

Indiana Restoring Fatherhood  
Initiative Evaluation:

Phase I

Submitted by:

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The second section of the report will focus on the information gained through the analysis of the 1999 Revised Program Form. Areas to be reviewed in this section include:

1. Themes present within the stated program *Outcome Objectives* reported by the 33 existing programs.
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3. Description and discussion of the various methods to *Evaluate Outcome and/or Process Objectives* reported by the 33 existing programs. This will also include a brief review of any standard evaluation instruments reportedly used by programs.

This review will provide a better understanding of the current strengths of the data collection strategies of funded programs, as well as areas in need of improvement. Efforts will be made to detect: (a) similarities and differences in the variables measured by the various programs, (b) similarities and differences in the manner in which variables are measured by programs, (c) exemplary outcome and process objectives, (d) exemplary outcome measures, and (e) significant gaps in information that may be addressed in Phase II and Phase III of the evaluation project.

## **II. Review of Fatherhood Reporting Tool and Database Information**

A total of 40 Program Reporting Tool Summary Reports were reviewed. In general, these reports were completed in full. There were a few reports with missing data, but these were isolated cases. One report was missing the first two pages of the summary and therefore little data could be obtained from this report. There also seemed to be reports that were not included. Perhaps they were lost at some point or never submitted to Family Services Administration. The inability to include data from these missing reports will deflate several key variables in this study, but results from the reports that were submitted still yield fascinating and informative results. An analysis of several of the variables yielded some interesting findings that are summarized in the following tables.

### **A. Numbers Served**

One of the first striking features in this data is the sheer volume of fathers and others served by these programs. As Table 1 demonstrates, over 4841 fathers were served by these programs statewide (1997-1999). An additional 9949 were also provided services as a result of the fatherhood initiatives. Examples of others receiving services included: mothers, grandparents, children of the fathers, and professional service providers.

**Table 1: Total receiving services by Fatherhood Programs**

<i>Population Served</i>	<i>N</i>
Fathers	4841
Pre-Teen/Teens	4676
Others	9949
Total Receiving Services	19466

At first it may seem a bit surprising that over 70% of those served by these programs were "others," that is, individuals other than fathers. First, it is important to note that fathers received the most "intensive" services (counseling, mentoring, etc.). In addition, by providing services to those other than fathers these various programs demonstrate an understanding that

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fathers do not exist in a vacuum. Efforts to change fathering behaviors will be more likely to occur when those individuals directly and indirectly involved with the father also gain an increased understanding of what is involved in responsible fathering.

### ***B. Types of Father Served***

Table 2 presents the data on the types of fathers that were served by the various Restoring Fatherhood programs. As the data indicates, perhaps the most noticeable feature within this data is that there is a fairly even distribution of the types of fathers served by these programs. This would seem to be a strength of the program in that no one population of fathers seems dramatically underserved.

**Table 2: Types of Fathers Receiving Services**

<i>Types of Fathers Served</i>	<i>N</i>
Married, Cohabiting	31
Divorced, Separated	31
Single, with custody	26
Young Unwed	27
Others	2

### ***C. Types of Goals that Programs Stated and Changes that Occurred***

Table 3 presents a listing of the types of goals that were pursued by the various programs as well as any goals that were added later. As the data demonstrates, All 8 of the goal priorities of the Restoring Fatherhood Initiative were covered to some degree by the programs funded. The most common goals pursued were: (a) Parenting skills (N=39), (b) Co-Parenting Skills (N=39), and (c) Increasing Fathers Involvement with Children (N=38). The most frequently added goals were: (a) Paternity Establishment (N=4), and (b) Reducing Out-of-Wedlock Pregnancies (N=4). It can also be seen that several additional goals (N=15) beyond the 8 state priorities were added by programs.

**Table 3: Types of Goals Stated by Programs and Changes Made**

<i>Types of Goals Pursued</i>	<i>Initial N</i>	<i>N Added</i>	<i>Total</i>
Father's Involvement with Child(ren)	37	1	38
Paternity Establishment	15	4	19
Child Support	17	3	20
Out-of-Wedlock Pregnancies	21	4	25
Accessibility to Services	25	3	28
Parenting Skills	39	0	39
Co-Parenting Relationships	36	3	39
High School Graduation Rates	16	0	16
Others	6	9	15

#### ***D. Types of Services Offered by Programs and Changes that Occurred***

Table 4 identifies the types of services that were provided by the programs within the grant as well as any services that were added later. The most common service provided by programs was Supporting Parenting Activities (N=35). The next most common service provided was Counseling (N=25), followed by Co-Parenting and Parent and Child Activities (N=23). The least common service provided by programs were Health-Related Services (N=11), followed by Individual Case Management (N=12) and Employment Training (N=13).

The most commonly added services were Mental Health Services and Public Education Services (N=3). It can be seen that while programs reported frequent additional goals in Table 4, there were very relatively few expansions in services to take on the additional goals. It seems that most programs were resourceful in finding ways to expand their goals without a large increase in services. It should also be noted that there were 17 types of services that were provided by programs that did not fall neatly into the 15 listed within the reporting form.

**Table 4: Types of Services Offered by Programs and Changes Made**

<i>Types of Services Offered</i>	<i>Initial N</i>	<i>N Added</i>	<i>Total</i>
Supporting Parenting Activities	35	0	35
Co-Parenting	22	1	23
Mentoring	17	2	19
Education Training	21	0	21
Employment Training	12	1	13
Health-Related Activities	11	0	11
Mental Health Services	13	3	16
Public Education Services	17	3	20
Counseling	24	1	25
Prevention/Alternative Youth Activities	17	1	18
Individual Case Management	12	0	12
Referral Services	18	1	19
Parent and Child Activities	22	1	23
Family Activities	18	0	18
Child Support/Paternity Visitation	14	1	15
Others	8	9	17

#### ***E. Methods of Measuring Program and Client Goals and Objectives***

Table 5 shows the various types of program achievement measures reported by programs. The most frequently used method of evaluation was Staff Evaluations (N=32). It is encouraging to note that a large number of programs report using both pre and post test (N=28), as well as anecdotal data from clients (N=25). Of course, this type of survey does not provide a full understanding of the exact nature of these various measurement types. Additional information will need to be gathered to gain a better understanding of the specific types of data collected within each of these categories. Some of this information is discussed within the review of narrative data from the 1999 revised Program Plans (Section III).

**Table 5: Types of Program Achievement Measures**

<i>Types Achievement Measures</i>	<i>N</i>
Pre and Post Tests	28
Anecdotal Data	25
Staff Evaluations	32
No Measures	1

Table 6 lists the various ways that programs report measuring individual client outcomes. As with program measures, the most common form of measuring individual goal achievement was through staff evaluations (N=28). The least common form of client evaluation was through Follow Up Tests (N=11). As with program measurements, little can be gained about understanding the specific mechanisms that agencies use to measure client outcomes based upon the survey listings. Some of this information will be expanded upon in Section III, dealing with a qualitative analysis of program objectives and outcome measures.

**Table 6: Types of Client Achievement Measures**

<i>Types Achievement Measures</i>	<i>N</i>
Pre and Post Tests	26
Anecdotal Data	24
Staff Evaluations	28
Follow Up Tests	11
No Measures	2

#### ***F. Client Characteristics Tracked***

Table 7 lists the types of demographic information that programs report tracking on participants. The most common characteristic that is tracked in Location of Residence (N=33), followed by Number of Children (N=28), Education Level (N=27), and Race (N=27). Date of Birth and Race were tracked less frequently. Although the collection of this type of data can be intrusive, it can prove helpful in identifying at-risk groups within a given program as well as developing future programming to meet the needs of specific populations. Further review is needed in this area.

**Table 7: Types of Client Characteristics Tracked**

<i>Client Characteristics</i>	<i>N</i>
Race	27
Income	20
Education Level	28
Date of Birth	18
Number of Children	28
Location of Residence	33
Other	

## **G. Funding Sources**

Table 8 shows the various additional funding sources reported by programs. The largest form of extra funding came in the form of Donations (N=23), followed by Other (N=17), and Fund Raising (N=13). The types of "other" funding sources included such options as: client fees, county funds, United Way, court fees, in-kind donations, local businesses, and county extension services.

**Table 8: Program Funding Sources**

<i>Funding Sources</i>	<i>N</i>
Federal Grants	10
Foundation Grants	12
Fund Raising	13
State Grants	12
Donations	23
Other	17

## **H. Data Related to Outcome Measures**

Miscellaneous Client Behaviors Tracked. Table 9 lists a range of client behaviors that are tracked by programs. The most common behaviors that are monitored are Attendance (N=34) and Length of Time in Program (N=30). It is somewhat informative that although 39 programs reported pursuing the Increase of Parenting Skills as one of their primary objectives (see Table 3), only 18 programs reported that they are actively tracking Parenting Skills. Further review is needed in this area.

