



### Reflections on Grandfathers Raising Grandchildren

**How “The Integration of Responsible Fatherhood within Foster Care Service Delivery and Other Children and Youth Servicing Systems” is Relevant and Applicable in an Older Adult Servicing Agency**

*By Lynn Fields Harris, MPA, Commissioner, The Strong Families Commission Incorporated; Executive Director, Center in the Park (CIP), Senior Community Center; and Chair, National Institute of Senior Centers*



Scholarly journals, statistical analyses and even pop-culture are replete with references to grandparents raising grandchildren. Not as obvious, or even available, is the literature that references grandfathers raising grandchildren. Even a recent film starring Kevin Costner and Octavia Spencer approached the subject from a racial rather than parental/caregiver point of view. Costner, in ‘Black or White,’ was seeking to maintain custody of a biracial granddaughter who had lived with both grandparents until the grandmother passed away.

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**“Parenting Our Children – Is in the Best Interest of the Nation”-**



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- **Statement adapted from the title of the 1996 U.S. Commission on Child and Family Welfare Report to Congress**

### According to the AARP in Pennsylvania:

- 79,440 grandparents are the householders and are responsible for their grandchildren living with them.
- Of these: 65% of the grandparents are White and not Hispanic, 25% are Black/African American, 2% are Asian, and 8% are Hispanic/Latino, and may be of any race.
- 38% have no parents of the children present in the home.
- 68% are under age 60.
- 19% live in poverty. (\*\*100% of poverty level)
- 16,818 grandparents in Philadelphia city are the householders and are responsible for their grandchildren living with them.

As a senior center director, I have witnessed and heard of the sacrifices, frustrations and joy that grandchildren bring to the lives of both their grandmothers and grandfathers, when they are in their care. In some cases, it has been the primary responsibility, either thrust upon them or by choice, of grandfathers to care for a grandchild. Often, these older adult males are the only male role models in the lives of their grandchildren; and/or the children live with them and the grandmother is still in the workforce or is battling with illness, leaving the grandfather largely responsible. There have been cases where the grandfather, in order to participate in senior center programs, has brought the child with him. Increasingly, I believe that senior centers and other aging services providers need to be responsive, flexible and accepting of the need for older adult males to include their care recipients (children) in their participation rather than staying at home.

Having become aware of the Stoneleigh Foundation Senior Fellow Project on Responsible Fatherhood conducted by Dr. Rufus Sylvester Lynch, I was intrigued about the possibility of engaging older adult males in the discussion. The Center in the Park's Men's Gathering is a group that has met over the Center's 48-year history and became more formally structured as an outgrowth of a research project on African American males and health (the Fulani Project). Its focus has evolved from purely social to improving health and moved on to technology and broader issues. The Gathering continues to meet weekly at Center in the Park, for information, engagement and socialization.

Dr. Lynch was invited to present the Responsible Fatherhood initiative to the CIP Men's Gathering. As a follow-up to that presentation, the men invited Dr. Lynch to meet with them on a quarterly basis between July, 2014 and March, 2015. The agenda highlights included:

- Knowledge and Exchange – Dr. Lynch felt that he had as much to gain from the men's experiences and thoughts as he had to impart and so the exchanges were lively;
- A panel presentation of father engagement community advocates;
- Discussion of a case study, which the men asked to have presented;
- A site visit to the Philadelphia Juvenile Justice Center with a presentation from Philadelphia's Deputy Human Services Commissioner Timne Farlow, who appreciated the men's presence and interest and called them the

"everyday heroes" who, through sharing their experience and wisdom, can play a positive role in transforming young lives as mentors and role models. It was also poignant to learn from her, in response to the men's questions, that most of the young people who are detained do not receive regular visitors and when they do, it is most often a grandparent who does visit; and

- Finally, the men met with Dr. Lynch to review their experiences and think further about whether or not a specific collaborative initiative would move forward.

As a result of the engagement, although no specific initiative has arisen from it, Center in the Park was the only senior community center in the city involved in the Stoneleigh Foundation Fellowship Project: "Integrating Responsible Fatherhood within the Foster Care Service Delivery and Other Children and Youth Service Systems."

Given the fact that there are grandfathers included somewhere in the numbers and statistics on grandparents raising grandchildren, the exchange and awareness of issues related to responsible fatherhood with older adult males remains beneficial.

