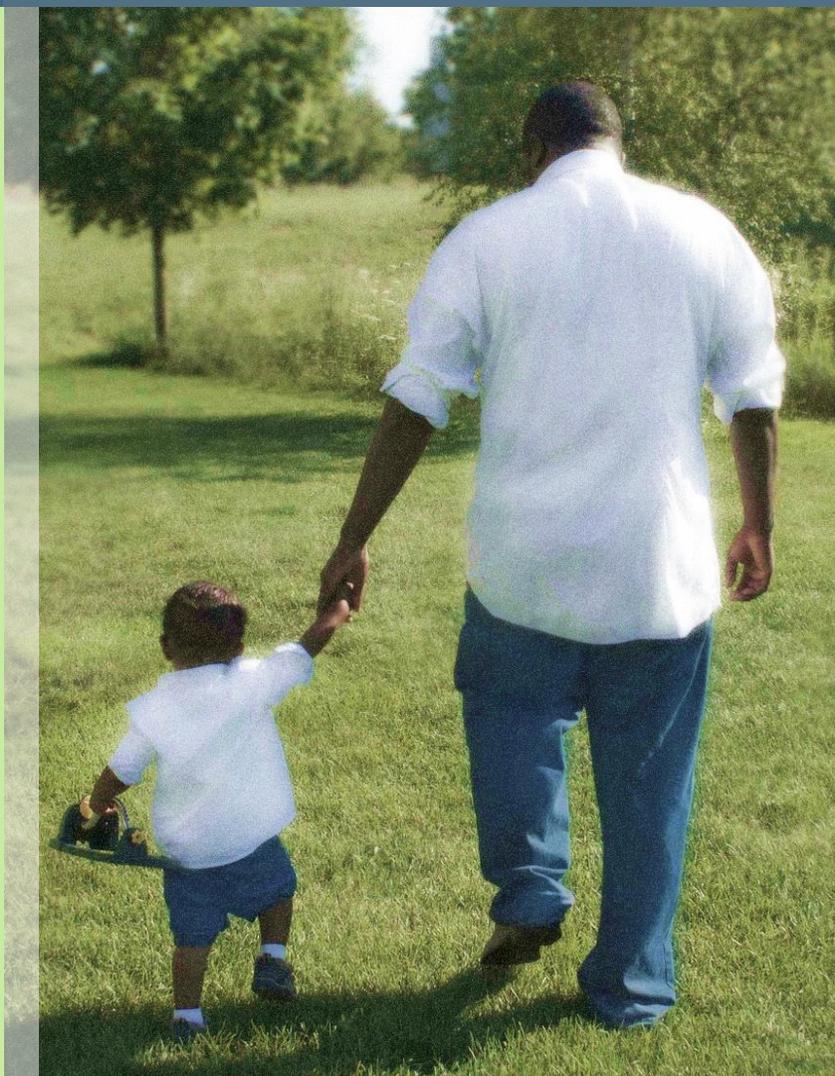


Final Report

Healthy Homes Mississippi

Fatherhood Initiative



Produced for the
Mississippi Department of Human Services
Division of Family Foundation and Support

By
Hornby Zeller Associates, Inc.

In conjunction with
The Social Science Research Center at
Mississippi State University

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By
Hornby Zeller Associates, Inc.
48 Fourth St, Suite 300
Troy, NY 12180
(518) 273-1614
www.hornbyzeller.com
Helaine Hornby, M.A.
Erin Whitham, M.S.W.
Matthew Powers, M.A.

In conjunction with
The Social Science Research Center at
Mississippi State University
<http://ssrc.msstate.edu/>
Connie Baird-Thomas, Ph.D.

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I. Executive Summary

The Mississippi Department of Human Services, Division of Family Foundation and Support, was awarded a federal grant with funds authorized by the Affordable Care Act (ACA) to enhance its *Healthy Homes Mississippi* program (HHM) by adding a fatherhood component. HHM provides comprehensive home visiting services to families in at-risk communities to improve maternal and child health; improve family protective factors; improve children's cognitive, social, and emotional growth; and support healthy parent-child relationships. The purpose of the fatherhood component is to increase the involvement of fathers in the lives of their infants and young children.

Evaluation Design

The evaluation of the Fatherhood Initiative was carried out by Hornby Zeller Associates, Inc. (HZA) in collaboration with the Social Science Research Center at Mississippi State University. The evaluation utilized a mixed methods, quasi-experimental design, collecting both qualitative and quantitative data to answer the evaluation questions.

Seven evaluation questions were developed to measure the extent to which the Fatherhood Initiative achieved its outcomes and the factors that impacted fathers' involvement in the program and their children's lives. The populations targeted by the evaluation were Family Support Workers (FSWs) and their supervisors (FSSs), fathers of families involved in the *Healthy Home Mississippi* (HHM) program and the mothers of those children.

Evaluation Questions

1. Have Family Support Workers increased the number of mothers willing to involve fathers in their children's lives?
2. Have Family Support Workers' attitudes and approaches to engaging male caregivers changed as a result of the fatherhood program enhancement?
3. Does participation in the *24/7 Dad* curriculum produce improvements in the fathers' parenting knowledge and skills?
4. What factors are associated with obtaining a signed consent form for the father to participate in HHM visits?
 - a. Demographic factors of the father: age, race
 - b. Marital factors of the father: marital status, total number of children, number of children in this household,
 - c. Economic and employment factors of father: employment status, living situation, income
5. What factors are associated with a father's enrolling in the *24/7 Dad* curriculum?
 - a. Fatherhood Coach: whether contacted, number of contacts
 - b. Participation in community and family events
 - c. Change in Individual Family Support Plans to include fathers
 - d. Contact with children

6. What factors are associated with increased contact of fathers with their children?
 - a. Number of *24/7 Dad* classes attended
 - b. Participation in home visits
 - c. Gains in skills and knowledge as a result of *24/7 Dad*
 - d. Fulfilling activities in Individual Family Support Plan
7. How well do the policies and procedures of the Father Component of *Healthy Homes Mississippi* (FCHHM) align with the value of involving fathers in the lives of their infants and toddlers?

Overall Findings

The results of the evaluation show that participation in the Healthy Homes Mississippi Fatherhood Initiative, which included exposure to the *24/7 Dad* curriculum, produced little change in staff members' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors toward fathers, and little change in Family Support Plans completed with the mothers to reflect increased involvement of fathers either in activities with the children or participation in home visiting itself. A review of the HHM policies and procedures found that in many cases the reference to including fathers in family support was implied in Mississippi's policies but not made explicit, thus de-emphasizing father involvement as a priority.

The Fatherhood Coach was the only staff person dedicated to engaging fathers. He had to serve the entire multi-county initiative, making his efforts thinly spread. While there were challenges in engaging fathers in the *24/7 Dad* program, individual case studies showed that those who did receive coaching had positive experiences. Qualitative analysis of Fatherhood Coach interviews revealed that the primary factors impacting enrollment in *24/7 Dad* were the Coach's participation in home visits and whether or not fathers already had regular contact with their child(ren). Nonetheless, during the project period the number of fathers consenting to participate in the home visiting program decreased in comparison to the previous two years.

There were changes in program leadership and even the auspices under which it was administered during the Fatherhood Initiative, moving from the state Department of Human Services to Mississippi State University and then back to the state. The training provided to FSWs and FSSs was not repeated after the first time it was delivered. The Fatherhood Coach was the most obvious change agent in the Initiative once the original Director left, but one individual was charged with serving all of the involved counties. His efforts were spread thin. The Initiative attempted to alter a pattern of behavior that is deeply ingrained. The efforts were not sufficiently robust to produce changes during a short period of time.

Successes, Challenges, and Lessons Learned

The primary challenges of this evaluation were the low number of respondents to the Fathering Skills survey as a result of low participation in the program and missing data in the home visiting program's data management system. However, the mixed method approach planned from the outset enabled evaluators to gain information qualitatively when quantitative approaches were unavailable. A great deal of effort went into the outreach to fathers, in particular, which ultimately allowed the team to extract valuable insights.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the research, the evaluation team has several recommendations for future work involving fathers in the home visiting program:

- Revise Mississippi HHM's Policies and Procedures to clearly reflect that increasing fathers' involvement in children's lives and the HHM program are priorities.
- Train all staff in father-friendly concepts and practices, and provide adequate staff resources for fatherhood programming.
- Increase the number of Fatherhood Coaches and/or reduce the number of counties one serves so that more time can be spent with each dad and performing community outreach activities.
- Create more realistic expectations about how long and how much effort it takes to produce changes in family relationships that yield greater involvement of fathers.
- Improve data collection systems to include information on all fathers of children whose mothers participate in HHM. Provide a database component to the existing system for tracking *24/7 Dad* clients.

