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Strengthening Families Through Fathers

SFTF Pilot Fatherhood Study Report

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Introduction

The Alabama Department of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention (ADCANP), also known as the Children’s Trust Fund, and the Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR), recognize that both mothers and fathers play an essential role in childrearing.

The mission of ADCANP is to secure resources to fund evidence-based community programs committed to the prevention of child maltreatment. They are an advocate for children and enhance the strengthening of families (Children’s Trust Fund of Alabama, 2020). The mission of DHR is to provide for the protection, well-being, and self-sufficiency of children and adults, as legislated by various state and federal codes (Alabama Department of Human Resources, 2020). The mission and vision of both state agencies are parallel: to strengthen and enhance the lives of children and families across Alabama. Each recognizes that parents may require assistance in creating nurturing and protective environments that produce positive child outcomes and reduce the risk of child maltreatment.

Currently, hundreds of fatherhood programs are active across the nation. Despite the prevalence of fatherhood programs, evaluation of these programs is still in the early stages. ADCANP and DHR are at the forefront in both funding and evaluation of fatherhood programs designed to strengthen families in Alabama. The extant findings are encouraging.

Recent published studies indicate the success of these [fatherhood] programs regarding enhanced economic stability and individual well-being of fathers, as well as enhanced father involvement with their children and better coparenting relationship quality (Adler-Baeder, et al., 2020).

Evaluation studies that replicate and extend the efforts to document program benefits serve to strengthen the research base for these programs.

ADCANP and DHR launched the Strengthening Families Through Fathers (SFTF) pilot program. The SFTF program utilizes the Protective Factors Framework (C.S.S.P., 2018; Browne, 2014) that emphasizes five vital factors for strengthening families: parent/family resilience, social connections, knowledge of parenting and child development, social and emotional competence of children, and concrete support in times of need. The framework is a research-informed approach used to help community-based child abuse prevention programs working with children and families. Theoretically, the framework elements parallel fatherhood program target outcomes (Fagan & Kaufman, 2015; James Bell Associates, 2010). The premise of the SFTF program was to provide focused attention, enhanced case management, and extended fatherhood program services for participants. After selecting three sites for the pilot program, ADCANP and DHR commissioned Auburn University to conduct a study evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of the SFTF

model. The overarching aim of the study is to evaluate the effectiveness of SFTF fatherhood programs in comparison to traditional TANF fatherhood programs in Alabama based on four assessment periods (pre-program assessment, post-program assessment, six-month follow-up, and one-year follow-up).

After review of the fatherhood programs funded across Alabama, three were invited to participate in the enhanced focused SFTF pilot project. The three sites chosen to implement the SFTF program are established family resource centers and are members of the Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers (ANFRC). The Family Resource Center model has nationally demonstrated one of the most successful social service models available to communities and families across Alabama (ANFRC, 2018).

In an effort to remain autonomous and to allow for creativity in program implementation, the three sites delivered the SFTF program with homogenous programmatic concepts, yet different implementation design approaches. The SFTF program services that were consistently and uniformly implemented across all three sites included 24/7 DAD® curriculum instruction, job readiness and career enhancement skills and education, basic adult education/literacy skills, financial literacy and awareness, and comprehensive, individualized case management, all delivered with the goal of promoting the five protective factors of the Strengthening Families™ Framework.

While all SFTF programs provided similar types of services to fatherhood program participants, program implementation varied across sites. One of the three sites implementing SFTF, the Family Guidance Center, created and utilized a unique combination of a web-based eLearning curriculum and on-line teaching and communication resources, accompanied by comprehensive, individual case management for program participants in addition to the core components of traditional TANF fatherhood programs. Another SFTF site, IMPACT Family Counseling, provided weekly field observations to program participants at businesses and other industries in the community. Program participants were also exposed to potential apprenticeship opportunities at collaborating businesses. The third site, Sylacauga's Alliance for Family Enhancement, or SAFE, also provided guest speakers from businesses and industries within the community as well as opportunities for field observations at these businesses. Financial assistance (i.e., transportation and program incentives) were provided to participants at all sites to encourage and promote program participation. Additionally, all sites used intakes and case management to assess individual participant needs and to provide enhanced, focused attention to participants within the SFTF program.

According to site staff, the key distinctions between traditional TANF fatherhood programs and the SFTF fatherhood programs primarily centered on extended personal, enhanced, one-on-one interaction with program participants. Typically, a fatherhood program funded by ADCANP is conducted over the course of 8 – 12 weeks. By comparison:

Participants in the pilot SFTF programs were provided with intensive, individualized services that continued for most, if not all, of the project year.

In the current study, we focused on quantitatively examining differences in fatherhood program participants' improvements on average in target outcome areas between SFTF program participants and traditional fatherhood program participants immediately post program, six months after program enrollment, and one year after program enrollment. Because of the limited sample size and the corresponding limited power to detect differences between groups, we also qualitatively explored the experiences of fatherhood program participants in focus groups to gain insight into their perception of benefits of the SFTF program and their role as fathers.