**Table 9: Miscellaneous Client Behaviors Tracked**

<i>Client Behaviors</i>	<i>N</i>
Attendance	34
Parenting Skills	18
Length of Time in Program	30
Job Skills	12
Other	13

Collection of Baseline Measures, Pre and Post Tests, Follow Up Studies. Table 10 shows the number of programs involved in various forms of program evaluation activities. It is quite encouraging that such a large percentage are involved in some form of effort to collect data that could be helpful in further evaluation of program effectiveness and ultimately client success. Of course, these numbers do not give details as to the exact nature of these outcome measures, however it is very notable that efforts are being made to address issues of accountability.

**Table 10: Number of Programs Completing Baseline Measures, Using Pre and Post Tests, and Conducting Follow Up Studies**

<i>Program Activities</i>	<i>N</i>
Completing Baseline Measures	23
Pre and Post Tests	24
Conducting Follow Up Studies	26

Participant Analysis Summary. Table 11 lists various types of participant analysis activities and the number of programs that have engaged in each of these activities. The most common analysis activity reported was "The number [clients] who have been in the program." Fewer than half collect information regarding whether clients finish the program (N=17) or whether they did not complete the program (N=17). It is somewhat surprising that so few of the programs are collecting this type of basic information. Perhaps it is a tracking issue or the desire of the program to avoid being intrusive. These is an area that needs further study.

**Table 11: Participant Analysis Summary**

<i>Participant Analysis Activity</i>	<i>N</i>
The number who have been in the program	27
The number who finish the program	17
The number who did not complete the program	17

#### ***I. Data Related to Cost-Benefit Analysis***

Average amount spent & total benefits versus total costs. Table 12 indicates the number of programs that report the ability to engage in various cost-benefit analysis. Most of the programs (N=28) report that they are able to track the average spent per client. Less than half (N=17) report that they are able to determine if the total benefits of the program exceed the total cost. It seems vital to gather more in-depth information regarding the barriers that exist in making it difficult for programs to calculate a cost-benefit ratio. Perhaps much can be learned from those programs reporting the ability to calculate such a ratio that can be instructive to the other programs. This area needs further exploration.

**Table 12: Number of Programs Reporting Ability to Track Average Amount Spent and Whether Total Benefits Exceed Total Costs**

<i>Cost-Benefit Activity</i>	<i>N</i>
Ability to track average spent per client	28
Ability to track cost-benefit ratio	17

Establishment of Processes for Client Involvement. Table 13 shows the number of programs that have taken measures to establish processes to ensure client participation. The most common process established is in the area of Recruitment (N=27). Less than half of the programs report established processes to address issues of Continued Participation and Enrollment (N=17). These types of activities can take a while to establish but are vital to the long term life of a program. This is another area in which further exploration is needed.

**Table 13: Number Reporting Various Forms of Established Processes to Ensure Participant Involvement**

<i>Established Process Area</i>	<i>N</i>
Recruitment	27
Continued Participation	17
Enrollment	17

### **III. Review of 1999 Revised Program Form**

As was mentioned several times in section II, it can be difficult to gain an in-depth understanding of the exact nature of what programs are doing based upon quantitative survey responses. While it may be helpful to understand how many fathers were served, how many programs report using pre and post test measure of improvement, etc., there is still the need to explore any existing data behind mere numbers. With this in mind, I chose to review the most recent written information provided by programs funded by this grant - the *1999 Revised Program Form*. This report requested funded agencies to update relevant information about their programs, including such areas as: recruitment, funding, program outcome objectives, program process objectives, and program outcome measures related to the eight goals areas of the Restoring Fatherhood initiative.

While there were some minor inconsistencies in the manner in which these reports were completed (e.g., not all programs included narrative sections on recruitment, funding, etc.), all Revised Program Forms included sections in which programs listed their latest (a) outcome objectives, (b) process objectives, and (c) outcome measures. This data was re-typed and entered into Ethnograph 5.0 to allow for a "qualitative" analysis of the written objectives and outcome measures. Data was then coded to permit easier analysis of the variables. Specific attention was given to the various ways in which programs reported they were going to achieve the 8 goals set forth by FSSA regarding the Restoring Fatherhood initiative. Outcome objectives, process objectives, and outcome measures were all grouped within the 8 goals. Some outcome and process objectives fell into more than one of the eight goal areas. This also held true for outcome measures. The raw data from these groupings can be found in the Appendix. It is a rather large listing, but it seems important to have a centralized listing of the various ways that programs report they are trying to achieve the 8 goals. It is possible that this listing can serve as a resource for programs as they consider various ways to pursue the 8 goals of the Restoring Fatherhood Initiative.

Before reviewing findings within this section it is important to review several aspects of the grant application itself. First, it is helpful to review how the grant defines certain concepts. According to the instructions for the *Restoring Fatherhood Renewing Families* grant application (1997), process objectives should:

.....focus on the steps taken to achieve goal(s) over the course of the funding period of two years (e.g., clients to be served, training sessions to be provided - what, by whom, by when), specifically outlining what the programs will do. (p. 8)

Outcome objectives should:



.....focus on the overall effect that the program will have on fatherhood as a result of the process objectives. They measure if the goals have actually been achieved (e.g., # of fathers paying child support, # of children actively involved with their fathers, # of hours/days fathers spent with their children, # of fathers that have established paternity, # of fathers that have completed parenting training. (p. 8)

No further examples exist within the grant application packet. The grant packet contained a *Work Plan* which afforded space for programs to list each of their respective process objectives, outcome objectives, and method for evaluating these objectives. Applicants were instructed to list only one process objective per page.

From the directions within the application, it can be seen that process objectives are to proceed outcome objectives in the area of program development. Process objectives describe the general activities of the program and “set the stage” for delineating specific “outcome” or what are also called “impact” objectives. Methods of measurement then follow from the outcome objectives. There should be a logical flow from each of these areas to the next. Unfortunately, the *Work Plan* format itself does not readily structure an easy understanding of this “flow” from process objective to outcome objective to evaluation method. There are several areas of concern regarding the construction of the *Work Plan*, they are as follows:

1. The Outcome Objectives are listed before the Process Objectives. This could be a bit confusing for the general reader or even the individual completing the *Work Plan*.
2. Very little space is allocated for writing the objectives on the form. This reviewer found it difficult to read some of the objectives due to small, illegible print. It would seem that a disproportionate amount of space is allocated to the Task Completion grid (Attachment 1-B in grant application). It is possible that a similar grid model could be used to list process and outcome objectives as well as the evaluation methods (See Table 14 for a proposed alternative).
3. The current *Work Plan* reporting format does not lend itself well to observing the logical connection between process objectives to outcome objectives to evaluation methods. In reviewing the form, it was difficult to link these various items together. Table 14 provides an alternative format that might make it easier to see these types of connections.

**Table 14: Alternative Work Plan Format and Example**

Process Objective	Outcome Objective	Evaluation Methods
<b>Example:</b> Through mediation, parents will settle divisive issues and mothers will allow fathers to spend more time with their children	Time with father will increase by 40%	Pre and post test measures of father involvement.

In summary, the current *Work Plan* format, despite several strengths, poses a challenge

for extensive elaboration of some very key concepts within program evaluation. Insufficient space is allocated for programs to provide an in-depth description of process objectives, outcome objectives, and evaluation methods; all integral parts of an overall assessment of program effectiveness. Without a clear understanding of how process objectives are linked to outcome objectives and ultimately outcome measures, it becomes very difficult to assess how well a program is meeting its overall goals.

#### **A. Goal One: Increasing Father's Involvement with their Children**

Despite the documentation limitations discussed earlier, this reviewer was able to identify some interesting and informative patterns within each of the 8 goal areas. The first goal to be considered is "Increasing Father's Involvement with their Children." Twenty-nine (29) programs reported that they were pursuing Goal One.