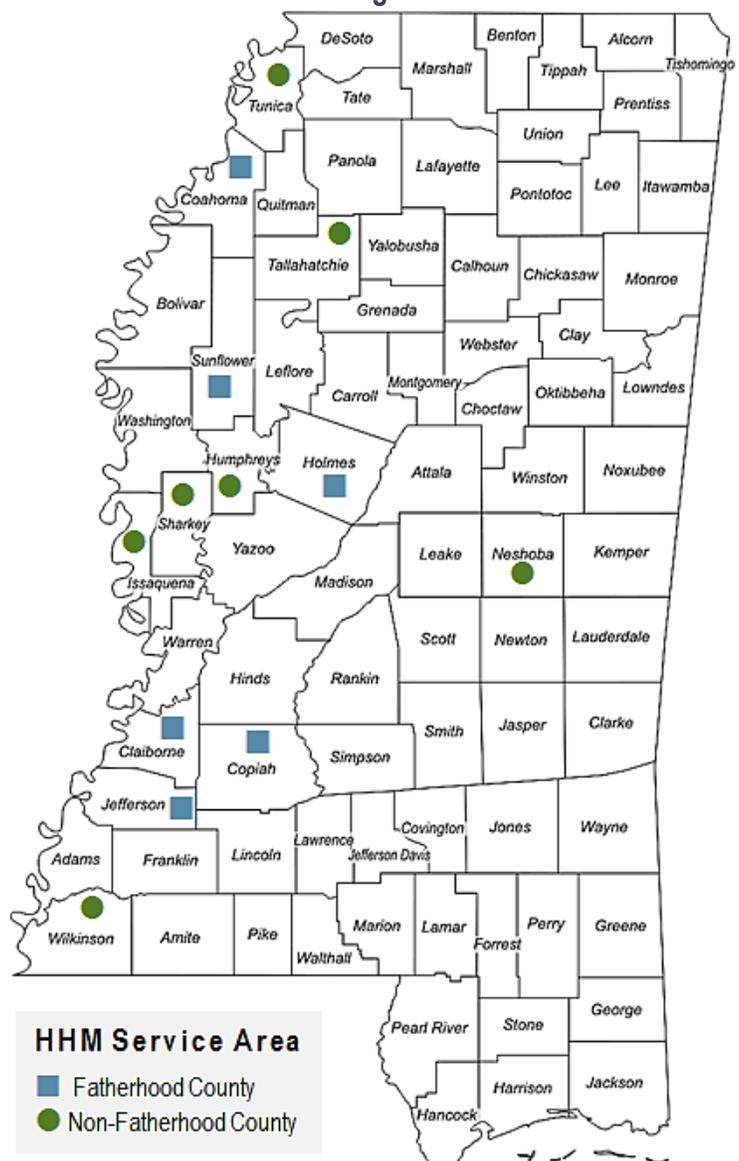
II. Evaluation Design

The Mississippi Department of Human Services, Division of Family Foundation and Support, was awarded a federal grant with funds authorized by the Affordable Care Act (ACA) to enhance its *Healthy Homes Mississippi* program (HHM) by adding a fatherhood component. HHM provides comprehensive home visiting services to families in at-risk communities to improve maternal and child health; improve family protective factors; improve children’s cognitive, social, and emotional growth; and support healthy parent-child relationships. HHM employs the *Healthy Families America* model and complies with all MIECHV benchmark reporting requirements as a condition of its federal funding. The purpose of the fatherhood component is to increase the involvement of fathers in the lives of their infants and young children.

Mississippi crafted a multi-faceted intervention to engage fathers in the lives of their children. The theory of change was that increasing the involvement of fathers is contingent upon making the mothers amenable to their involvement; providing activities in the community to engage the fathers, and then providing dads a structured curriculum (*24/7 Dad*) designed to enhance attitudes and skills in how to be a good father. Central Office and Family Support Worker staff were trained in the *24/7 Dad* curriculum to understand and convey fatherhood principles to mothers enrolled in the home visiting program. A Fatherhood Coach was hired to engage and provide the structured *24/7 Dad* curriculum to fathers to teach them how to change their attitudes and skills, and to help them become better, more engaged dads.

Specific counties within the HHM service area were targeted to participate in the Initiative (as shown in Figure 2-1). Fatherhood counties are those in which a subset of Family Support Workers (FSWs) and Family Support Supervisors (FSSs) received *24/7 Dad* training and where the Fatherhood Coach worked with fathers.

Figure 2-1. HHM Service Area



The evaluation of the Fatherhood Initiative was carried out by Hornby Zeller Associates, Inc. (HZA) in collaboration with the Social Science Research Center at Mississippi State University. The evaluation utilized a mixed methods, quasi-experimental design, collecting both qualitative and quantitative data from program participants and a comparison group when possible to answer the evaluation questions. Both evaluators participated in the evaluation planning process, with HZA leading the quantitative data collection and analysis components and Mississippi State University leading the qualitative work.

Evaluation Questions and Study Design

Seven evaluation questions were developed to measure the extent to which the Fatherhood Initiative achieved its outcomes and the factors that impacted fathers' involvement. Below is an overview of the design used to evaluate each evaluation question, as well as the tools, data sources, the sampling and analysis plan, and review of any changes made to the analysis plan during the course of the evaluation. See Figure 2-2 on the following page for the logic model for the project.

1. Have Family Support Workers increased the number of mothers willing to involve fathers in their children's lives?

Design: A mixed method approach was used to analyze the degree to which FSWs increased the number of mothers willing to involve fathers in their children's lives. The data source was the Family Wise Data Management System, which is used by FSWs during home visits to enter information on families in the service area. Individual Family Support Plan (IFSP) goals involving fathers and fathers' presence at home visits were the measures used to answer the evaluation question.

Sampling and Analysis Plan: All IFSPs completed by mothers in the home visiting service area with at least one goal identified were included in the analysis of IFSP goals. Similarly, all records from home visits were analyzed to determine the number of fathers present at home visits and their involvement with children. Only those records with dates that occurred outside the study time frame (see timeline) or did not have a date were excluded.

A qualitative analysis was conducted of IFSP goals to determine what proportion had a goal that included a father, with goals coded into categories. The number of goals involving fathers and the number of visits with a father present among two sets of comparison groups were analyzed. The first comparison was made between those families who had an FSW who had been trained in *24/7 Dad* and those who did not. The second was made between those families who lived in a Fatherhood county and those who did not.

Timeline: Data were examined and compared during two distinct time periods: a two-year baseline period (July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2015) and the project period (July 1, 2015–September 30, 2016).

Figure 2-2. Logic Model

Theory of Change: Increasing the involvement of fathers is contingent upon making the mothers amenable to their involvement; providing activities in the community to engage the fathers and then providing a structured curriculum (*24/7 Dad*) designed to enhance attitudes and skills in how to be a good father.

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Intermediate Outcomes	Long-term Outcomes
MIECHV Expansion Grant obtained by Mississippi				Increased involvement of fathers with their children, as evidenced by increased visits, increased participation in events (Family Wise)
Counties selected				
Family support workers designated	HHM staff train Family Support Workers in 24/7 Dad to convey fatherhood principles	Mothers' IFSPs have a goal to involve fathers in child's life	More mothers have a goal of involving the father in the child's life (Family Wise) Family Support Worker attitudes and behaviors toward involving fathers improves (Staff Survey)	
24/7 Dad curriculum selected	Central Office HHM staff trained in 24/7 Dad curriculum			Increased parent support for child's learning and development; improved parent-child relationship
Fatherhood Coach hired	Fathers meet with Fatherhood Coach through outreach efforts	Fathers attend community events	Fathers who consent to participate in HHM increases as documented (Family Wise)	
	Community events held to attract fathers	Fathers participate in 24/7 Dad curriculum Fathers take pre-/post test	Fathers complete 24/7 Dad curriculum Fathers' knowledge of parenting and behavior management skills improve (Fathering Survey)	
			Fathers' attitudes toward child and family involvement improve in these domains: self-awareness, caring for self, fathering skills, parenting skills, and relationship skills (Fathering Survey)	
HZA and MS State evaluation contract awarded	Data collection tools developed Staff survey administered HZA accesses Family Wise extracts Focus groups with FSWs conducted Treatment and comparison groups identified Community events documented	2 focus groups completed with at least 10 participants Staff survey completed with results analyzed to measure staff attitudes, behavior and bias	Staff increase behavior to involve dads in home visiting activities Staff attitudes toward fatherhood involvement improves Staff bias toward fathers diminishes	

2. Have Family Support Workers' attitudes and approaches to engaging male caregivers changed as a result of the fatherhood program enhancement?

Design: A mixed method approach was taken to assess FSWs' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors toward fathers. The two data sources used to address this question were the **HHM staff survey**, administered at both the start and after FSWs were trained in *24/7 Dad* and three sets of **focus groups** with FSWs.

Tools: The **HHM staff survey** was developed from the National Fatherhood Initiative and the Dakota Father Friendly Assessment.¹ Consisting of 52 questions on a four-point Likert-style agreement scale, the survey was administered both at the beginning of the program, before staff were trained in *24/7 Dad*, and after the training. The survey measured staff's personal experiences with father figures, demographic information, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors towards fathers, and the degree to which state leadership and supervisors employ father-friendly practices. The survey was administered online by HZA.

Interview guides for each of the three sets of **focus groups** were developed in collaboration with HHM program staff. Topics included FSWs' perspectives on fathers' roles in children's lives, mothers' involvement of fathers in parenting and the home visits, and FSWs' approaches to involve fathers in HHM and parenting.

Sampling and Analysis Plan: All FSWs and Family Support Supervisors (FSSs) working in the home visiting program were included in the sampling frame for both the staff surveys and focus groups. The **staff survey** analysis team conducted descriptive analyses on the demographic and family experiences survey measures. A factor analysis was performed to validate the existence of the attitude, belief and behavior domains and the assignment of questions to each domain. An average score was developed for each domain based on the number of questions. The scores of FSWs and FSSs were compared among those who were trained in *24/7 Dad* versus those who were not, and between those assigned to Fatherhood and non-Fatherhood counties. Although the initial analysis plan called for the use of paired t-tests to compare the average domain scores of each set of comparison groups, the sample of respondents completing both the pre- and post-tests was too small to take that approach. Instead, this report presents scores of all pre- and post-test surveys submitted.

To analyze the staff **focus groups**, researchers from Mississippi State University reviewed the transcriptions and categorized the responses as they corresponded with the questions on the interview guide to analyze them for recurring responses/themes. Responses that were not directly linked to an interview question but were relevant to the overall discussion also were included in the analysis. Focus group data was examined for convergence and/or divergence with the quantitative survey data.

¹ Adapted from *National Fatherhood Initiative Father Friendly Checkup*. www.fatherhood.org © 2010 and White, J. M., Brotherson, S. E., Galovan, A. M., Holmes, E. K., & Kampmann, J. A. (2011). The Dakota Father Friendly Assessment: measuring father friendliness in head start and similar settings. *Fathering*, 9(1), 22.

Timeline: The **HHM staff survey** was first offered at baseline between June and August of 2015. The follow up or post-test survey was offered in November of 2015 and again in August of 2016 near the end of the project.

The **focus groups** were conducted prior to the staff training in the *24/7 Dad* curriculum (July of 2015), at a midpoint in the program (December of 2015) and near the conclusion of the Initiative (August of 2016).

3. Does participation in the *24/7 Dad* curriculum produce improvements in the fathers' parenting knowledge and skills?

Design: A mixed method approach was taken to evaluate changes in fathers' parenting knowledge and skills. Quantitative data on fathers' knowledge and skills upon enrollment was collected through the **Fathering Skills survey**, designed to be administered as a pre-test at the time the father enrolled in *24/7 Dad* and a post-test at program completion. The evaluation team conducted **one-on-one interviews** with program participants to provide qualitative data as well as context to the survey results. Interviews were both in person and via phone, depending on the participants' availability.

