




**Building Father-Friendly Systems  
And Strong Partnerships**



## Staggering Statistics



- Children in father-absent homes are five times more likely to be poor ([https://fatherhood.gov/for-programs/for-your-fathers/father-presence#Father\\_Absence](https://fatherhood.gov/for-programs/for-your-fathers/father-presence#Father_Absence) )
- 71% of all high school dropouts come from fatherless homes — 9 times the average (National Principals Association Report)
- 85% of all children who show behavior disorders come from fatherless homes — 20 times the average (Center for Disease Control)
- 63% of youth suicides are from fatherless homes (US Dept. Of Health/Census) — 5 times the average

## Fathers Corps Mission



**The Alameda County Fathers Corps promotes and supports fathers and father figures to be meaningfully engaged with their children and families, and advocates for family service providers to provide father friendly services and assist fathers in strengthening their parenting skills**



## How the Fathers Corps was Born



- **Partnership between First 5 Alameda County and Alameda County Public Health Department**
  - Established in August 2013 to train male service providers working with fathers in Alameda County
- **Partnership expanded, now includes Alameda County Social Services**



## Building Powerful Partnerships



- **Established Fathers Corps Leadership Team**
  - First 5 Alameda County
  - Alameda County Public Health Department
  - Alameda County Social Services Agency
  - Alameda County Department of Child Support Services
  - Alameda County Probation
  - UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland
- **Leadership Team is strong, collaborative, and committed**

## What is the Fathers Corps?



- **Convene learning community for 10 trainings over nine months**
  - Participants trained on array of early childhood topics; reviewed and discussed material specific to the needs and roles of fathers





## Fathers Corps' Goals



- Increase providers' knowledge of environmental, nutritional, and social and emotional factors affecting the healthy development of children birth to 5 years and increase awareness of father specific services
- Assist participants in implementing Alameda County Fathers Corps Father-Friendly Principles at home agencies
- Train participants for inclusion in the pool of Father Engagement Specialists and Mentors who are available to support family service programs

## Training Calendar



Date	Training Topic
9/19/2014	Child Development 101
10/17/2014	Temperament / Discipline
11/21/2014	Personal Safety and Law Enforcement
12/12/2014	Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)
1/9/2015	Fathers' Rights and Responsibilities (Custody 101 & Child Support 101)
1/30/2015	Fathers Corps Retreat & Program Check-in
2/20/2015	Navigating the Alameda County Social Services Agency Eligibility and Employment Services Systems
3/20/2015	Parenting as a Team
4/17/2015	Working with Teen Fathers
5/15/2015	Nutrition and Wellness

## Comments On Training Evaluations



- “Thanks, one of the best trainings I’ve been part of.”
- “It was magical and inspiring. I hope future meetings have a similar quality.”
- “Good focus on fathers & how to relate to men. Good info in general.”
- “What a wonderful way to spend the afternoon. More than I expected.”
- “This was all over [a] great training, probably the best one... I will use information in both my work place and at home.”
- “Understanding the impact of stress/ trauma EXCELLENT FACILITATOR, Knowledgeable and pleasant”
- “It could have went on for another 2 – 3 hours”

## Who’s the Corps?



- 40 male service providers who work with fathers in Alameda County
- Over 20 agencies and programs represented:
  - ACPHD; Family Health Services; SSA; Healthy Homes Department; Alameda County Probation ; Alameda Department of County Child Support Services
  - City of Berkeley; City of Fremont; Oakland Housing Authority
  - Oakland Head Start and Alameda County Head Start
  - 4C’s; Centerforce; FSSBA; Through the Looking Glass; Brighter Beginning; Raising a Reader
  - CBO’s: A Better Way; REACH; Urban Parenting in America
- Providers who work with fathers in various capacities:
  - Advocates
  - Mentors
  - Policy makers
  - Case managers
  - Counselors & Therapists



## Evaluation



### Key Questions

- Why did participants join the Fathers Corps? How have they benefitted, if at all, by participating?
- How effective were the training sessions? What did participants learn? How relevant was the information?
- Have any changes occurred in participants' practice or agencies?
- How could the Fathers Corps be improved?

## Evaluation



### Data Sources

- Training evaluation surveys at end of each training session
- Two online participant surveys — in October 2013 and June 2014
- Mid-point discussion in January 2014

### Results – Some Highlights

Participants reported increases in:

- Knowledge of parenting and child development
- Connection to community resources
- Networking and peer support
- Commitment to advocating on behalf of fathers, male caregivers





## Evaluation



### Participating in the Fathers Corps has...

- 69% - strengthened “a lot” their commitment to advocating on behalf of fathers/male caregivers
- 58% - helped them “a lot” to be a more knowledgeable, skillful, and/or engaged provider
- 42% - helped them “a lot” to plan, or inspired them to start, a new program or service for fathers

“Let’s continue this great work of placing focus and energy on fathers in Alameda County. I envision needed services and new partnerships arising from the work of the Father Corps...”

## Lessons Learned



### Learning Community

- Sessions need to be interactive, not just one way communication
- Material must be sensitive to fathers’ needs and concerns and of practical application to participating service providers
- Male trainers whenever possible
- Be flexible and allow current events to drive some components of content
  - Personal Safety and Law Enforcement
  - Discipline
- Be responsive to feedback received from members
  - Offered retreat
  - Male trainers



## Fathers Corps Highlights



- Identified and adopted the Alameda County Father Friendly Principles
- Completed 2 years of learning community hosted 20 trainings, each attended by over 20 male service providers
- Hosted Fatherhood 101 screening in Oakland, attended by over 500 people
- Social Services Agency and Alameda County Public Health hosted Fatherhood 101 screenings
- “Daddy & Me” events at Children’s Fairyland
- Fathers Corps is a resource for providers looking for direct support for fathers and for programs in need of male providers to support their program

## Systems Change



- Father Friendly Principles were adopted by the Alameda County Board of Supervisors on February 3<sup>rd</sup>
- Fatherhood component being added to all First 5 core training topics
- First 5 is offering fatherhood training series
- SSA has established a Male/Fatherhood Advisory Committee to help inform SSA leadership of the needs men/fathers in their system
- First 5 received more father-specific grant applications
- First 5, HCSA, and SSA partner to fund Fathers Corps Administrator position



## Next Steps



- Family service provider survey closes today
- Focus groups and one-one-one interviews with fathers who are not in the lives of their children
- Fathers Corps Year 2 Celebration on June 25<sup>th</sup>
- Daddy & Me event to be held at Fairyland on June 26<sup>th</sup>
- Recruiting for Year 3 of the Fathers Corps
- Continue to provide support to agencies to incorporate the Father Friendly Principles
- Fund development to sustain the Alameda County Fathers Corps





**FIRST 5**  
 **ALAMEDA COUNTY**

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ALAMEDA COUNTY  
FATHERS CORPS  
est. 2013