Resource: <http://www.aarp.org/relationships/friends-family/grandfacts-sheets/>



## Additional Parenting and Resource Information for Grandparents \*

### GRANDPARENTS AND RELATIVES RAISING GRANDCHILDREN:

[http://www.raisingyourgrandchildren.com/State\\_information.htm](http://www.raisingyourgrandchildren.com/State_information.htm)

### CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED PARENTS:

<http://www.youth.gov/youth-topics/children-of-incarcerated-parents>

### NATIONAL FAMILY CAREGIVER SUPPORT PROGRAM:

[http://www.aoa.acl.gov/aoa\\_programs/hcltc/caregiver/](http://www.aoa.acl.gov/aoa_programs/hcltc/caregiver/)

### GRANDPARENTING TODAY – THROUGH THE EYES OF A CHILD:

<http://fyi.uwex.edu/grandparenting/through-the-eyes-of-a-child/factsheets/>

### GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN:

[https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/ta-system/health/mental-health/adult-mental-health/famcom\\_rep\\_00248\\_043007.html](https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/ta-system/health/mental-health/adult-mental-health/famcom_rep_00248_043007.html)

### THE STATE OF GRANDFAMILIES IN AMERICA:

<https://peerta.acf.hhs.gov/content/state-grandfamilies-america>

### TAKING EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT FOR A GRANDCHILD:

<http://finance.zacks.com/can-grandmother-earned-income-credit-grandchild-5940.html>

\*Source:

**Child Support Report,  
September, 2016**

Office of Child Support Enforcement

## Child Support Report

Vol. 38 No. 8 September 2016

### **Grandparents Caring for Grandchildren**

**By John Langrock, OCSE**

**Editor's Note:** Coincidentally, an article on grandparents caring for grandchildren was just published in the September, 2016 issue of the federal Child Support Report (CSR).

The article mirrors a number of points made by Lynn Fields Harris on pgs. 1-3 of the Commission's newsletter including access to helpful resources (see column to the right.) Furthermore, the CSR article highlights the fact that "In the U.S. in 2012,

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nearly 10 percent of the nation's 65 million grandparents lived with at least one grandchild and 10 percent of the 17 million children lived with a grandparent." To read the article in its entirety go to:

[www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/programs/css/September\\_2016\\_child\\_support\\_Report.pdf](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/programs/css/September_2016_child_support_Report.pdf)



## News from the Nation's Capital

### Congress Passes Last Minute Continuing Resolution – Avoids Government Shutdown

With only two days to spare before the deadline, Congress avoided a government shutdown by passing a short-term continuing resolution (CR), set at Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 spending levels, on September 28. The CR will keep the federal government funded through December 9.

SOURCES: National Low Income Housing Coalition and Federal News Radio

## Public Law 113-183 "Sense of Congress" Legislation Regarding Parenting Time

**Editor's note:** Did you know that Congress is on record in support of increased parent access to children and that this support has been embedded in legislation (Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act) passed by Congress on September 29, 2014?

I didn't until recently so it was a very welcome surprise! Hopefully the "Sense of Congress" language will someday become statutorily-mandated requirements for those federal programs identified in legislation. Helping noncustodial parents – particularly unmarried fathers -- gain increased access to their children through the establishment of parenting time agreements/orders is a critical step towards ensuring that children benefit from the love and financial support of *both* parents.

### SEC. 303. SENSE OF THE CONGRESS REGARDING OFFERING OF VOLUNTARY PARENTING TIME ARRANGEMENTS.

(a) **FINDINGS.**—The Congress finds as follows

(1) The separation of a child from a parent does not end the financial or other responsibilities of the parent toward the child.

(2) Increased parental access and visitation not only improve parent-child relationships and outcomes for children, but also have been demonstrated to result in improved child support collections, which creates a double win for children—a more engaged parent and improved financial security.



(b) **SENSE OF THE CONGRESS.**—It is the sense of the Congress that—

(1) establishing parenting time arrangements when obtaining child support orders is an important goal which should be accompanied by strong family violence safeguards; and



(2) States should use existing funding sources to support the establishment of parenting time arrangements, **including child support incentives, Access and Visitation Grants, and Healthy Marriage Promotion and Responsible Fatherhood Grants.**