Process Objectives for Goal One. Perhaps one of the greatest strengths of the Restoring Fatherhood initiative is the degree of creativity that was permitted by the funders for individual programs to form innovative approaches to achieve similar goals. A impressive array of diverse "means" to achieve a common "ends" can be seen upon the review of the process objectives. Examples of these diverse approaches can be seen in the following process objectives:

- ❖ Offer workshops consisting of 3 hour educational/training seminars about parenting and fatherhood skills and issues
- ❖ Policies and issues in Indiana will be monitored for the impact of laws on fatherhood and parental involvement
- ❖ Provide a minimum of 48 chances where the fathers and children can spend special time together (i.e., group activities, trips, eating out, parties)
- ❖ Offer activities at little or no cost to fathers and children to model healthy father-child interaction.
- ❖ Provide parenting training course consisting of 12 two-hour weekly sessions to fathers identified as minimally involved with their children. This course will provide comprehensive training in parenting, discipline, child development, and co-parenting for family life
- ❖ Pair participant fathers with mentor fathers for weekly contact for at least 6 months Partners work together to improve their self worth, discipline skills, money management skills, stress management skills, and informal support system of participant fathers, and increase awareness of utilization of community services
- ❖ Offer two activities per month that fathers and children can participate in which will serve to encourage relationships and improve time spent together
- ❖ Provide fatherhood/co-parenting information to referrals from alternative school, adult education, social services, & judicial systems, and general public, addressing above outcomes for parents. Via classes, tutoring, mentoring, grade equivalency support, counseling, individual and group information and referral
- ❖ Teach eight 2-hr training sessions each quarter to provide fathers with parenting education and co-parenting skills
- ❖ Offer a course consisting of 15 2-hour classes twice a year to discuss basic parenting and life skills
- ❖ Assign a one-year "father-friend" and provide 12 2-hour customized support group sessions.
- ❖ Offer 8 week course consisting of 90 minute sessions, held weekly to provide fathers with parenting education
- ❖ Dads will work in small clusters with students in Saturday school detention

## program

In reviewing these process objectives it can be seen that many programs (N=12) chose to offer some form of parent education as a means of increasing father involvement. Another common method to increase father involvement was to provide opportunities for fathers and their children to engage in recreational "activities." A total of six programs reported using these types of interventions. One innovative program offered weekly play groups for fathers, children, and mothers in order to teach and model appropriate parent-child interactions as well as provide guided practice in skill development.

It is also important to note that some programs stated their process objectives in such a way that it was somewhat difficult to determine the exact nature of their activities. Examples of these process objectives include:

- ❖ Improve coparent relations
- ❖ After completing training, dads will have visitation rights
- ❖ Establish a consistent referral base

Fortunately these types of process objectives were the exception rather than the rule. The majority gave a much more in-depth picture of the nature of the activities being offered within the programs.

Outcome Objectives for Goal One. A review of this material yielded some very useful findings. Examples of well-stated outcome objectives included:

- ❖ 100 males will attend workshops on fatherhood issues
- ❖ 80% of court ordered participants will negotiate and follow up on plan regarding visitation issues
- ❖ 80% of fathers participating in local programs will improve knowledge of and attitudes toward father roles and responsibilities
- ❖ 80% of fathers who complete the 12-week parenting training will maintain active involvement with their children as demonstrated by personal contact of not fewer than three hours per week.
- ❖ 75% of participant fathers will complete the program establishing a successful mentoring relationship and working toward one or more self-improvement goals
- ❖ 100% of identified fathers will participate in a social activity no less than 1 time per month
- ❖ 80% of identified fathers will spend at least 2 hours per month with their children with the cooperation of the mothers
- ❖ 80% of fathers will improve involvement

This reviewer was quite impressed with the number of programs that attempted to provide a quantitative estimate of how many fathers would be effected and in what manner these fathers would be influenced. Of the 41 outcome objectives that were written, 44% (N=18) were stated using some form of quantitative measures. This percentage should be higher because several objectives presented by programs as meeting Goal One did not really "fit." Examples of these types of problems include the following outcome objectives:

- ❖ 10% decrease in juvenile delinquency
- ❖ Community awareness and education
- ❖ Provide the class quarterly
- ❖ To provide a better future and job

❖ Individual fatherhood assistance

As these outcomes suggest, some programs may need to re-evaluate whether their activities are truly linked with the goal they are stating they are pursuing. However, the vast majority of programs listed objectives that were logically connected with Goal 1, however many just failed to provide a numerical estimate of the impact their program might have on father involvement.

Outcome Measures Related to Goal One. A great deal of effort was put forth by many of the programs in their attempts to demonstrate that they were achieving their stated goals and objectives. Some examples of these efforts include the following outcome measures:

- ❖ Obtain written feedback from participants, including pre-test post-test instruments where appropriate.
- ❖ Record attendance of fathers and children
- ❖ Fathers will provide program facilitators with information about amount of time, type of activities, rating level of enjoyment, and any difficulties encountered during time spent with children during enrollment in parenting training
- ❖ Fathers will complete pre-test post-test: Parent Stress Index, Attitudes towards Parenting Questionnaire, Steps to Safe and Effective Discipline Checklist.
- ❖ Three month and six month follow-ups by mail and phone will provide information about fathers' level of involvement with their children
- ❖ Parents will complete pre-mid, and post & 6 months follow up self ratings of behavioral changes using the Parent Learning Profile & pre and post objective evaluations of knowledge of child development and healthy child care practices
- ❖ Fathers to be pre- and post tested each session of program, an Adult Adolescent Parenting Inventory evaluation will be given before and after sessions to evaluate knowledge gained and attitude change concerning parenting
- ❖ Observations of father-child interaction periods will be noted as well as observation at in-home visits, and co-parent responses when witnessed.
- ❖ Maintain an accurate record of fathers and children's participation in monthly activities.
- ❖ Briefly interview fathers and children about their involvement in the event on their feelings about the time they spend together.
- ❖ Fathers will complete self-report surveys at their initial meetings and quarterly thereafter regarding their knowledge and perception of parenting skills, communication skills, and relationship skills. These surveys will measure time spent with their children and the types of activities conducted
- ❖ Collect pre-and post test data and self-assessment progress records
- ❖ Pre-test/ Post-test setting instruments; self-tracking scale; participant involvement; Post-tests to measure increase in knowledge of parenting skills and participation in child's development, # of hours participating
- ❖ Social worker will complete pre and post program assessment of the frequency of positive contacts between fathers and their children. Information about the fathers' attendance at scheduled counseling and group activity sessions will be maintained

One method that programs reported they were using to measure outcomes was implementing pre and post test measures. Ten of the programs reported using some form of pre and post test measures to evaluate success. In addition, programs frequently mentioned the use of interviews, attendance records, surveys, service plans, questionnaires, and worksheets as common ways of collecting outcome measures. This information was most commonly collected from the father.

However, the collection of outcome measurement data was not restricted to father-only report data. Some programs engaged in a technique known as “triangulation” of data collection. Essentially this means that one does not restrict data collection to one source, but rather multiple views are taken into account. Sources included in this type of data collection included feedback from:

- ❖ The mother of the children
- ❖ The children of the father
- ❖ Social workers/others working with the father
- ❖ Official court records
- ❖ Observations by professionals of fathering behaviors
- ❖ Mentors

The process of “triangulation” serves to strengthen efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of an intervention. The existence of multiple perspectives that consistently speak to the positive effects of a program can serve as powerful evidence that a program is indeed meeting its stated goals and objectives.

### ***B. Goal Two: Increase Paternity Establishment***

Fourteen programs reported that they were pursuing Goal Two, Increasing Paternity Establishment among fathers. The following sections review the Process Objectives, Outcome Objectives, and Outcome Measures reported by these programs.

Process Objectives for Goal Two. In reviewing the various process objectives listed by programs that were attempting to “increase paternity establishment,” very few consistent themes emerged. Here are examples of some of the process objectives:

- ❖ Offer 2 hours, ten week group sessions for fathers to establish paternity rights and improved co-parenting relationships
- ❖ Secure records of new births from hospitals to identify to make contact with new fathers to encourage paternity establishment
- ❖ Provide information on genetic tests, consequences of abandonment for children, and relating to offender's own childhood without fathers
- ❖ Offer workshops led by financial and legal experts to increase awareness of responsibilities
- ❖ Offer the “It's My Child Too” program

As can be seen from these objectives, programs report diverse means to achieve the end result of increasing paternity establishment. Several programs listed process objectives that did not seem overtly connected with increasing paternity establishment, examples include:

- ❖ Establish a consistent referral base
- ❖ Through mediation, settlement of divisive issues between fathers and mothers allow dads to spend more time with their children
- ❖ This program is court ordered for any male seeking to establish paternity

When this group of process objectives is compared to the process objectives associated with Goal 1, there seems to be a noticeable difference in quality. Goal Two process objectives tended to be less specific regarding the specific nature of the programming to be offered. Some of the objectives seem to “fit” better under other goals. Part of this can be explained by the fact that a handful of programs essentially used the same process objective to meet multiple goals. While this may be feasible in some cases, there is a distinct possibility that this will not hold true

in general. It would be helpful if programs examined whether there is a logical connection between their stated program objectives and activities and the Restoring Fatherhood Goal they are purporting to meet.

Outcome Objectives for Goal Two. The outcome objectives were generally stronger in their make up and clarity than the process objectives. It was as if programs had a very clear notion of what they wanted to accomplish but were not as able to articulate the manner in which they would achieve the desired outcome. Examples of outcome objectives are as follows:

- ❖ 40% of fathers will have established paternity rights and improved co-parenting relationships
- ❖ 75% of identified fathers will complete requirements to establish paternity
- ❖ 80% of fathers will make full child support payments, improve involvement, understanding, and discipline
- ❖ Increase paternity establishment
- ❖ Increase establishing paternity

In general, programs that stated clear process objectives were more likely to put forth strong outcome objectives. As can be seen, several (N=4) programs were able to attach a quantitative value to the degree of change they expected to see. As in the case with the process objectives, several of the outcome objectives did not seem to connect with Goal Two or were stated in such a “vague” manner that it would be nearly impossible to measure; examples are as follows:

- ❖ Youth education
- ❖ To provide a better future and job

In general, the outcome objectives may provide data that can be used to assess the effectiveness of the program. An examination of the outcome measures will tell us more about this potential.