Methods

PROCEDURES

Fatherhood program participants were invited to participate in the study if they were not currently incarcerated since follow-up data collection was part of the analytic plan and access to incarcerated individuals is limited post-program. While some fathers participated in programs due to court mandates, other fatherhood participants attend voluntarily. Some participants were referred to the SFTF program from the local DHR office.

The data collection plan involved an intake survey at program start for the collection of demographic information, a retrospective pre/post survey given after program completion assessing target outcomes, and six-month and one-year follow-up surveys assessing target outcomes. The retrospective pre- and post-program survey given after program completion prompted fathers to reflect and report their level of knowledge or skill for each item before participation and then provide a score for their current level of knowledge or skill in that area after program participation. This method has been validated as an effective and efficient strategy for assessing perceived change among program participants (Pratt et al., 2000). As the method allows for simultaneous assessment of pre- and post-program levels, it is less susceptible to response bias shift and socially desirable responses at true baseline; thus, it may provide a more valid assessment of change (Pratt et al., 2000).

The Auburn University research team utilized contact information provided by the partnering agencies to gather six-month and one-year follow-up surveys. Fathers were contacted via telephone calls and emails. Auburn University evaluation staff managed data collection tracking, data entry, and payment at each phase of the study and provided technical assistance to agency partner staff as needed. IRB-approved protocols were adhered to, ensuring participant data confidentiality and ethical treatment. Participants received \$25 for completion of surveys at each phase of the study, giving participants the opportunity to earn up to \$75 dollars.

Semi-structured focus group interviews with SFTF participants were conducted at the three sites implementing the SFTF fatherhood programs in partnership with ADCANP. A female professor experienced with fatherhood programs led the discussion, while at least two trained field note-takers consolidated information provided by respondents in the focus group (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Fathers were compensated \$50 for participating in the one-hour focus group session.

PARTICIPANTS

The total study sample recruited from the three sites for the quantitative analyses included 197 fatherhood program participants who were not incarcerated during program participation (45% SFTF program participants; 55% traditional fatherhood program participants). The sample was 95% male and 5% female, as the fatherhood programs do not discriminate on the basis of sex for program participation. The sample included predominantly Black fathers (88%), and 10% of the sample were currently married while the majority (47%) were single, never married. The mean age of participants was 39.4 years ($SD = 11.0$). Participants were mostly lower income or not employed (75%) at baseline (see Table 1).

The qualitative study sample included 13 fathers from three SFTF focus groups, one group at each of the three selected sites. The sample included predominantly black fathers (92%), and most of them were currently unmarried. More specifically, 39% were single or never married and 15% were divorced. The mean age of the participants was 41.4 years ($SD = 9.01$). Participants were mostly lower income or not employed (69%) at baseline.

MEASURES

The measurements for the study are based on employing a mixed methods approach to ascertain and evaluate both quantitative and qualitative components of program research sites and participants. This approach is consistent with other studies examining and evaluating fatherhood programs in Alabama (Adler-Baeder et al., 2019) and across the country (Arnold and Beelmann, 2019; Giallo et al., 2019). The section below outlines the evaluation measures used in this study.

The retrospective pre/post survey contains 16 outcome measures that align with four out of five protective factors:



Social Connections

- Commitment to Couple Relationship (3 items)
- Conflict Management (3 items)
- Communication (3 items)
- Coparenting Relationship (2 items)
- Abuse Prevention Skills (1 item)



Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development

- Parent Involvement (2 items)
- Parent-Child Relationship Quality (3 items)
- Positive Parenting Behaviors (3 items)



Concrete Support in Times of Need

- Financial Responsibility (2 items)
- Economic Stability (1 item)
- Commitment to Pay Child Support (1 item)
- Commitment to Cooperate with Child Support Personnel (1 item)
- Income (1 item)
- Job Status (1 item)



Parental Resilience

- Hope for the Future (3 items)
- Depressive Symptoms (4 items)

Multi-item measures were reliable with inter-item correlations and Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from .61 to .86 (Cronbach, 1951).

As noted, the study utilized focus groups to better understand the experiences of fathers who participated in the SFTF program. Using focus groups to explore the Protective Factors is important for understanding in-depth experiences of fathers (Deslauriers et al., 2012, Adler-Baeder et al., 2019). The focus groups revealed perceptions of 13 fathers who participated in the SFTF program. Across all three focus groups, fathers participated in approximately 24 hours of program services focused on parenting over a 12-week period. Focus groups were 1-2 hours in length and were digitally recorded, transcribed, and coded into key themes. Six questions were used as a guide for focus group discussions.

Questions ranged from broad to specific:

1. What do you enjoy about being a father?
2. What do you find challenging about being a father?
3. How has your coparenting relationship changed while participating in the program?
4. As a father, what are the main obstacles you face when it comes to paying child support?
5. How have you benefited from the SFTF program?
6. What words of wisdom would you give to future fathers who are considering participating in SFTF?

