

Fatherhood Facilitator and Program Director Interview Protocol

Thank you for taking the time to talk with us. My name is [NAME] and this is [NAME], and we work for Child Trends, a research center in Washington, D.C. We are part of a team that is helping the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation in the Administration for Children and Families understand what kinds of services fatherhood programs offer on healthy romantic and coparenting relationships; how those services help fathers; and how those services might be tailored to better meet the needs of fathers. When we say coparenting relationships, we mean a fathers' relationship with the mother(s) of his children or others who work with the father and share responsibility for raising a child.. When we say romantic relationships, we mean fathers' relationships with people they are dating, committed to, or married to, whether they are having sex or not. As part of this project, we are conducting focus groups with program participants and coparents, and interviews with staff from fatherhood programs like yours and partner organizations.

As we're talking today, please keep in mind there are no right or wrong answers to our questions. You're the expert and we want to hear your honest opinions - positive or negative. Honest feedback will help us the most. If there is a question you do not want to answer, please let us know and we will skip to the next question. Your participation is voluntary, and you are free to stop the interview at any time.

However, your opinions are important to us, so we hope you will stay for the whole interview. This interview will last about 90 minutes.

What you say here will be kept private, which means that your name will not be shared or associated with your opinions, and we will not identify who participated in the interviews. Your responses will be combined with responses from others who are participating in these interviews in published documents. Additionally, quotes from today may be included in published documents, but the quotes will not be attributed to you or your organization without your permission.

We will take notes and record the interview, so we can make sure that we don't miss important details. If you would like us to turn off the recorder at any point, please ask and we will do so. Only the study team will have access to the recordings. Once we transcribe the interviews and finalize our notes, we will delete the recordings.

Have you had a chance to read the consent form [STAFF] sent by email? [WAIT FOR RESPONSE, THEN SAY:] This form covers much of what we just discussed about the goals for this study, how we will protect your privacy, and how we plan to use what we learn for our project. The consent form also has contact information for the study's Principal Investigator as well as the Institutional Review Board that is in charge of ensuring our study follows certain guidelines regarding participant rights. You can contact them with any comments or concerns about participating in this study.

Because this is a federally-funded project, I have to read a couple of sentences to you before we begin. *According to the Paperwork Reduction Act, 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. The OMB number for the described information collection is [NUMBER] and the expiration date*

is [DATE]. If you have comments regarding this estimated interview length or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing the interview length, please send them to Mindy Scott at Child Trends, 7315 Wisconsin Ave, Suite 1200W, Bethesda MD 20814; Attn: OMB-PRA [NUMBER].

Do you have any questions before we get started?

Do you agree to participate in this interview?

Do you agree to be recorded?

Do you have any questions before we begin?

INTERVIEWEE ROLE AND BACKGROUND

To begin, we would like to hear a little about your background.

- 1) Please take a minute or two to share a little about your experience working with fathers.
- 2) Tell me about your position and role at [FATHERHOOD PROGRAM NAME].
 - a. [IF NOT ADDRESSED]: How long have you been in this position?

DESCRIPTION OF FATHERS AND THEIR COPARENTS

Thank you! It is helpful to hear about the work that you do as part of [FATHERHOOD PROGRAM NAME]. Next, we would like to talk with you about the fathers you work with.

- 3) What do the fathers you work with enjoy or find easy about being a father? What are their strengths as parents?
- 4) We know that being a father can be hard sometimes. What do you think are some of the challenges they face as parents?
- 5) We'd like to shift and talk about coparenting. We're interested in how you define coparenting. *Note for facilitator: if they have trouble, you can ask the probe below or offer our definition: mother(s) of a father's child(ren) or others that play a significant role in helping to raise his children.*
 - a. **Probe:** What would make someone a "coparent" in your eyes?
 - b. **Probe:** In your experience, who do fathers typically coparent with?
- 6) What are some of the challenges these coparents face as parents or parent figures?
 - a. **Probe:** How are the challenges coparents face similar to or different from the challenges faced by fathers?

FATHERS' RELATIONSHIPS

Now, we'd like to focus more closely on the relationships fathers have, both coparenting relationships and relationships with people they are dating, committed to, or married to, whether they are having sex or not, which we will refer to as "romantic relationships." Let's start by talking about fathers' romantic relationships.

- 7) What are some strengths, if any, the fathers you work with have in forming healthy romantic relationships and keeping them strong?

- a. Follow up: What are specific challenges, if any, that fathers have related to forming and keeping romantic relationships strong?
 - i. **Probe** [IF NEEDED]: Are there any particular subsets of fathers (for example, fathers who are young, are justice involved, or who have children with more than one partner) who face additional or unique challenges in their romantic relationships? What are those challenges?
- 8) What are some strengths, if any, the fathers you work with have in keeping their coparenting relationships strong?
 - a. Follow up: What are specific challenges, if any, fathers have related to their coparenting relationships?
 - i. **Probe** [IF NEEDED]: Are there any particular subsets of fathers (for example, fathers who are young, are justice involved, or who have children with more than one partner) who face additional or unique challenges in their coparenting relationships? What are those challenges?
- 9) For the last question on this topic, I'd like you to think about both healthy romantic relationships and coparenting relationships. Do you think of these topics as distinct? [IF NEEDED]: Say more about that.