Outcome Measures for Goal Two. Perhaps the most striking observation in reviewing the outcome objectives for Goal Two is not so much what is said, but what is not said. It was quite surprising that more programs did not simply state that one measure of success related to Goal Two would be an increase in paternity establishment. Some programs did this as can be seen in the following outcome measures:

- ❖ An electronic record will be kept of the fathers contacted and the number of fathers who establish
- ❖ Post-tests to measure increase in knowledge of parenting skills and participation in child's development, # of hours participating, establishment of paternity initiated; number of sessions attended
- ❖ Reports of establishment of paternity
- ❖ Coordinator will record and number of fathers with paternity agreements

Less obvious evidence of increasing paternity establishment can be found in the following:

- ❖ Pre and post tests
- ❖ Training sessions for court personnel will be completed and recorded. The referral process will be defined and written. Classes will be held and recorded with accurate attendance kept
- ❖ Reduction in court filings, trials, redocketing of cases, increase in support collections, and surveys will be used to evaluate outcomes

In summary, it may be a challenge for FSA to determine the level of success in meeting Goal Two based on available data. Follow up with these 14 programs may help to gain a clearer picture of the nature of the data that was actually collected.

### **C. Goal Three: Increase Child Support**

Seventeen (17) programs reported they were pursuing Goal Three: "Increase Child Support." The following sections review the Process Objectives, Outcome Objectives, and Outcome Measures reported by these programs.

Process Objectives for Goal Three. Once again, it is evident that programs within the grant were allowed a large degree of freedom in designing ways to achieve the Restoring Fatherhood Goal. The diversity can be seen in the following examples of process objectives associated with Goal Three:

- ❖ Conduct 4 two hour sessions that will address self-respect, and being emotionally and financially supportive of their children.
- ❖ Parenting training course will emphasize the importance of fathers assuming financial responsibility for their children and work with the fathers on budgeting and prioritizing child welfare.
- ❖ Facilitate job training fair for County residents who owe child support.
- ❖ Job readiness class completion, job placement, and child support payments
- ❖ It's my child too curriculum
- ❖ Increase knowledge of family law and contact courts for payment agreements
- ❖ During 8 two hour sessions, teach interview and job search skills and schedule one job interview

Several programs sought to improve the fathers job position as a means to increase child support (N=6). This seems a logical assumption for programs to make as increased employability may certainly lead to an improved economic situation for the father and ultimately for his children. Other programs (N=6) also included process outcomes that sought to address relationship or emotional issues that might interfere with a father paying child support. Examples of these process objectives include the following:

- ❖ Staff will provide parenting training course consisting of 12 two-hour weekly sessions to fathers identified as minimally involved with their children. This course will provide comprehensive training parenting, discipline, child development, and co-parenting for family life
- ❖ Individual counseling or crisis intervention. May include separate father's support group
- ❖ Teach eight 2-hr training sessions each quarter to provide fathers with parenting education and co-parenting skills. Encourage active involvement with children.
- ❖ Offer two 2 hour training classes, each quarter, to provide parents with conflict resolution skills & establish commitment to co-parenting relationship

Approaching the child support issue from this perspective also seems to make some sense as selected research has connected child support payments with such variables as co-parental relationship and level of emotional commitment to the child.

In general, the process objectives were seemingly directly connected to Goal Three. Exceptions to this were so rare that there is really no need to discuss them.

Outcome Objectives for Goal Three. In general, the outcome objectives related to Goal Three were concise, clearly written, and logically connected to Goal Three. The following examples help illustrate this:

- ❖ 90% of fathers who complete the parenting training program will contribute financially to the support of their children.
- ❖ 10% increase in Child Support
- ❖ 70% of identified fathers will increase child support payments
- ❖ 80% of fathers will make full child support payments
- ❖ Current fathers will understand financial obligations of fatherhood
- ❖ Increase Child support

As can be seen, several programs were able to delineate a percentage increase in child support. Others merely stated that there would be an increase without such specification. There were a few outcome objectives that were not as clearly connected to Goal Three, examples include:

- ❖ Individual fatherhood assistance
- ❖ To provide a better future and job
- ❖ Community awareness and education
- ❖ Provide fathering training

The major problem with these objectives is that they seem more like process objectives (not necessarily well written ones) than outcome objectives. It would be difficult to measure outcome objectives stated in this manner.

Outcome Measures for Goal Three. Due to the diversity in process and outcome objectives, it is no surprise that a wide array of outcome measures were present. The most obvious outcome measure would be to record the number of fathers who started to pay child support following the program. Examples of such outcome measures are included in the following stated outcome measures:

- ❖ Record the number of participants who made an attempt to pay child support
- ❖ When fathers involvement increases, child support payments become more regular. Collection statistics will reflect an increase
- ❖ Fathers will begin financial support of children during enrollment in parenting training. Fathers will complete pre- and post tests; Parenting Stress Index, Attitudes Towards Parenting Questionnaire, three month and six month follow ups by mail and phone will provide information about the fathers' financial support of their children
- ❖ The projected increase in child support collections will be determined from records kept by the county clerk
- ❖ Coordinator will record and report number of fathers with paternity agreements and amounts of financial support paid.

Of the seventeen programs pursuing Goal Three, eleven (11) reported that they were measuring the level of child support as an indicator of success. This is quite encouraging as this data will be very useful to FSSA regarding the level of success achieved toward Goal Three. The remaining six programs (those that did not report measuring increases in child support) were generally seeking to change fathers' attitudes toward their role of father and/or to change the co-parental relationship. Although it is understandable why they might not choose to logically



connect these activities with a child support measure, it is still possible that child support measures could have been part of the outcome measures for these interventions. Essentially, if programmers believed that these seemingly indirect means to increase child support would help to attain Goal Three, it would have been expedient to include a measure related to child support in their outcome measures.

#### ***D. Goal Four: Decrease Out-of-Wedlock Pregnancies***

Sixteen (16) programs reported that they were making efforts to decrease out-of-wedlock pregnancies. The following sections review the Process Objectives, Outcome Objectives, and Outcome Measures reported by these programs.

Process Objectives for Goal Four. Once again, a wide range of programming can be evidenced in the stated process objectives. Here are a sample of the process objectives:

- ❖ Offer 3-session workshop series to a minimum of three 5th grade groups, with a minimum of 2 offered in inner-city schools
- ❖ Offer 8, 2 hour workshops on human sexuality, understanding and controlling sexual desires, sexual assault, delayed gratification, and sexual abuse
- ❖ Offer courses and training consisting of two semi-monthly courses on abstinence
- ❖ Hold monthly meetings for 3 months, 1.5 hours long, on the responsibility of parenthood, abstinence, and safe sex.
- ❖ Over one year, provide 30 weekly one-hour family life/sexuality interactive education classes about puberty, contraception, sexual values, manhood, and the emotional and financial responsibilities of fatherhood
- ❖ Offer presentations by Planned Parenthood for all residents. Discuss personal use of birth control in regular psycho-educational groups
- ❖ Continue school-based programs at middle schools. Culminate semester-long programs with experiential activities at youth camp. (12 group meetings/per semester; 1 weekend each for boys and girls/semester). Expand to include new middle schools

These objectives (and others not presented here) make it relatively clear that many programs (N=14) attempted to use educational programming in order to achieve the goal of reducing out-of-wedlock pregnancies. Of course these broad general process objectives do not give information giving the exact content of these educational interventions. It is unclear how many programs give information on birth control, safe sex, sexual decision-making, abstinence, etc. Only a more extensive follow up with these programs can provide this type of information.

Outcome Objectives for Goal Four. The outcome objectives could be grouped into two major categories, those that state they will be able to directly influence out-of-wedlock pregnancies and those that are pursuing program objectives that will lead to changes in participants that may ultimately lead to a reduction of out-of-wedlock pregnancies. Since determining the success in reducing out-of-wedlock pregnancies is a “long-term” measurement project and because gathering information about such sensitive topics as the sexual behaviors that lead to out-of-wedlock pregnancies, measurement can be difficult, if not impossible. It is quite understandable that programs might experience take a more “indirect” approach to formulating their outcome objectives and subsequent outcome measures. The following list of

outcome objectives reflect this challenge:

- ❖ 80% of fathers participating in local programs will improve knowledge of and attitudes toward father roles and responsibilities
- ❖ Decrease out-of wedlock pregnancies
- ❖ To reduce the number of out of wedlock pregnancies among identified fathers and potential fathers
- ❖ 100% of fathers will be employed and establish paternity. 80% will not have additional out-of-wedlock births
- ❖ Decrease out of wedlock pregnancies - boys identified as at-risk will not become teen fathers
- ❖ 90% will commit to birth control
- ❖ Provide and service expanding curriculum of age appropriate materials regarding skills and problems of parenting; predictors, problems, and consequences of teen pregnancy, include also parent/child communication, dealing with anger, conflict, and respect/responsibility related issues
- ❖ Develop and distribute 5 educational pamphlets related to fatherhood. These will be distributed to individuals, agencies, and organizations

As noted, this list reflects the two primary ways of thinking about reducing out-of-wedlock pregnancies, direct reduction of behaviors that lead to out-of-wedlock pregnancies and interventions that deal with the issue in an indirect (but potentially just as effective) manner by dealing with such things as emotional readiness, parenting information, etc.