Results

To address our first aim of examining differences in average change in target outcomes between SFTF fatherhood participants and traditional fatherhood participants immediately following program participation, six months after program enrollment, and one year after program enrollment, mixed between/within repeated measures analyses of covariance (RMANCOVAs) were conducted, using the type of fatherhood program as the between-groups factor and a p -value of .10 to account for the limited statistical power in the small sample sizes, particularly at follow-up timepoints. 50.3% of fathers provided follow-up data at either the 6-month or the 1-year follow-up. Due to attrition at follow-up points, analytic samples included the following sample sizes: baseline to immediate post program $n = 192$; baseline to six months after program completion $n = 88$; and baseline to one year after program completion $n = 67$. Note: There were no statistically significant differences between the full sample and the analytic samples for 6 month and 1 year tests in terms of sex, race, relationship status, education, job status and income, indicating the follow up samples were representative of the original sample.

SFTF PROGRAM EFFECTS

Participants in the SFTF program reported greater improvements compared to the fathers in traditional programs in: commitment to the couple relationships and in financial responsibility immediately after the program, with the effect on financial responsibility sustained to the one year point.

Fathers in traditional programs had greater improvements in positive parenting at the 6-month point, and in coparenting quality at the one year point. However, SFTF fathers also had significant improvements in coparenting quality at the one year mark.

From baseline to immediately post-program, two differences between groups were detected. Post hoc analyses of the interaction effect found indicated that fathers in the SFTF programs reported improvements, on average, in *commitment to their couple relationships* ($t(63) = -4.63, p < .001$) while traditional fatherhood program participants did not report improvements ($t(76) = -1.50, p = .14$). Additionally, fathers in SFTF programs reported enhanced improvements in *financial responsibility* ($t(79) = -5.51, p < .001$) compared to fathers in traditional fatherhood programs, who also reported improvements ($t(98) = -2.51, p = .014$).

From baseline to six months later, one difference between groups were found. Contrary to expectations, traditional fatherhood program participants reported improvements in *positive parenting behaviors* ($t(32) = -2.76, p = .01$) while SFTF program participants did not report improvements ($t(46) = -.75, p = .46$).

From baseline to a year after program enrollment, two differences between groups were found. Fathers in the SFTF programs reported improvements on average in *financial responsibility* ($t(35) = -3.08, p = .004$), while fathers in traditional fatherhood programs reported no improvements ($t(29) = -.88, p = .38$).

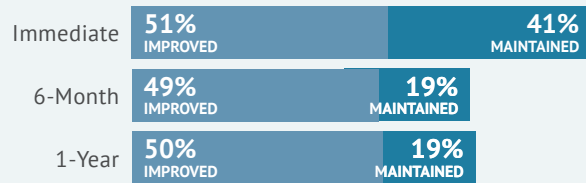
In addition, from baseline to a year later, contrary to expectations, traditional fatherhood participants reported more enhanced improvements in *coparenting relationship quality* ($t(24) = 4.33, p < .001$) compared to SFTF fathers, who also improved ($t(32) = 2.67, p = .012$).

MAIN EFFECTS OF TIME

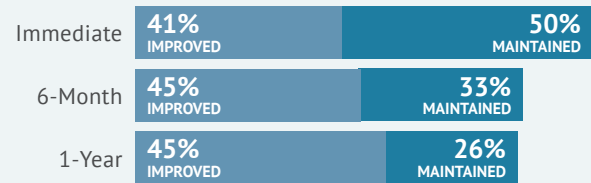
While SFTF fathers did not report enhanced improvements compared to traditional fatherhood program participants in target outcomes other than commitment to their *couple relationship* immediately post-program and *financial responsibility* immediately post-program and one year after enrollment, many improvements on average were reported by all fatherhood program participants.

