

# Child Well-Being in Pennsylvania and the *Urgent Need* for Father Involvement



## Summary Companion Report

Statewide Symposium Convened on  
September 27, 2017, in  
Mechanicsburg, PA

### Sponsored By:

Allegheny Intermediate Unit, AMACHI Inc.,  
Child Welfare League of America, Delta  
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Pennsylvania Chapter of the National  
Association of Social Workers, and The Strong  
Families Commission, Incorporated

**August, 2018**



**Symposium Organizing Committee**

### **Disclaimer:**

The recommendations contained in this Report do not necessarily represent, in total, the opinions and/or consensus of all participants who attended the September 27, 2017, *Symposium on Child Well-Being in Pennsylvania and the Urgent Need for Father Involvement*.

Nor does it represent a complete picture of the myriad of State-administered programs critical to the well-being of children, fathers, and families.

The Report does, however, reflect the consensus of participants and various Pennsylvania state and local leaders that the role of fathers in the lives of their children is critical to their emotional, social, educational and economic health.

Furthermore, the Report underscores participants support for implementing a “systems integration approach” (e.g., a statewide plan) that emphasizes: a) the urgent need for father involvement by removing systemic barriers; and b) adopting policies that allow for the provision of father-inclusive services throughout the family care network of agencies within the Commonwealth.

Please refer to the FULL COMPREHENSIVE REPORT (separate document) for an in-depth review and discussion of the “Proceedings, Observations, Research Findings and Recommendations” emanating from the September 27, 2017, Statewide Symposium on *Child Well-Being in Pennsylvania and the Urgent Need for Father Involvement*.

Post 2017 Symposium

**-- SUMMARY COMPANION REPORT --**

**Child Well-Being in Pennsylvania and the  
Urgent Need for Father Involvement:**

***Proceedings, Observations, Research Findings and  
Recommendations***

*Submitted to:*

**His Excellency Thomas W. Wolf, Governor of Pennsylvania**

**The Honorable Members of the General Assembly**

**The Honorable Chief Justice and Justices of the Supreme Court**

*Submitted by:*

*The Reverend Dr. W. Wilson Goode, Sr.*

*Chair*

*Symposium Organizing Committee (SOC)*

**August 2018**

## Proceedings Editors

At the conclusion of the Statewide Symposium on “Child Well-Being in Pennsylvania and the Urgent Need for Father Involvement” held on September 27, 2017, enthusiasm was running high among the 154 symposium participants.

Yet the hard work (post-symposium) and the need for producing a report of the proceedings was to be shouldered primarily by the following individuals:

*Kevin A. Golembiewski, Esquire*  
*Writer and Principal Editor*

&

*Dr. Rufus Sylvester Lynch, ACSW*  
*Quality Assurance Content Editor*

Their work not only consisted of organizing the valuable information emanating from the Symposium but to frame the issues identified by the workgroup participants (e.g., barriers to and recommendations for father involvement) in a cohesive format. This effort included a search of the literature and state-of-the art research that further provided context for these issues as reflected in both the Full Comprehensive Report and, to a more limited extent, the Summary Companion Report.

A special thanks to Kelly Hoffman, Kids Count Director with the Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children and Tim Schock, Data Analyst with Pennsylvania State Data Center, for compiling county-specific data on children in poverty that has been included in this report. This information brings the issue of father absence and/or father non-involvement and its consequences on child and family well-being to Pennsylvanians locally.

Speaking on behalf of the editors, it is our collective hope that this Report will be of use to a wide-range of policy-makers, service providers, and advocates who recognize the importance of moving the issue of fatherhood to the forefront of state and local level policy and program priorities.

*Ms. Debra Pontisso, MPA*  
*Director of Institutional Advancement*  
*and Editor of Publications*

[www.thestrongfamiliescommission.com](http://www.thestrongfamiliescommission.com)



To: His Excellency Thomas W. Wolf, Governor of Pennsylvania;  
The Honorable Members of the General Assembly; and  
The Honorable Chief Justice and Justices of the Supreme Court

The following pages present an analysis of various aspects of the Commonwealth's child and family related programs and services. We strive to demonstrate and convince you to embark on a mission dedicated to improving the lives of children, parents and families in Pennsylvania. Each of you is imbued with the power, acting within your separate governmental spheres, to effectively foster a positive environment where children receive the support of both their parents to be nurtured and reared in an environment for positive growth.

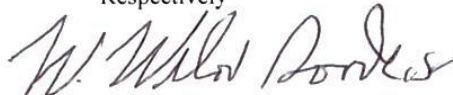
Together you hold the power to change government agencies' policies and practices, enact new state laws, and remove the systemic judicial barriers and rules against the full and equal participation of fathers in the lives of their children. Studies show that the welfare of children is greatly enhanced by having fathers as active participants in their lives. The research demonstrates that adverse conditions in the child's world, such as: living in poverty, underage pregnancies, drug abuse and addictions, and engaging in criminal behavior have a higher incidence of occurrence when the father is not part of the child's home life.

Some barriers, such as an automatic preference for parental involvement of the mother over the father, can be substantially eliminated by the issuance of an Executive Order which directs governmental agencies that control family and children service agencies to alter their preconceived notion that a father is automatically viewed as less nurturing than the mother. Judicial barriers that impede the reentry of fathers into the lives of their children may be ameliorated by court ordered procedural rule changes. We encourage the Justices of the Supreme Court to consider sending this report to all of the Presiding Judges that oversee family court matters to solicit comments regarding potential implementation of proposed changes. Legislative direction, such as that provided by a concurrent resolution, can provide the impetus for policy changes in the Commonwealth's child and family welfare programs. New statutory authority can also serve as a catalyst for change.

It will require a coordinated and concerted effort to implement the beneficial systemic and legal changes required to eradicate the barriers that imperil child welfare in Pennsylvania. Perhaps it is an appropriate time to explore the advisability of enacting laws that recognize the constitutional or statutory right of children to have access to both parents.

We encourage you to review the information in the enclosed report, and join the effort to reform Pennsylvania's systems of care as discussed in the report. After reviewing the report, we hope you also recognize that the child has a greater opportunity for full development when both parents are actively contributing to the child's development and growth.

Respectively



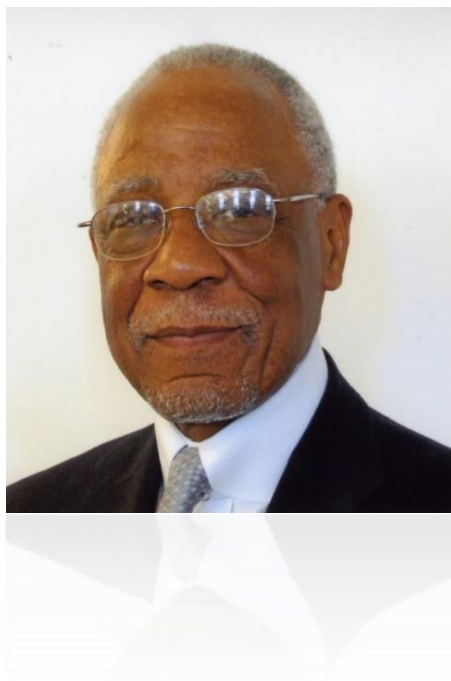
W. Wilson Goode, Sr.

Chair

Symposium Organizing Committee

## The Reverend Dr. W. Wilson Goode, Sr.

Dr. Goode is the President and CEO of AMACHI, Incorporated, a nationally acclaimed faith-based program for mentoring children of incarcerated parents which has served more than 350,000 children in all 50 States. He is also Chairman and CEO of Self, Incorporated, a *nonprofit corporation dedicated to serving* more than 600 *homeless men and women*. He is a Senior Fellow at the Fox School at the University of Pennsylvania.



Dr. Goode became Philadelphia's first African American Mayor in 1984 and served two terms. And, he was the first African American member and Chairman of the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission. He broke racial barriers again with his appointment as Managing Director for the City of Philadelphia.

Dr. Goode is Chairman of the Philadelphia Leadership Foundation. He is a Board Member and Former Chairman of Big Brothers Big Sisters Independence Region, and the Free Library of Philadelphia, He is also former Chair of Partners for Sacred Places and the Cornerstone Christian Academy.

He is a Board Member of America's Promise, Community in Schools of Philadelphia, and Eastern University. He is Chairman Emeritus of Leadership Foundations, and Emeritus Trustee of Southwest Leadership Academy Charter School.

Dr. Goode has earned degrees from Morgan State University (BA), the University of Pennsylvania (MA), Palmer, Theological Seminary (D. Min.), and fourteen conferred honorary doctorates. He is a member of Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity and Kappa Alpha Psi.

Dr. Goode is an ordained Baptist Minister since 1999 with more than 64 years of service at the First Baptist Church of Paschall located in southwest Philadelphia

Dr. Goode and his wife of 58 years have one son, two daughters and two granddaughters.



