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Department of Family
and Protective Services

Shifting the Paradigm

Engaging Fathers in Child Welfare

The Importance of Fathers



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- Investing in children and family
- Breaking cycles of negativity
- Leaving positive legacy

The Statistics

Children/Youth from Fatherless Homes

Children/Youth from Homes with Fathers

63 percent of youth suicides

37 percent of youth suicides

90 percent of homeless and runaway youth

10 percent of homeless and runaway youth

85 percent of youth who exhibit behavioral disorders

15 percent of youth who exhibit behavioral disorders

71 percent of all high school dropouts

29 percent of all high school dropouts

75 percent of all youth in chemical abuse centers

25 percent of all youth in chemical abuse centers

70 percent of youth in state-operated institutions

30 percent of youth in state-operated institutions



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The Statistics

Fatherlessness in Texas (Brewer)*

- **In 2019**, 35% of all children in Texas (2.5 million) were from single-parent homes
 - 40% of all Hispanic/Latino children
 - 60% of all Black children
- **In 2020**, 42% of all births in Texas were to unmarried mothers
 - Nearly a half-million children in Texas have an incarcerated parent
 - 1.4 million children in Texas have one or more emotional, behavioral, or developmental challenges
 - 22,641 children in Texas were born to teenage mothers
 - Rate of 22 teen births per 1000 (*the national rate is 13.9 per 1000*)



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Recent Legislative Action

- **H.B. 567** prevents DFPS from removing children in non-emergencies. In addition, the bill prevents parents from losing their children solely due to marijuana use.
- **H.B. 2926** provides opportunity for permanency and reinforces the belief that all people –including children– heal from trauma through familial relationships.
- **H.B. 730** mandates investigators to notify parents accused of abuse or neglect of their legal rights.
- **H.B. 1087** requires investigators to document via affidavits all reasonable efforts to keep a child and family together (*similar to S.B. 2120*).





Why Fathers Matter

Studies suggest that fathers' involvement in permanency planning has the potential to reduce impact to disproportionate number of children of color.





Changing the Narrative

- Reflecting on past/current experiences
- Exploring relationships with male role models (*father, step-father, grandfather, mother's boyfriend, etc.*)
- Identifying possible barriers to involvement with child
 - Lack of understanding value of relationship
 - Employment status
 - Medical history
 - Life history (domestic violence, **incarceration**, etc.)
- Challenging them to define their **legacy** as a father



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Employing Engagement Concepts

DFPS has unique opportunity for first contact between agency and father to establish strength-based relationships.

- *Responsible Father Resources:*
 - ✓ https://dfps.texas.gov/Child_Protection/Family_Support/fathering_resources.asp
 - ✓ Family Help Line **1-844-888-6565**





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Empowering Our Voices





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Thank you

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