Significant Main Effects of Time by Outcomes

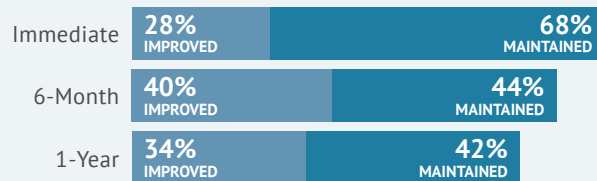
Conflict Management



Communication



Abusive Prevention Skills



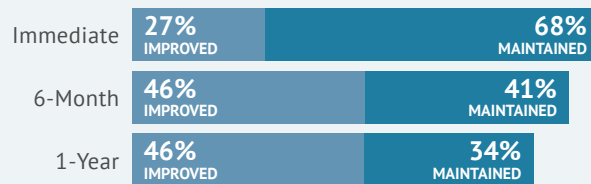
Financial Responsibility



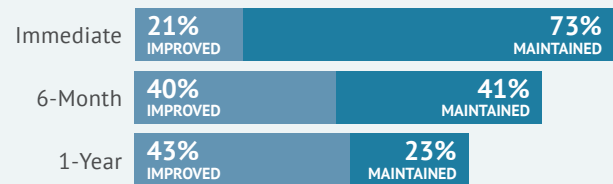
Economic Stability



Father/Parent Involvement



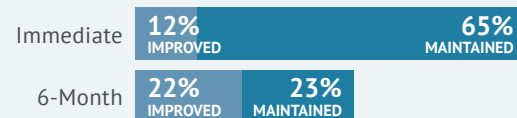
Parent-Child Relationship Quality



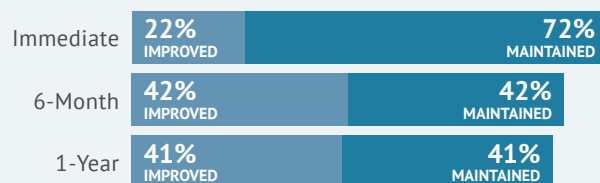
Positive Parenting Behavior



Coparenting Relationships



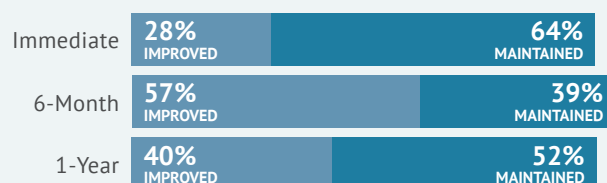
Commitment to Paying Child Support



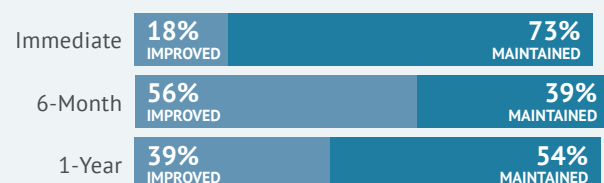
Commitment to Cooperate with Child Support Personnel



Income



Job Status



All fatherhood program participants reported statistically significant improvements ($p < .10$), on average, in the following target outcomes **from baseline to immediately post-program**:

- Job Status
- Income
- Conflict Management
- Communication
- Abuse Prevention Skills
- Economic Stability
- Parent Involvement
- Parent-Child Relationship Quality
- Positive Parenting Behaviors
- Coparenting Relationship Quality
- Commitment to Pay Child Support
- Commitment to Cooperate with Child Support Personnel

All fatherhood program participants reported statistically significant improvements, on average, in the following target outcomes **from baseline to six months after program enrollment**:

- Job Status
- Income
- Conflict Management
- Communication
- Abuse Prevention Skills
- Financial Responsibility
- Parent Involvement
- Parent-Child Relationship Quality
- Coparenting Relationship Quality
- Commitment to Pay Child Support
- Commitment to Cooperate with Child Support Personnel

All fatherhood program participants reported statistically significant improvements, on average, in the following target outcomes **from baseline to one year after program enrollment**:

- Job Status
- Income
- Conflict Management
- Communication
- Abuse Prevention Skills
- Parent Involvement
- Parent-Child Relationship Quality
- Positive Parenting Behaviors
- Commitment to Pay Child Support

There were no statistically significant shifts from baseline to immediate post-program in *hope for the future* or *depressive symptoms*. There were no statistically significant or trending shifts from baseline to six-months later in *commitment to couple relationship*, *hope for the future*, *economic stability*, or *depressive symptoms*. Lastly, there were no statistically significant or trending shifts from baseline to a year later in *commitment to couple relationship*, *hope for the future*, *economic stability*, *commitment to cooperate with child support personnel*, or *depressive symptoms*.

QUALITATIVE RESULTS

To address the second aim of qualitatively exploring the experiences of fatherhood program participants to gain insight into their perception of the role of the father, and the benefits of the program, we utilized qualitative thematic coding and methods for cross-coder reliability.

Focus groups discussions were digitally recorded, transcribed, and coded into key themes. Thematic coding was utilized to analyze field notes from the focus group discussions. First, focus group field notes were read without assigning any codes or developing any themes. Individual note-takers then used comments options in the document to note themes in each response set. These were sent to the primary coder. After thorough review of all notes and suggested codes, the primary coder used a grouping method to consolidate consistent, broad themes in the responses and select illustrative comments related to the themes. The thematic coding highlights four focus areas: coparenting relationships challenges and improvements, child support concerns, personal benefits from program, and advice on how to succeed in SFTF.

Theme 1 - Coparenting Relationship Challenges and Improvements

Fathers reported that SFTF helped them to separate personal conflicts with their children's mothers from continuing parental responsibilities. Several fathers discussed the process of becoming a better coparent while participating in SFTF. Some of the comments from participants are quoted below:

"As far as co-parenting, it was really a struggle between me and my wife. Problem was me and her. So both of us came and she got her little bit of knowledge and I got mine. Every time we come home together, oh well, we talked about this and we talked about that. Mistakes. So, it's kind of enhance that. So we come home and talk about the things we're doing wrong and what we need to do better. Pulled everything together better now."