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## I. Introduction

This document is a **Summary Report** and companion piece to the full report -- *Child Well-Being in Pennsylvania and the Urgent Need for Father Involvement: Proceedings, Observations, Research Findings and Recommendations* – emanating from a one-day, statewide, and inter-agency symposium held on September 27, 2017, at the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Research Center in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania.

Approximately 154 persons attended this important child-father-family summit, representing the perspectives of a cross-section of public and private, federal, state and local policy makers, researchers, direct service providers and advocates to name a few. All were united in the shared belief that child and family well-being outcomes could be significantly improved by removing the barriers (and providing the necessary supports) to father involvement in the lives of their children and families.

## II. Purpose

Research shows that father involvement is associated with greater child well-being. Just like mothers, fathers have a lot to offer. They are role models, caretakers, providers, and advocates. When a child has the benefit of access to both mother and father, s/he is more likely to exhibit healthy behaviors, excel in school, and achieve emotional well-being.

Nationwide, approximately 24 million or 35% of the nation’s children are being raised in single parent households often without access to their fathers and/or their emotional and financial support.

In Pennsylvania, nearly 900,000 or 34% of the state’s children are currently residing in single-parent homes. In Philadelphia, alone, 60% of the city’s children live in single-parent households, with over 50% living in mother-only households and nearly 10% living in father-only households. According to data collected by the Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children, an estimated 315,270 or 46% of children in single, female-headed households are living below the 100% poverty level.

The purpose of the meeting was three-fold:

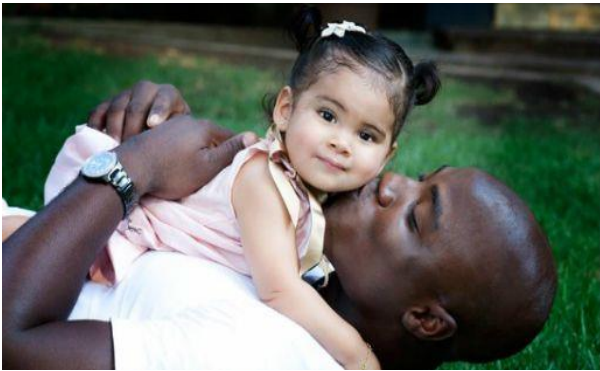
- 1) to examine the adverse consequences of father absence and/or non-involvement on child well-being and family stability in Pennsylvania;
- 2) to identify the barriers to and propose recommendations for increasing father involvement and support across “systems of care”; and
- 3) to launch the beginning of a statewide “Call to Action” partnership among state and local organizations serving children and families that would:
  - recognize fathers as an integral part of the “family unit” regardless of marital status or living arrangement; and
  - establish “on ramps” for fathers -- via updated policies, programs and/or state legislation -- for needed services and supports necessary for them to positively contribute to the overall emotional and economic well-being of their children.

Please refer to the **FULL COMPREHESIVE REPORT** (separate document) for an in-depth review and discussion of the “Proceedings, Observations, Research Findings and Recommendations” emanating from the September 27, 2017, Statewide Symposium:

*Child Well-Being in Pennsylvania and the Urgent Need for Father Involvement*

### III. Conclusion - What Does This All Mean?

Pennsylvania faces a variety of barriers to father involvement and child well-being, but the state is well-positioned to not only overcome these barriers but also become a national leader in the movement to increase father presence and greater father involvement.



People and organizations across Pennsylvania are motivated to change policies and practices that impede fathers’ involvement. The Symposium underscored this. Academics, social service providers, nonprofit leaders, legislative staff, elected and appointed public officials, and others came together to identify barriers to father involvement and to recommend solutions for overcoming the barriers. This energy and desire to increase father involvement is an invaluable resource for Pennsylvania.

As this Report discussed, perhaps the biggest barrier to father involvement is simply the failure of Pennsylvania’s systems to prioritize it. Addressing this barrier requires people across the state to talk to their colleagues, elected officials, friends, and family members about the importance of father contributions to the well-being of children and families.

And now, in addition to this energy and desire to increase father involvement, Pennsylvania has this Report—a guide to the barriers to father involvement in the state and a roadmap for overcoming the barriers. Leveraging this Report, stakeholders in Pennsylvania, such as The Strong Families Commission [THE COMMISSION] and its partners, can ensure that Pennsylvania fulfills its potential as a national leader in engaging fathers to become one of its best assets for helping to raise children.

It is incumbent upon us all who care about child well-being to assist with this pursuit of removing systemic barriers that impede greater father involvement and brighter futures for our children.

## IV. Summary of Workgroup Discussions and Systems Recommendations

### Preface:

Various attitudes, policy and procedural impediments exist delaying the successful recognition of the importance of fathers to the proper development of their children. The key strategy to overcoming these impediments is to get our state government leaders respectively to adopt the following recommendations.



- *The General Assembly is encouraged to consider adoption of a Concurrent Resolution agreeing that prospective legislation regarding children and families will recognize, foster and promote the value of fathers' contribution to the well-being of their children;*
- *The Governor is urged to issue an Executive Order that directs all Commonwealth departments and agencies to acknowledge the value of fathers and to be inclusive of fathers in the development and administration of children and family programs; and*
- *The Supreme Court is requested to promulgate rules and procedures for the unified judicial system to ensure that fathers' rights receive equal consideration and review in determining the best interests of the child and family.*

FATHERS HAVE THE SAME RESPONSIBILITIES AND, IMPORTANTLY, THE SAME RIGHTS AS MOTHERS."  
- JUSTICE MAX BAER, PENNSYLVANIA SUPREME COURT

The **recommendations** that follow are designed to address the barriers to father involvement in Pennsylvania. They are based not only on insights gleaned from the Symposium but also research into social science studies and best practices identified in the FULL COMPREHENSIVE REPORT. There may be other “systems of service” and/or programs in Pennsylvania that warrant inclusion in the future

<p align="center"><b>Barriers to Father Involvement within Systems</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Summary Recommendations</b></p>
<p><b>Administration of Justice and Public Safety</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Countless fathers face stigma because of their interactions with the justice system.</li> <li>▪ Fathers do not always understand their “rights and responsibilities” as it relates to the support of their children.</li> <li>▪ The criminal justice and child support systems focus too much on punishing and too little on rehabilitating.</li> <li>▪ Returning citizens lack guidance and awareness of available resources, if such exist.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p><i>The three branches of government are encouraged respectively to factor fatherhood into state legislation, judicial rules and procedures, and department regulations.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Prospectively, when legislators draft criminal laws, they should consider the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ effects of punishment on offenders’ children, as well as the offenders’ ability to serve prospectively, as an effective parent;</li> <li>○ state government agencies should consider fathers’ potential contributions when forming regulations regarding safety, permanency, well-being and reunification; and</li> <li>○ Justices of the Supreme Court should similarly consider fatherhood when issuing rules and procedures in criminal cases.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p align="center"><b>Behavioral Health</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Behavioral health policy makers typically do not prioritize father involvement, and their professional staff often lack training on how to engage fathers.</li> <li>▪ Fathers struggle with stigma when pursuing behavioral health services that can negatively impact father-child relationship.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p><i>The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services is encouraged to consider a Paradigm shift that recognizes the importance of fathers in behavioral health treatment and services.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Behavioral health systems should recognize and integrate into their service delivery models the overwhelming evidence that responsible and involved fathering starting from the prenatal period and into adolescence has positive effects on the well-being of children.</li> <li>▪ To achieve this paradigm shift, behavioral health organizations should launch a public campaign showcasing the immeasurable value of a father in a child’s life. Further, behavioral health organizations should hold annual trainings on the importance of father involvement. This will not only signal to staff that father involvement is a priority but also afford staff the tools necessary to facilitate father engagement as an inclusive strategy.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Child Support Services and Enforcement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The child support system does not adequately take in to account the circumstances of many noncustodial parents, e.g. ability to pay.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p><i>The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, Bureau of Child Support Enforcement is urged to adopt the following recommendations:</i></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Child support enforcement penalties are counterproductive.</li> <li>▪ Fathers lack necessary information about their procedural rights.</li> <li>▪ Child support does not recognize or help with the parenting time needs of fathers.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Improve better data collection and exchange about father income.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Child support courts and the child support enforcement program should work on resolving the lack of a sufficient data exchange that can result in the unnecessary incarceration of fathers for alleged non-payment of child support orders.</li> </ul> <p><u>Reform policies impacting a father’s credit report.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reassess current policies that adversely impacts a father’s credit report in those cases where he may be paying part but not the full amount owed.</li> </ul> <p><u>Expand outreach regarding the implementation of new federal child support program regulations.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Pennsylvania Child Support Agency should consider expanding their outreach or, “roll-out” strategy that includes targeting organizations directly serving fathers on how it will implement the new and improved changes in federal child support regulations.</li> </ul> <p><u>Training for community-based organizations.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Pennsylvania Child Support Agency should be encouraged to conduct training for community-based, father- and family-support organizations on child support issues and to schedule on-site meetings with non-residential parents who have issues regarding their individual cases.</li> </ul> <p><u>Designate contact persons to facilitate coordination.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In order to institutionalize interagency program coordination at the local level, the Pennsylvania Child Support Agency should consider designating a contact person in each county office of child support that community-based fatherhood and family support organizations could contact when dealing with clients who have child support issues.</li> </ul> <p><b>Recommendations (continued):</b></p> <p><u>Adopt family-centered program initiatives.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Pennsylvania Child Support Agency should be encouraged to adopt some or all of the “Family-Centered” program initiatives outlined by the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement. This could be achieved by partnering with existing community-based organizations serving fathers, families and children.</li> </ul> <p><u>Utilize Federal Child Access and Visitation (AV) Grant Funds.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Since the Pennsylvania State Child Support Agency administers the Federal AV Grant Program, it should utilize</li> </ul>
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	<p>these funds to provide services to fathers <i>in the child support caseload</i> that have parenting time &amp; child access issues.</p>
<p><b>Dependent, Delinquent, and Crossover Children and Youth</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Biases toward men, as well as fathers, among professionals.</li> <li>▪ Negative perception of fathers amongst mothers can influence service professionals.</li> <li>▪ Failure to prioritize family finding.</li> <li>▪ Heavy caseloads.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p><i>The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services should intentionally ensure that gender equity is a priority and is up-held in both the work and service delivery environment to families served.</i></p> <p><u>Prioritize gender equity</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Both mothers and fathers should be incorporated into child welfare family services; the system should strive for equity and full parental involvement, thus removing gender inequity as a barrier.</li> </ul> <p><u>Proper resource allocation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services should identify the necessary resources to improve its next federal Child and Family Service Review (CFSR), as none of the seven CFSR Outcomes were found to be in substantial conformity with the federal regulations. In addition, only five of the seven systemic factors were found to be in conformity. Going forward a corrective action strategy should be developed and implemented to ensure that Pennsylvania meets all of the CFSR “Outcomes and Systemic Factors.”</li> </ul>
<p><b>Early Childhood Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fathers do not feel welcome.</li> <li>▪ Early childhood education providers do not typically engage fathers</li> </ul>	<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p><i>The Pennsylvania Department of Education policies should be explicit in supporting the involvement of fathers in services to children and families.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Prioritize making fathers feel welcome. The early childhood education sector should do all that it can do to welcome fathers in early childhood education centers and other educational environments so that fathers can seamlessly begin to navigate this system with their children and form solid working relationships with their teachers and staff.</li> <li>▪ The State should mandate that early childhood education agencies receive technical assistance to determine their preparedness for Father Involvement.</li> <li>▪ More specific, early childhood education centers should have one person designated to develop projects and initiatives geared towards welcoming fathers and providing fathers information on how to navigate the centers. In cases where a</li> </ul>