Tools: The **Fathering Skills survey** was provided with the *24/7 Dad* curriculum.² The survey collected demographic data on fathers and included 22 questions on parenting knowledge and skills, as well as *24/7 Dad* concepts. The survey was administered by the Fatherhood Coach. An interview guide for the **one-on-one interviews** was developed to add context on fathers' backgrounds and their satisfaction with the program.

Sampling and Analysis Plan: All fathers who participated in at least one *24/7 Dad* session were part of the sample for the **Fathering Skills survey**. Both *24/7 Dad* participants and those fathers who had been contacted by the Fatherhood Coach were recruited to participate in the **interviews** (although ultimately only *24/7 Dad* participants were interviewed). Several attempts were made to secure the interviews. Evaluators asked the Fatherhood Coach to approach fathers with whom he had been in contact, the evaluation team contacted them by telephone and mail, and finally FSWs were asked to help recruit fathers whose families were HHM participants.

Evaluators analyzed the **Fathering Skills survey** pre-tests by calculating an overall score based on the number of correct responses. By analyzing responses to the individual questions, specific areas about which fathers were less knowledgeable were identified. Because the Fatherhood Coach was unable to collect post-test surveys, comparison of pre- and post-test scores was not possible.

To analyze the in person **interviews**, researchers from Mississippi State University reviewed the transcriptions and categorized the responses as they corresponded with the questions on the interview guide for recurring responses/themes. Responses that were not directly linked to an interview question but were relevant to the overall discussion also were included in the analysis. Interview data were examined for convergence and/or divergence

² Fathering Surveys Scoring Instructions, *24/7 Dad A.M. /P.M., 2nd Ed.*, 2011.

with the quantitative survey data. Case studies on three fathers were developed based on the data collected through the interviews.

Timeline: As previously noted, Fathering surveys were administered when fathers enrolled in *24/7 Dad*. Interviews were conducted during the summer of 2016.

4. What factors are associated with obtaining a signed consent form for the father to participate in HHM visits?

- a. Demographic factors of the father: age, race
- b. Marital factors of the father: marital status, total number of children, number of children in this household,
- c. Economic and employment factors of father: employment status, living situation, income

Design: To determine what factors were associated with fathers consenting to participate in home visits a quantitative approach was taken. Using data collected through the Family Wise Data Management System, fathers who signed consent forms to participate were compared to those who did not to determine which factors contributed to and detracted from HHM program participation.

Sampling and Analysis Plan: All Family Wise Data Management System family-level records from between July 1, 2013 and September 30, 2016 for families living in the project service area were included in the analysis.

Originally evaluators planned to use both logistic and linear regression techniques to answer this research question. However, the home visiting program collected data on the demographics and other characteristics on only a small subset of fathers identified as “Adult2” in the database (n=102). In addition, fields that were identified as having information about the father were used to collect data on other adults who consented to participate in HHM, such as grandmothers. Without data from all fathers in the comparison group (those who did not consent to participate in HHM) the results of the logistic regression would have been skewed and inconclusive.

Instead, the number of fathers consenting to participate in HHM was compared in two ways. First, the number of consents among families with an FSW who was trained in *24/7 Dad* was compared to the number of consents from families with an untrained FSW. Second, the number of consents among families in Fatherhood counties was compared to those in non-Fatherhood counties. Both subsets of families were compared during the baseline and project periods and chi-square analyses were conducted to determine if the treatment condition (having a worker with *24/7 Dad* training or living in a Fatherhood county) impacted the number of consenting fathers. In addition, frequencies describing the characteristics of the fathers identified as Adult2 who consented and those who did not are presented in this report.

Timeline: Data were examined and compared during two distinct time periods: a two-year baseline period (July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2015) and the project period (July 1, 2015–September 30, 2016).

5. **What factors are associated with a father's enrolling in the 24/7 Dad curriculum?**
 - a. Fatherhood Coach: whether contacted, number of contacts
 - b. Participation in community and family events
 - c. Change in Individual Family Support Plans to include fathers
 - d. Contact with children

Design: The planned design to answer this question was a mixed methods approach with data sources from the Family Wise Data Management System, interviews with fathers, and data collected by the Fatherhood Coach on his contacts with fathers. These sources were analyzed to determine if factors such as contacts with the Fatherhood Coach or with one's children increased the probability that a father would enroll in the 24/7 Dad program.

Sampling and Analysis Plan: For data sources collected from the Family Wise Data Management System the sample consisted of all families in Fatherhood counties between July 1, 2013 and September 30, 2016, while the sample for 24/7 Dad participation was all fathers in the Fatherhood counties.

Originally evaluators planned to use both logistic and linear regression techniques to answer this research question. However, data were only available for a small subset of fathers with families enrolled in the home visiting program and those enrolled in the 24/7 Dad program. Instead output data from the 24/7 Dad program were analyzed along with qualitative data from interviews with the Fatherhood Coach to provide information on program enrollment and satisfaction.

Timeline: Data was collected during the project timeline: July 1, 2015 to September 30, 2016.

6. **What factors are associated with increased contact of fathers with their children?**
 - a. Number of 24/7 Dad classes attended
 - b. Participation in home visits
 - c. Gains in skills and knowledge as a result of 24/7 Dad
 - d. Fulfilling activities in Individual Family Support Plan

Design: As with previous evaluation questions, a mixed method approach was taken to examine the factors which impact fathers' contact with children. The data sources included information collected by the Fatherhood Coach, the Family Wise Data Management System (e.g., IFSP goals involving fathers, fathers' participation in home visits), and Fathering Skills surveys (described in more detail in evaluation question three).

Sampling and Analysis Plan: The sample consisted of all families in Fatherhood counties. Originally evaluators planned to use both logistic and linear regression techniques to answer this research question. However, data from multiple data sources were not available (24/7 Dad participation throughout the course of the project and post-test Fathering Skills surveys). Data on the proportion of fathers who participated in home visits were available through the Family Wise system and are reported here.

Timeline: Data were examined from the project timeline: July 1, 2015 to September 30, 2016.

7. How well do the policies and procedures of FCHHM align with the value of involving fathers in the lives of their infants and toddlers?

Design: Taking a qualitative approach, evaluators performed a content analysis of HHM’s written policies and procedures at the start of the project period. The purpose of the analysis was to see if the policies and procedures affirmatively treat fathers in the same manner as mothers.

Analysis Plan: Considering the various ways that male caregivers could be referenced in the documents, both directly and indirectly, the entire manual was reviewed to find any and all relevant references. All direct and indirect references were counted excluding the “List of Abbreviations, Terms and Definitions” and the table displaying “Mentoring Program Training Topics.” Indirect references were typically policies or procedures that could include the father or male caregiver, but the reference was not explicit or direct. The evaluators provided a list of specific suggestions to HHM managers to update the policy to make it more father friendly.

Timeline: The HHM policies and procedures were analyzed at baseline (October of 2015). By the end of the project period evaluators were notified that the policies and procedures had been revised, but the updated version was not provided to the Evaluation team for review.

Summary of Allocation of Evaluation Funds

Year One		
	Project Role	Amount
Hornby Zeller Associates	Subcontractor	\$38,817
Mississippi State University	Prime	\$21,183
	<i>Total</i>	<i>\$60,000</i>
Year Two		
Hornby Zeller Associates	Prime	\$53,595
Mississippi State University	Subcontractor	\$30,947
	<i>Total</i>	<i>\$84,542</i>
	Total Budget	\$113,595

III. Evaluation Results

The Fatherhood Initiative evaluation sought to address seven evaluation questions using a variety of data sources, as explained earlier. Below the findings for each evaluation question are discussed.

Mothers' Willingness to Involve Fathers

There was little to no change in the number of mothers involving fathers in their children's lives during the project period. The comparison of the number of Individual Family Support Plans (IFSP) with goals regarding fathers' involvement during the baseline and project period showed a decrease in the proportion of goals involving fathers. In addition, the number of home visits with fathers present stayed the same.

Evaluation Question 1:

Have Family Support Workers increased the number of mothers willing to involve fathers in their children's lives?

IFSP Goal Analysis

Family goals involving fathers fell into one of three broad categories: relationships, co-parenting and other goals. Figure 3-1 shows the types of goals identified by mothers within each of those categories. Goals around relationships focused on marriage, improving

Figure 3-1. Types of goals involving fathers

On relationships

- Get married/start long-term relationship
- Improve relationship/continue healthy relationship with husband/father of baby
- Start marriage counseling
- Parents want to spend more time together

Co-parenting

- Goal mentions co-parenting
- Parent wants to hear child say 'dada'

Other goals

- Father plans to get a job
- Mother and father plan to work toward other goal together (e.g., financial stability, driver's license)

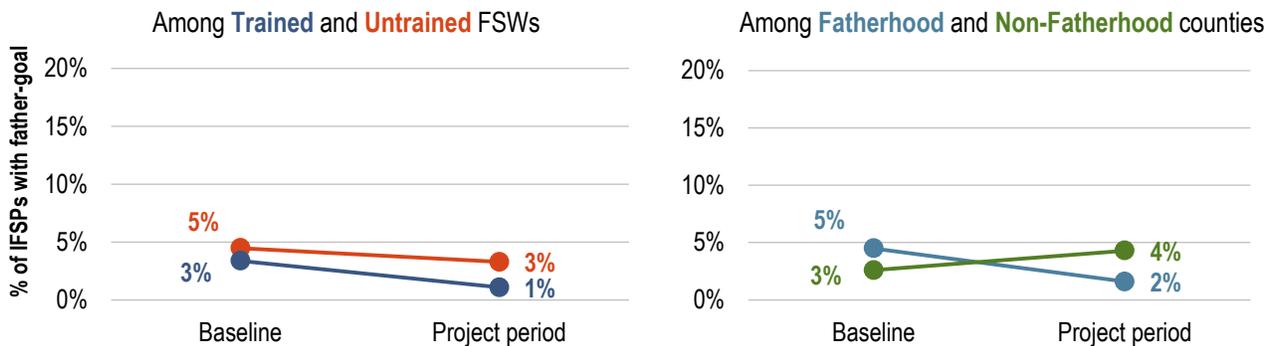
communication with one's partner and spending quality time together. Co-parenting goals were about the mother and father working together to raise their child. The third category consisted of goals detailing how the mother and father wanted to work together to achieve or obtain something for their family such as employment, housing or improved education.