"Afterwards, sitting here, I'm getting better. I was actually able to call my baby's mama and talk to her like a human, yesterday. She has her days, you know. I don't press the issue on her about my boys. You know. So, it's getting better. It was worse before I came. Is getting better since I've been here."

"She'll call or we have Facebook. So, she might write a message on Facebook, if he needs anything. Updates. Like graduation is coming up, the time, the date. You know, we'll meet up [...] But, we just keep a good image. If we have something going on, you know, I tell them, or they tell me. Like vice versa."

Theme 2 – Child Support Concerns

A major concern for fathers was child support. Emerging child support issues included disagreements with mothers, unemployment and underemployment, and gender inequality in the child support system. Fathers described their frustrations with the child support system, recommendations to create a gender-neutral system, and lessons learned from SFTF about child support obligations.

"Oh, I learned something. Like when they was okay, you might spending your money for your child to do this. But, your baby's mama's lights have to be paid. The water's got to be paid. If she takes the money and does something else with it, as long as it's in favor of my child. At first, I was against it. Use my money for my child! But, they open my eyes up and made me see a different way. I can agree now. That did open my eyes."

Theme 3 – Personal Benefits from Program - Fathers' perceived SFTF as providing personal benefits in the areas of better communication, attentiveness to children, learning self-control, and learning to love one's self and his children.

"Better communication with their mother too. Because I was really mad for a long time, until I started this lil class here. This class helped. It took a lot of anger out of me. Especially yesterday. Since, they took me off of 1 (completed his child support obligations). So I feel good."

"I used to didn't pay attention to him, my son. But, now, I'm paying attention to him. Because of the class, I learned it. When you pay attention, then, you can get better vibes out of him. And, that's what I've been getting from my son. Whenever, I'm telling him what I'm learning, he will tell his sister and she'll call me and ask me is this true. Yes, it's true. If you go to the class you'll learn."

“I’m gonna say self-control. Controlling my actions and my anger and everything. You know, sometimes it’s best not to say nothing. It’s best to go on, to do what they say and stuff like that. Yeah, controlling my anger.”

“When I came to the program, I was going through a real internal struggle. I had just served 10 years in the feds and I’ve been in and out of incarceration, since I was 11 years old. With me having six boys, I didn’t have any love for myself or for human beings to be exact. To even properly love my children. You see what I’m saying. I can’t speak for everybody, but me. Like coming up the way that I did, coming up in a household like I did [...] So when I came to this class right here, it helped me to come from being reduced as a human being, to a commodity in the penitentiary, to returning back to society as a beast. Like, that make or break process is going to take place in life whether you like it or not. So the beginning of my process of being a dad to my children, really began when I came to this class. So, it took me from being a monster to my babies, to being a humanitarian so to speak because all I was teaching them was how to kill or be killed.”

“As for me, it has helped me with my communication. Being able to just sit down and listen to what my son is saying. Instead of just hearing it. Just actually listening to it, makes it better than just, blah blah, blah, and then walking off and be like forget about it. But now, there’s just certain things that he kind of tells me that just runs through my mind during daytime.”

Theme 4 - Advice on How to Succeed in SFTF

Perceived program benefits included developing parenting skills in a short time frame, learning positive ways to parent and build better relationships with children, being able to convey parenting knowledge learned in SFTF to children and other family members, and classes that created a father-friendly environment.

“You will really get something out of it. It’s sorta changed me now. In just, a little time. If they had had that, back in like the 80s. I don’t know if they had this kind of guidance, but they didn’t have anything like this then.”

“Not just with the children, but life in general. Just with people in general. You know. I mean, it helped me a lot, not just besides the kids. Just being in a relationship with people. You know what I mean, far as like you know, being in a relationship with my father. Some of the things that we had that wasn’t there, is now. It’s just a little bit better. Because, I have learned some things. And now, I know how to relate with him and he knows how to relate with me.”

“Be ready because it’s an adventure. You will end up liking it. Like we said, I really didn’t know anybody, but him. But, I really don’t know him. But you feel like, that you’re coming into a family, when you’re coming into class. Because you get the people helping. I see my man here, he’s trying to help my man here. You will have people that’s going to look for you and do for you. So, be prepared to build a bond with someone. Be prepared to be ready. Just excited.”

“A lot of us have been called negative things for so long. It feels good to be in an environment for us people. Not just us, but other people consider us as people. That’s a whole different environment and we need to know that such people exist.”

Using anecdotal evidence from the focus groups was an important feature within the study to help frame the narrative of fatherhood for program participants. The focus group themes clearly show a change in perception along various dimensions of fatherhood such as managing coparenting relationships, child support usage, managing anger and self-control, child attentiveness, communication, and self-efficacy. These attributes or lessons learned are clearly taught within the SFTF program. The personal assertions from the focus groups illustrated and perhaps reflected the journey of fatherhood encompassing self-discovery and self-awareness. Lastly, the themes surmised from the qualitative analysis aligned with outcome measures.