## “Sense of Congress” Legislation on Parenting Time: A Discussion

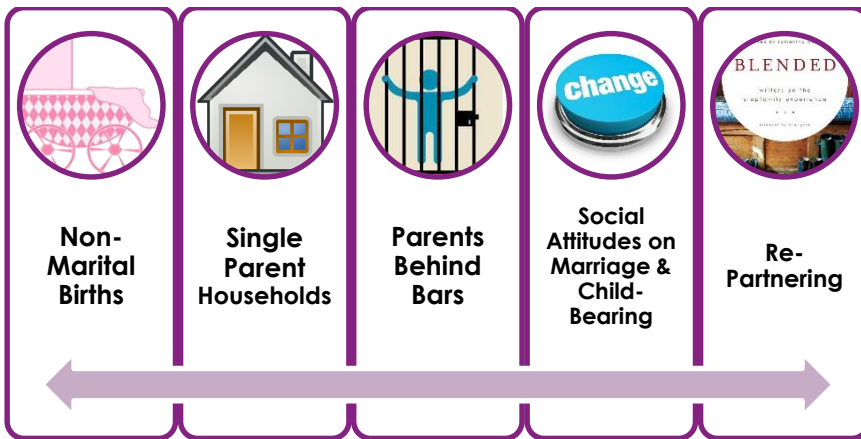
By Debra Pontisso, MPA, Director of Institutional Advancement, Strong Families Commission, Inc. and Co-Chair of the National Responsible Fatherhood Roundtable

The “Sense of Congress” provision on parenting time -- as contained in the passage of Public Law 113-183 -- draws us one step closer to fully *understanding* and *addressing* at the national level the child access needs of noncustodial parents (NCPs), particularly unmarried fathers.

Striking changes in U.S. family formation and structure, and attitudes towards childbearing are few of the indicators of social change impacting child-wellbeing. Furthermore, the lack of programmatic “on ramps” and the presence of institutional disconnects that discourage NCP involvement in the lives of their children are additional factors that inadvertently contribute to father absence.

I believe that focusing on the following “big five” indicators of social change best underscores the current realities of family formation and structure in America.

### Indicators of Changes in Family Formation



Many (but not all) of the 24 million children growing up in single parent households 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.**

**Non-Marital Births:** In 2014, **40.6% or 1.6 million of all live births (4.0 million)** were to unmarried parents compared to 28% or 1.2 million out of 4.1 million births in 1990.

**Single Parent Households:** As of 2013, 24 million or 35% of the nation's children were living in single parent households – usually headed by the biological mother.

**Incarceration:** In 2007, an estimated 809,800 of the 1.5 million individuals serving time in prison (state/federal) were parents of an estimated 1.7 million minor age children.

**Social Mores:** Changing attitudes towards marriage and child bearing has contributed to an increase in non-marital births and cohabitation.

**Re-Partnering:** Unmarried parents are more likely than divorced parents to have children with different partners.

**For further data and research on the “five social indicators” of changes in family formation, go to:**

#### Non-Marital Births

**National Vital Statistics Reports, Vol. 64, December 23, 2015. Births: Final Data for 2014**

[www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr64/nvsr64\\_12\\_tables.pdf#i04](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr64/nvsr64_12_tables.pdf#i04)

**Child Trends Data Bank**

<http://www.childtrends.org/?indicators=births-to-unmarried-women>

#### Single Parent Households

**Child Trends Data Bank**

<http://www.childtrends.org/indicators/family-structure/>

#### Incarceration

**Bureau of Justice Statistics, Special Report: Parents in Prison and Their Minor Children,**

U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, August 2008 (revised March 30, 2010)

[www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/pptmc.pdf](http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/pptmc.pdf)

#### Social Mores

**National Health Statistics Report, No. 92, March 17, 2016: Trends in Attitudes About Marriage, Childbearing, and Sexual Behavior: United States, 2002, 2006–2010, and 2011–2013**

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhsr/nhsr092.pdf>

#### Re-Partnering

**Parenting as a “Package Deal”: Relationships, Fertility, and Nonresident Father Involvement Among Unmarried Parents** by Laura Tach, Ronald Mincy, and Kathryn Edin, published in *Demography*, 2010 Feb; 47(1): 181–204.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3000012/>

Source: “Marriage from a Child’s Perspective: How Does Family Structure Affect Children, and What Can We do About it?” by Kirstin Anderson Moore, Ph.D., Susan M. Jekielek, M.A., and Carol Emig, M.P.P., *Child Trends Research Briefs*, June 2002.

#### Focusing on the “Parenting Time Disconnect” Facing Unmarried Fathers

The “Sense of Congress” legislation on parenting time builds upon the belief that, in general, children do better with the financial and emotional support from both parents.

On the financial support- side of the equation, federal and state child support agencies are pretty adept at establishing and enforcing child support orders and collecting payments from non-custodial parents (usually fathers).

