



How organizations can support fathers

Fathers play an important role in the development of children and in the success of families. The involvement of two caring parents has many positive effects on children and families.

- Children have higher self-esteem and are less likely to give in to peer pressure.
- Children have fewer problems in school and stay in school longer.
- Children have longer-lasting relationships and a better chance for a successful marriage.
- Children have better coping skills and can adapt to change more easily.

How to be a father-friendly organization

- **Include fathers in programs and services for general audiences, such as parents.** Promote the importance of fathers, but not at the expense of women or mothers.
- **Offer programs and services for fathers only.** Make sure to offer these programs or services at times that are convenient for fathers to attend. Ask men to lead fatherhood programs.
- **Be sensitive to factors that limit father involvement.** Factors may include a conflicted relationship with the child's mother, lack of fathering skills, unemployment/low income and experience with criminal behavior.
- **Use activities, materials and individual or group exercises that appeal to men and fathers.** What works for women and mothers does not always work for men and fathers.
- **Recruit men and fathers to address issues, such as family violence, custody, parenting and health.**
- **Respect the father's parenting style.** Mothers and fathers nurture and play differently. Both are valuable for the development of the child's social and emotional skills.
- **Make your meeting space father-friendly.** Provide reading materials that are directed toward fathers and men in the waiting or common areas. Provide a diaper changing deck in the men's room.
- **Host special events that celebrate fatherhood and promote father-child relationships.**
- **Make sure fathers are shown positively in your organization's marketing materials.** Place marketing materials in locations that men and fathers frequent.