Outcome Measures for Goal Four. The outcome measures reflect the direct versus indirect program intervention ideas discussed in previous sections. The following list of outcome measures exemplifies the differences in approaches:

- ❖ Determine, through anonymous responses, who abstained from sexual activity during the course of the sessions
- ❖ Track participants in the program, give pre and post tests, give periodic sexual activity surveys, and discuss with youth sexual behaviors
- ❖ Ask fathers if paternity has been established and if they have fathered any other out-of-wedlock children
- ❖ Participants will complete a questionnaire at the beginning of their participation and after 15 activity sessions to assess their awareness of the consequences of teen fatherhood
- ❖ With the assurance that program participation and services will not be affected, participants will report whether or not they have made anyone pregnant and will demonstrate positive changes in sexuality knowledge/attitudes on Philliber Assessment Instrument
- ❖ Staff will document that all participant health problems are identified and treated (within available payment mechanisms) and will document individual involvement in risky behavior
- ❖ Coordinator will compile and report information from worksheets and questionnaires to document change in use of birth control methods

As can be seen through these outcome measures, some programs report that they will attempt to measure directly whether out-of-wedlock pregnancies have been reduced. Other programs report that they will measure changes in attitudes, beliefs, and related behaviors that

may ultimately lead to a reduction in out-of-wedlock pregnancies. It is not a question of either/or when it comes to the “appropriateness” of one approach over another. Both approaches have merit and can help to give us a holistic solution to the out-of-wedlock pregnancy problem.

#### ***E. Goal Five: Improve Service Accessibility for Fathers***

Twenty (20) programs reported that they were making efforts to increase service accessibility for fathers. The following sections review the Process Objectives, Outcome Objectives, and Outcome Measures reported by these programs.

Process Objectives for Goal Five. Programs pursuing Goal Five presented a wide range of innovative and creative ways to increase service accessibility. Some of the more exemplary process objectives are listed below:

- ❖ Divorced fathers will participate in monthly support groups meetings to voice concerns and share information
- ❖ Staff person will be available a minimum of 20 hours per week
- ❖ Policies and issues in Indiana will be monitored for the impact of laws on fatherhood and parental involvement
- ❖ During an 8 week period the participants will be linked with services as determined by the needs assessment administered to the fathers
- ❖ Staff will welcome fathers as paraprofessionals who assist in providing support and feedback to other fathers. As graduates of the program, volunteer to become mentors; training will be delivered in a group support framework in which fathers are encouraged to develop mentoring relationships and become resources for one another
- ❖ Staff will supply vendors with fathers’ information brochure. Staff will interact with male customers to introduce them to potential services of interest, supply them with phone numbers, contact info, etc.. Staff will investigate new services of interest/need for fathers
- ❖ Appointments and group sessions with local service agencies will be held monthly
- ❖ Compile a list of service organizations that serve fathers and put them into a directory
- ❖ Brochures, flyers, and newspaper articles
- ❖ Increase offender access and knowledge of available DOC programmatic services
- ❖ Offer free transportation to all program activities for all participants
- ❖ Increase the capacity of the helping professional community to provide ethnic and gender sensitive family life education programs

An interesting trend within the process objectives listed under Goal Five was related to the “macro” approach taken by some programs. By macro, I’m referring to intervention efforts beyond the “one-to-one” efforts; rather, the efforts are designed to impact the overall system of care that deals with fathers. For example, one program expressed as an objective efforts to monitor policy issues that emerge at the state level in Indiana. This is a very progressive way of dealing with the issue of service accessibility. Another innovative program described their objective in terms of assisting the professional community “provide ethnic and gender sensitive family life education programs.” While yet another program reported that they would have monthly meetings with local service providers. Again, the common theme within these approaches is that the service community itself needs to be a point of intervention, rather than

just the client's knowledge and perceptions of services that are available.

Outcome Objectives for Goal Five. After subsequently examining the outcome objectives listed for Goal Five it became increasingly clear to this reviewer that perhaps some of the service providers did not have a clear understanding of the intentions behind Goal Five. Several programs seemed to interpret increasing service accessibility to fathers as simply providing the program's new service to the fathers, and success would be if the fathers completed this new service. Very few of the outcome objectives were stated in a way to reflect a sense that fathers would learn about the "system of care" that exists in a community that might be responsive to the special needs of fathers. The following list exemplifies the outcome objectives from those programs which seemed to understand this notion of increasing accessibility to services:

- ❖ Establishment of a policies and issues monitoring program concerning fatherhood
- ❖ Fathers will demonstrate increased usage of community resources through the use of coupons at the Beds & Britches, Etc. Boutique from two or more vendor sources 25% of visits by 12/99; 50% by 6/00.
- ❖ All fathers enrolled will obtain and maintain information on different service agencies
- ❖ To have a "Fathers' Directory" in which fathers can easily identify services available to them
- ❖ Increase service accessibility - Create ethnic & gender sensitive family life education programs

Examples of programs which seem to indicate a slight misunderstanding of the intentions behind Goal Five include the following:

- ❖ 80% of court ordered participants will negotiate and follow up on plan regarding visitation issues
- ❖ 90% of fathers enrolled in training will complete a 12-week parenting program
- ❖ To provide a better future and job
- ❖ 80% of fathers will make full child support payments, improve involvement, understanding, and discipline
- ❖ Increase fathers' involvement with their children
- ❖ 10% increase in Child Support
- ❖ 10% decrease in juvenile delinquency
- ❖ 80% of fathers participating in local programs will improve knowledge of and attitudes toward father roles and responsibilities

As these examples suggest, there seems to be considerable differing opinions on what constitutes increasing accessibility to services for fathers. However, I would like to draw attention to one particularly innovative outcome objective listed. In one program, fathers can actually earn vouchers that can be used in an agency-based "store" by using various community resources. This sounds like a wonderful way to reinforce the value that other services can offer fathers. These men can benefit in at least two ways, first they will receive the benefits from the community resource to which they were referred, and second, they receive the voucher that enables them to "purchase" an item that will provide concrete assistance in their lives.

Outcome Measures for Goal Five. Outcome measures for this Goal continued to reflect some basic misunderstandings regarding what is exactly meant by increasing service accessibility. Following are examples of programs which seemed to understand that increasing service accessibility meant assisting fathers gain access to resources that might be helpful to

them from throughout the community:

- ❖ Contact at least monthly with legislators' offices for updates about legislative issues concerning fathers and children
- ❖ Bi-weekly exploration of the internet and print material for current legislative policy and news
- ❖ Meet objective of distributing 1000 pieces of literature
- ❖ Success will be determined by the number of linkages and the results of those connections
- ❖ Documentation of fathers' contact time and work with other fathers who are enrolled in or have completed parenting training
- ❖ Staff will track the number of vendors sources utilized each visit through interview/identifying information on coupon
- ❖ Provide director with developing copies of the "Fathers' Directory", send a finished copy to FSSA

Unfortunately there were a significant number of programs that measured success not by increased accessibility to father-serving programs, but rather, as completion of the grant-funded program itself. There is really not much need to delineate these types of outcome measures as they only follow from the misunderstandings discussed in the sections on process and outcome objectives listed for Goal Five.

#### ***F. Goal Six: Improve Fathers' Parenting Skills***

Twenty nine (29) programs reported that they were making efforts to improve father's parenting skills. The following sections review the Process Objectives, Outcome Objectives, and Outcome Measures reported by these programs.