However, there is a serious **institutional disconnect** when it comes to addressing the child access needs of unmarried fathers – particularly those who lack a parenting time order through the courts. According to the research findings of Drs. Ron Mincy and Frank Furstenburg, “...father involvement drops sharply after relationships between unmarried parents ends” and is further complicated by evidence which suggest unmarried parents are more likely to re-partner than divorced parents (Source: refer to citation of article in side bar under “Re-Partnering”).



#### Obstacles to father-child access -- particularly among unmarried parents – are often indicative of the following realities:

1. Legal Paternity Establishment: While the majority of unmarried fathers are present at the time of their child's birth at the hospital -- and willingly sign the paternity affidavit -- they are often under the false assumption that they have full parenting time rights. They don't. Signing the paternity affidavit only means that they are the legal, biological father of their child

2. Legal Parenting Time Rights: In the majority of states (with the exception of Texas) unmarried fathers must go to court to petition for a parenting time order -- **assuming they have the financial resources to hire an attorney** which many younger unmarried fathers simple don't have.

And even if unmarried fathers have the knowledge and wherewithal to navigate the court system “pro se”, many are deterred from doing so because of prior brushes with the criminal justice system or because they are simply intimidated by the process.

3. Lack of Institutional “On-Ramps” to Court-Connected Parenting Time Services: When parents get divorced they must do so through the courts. An integral part of the divorce proceedings – aside from dividing up assets, etc. – is the resolution of parenting time issues that ensure, to some degree, the continued involvement of the soon-to-be noncustodial parent in the lives of his/her children. This usually results in a parenting time (custody/visitation) order.

Unmarried parents, however, do not have an institutional “on-ramp” due to their non-marital status *coupled with the fact* that it does not require them to resolve the breakout of their relationship through the courts. They are left on their own to figure out parenting time issues without the benefit of court-connected services usually available to divorcing parents (e.g., mediation, parent education, etc.) nor the opportunity to establish a parenting time order.

4. Mother as Gate-Keeper: If and when (most often “when”) an unmarried couple breaks-up and the break-up is acrimonious, the biological mother is in a formidable position to either grant or deny a father’s access to his children. And should she forbid the father from seeing his child, there is little that can be done without a legal parenting time order through the courts.

3. NCP’s Begrudge Having to Pay Child Support When They Can’t See Their Kids: The two primary ways a child support order is triggered is: a) a mother goes on welfare; or b) a mother request child support services. A pre-condition for obtaining a child support order for unmarried custodial parents is that legal paternity must be first be established. Usually this isn’t a problem since the majority of unmarried fathers voluntarily acknowledge paternity at the time of their child’s birth. What they may not know is that they may be required to pay child support. The “double insult” for unmarried father results when he is willing or has to pay child support but cannot see his children partly because he doesn’t have a legal parenting time order. Under current law, child support program funds cannot be used for this purpose.

The **good news** is that it appears Congress via the “Sense of Congress” language of 2014 may have been spurred on by an idea contained in President Obama’s budget proposal that – *if it had been approved* -- *would have required* the nation’s child support agencies to offer unmarried parents the opportunity to establish a parenting time plan order at the time a child support order was being created. Currently, child support funds cannot be used for anything other than statutorily-mandated child support functions. The potential of this proposal is enormous insofar as it would create an important “on-ramp” for millions of unmarried parents in the child support caseload to parenting time services outside of the court.

This proposal appears to be modeled after legislation passed in 1993 that required child support agencies to manage in-hospital paternity programs allowing unmarried parents – including the father – to *voluntarily* establish legal paternity without having to go to court.

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### Pennsylvania Statistical Snap-Shot

#### **Number and Percentage of Children Born to Unmarried Parents in 2014:**

**In 2014, 58,383 (all races) or 41% of the total of number of births (139,000)**

**White: 31,583 or 32%**  
**Black/African American: 15,536 or 77%**  
**Hispanic: 9,487 or 65%**

Source: National Vital Records Report, Vol. 64., No. 12, December 23, 2015

#### **Children in Single Parent Households:**

**In 2014, 35% or 905,000 children under 18 yrs. lived in single parent homes**

Source: Child Trends Data Center  
[www.datacenter.kidscount.org/data#PA](http://www.datacenter.kidscount.org/data#PA)

#### **Children Who Had an Incarcerated Parent:**

**181,000 (2011-2012)**

Source: Kids Count Data Center  
<http://www.datacenter.kidscount.org/>

#### **No. of Children Living in Poverty:**


**1 million in 2014 (living below 200% poverty)**

Source: Kids Count Data Center

The "Sense of Congress" language specifies that "states should use existing funding resources to support the establishment of parenting time arrangements, including child support incentives, Access and Visitation Grants, and Healthy Marriage Promotion and Responsible Fatherhood Grants." This is not a legislative mandate but a legislative intent.