The proportion of IFSP goals involving fathers did not change during the project period in comparison to the baseline. From July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2015, the baseline period, 49 out of 1,198 IFSPs had goals which mentioned fathers (4% of the plans analyzed). In contrast, 32 out of 1,141 IFSPs (3%) had goals involving fathers during the project period (July 1, 2015-September 30, 2016).

Figure 3-2 shows the difference in the proportion of IFSPs with a father-related goal for the two subsets of comparison groups, fatherhood-trained and untrained FSWs and fatherhood and non-Fatherhood counties. The only sub-group which shows an increase in goals is IFSPs among families in non-Fatherhood counties; however, all changes from baseline to the

project period are small and the data show that the vast majority of IFSPs both before and after the Fatherhood Initiative did not include goals pertaining to fathers or their relationships with their children. Among IFSPs completed with a family whose FSW was trained in *24/7 Dad*, there was a decrease in father-related goals, from three percent of IFSPs during the baseline period to one percent of plans during the project. A similar trend was seen in plans completed by families living in Fatherhood counties.

Figure 3-2. Change from baseline to project period in proportion of IFSPs with father-related goals



Fathers' Presence at Home Visits

As with the IFSP data, the home visit records show that few fathers were present for home visits both before and after the Fatherhood Initiative began. During the baseline period fathers were present at twelve percent of visits and during the project period eleven percent. Among visits with FSWs who were trained in *24/7 Dad* and in Fatherhood counties the proportion of visits with a father present decreased during the project period from eleven percent, to five percent among both visits with trained FSWs and visits in Fatherhood counties. It is important to consider that parents may not be present at a visit for a number of reasons, including work and caring for other children.

Overall Findings and Limitations

The low number of IFSPs with father-related goals and home visits with fathers present together suggest that the number of mothers who involved children's fathers did not change during the project period. One factor that may have impacted the program's ability to increase mothers who wanted to involve fathers was that some families received home visiting services from more than one FSW during the course of their involvement with the program. Not all workers were trained in *24/7 Dad* and if a family was served by trained and untrained FSWs it may have impacted the degree to which they were encouraged to involve fathers.

Family Support Workers’ Attitudes and Approaches to Engaging Male Caregivers

Evaluation Question 2:

Have Family Support Workers’ attitudes and approaches to engaging male caregivers changed as a result of the fatherhood program enhancement?

Evidence of changes in FSWs’ and FSSs’ attitudes, beliefs and behaviors as a result of attending the *24/7 Dad* training is limited. Results from the staff surveys and focus groups are discussed in detail below.

Staff Survey

A total of 33 FSWs and ten FSSs participated in the baseline staff survey and 35 FSWs and ten FSSs completed the follow-up survey during one of the two administrations. Results discussed are from all pre- and post-tests collected during the grant period. Two sets of FSW comparison groups were examined: first, results for those who participated in a *24/7 Dad* training during the project period were compared to those who were not trained. Second, differences between those who worked in Fatherhood counties (who may or may not have participated in the training) and those in non-Fatherhood counties were examined. Table 3-1 shows the total number of FSWs in each group. Supervisors’ surveys were analyzed together.

	Pre	Post
FSWs by 24/7 Dad training		
Trained	9	9
Untrained	24	26
FSWs by county		
Fatherhood Counties	17	19
Non-Fatherhood Counties	16	16
Supervisors	10	10

Since only seven trained FSWs and four trained FSSs completed both the pre- and post-administered surveys, the results from the analyses of all surveys collected are reported.

Demographic Characteristics, Past Experiences and Parenting Perceptions

Overall, FSWs and FSSs had similar demographic characteristics (see Appendix A for full results). All staff were women and most identified as African-American (100% of FSSs on the pre- and post-tests compared to 79% of FSWs on the pre-test and 89% on the post). The average age of FSWs was 38 years old, while FSSs tended to be slightly older (41 on the pre-test and 44 on the post-test). FSWs varied from FSSs on educational background, the number of staff having children, and length of time in their position. Seventy percent of FSSs had a Master’s degree and about 60 percent had children, compared to about one in three FSWs on either survey with a Master’s degree and three in four with children. While FSSs who took the pre-test had been in their position longer than FSWs, (21 months compared to

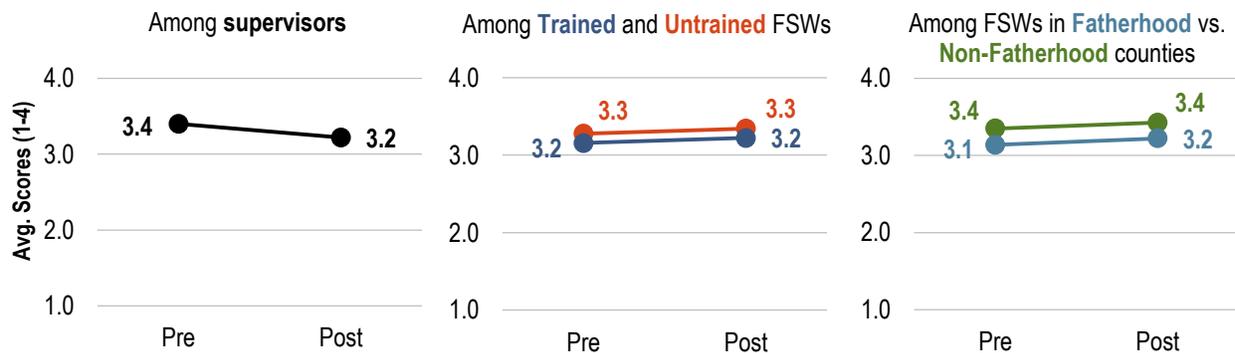
twelve), post-tests showed similar time on the job, with FSSs reporting they had been in their position 39 months compared to 37 among FSWs.

FSWs' and FSSs' responses showed that in general their fathers were a positive influence growing up. Most disagreed that their views on fathering had been influenced by negative experiences with men. Regarding views on parenting, most saw differences in how mothers and fathers parent, discipline children, and communicate. As expected, there were few changes in the reported past experiences and parenting perceptions on pre- and post-tests, even though the two surveys had different samples.

Attitude

Attitude is an inclination to think or feel a certain way. On the HHM staff survey attitude questions reflected opinions that may impact the way staff feel about fathers' involvement with their children and can play a role in staff opinions about what should happen when a father behaves in a certain manner. As shown in Figure 3-3, FSWs' and FSSs' average scores in the attitude domain showed fairly positive attitudes towards fathers on both pre- and post-tests, as evidenced by average scores above three. Looking at FSWs' scores based on training status and the county in which they worked showed only small differences between comparison groups and very little change from pre- to post-test scores.

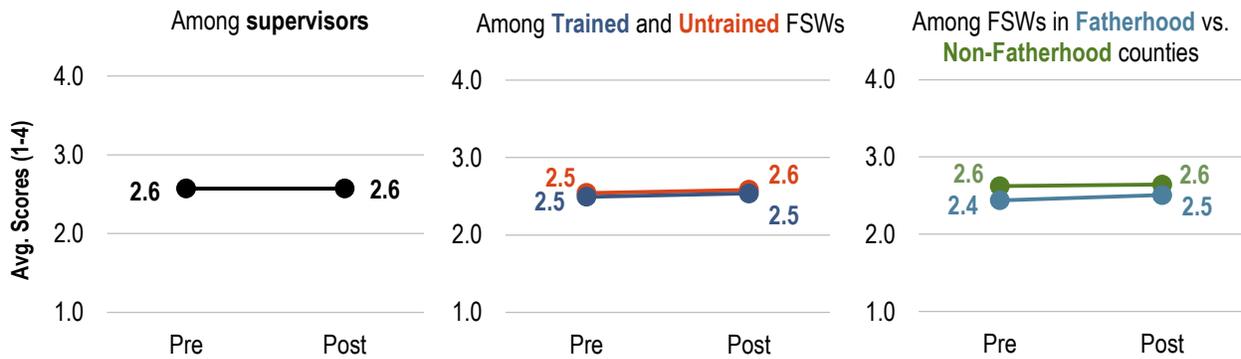
Figure 3-3. Changes in attitude scores among FSSs and FSWs on pre- and post-post tests



Belief

The belief questions on the survey focused on value judgments which generally viewed one parent as better than the other. The statements demonstrate a framework by which staff form opinions about the value and importance of fathers' involvement that may be the most difficult to change. Pre- and post-survey results show that belief scores were lower than the other domains and did not change during the project period. Looking at individual survey question responses, most FSWs agreed that mothers were more committed to the well-being of their children; that it requires a lot of time and effort to involve fathers; and that mothers in many homes are taking care of children without help from fathers.

Figure 3-4. Changes in belief scores among FSSs and FSWs on pre- and post-tests

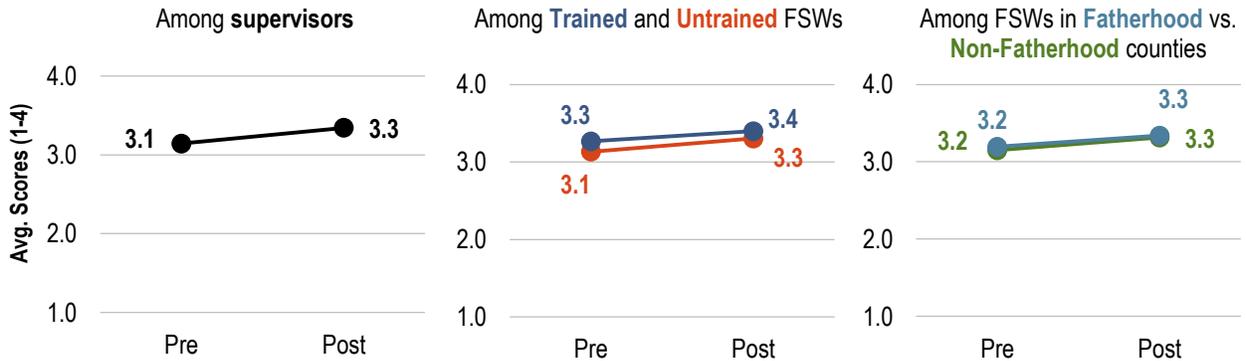


Behavior

The behavior questions addressed a tangible and measurable action regarding fathers on the part of the FSW. While behavior questions on the FSW survey focus on whether the individual worker reports a behavior (such as giving equal attention to male and female parents), on the FSS survey supervisors were asked their opinions on FSWs’ general patterns of behavior.

