

Coparenting and Healthy Relationship and Marriage Education for Dads (CHaRMED)

Fathers, children, and their families benefit from healthy relationships. *Relationships* refer to any relationship between two or more people, including relationships between a parent and child, romantic partners, and parents or other caretakers of a child. The Office of Family Assistance (OFA)—within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (ACF)—promotes healthy relationships through the Responsible Fatherhood (RF) grant program. RF grantees are required to include programming on healthy marriage and relationships and responsible parenting. These healthy relationship and parenting programs focus both on romantic and coparenting relationships and aim to improve a wide array of fathers' relationship skills, such as communication, conflict management, emotional self-regulation, and problem-solving.

Despite the importance of healthy romantic and coparenting relationships, little is known about how RF programs incorporate Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education (HMRE) and coparenting services into their programming, and what strategies hold promise for promoting active engagement in these services. To learn more about the approaches used by Responsible Fatherhood programs, OFA is funding, and ACF's Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) is overseeing, the Coparenting and Healthy Relationship and Marriage Education for Dads (CHaRMED) study. OPRE has contracted with Child Trends to design and conduct the study.

Study objectives

The CHaRMED project aims to build knowledge about approaches that RF providers currently use, or could use in the future, to foster healthy coparenting and romantic relationships. To meet this objective, the study will:

- Describe the characteristics and qualities of marriages or romantic relationships, and coparenting relationships, of fathers who are likely to participate in RF programs.
- Develop a conceptual model for addressing coparenting with fathers, including those most likely to be served by RF programs.
- Document current services offered by RF grantees in the areas of Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education (HMRE) and coparenting.
- Understand participant and program staff perspectives on HMRE and coparenting services, and how these services might be improved.
- Identify gaps in existing approaches to HMRE and coparenting services, and identify other approaches and/or resources relevant to address those gaps.

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