Implications for Practice and Conclusion

Among a group of fathers participating in two types of fatherhood programs across three sites in Alabama, we find evidence of significant improvements for the average participant over a one-year period in multiple areas related to family strengths that serve as protective factors for children (Browne, 2014): social connections, parent/family resilience, parenting skills and child development knowledge; and concrete supports in times of need.

Overall, the program participants in the traditional and SFTF fatherhood programs saw improvements across most measures in the desired direction. This is consistent with previous studies of other fatherhood programs supported by ADCANP utilizing the Strengthening Families framework (Landers, 2017; Adler-Baeder et al., 2019; Landers 2020).

The SFTF participants reported some added benefits in their couple relationships and in financial responsibility. One possible explanation for financial responsibility increasing more over time for this group may be due to the added workplace development emphasis across the three program sites. Each SFTF program site incentivized program participation by either paying participants to take classes and/or paid for certifications over the course of a year period, which directly increased fathers' income. Although the sites' approaches to providing workplace development varied depending on the needs of the fathers in their programs, all programs using the SFTF model placed an enhanced focus on economic stability and workplace development. The increased financial responsibility in managing money may improve child support payments and potentially reduce child abuse and neglect (Cancian et al., 2013; Schumacher et al., 2001). The lasting programmatic effects of intensive case management positively impacts financial responsibility (Adler-Baeder et al., 2019) as suggested by the SFTF framework.

The qualitative anecdotal narratives described clear benefits to SFTF participants in key areas that align with the Protective Factors for families.

Although we quantitatively found that SFTF fatherhood participants saw statistically significantly enhanced improvements over time in financial responsibility compared to the traditional participants, the focus group discussions also revealed improvements in self-regulation and relationships among these participants. The qualitative anecdotal narratives described clear benefits to SFTF participants in key areas that align with the Protective Factors for families.

Fathers noted improvements in coparenting relationships with child's mother, improved communication skill, and improved self-control. Also evident was the fathers' value for the program and the connections made through the classes.

Program administrators and broad stakeholders should perhaps consider that self-regulation and interpersonal aspects of the program, combined with more workplace development skills likely lead to better financial responsibility for fathers.

Our findings validate the approach of emphasizing interpersonal skill and workplace development to garner financial responsibility of fathers. This is a key aim of fatherhood programs.

We note some practical implications based on our results and experiences. First, the SFTF program model appears to be as effective, and in some ways, more effective than other fatherhood programs. It is likely that the added time and emphasis, particularly on adult relationship quality and job skills and financial self-efficacy, were beneficial for SFTF program fathers. Listening to the voice and narratives of fathers participating the SFTF program was helpful in uncovering additional areas of programmatic benefits for some fathers in their coparenting relationships and in their individual life skills and well-being. The noted benefits of SFTF programs, as told by the fathers, may have lasting impacts on how fathers communicate with mothers, coparent, gain skills to meet the financial obligations of having children, and meet their own and their children's socio-emotional needs. Thus, the programs assessed demonstrate they are meeting the desired results of strengthening fathers and families by enhancing protective factors.



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Table 1. Quantitative Sample demographics

Demographic Characteristics	N	%
Sex		
Male	183	95%
Female	9	5%
Relationship Status		
Single, never married	93	48%
Divorced	33	17%
Committed relationship	31	16%
Married	20	11%
Separated	12	6%
Widowed	3	2%
Race/Ethnicity		
Black or African American	164	88%
White	20	11%
Other	2	1%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	<1%
Job Status		
Not currently employed	126	78%
Full time work	15	9%
Part time work	11	7%
Temporary, seasonal, or occasional work	7	5%
Employed, but number of hours vary	2	1%
Education		
High school diploma/GED	96	50%
Did not finish high school	56	30%
Trade school/technical certificate	20	10%
Associate's degree	11	6%
Bachelor's degree	7	4%
Monthly Income		
Nothing, not employed	132	75%
\$100 - \$799	28	16%
\$800 - \$1,599	9	5%
\$1,600 - \$2,499	5	3%
\$2,500 - \$3,299	2	1%
\$5,000 or more	1	<1%

Table 2. Aim 1: RMANCOVAs Results for fathers' functioning on time and interaction effects of time and group