As was the case with attitude scores, behavior results were positive on both the pre- and post-tests, with averages above three. Behavior is the only domain in which FSWs trained in *24/7 Dad* show higher scores compared to untrained staff.

Figure 3-5. Changes in behavior scores among FSSs and FSWs on pre- and post-tests

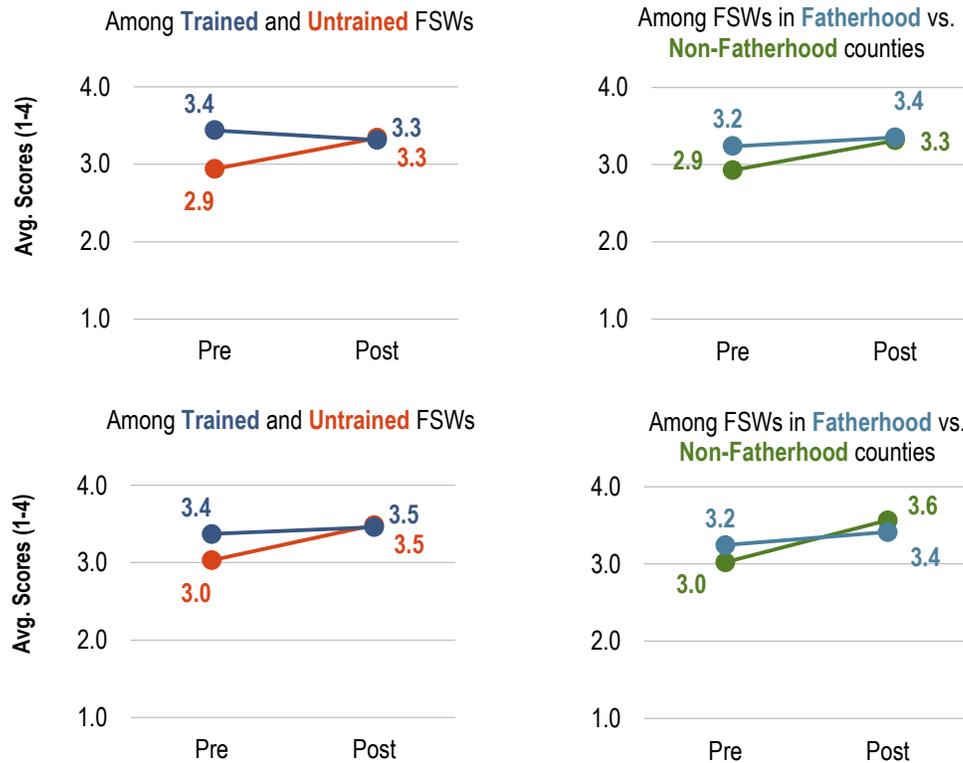


State and Supervisory Leadership

Leadership questions determined if FSWs perceived state leaders and supervisors as encouraging and supportive of the participation of fathers in HHM. Overall FSWs appeared to see state leaders and supervisors’ leadership as more supportive of fathers on post-test surveys versus pre-tests. The largest increases in scores in the two domains were among untrained FSWs and those working in non-Fatherhood counties (see Figure 3-6, on the following page).

In contrast, trained FSWs and those in Fatherhood counties had higher scores on pre-tests and saw smaller gains during the project period. The individual statements with the most disagreement were about whether supervisors and state leaders provide adequate resources to serve fathers effectively and if state leaders have a formal process to increase the role of fathers in HHM.

Figure 3-6. Changes in leadership scores among FSSs and FSWs on pre- and post-tests



Focus Groups

A total of twenty-seven staff participated in three sets of focus groups. During the first round of focus groups it was clear that staff valued fathers, even if their own experiences with their fathers were not ideal. However, at that early stage of the project FSWs offered generic suggestions for how to involve fathers but struggled with finding specific ways to engage them. They also talked about cultural expectations of fatherhood that made it difficult to involve fathers. As one FSW stated, “In this county a lot of moms are young and have more than one child and no father around and that is the norm, to not have the father involved.”

In the later focus groups FSWs talked about changes in their attitudes or approaches to the fathers’ involvement since the start of the Fatherhood Initiative. FSWs were more aware of how their personal experiences and opinions could affect their willingness to encourage mothers to include fathers in the family goals. In addition, the response to the Fatherhood Initiative varied by the extent of FSWs’ contact with the Fatherhood Coach. The group that had interacted with him clearly understood the nature and intent of the program, while FSWs who had not were unsure of how the program operated and its purpose.

While FSWs showed more intention and persistence in promoting fathers' involvement in the family goals during the second and third round of focus groups, they also identified additional training needs. One FSW alluded to the need for more professional development and concrete skills so she would know "...what works, what to do, what to say, what not to say, what does research say, instead of shooting off the hip a lot of times." Other suggestions were for revisions to the HHM curriculum so that the father's role was more prominent and better integrated into home visiting materials, to have more Fatherhood Coaches available given the large service area and to open the *24/7 Dad* program to fathers outside of the HHM program.

Overall Findings and Limitations

Overall staff and supervisor surveys indicate that the HHM staff had positive attitudes toward fathers and reported employing father-friendly behaviors in their work. In contrast, staff beliefs about fathers remained low throughout the project period. Analysis of the focus groups conducted over the course of the program show that there were changes consistent with the philosophy of the initiative in FSWs' thinking about whether fathers should be involved and FSWs' role in involving them. FSWs offered recommendations for improvements to both the HHM curriculum and the *24/7 Dad* program. Some caution should be taken in interpreting the findings of the survey analysis because surveys were not able to be matched in the pre and post periods.

Improvements in Fathers' Parenting Knowledge and Skills

Qualitative interviews with fathers participating in the *24/7 Dad* program showed that they had positive experiences participating, while analysis of the pre-test Fathering Skills surveys indicates fathers had low levels of knowledge about parenting. The lack of post-test surveys made it difficult to draw conclusions about any changes in knowledge and skills that may have occurred as a result of participation.

Evaluation Question 3:

Does participation in the *24/7 Dad* curriculum produce improvements in the fathers' parenting knowledge and skills?

Interviews with Fathers

A total of six out of the thirteen fathers who participated in the *24/7 Dad* program were interviewed for the evaluation, although an attempt to reach each Dad was made, as were fathers who did not participate but could form a comparison group. Interview topics focused on participants' relationships with their own fathers, information learned through *24/7 Dad*, and feedback on the program and the Fatherhood Coach. In addition to the overall findings discussed below, we have included case studies developed about three of the interview participants in Appendix B of this report.

Fathers reported that their relationships with their own fathers motivated them to improve their relationships with their children; they said they wanted to be more engaged and spend more time with their kids, unlike their own dads.³

Through participation in *24/7 Dad*, fathers said they had learned about the importance of communication, spending time with their children and focusing on their relationships with their children, rather than on themselves or on their relationships with their children's mothers (particularly when those relationships were contentious). They provided concrete examples of what they could do to interact with their children such as reading, playing, and talking with them. Those with infants or who were expecting new babies understood that they make an impact when interacting with their children even at a very young age.

Fathers talked positively about the Fatherhood Coach, saying he was easy to talk and relate to, and that they appreciated that he shared his own experience, and that coaching involved an exchange of ideas; i.e., that he learned from them as well.

Fathering Skills surveys

Based on the Fatherhood Coach's records of his contacts with fathers and *24/7 Dad* participation, we determined that thirteen men participated in the *24/7 Dad* program out of the 36 with whom the Coach had contact. A total of eight fathers completed the Fathering Skills pre-test. The average age of respondents was 23, with the youngest being 19 and the oldest 31. Almost all were single at the time of the pre-test (86%) and all identified as Black. All eight respondents had completed high school while three reported some college education. Half were employed.

On average participants answered nine out of 22 questions on the survey correctly, showing that at the time of program enrollment there was room for improvement in fathers' parenting knowledge and understanding of the *24/7 Dad* concepts. Questions that most fathers answered correctly were about keeping in mind what is best for the child when working out differences with another parent, and the variety of ways dads can provide for their family.

Overall Findings and Limitations

The lack of data on fathers who participated in the *24/7 Dad* program makes it difficult to draw conclusions about how much it produced improvements in fathers' parenting knowledge and skills. It is clear from the interviews, however, that participants valued their one-on-one work with the Fatherhood Coach and learned concrete ways they can interact with their children and build their relationships.

³ The intergenerational impact of parenting is discussed in this article: Cooper, S. (2015) Reframing the discussion on African-American fathers: Implications for positive development of African American boys, *CYF News*, American Psychological Association. Retrieved from: <http://www.apa.org/pi/families/resources/newsletter/2015/08/african-american-fathers.aspx>

Factors Associated in Participation in HHM Visits

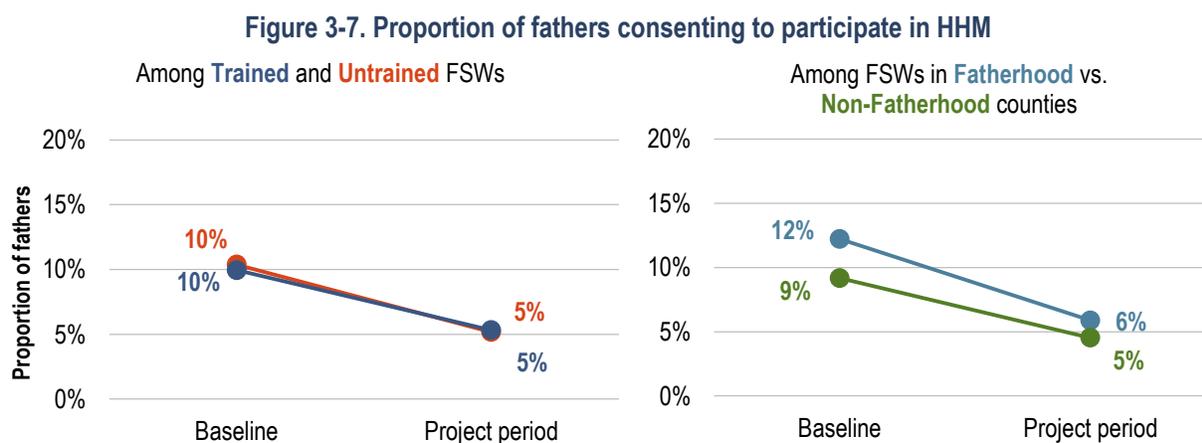
During the project period the number of fathers consenting to participate in the home visiting program decreased in comparison to the previous two years.

