

Home Visiting: Approaches to Father Engagement and Fathers' Experiences

Program Administrator Interview Guide

3 Respondents per Program

90 Minutes

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 90 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing the instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. This information collection is voluntary. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to: Reports Clearance Officer (Attn: OMB/PRA 0970-XXXX), Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services, 370 L'Enfant Promenade, S.W

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for agreeing to meet with us today. I'm [INTERVIEWER NAME] and this is my colleague [ASSISTANT NAME], and we're researchers from the Urban Institute, a non-profit social policy research organization in Washington, DC.

As we may have mentioned, as part of this study, we are talking to leaders and staff in selected home visiting programs that actively engage fathers in their programs and services. We hope to learn about your experiences and the strategies you are using and how they are working in order to share this information with others who are interested in engaging more fathers. We are gathering information by conducting site visits to the programs and interviewing a range of managers and staff.

The goal of this study is to document:

- 1) the strategies used by selected home visiting programs to effectively engage fathers in home visiting services;
- 2) the perspectives and experiences of staff;
- 3) the experiences and views of fathers who have participated;
- 4) possible barriers/challenges to participation; and
- 5) lessons for other programs that are interested in more fully engaging fathers with young children in their services and activities.

We are visiting with you today because of the great work your program is doing on father engagement. During our visit this week, we are scheduled to talk with program administrators, home visiting staff, and both fathers and mothers to get their perspectives on father engagement in your program.

Our meeting with you today will last about 90 minutes. The structure will be rather open-ended, meaning we have a list of specific questions to cover but you can feel free to respond in as much detail as you would like.

INFORMED CONSENT

Before I begin my questions, I'd like to give you a copy of a consent form that describes our study procedures and your rights as a participant. If you agree to the study procedures, I'll ask you to sign and date your copy.

[NOTES TO FACILITATOR: Give copy of consent form to participant. Continue as participant reads along.]

I'd like to point out a few details on the consent form:

1. First, your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose to not answer any question and may stop the interview at any time.
2. Everyone who works on this study has signed a *Staff Confidentiality Pledge* prohibiting disclosure of anything you say during the interview that would allow someone outside the research team, including government staff and officials, to identify you. The only exception is a researcher may be required by law to report suspicion of immediate harm to yourself, to children, or to others.
3. Your name and other identifying information, such as the program's name and specific location, will be removed from the data to protect your privacy.
4. If we quote anything you share with us, we will not use your name in our report.
5. We value the information you will share with us today and want to make sure we accurately capture all the details. With your permission, we will audio record the session and take typed notes. These files will not be shared with anyone outside the research team. Once the project is complete, all audio recordings will be destroyed. During the discussion, if you would like to stop the recording while you make a particular comment off the record, please let us know and we will do so.

Do you have any questions about the study procedures?

Would you please sign a copy of our Informed Consent Form, and then may we begin our interview?

[Participant must sign and return one copy and may keep the second copy.]

[If anyone objects to the recording, the researcher who is not leading the interview will need to take thorough notes.]

PROTOCOL

Introductions

To get started, I have a few questions about your background, the history of your program, and the population and community your program serves. Later in the interview, we'll focus more closely on the work you do with fathers.

1. To start, would you please tell us your job title, how long you've been in this position, and provide a brief description of your primary role and responsibilities in the program?
2. What's your background in this work?
3. What led you to become involved in this work?

Program History

4. Tell us a little about your agency's history and structure (*Probes: mission; programs/services offered; history and development of home visiting program*)

Population and Community Served

5. Tell us about the families that you serve in your home visiting program (*Probes: the number of families; demographic characteristics of the mothers and fathers; program eligibility criteria; target population; community needs*)

Program Goals, Staffing, and Model

Next, I'd like to ask a series of questions about your home visiting program.