Process Objectives for Goal Six. A wide range of interventions were used by programs pursuing Goal Six. As has been stated in previous sections, certainly one of the strengths of the Indiana Restoring Fatherhood initiative has been the allowance for innovative and creative ways to address each of the 8 Goals highlighted in the initiative. Many programs attempting to improve fathers' parenting skills chose to provide some sort of formalized training program. (e.g., It's My Child Too program). Other programs focused on providing support mechanisms to assist with the psychological dimensions of fathering (e.g., father mentoring programs or support groups). The following process objectives demonstrate the range of service activities:

- ❖ Offer workshops consisting of 3 hour educational/training seminars about parenting and fatherhood skills and issues.
- ❖ Offer a father-oriented training over a 4-6 week period.
- ❖ Offer 12 sessions that will cover parenting education, making joint decisions, nutrition, child care, roles of family members, discipline, and goal setting for the family.
- ❖ Fathers referred will complete 8 1/2 hour sessions focusing on parenting skills, child development, and child care
- ❖ Staff will provide parenting training course consisting of 12 two-hour weekly sessions to fathers identified as minimally involved with their children. This course will provide comprehensive training in parenting, discipline, child development, and co-parenting for family life
- ❖ Offer 4 parent training programs and 2 support groups to parents and their children

- ❖ A program that pairs participant fathers with mentor fathers for weekly contact for at least 6 months. Partners work together to improve their self worth, discipline skills
- ❖ Program (10 hours classroom) to be offered 7 times a year with in-home hours as required. This will provide fathers with parenting education.
- ❖ Offer 3 Nonviolence classes focused on nonviolent fathering and personal and partnership roles; 24 classes to include fathering skills with other focus
- ❖ Offer a parenting course consisting of two, 2 hour training sessions per month on disciplining children, needs of children, communication
- ❖ Offer weekly, two hour work group gatherings, group activities, and applications to provide fathers with parenting education and co-relationship communication skills and increase their involvement with their children.
- ❖ Teach eight 2-hr training sessions each quarter to provide fathers with parenting education and co-parenting skills
- ❖ Offer a course consisting of 15 2-hour classes twice a year to discuss basic parenting and life skills. Assign a one-year “father-friend” and provide 12 2-hour customized support group sessions
- ❖ Parenting tips on communication and other issues in monthly newsletter to Dads who enroll in program

For the most part, the process objectives reported by programs focusing on Goal Six were directly connected with the goal of improving fathers’ parenting skills. Process objectives that were “off the mark” were definitely the exception rather than the rule within Goal Six and there is little need to delineate those objectives. However, since there was some degree of inconsistency in terms of the detail given within each process objective regarding *frequency*, *duration*, and specific *content* of programs, it is impossible to make any broad generalizations about these three areas. In spite of this inconsistency, it was evident that a considerable range in these three areas exist in the programs. For example training sessions varied in *duration* as programs ranged from ½ hour per session to 3 hours per session. Overall length and *frequency* of interventions reportedly ranged from one-time workshops to weekly sessions lasting as long as 12 weeks. Mentoring programs and support group efforts typically called for longer term commitments from fathers (as long as 1 year reported). Differences in *content* of training programs was particularly difficult to evaluate. In general, most programs reported content on basic parenting skills (e.g., discipline, parenting without violence), while other programs included content on more general relationship issues (e.g., communication, identifying the needs of others, co-parenting relationships, dealing with anger). A few programs also included content on specific issues related to increasing fathers’ understanding of basic child development.

Outcome Objectives for Goal Six. The outcome objectives related to Goal Six included a number of objectives that permit a degree of analysis to determine if the programs did improve fathers’ parenting skills. The following outcome objectives are examples of effective objectives:

- ❖ 80% of participants will complete training. 65% will show improved parenting skills
- ❖ 80% of fathers participating in local programs will improve knowledge of and attitudes toward father roles and responsibilities
- ❖ 90% of fathers who complete a 12-week parenting training will remain free of pejorative involvement with the child welfare system
- ❖ 80% of parents will show positive behavioral growth and knowledge in healthy childrearing practices
- ❖ 100% of referral fathers will complete program (10 hours classroom) and increase their effectiveness as parents

- ❖ Improve father's parenting skills, reliability, and raise their level of parental responsibility
- ❖ 80% of fathers will make full child support payments, improve involvement, understanding, and discipline
- ❖ Improve fathers' parenting skills - 20 fathers will increase the frequency of positive contacts with their children
- ❖ Fathers-to-be will be better prepared to care for their newborns and to communicate with and support their babies

The objectives listed above may be very helpful in determining the level of increase in father parenting skills that may occur as the result of interventions. Unfortunately, other outcome objectives were stated in terms in which success is to be determined simply by whether or not fathers attended the program. Following are some examples of these less effective outcome objectives:

- ❖ 80% of participants will complete 12 2 hour sessions on parenting and coparenting
- ❖ 75% of identified fathers will complete a three month, twice per month, 1.5 hour class on parenting/co-parenting to improve parenting skills
- ❖ 35 fathers will attend at least one work group gathering for the next 12 months.
- ❖ To provide a better future and job

These types of measures, as discussed in earlier sections, do not tell us much more than whether or not fathers completed programs. The objectives shed little light on what fathers gained from the training and support.

Outcome Measures for Goal Six. A number of programs expressed particularly strong outcome measurement plans for ways to determine if fathers' parenting skills improved. Example of very effective outcome measures are as follows:

- ❖ Pre and post tests evaluating parenting/ fathering skills will be administered by the facilitators to the fathers at the 1st and sessions
- ❖ The participants will be given a typical test situation using "Teach me" baby. The participants will be given various scenarios and decide how they will respond. Successful application will determine impact of sessions
- ❖ Prior to program offering, collect baseline data from father program participants regarding knowledge of and attitudes toward fatherhood roles and responsibilities; at completion of program, collect data from father program participants on same content area
- ❖ Three and six month follow ups by mail and phone will provide information about encounters with child welfare agencies
- ❖ Fathers will complete pre-and post tests Parenting Stress Index, Attitudes Towards Parenting Questionnaire, Steps to Safe and Effective Discipline Checksheet. Participants will complete an evaluation of training form to provide feedback to program staff
- ❖ Parents will complete pre-mid, and post & 6 months follow up self ratings of behavioral changes using the Parent Learning Profile & pre and post objective evaluations of knowledge of child development and healthy child care practices
- ❖ Fathers to be pre- and post tested each session of program, an Adult Adolescent Parenting Inventory evaluation will be given before and after sessions to evaluate knowledge gained and attitude change concerning parenting. Observations of father-child interaction periods will be noted as well as observation at in-home

- visits, and co-parent responses when witnessed. Final written objectives to be followed up on by father at end of program classes
- ❖ Participants will be administered pre and post tests. At the end of the course sessions, facilitator will test fathers over course material
- ❖ Fathers will complete self-report surveys at their initial meetings and quarterly thereafter regarding their knowledge and perception of parenting skills, communication skills, and relationship skills
- ❖ Have noncustodial fathers complete pre- and post-tests regarding involvement in children's lives, understanding of child development, and discipline. Fathers will also complete training evaluations
- ❖ Pre and post tests to evaluate skills & knowledge learned
- ❖ Survey questionnaires are completed prior to program and upon completion (pre and post). Improved parenting skills will benefit individuals with their children and with the students we serve

This reviewer was impressed by the number of programs that proposed to use some form of pre test post test designs to determine program effectiveness (n=14). Several programs were quite specific in regards to the exact instrumentation that they planned on using (e.g., Adolescent Parenting Inventory, Parenting Stress Index, Attitudes Towards Parenting Questionnaire, Steps to Safe and Effective Discipline, etc). This type of information will be especially useful when it is time to develop an evaluation tool that can be used across all programs within the Restoring Fatherhood initiative.

In addition to the use of pre and post test measures, some programs also included "observational" and "interview" data. Of particular note is the example of the program that uses the "Teach Me Baby" to evaluate fathers' progress in applying concepts learned in training to a mock parenting situation. It will be quite interesting to see how this program compiles and analyzes the results from these in-class applications.

### ***G. Goal Seven: Improve Co-Parenting Relationships***

Twenty-seven (27) programs reported that they were making efforts to improve father's parenting skills. The following sections review the Process Objectives, Outcome Objectives, and Outcome Measures reported by these programs

Process Objectives for Goal Seven. After reviewing six program goal areas it is possible to see numerous areas of program overlap. Essentially, programs that reported they were pursuing Goal 1 and Goal Six were more likely to also report that they were pursuing Goal Seven. It is quite logical that as programs attempt to increase father time with their children (Goal One) and improve father parenting skills (Goal Six) that these same programs would attempt to address issues of "co-parenting." As was noted in Section I of this evaluation, nearly 70% of those served by the programs within the Indiana Restoring Fatherhood initiative were not the fathers. As stated earlier, this makes a great deal of sense as fathers do not enact their roles in isolation. Well-informed efforts to increase father involvement will be more effective if they address others in the father's life, such as the children themselves and the mother of the child. In this vein, many of the process and outcome objectives begin to overlap as well. Many programs report the same process and outcome objectives addressing different Goals. This can be quite understandable and appropriate at times, while at other times it can cloud the differences that do exist from one goal to the next. The following process objectives reflect some of the ways that programs can handle this overlapping of goals effectively:



- ❖ All couples in the county with dependent children are required to attend a session (2 hours) "Caught in the Middle" the effect the divorce will have on their children and their need for responsible communication
- ❖ This course will provide comprehensive training in parenting discipline, child development, and co-parenting for family life. The presence of both male and female facilitators will offer the opportunity to role play situations in which parents frequently disagree on child rearing specifics
- ❖ staff will provide parenting training course consisting of 12 two-hour weekly sessions to fathers identified as minimally involved with their children. This course will provide comprehensive training in parenting, discipline, child development, and co-parenting for family life
- ❖ Program (10 hours classroom) to be offered 7 times a year with in-home hours as required. This will provide fathers with parenting education, better communication skills, and better co-parenting relationships that will increase fathers' involvement with their children
- ❖ Offer 2 hours, ten week group sessions for fathers to establish paternity rights and improved co-parenting relationships
- ❖ Ten semi-monthly group sessions will occur with fathers and then mothers featuring various activities and courses
- ❖ Teach eight 2-hr training sessions each quarter to provide fathers with parenting education and co-parenting skills.