SERVICES OFFERED ADDRESSING ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Now we are hoping to ask you a few questions about how fathers' relationships are addressed through the services [FATHERHOOD PROGRAM] provides. Let's start again by talking about fathers' romantic relationships first.

- 10) In what ways does [FATHERHOOD PROGRAM] address fathers' healthy romantic relationships?
 - a. Follow up: To what extent is addressing fathers' healthy romantic relationships a priority for [FATHERHOOD PROGRAM]? [IF PRIORITY]: Please share some examples that show this.
 - b. Follow up: What kind of support is there from the organization or leadership to address healthy romantic relationships with fathers, if any?
 - c. Follow up: What are some barriers to programs addressing healthy romantic relationships among fathers?
- 11) What specific services related to romantic relationships are offered?
 - a. **Probe** [IF NEEDED]: What do they consist of?
 - i. Follow up: How often do they occur and how long do they last?
 - b. Follow up: Are partners/spouses included in any of the services you mentioned?
 - i. [IF YES]: How are partners/spouses involved?
 - ii. [IF YES]: How often do partners/spouses attend?
 - iii. [IF NO]: Is there a reason [FATHERHOOD PROGRAM] does not include partners or spouses? **Probe** by saying "Can you tell me more about that?"
 - iv. Follow up: Are these services mainly for fathers and the biological mothers of their children, new partners or both? What if a father is no longer romantically involved with the mother of their child/children?

- 12) How does [FATHERHOOD PROGRAM] encourage fathers to participate in healthy romantic relationship services?
 - a. Follow up: What works well about [STRATEGIES MENTIONED IN Q12]?
 - b. Follow up: What could be done better?
- 13) What does attendance or uptake and engagement of fathers in these services look like?
 - a. Follow up: What are the reasons fathers participate in these services?
 - b. Follow up: What, if anything, makes it difficult for fathers to participate in these services?
 - c. **Probe**: In what ways does [FATHERHOOD PROGRAM] work to address these challenges to make it easier for fathers to participate?
 - d. Follow up: What, if any, challenges do [FATHERHOOD PROGRAM] staff have keeping fathers engaged in these services?
 - e. Follow up: Does [FATHERHOOD PROGRAM] have any successful strategies for maintaining father participation and engagement?

SERVICES OFFERED ADDRESSING COPARENTING RELATIONSHIPS

Now let's talk about how your program addresses coparenting relationships.

- 14) In what ways does [FATHERHOOD PROGRAM] address fathers' coparenting relationships?
 - a. Follow up: To what extent is addressing fathers' coparenting relationships a priority for [FATHERHOOD PROGRAM]? [IF PRIORITY] Please share some examples that show this.
 - b. Follow up: What kind of support is there from the organization or leadership to address coparenting with fathers, if any?
 - c. Follow up: What are some barriers to the program addressing coparenting relationships among fathers?
- 15) What specific services related to coparenting are offered?
 - a. **Probe** [IF NEEDED]: What is discussed or taught?
 - b. Follow up: How often do they occur and how long do they last?
 - c. Follow up: How, if at all, is coparenting with multiple coparents or multiple children discussed in these services?
 - d. Follow up: How, if at all, are fathers' coparents included in these services?
 - i. **Probe**: Who are included as coparents?
 1. Follow up [IF NOT JUST THE CHILD'S MOTHER]: How do these services address coparenting relationships with caretakers who may not be the child's biological mother?
- 16) How does [FATHERHOOD PROGRAM] encourage fathers to participate in coparenting services?
 - a. Follow up: What works well about [STRATEGIES MENTIONED IN Q16]?
 - b. Follow up: What could be done better?
- 17) What does attendance or uptake and engagement of fathers in these services look like?
 - a. Follow up: What are the reasons fathers participate in these services?
 - b. Follow up: What, if anything, makes it difficult for fathers to participate in these services?

- c. **Probe:** In what ways does [FATHERHOOD PROGRAM] work to address these challenges to make it easier for fathers to participate?
- d. **Follow up:** What, if any, challenges do [FATHERHOOD PROGRAM] staff have keeping fathers engaged in these services?
- e. **Follow up:** Does [FATHERHOOD PROGRAM] have any successful strategies for maintaining fathers' participation and engagement?