6. What are the goals of your program? (*Probes: Father engagement goals/outcomes*)
7. Do you receive any guidance from any national office or association regarding father engagement? What kind of guidance or training have you received?
8. Tell us about your staffing structure. How many staff do you have and in what positions? (*Probes: staff for fathers; their roles and length of position*)
9. What is the education level and training requirements of your staff?
10. What is the caseload size for home visitors (*Probes: average and maximum*)?
11. Describe your program model, including the frequency and duration of home visits and what occurs during the home visits. (*Probes: maximum number of visits; number of visits for mother versus father; determination of frequency and duration*)

12. Do you use any specific curricula and/or assessment tools? (*Probe: father-specific curricula or assessment tools specific to fathers*)

Recruitment and Retention

13. How do most clients find out about your program? What outreach and recruitment efforts do you conduct? (*Probes: outreach/recruitment staff; primary roles and responsibility; qualifications; recruitment process*)
14. Do your recruitment efforts differ for recruiting mothers and fathers? If so, how? (*Probes: recruitment of different types of fathers*)
- a) Have you experienced any challenges in recruitment? How so? (*Probes: challenges for mothers versus fathers, for different types of fathers*)
15. How do you screen for program eligibility? (*Probes: mothers versus fathers; different groups of fathers; residential status or biological relationship of father*)
16. How long do most mothers stay enrolled in the program?
17. How long do most fathers stay involved?

Father Engagement Strategies

We are most interested in learning about the strategies your program uses to engage fathers in home visiting.

18. What is your program's philosophy toward father engagement? (*Probes: evolution over time; impact of father involvement on goals of home visiting program*)
19. Please tell me about the ways you engage fathers in your home visiting program.
(*Probes: home visits for both mothers and fathers: scheduling for both mothers and fathers' schedules, specific content for fathers; separate home visits for fathers; separate visits in home of non-residential fathers; staff specifically for fathers*)
20. How are home visitors trained to engage fathers? (*Probes: frequency of trainings; one-time or ongoing; content of training; provider of training*)
- a) Do you think this training has been sufficient? If not, what additional training do staff need? Do you have plans to implement this additional training?

21. Do you engage different types of fathers in different ways, such as residential and non-residential fathers, biological and social fathers, first-time fathers and experienced fathers?
(Probes: engagement strategies for different types of fathers; differences in level of engagement across different types of fathers)
22. What are fathers expected to learn during home visits?
23. What do you see as the benefits to fathers when they participate in home visits? *(Probes: types of services that seem to benefit fathers most and type of father that benefits most)*
24. What are the benefits to mothers and children when their babies' fathers or the mothers' current partners participate?
25. In addition to home visits, what other activities, programs or support services do you provide for fathers, such as group meetings and special fatherhood events?
26. Do home visitors refer the fathers they work with to other fatherhood activities? *(Probes: How often? What criteria do they use to refer fathers?)*
27. Who leads these activities?
28. What has been the response to these activities by fathers? By mothers or partners?

Program Successes

Now let's turn to some of the successes you have experienced.

29. In what ways has your program been successful in achieving its goals of increasing father engagement? *(Probes: measures of success; staff feedback and how it's shared; client feedback and how it's shared)*
30. What program components/activities do you think have been the most popular? Why?
31. Which ones do you believe have been most useful to participants? Why?

Challenges to Father Engagement

Now let's turn to discuss any challenges that you may have confronted.

32. We know that engaging fathers in home visiting programs isn't always easy. What are the biggest challenges you've seen? (*Probes: concerns/resistance from staff; concerns/resistance from mothers/maternal grandmothers; challenges with staff capacity/training; logistical issues; fathers circumstances/needs impact on participation*)

33. How do these challenges impact the program's provision of services? Does it make it harder to serve participants? How?

34. (*If program has other activities, such as group workshops*)
What have been the major challenges to including fathers in other program activities? (*Probes: recruitment, funding, training, resistance from staff, resistance from the community.*)

Lessons Learned and Goals for Program Improvement

Let's finish up by discussing any important lessons learned from your work to engage fathers in home visiting, and if any, areas where you would like to see improvement.

35. What would you say have been the most successful aspects of your efforts to engage fathers? (*Probes: equally successful for all types of fathers*)

36. How do you think the program could improve its efforts to engage fathers in home visiting?

37. What recommendations would you have for other home visiting programs like yours that are trying to engage fathers?

Those are all of our questions. Thanks so much for your time!