	<p>center is unable to meet the expectation of providing a designed person to ensure that the environment is always welcoming to fathers, the state has a duty to provide reasonable support to fulfill this mandate</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Education</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ School staff lack training and understanding necessary to engage fathers.</li> <li>▪ Parents deterred from involvement by information asymmetry.</li> <li>▪ Parental relationships can impede father involvement.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p><i>The Pennsylvania Department of Education should implement state-wide Family Engagement Strategies that are inclusive of fathers.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Encourage Counties to implement District-wide family engagement strategies that are inclusive of fathers. Considering the research showing that parental involvement in education has substantial benefits for child outcomes, combatting the barrier of parental disconnect through extended family engagement strategies that are inclusive of fathers should be a priority for the Pennsylvania Department of Education, as well as the 500 school districts within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Employment and Training</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Blue-collar jobs often do not support parental involvement.</li> <li>▪ Occupational Licensing and Certification for those who have been incarcerated can be a problem for successful reentry.</li> <li>▪ Humiliation of working Fathers who prioritize their time with their children over producing Family Income.</li> <li>▪ Lack of intentional focus on father-child-family relations in employment and training programs.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Pass House Bill 1419 (Signed into Law by Governor Wolf on June 28, 2018)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support Pennsylvania House Bill 1419 (Clean Slate), a bill that provides for automatically sealing certain criminal records so that they are not available to the public but can still be accessed by law enforcement. This legislation is supported by a broad bipartisan coalition of legislators and organizations.</li> </ul> <p><i>Although this legislation has now passed and has been signed by the Governor, the legislature should provide guidance to stakeholders, the general public and employers regarding the significance of this landmark legislation.</i></p> <p><i>These communications should include timeframes of implementation, limitations and/or exceptions to this law relative to federal and national background checks, included and excluded offenses, but most importantly the benefits to the public, employers and housing entities.</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Housing, Supervised Independent Living, and Homelessness</b></p>	<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Homelessness programs do not prioritize father involvement.</li> <li>▪ Supervised independent living programs do not pursue father involvement.</li> <li>▪ Staff struggle with biases about fathers.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i><b>The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services should incorporate a Two-Generation Approach to child well-being across the Commonwealth.</b></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pennsylvania should Support a Two-Generation Approach to child well-being, if it is not already doing so, by Developing and Strengthening Partnerships across Early Childhood and Housing Programs and Systems.</li> <li>▪ A two-generation approach aims to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty by addressing the needs of both children and parents. This requires aligning and coordinating the design and delivery of services for the whole family, so both generations can experience improved physical and mental health, safety, educational, and economic outcomes.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Parent Education and Support Services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack of institutional focus on strengthening bonds between fathers and children.</li> <li>▪ Difficult to engage fathers and find times to convene parenting classes.</li> <li>▪ Discriminatory bias practices, procedures and protocols within the system</li> </ul>	<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p><i><b>The appropriate program oversight parties should be encouraged to provide necessary resources to establish parent education programming that is specifically inclusive of fathers.</b></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Engaging fathers can be difficult for a number of reasons, i.e. conflict in work schedules, child care not defined as their role, or father is non-custodial and is not in a healthy working relationship with the child’s mother or care provider.</li> <li>▪ Consequently, parenting education and support service providers find it difficult to coordinate meeting times and classes with fathers. This, of course, is a barrier that can be overcome if providers were given adequate financial resources for engaging fathers, and training for staff as to how best to engage them</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Public Health</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Failing to view father involvement as a systemic issue.</li> <li>▪ Insufficient educational initiatives about the detriments of father disengagement.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <p><i><b>The Pennsylvania Department of Health should adopt father absence and noninvolvement as a public health issue and raise awareness throughout the Commonwealth of its importance to the children and families, as well as the community at-large.</b></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Education about the detriments of lack of father absence and non-involvement must be disseminated aggressively. Similar to the way that cigarette smoking was causally connected to lung cancer and chronic bronchitis, the lack of father involvement can be</li> </ul>

	<p>causally connected to problems that impact society on multiple levels and can take a tremendous toll on families and communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Pennsylvania must move to identify father absence and father non-involvement as a public health issue worthy of research, prevention, public education, and policy change.</li><li>▪ A first, concrete step that public health organizations in Pennsylvania can take is to create pages on their websites devoted to father involvement including a discussion regarding the social consequences of father absence as a public health issue.</li></ul>
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## V. Continuing the Work: Three Overarching Recommendations

### A. Three Branches of Pennsylvania State Government: The Importance of Taking Leadership

Various attitudes, policy and procedural impediments exist to the successful recognition of the importance of fathers to the proper development of their children.

Findings from the 2018 Convening, with recommendations, are expected to be transmitted to the Governor of the Commonwealth and select members of his cabinet, every member of the Pennsylvania General Assembly, Justices of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, and Lead Judges of Family Courts throughout the Commonwealth

*The key to the successful implementation of strategies* requires effective endorsement by the three branches of the Pennsylvania State Government. Following are recommendations offered for consideration by each branch.

- The *General Assembly* is encouraged to consider adoption of a Concurrent Resolution agreeing that prospective legislation regarding children and families will recognize, foster and promote the value of fathers' contribution to the well-being of their children.
- The *Governor* is urged to issue an Executive Order that directs all Commonwealth departments and agencies to acknowledge the value of fathers and to strive to be inclusive of fathers in the development and administration of children and family programs.
- The *Supreme Court* is requested to promulgate rules and procedures for the unified judicial system to ensure that fathers' rights receive equal consideration and review in determining the best interests of the child and family.

### B. An Appeal to the Symposium's Organizing Planning Committee

Just as we need the support of the three branches of Pennsylvania State Government to support gender equity within family matters and to remove systemic barriers to contributions that fathers can make toward the well-being of their children, we also need the citizens of the Commonwealth, especially those who were involved with initiating the Symposium to continue the goal of creating here in Pennsylvania an on-going entity that will partner with the government to make sure that all Pennsylvanians are treated equitably and that our children are the benefactors of such practice.

