips for fathers on how to work with their lawyers, and a guide to how the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children affects NRFs. Due to overwhelming demand, the initial print run of 2,000 copies of this book was disseminated in less than two months and a second printing was completed. Copies have been distributed at state and national conferences across the country, and have been sent to public defender's offices, sole practitioners, state and local Court Improvement Program staff and all of the Children's Bureau regional offices.

Advocating for Fathers in Child Welfare Court Cases: A Training Curriculum

This curriculum was designed to provide guidance to lawyers on how to navigate issues affecting fathers and their children involved in child welfare proceedings. It provides practical strategies to parents'

attorneys who represent NRFs in child welfare cases and includes instructor guides, PowerPoint slides, handouts and a post-test for five modules:

- Introduction and background on benefits of father involvement
- Constitutional rights and responsibilities of NRFs
- Strategies for effective advocacy inside the courtroom
- Strategies for effective advocacy outside the courtroom
- Special ethical considerations involved with representing NRFs

It can be presented as a full day training or series of 4 shorter sessions. Due to the variation between states on many of the legal issues covered, the curriculum must be tailored by the presenters to local law and practice. The curriculum was pilot tested in Maryland, California and the District of Columbia, and is based in part on the book Advocating for Fathers in Child Welfare Court Cases, discussed above.

Judicial Bench Cards

These materials provide a quick reference guide for judges and judicial officers on how they can help fathers participate in the child protection court process and case planning. There are three separate bench cards:

- Engaging Fathers in Court Hearings and Case Planning
- Male Help - Seeking and Learning Styles
- Identifying and Locating Fathers

The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges provided the QIC NRF assistance with the development and dissemination of these cards. They were also disseminated at the ABA Center on Children and the Law's national conference and sent to state Court Improvement Program staff and Children's Bureau Regional Offices.

The Father Friendly Check-Up for Child Welfare Courts

The Father Friendly Check-Up for Child Welfare Courts (FFCU-CWC) is a diagnostic tool through which courts can self-assess the degree to which child welfare courts encourage father involvement, and it identifies areas for improvement in three categories:

- Case Management and Courtroom Operations
- Organizational Philosophy and Court Administration
- Hiring, Training and Performance Reviews

Questions cover courtroom practice, such as whether judges speak directly to fathers about their rights and responsibilities, as well as court rules, and resources available for fathers, attorneys and judges through the court (e.g., brochures about local fatherhood programs, continuing legal education seminars on the importance of father engagement). The FFCU-CWC was pilot tested with the assistance of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. It is an adaptation of the National Fatherhood Initiative's series of Father Friendly Check-Ups for different audiences.

Finding Your Way: Guides for Fathers in Child Protection Cases

This series of guides for fathers includes tips on how NRFs can be active participants in their children's court cases and successfully navigate the child protection system. The guides were designed to be easy

for fathers to use and were developed with extensive input from the FAC and the subgrantee sites' fathers' program staff on both content and appearance. The guides are color coded, feature numerous photos, charts and other visual aids and come in a folder so they are easy to keep together. Topics include:

- Guide 1: Your Rights and Responsibilities
- Guide 2: How to Work with Your Lawyer
- Guide 3: Your Role in Court
    - The Court Process
    - Who Will Be in Court
    - Common Court Terms
- Guide 4: Your Role Outside Court
- Guide 5: When You Owe Child Support
- Guide 6: If You Are or Have Been in Prison

The guides are available in English and Spanish, electronically through the QIC's website and in hard copy through the Child Welfare Information Gateway.

Engaging NRFs in Child Welfare Cases: Separate Guides for Children's Attorneys, GALs/CASAs, and Government Attorneys

This is a series of three guides targeted at three different audiences: children's attorneys; Guardians ad litem/Court Appointed Special Advocates; and attorneys representing the child welfare agency. Each guide includes research on the importance of fathers in children's lives and the child welfare system's challenges engaging fathers. Each also offers guidance and practical tools to involve fathers and advocate for children targeted at the guide's audience and taking into account their different roles. The guides for children's attorneys and GALs/CASAs also include numerous quotes from current and former foster youth. These quotes were gathered by the QIC in partnership with several different foster youth empowerment organizations, and discuss how youth feel about their fathers and what they wish their advocates had done regarding their fathers, among other topics. Numerous attorneys and other advocates provided feedback on these guides including staff from the National Association of Counsel for Children and the National CASA Association, and several government attorneys who represent child welfare agencies.