Outcome Objectives for Goal Seven. Despite the fact that 27 programs stated that they were attempting to improve co-parenting relationships, very few actually framed process and outcome objectives that would enable one to evaluate progress in coparenting relationships. Following are the exceptional outcome objectives that actually will provide some level of information regarding an increase in coparenting relationships:

- ❖ 40% of fathers will have established paternity rights and improved co-parenting relationships
- ❖ All fathers enrolled and the mothers will engage in co-parenting activities/skills
- ❖ 100% of noncustodial fathers & custodial mothers will improve their co-parenting relationship
- ❖ 20% mothers will participate with fathers, 100% on contact with fathers
- ❖ Improve coparenting relationships - Mothers and fathers will learn to create and maintain stable, functional, & satisfying families
- ❖ Between July 1, 1999 and August 30, 1999 and 45 of the already established minority and low income fathers (public housing residents) will demonstrate a concern for fatherhood, co-parenting and family togetherness at a community jazz festival

The majority of outcome objectives reported by programs do not specifically address improvement in coparenting, for example:

- ❖ To provide a better future and job
- ❖ 70% of identified teen fathers will graduate high school or equivalent
- ❖ 100% of the identified fathers will learn and implement 25 activities to do with their kids
- ❖ 80% of fathers participating in local programs will improve knowledge of and attitudes toward father roles and responsibilities
- ❖ Increase fathers' involvement with their children

- ❖ 35 fathers will attend at least one work group gathering for the next 12 months.  
7 fathers will maintain 100% attendance at all work group gatherings in the next 12 months
- ❖ Provide fathering training

As can be seen, some of these objectives would seem to offer little information as to whether coparenting relationships improved. Other objectives reported (but not listed here) did state that training would be offered to improve co-parenting but there was no specification as to the type of training and the degree of improvement that would be expected. It is somewhat unfortunate that process and outcome objectives were not more specific to coparenting relationships.

Outcome Measures for Goal Seven. As can be expected, if most of the process and outcome objectives did not actually address issues related to coparenting, then it is quite likely that outcome measures will not address coparenting issues as well. First, let's examine outcome measures that might prove helpful in determining improvement in coparenting relationships:

- ❖ Parents who participate with mediation and father corps when ordered by the court return to court less, reflecting an improvement in co-parenting relationships
- ❖ Fathers will provide examples of co-parenting difficulties encountered during enrollment in parent training. Fathers will complete pre- and post tests - Parenting Stress Index, Attitudes Toward Parenting Questionnaire, Steps to Safe and Effective Discipline Checklist. Three and six month follow ups by mail and phone will provide information about fathers' co-parenting relationships with other parent
- ❖ Observations of father-child interaction periods will be noted as well as observation at in-home visits, and co-parent responses when witnessed
- ❖ Have noncustodial father and custodial mother complete pre and post tests regarding quality of their coparenting relationship
- ❖ Coordinator will record and report contacts with mothers and their program participation. Coordinator will also administer pre/post questionnaire related to mothers' and fathers' perceptions of their cooperation in their parenting of children
- ❖ Participating parents and professionals will complete evaluative written surveys and self-assessment upon completion of trainings and workshops. Agency staff will provide anecdotal data to measure changes in parents abilities and skills
- ❖ Coalition will evaluate the level of change in knowledge concerning teenage fathers and renewing families with a community jazz assessment survey

These few programs that made efforts to address coparenting did a very good job of putting forth workable plans to evaluate improvement in coparenting. An interesting mix of pre/post test measures, observations, self-report, and surveys were mentioned as viable ways to measure coparenting improvement. Some programs even reported that they will elicit information from both the father and mother of the children. This is reminiscent of the use of "triangulation" that was discussed in an earlier section. In reviewing the other outcome objectives within Goal Seven, I would simply suggest that programs consider adopting outcome measures similar to the ones listed above.

#### ***H. Goal 8: Increase the High School Graduation Rate of Teen Fathers***

Eleven (11) programs reported that they were making efforts to increase the high school graduation rate of teen fathers. The following sections review the Process Objectives, Outcome

## Objectives, and Outcome Measures reported by these programs

Process Objectives for Goal Eight. Programs reported a variety of interventions aimed at increasing the graduation rate of teen fathers. Some of these programs dealt directly with the problem of graduation by providing educational assistance (e.g., GED training, tutoring, career counseling, mentoring, etc), while others addressed the connection between their need for education and a career with their responsibilities as a father. The following objectives reflect one or both of these tactics:

- ❖ Provide fatherhood/co-parenting information to referrals from alternative school, adult education, social services, & judicial systems, and general public, addressing above outcomes for parents. Via classes, tutoring, mentoring, grade equivalency support, counseling, individual and group information and referral
- ❖ Use lectures, activities, mentoring, and workshops to stress direct correlation between level of education and ability to provide for offspring
- ❖ Coordinator will monitor and support fathers' active participation in their appropriate educational and/or vocational program
- ❖ To provide employment training and skill for parents and youth
- ❖ Counseling, tutorials services and GED preparation will be provided
- ❖ From February to June, strongly encourage taking the GED test and attaining gainful employment by going to academic sessions 3 days a week for one hour and vocational grooming sessions for one hour. Participants will receive a token after each class attended to be applied towards the reimbursement of the GED exam fee (\$35). Participants must attend half of the 35 sessions to have the full amount reimbursed.

As with other process objectives stated within Goals 1 - 8, there were a few reported within Goal 8 that seemingly had little to do with the stated goal. Fortunately these were the exceptions within this goal and do not merit delineation within the report at this point in time.

Outcome Objectives for Goal Eight. Outcome objectives for Goal Eight were typically reported in a manner that suggest that the data collected might prove valuable in determining the degree of improvement in high school graduation rates that occurred as a result of these interventions. Following is a list of exemplary outcome objectives:

- ❖ 50% of the parents will earn a diploma and receive job training and placement to be able to pay child support
- ❖ Increased high school graduation rates (or GED) of young fathers
- ❖ To build self-esteem, inform and improve academic skills of teen fathers
- ❖ 100% fathers will be enrolled in high school or GED programs until success
- ❖ 80% of boys identified will remain in school or require a GED
- ❖ Between 9/1/99 - 1/31/00 - 45 (100%) of the already established teen fathers will complete six GED preparatory readiness sessions and targeting vocational employment
- ❖ Between 2/1/00 and 6/1/00 - 500 minority and low income individuals (public housing residents) will be recruited and partnered with a collaboration team of academic and grooming counselors to complete their GED and be employed gainfully

As with the process objectives, there were a few objectives that seemed out of place within this Goal. Again, these types of objectives were the exception rather than the rule.

Outcome Measures for Goal Eight. The outcome measures listed within Goal Eight were typically presented in a manner that was clear and concise. The following are exemplary outcome measures:

- ❖ The number of diplomas will determine impact of learning
- ❖ Test scores on G.E.D. test will also determine impact of program Participants will complete questionnaire indicating whether or not the training has helped in any way.
- ❖ Record the number of job placements made as a result of the training
- ❖ Number of men passing the GED test
- ❖ Coordinator will record and report fathers' progress in their assigned educational and/or vocational program
- ❖ Give a pre-test and a final exam to determine their progress. Each student is required to have 90% attendance and a 70% or higher passing grade on final exam to receive their certifications
- ❖ Attendance records and grades will be maintained. Records of those completing a GED will also be maintained. Graduation records will be kept for all young males in their senior year.
- ❖ Coalition will report the results and evaluation of the 45 teen fathers to be enrolled in the GED program, provide referral services as appropriate, and conduct follow up activities to determine level of increased success on the GED post test

It was encouraging to see programs "keep it simple" when it came to measuring outcomes in this section. Essentially, program recognized that the easiest way to measure success is to count how many program participants actually graduate or complete a GED. Since there is a good deal of consistency in how programs are measuring success in Goal Eight, it may be quite possible to eventually compare and contrast programs.