In that regard it is proposed that the Symposium Organizing Community (SOC) continue to exist until a formal statewide entity is established that will work to ensure that the recommendations of this report are implemented and a sustaining entity is identified or formed with a mission to provide the leadership necessary to develop, implement, and administer a statewide plan with the goal of reducing systemic barriers that impede Father Involvement and their contributions to the wellbeing of children throughout the family care network of agencies within the Commonwealth.

## C. Next Steps – The Launch of the 2018 Campaign for Brighter Futures for Our Children... ...Through Greater Father Involvement (*Scheduled for October 17-18, 2018*)

After a successful and historic bipartisan and bicameral Legislative sponsored symposium, as acclaimed by all, verbally and in writing, the Symposium Organizing Committee was faced with identifying the next steps beyond just writing a Proceedings document.

In that regard, it was determined that the work of the 2017 Inaugural Symposium on Child Well-Being in Pennsylvania and the Urgent Need for Father Involvement must continue toward building a larger network of father, child and family advocates for the purpose of: ***“bringing to light something that has been in the dark, far too long, . . . that is the Absence and/or non-involvement of too many Fathers in the Care of their Children and Families and to shine a spotlight on the consequences of” that absence.***

Notwithstanding the above heartfelt purpose that brought the Symposium Organizing Committee together in the first instance, the Committee also affirmed as its overarching goal, the encouragement of Commonwealth investment in every child’s developmental growth, and the elimination of all systemic barriers that impede every father’s desire to contribute more to his child’s well-being.

Given the reality of father, child and family advocates who operate in silos, the Organizing Committee added as a goal for its 2018 gathering, a convening of such advocates to highlight the urgent need for greater paternal participation within the lives of children and families.



Therefore, the Committee has moved forward with the scheduling of a follow-up statewide conference entitled ***“Pennsylvania 2018 Campaign for Brighter Futures for Our Children...Through Greater Father Involvement”*** scheduled for October 17-18, 2018. It will be held at the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania.

***For additional information, refer to the flyer on page 12;  
To register for the conference, go to: [www.soc18.org](http://www.soc18.org)***

The Committee sees a convening of such a group as an opportunity for stakeholders across the Commonwealth to work collaboratively to strategize and identify ways for all interested parties to be more supportive of the role that fathers play in the care of their children.

It is anticipated that Convening Participants would depart with a willingness to serve as catalysts raising the consciousness of government, philanthropic, corporate, community, civic, and public/private business leaders from around the state to bring about civic action to transform attitudes and behaviors of Pennsylvanians, regarding the worth of Fathers and their contributions to the well-being of Pennsylvania’s children, youth and families.



**SAVE THE DATE!**

**OCTOBER 17 – 18, 2018**

**Pennsylvania 2018 Campaign for Brighter  
Futures for Our Children...through Greater  
Father Involvement**

**A Two-Day Convening of Father, Child &  
Family Support Advocates**

**Location:**

**University of Pittsburgh Child Welfare Resource Center  
Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania**

**An Alphabetical Listing of Partners:**

Allegheny Intermediate Unit, AMACHI, Inc., Child Welfare League of America, Delta Community Supports, Inc., Fathers Collaborative Council of Western Pennsylvania, NASW-PA, and The Strong Families Commission, Inc



**AGENDA:**

**What's Working in Pennsylvania?**

Voices from Around the State

**Lunch Panelist**

Perspectives of Key Federal Agencies

**What's Working in Other States?**

Child Welfare League of America & Casey Family Programs

**Lunch Panelist**

Pennsylvania State Child and Family Program and Policy Updates

**State Approaches to Fatherhood**

Temple University Fatherhood Research and Practice Network & Center for Policy Research features the Ohio Commission on Fatherhood

**Finalizing Recommendations and Next Steps**

Virtual Deliberation Sessions with Content Experts

***"...FATHERS HAVE THE SAME RESPONSIBILITIES AND, IMPORTANTLY, THE SAME RIGHTS AS MOTHERS."  
– JUSTICE MAX BAER,  
PENNSYLVANIA SUPREME COURT***



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# A. Number and Percentage of Pennsylvania Children Under 18 Years in Families with Incomes Below 100 Percent of Poverty Level by County and Family Type (2012-2016)

Thanks to the combined efforts of Kelly Hoffman, KIDS COUNT Director with Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children and Tim Schock, Data Analyst with Pennsylvania State Data Center, the following table (page 15-16) is an invaluable tool for policy-makers, service providers, and advocates because it includes specific information on the number of children living in families by family type with incomes below the poverty level in each of the state's 67 counties.

## An Explanation of the Data Categories

**Pennsylvania Statewide Data:** 1<sup>st</sup> line of the table includes overall totals for the state.

**Individual County Listing:**

Example: Adams County

**All Family Types in Adams County:** (married couple families, single-mother families and single-father families)

Number of children in all family types: 20,330 children in Adams County

**Living below poverty:**

**Number of Children: 3,040**

**Percent of all Children: 15%**

**Married-Couple Families in Adams County**

Number of all children in married-couple of families: 14,770

Percent of children living in all family types in the county: 73%

**Living below poverty:**

**Number of Children: 1,050**

**Percent of Children living in married-couple families: 7%**

**Single-Mother Families in Adams County**

Number of all children in single-mother families: 4,090

Percent of children living in all family types in the county: 20%

**Living below poverty:**

**Number of Children: 1,710**

**Percent of Children living in single-mother families: 42%**

**Single-Father Families in Adams County**

Number of all children in single-father families: 1,470

Percent of children living in all family types in the county: 7%

**Living below poverty:**

**Number of Children: 280**

**Percent of Children living in single-father families: 19%**



Children under 18 years by family type and poverty status

County	All family types			Married-couple families				Single mother families				Single father families			
	# children in all family types	In poverty (<100%)		# children	% of all family types	In poverty (<100%)		# children	% of all family types	In poverty (<100%)		# children	% of all family types	In poverty (<100%)	
		# children	% of all children			# children	% of married-couple families			# children	% of single mother families			# children	% of single father families
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	<b>2,646,00</b>	<b>494,750</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>1,759,3</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>131,1</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>690,2</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>315,2</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>196,4</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>48,31</b>	<b>25%</b>
Adams	20,330	3,040	15%	14,77	73%	1,050	7%	4,090	20%	1,710	42%	1,470	7%	280	19%
Allegheny	230,880	39,620	17%	157,1	68%	7,810	5%	59,84	26%	28,22	47%	13,90	6%	3,590	26%
Armstrong	12,900	2,600	20%	8,970	70%	890	10%	2,910	23%	1,520	52%	1,020	8%	190	19%
Beaver	32,810	5,460	17%	21,76	66%	1,020	5%	8,710	27%	3,860	44%	2,350	7%	580	25%
Bedford	9,830	1,920	20%	7,090	72%	720	10%	1,710	17%	780	45%	1,030	10%	430	42%
Berks	92,590	20,550	22%	58,69	63%	5,380	9%	26,00	28%	13,15	51%	7,900	9%	2,030	26%
Blair	25,480	5,490	22%	17,26	68%	1,730	10%	6,130	24%	3,010	49%	2,090	8%	740	35%
Bradford	13,310	2,330	18%	9,260	70%	960	10%	2,510	19%	1,080	43%	1,540	12%	300	19%
Bucks	132,180	9,040	7%	104,5	79%	3,030	3%	21,00	16%	5,420	26%	6,680	5%	600	9%
Butler	38,190	3,560	9%	30,11	79%	930	3%	5,200	14%	2,060	40%	2,880	8%	570	20%
Cambria	25,900	6,320	24%	16,82	65%	1,570	9%	6,970	27%	4,050	58%	2,120	8%	700	33%
Cameron	810	180	22%	390	48%	30	7%	300	37%	150	49%	120	15%	3	2%
Carbon	12,250	2,570	21%	8,030	66%	560	7%	3,000	25%	1,320	44%	1,220	10%	680	56%
Centre	24,050	3,170	13%	19,12	80%	1,520	8%	3,760	16%	1,420	38%	1,170	5%	240	20%
Chester	118,730	10,120	9%	96,28	81%	3,870	4%	16,10	14%	5,080	32%	6,350	5%	1,180	19%
Clarion	7,180	1,610	22%	5,320	74%	820	15%	1,270	18%	640	50%	590	8%	160	27%
Clearfield	14,900	3,410	23%	10,46	70%	1,430	14%	3,220	22%	1,800	56%	1,230	8%	190	15%
Clinton	7,960	2,080	26%	5,450	68%	820	15%	1,740	22%	880	51%	780	10%	380	49%
Columbia	11,680	1,950	17%	8,420	72%	650	8%	2,320	20%	1,070	46%	950	8%	220	23%
Crawford	18,110	3,730	21%	12,42	69%	1,310	11%	3,970	22%	2,170	55%	1,730	10%	260	15%
Cumberland	48,530	5,610	12%	36,42	75%	1,900	5%	8,710	18%	2,950	34%	3,410	7%	760	22%
Dauphin	59,820	11,900	20%	35,63	60%	3,000	8%	19,01	32%	7,980	42%	5,180	9%	920	18%
Delaware	123,500	17,810	14%	81,64	66%	3,810	5%	33,54	27%	12,20	36%	8,320	7%	1,810	22%
Elk	5,980	820	14%	4,170	70%	180	4%	1,110	18%	460	41%	700	12%	190	26%
Erie	59,780	14,410	24%	36,35	61%	4,130	11%	18,15	30%	9,210	51%	5,280	9%	1,060	20%
Fayette	25,500	7,490	29%	15,57	61%	1,940	12%	7,630	30%	4,870	64%	2,300	9%	680	30%
Forest	130	50	36%	90	70%	30	31%	30	26%	20	45%	10	4%	3	60%
Franklin	34,000	6,340	19%	24,42	72%	2,670	11%	7,350	22%	3,200	43%	2,230	7%	470	21%
Fulton	3,020	450	15%	2,170	72%	200	9%	500	16%	210	41%	340	11%	50	15%
Greene	7,010	1,620	23%	4,300	61%	260	6%	1,910	27%	1,180	62%	800	11%	180	23%
Huntingdon	8,520	1,590	19%	6,380	75%	790	12%	1,340	16%	650	49%	800	9%	150	18%
Indiana	15,620	3,230	21%	12,15	78%	1,860	15%	2,260	14%	1,110	49%	1,210	8%	260	21%
Jefferson	9,180	1,960	21%	6,580	72%	900	14%	1,840	20%	860	47%	760	8%	200	27%
Juniata	5,470	910	17%	4,300	79%	610	14%	650	12%	260	40%	520	9%	30	7%
Lackawanna	42,030	9,270	22%	26,39	63%	2,710	10%	12,33	29%	5,910	48%	3,300	8%	650	20%
<b>County</b>	<b>All family types</b>			<b>Married-couple families</b>				<b>Single mother families</b>				<b>Single father families</b>			