Charts on state statutes relating to NRFs

The QIC commissioned the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) to identify and summarize state statutes relevant to fatherhood and child welfare. This information is presented as a series of charts on NCSL's website, covering current and pending legislation relating to identification, notification and engagement of NRFs in the child welfare context, state definitions of "father" or "parent," and putative father registries.

Child Court Works Special Issues

The ABA's Child Court Works publication, in cooperation with QIC staff, devoted two issues to addressing the importance of engaging fathers in the child welfare court process and how to accomplish greater father engagement through policy and practice reform.

Legal Literature Review and Interviews/Focus Groups

As part of the Literature Review published in Phase I, QIC legal staff identified and summarized legal literature relevant to fathers in child welfare cases, which included a discussion of state and federal court cases, federal and state laws, court rules, legal journals and treatises and legal and judicial practice guides. An updated annotated bibliography on the subject was also published in early 2010. As part of the needs assessment activities undertaken in Phase I, numerous key informant interviews were also conducted with lawyers (children's attorneys, parent's attorneys and government attorneys) as well several judicial officers and judges and several focus groups were held, both in person and over the phone, with lawyers, judges and domestic violence professionals.

Site Products

In addition to the products of the national partners, the research and demonstration sites made meaningful contributions to the dissemination efforts of the project by producing their own products for distribution.

Indiana

Fatherhood Engagement Service Standard

The Fatherhood Engagement Service Standards provide expectations to service providers implementing fatherhood programming. The standards describe service delivery; the eligibility of the target population; goals and outcome measurements; and minimum qualifications of the direct service worker and supervisor. The standards described are specific to Indiana but can be adapted to other jurisdictions for use when implementing fatherhood programming.

Fatherhood Services Specialist Job Description

The Indiana site developed a job description for a Fatherhood Services Specialist which details roles and responsibilities of the specialist along with required skills, education and experience.

Texas

Duane's Story (father's video)

"Duane's Story" is an 11 minute video of a father telling his story about his experiences as he moved through the child welfare system. He describes challenges and what was helpful to him as he worked to get his daughter back.

Father's Toolkit

The Father's Toolkit is a guide for fathers with a Child Protective Services (CPS) case. It explains how CPS works and what fathers need to know and do. It provides advice to fathers who currently have an open case from fathers who have already been through this experience.

Washington

Including Fathers Video

The Including Fathers is a 24 ½ minute video that tells the stories of committed dads determined to navigate the system in order to be engaged with and, in some cases gain custody of, their kids. The video profiles one father and his child and allows a peek into the Bringing Bag the Dads model program curriculum group with fathers.

Father's Rights Brochure

Father's Rights Brochure outlines the rights of fathers when involved with child welfare in King County, Washington. It details what fathers can do if they have a complaint about CPS; information how fathers can get legal representation; and the legal responsibilities of fathers such as establishing paternity, supporting their child and completing court-ordered services.

Colorado

Diligent Search Tutorial

The Diligent Search Tutorial provides users with some guidance and tips on how to conduct a diligent search for fathers and other family members. It includes a PowerPoint with notes to help users understand the PowerPoint content. The tutorial also includes supplemental materials to aid in the search such as search engines, phone scripts, use of genograms and tips on how to interview children and youth.

Social Worker Training Supplement

The Social Worker Training Supplement provides users with additional training materials to complement the *Social Worker Training Curriculum: Engaging the Non-Resident Father*. These additional training materials and resources support engagement of NRFs in child welfare cases. It includes several training activities related to local agency services, engaging child support enforcement, domestic violence and an appendix that highlights options for delivery of material on the value of fathers and male help seeking behaviors. It also includes several resource handouts caseworkers may find useful as they work towards a practice shift to engage NRFs.