#### **IV. Summary of Phase I Findings and Implications for Phase II**

##### **A. Areas of Strength in Data Collection Efforts**

The review of the information provided for Phase I revealed several areas of strength within the current data collection strategies of funded programs. The strengths are as follows:

- ❖ A large number of programs report using pre and post test measures to evaluate outcomes
- ❖ Many programs report collecting data from multiple sources (triangulation of data sources); programs collected information from fathers, their children, the child's mother, other professionals, and other relevant individuals
- ❖ Many programs also report using multiple methods of data collection (triangulation of data collection methods). Programs report using such methods as: surveys, questionnaires, interviews, observations, standardized tests, etc...
- ❖ A large number of programs report that they are able to complete a cost-benefit analysis of their program

- ❖ There is a potential for a relatively large data pool considering the number of individuals served by this initiative (nearly 20,000)
- ❖ There seems to be a great deal of diversity (race, income, geographic location) within the fathers served. This type of diversity will strengthen efforts to generalize the findings from outcome research
- ❖ A few programs report the use of standardized instruments to measure outcomes. The use of standardized measures can increase the validity of findings.
- ❖ A few programs engage in observational methods to collect data. When this occurs in the client's natural environment an even stronger case can be made for program effectiveness
- ❖ A large number of programs are collecting relevant demographic information on their clients. This type of data helps to identify at-risk populations that can guide future funding directives.
- ❖ In most cases, programs are framing their process and outcome objectives in a manner that could lead to effective evaluation
- ❖ FSSA provides reporting forms to help standardize the data collection reporting process.

#### ***B. Gaps in Information: Looking Toward Phase II***

Despite the numerous strengths noted in the collection of data, there are significant gaps in information that exist. Some of these will be addressed in Phase II of this research project, while others are long term issues that will require other actions by FSSA. First, we will consider the gaps that exist which will be addressed within Phase II (These issues are part of the *Interview Protocol* that can be found in the Appendix):

- ❖ What is the exact nature of the evaluation methods used by programs? (e.g., pre and post tests, surveys, questionnaires, etc.). More information is needed regarding:
  - (a) What instruments are used to measure the variables in question?
  - (b) What is done with this data after it is collected?
  - (c) Is this information available in a summary report (or other form) that could be used by FSSA?
  - (d) What assistance might be needed to analyze data that is collected?
- ❖ Although related to the above issue, it is important to learn more about the use of any standardized evaluation instruments by programs. To what degree do programs use standardized evaluation instruments?
- ❖ What input (if any) do clients have in the designing of evaluation processes? What benefits might be gained by finding ways to include clients in the planning and evaluation process?
- ❖ To what degree are current assessment procedures used as "formative"

evaluation opportunities. Formative evaluation refers to a type of assessment that is geared more toward using information to make positive changes in a program versus a one-time measure of whether a program is “successful.”

- ❖ Are there examples of “anecdotal” (we researchers often use the term, “qualitative”) evidence of the benefits of these programs?
- ❖ What are the views of agency personnel regarding the Restoring Fatherhood initiative and the degree of support (financial, consultive, etc.) they have received from FSSA?
- ❖ What suggestions do agency personnel have for creating a standardized evaluation tool for all programs funded through FSSA?
- ❖ What suggestion do agency personnel have for improving the Restoring Fatherhood initiative?

At this point I would point out that it is quite possible that while in the process of collecting the answers to the above questions, additional questions will emerge. This is the nature of interviewing. Therefore this list, and the enclosed *Interview Protocol* should be viewed as only a “tentative” list of areas that will be explored during the agency visits.

It was mentioned that there are gaps in information that exist that will not be addressed in Phase II of this research project, rather they may require other actions by FSSA. The issues are as follows:

- ❖ Improvements should be considered in the reporting tool used by FSSA. This was covered in an earlier section, however it bears repeating. The current *Work Plan* tool seems inadequate in terms of the space that is allowed for programs to report process and outcome objectives as well as outcome measures. This “space crunch” makes it difficult to see (and thus creates a “gap in information”) the connection from process objective, to outcome objective, to outcome measure.
- ❖ What ongoing training can be offered to assist programs continue to increase their ability to conduct quality program evaluation? I would add that I attended part of an inservice in Fall 1999 provided by FSSA that was designed to assist programs with this issue. I found it to be very helpful. I would hope that these types of programs can continue. It would seem critical that this type of inservice occur once a standardized evaluation tool is formulated. Program personnel will need training in how to administer and collect data using the new evaluation tool.
- ❖ What mechanism can be put in place that would allow FSSA to systematically obtain relevant evaluative data that is collected by funded programs? The current reporting tools provide some information, but not in-depth information about such things as the findings from pre and post test evaluations, or examples of quality “anecdotal” information. Perhaps this will occur as the result of standardized evaluation tool that will be created. However, even with this tool programs still may collect data in other forms that could be useful to FSSA.
- ❖ What can be done to encourage programs to collect more extensive

demographic information? As was noted earlier, it would be very helpful to gather more extensive information on client characteristics in order to develop a database to increase our ability to identify populations at risk. Perhaps this will just become part of the required information within the standardized evaluation tool to be developed.

## **V. Final Comments**

Although the bulk of this report has focused on examining the data collection procedure of the various programs funded by the Restoring Fatherhood initiative, it is important to note that the data that was evaluated within the reports also tells us something about the “quality” of the programs within this initiative. The following represents some of the strengths of the programs (beyond mere data collection processes):

- ❖ The funding process of FSSA allowed for communities to develop innovative programs that were designed to meet local needs. Rather than dictating a “one size fits all” philosophy, FSSA permitted a large degree of freedom for programs to be creative in program design.
- ❖ Funding also allowed for the flip-side of the first point, that is, several programs decided that exemplary approaches existed and were worth duplicating across several sites within the state. The most obvious example is the program originated by Purdue entitled “It’s My Child Too.” This program was replicated in several different sites. Essentially, if something is found that has been proven to be effective, then there is no reason to deny funding to other communities wishing to try the same approach.
- ❖ Programs served diverse populations. Some programs focused on young fathers, others on prevention of teen fathering, while others looked at the special needs of the divorced father or unmarried, nonresidential father. Diversity also was evident in terms of the race and socioeconomic status of those served. Several programs specialized in meeting the special needs of the African American family. This was certainly one of the major strengths of the initiative.
- ❖ Programs included individuals other than the fathers. This was mentioned several times throughout the report but it seems worth mentioning again within the strengths section. As stated earlier, the provision of services to other people in fathers’ lives provides an effective way to educate those who directly affect the way in which a father is able to enact his role. For example, programs that aimed interventions at the child’s mother recognized the historic “gatekeeping” role that mothers have played between father and child. Successful attempts to increase father involvement, father financial support, etc., will stand a better chance of success if the child’s mother is made part of the solution.
- ❖ Many programs expanded on the traditional “breadwinning” role of father to focus on increasing the nurturing and supportive capacity of men. Programs seeking to increase father involvement with children will probably experience higher levels of success if they can tap into the strengths of fathers. This holds true for programs which hope to increase the financial support of fathers to their children,

as research as consistently links financial support to levels of other types of involvement between father and child.

These are just a few of the numerous strengths that were identified within the programs funded by the Indiana Restoring Fatherhood initiative. The information to be gathered during Phase II of this evaluation will undoubtedly reveal additional positive points that could not be documented by FSSA reporting tools.



## **APPENDIX**

# Indiana Restoring Fatherhood Initiative Evaluation

## Agency Interview Protocol

### Phase I

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#### ***Questions for Agency Personnel:***

1. Explain the exact nature of the evaluation methods used by your program?
  - (a) What instruments are used to measure the variables in question?
  - (b) What is done with this data after it is collected? How is it used?
  - (c) Is this information available in a summary report (or other form) that could be used by FSSA?
  - (d) What assistance might be needed to analyze data that is collected?
2. To what degree does your program use standardized evaluation instruments? What standardized instruments do you use?
3. What input (if any) do clients have in the designing of evaluation processes? Do you see any benefits that might be gained by finding ways to include clients in the planning and evaluation process?
4. To what degree are current assessment procedures used as “formative” evaluation opportunities, that is, do you collect information to make positive ongoing changes to your program versus a one-time measure of whether your program is “successful.”
5. Do you have examples of “anecdotal” evidence regarding the ways in which clients are helped by your program? For example, do you have any client “success stories?”
6. What barriers exist to your ability to track various types of data
  - ❖ demographic information
  - ❖ participant analysis
  - ❖ cost benefit analysis
  - ❖ miscellaneous client behaviors (attendance, program completion, etc.)
7. What are the your views (agency personnel) regarding the Restoring Fatherhood initiative and the degree of support (financial, consultive, etc.) you have received from FSSA?
8. What suggestions do you (agency personnel) have for creating a standardized evaluation tool for all programs funded through FSSA?
9. What suggestion do you (agency personnel) have for improving the Restoring Fatherhood initiative?

# **Indiana Restoring Fatherhood Initiative Evaluation**

## **Client Interview Protocol**

### **Phase I**

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#### ***Questions for Clients:***

1. How has the program helped you? Can you give some examples from your life?
2. What was the most significant part of the program for you?
3. What suggestions do you have for ways to improve the program?
4. How have your views on fathering changed as a result of program participation?
5. If applicable, how has the program affected your relationship with your child(ren)?
6. If applicable, what more could be done for fathers in your situation?