	In poverty (<100%)			# children	% of all family types	In poverty (<100%)		# children	% of all family types	In poverty (<100%)		# children	% of all family types	In poverty (<100%)			
	# children in all family types	# of all children				# children	% of married-couple families			# children	% of single mother families			# children	% of single mother families	# children	% of single father families
		# children	% of all children														
Lancaster	125,910	19,610	16%	96,210	76%	8,320	9%	22,250	18%	9,870	44%	7,450	6%	1,420	19%		
Lawrence	17,650	3,760	21%	11,020	62%	660	6%	5,200	29%	2,650	51%	1,430	8%	450	32%		
Lebanon	30,970	4,820	16%	20,870	67%	1,130	5%	7,420	24%	3,240	44%	2,670	9%	450	17%		
Lehigh	80,520	16,170	20%	50,500	63%	3,780	7%	23,870	30%	10,650	45%	6,160	8%	1,730	28%		
Luzerne	61,370	16,120	26%	35,930	59%	3,520	10%	20,490	33%	11,230	55%	4,950	8%	1,370	28%		
Lycoming	23,540	5,040	21%	15,490	66%	1,250	8%	5,910	25%	3,380	57%	2,140	9%	410	19%		
McKean	7,950	2,140	27%	4,510	57%	610	13%	2,290	29%	1,210	53%	1,140	14%	320	28%		
Mercer	22,220	5,120	23%	15,090	68%	1,540	10%	5,470	25%	2,970	54%	1,660	7%	610	37%		
Mifflin	10,160	2,370	23%	7,190	71%	940	13%	2,050	20%	1,160	56%	920	9%	270	29%		
Monroe	34,780	5,600	16%	23,970	69%	1,690	7%	8,140	23%	3,560	44%	2,670	8%	350	13%		
Montgomery	176,830	13,230	7%	140,350	79%	4,760	3%	27,060	15%	7,150	26%	9,420	5%	1,320	14%		
Montour	3,520	480	14%	2,490	71%	150	6%	780	22%	320	41%	250	7%	10	2%		
Northampton	60,330	7,580	13%	42,370	70%	2,310	5%	13,620	23%	4,640	34%	4,340	7%	620	14%		
Northumberland	17,820	3,820	21%	11,780	66%	1,290	11%	4,310	24%	1,970	46%	1,730	10%	560	32%		
Perry	9,680	1,090	11%	7,250	75%	510	7%	1,840	19%	490	27%	600	6%	100	16%		
Philadelphia	339,650	123,690	36%	136,940	40%	22,880	17%	172,460	51%	89,450	52%	30,250	9%	11,370	38%		
Pike	10,730	1,640	15%	7,490	70%	750	10%	1,840	17%	470	26%	1,390	13%	410	30%		
Potter	3,570	680	19%	2,590	73%	310	12%	700	20%	320	46%	280	8%	50	17%		
Schuylkill	27,930	5,150	18%	18,710	67%	1,470	8%	6,680	24%	2,970	45%	2,550	9%	710	28%		
Snyder	8,520	1,410	17%	6,450	76%	580	9%	1,570	18%	760	48%	500	6%	80	15%		
Somerset	13,750	2,740	20%	10,430	76%	1,050	10%	2,190	16%	1,200	55%	1,140	8%	490	43%		
Sullivan	720	60	8%	510	71%	20	4%	100	14%	20	16%	110	15%	30	23%		
Susquehanna	8,000	1,490	19%	5,650	71%	590	11%	1,460	18%	680	47%	880	11%	220	24%		
Tioga	8,170	1,410	17%	5,870	72%	590	10%	1,500	18%	720	48%	810	10%	100	12%		
Union	7,740	970	12%	6,050	78%	240	4%	1,120	14%	590	53%	570	7%	130	23%		
Venango	10,380	2,270	22%	7,060	68%	870	12%	2,450	24%	1,170	48%	880	8%	230	26%		
Warren	7,690	1,550	20%	5,590	73%	680	12%	1,490	19%	640	43%	610	8%	230	38%		
Washington	40,410	5,200	13%	29,500	73%	1,220	4%	7,950	20%	3,570	45%	2,960	7%	400	14%		
Wayne	8,820	1,570	18%	6,460	73%	630	10%	1,650	19%	690	42%	710	8%	250	36%		
Westmoreland	66,550	9,970	15%	47,820	72%	2,730	6%	14,380	22%	6,220	43%	4,360	7%	1,020	23%		
Wyoming	5,550	850	15%	3,760	68%	220	6%	1,290	23%	540	42%	500	9%	90	17%		
York	96,450	14,990	16%	64,660	67%	2,850	4%	23,650	25%	10,320	44%	8,150	8%	1,830	22%		

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-16 5-year estimates American Community

Survey (B17006)

A family is considered to be in poverty if the family's total income is less than the family's threshold (which is based on family size and composition).

## B. Organizers of the Symposium: A Collective Effort

The Symposium was convened by *The Strong Families Commission Incorporated* in partnership with Allegheny Intermediate Unit; AMACHI, Inc.; Child Welfare League of America; Delta Community Supports, Inc.; Fathers Collaborative Council of Western Pennsylvania and the Pennsylvania Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers.

### 1. Symposium Organizing Planning Committee Members

**Reverend Dr. W. Wilson Goode, Sr.**, President/CEO, AMACHI, Inc.; & Chair, Symposium Organizing Committee (SOC).

**Dr. Catherine Lobaugh**, Executive Director for Early Childhood, Family and Community Services, Allegheny Intermediate Unit, a part of the Pennsylvania Department of Education; & Co-Chair Symposium Organizing Committee (SOC).

**Mr. David A. Wyher**, President / CEO, Delta Community Supports, Inc; & Co-Chair, Symposium Organizing Committee (SOC).

**Ms. Christine L. James Brown**, President/CEO, Child Welfare League of America, Inc., Anchor Partner to THE COMMISSION & Symposium Organizing Committee (SOC) Member.

**Mr. Larry L. Klinger, Jr.**, Chair, Fathers Collaborative Council of Western Pennsylvania, & Symposium Co-Organizer.

**Dr. Rufus Sylvester Lynch**, Chair, The Strong Families Commission Incorporated (“THE COMMISSION”), based in Philadelphia, & Symposium Principal Organizer of SOC.