### Brief Overview of Federal Programs Identified in the "Sense of Congress" Parenting Time Legislation

A summary of those federal programs identified in the "Sense of Congress" legislation is as follows and it is worth noting that they are administered under the umbrella of the Administration on Children and Families (ACF), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Program	Summary Description & Links
<p><b>[Child] Access and Visitation (AV) Grants to States</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passed Congress in 1996 as part of the welfare reform legislation</li> <li>• Since 1997 -- the year the program became operational -- approximately \$10 million has been made available annually to states/trust territories based on a funding formula</li> <li>• <b>Purpose:</b> To enable states to support and facilitate noncustodial parents' access to and visitation of their children"</li> <li>• <b>Allowable Services:</b> parenting agreements, mediation, parent education, counseling, visitation enforcement (including neutral drop- off/pickup and supervised visitation)</li> <li>• To date, an estimated <b>1.1 million noncustodial parents served</b></li> <li>• Although the AV Grant Program is administered by and housed within the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE), states can decide which entity will administer the grant program (usually state offices of the courts or child support), which services to provide, and noncustodial persons (NCPs) to be served. In other words, there is no requirement that NCPs have to be in the child support caseload.</li> <li>• For additional information, go to: <a href="http://www.acf.hhs.gov/css/grants/grant-updates-results/access-and-visitation-mandatory-grants">http://www.acf.hhs.gov/css/grants/grant-updates-results/access-and-visitation-mandatory-grants</a></li> </ul>
	<p>Since 2010 with Congressional passage of the Claims Resolution Act of 2010 (CRA), approximately <b>\$150 million a year</b> has been appropriated annually to support the funding of: 1) Responsible Fatherhood Grants; and 2) Healthy Marriage Grants.</p> <p>The Office of Family Assistance (OFA) within ACF is responsible for administering these two grant programs and competitively awards both grants to states, local governments, and community-based organizations (both for profit and not-for-profit, including faith-based). These grantees work to help participants build and sustain healthy relationships and marriages, and to strengthen positive father-child interaction.</p> <p>OFA is also the agency that administers the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. For additional information, go to:</p> <p><a href="http://www.acf.hhs.gov/ofa/programs/healthy-marriage/about">http://www.acf.hhs.gov/ofa/programs/healthy-marriage/about</a></p>
<p><b>[Pathways] to Responsible Fatherhood Grants</b></p>	<p>The following three Responsible Fatherhood activities are specified in the Claims Resolution Act of 2010:</p> <p><b>1. Healthy Marriage</b> – Activities to promote marriage or sustain marriage through activities, such as:</p>





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be a dad today.

fatherhood.gov

- Providing information about the benefits of marriage and two-parent involvement for children.
- Enhancing relationship skills.
- Education regarding how to control aggressive behavior.
- Disseminating information on the causes of domestic violence and child abuse.
- Marriage preparation programs and premarital counseling.
- Skills-based marriage education.
- Financial planning seminars.
- Divorce education and reduction programs, including mediation and counseling.

**2. Responsible Parenting – Activities to promote responsible parenting, such as:**

- Counseling, mentoring, and mediation.
- Disseminating information about good parenting practices.
- Teaching parenting skills.
- Encouraging child support payments.

**3. Economic Stability – Activities to foster economic stability, such as:**

- Helping fathers improve their economic status by providing activities such as job training, employment services, and career-advancing education.
- Coordination with existing employment services such as welfare-to-work programs, referrals to local employment training initiatives

For the Federal Fiscal Years (2015-2020), approximately 39 New Pathways for Fathers and Families grantees have been funded. For additional information go to:

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/ofa/programs/healthy-marriage/responsible-fatherhood>

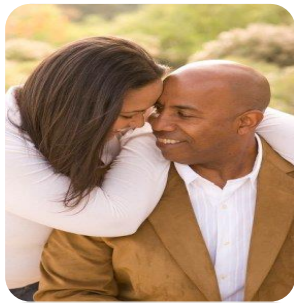
For a list of **current grantees**, go to:

[http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ofa/healthy\\_marriage\\_and\\_responsible\\_fatherhood\\_grantees.pdf](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ofa/healthy_marriage_and_responsible_fatherhood_grantees.pdf)

To access the **National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse**, go to:

<http://www.fatherhood.gov>

**Healthy Marriage Grants**



The Healthy Marriage initiative is part of national strategy to enhance child well-being. ACF recently funded 60 organizations across the country to provide comprehensive healthy relationship and marriage education services, as well as job and career advancement activities to promote economic stability and overall improved family well-being.