CURRICULUM USE

- 18) Do [SERVICES MENTIONED IN Q11 AND OR Q15] use specific curricula?
- a. [IF YES]: Can you tell me about the curricula?
 - b. [IF NO OR IF ONLY HMRE CURRICULA IS MENTIONED]: Are healthy romantic or coparenting relationships addressed in any of the other curricula used by [FATHERHOOD PROGRAM]?
 - i. **Probe:** Do the curricula distinguish between these two topics?
 - ii. [IF YES]: Please describe these curricula.
 - iii. **Follow up** [IF SAID THAT THEY INVOLVE ROMANTIC PARTNERS/COPARENTS IN SERVICES]: You mentioned earlier that you include partners/coparents in services. Do the [CURRICULA MENTIONED] require or encourage that involvement?
 - iv. **Follow up** [IF SAID THAT THEY DO NOT INVOLVE ROMANTIC PARTNERS/COPARENTS IN SERVICES]: You mentioned earlier that you do not include partners/coparents in services. Did you have to adapt any curricula you use? [IF NEEDED]: Are [CURRICULA MENTIONED] designed to involve partners or spouses?
 - 1. [IF COPARENTING CURRICULA ARE MENTIONED]: Please describe the coparents'/partners'/spouses' involvement in the curricula.
 - 2. [IF COPARENTING CURRICULA ARE MENTIONED]: Who are included as coparents/partners/spouses in these curricula?

FACILITATORS AND FACILITATOR TRAINING

- 19) What do you look for when hiring facilitators for your healthy relationship services?
- a. **Probe:** Are there any particular qualities you look for in hiring for coparenting related services?
 - b. **Probe:** Are there any particular qualities you look for in hiring for healthy relationship related services?
 - c. **Probe:** Are there any specific credentials you look for in your facilitators for either coparenting or healthy relationship related services?
 - d. **Probe:** Do you look for facilitators that reflect the characteristics of the fathers you serve? Tell me more about that.
- 20) Can you tell me any training you offer for facilitators at [FATHERHOOD PROGRAM], for your healthy relationship services? *Note: We want to know about training content, length of training, and whether they think it is adequate.*

- a. **Probe:** Are there any specific certifications or on-the-job training facilitators can receive related in these topic areas? [FOLLOW UP ON EACH CERTIFICATION AND TRAINING BY ASKING IF IT IS OPTIONAL OR REQUIRED]
- b. **Follow up** [IF OFFERING TRAINING]: Would you say that the training for facilitators is adequate? How so?
 - i. **Follow up:** How can the training be made better?

PARTNERSHIPS (DIRECTORS ONLY; FACILITATORS SKIP)

Now we have a few questions about your partnerships with other organizations. [Note to interviewer: Please skip any questions in this section that have been discussed previously throughout this interview. Partnerships may be discussed above if the partner organizations are providing the relationship services described.]

- 21) Are there any partnerships in place between your organization and other agencies addressing healthy relationship services, which can include either coparenting or the father’s romantic relationships?
 - a. [IF YES]: What type of organizations or agencies do you partner with? Please tell me about each partnership. We’ll start with [PARTNER ORGANIZATION]. [Note for interviewer: Ask the following questions for each partnership named].
 - i. **Probe:** What kind of activities does [PARTNER ORGANIZATION] do as a result of the partnership?
 - ii. **Probe:** How was this partnership started?
 - iii. **Probe:** Is this partnership formal or informal (i.e. is there a MOU established)?
 - iv. **Probe:** How long has this partnership been in place?
 - v. **Probe:** On average, how much time do you spend working with this partner? How often do you communicate with the partner?
 - vi. **Probe:** On average, about how many fathers who participate in your program are served each year by this partner organization(s)?
 - b. [IF YES]: What works well about this/these partnership(s)? Any success stories you would like to share?
 - c. [IF YES]: What are some challenges of this/these partnership(s), if any? What are some lessons learned?
 - d. **Follow up:** Are there any partnerships with other systems (e.g., child support, child welfare, school systems, DV)?
- 22) Are there any partnerships you would like to develop to help address coparenting or healthy relationships with fathers?
 - a. [IF YES]: What kinds of partnerships would you like to make?
 - i. **Follow up:** Any plans to make these partnerships?

CLOSING AND RECOMMENDATIONS (DIRECTORS)

Lastly, we would like to see if you have any further recommendations.

- 23) Do you have any additional thoughts on how [FATHERHOOD PROGRAM]'s coparenting and healthy romantic relationship services could be improved?
- a. [IF YES]: What would be required for these changes to happen?
 - b. Follow up: What can systems, other agencies, or policies do? [If participant is having difficulty answering this say, "For example, child support, child protective services, domestic violence agencies, school systems, justice system/police, etc., as well as the policies that shape these services."]
 - c. Follow up: If you had all the money in the world to design your program and make services better for the fathers you serve, what would you do?

CLOSING AND RECOMMENDATIONS (FACILITATORS)

And lastly,

- 24) Is there anything that we didn't touch on today that you want us to know?

We really appreciate you taking the time to talk with us today—thank you.