### 2. State Legislative Sponsors

**State Senator Anthony Hardy Williams** (D-8<sup>th</sup> District) **Chair**

**State Senator Patrick M. Browne** (R-16<sup>th</sup> District)

**Representative Edward C. Gainey** (D-24<sup>th</sup> District)

**Representative Harold A. English** (R-30<sup>th</sup> District)

### 3. Guiding Principles

The **Symposium Organizing Committee** had the following purposes in mind in developing an agenda for the statewide meeting:

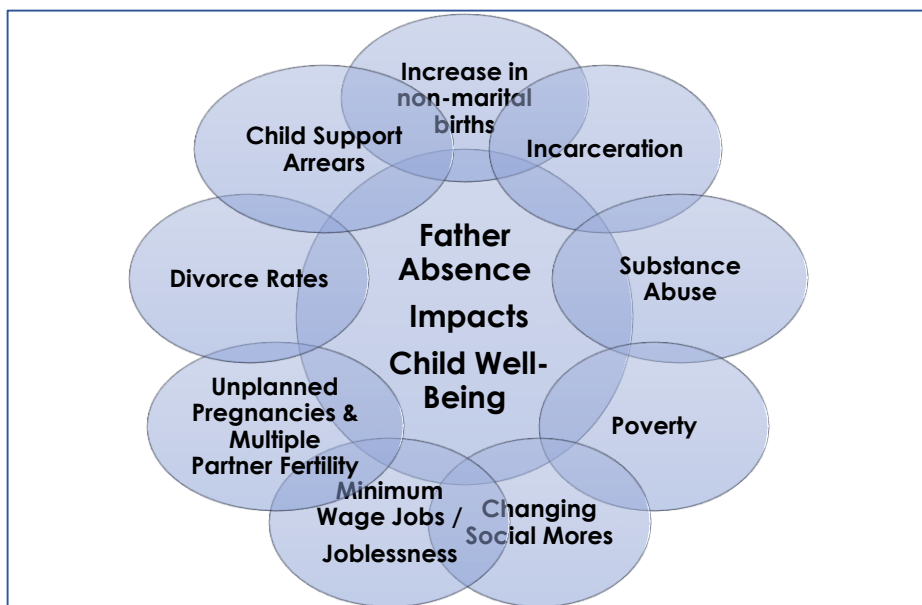
1. To bring to light something that has been in the dark, far too long, ... that is “the absence of too many fathers in the care of their children and families”;
2. Shine a spotlight on the consequences of that issue;
3. Elevate the discussion at the state level of the value of Father Involvement in the lives of their children and families;
4. Organize communities across the Commonwealth regarding the issue;
5. Build bi-partisan and bicameral support that would encourage and support Commonwealth investment in every child’s developmental growth, and the elimination of all systemic barriers that impede every father’s desire to contribute more to his child’s well-being;

6. Explore barriers that impede Father Involvement within the child and family social service systems; and
7. Convene approximately 100 interdisciplinary executive opinion leaders, policy makers and child and family service providers drawing from the philanthropic, private, public, business, corporate and community network of child and family stakeholders who would provide insight for elected officials on Commonwealth philosophy, policies, practices, procedures and protocols that impede father's contributions to the care and well-being of their children.

#### 4. A Systems Approach to Increasing Father Involvement

The Symposium Organizing Committee wrestled with grouping the myriad of systems and issues that touch the lives of fathers, children and their families warranting an in-depth review of the obstacles to father involvement and overall family stability.

Father absence and/or non-involvement can be viewed as either a consequence of family and child support policies and programs (e.g., barriers to father involvement) or the cause of the number of children living in poverty without the emotional and financial support of their fathers and/or both.



It must be recognized up-front that there are multiple and often times complex factors undermining child and family well-being *other than* father absence and/or non-involvement (e.g., substance abuse, low paying jobs, changing norms in family formation, incarceration, etc.) as reflected in the diagram to the left.

However, research over the past two decades has provided an abundance of evidence that shows a direct correlation to father involvement (or lack thereof) to

child and family well-being (The Full Comprehensive Report includes this information.)

**The goal** of the Symposium's "systems approach" is to identify the barriers to greater father involvement in the lives of children -- remove or minimize them -- and provide the necessary supports to fathers that will enable them to positively contribute to the emotional and financial well-being of their children.

With this in mind, the Executive Organizing Committee focused its work on the topics under the following categories as a way to get a handle on developing a comprehensive, systems approach to tackling the issue of increasing father involvement and father-inclusive services:

- 1. Administration of Justice/Public Safety**
- 2. Behavioral Health**
- 3. Child Support Services and Enforcement**
- 4. Dependent, Delinquent and Crossover Children and Youth**
- 5. Early Childhood Development**
- 6. Education**
- 7. Employment and Training**
- 8. Housing, Supervised Independent Living, and Homelessness**
- 9. Parent Education and Support Services**
- 10. Public Health**

The Executive Organizing Committee recognizes that these 10 over-arching categories may have inadvertently missed other “systems of care” in Pennsylvania that touch the lives of fathers, children and their families and may need to be included at some other point in time.

## **5. Laying the Groundwork**

The establishment of a “systems approach” to father involvement was guided, in part, by the work accomplished by the Philadelphia Strong Families Coalition (PSFC) during (2012– 2014.)

In 2011, long before the 2017 Symposium on “Child Well-Being in Pennsylvania and the Urgent Need for Father Involvement,” and the formation of The Strong Families Commission, Incorporated (THE COMMISSION), a small group of child and family stakeholders were convened in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania by David J. Lett, former Regional Administrator for Children and Families, Region III, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, to consider how an increase in Father Involvement might add positive benefits to the lives of Philadelphia’s children, improving their safety, permanency and well-being.

Within months of organizing, the small group of stakeholders began to expand its membership and collaborate to make the case that essential dialogue concerning the value of Fathers’ contributions to the well-being of children and families was needed, by and among Philadelphia’s Children and Youth (CY) and Family-Focused Agencies (FFAs). This group was named the Philadelphia Strong Families Coalition (PSFC.)



The Coalition pursued its long-term vision by engaging opinion leaders and practitioners who are committed to developing innovative policies, practices, and protocols that support the involvement of fathers in the care of their children.

Important milestones for the Coalition included producing the comprehensive 2014 report “*Child Well-Being in Philadelphia, Profiles of Children, and Families & Fathers,*” a publication that offered a menu of strategies designed to dissolve the systemic barriers that limit fathers’ participation in their children’s lives.

Among its other findings, the report recommended that the City of Philadelphia endorse an independent city-wide advocacy alliance as a public repository for information, data, and resources that contribute to building

healthy families. The goal of that effort is to guide public agencies toward embracing the notion that each child is entitled to a father-child relationship.

### **The Strong Families Commission, Inc.**

In October 2014, three (3) members of PSFC incorporated The Strong Families Commission, Incorporated (THE COMMISSION) as a Pennsylvania non-profit charitable organization to fulfill the recommendations of the Coalition’s report.

Since that time, THE COMMISSION has been recognized by the federal government as a private non-profit 501(c) (3) registered charitable organization in Philadelphia that is dedicated to serving Fathers with children by partnering with children, youth, and family-focused systems of care that are willing to include fathers in their service delivery models to improve the emotional, social, physical, intellectual, spiritual, and financial well-being of the children they serve.



**In Philadelphia,** THE COMMISSION is the principal organization that advocates for the inclusion of Fathers in the lives of children and families and the systems that serve them. THE COMMISSION early on was credited with advocating *father integration* as a concept for transforming agencies into father-friendly flagship service providers, mainly in the Philadelphia area. This approach made sense during the first stages of the work of the Commission, as Philadelphia served as a fertile setting for the project’s launch because it is home to a critical mass of providers and opinion leaders who are aware of the potential value of Father Involvement.

While the Commission made great progress in advancing dialogue and social service practices that promote *Father Inclusion*, within the City of Philadelphia and portions of Southeastern Pennsylvania, it soon recognized that potential improvements in the provision of child and family support services was limited by statewide policies and procedures that unintentionally negated the value of including fathers as part of the service delivery response.

**The Commission Goes Statewide:** Members of THE COMMISSION and its Chair, Dr. Rufus Sylvester Lynch, felt it was essential to maintain a forward momentum of its advocacy work outside of metropolitan Philadelphia, uniting first with the Fathers’ Collaborative Council of Western Pennsylvania (FCCWPA).