The [Healthy Marriage grantees](#) can provide a range of activities including:

- Public advertising campaigns on the value of healthy marriages.
- Education in high schools on the value of marriage, relationship skills, and budgeting.
- Marriage and relationship skills programs that may include parenting skills, financial management, conflict resolution, and job and career advancement.
- Premarital education and marriage skills training for engaged couples and for couples or individuals who are interested in marriage.
- Marriage mentoring programs that use married couples as role models and mentors in at-risk communities.
- Divorce reduction programs that teach relationship skills.
- Programs to reduce the disincentives to marriage in means-tested aid programs, if offered in conjunction with any activity described above.

For additional information, go to: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/ofa/programs/healthy-marriage/healthy-marriage>

For a list of **current grantees**, go to: [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ofa/healthy\\_marriage\\_and\\_responsible\\_fatherhood\\_grantees.pdf](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ofa/healthy_marriage_and_responsible_fatherhood_grantees.pdf)

To access the **National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families** go to: <https://www.healthymarriageandfamilies.org/>

## Child Support Incentives



### Background:

The primary responsibility of the national Child Support Program is to obtain financial and medical support for children primarily from through:

- locating parents,
- establishing paternity,
- establishing and modifying support obligations,
- and monitoring and enforcing these obligations.

### Performance-Based Incentives and Penalties:

The Child Support Program has a strong outcome-based performance management system established by the Child Support Performance and Incentive Act of 1998 (CSPIA). Since parenting time/child access is currently not an allowable service under the child support program, it is understandable as to why it is not part of state performance outcomes or incentives.

Under CSPIA, states are measured in five program areas:

- paternity establishment;
- support order establishment;
- current support collected;
- cases paying towards arrears; and
- cost effectiveness.

Source: Annual Report to Congress for FY 2014, submitted by the Office of Child Support Enforcement or go to:

[http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/programs/css/fy2014\\_part\\_01\\_narrative\\_and\\_national\\_performance.pdf](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/programs/css/fy2014_part_01_narrative_and_national_performance.pdf)

### Office of Child Support Enforcement's Demonstration Grants: Parenting Time Demonstrations for Children (PTOC)

The Obama Administration's repeated attempts to obtain congressional approval – via annual budget proposals -- that would have allowed child support funds to be used in establishing parenting time agreements for unwed parents is likely the impetus behind OCSE's funding of demonstration grants entitled Parenting Time Opportunities for Children (PTOC). It is of interest to OCSE for another reason and that is because research has shown that if NCPs gain increased access to their children they are more likely to comply with and/or increase their child support payments. As Congress stated in Public Law 113-183, Section 303(a), "Increased parental access and visitation not only improve parent-child relationships and outcomes for children but also have been demonstrated to result in improved child support collections, which creates a double win for children – a more engaged parent and improved financial security." For additional information on the demonstration grants, go to:

[https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/programs/css/14\\_discretionary\\_grants\\_for\\_ptoc\\_final.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/programs/css/14_discretionary_grants_for_ptoc_final.pdf)

## Family Strengthening in Pennsylvania

### The Commission Takes the Lead...

...to educate social workers from across Pennsylvania about the importance of advocating for the inclusion of Fathers in service delivery to children and families.

*By Rufus Sylvester Lynch, DSW, ACSW, and Commission Chair*

In January of this year, NASW-PA in partnership with the Stoneleigh Foundation Senior Fellow Project "**The Integration of Responsible Fatherhood within Foster Care Service Delivery and Other Children and Youth Servicing Systems**" conducted among its members a three question survey to determine the interest of social workers in the area of Fathers within families, Fatherhood Engagement, and Responsible Fatherhood as a field of study.

The findings were encouraging. For example, 91% of the respondents agreed with the question of whether they believed "Responsible Fatherhood" and "Fatherhood Engagement" are an important area of interest that social workers should be trained in; 73% of the respondents expressed agreement that the subject was an area of interest for them as professional social workers; and 75% of the respondents reported if an online toolkit on "Responsible Fatherhood" were made available to them the 14 topical areas below would be useful or very useful to them.