Evaluation Question 4:

What factors are associated with obtaining a signed consent form for a father to participate in HHM visits?

Fathers' Participation in HHM

Twenty-nine percent of families identified an additional adult (called Adult2) as involved in the child's life in the Family Wise Data Management System, and only 38 percent of those families identified a father as Adult2. Only those adults designated as Adult2 could consent to participate in HHM, so it is not surprising that during both the baseline and project period a small proportion of fathers consented to participate in the program. However, as shown in Figure 3-7, it is clear that the proportion of families with a father consenting to participate declined during the project period.



The decreases in fathers consenting to participate between the baseline and project periods among families with untrained FSWs, FSWs in Fatherhood counties and those in non-Fatherhood counties were statistically significant. Table 3-2 presents the results of the chi-square analysis.

Table 3-2. Number of fathers consenting to participate in HHM and chi-square results				
Number of fathers consenting	Baseline	Project period	Chi-square value	Significance
FSW Training				
Trained	17	6	1.961	0.161
Untrained	36	15	5.805	0.016
County				
Fatherhood county	31	9	3.927	0.048
Non-Fatherhood county	22	12	4.763	0.029

Demographics of Fathers Identified as Adult2

As shown in Table 3-3, fathers who consented to participate in the home visiting program are demographically similar to fathers who did not consent. The area where there is the largest difference is in education. Fathers who consented were more likely to have received some college education (40% compared to 14% of fathers who did not consent, a statistically significant difference ($X^2=5.8627$, $p\text{-value}=.015$)).

Table 3-3. Demographic results among fathers identified as Adult2					
	Consented (n=74)	Did not consent (n=27)		Consented (n=74)	Did not consent (n=27)
Average age	30.5	32.3	Employment		
Race			Full time	49%	44%
Black	82%	89%	Part time	8%	15%
Native American/Alaskan Native	14%	4%	Permanent Disability	4%	7%
White	5%	4%	Unemployed	38%	33%
Ethnicity – not Hispanic	100%	100%	Self-employed	1%	0%
Education			Earnings		
8 th grade or less	1%	4%	Minimum wage or less	32%	27%
Some high school	12%	18%	At or above living wage	3%	13%
High school graduate/GED	47%	64%	Above minimum wage	66%	60%
Some college	18%	7%	Family Structure		
2 year degree	11%	7%	Single	44%	39%
4 year degree	11%	0%	Partnering	12%	29%
			Married	44%	32%
			Divorced	0%	0%
			Widowed	0%	0%

Overall Findings and Limitations

The number of fathers consenting to participate in the home visiting program decreased during the project period. Although we do not have an explanation as to why, we know from the demographic data that those who did participate are more likely to have some college education.

Factors Associated with Enrollment in *24/7 Dad*

The primary factors identified through interviews with the Fatherhood Coach as impacting enrollment in *24/7 Dad* were the Coach's participation in home visits and whether or not fathers already had regular contact with their child(ren). Not enough data about fathers with children in HHM with a trained FSW were available to conduct additional analyses of the number of coach visits, participation in community and family events, and changes in IFSP goals.

Evaluation Question 5:

What factors are associated with a father's enrolling in the *24/7 Dad* curriculum?

Family Wise Data and Fatherhood Coach Data

Fatherhood Coach records, which tracked the number of contacts with fathers and FSWs the Coach made and the result of each interaction, showed that more contacts were made with fathers who enrolled in the program; however, because the evaluator was unable to determine how many times the Coach interacted with fathers before they decided to enroll in *24/7 Dad* and records were not available through the entire project period, additional analyses were not conducted. A fatherhood module was supposed to be added to the Family Wise Data Management System to capture this information but never was. Instead the Fatherhood Coach captured his activities in an Excel spreadsheet.

Out of the 36 men with whom the Fatherhood Coach made contact regarding participation in *24/7 Dad*, thirteen could be matched to IFSP goal data from the Family Wise Data Management system. Of those thirteen, three of their children's mothers had a father-related IFSP goal; however, there were too many fathers (64%) for whom no IFSP records were available during the project period to draw any conclusions.

Fatherhood Coach Interviews

The Fatherhood Coach participated in three interviews during the course of the project. He identified two factors as being helpful in engaging fathers in the *24/7 Dad* curriculum: the Coach's participation in home visits and the fathers' contact with their children. The Coach found that by accompanying HHM staff on home visits, he was better able to connect with both mothers and fathers, which made it easier to enroll fathers in the program. He also discussed the challenges of reaching fathers and connecting them when they did not already have regular contact with their children. The Coach was responsible for providing surveys in six non-contiguous counties which meant he spent as much if not more time driving to meet with *24/7 Dad* participants or community outreach events than the time spent meeting with clients or community members. He also noted that those fathers that already had contact with their children were more amenable to participating in the program.

Overall Findings and Limitations

Although the qualitative data provided some information about what led to successful recruitment of participants in *24/7 Dad*, caution should be taken in interpreting the results. For example, it would be unwise to say that because the Coach was more successful in

engaging fathers who already had contact with their children, in the future only that population should be targeted. Instead the results provide insight as to the type of resources that may be needed to support a successful Fatherhood program, such as additional time and resources to locate and get in contact with fathers. In fact, the small proportion of fathers who are identified as Adult2 in the Family Wise Database Management System suggests that focusing on previously engaged fathers would only yield a small number of participants in such a program.

Fathers' Contact with Their Children

Within the sample of fathers with children in HHM whose mothers have a trained FSW, the Family Wise Data Management System contained information only for those fathers who

Evaluation Question 6:

What factors are associated with increased contact of fathers with their children?

were identified as Adult2. In addition, information on fathers' contacts with their children is not tracked in a systematic way that would have enabled evaluators to determine if the frequency of contact had changed. The expected addition of the Fatherhood module in the Family Wise database would have allowed for greater analysis.

Review of HHM Policies and Procedures

During the baseline review of the HHM policies and procedures manual it was found that in many cases the reference to including fathers in family support was implied in Mississippi's policies. Given the priority on increasing male involvement in the HHM program and the enhancement involving the Fatherhood Coach, subtle changes could more clearly reflect their focus.

Evaluation Question 7:

How well do the policies and procedures of HHM align with the value of involving fathers in the lives of their infants and toddlers?

Suggested changes were provided to HHM leadership in the Year 1 Evaluation report to assist in making the policies more overtly inclusive of fathers. Suggestions focus on three main areas:

- Incorporation of the Fatherhood Initiative program components, including Fatherhood Coach into the manual;
- Development of policies and processes around FSWs working with parents in different households;
- Explicit recognition of fatherhood involvement as a goal of the HHM program and incorporation into the appropriate procedures.

Appendix C details the specific changes recommended at the start of the project. Although revisions to the policies and procedures were started during the project period, they were not available for the evaluation team to conduct the second review and analysis.

IV. Evaluation Successes, Challenges, and Lessons Learned

The primary challenges of this evaluation were the low number of respondents to the Fathering Skills surveys as a result of low participation in the program and missing data in the home visiting program's data management system. As previously noted, a number of changes were made to the analysis plans largely as a result of missing data. However, the mixed method approach planned from the outset enabled evaluators to gain information qualitatively when quantitative approaches were unavailable. A great deal of effort went into the outreach to fathers, in particular, which ultimately allowed the team to extract valuable insights.

Many of the challenges that the Fatherhood Initiative faced are common among newly implemented programs. While it is important to understand programs' outcomes as this evaluation aimed to do, an evaluation focused on implementation may have been better suited for this stage of the program's life cycle.⁴

⁴ JBS International. *Demonstrating Tools for Supporting Programs Along Different Stages of the Evaluation Life Cycle*. American Evaluation Association Conference, Nov 2016.

V. Conclusions, Implication of Findings, and Recommendations

The goal of the fatherhood component of HHM was to engage fathers in the lives of their children by increasing the involvement of fathers, making mothers amenable to fathers' involvement, providing activities in the community to engage the fathers and providing a structured curriculum designed to enhance attitudes and skills in how to be a good father. Mississippi aimed to create a large cultural change within families and their own staff who would be promoting involvement of fathers.

The results of the evaluation show that participation in the Fatherhood Initiative, including *24/7 Dad* training, produced little change in staff members' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors toward fathers, and little change in Family Support Plans completed with the mothers to reflect increased involvement of fathers either in activities with the children or participation in home visiting itself. A review of the HHM policies and procedures found that in many cases the reference to including fathers in family support was implied in Mississippi's policies but not made explicit, thus de-emphasizing father involvement as a priority.

The Fatherhood Coach was the only staff person dedicated to engaging fathers. He had to serve the entire multi-county initiative, making his efforts thinly spread. While there were challenges in engaging fathers in the *24/7 Dad* program individual case studies showed that those who did receive coaching had positive experiences. Qualitative analysis of Fatherhood Coach interviews revealed that the primary factors impacting enrollment in *24/7 Dad* were the Coach's participation in home visits and whether or not fathers already had regular contact with their child(ren). Nonetheless, during the project period the number of fathers consenting to participate in the home visiting program decreased in comparison to the previous two years.

There were changes in program leadership and even the auspices under which it was administered during the Fatherhood Initiative, moving from the state Department of Human Services to Mississippi State University and then back to the state. The training provided to FSWs and FSSs was not repeated after the first time it was delivered. The Fatherhood Coach was the most obvious change agent in the Initiative once the original Director left, but one individual was charged with serving all of the involved counties. His efforts were spread thin. The Initiative attempted to alter a pattern of behavior that is deeply ingrained. The efforts were not sufficiently robust to produce changes during a short period of time.

