

Fatherhood Program Partner Staff Interview Protocol

Thank you for taking the time to talk to us. My name is [NAME] and this is [NAME], and we work for Child Trends, a research center in Washington, D.C. We're part of a team that is helping the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation in the Administration for Children and Families to understand how fatherhood programs are incorporating healthy marriage and relationship education (HMRE) into programming, how programs address building healthy coparenting relationships, and how uptake of these services among fathers may be improved. 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 interviews with fatherhood program facilitators, directors or other similar staff, and staff from organizations like yours who partner with fatherhood programs.

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 entire interview. This interview will last between 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 share who participated in the interviews. Your responses will be combined with responses from others who are participating in these focus groups 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 capture all the information on paper, 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 [PARTNER ORGANIZATION].
 - a. [IF NOT ADDRESSED]: How long have you been in this position?

Great, now we would like to talk to you about [PARTNER ORGANIZATION].

- 3) Who does your organization primarily serve?
 - a. **Probe:** What kinds of services/activities does your organization provide?
 - b. **Probe:** What, if anything, does your organization do uniquely or differently for fathers compared to others you may serve? What services, if any, are particularly targeted towards fathers?

PARTNERSHIP WITH FATHERHOOD PROGRAM

Thank you! We would now like to hear more about your organization's partnership with [FATHERHOOD PROGRAM]...

- 4) Please describe the partnership [PARTNER ORGANIZATION] has with [FATHERHOOD PROGRAM].
 - a. **Probe:** How did the partnership begin?
 - b. **Probe:** How long has this partnership been in place?
 - c. **Probe:** Is this partnership formal or informal (i.e., is there a MOU established)?
 - d. **Probe:** How often would you say you communicate with [FATHERHOOD PROGRAM]? Do you have standing meetings?
 - e. **Probe:** What works well about this partnership? Any success stories you would like to share?
 - f. **Probe:** What are some challenges of this partnership, if any? What are some lessons learned?

DESCRIPTION OF FATHERS AND THEIR COPARENTS

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

- 5) What are some strengths of the fathers who you work with?
- 6) What are some challenges faced by the fathers you work with?
- 7) In your experience, who do fathers typically coparent with?
 - a. **Probe:** Who are fathers' primary coparents? How common is it for fathers to have multiple coparents?
- 8) What are some of the challenges coparents face? As a reminder, when we say coparent, this can mean the mother(s) of the father's children or others that play a significant role in helping to raise his children. As you respond, let us know what type of coparent you're thinking about.
 - 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."

- 9) What are some strengths, if any, the fathers you work with have in forming healthy romantic relationships and keeping them strong, if any?
 - a. Follow up: What are specific challenges that fathers have related to forming and keeping romantic relationships strong, if any?
 - 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?
- 10) What are some strengths, if any, the fathers you work with have in keeping their coparenting relationships strong, if any?
 - a. Follow up: What are specific challenges fathers have related to their coparenting relationships, if any?
 - 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?
- 11) 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/COPARENTING RELATIONSHIPS

Now we are hoping to ask you a few questions about how fathers' relationships are addressed through the services your organization provides both independently and through the partnership with [FATHERHOOD PROGRAM].

- 12) In what ways does [PARTNER ORGANIZATION] address fathers' healthy romantic relationships?

- 13) What services related to romantic relationships are offered through this partnership?
- 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?
 - c. Follow up: What does attendance or uptake of these services look like?
- 14) In what ways does [PARTNER ORGANIZATION] address fathers’ coparenting relationships?
- 15) What services related to coparenting are offered through this partnership?
- 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?
 - e. Follow up: What does attendance or uptake of these services look like?
- 16) Do [SERVICES MENTIONED IN Q13 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 [PARTNER ORGANIZATION]?
 - i. **Probe**: Do the curricula distinguish between these two topics?
 - ii. [IF YES]: Please describe these curricula.
 - iii. Follow up [If said in Q13/15 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 in Q13/15 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?

- 17) How, if at all, has your organization changed in terms of how you think about addressing romantic and coparenting relationships with fathers due to your partnership with [FATHERHOOD PROGRAM]?
- a. Follow up: To what extent is addressing fathers' romantic and coparenting relationships a priority for [PARTNER ORGANIZATION]? [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 romantic and coparenting relationships with fathers, if any?
 - c. Follow up: What are some barriers to addressing romantic and/or coparenting relationships among fathers?

CLOSING

And lastly,

- 18) Do you have any additional thoughts on how healthy romantic relationship and coparenting services could be improved for fathers?
- a. [IF YES]: What would be required for these changes to happen?
 - a. 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, the justice system/police, etc., as well as the policies that shape these services."]
 - b. Follow up: If you had all the money in the world to make services better, what would you do?
- 19) 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.