The findings are encouraging as reported below:

#### Useful Online Resources & Tools

Information on Cultural Differences	93%
Methods to Engage Fathers	91%
Community Resources	91%
Practice Tips	90%
Assessment Tools	86%
Links to additional Online Resources	86%
Research Summaries	82%
Tools for Staff Training	82%
Standard of Practice	81%
Frequently Asked Questions	80%
Techniques to Involve Agencies	78%
Definitions	76%
Research Articles	72%
Case Studies	72%

In an effort to respond to the growing needs of Pennsylvania's Social Workers the Commission Chair organized a trans-disciplinary team of Father Inclusive Stakeholders to present at the October 2016 Annual Meeting of the Social Work Profession to address the value of Fathers and their contributions to the well-being of children. The Conference Presenters and Title Presentations are as follows:

**Pre-Conference Intensive Facilitator's** – Rufus Sylvester Lynch, DSW, ACSW, Commission Chair, [drrslynchtstfc@iawfpa.com](mailto:drrslynchtstfc@iawfpa.com) and Gayle P. Washington, MSW, LSW, Board Chair, IAWF, [gwashin277@aol.com](mailto:gwashin277@aol.com)

**Title of Presentation:** Responsible Fatherhood and the Well-being of Children through the Lens of Social Workers: Constructing Knowledge, Skills, and Resources.



**Gayle P. Washington, MSW, LSW, Board Chair, IAWF**

**Content Expert Presenters**

**Jacquelyn Mitchell, J.D., MSW, LSW, Director of Accreditation, Continuing Education and Quality Assurance, The Strong Families Commission, Incorporation, [jamitche@bellsouth.net](mailto:jamitche@bellsouth.net)**

**Title of Presentation:** A Professional and Ethical Query For Social Workers: Do Children Have A Fundamental Legal Right to a Relationship With Both Parents?

**Carol S. Larach, DrPh, MPH, MEd., Director of Program Integration, Division of Material, Child and Family Health, Philadelphia Department of Public Health, [Carol.Larach@phila.gov](mailto:Carol.Larach@phila.gov)**

**Title of Presentation:** Perinatal Depression and Fathers.

**Keva White, LCADC, LSW, President and CEO of VIP Community Services, Inc. [vipcerv@aol.com](mailto:vipcerv@aol.com)**

**Title of Presentation:** Fatherlessness: An Economic Determinant of Child Well-being.

**Richard Jeffrey Rhodes, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent, The School District of Philadelphia, [rrhodes@philasd.org](mailto:rrhodes@philasd.org)**

**Title of Presentation:** Father's Absence on Children's learning and progress in school.

**Jeffrey K. Shears, Ph.D., Director of Graduate Studies, Joint Master of Social Work Program, NC A&T / UNC Greensboro, [jeffrey.shears@outlook.com](mailto:jeffrey.shears@outlook.com)**

**Title of Presentation:** Children, Youth and Family-Focused Agency Self-Assessment of Father Friendliness: Quantitative Findings.

**Virginia J. Smith, Ph.D., ACSW, Professor, Masters of Human Services Program at The Lincoln University and Director of Research at the Institute for the Advancement of Working Families (IAWF), [vsmith@lincoln.edu](mailto:vsmith@lincoln.edu)**

**Title of Presentation:** Children, Youth and Family-Focused Agency Self-Assessment of Father Friendliness: Qualitative Findings

**Lynette Medley, M.Ed., Founder/CEO, No More Secrets Mind Body Spirit [lynettemedley@nomoresecretsmbs.org](mailto:lynettemedley@nomoresecretsmbs.org)**

**Title of Presentation:** Agencies Acknowledging Males in Their Totality

**Artish Jacobs, MPA, MHR, Program Specialist, U.S. Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement, Administration for Children and Families, [artish.jacobs@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:artish.jacobs@acf.hhs.gov)**

**Juanita DeVine, MSW, Regional Program Manager, U.S. Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement, Administration for Children and Families, [juanita.devine@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:juanita.devine@acf.hhs.gov)**

**Title of Presentation:** Child Support a New Direction in Supporting Fathers and Dispelling Myths.

**Rufus Sylvester Lynch, DSW, ACSW, Commission Chair, [drrslynchtsfc@iawfpa.com](mailto:drrslynchtsfc@iawfpa.com)**

**Title of Presentation:** Present, Absent or Anonymous – Fathers: 21st Century Enrichment of Father Involvement; Creating Gender Equity through the Caring of Men.

