

Strengthening Responsible Fatherhood Programs through Research and Evaluation: PACT and FaMLE Cross-Site

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Overview

- **Parents and Children Together (PACT)**

- Focus on selected grantees from ACF's 2011 cohort of Responsible Fatherhood programs



- **Selected Findings from PACT Implementation and Qualitative Studies**

- **Fatherhood and Marriage Local Evaluation (FaMLE) and Cross-Site Project**

- Focus on ACF's entire 2015 cohort of Responsible Fatherhood grantees



The Parents and Children Together Evaluation – PACT



PACT: A Multi-Component Evaluation

- ***Qualitative Study***
 - How do fathers view and carry out their roles as parents, providers, and partners?
- ***Implementation Study***
 - How were PACT programs designed and implemented?
- ***Impact Study***
 - Do programs improve outcomes for enrolled fathers?
- ***Study of Hispanic Fatherhood Programs***
 - How are programs for Hispanic fathers designed and received?

PACT: Robust Study Methods

- **Mixed-method implementation study**
 - Staff interviews and web survey
 - Enrollment and participation data
 - Focus groups with participating fathers
- **In-depth 2-hour interviews with participating fathers**
 - Obtain rich and nuanced detail about fathers' lives
 - Complement what is learned through other methods
- **Experimental impact evaluation**
 - Baseline survey; random assignment to program or control
 - Twelve month follow-up survey with fathers in both groups
 - Administrative data on fathers from NDNH

PACT: Current Status

- **Four RF programs in the implementation, qualitative, and impact study**
 - **Connections to Success in Kansas City MO and Kansas City KS**
 - **Fathers' Support Center in St. Louis MO**
 - **Goodwill-Easter Seals Minnesota in Minneapolis and St. Paul MN**
 - **Urban Ventures in Minneapolis MN**
- **Study enrollment ended February 2015 with 5,522 fathers**
- **Baseline surveys complete; currently completing 12-month followup; 71% response rate so far**
- **87 fathers participated in first wave of in-depth interviews; 59 in second wave; third wave this spring**
- **Implementation data for full period of evaluation collected; findings from initial period being updated**

Who are the Fathers that Enrolled in PACT?

Characteristics	Overall	Family Structure	Overall
Average age (years)	35	Number of children (avg)	2.6
Black, non-Hispanic	81%	Children by multiple mothers	47%
HS Diploma or GED	69%	Formal child support order	58%
Recent paid work	50%	Living with any of their children	22%
Criminal conviction	73%	Spent time with any of their children in past month	80%
Unstable housing	54%		

Source: PACT Baseline Survey Data, through 8/22/14. N = 4,734 fathers.

Note: Programs began PACT intake between 12/9/12 and 2/13/13.

PACT Qualitative Study: Fathers' Perspectives



Selected PACT Qualitative Study Findings

- **Fathers expressed intense desire to be a positive influence in their children's lives**
- **Appreciated parenting workshops--early family instability and fatherlessness left men unprepared**
- **Fathers inspired and motivated by staff who had overcome similar challenges**
- **Most common barrier was limited access to children due to contentious relationships with mothers**
- **Effect of past criminal records on employability and large child support arrearages made financial support of children challenging**

Implications from Qualitative Study

- **Strengthen efforts to improve fathers' access to children**
 - **Focus relationship services on co-parenting**
 - **Seek to resolve co-parenting conflicts between parents, such as through mediation**
 - **Help fathers secure legal parenting time orders**
- **Augment existing employment services, assist with expunging criminal records when possible**
- **Increase collaboration with child support and court system to modify orders, reduce arrearages**
- **Expand and intensify supplementary services (mental health, housing, drug treatment, legal assistance)**

PACT Implementation Study of Four Fatherhood Programs



Selected PACT Implementation Study Findings

- **All programs went beyond the three core services to include content on “personal/father development”**
- **All programs partnered with local child support, but assistance ranged from very limited to extensive**
- **Initial program engagement relatively high, but retention best in cohort-based programs**
 - **Standalone relationship skills workshops for fathers had the least take-up**
- **Setting performance targets, using data to monitor progress helped programs enroll and engage fathers**

Implications from Implementation Study

- **To improve take-up of relationship skills component, Increase accessibility and relevance of content**
- **To maximize participation, carefully consider service delivery structure**
 - **Open entry may not result in more participation because of availability bias**
 - **Offer services in larger time blocks**
- **Working closely and creatively with child support agencies may promote positive outcomes**
- **Reducing child support arrears may be a powerful incentive for program participation**

Published and Forthcoming PACT Reports

Published: RF Only

- “In Their Own Voices” ... report on Wave 1 of Qualitative Study, June 2015
- “Design and Implementation of RF Programs” ... report on first wave of data on RF programs, September, 2015
- “H-PACT” ... report on a study of RF programs serving Hispanic men, November 2015
- Practitioners’ Brief on Responsible Fatherhood programming, April 2015

Forthcoming: RF Only

- Three research briefs on findings from Qualitative Study Wave 2
- Research brief on quality of program implementation
- Report integrating findings from all waves of implementation and qualitative study
- Report on impacts of RF programs (estimated July 2017)
- Policy forum, webinar, podcasts

For More Information about PACT

- Contact Robin Dion at Mathematica Policy Research
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- For published reports see

ACF website

- <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/parents-and-children-together-pact-evaluation>

Mathematica's website

- <http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/our-publications-and-findings/projects/parents-and-children-together>

Family and Marriage Local Evaluation and Cross-Site Project



FaMLE Cross-Site Project

- **Supports all Responsible Fatherhood (RF) and Healthy Marriage (HM) grantees awarded 2015 ACF funding**
- **Key activities**
 - **Develop comprehensive set of evidence-informed performance measures (inputs, outputs, and outcomes)**
 - **Design and implement a new management information system to facilitate data collection by grantees**
 - **Provide training and technical support as grantees collect and report data**
 - **Support grantees as they conduct “local” evaluations**
 - **Conduct cross-site analyses of RF/HM grantees’ program design, implementation, and outcomes**

FaMLE Cross-Site Website

www.famlecross-site.info

- Designed specifically for OFA's RF and HM grant applicants
 - Program design
 - Evaluation design
 - Performance measures
 - nFORM prototype
- Questions to consider
- Tips
- Links to other resources



Resources For Evaluation Design

QUESTIONS AND RESOURCES FOR GRANT APPLICANTS TO CONSIDER WHEN DEVELOPING THEIR LOCAL EVALUATION PLANS

This page provides tips and resources for grant applicants to review as they plan data collection and evaluation for responsible fatherhood and healthy marriage programs. Each item in the list below expands into a section that includes a discussion of questions practitioners and evaluators may want to ask themselves when considering how to design their evaluations. The resources cited at the end of each section provide more information on these evaluation and data collection issues. The [glossary](#) provides definitions of many key terms related to program evaluation.

It is strongly recommended that grantee staff and local evaluators review these items together.

+/-	RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND DESIGN OF THE EVALUATION
+/-	ISSUES IN IMPACT STUDIES: DEFINING THE EXPERIMENTAL CONDITIONS
+/-	ISSUES IN RANDOMIZED-CONTROLLED TRIAL (RCT) STUDIES: CONDUCTING RANDOM ASSIGNMENT
+/-	ISSUES IN QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN (QED) STUDIES: SELECTING A COMPARISON GROUP
+/-	ISSUES IN STUDIES DOCUMENTING PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION
+/-	ISSUES IN DESCRIPTIVE PRE/POST DESIGN STUDIES
+/-	DATA COLLECTION DESIGN
+/-	LOGISTICS OF DATA COLLECTION