Events and Presentations

American Humane Association provided information and TA to more than 50 organizations, counties, and states. Furthermore, the QIC NRF participated in approximately 40 presentations and other events, and has disseminated QIC NRF information throughout the U.S. By leveraging the good work of the QIC NRF and its sites, the project partners are developing strategies for sustainability and proposals for continued funding, support, and resources. Moreover, the presence and leadership of the QIC NRF at every meeting of Casey Family Programs' National Fatherhood and Child Welfare Network meetings and webinars, has enhanced the visibility and accessibility of the QIC NRF. Many of the opportunities for presentations and training resulted from requests from child welfare and judicial leadership, and from other policy makers, to enhance their work in the engagement of fathers in the child welfare and court systems.

The three significant events that occurred this report period were the research summit, policy roundtable, and the practice learning summit. Highlights from the Research Summit held January 11 – 13, 2011, in Santa Fe, New Mexico include two major research efforts. David Olds reported on the longitudinal research and evaluation done on the Nurse Family Partnership programs, and Jay Fagan reported on findings derived from the Fragile Families data base and on several other program meta-studies. The QIC NRF presented preliminary key findings as well.

The second event was the Policy Summit held on February 8, 2011 in Washington D.C was attended by approximately 85 professional from the judicial system, father advocacy programs, and policy and legislative representatives. As a result of the event, there were several recommendations made by the presenters and participants for a presentation to Congress:

The third event, held on March 30, 2011, was a Practice Learning Summit. The purpose of this event was the presentation of the findings, learning, challenges, and recommendations from the grantee sites. This event was attended by approximately 50 professionals including judicial, federal, state, and legislative. A report of the findings from the Practice Learning event will be provided in the projects final report.

The ABA was also actively engaged in disseminating information through presentation and webinars in the final fiscal year of the project. On September 8, 2011, they presented a workshop, Engaging Fathers in Child Dependency Cases, for the Virginia Court System's annual Court Improvement Program State Best Practice Court Conference in Williamsburg, VA for fifty children's, parents' and government lawyers and judges. On June 28th, the ABA presented on a webinar for over 70 participants from the Children's Bureau, CIP and NRC staff on the Findings from the QIC NRF. On July 16, 2011, they held a workshop, Non-Custodial Fathers and Paternal Kin in the Child Welfare System: Lessons from the QIC, at the 14th National Conference on Children and the Law in Crystal City, VA with over 30 attendees, mostly child welfare attorneys. A breakfast was sponsored by the QIC NRF at this same conference on July 14, 2011, and was attended by 300 people. And finally, on September 13, 2011 another successful webinar was held for over 70 parent attorneys, judges and CIP staff called Engaging Fathers in Child Welfare Cases: Tips for Attorneys and Judges.

As is evident, the dissemination efforts were a high priority for all of the partners and sites involved in this project. From presentations and summits to curriculum, journals and a web-based toolkit, the staff of this project have dedicated much time and resources to make sure that the lessons learned from this project are shared and continue to reach audiences well after the project has ended.

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Appendices

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Appendix B: Curriculum Feedback Questionnaire

	Question	**Response Set**
1	Date:	6/22/2009
2	Week Number of This Session for the Group:	The Session number for that cohort.
3	Enter the Group ID Number:	This format provided the indication of the site and cohort number, e.g. 2000-3.
4	Please select the Session Module:	Module Title or topic specification ("Other" for weeks 13 - 20).
5	What was this week's topic?	Topic definition for weeks 13 – 20
6	How would you rate the session's facilitated discussions and activities as a whole?	Excellent Good Average Fair Poor
7	Please explain your rating:	Facilitators were invited to elaborate on their general rating.
8	Did you have time to complete all of the session's facilitated discussions and activities?	Yes/no
9	For which activities would you have liked more time?	
10	How would you rate the level of engagement of the Dads in the facilitated discussions and activities throughout the session?	Survey asked facilitators to choose among: Fully engaged mostly engaged engaged some of the time, slightly engaged, not engaged.
11	For which facilitated discussions or activities was the Dads' engagement particularly HIGH or particularly LOW?	[Open-ended response]
12	Did you have any special guest speakers for this particular session?	Yes
13		Name of Guest Speaker
14	Did a session participant exhibit any inappropriate or highly unusual behavior?	Yes/no
15	Please share any additional comments or feedback.	{Open-ended response]
16	OPTIONAL: If you would like to be contacted to discuss your comments further, please provide us with your email address and/or phone number.	Contact Information