Together, THE COMMISSION and FCCWPA, supported by the Allegheny Intermediate Unit (AIU), and in partnership with the Pennsylvania Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW-PA), AMACHI, Inc., Delta Community Services, Inc., and the Child Welfare League of America, began planning the 2017 *Symposium on “Child Well-Being in Pennsylvania and the Urgent Need for Father Involvement.”*

## C. State-Wide Fatherhood Symposium: Meeting Overview

### Agenda

Child Well-Being in Pennsylvania...  
And the Urgent Need for Father Involvement

#### September 27, 2017 • Full Day Program

- 8:00 am – 9:00 am Registration, Continental Breakfast, Networking
- 9:00 am – 9:10 am **Welcome and Greeting**  
Reverend. Dr. W. Wilson Good, Sr., Symposium Chair
- 9:10 am – 9:20 am **Purpose of Symposium and Introduction of Plenary Speakers**  
Mr. David A. Whyer, Symposium Co-Chair
- 9:20 am – 10:40am **PLENARY SPEAKERS**
- Mr. William J. Clark, President, Child’s World America,  
and Publisher of Child World News on behalf of Mr. Bruce Lesley,  
President, First Focus
- Making Children and Families the Priority***
- The Honorable Eugene DePasquale, Auditor General of Pennsylvania,  
***Fixing Pennsylvania’s Broken Child-Welfare System***
- Dr. Janet Eisenberg Shapiro, Dean and Professor of the Graduate  
School of Social Work and Social Research,  
***Fathers Get Stressed Too: How the ACES Studies Can Help  
Us to Support Fathers as Partners and Caregivers***
- 10:40 am – 10:45 am BREAK
- 10:45 am – noon **PANEL PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION**  
Moderator – Dr. Catherine Lobaugh, Symposium Co-Chair
- Child Well-Being in Pennsylvania***
- Ms. Kelly M. Hoffman, Kids Count Director at the Pennsylvania  
Partnership for Children
- Systemic Impediments to Father Involvement***  
Dr. David J. Pate Jr., Associate Professor at the University of  
Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Helen Bader School of Social Welfare, and  
an Affiliated Associate Professor of the Institute for Research and  
Poverty at the University of Wisconsin-Madison



10:45 am – noon (Continued)

***Engaging Fathers and Families Through the Lens of Education***  
 Ms. Carrie Jasper, Director, Outreach to Parents and Families,  
 Office of Communications and Outreach, U.S. Department of  
 Education

12:15 pm – 1:15 pm **SYMPOSIUM WORKING LUNCH**

Introduction of Luncheon Speaker:  
 Mr. Larry L. Klinger, Jr., Chair, Fathers Collaborative Council of  
 Western Pennsylvania

Symposium Remarks:  
 Ms. Larissa Bailey, Central Region Manager,  
 Office of U.S. Senator Pat Tooney

Lunch Speaker:  
 Ms. Christine Lea James-Brown, CEO,  
 Child Welfare League of America

1:15 pm – 1:30 pm BREAK

1:30 pm – 3:00 pm **SYMPOSIUM ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS**

3:00 pm – 3:30 pm **AFTERNOON PRELIMINARY REPORTING:  
 FROM ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS**

Moderator:  
 Larry L. Klinger, Fathers Collaborative Council of  
 Western Pennsylvania

3:30 pm – 4:00 pm **LEGISLATIVE ADDRESS**

State Senator Anthony Hardy Williams  
 State Senator Patrick M. Brown  
 Representative Edward C. Gainey \*  
 Representative Harold A. English  
 \* *Spoke on behalf of the Legislative Sponsors*

4:00 pm – 4:30 pm **EVALUATION AND ADJOURNMENT**

Dr. Rufus Sylvester Lynch, Chair  
 The Strong Families Commission, Inc.



## 1. Roundtable Discussion Work Groups



### Roundtable Workgroups Facilitators

<b>Administration of Justice/Public Safety</b>	Chair, Mr. George D. Mosee, Jr., Esquire Co-Chair, Dr. H. Jean Wright II, Forensic Psychologist
<b>Behavioral Health</b>	Chair, Mr. George Fleming Co-Chair, Ms. Robin Evans
<b>Child Support Services and Enforcement</b>	Chair, Ms. Debra Pontisso Co-Chair, Ms. Jacquelyn Mitchell, JD, LICSW
<b>Dependent, Delinquent &amp; Crossover Children and Youth</b>	Chair, Mr. David R. Fair Co-Chair, Mr. Jerry Harvey
<b>Early Childhood Development</b>	Chair, Ms. Jeanette Casciato Co-Chair, Ms. Malkia Singleton Ofori-Agyekum
<b>Education</b>	Chair, Dr. Richard Jeffrey Rhodes Co-Chair, Ms. Barbara J. Chavous-Pennock, MSW
<b>Employment and Training</b>	Chair, Ms. Kay Lynn Hamilton Co-Chair, Mr. Jason Cosley
<b>Housing, Supervised Independent Living, and Homelessness</b>	Chair, Ms. Nicole Anderson Co-Chair, Ms. Kerry Krieger
<b>Parent Education/Supportive Services</b>	Chair, Ms. Anita Kulick Co-Chair Mr. John M. Burwell
<b>Public Health</b>	Chair, Ms. Brenda Shelton-Dunston Co-Chair, Mr. William Champagne

## Participant Input

An important part of the one-day Fatherhood Symposium was the break-out of attendees into one of the 10 Roundtable Discussion Workgroups based on their professional interest and/or expertise.

Given the time limitations of the breakout session, many of the Roundtable Workgroup Facilitators developed draft, background issue papers and made them available to attendees prior to the September 27<sup>th</sup> meeting as a means to stimulate ideas beforehand.

All workgroups elected a spokesperson who subsequently presented a summary of the workgroup discussion – including the barriers to and recommendations for increasing father involvement – to all meeting participants.

The Workgroups provided the direction and basis for the editors of the FINAL REPORT to conduct a search of the literature (e.g., empirical studies) on issues

## D. Understanding the Need: A Statistical “Snap-Shot”

Compared to several decades ago, the landscape of American families has changed significantly.



The rise in the number of children in female-headed households is based, in part, on the dramatic increase in births to unmarried parents over the last three decades. It is also compounded by the accelerated incarceration of adults nationwide (the majority with minor age children) which takes fathers out of the lives of their children – for a time or sometimes forever.

In far too many instances, **father absence** or **father non-involvement** has been the unfortunate consequence of changes in family formation, structure and dynamics throughout the country and in Pennsylvania.

Such behavior on the part of fathers has also had an adverse impact on the well-being of children. That is not to say, however, that all children from single-parent or estranged households suffer these consequences.

### 1. Family Formation Indicators vis-à-vis Father Absence

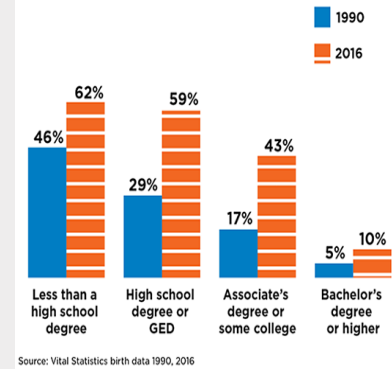
#### Births to Unmarried Women by Year:

Location	1990	2016
<b>National</b>	1,165,384 or 29% of all live births	1,569,796 or 40% of all live births
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	49,258 or 29% of all live births	<b>56,680 or 41% of all live births</b>

Source: Kids Count Data Center, Annie E. Casey Foundation - <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/7-births-to-unmarried-women>

#### Nonmarital childbearing has increased dramatically for women of all education levels

Percent of births occurring to unmarried women age 18+ by education, 1990 and 2016



Many explanations have been offered for the increase in nonmarital childbearing.

One of the most notable changes in recent decades has been the fact that women and men are marrying at increasingly older ages and/or fewer adults are getting married.

This means that relatively fewer women are married when women are most likely to have a child.

At the same time, however, cohabitation has increased. Notably, many nonmarital births occur to couples who live together in a cohabiting union but are not formally married. Recent estimates suggest that 62 percent of births to never-married women are to women in a cohabiting union.

**Source:** Child Trends, “Dramatic increase in the proportion of births outside of marriage in the United States from 1990 to 2016” by Elizabeth Wildsmith, Jennifer Manlove, & Elizabeth Coo, August 8, 2018

Note: Non-marital birth percentages for these years were higher within the African-American and Hispanic populations  
**Children Living in Single-Parent Households by Year:**



Location	2000	2016
National	20,748,000 or 31% of all children	24,267,000 or 35% of all children
Pennsylvania	801,000 or 29% of all children	<b>894,000 or 34% of all children</b>

Source: Kids County Data Center, Annie E. Casey Foundation  
<https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/106-children-in-single-parent-families>

Definitions: Children under age 18 who live with their own single parent either in a family or subfamily. In this definition, single-parent families may include cohabiting couples and do not include children living with married stepparents. Data Source: Population Reference Bureau, analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Supplementary Survey, 2001 Supplementary Survey and 2002 through 2016 American Community Survey (ACS).

### Why This Data Matters

Many (but not all) of the 24 million children growing up in single parent households, nationwide, today face higher risks of poor outcomes than do children in intact, *low-conflict* families headed by two biological parents. According to a Child Trends report:

*Children born to unmarried mothers are more likely to be poor, to grow up in a single-parent family, and to experience multiple living arrangements during childhood. These factors, in turn are associated with lower educational attainment and a higher risk of teen and non-marital child bearing.*

### Children Who Had a Parent Who Was Ever Incarcerated by Year:

National*	More than 5 million—7 percent of all children in the United States—have had a parent incarcerated at some point in their life	2015
Pennsylvania**	<b>225,000 or 9% of all children in the state have or had a parent who was incarcerated</b>	<b>2015-2016</b>

\* **National Data Source:** *Parent-Child Visiting Practices in Prisons and Jails*, by Lindsey Cramer, Margaret Goff, Bryce Peterson, and Heather Sandstrom, Urban Institute, April 13, 2017; *Parents Behind Bars: What Happens to their Children?* by David Murphey and P. Mae Cooper, Child Trends, 2015.