**Rufus Sylvester Lynch, DSW, ACSW, Commission Chair**



## Articles & Research on Family Formation

### The New Economic Face of Marriage\*

By Aimee Picchi  
MONEYWATCH  
August 29, 2016  
<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/the-new-economic-face-of-marriage/>

\*based on research conducted by Richard V. Reeves, Isabel V. Sawhill, and Eleanor Krause, [Brookings Institution](#), August 19, 2016

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/social-mobility-memos/2016/08/19/the-most-educated-women-are-the-most-likely-to-be-married/>

### Marriage and Cohabitation Experiences Among Adults

Bowling Green State University  
National Center for Family and Marriage Research

<http://www.bgsu.edu/ncfmr/resources/data/family-profiles/lamidi-manning-marriage-cohabitation-young-adults-fp-16-17.html>

### Involving Dads in the Lives of Children Born Out of Wedlock

by Sarah Breitenbach  
Huffington Post, September 29, 2016  
<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/involving-dads-in-lives-of->

## Training Webinars and Conferences

### National Fatherhood Initiative's Free Webinar

Subject: **The Resource to Engage Dads in Home Visits:** An Introduction to NFI's Home Visitation Resource Bundle  
When: Tuesday, October 25th, 2016  
Time: 2:00 pm – 2:30 pm EST

During this webinar you will learn how to use the resources to plan for your meetings with dads when he's present and provide leave-behind items for dads

To register, go to: [www.fatherhood.com](http://www.fatherhood.com)

### Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) Forum on: Reconnecting Justice: Pathways to Effective Reentry through Education and Training

When: October 28, 2016  
Where: FHI 360, Academy Hall  
1825 Connecticut Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20009  
Time: 12:00pm – 3:00 pm EDT

On **October 28**, join the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) for "**Reconnecting Justice: Pathways to Effective Reentry through Education and Training**," a public forum exploring the intersection between criminal justice reform and postsecondary education and employment. This event, the second in our series on criminal justice, will include a keynote address by Nicholas Turner, president of the Vera Institute of Justice, as well as expert discussions connecting policy trends in correctional education and training with reentry opportunities that promote economic success.

To register to attend **in person**, go to:

<http://www.clasp.org/issues/postsecondary/pages/register-for-clasp-reconnecting-justice-forum>

To sign-up for the **web-cast**, go to:

<http://www.clasp.org/issues/postsecondary/pages/register-for-clasp-reconnecting-justice-forum>

### 12<sup>th</sup> Annual NASW Social Work Pioneer Program & Luncheon

NASW Foundation  
When: October 29, 2016  
Time: 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.  
Location: Women's National Democratic Club, 1526 New Hampshire Avenue, Washington, D.C. 20036

This year's program theme is titled "Spirituality, Racism and Poverty: The Conversation starts with me and us" Keynote Speaker: Dr. Rufus Sylvester Lynch, DSW, ACSW, NASW Social Work Pioneer®, NASW National Board of Directors, and Chair, The Strong Families Commission Incorporated. For more information, please contact the NASW Foundation at 202.408.8600 x 484. [www.naswfoundation.org](http://www.naswfoundation.org)

# The Strong Families Commission

## Vision

- Children and youth in Philadelphia, across the state, and around the country will benefit from and grow up with the emotional, social, intellectual, spiritual, and financial support of both parents in a healthy and supportive environment

## Mission

- To strengthen families and improve child well-being through advocacy designed to affect child and family policy and programs, leverage resources to contribute to the well-being of children and families, and to encourage collaboration among Philadelphia organizations and beyond that are family-focused and inclusive of fathers

## Goal

- Model Philadelphia as the most Father Friendly City in America, by eliminating the systemic barriers that work against increasing father engagement in all systems of care that address the well-being of children, youth, and families. Achieving this goal can propel The Philadelphia Model of Father Integration into a successful example for the rest of the nation to emulate

## Strategy

- Partner with children, youth, and family-focused agencies and systems of care to increase their capacity to include fathers in their service delivery models that are designed to improve the well-being of the children they serve

The Strong Families Commission, Incorporated  
P.O. Box 13502, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19101  
[www.thestrongfamiliescommission.com](http://www.thestrongfamiliescommission.com) T: 215-879-1745

**A SPECIAL THANK YOU** to everyone who made a tax deductible gift to The Commission in 2015.....

...and we *invite* anyone who wishes to support the work of the Commission to give generously and securely online -- [www.thestrongfamiliescommission.com](http://www.thestrongfamiliescommission.com) - via PayPal and/or you can mail a check to:

**The Strong Families Commission, Incorporated**  
P.O. Box 13502  
Philadelphia, PA 19101



Lynn Fields Harris, MPA,  
Commission Treasurer

### **A Note from the Editor:**

If you have information on best practices, research and other topics that you think readers would be interested in, please contact me – Debra Pontisso --at [dpontisso@aol.com](mailto:dpontisso@aol.com).



Debra Pontisso, MPA,  
Director of Institutional Advancement