Recommendations

Revise HHM's Policies and Procedures to clearly reflect that increasing fathers' involvement in children's lives and the HHM program are priorities. In many cases, in the original policies and procedures reviewed during the evaluation reference to fathers' inclusion in family support was implied; however, more explicit policies would help any continued efforts to work with fathers. During focus groups FSWs also indicated that changes could be made to the generic HHM curriculum (as opposed to *24/7 Dad*) to make it more father-friendly. Father-positive policies and procedures would help guide that process.

Train all staff in father-friendly concepts and practices, and provide adequate staff resources for fatherhood programming. IFSP and home visit data showed that many families are seen by more than one FSW while they participate in the HHM program. To strengthen the fatherhood component all staff should be trained so that they are prepared to share the concepts with their clients. In addition, given the large service area of HHM, one of the challenges for the Fatherhood Coach was the amount of travel necessary to see fathers in Fatherhood counties. Adding Fatherhood Coaches and enabling them to focus on specific geographic areas may help engage more communities and fathers.

Using the information from this evaluation and its experience with the Fatherhood Initiative, Mississippi can also determine whether *24/7 Dad* is the most appropriate training for its staff. While there was positive feedback from fathers who participated in the structured program, outcomes of trained FSWs do not show that it impacted their work. Attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors showed little change and there were no improvements in the number of fathers consenting to participate in HHM or the numbers of mothers with IFSPs with father-related goals who had a trained FSW.

Increase the number of Fatherhood Coaches and/or reduce the number of counties one serves so that more time can be spent with each dad and performing community outreach activities. Serving a six county area limited the Fatherhood Coach's ability to establish consistent connections in the communities where he was working, join home visits with FSWs, and meet with fathers. A smaller geographic area has the potential to increase the effectiveness of one Fatherhood Coach, while increasing the total number of Coaches will enable HHM to provide father-specific programming throughout the service area.

Create more realistic expectations about how long and how much effort it takes to produce changes in family relationships that yield greater involvement of fathers. As noted earlier the Initiative sought to change a strongly ingrained pattern of behavior. The challenges experienced in engaging mothers and fathers and training FSWs demonstrate that a more rigorous intervention is needed to produce change with more time allowed for believes to

Improve data collection systems to include information on all fathers of children whose mothers participate in HHM. Provide a database component to the existing system for tracking *24/7 Dad* clients. In the Family Wise Data Management System only information about those fathers who are identified as Adult2 in the HHM database is being collected by FSWs. Demographic fields for fathers' information are also being used to collect information about other adults, such as grandmothers who are children's caregivers. Collecting information on all fathers would provide more information about the factors that impact consent to participate in the HHM program and involvement. Other caregivers could be entered in separate fields.

In addition, information about children's relationships and contact with fathers is collected through visit memos or IFSP goals in narrative form. This made it difficult to extract information about increases in fathers' involvement and children's contact with fathers. One way to improve the current database would be to incorporate categories for visit activities, between-visit activities and goals (*i.e.*, a menu where an FSW could select all the topic areas covered in a visit). This would not only help evaluation, but FSWs and FSSs could also

quickly identify which families and how many have father involvement as a focus of their visits or goals (and could be extended to improve tracking of the numerous other areas that FSWs work with families).

Finally, one of the challenges identified by the Fatherhood Coach regarding tracking client information was that a fatherhood module within the Family Wise Data Management System never materialized, leaving him to develop his own Excel tracking sheets. His outreach work involved contacts with community members, fathers, and FSWs and a database would have helped him track that information in a more effective manner.

Plan for Dissemination of Evaluation Findings

This final report will be distributed HHM program leadership and shared with members of the HHM Advisory Committee. An in-person presentation to the Advisory Committee was given by Mississippi State University in December 2015 to share the initial findings from the year one report and this update will expand on those findings.

Appendix A. Demographics of Staff Survey Respondents

Demographic results				
	FSWs Pre	FSWs Post	Supervisors Pre	Supervisors Post
Gender				
Female	100%	100%	100%	100%
Race				
African-American	79%	89%	100%	100%
Asian	3%	0%	0%	0%
Native American or Alaskan Native	6%	3%	0%	0%
White	6%	9%	0%	0%
Education				
Some college	10%	0%	0%	0%
2 year degree	10%	17%	0%	10%
4 year degree	39%	51%	30%	30%
Master's degree	33%	31%	70%	70%
Average age	37.8	38.4	41.0	44.1
Average months in position	11.6	36.5	21.0	39.0
Family Structure				
Single	40%	35%	40%	50%
Partnering	7%	6%	10%	10%
Married	43%	50%	40%	40%
Divorced	3%	6%	10%	0%
Widowed	3%	3%	0%	0%
Have children	68%	77%	56%	60%

Appendix B. Fatherhood Initiative Participant Case Studies

All names and identifying characteristics have been altered to protect the identity of the participants.

Michael

Michael is the father of several children ranging in age from seven months to 10 years. The seven month-old child currently receives services through Healthy Homes Mississippi. Michael has been involved with the home visiting program for approximately six months, and began participating within one month of the birth of his youngest daughter. He currently does not live in the home with any of his children and describes his relationship with the mother of the youngest child as “somewhat good. It has its ups and downs.” When asked about his relationship with his own father Michael declined to discuss it but stated, “I do wish he had been in this kind of program.”

Michael describes himself as an engaged father and states he makes an effort to involve himself, as much as possible, in the lives of all his children. He sees them or has some kind of contact with them most afternoons after school. Several of his sons are involved with sports teams and he attends their games. He is trying to enroll the girls in dance classes. He said that he checks on them regularly to see how they are doing in school and to ensure that they are completing their homework.

Although he does not live in the home, he sometimes does participate in the home visits. In fact, he became introduced to the Fatherhood Initiative during one of those sessions when the Fatherhood Coach accompanied the FSW. The Coach invited him to participate in the Fatherhood Initiative, and after some encouragement from the FSW, he agreed. During the first visit the Fatherhood Coach he said it “opened my eyes a lot.” After that initial one-on-one visit he decided to continue with the program. At the time of the interview, he either met one-on-one with the Fatherhood Coach or had some type of contact with him each week.

When asked about his experiences in the Initiative Michael stated that he learned a lot of fatherhood skills. His relationships and how he interacted with his children had changed. As an example, he shared that one of his children was being teased at school. He was able to use some of the techniques that he had learned to sit down with the child, discuss what was going on and provide him some suggestions for coping with the teasing. Prior to meeting



with the Fatherhood Coach he did not feel comfortable having a “sit down” conversation. He would go to his children’s sporting events and support them, but now he spends more time talking with and listening to them when they talk about what is going on at home and at school.

The Initiative also affected the way he interacted with the child’s mother; as he put it:

“It’s about being a good father. Being able to co-parent even if you and the mother are not together. It’s not about finances. Don’t let that be the reason that you don’t come around. It has to be about the child.”

From participating in the program he also came to recognize:

- A baby’s first months are important and there are ways to interact with even a small infant/child (e.g., reading to the child from books given to him by the Fatherhood Coach; talking to the child during feedings);
- There are many opportunities for a father to be involved in a child’s life; it’s not always about what you do for them (financially);
- Parents can discipline a child without fussing and belittling them; he was presented with different ways to deal with them.

During the interview, Michael was asked what influenced his continued involvement in the Fatherhood Initiative. Most of his responses either directly or indirectly referenced the Fatherhood Coach. The Coach was easy to relate to and shared some of his personal experiences. Michael stated that the Coach “...made me feel important.” He even made notes about some of the comments that Michael made.

Michael stated that he really liked being a part of the Fatherhood program. He found the sessions with the Coach to be very helpful. In addition, topics that were not covered during their conversations were addressed in the written materials that were provided and Michael often referred to the “handbooks” for guidance. When asked to offer suggestions for improvement, he said that he “wouldn’t change anything about it.”

Jamal

Jamal is an expectant father in his early twenties; he has no other children. He and his girlfriend live together. She is receiving services through Healthy Homes Mississippi. He does not participate in the home visits because of scheduling conflicts. At the time of the interview they were just weeks away from their child's birth and Jamal had been involved in the Fatherhood Initiative for close to three months. He became aware of the program through his girlfriend's grandmother. Since her granddaughter was in the "motherhood" component, she thought it would be good for Jamal to be in the fatherhood program. When Jamal's girlfriend talked to him about it, he readily agreed to be contacted by the Fatherhood Coach. After talking with the Coach he consented to participate. He meets with the Fatherhood Coach weekly, usually on a one-on-one basis.

Jamal and his father have a close relationship. He was in the home with Jamal for a period when he was younger, but family circumstances did not allow them to live together for his entire childhood. However, his father did continue to reside in the same neighborhood as Jamal and his siblings. As a minor, Jamal always had a desire to be close to his father. He stated that the courts moved him around and were "trying to keep me from my Dad and I loved my Dad so much." During Jamal's teen years when the two were separated, he would slip away from his home to spend weekends with his father. When Jamal became an adult, he moved in with his father.

Although the child that he and his girlfriend are expecting is considered his first child, Jamal believes that he has another child. He said that a former girlfriend became pregnant, but she hid the pregnancy from him and denied that he was the father. The two of them have an acrimonious relationship, and she now refuses to even speak to him. He has inquired about getting a paternity test, but said that he was told he could not do so without the mother's consent. He attempted for two years to no avail to get the mother to allow the test, but has since "left it alone." Despite the circumstances, he remains convinced that he is the child's father.

Jamal is excited about the upcoming birth of his child and looks forward to establishing his role as a father. Given his past experiences, he knew that he wanted his child's life to be different. He stated that, "I basically used my past of what I went through in life. I wouldn't want nobody to live through what I lived through. My past has motivated me." When asked whether the things that he had learned in the Fatherhood program had influenced his perceptions of the relationship he wants to have with his child he referenced the impact of a father on a child's overall well-being: teaching him/her right from wrong, demonstrating good manners, focusing on the child's health and well-being instead of material things and letting everyday occurrences be learning opportunities for the child.



Jamal stated that his involvement in the Fatherhood Initiative had impacted his relationship with his girlfriend as well. Even though they already were living together, participating in the program has made their relationship stronger. He said that there is "... a lot of communication instead of arguing about different things, but now we know we have a child and it is mostly about the child, instead of putting ourselves before the child."