#### \*\*Pennsylvania Data Source:


Child Trends analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau, National Survey of Children’s Health. The state-level data used here come from the National Survey of Children’s Health (NSCH). The NSCH includes information on approximately 50,000 children under age 18, with representative samples for each state. For more information on the NSCH, see <http://childhealthdata.org/learn/NSCH>

## Why This Data Matters

- Physical proximity and availability are key to father involvement and the criminal justice system affects both: incarceration *directly* limits access to fathers, and reentry policies impact fathers’ capacity to be available for their children (emotionally and financially). Furthermore, at any given time, countless fathers are serving jail time, which can be just as disruptive to a child as prison time, “making it difficult for remaining caregivers to maintain a job, housing and child care.”
- Recent estimates indicate that 2.7 million children in the United States have a parent incarcerated, and more than 5 million—7 percent of all children in the United States—have had a parent incarcerated at some point in their life.
- Black children and children from economically disadvantaged families are more likely to experience parental incarceration. In fact, nearly twice as many black children (11.5 percent) have had a parent who lived with them go to jail or prison compared to white children (6 percent).
- And a *child living in poverty* is three times more likely (12.5 percent) to have experienced parental incarceration than a child whose household income is at least twice the federal poverty level.

## 2. Children Living in Poverty

### Number and Percentage of PA Children Under 18 Years in Families with Incomes Below 100 Percent of Poverty Level by Family Type\*

	Total Number of Children in State by Family Type	Number of Children in Poverty	Percent in Poverty by Family Type
<b>Married Couple Families</b>	<b>1,759,350</b>	<b>131,170</b>	<b>7 percent</b>
<b>Single Mother Families</b>	<b>690,230</b>	<b>315,270</b>	<b>46 percent</b>
<b>Single Father Families</b>	<b>196,410</b>	<b>48,310</b>	<b>25 percent</b>

\*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-16, [five- year estimates from the American Community Survey]

Definitions: Families with related children under age 18 that have incomes below the federal poverty level. The federal poverty definition consists of a series of thresholds based on family size and composition. In 2016, the poverty threshold for a family of two adults and two children was \$24,000.

## Why This Data Matters

Children in poverty can face insurmountable barriers to success. They are more likely to suffer abuse or neglect. Their school performance is hampered by the greater likelihood of learning disabilities, repeating grades, and dropping out. They are more likely to become teen parents and to abuse drugs and alcohol. Neighborhood concentration of poverty can expose children to crime, violence, lead poisoning and other health hazards. Children may have less access to beneficial activities that offer recreation, learning, and socialization. Source: Kids Count Data Center, Annie E. Casey Foundation.

### **3. Pennsylvania's National Child Well-Being Ranking**

The *2018 Kids Count Data Book*, released by Annie E. Casey Foundation June 27, 2018, ranks Pennsylvania 17<sup>th</sup> in the country for overall child well-being. The *Data Book* uses 16 indicators to rank each state across four, overarching domains: education, health, economic well-being and family and community.

According to a press release issued by the Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children upon the release of the *Data Book*, Pennsylvania now ranks:



- **10th in education:** The education domain looks at early education opportunities, reading and math proficiency and whether high school students graduate on time. Pennsylvania ranks above average for on-time graduation rates at 86 percent. However, a majority of fourth-graders in the state (60 percent) scored below proficient in reading and nearly two-out-of-three students in eighth grade (62 percent) were not proficient in math.

- **15th in health:** The health domain looks at the percentage of children who lack health insurance, child and teen death rates, low-birthweight babies and alcohol and drug abuse among teens. The state continued to see a reduction in the percentage of children lacking health insurance, which fell 20 percent from 2010 to 2016. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, nearly 1.4 million children in Pennsylvania have access to affordable, quality health care coverage through Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), allowing the state to reach the very low rate of 4 percent of children lacking health insurance, in line with the national average.

- **23rd in economic well-being:** The economic well-being domain examines data related to child poverty, family employment, housing costs and whether older teens not in school are working. Pennsylvania continues to experience slow economic growth and there has been little change since 2010 with far too many children – nearly one in five – still living in poverty.

- **24th in the family and community domain:** This domain examines the percentage of children living in high-poverty areas, single-parent households and education levels among heads of households, as well as teen birth rates. The state saw a drop in the teen birth rate, however, the number of children living in high-poverty neighborhoods increased. More needs to be done to ensure the well-being of our families and communities

### **4. Systems of Care in PA and the Need for Father-Inclusive Services**

Too many children across the country, including far too many in the State of Pennsylvania, lack the benefit of both parents. In most cases this reflects the absence of a father. For example, in Philadelphia 60% of the children live in single-parent households, with 50% living in mother-only households and around 10% living in father-only households.

This is particularly troubling because research suggests that a father's absence can have a negative impact on child well-being from birth forward, including economic deprivation, higher odds of incarceration, twice the odds of becoming a high school dropout, higher odds of smoking, drinking and using drugs, and higher risk of physical, emotional or economic neglect.





**The conundrum is that, in general, state child and family support services funded by the federal government are generally focused on children and their mothers.**

Furthermore, it has to be acknowledged that Congress sets the parameters for the intended goals and program outcomes that often result in program “silos” thereby making it difficult to create on-ramps to services for fathers and/or including them as part of the service response.

Consequently, the systems of care in Pennsylvania are typically not including fathers nor the paternal side of the child’s family as resources essential to ensuring the safety, permanency, and well-being of children. Thus, our children are often not fully served.

The good news is that there has been a growing recognition within federal government -- dating back to the early 90s -- that fathers need to be included and considered as an integral part of the social service response in programs largely intended to support children in single-parent households and/or other children in need.

For Pennsylvania, the challenge is to recognize that including fathers as an integral part of a social service response can positively impact program outcomes for children.

This will require the purposeful incorporation of a “Father Involvement” into existing program policies, regulations, and/or practices. It will require inter-agency collaboration and outreach.

And last, but equally important, it will take the leadership and action of the Pennsylvania State Legislature – similar to the Legislative Preamble below – to create a context for change.

### **Proposed Congressional Legislation:**

#### **“Julia Carson Bill for Responsible Fatherhood and Healthy Families Act of 2015”**

Co-Sponsored by U.S. Congressmen Danny K. Davis (D-IL) and André Carson (D-IN)

#### **Preamble:**

*Fathers play a significant and under-appreciated role in the development of their children, with research demonstrating that a supportive and involved father strengthens a child’s emotional, physical, intellectual and behavioral development.*

*Children with positive relationships with fathers – even if they do not live in the same household - have stronger mental health, economic success, and academic achievement with lower rates of youth delinquency, school drop-out, and teen pregnancy.*

*Father engagement does not depend on living in the same house as one’s child, with many non-residential fathers being actively-involved with their children and supportive of their children’s mothers.*

*However, low-income fathers experience multiple challenges to contributing financially and emotionally to their children due to limited education and job skills, unstable employment opportunities, child support enforcement policies, incarceration, and strained relationships with their children’s mothers.*



## E. The Collective Impact Approach to Achieve Social Change

**COLLECTIVE IMPACT\*** brings people together — in a structured way — to achieve social change. Collective impact takes us from common goals to uncommon results.

*Too many organizations are working in isolation from one another.*

**The Collective Impact Framework:** Collective Impact is a framework to tackle deeply entrenched and complex social problems in an innovative and structured approach to making collaboration work across government, business, philanthropy, non-profit organizations and citizens to achieve significant and lasting social change.



- **It starts with a common agenda.**  
That means coming together to collectively define the problem and create a shared vision to solve it.
- **It establishes shared measurement.**  
That means agreeing to track progress in the same way, which allows for continuous improvement.
- **It fosters mutually reinforcing activities.**  
That means coordinating collective efforts to maximize the end result.
- **It encourages continuous communication.**  
That means building trust and relationships among all participants.
- **And it has a strong backbone.**  
That means having a team dedicated to orchestrating the work of the group.

\*Source of Information: The Collective Impact Forum

<https://www.collectiveimpactforum.org/what-collective-impact>

### The Aspen Institute Forum for Community Solutions

*Through the Forum for Community Solutions, the Aspen Institutes supports and encourages communities to come together to expand mobility, eliminate systemic barriers, and create their own solutions to their most pressing challenges.*

Multi-Sector partnerships are a critical part of complex community collaborations, and the Forum for Community Solutions promotes their use and uses them as a tool to increase the impact and effectiveness of collaborations. A partnership with the *Collective Impact Forum* underscores the Aspen Institute’s commitment to building multi-sector partnerships through the role of collective impact.

## F. Organizational Contributors to the Symposium



THE HEINZ ENDOWMENTS



H.F. "Gerry" Lenfest



**Symposium Organizing Committee**



*An Advocate for Greater Father Involvement in  
the Lives of Children & Families  
And the Systems that Serve Them*



[WWW.SOC18.ORG](http://WWW.SOC18.ORG)