	Mean		Std Dev		Size (N)		SD Pooled	Cohen's d	Time F	Time Effects Sig	Time x Group F	Group Effects Sig
	T1	T2	T1	T2	T1	T2						
Commitment to their Couple Relationship	5.06	5.33	1.98	1.94	77	77	1.96	0.14	18.22	0.000*	4.61	0.034*
Conflict Management Skills	5.08	5.96	1.67	1.24	96	96	1.47	0.59	62.49	0.000*	0.25	0.622
Communication Skills	5.73	6.22	1.65	1.27	98	98	1.47	0.33	39.42	0.000*	1.87	0.173
Hope	5.31	5.31	1.70	1.70	104	104	1.70	0.00	-	-	-	-
Financial Responsibility	6.09	6.48	1.58	1.23	99	99	1.41	0.28	34.07	0.000*	6.44	0.012*
Economic Stability	4.53	4.60	1.97	1.96	95	95	1.97	0.04	5.00	0.027*	2.08	0.151
Parent Involvement	6.11	6.38	1.32	1.11	83	83	1.22	0.22	13.42	0.000*	0.29	0.592
Parent-Child Relationship Quality	5.90	6.01	1.39	1.33	90	90	1.36	0.08	6.32	0.013*	0.28	0.595
Positive Parenting Behavior	5.84	5.97	1.38	1.31	89	89	1.35	0.09	7.96	0.005*	0.30	0.586
Coparenting Conflict	3.06	2.68	2.17	2.01	84	84	2.09	-0.18	12.29	0.001*	0.10	0.758
Dating Abuse Prevention Skills	5.73	6.31	1.88	1.37	98	98	1.64	0.35	38.97	0.000*	0.97	0.327
Commitment to Pay Full Child Support	5.12	5.49	2.20	2.20	57	57	2.20	0.17	8.14	0.005*	0.06	0.804
Cooperating with Child Support Personnel	5.24	5.65	2.11	2.09	55	55	2.10	0.20	11.65	0.001*	0.09	0.766
Depression Symptoms	1.58	1.92	0.63	0.88	3	3	0.76	0.44	0.37	0.547	1.04	0.310
Job Status	0.29	0.45	0.63	0.73	78	78	0.68	0.23	3.08	0.083*	-	-
Income	1.44	1.71	1.07	1.39	90	90	1.24	0.21	12.40	0.000*	2.15	0.144

*Denotes statistical significance: $p < .1$.

Table 3. Aim 1: RMANCOVAs Results for fathers' functioning on time and interaction effects of time and group

	Mean		Std Dev		Size (N)		SD Pooled	Cohen's d	Time F	Time Effects Sig	Time x Group F	Group Effects Sig
	T1	T3	T1	T3	T1	T3						
Commitment to their Couple Relationship	5.32	5.62	1.83	1.73	23	23	1.78	0.17	0.011*	0.92	1.252	0.268
Conflict Management Skills	5.05	5.97	1.82	1.30	37	37	1.58	0.58	6.921	0.01*	1.695	0.197
Communication Skills	5.99	6.58	1.60	0.75	37	37	1.25	0.47	7.563	0.007*	0.235	0.629
Hope	5.39	5.66	1.86	1.46	39	39	1.67	0.16	2.17	0.144	0.142	0.708
Financial Responsibility	6.01	6.55	1.77	0.98	38	38	1.43	0.38	11.424	0.001*	0.958	0.331
Economic Stability	4.70	4.41	2.07	2.03	37	37	2.05	-0.15	0.422	0.518	0.067	0.796
Parent Involvement	6.27	6.56	1.00	1.24	32	32	1.13	0.26	7.511	0.008*	1.093	0.299
Parent-Child Relationship Quality	6.05	6.45	1.31	1.24	34	34	1.28	0.31	3.369	0.070*	0.539	0.465
Positive Parenting Behavior	5.91	6.67	1.25	0.72	33	33	1.02	0.75	7.025	0.010*	2.929	0.091*
Coparenting Conflict	3.55	2.07	2.41	1.64	29	29	2.06	-0.72	15.068	0.000*	0.859	0.357
Dating Abuse Prevention Skills	5.58	6.56	2.02	1.00	36	36	1.59	0.61	8.573	0.004*	0.882	0.350
Commitment to Pay Full Child Support	5.36	6.07	2.24	1.82	14	14	2.04	0.35	3.649	0.063*	0.060	0.807
Cooperating with Child Support Personnel	5.50	6.08	2.32	1.83	12	12	2.09	0.28	3.801	0.06*	0.027	0.871
Depression Symptoms	1.58	1.75	0.63	0.25	3	3	0.48	0.35	0.000	0.987	1.054	0.308
Job Status	0.58	1.50	0.81	0.81	26	26	0.81	1.14	51.406	0.000*	0.262	0.610
Income	1.64	2.72	1.10	1.70	36	36	1.43	0.76	43.935	0.000*	0.013	0.908

*Denotes statistical significance: $p < .1$.