When asked about ways in which the Fatherhood Coach had helped him, he gave this example:

"He really motivated us, to be there for our child. Every time he came he brought a different book. I will read to my child every night. That was his main interest he wanted us to read to the child. He wanted us to be a part of our child's life, no if and ands."

Jamal was very positive about his experiences with the program. Many of his comments were related to his connection with the Fatherhood Coach. He referred to him "a real cool guy" and stated that he didn't mind meeting with him. He also liked the Coach's approach in that he "has that book, the fatherhood book, but he don't always go by the book. We would talk like normal people. Just have a normal conversation instead of going for questions or reading and all of that." He felt that he could talk to the Coach about anything and that he was always there for him.

When asked for any suggestions to improve the program, Jamal indicated that initially, he thought Healthy Homes focused only on the mother and the baby. He didn't think it was designed for fathers. He also was hesitant because it was a part of the Department of Human Services, "Like DHS...that was the only part that spooked me. I didn't know nothing about it. It just popped up on me. I thought it was something with DHS." Other issues he offered for consideration to increase involvement in the Initiative in his community included:

- The age of the Coach- he felt comfortable with someone around his own age. Anyone over 40 would be considered "old" and not relatable;
- The Coach should be a man; and
- People generally do not want to be around people with whom they are not familiar.

Tony

Tony is the father of a three month old child. Tony first found out that he was going to be a father while he was serving a two-month jail sentence. He describes his relationship with the child's mother as "off and on." Even though he and the child's mother are not in a steady relationship, he is involved in his daughter's life and she lives with him part-time. He became involved in the Fatherhood Initiative shortly after her birth. After his release from jail he met with his child's family service worker (he participates in the sessions if he is at the home at the time of the visit.) She discussed his future plans, which included finding employment and enrolling in a parenting class. He agreed to participate in the Fatherhood Initiative because in his words, "A parenting class will help me out because I don't know nothing about children really." He admitted that the prospect of becoming a father was scary.

The childhood years were somewhat challenging for Tony. He was put in DHS custody as a baby and subsequently placed in the home of a relative. He lived there until he turned 18. He stated that he has never seen his father. Nonetheless, the relatives with whom he lived provided a stable environment and were positive role models. He stated that when they had disagreements, "...it was never no head bumping. No arguments. If they had a problem they would sit down and talk face-to-face. No arguing, no loud yelling or nothing."

When asked to relay what he'd gained from the Fatherhood Initiative in terms of the relationship that he wants to have with his child, Tony stated that he learned that just being present makes a big difference in the life of a child, even at a very young age. The things that he could teach her, just by being there, "...will be stuck in their head, so they know what to do." Being in the program made him aware of the extent to which fathers in Mississippi were not involved in their children's lives. It made him more respectful of those dads who were there and that motivated him to keep engaged with his daughter.

Tony spoke very highly of the nature of his interaction with the Fatherhood Coach. In fact he stated,

"He helped me in a lot of ways. He helped me stay focused. He helped me do what was right. If I didn't have him to talk to about my problems every week, I'd probably be in jail somewhere. He would always tell me it's not about you and her (child's mother) it's about the baby."



The approach that the Fatherhood Coach took with him helped to develop their relationship. Tony says he talks to him as if he is his “homeboy”. He shows Tony respect and asks for his perspective about the materials that they discuss. Even if Tony does not completely grasp the concept, the Coach will point out what he understood correctly and then help to clarify the points that may not have been as clear. “We will tell him what we feel then he will tell us, well you got it, you got it, but let me catch you up on a few more things.”

Tony did not have any suggestions or recommendations for improving the Fatherhood Initiative. His experience was positive and he looked forward to continuing in it. He was, however, unsure about how receptive others in his community would be. He stated that among his peers, many of them feel as though they don’t need any help in learning how to be a dad. He believes a person has to have an inner desire to be a better father; otherwise, they will show little or no interest in programs of this nature.

Appendix C. HHM Policy and Procedures Baseline Manual Review

The table below shows each section of the HHM Policy and Procedures Manual, the presence or absence of direct references to male caregivers within that section, and a brief suggestion for changing, adding or enhancing the policy or procedure.

Section of Manual	Direct Reference to Male Caregivers?	Suggestion for Enhancing Policy or Procedure
Program Introduction and Overview of HHM	Yes ✓ [p. 7]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add specific statement about priority to involve fathers in <i>Program Goals</i> • Add purpose of Fatherhood Coach to <i>Objectives</i> • Specify Fatherhood Initiative in <i>Service Components</i> (e.g., 24/7 Dad tools) • Include reference in <i>Target Population</i> throughout manual
Tracking of the HHM Program Families Identified and Referred through Community Relationships	No	
Parent Survey Tracking and Monitoring Processes	Yes ✓ [p. 10]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add reference to option to work with Fatherhood Coach (if applicable) in <i>Enrollment</i> sections • Add policy that shows FSW attempts to schedule visits at times that work for male caregivers • Check <i>Demographic Form</i> for equal reference to fathers
Initiation of Home Visiting Services	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add policy that shows FSW attempts to schedule visits at times that work for male caregivers • Add statement about program's interest in increasing father's involvement and acceptance rate • Add strategy that addresses priority to recruit fathers as one target population (on p.15)
Program Eligibility Guidelines /Criteria Use of Parent Survey Screening	Yes ✓ [p. 16]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider adding specific statement about serving fathers • Item 3 implies absence. For example, it reads, "father if he is available." Consider revising using strengths-based phrasing
Addressing the Family's Risk Factors and Stressors	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider including policy where FSW will discuss extent of male involvement as standing item in regular supervision • Add policy for working with both parents even if in separate households
Voluntary Program Participation	Yes ✓ [p. 19]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use terms that imply both parents are involved and valued under <i>Building Family Trust</i>
Engaging New Families and Maintaining Family Involvement	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider adding specific item demonstrating priority on maintaining involvement of males • Add reference to option to work with Fatherhood Coach (if applicable)
Creative Family Engagement	N/A	N/A
Tracking of the HHM Retention Rates	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add item to <i>Retention Procedures</i> which shows priority to include male caregivers (e.g., tracking male presence in visits)
Offering Services Intensively Clearly Defined Service Levels HHM Defined Levels of Service	N/A	N/A
HHM Home Visit Completion	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under <i>Close Out Procedure</i> item 6, add condition about positive co-parenting and/or including male caregiver (where applicable)

Section of Manual	Direct Reference to Male Caregivers?	Suggestion for Enhancing Policy or Procedure
Cultural Characteristics of Service Population	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add male caregivers (or parents living in separate households) to lists of family compositions served • Under <i>Family Centered</i> section add reference to review of success of Fatherhood Coach and collaboration to support male caregivers' involvement • Consider revising statements such as “<i>ethnic, cultural, linguistic factors...</i>” to include social or familial factors in the list
Individual Family Support Plan	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider adding condition that demonstrates programs' willingness to assist with IFSPs in separate households • Consider clarifying “each caregiver or both parents” instead of “<i>family</i>” when referring to documenting goals in item 12
The Promotion of Positive Parent-Child Interaction, Attachment, and Bonding and the Development of Nurturing Parent-Child Relationships	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider bolstering policy to include reference to importance of male caregiver involvement in child's life and incorporate throughout section • Assure screenings and assessment processes include observing and including fathers/male caregivers
System of Tracking Children with Suspected Developmental Delay	N/A	N/A
Connecting Participating Target Children to Health Services	N/A	N/A
Connecting Families to Community Services/Resources	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider adding statements that demonstrate program awareness of differing needs in separate households throughout sub-sections
Maintaining Staff Member Safety	Yes ✓ [p. 41–42]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statements in <i>DV Policy</i> section use his/her in reference to parent, this can be done in other sections of the manual as well • <i>Establish Rapport Procedures</i> references “<i>all of the adults and children...</i>” this can be done in other sections as well
Caseload Size	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider articulating how caseloads can be adjusted if FSW works between separate households with same child
Selection of Service Staff, Program Managers, Supervisors, Direct Service	N/A	N/A
Training Plan for Program Staff	Yes ✓ [p. 53]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider bolstering <i>Training Plan Policy</i> to require staff development in non-biased family interaction and respecting cultural differences • Add item specifying Father Involvement under training in “<i>Parent and Child Relationship.</i>” • Add item specifying Co-parenting under training in “<i>Maternal and Family Health</i>” and/or “<i>Family Goal Planning.</i>” • Add item specifically addressing Healthy Male Attachment to “<i>Infant-Child Development</i>”
HHM Professional Development Plan	Yes ✓ [p. 61]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See suggestions in <i>Training Plan for Program Staff</i> above • Consider rephrasing Engaging Fathers to assure positive and strengths-based approach (listed under <i>Family Issues</i> implies there is a deficit)
Site Staff Training Topics	Yes ✓ [p. 67]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider adding outreach to specific groups (e.g., fathers) under <i>Outreach on Staff Training Checklist</i>
Staff Supervision	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add reference for supervisor to review FSW's work with Fatherhood Coach and other strategies for involving males

Section of Manual	Direct Reference to Male Caregivers?	Suggestion for Enhancing Policy or Procedure
Site Advisory Board	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Male involvement is implied in the diversity of professional representation on the list of possible board members; could add explicit request for former or current father in the program
Participant Involvement in Program Planning and Evaluation	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Parent Satisfaction Surveys to assure male perspective is welcomed and encouraged Assure demographics appropriately capture father info
Site Parent Support Meetings	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Male involvement is implied with first statement, "Include all parents..." However, could make an explicit statement to encourage participation from Fatherhood Initiative
Site Team Support Meetings	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Male involvement is implied with first statement, "Include all staff..." However, could make an explicit statement to encourage participation from Fatherhood Coach
Comprehensive Quality Assurance Plan	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add "Fatherhood Coach" to list of CQI participants under <i>Monitoring and Evaluation of Quality Services</i> on p. 79 and throughout section as applicable
Rights and Confidentiality Release of Information	N/A	N/A
Other Challenging Issues	N/A	N/A
Information Security and Database	N/A	N/A
Site to Site Mentoring	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See suggestions above for <i>Site Staff Training Topics</i>, checklist is the same, training topics are also the same