Table 4. Aim 1: RMANCOVAs Results for fathers' functioning on time and interaction effects of time and group

	Mean		Std Dev		Size (N)		SD Pooled	Cohen's d	Time F	Time Effects Sig	Time x Group F	Group Effects Sig
	T1	T4	T1	T4	T1	T4						
Commitment to their Couple Relationship	5.65	6.42	1.57	0.85	16	16	1.26	0.61	1.965	0.170	0.941	0.339
Conflict Management Skills	4.98	5.91	1.87	1.36	29	29	1.63	0.57	3.997	0.050*	1.898	0.173
Communication Skills	5.84	6.52	1.53	0.62	29	29	1.17	0.58	5.936	0.018*	1.263	0.265
Hope	5.72	5.73	1.64	0.79	30	30	1.29	0.01	1.272	0.264	1.172	0.283
Financial Responsibility	6.30	6.58	1.58	0.79	30	30	1.25	0.23	8.128	0.006*	2.979	0.089*
Economic Stability	4.46	4.86	2.03	1.76	28	28	1.90	0.21	0.146	0.703	2.451	0.123
Parent Involvement	6.02	6.38	1.12	0.90	26	26	1.01	0.36	9.992	0.003*	1.402	0.241
Parent-Child Relationship Quality	5.94	6.54	1.32	1.23	26	26	1.28	0.47	2.868	0.096*	1.938	0.169
Positive Parenting Behavior	6.01	6.79	1.16	0.45	26	26	0.88	0.89	15.293	0.000*	0.708	0.404
Coparenting Conflict	3.60	1.38	2.61	0.68	25	25	1.91	-1.16	26.211	0.000*	3.159	0.081*
Dating Abuse Prevention Skills	5.59	6.52	2.04	0.99	36	36	1.61	0.58	2.180	0.049*	2.180	0.145
Commitment to Pay Full Child Support	5.00	6.50	2.26	1.00	12	12	1.75	0.86	0.230	0.019*	0.981	0.331
Cooperating with Child Support Personnel	5.13	6.63	2.75	1.06	8	8	2.08	0.72	1.868	0.184	2.919	0.100*
Depression Symptoms	1.25	1.50	0.35	0.71	2	2	0.56	0.45	0.081	0.778	0.853	0.362
Job Status	0.58	0.89	0.90	0.94	19	19	0.92	0.34	11.548	0.001*	1.112	0.296
Income	1.52	2.14	1.12	1.62	29	29	1.39	0.45	13.220	0.001*	0.283	0.597

*Denotes statistical significance: $p < .1$.

Table 5. Percent change in desired direction by group

		% Improved		% Maintained		% Lowered	
		SFTF	Comparison	SFTF	Comparison	SFTF	Comparison
Commitment to Couple Relationship	T1-T2*	50	26	45	58	8	16
	T1-T3	41	48	21	22	38	30
	T1-T4	42	50	32	31	26	19
Conflict Management	T1-T2	53	49	37	44	10	7
	T1-T3	43	57	19	19	38	24
	T1-T4	46	55	17	21	37	24
Communication	T1-T2	46	38	47	53	8	9
	T1-T3	48	41	27	41	25	19
	T1-T4	44	45	28	24	28	31
Hope for the Future	T1-T2	0	0	100	100	0	0
	T1-T3	45	39	21	23	34	39
	T1-T4	56	37	3	13	41	50
Abusive Prevention Skills	T1-T2	32	26	66	70	3	4
	T1-T3	39	42	41	47	20	11
	T1-T4	31	41	46	38	23	21
Financial Responsibility	T1-T2*	40	25	56	64	4	11
	T1-T3	44	32	40	50	17	18
	T1-T4*	44	23	42	53	14	23
Economic Stability	T1-T2	24	14	66	76	10	11
	T1-T3	40	43	26	11	34	46
	T1-T4	38	57	18	7	44	36
Father/Parent Involvement	T1-T2	30	24	65	70	5	6
	T1-T3	50	41	37	47	13	13
	T1-T4	46	46	39	27	15	27
Parent-Child Relationship Quality	T1-T2	21	20	74	72	5	8
	T1-T3	43	35	38	44	19	21
	T1-T4	35	54	27	19	38	27
Positive Parenting Behavior	T1-T2	23	20	71	72	6	8
	T1-T3	49	58	26	24	26	18
	T1-T4	52	58	27	39	21	4
Coparenting Relationships	T1-T2	25	23	60	69	16	8
	T1-T3	51	62	22	24	27	14
	T1-T4	58	60	15	28	27	12
Commitment to paying Child Support	T1-T2	23	21	72	72	5	7
	T1-T3	48	29	35	57	17	14
	T1-T4	35	50	47	33	18	17
Commitment to Cooperate with Child Support Personnel	T1-T2	18	26	79	71	4	4
	T1-T3	41	33	48	42	10	25
	T1-T4	28	38	50	50	22	13
Depressive Symptoms	T1-T2	39	67	17	33	44	0
	T1-T3	28	33	22	33	50	33
	T1-T4	32	50	21	50	47	0
Income	T1-T2	39	19	52	73	9	8
	T1-T3	54	61	44	33	2	6
	T1-T4	44	34.5	50	55	6	10
Job Status	T1-T2	-	18	-	73	-	9
	T1-T3	53	62	43	35	5	4
	T1-T4	46	26	49	63	6	11

*Denotes statistical significance for outcomes in which SFTF participants reported enhanced improvements: $p < .1$.



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