

A Spotlight on Young Fathers:

Adding new tools to your toolbox to help recruit, retain, and engage young fathers in programs



Conference Number: 888-390-1454

Participant Code: 6232015

June 23, 2015



This webinar was developed by Child Trends under contract #HHSP233201450027A for the Office of Adolescent Health; US Department of Health and Human Services as a technical assistance product for use with OAH Pregnancy Assistance Fund grantees.



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- After this webinar, attendees will be able to:
 - Describe how the new tools can be integrated into their programs
 - Navigate through the tools in order to identify specific strategies for improving services for young fathers



- Poll: Are you currently serving young fathers or do you have plans to serve young fathers in the future?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe



- Programs can play an important role in supporting young fathers and their families by addressing the potential challenges faced by young fathers and their children as a result of early childbearing

- Challenges due to early childbearing
 - For young fathers:
 - Lower income, economic stability, occupational attainment
 - Greater relationship turbulence
 - Difficulty paying child support
 - For children:
 - Low/very low birth weight, premature birth
 - Negative home environments
 - Lower cognitive abilities
 - Behavior problems

- Programs can promote factors that help young fathers overcome these challenges
 - Support young fathers' ability to provide financially
 - Create safe and stable home environments for children
 - Teach young fathers about positive engagement with children
 - Promote positive relationships with partners/mothers



- Young fathers included as a specific target population
- Key challenges related to recruiting, retaining, and engaging young fathers include:
 - Difficulty reaching young fathers
 - Limited focus on content and skills that young fathers consider interesting or useful

- Q&A: What specific challenges have you faced recruiting, retaining, and engaging young fathers?
- **Discussion Board Responses:**
 - Out-of-school young dads
 - Overloaded schedules of young dads
 - Finding appropriate meeting times
 - Thinking programs for women only



- Research on young fathers
- Common/successful program approaches
- Target audience of tools
- Provide multiple, high quality products:
 - Recruitment tip sheet
 - Retention tip sheet
 - Checklist
 - Toolkit



Five Things to Know About Recruiting Young Fathers



This item was prepared under contract #HHSP233201450027A from the HHS Office of Adolescent Health (OAH). It was developed as a technical assistance item for OAH Pregnancy Assistance Fund grantees.

- Key features:
 - Five detailed tips with multiple references
 - Extensive list of resources
- Suggested uses:
 - Staff trainings
 - Recruitment efforts



Recruitment Tip Sheet



Five Things to Know About Recruiting Young Fathers

1. Young fathers are not always easily identifiable. Make sure your program is highly visible in the community so that everyone learns about it.

It might not always be obvious which youth are young fathers. It's important to make sure your program is visible so you don't overlook any potential participants simply because you are unaware of their status as a father. Fathers might not be interested in your program the first time they hear about it, so frequent and varied promotion is important. [Strategies for increasing the visibility of your program](#)¹ might include using videos, print media, [social media](#)², and mobile communications (like texting). Sponsoring fun events that incorporate recreational activities or provide opportunities for young fathers to spend time with their child(ren) can also be a way to help young fathers and others learn about your program. Making connections with other organizations, including those that serve young mothers, can open new avenues for promotion.

2. Young fathers may be skeptical about how your program will benefit them. Including young fathers in all aspects of program planning can help them feel more confident that your program will serve as an important source of support.

Many programs targeting young people find [peer outreach](#)³ to be an effective way to connect with potential participants. Young fathers are likely to trust the views of other young fathers when it comes to making a decision about whether to participate in your program. While the best way

to ensure that young fathers will spread the word is to have a high-quality program that meets their needs, you might also consider connecting young fathers who invite other young fathers to attend the program. Planning fun activities where current participants are encouraged to invite their friends can be another way to increase participation. Another potential strategy is to [hire young fathers](#)⁴, particularly those who already completed the program, as staff. Not only are they able to recruit participants for your program, but they also gain valuable career skills. You might consider [engaging young fathers in the planning stages](#)⁵ of your program, or in [creating promotional materials](#)⁶. Finally, having staff who [share characteristics](#)⁷ with your target population (like gender, ethnicity, or language) can increase young fathers' participation.

3. Young fathers have competing interests. Maintaining flexibility and providing tangible incentives can help motivate young fathers to participate.

[Incentives](#)⁸, such as gift cards, transportation, and meals can be a big help in motivating young fathers to give your program a try. In addition to tangible incentives, flexibility—both in terms of timing and location—can reduce barriers to participation. Make sure to schedule activities at convenient times for young fathers, which is usually during evenings and weekends. In addition, you should also find out which locations in your community are more appealing to young fathers. Attending a meeting for the first time at school or at a clinic may be intimidating or uncomfortable for some young fathers; inviting them to meet somewhere in the community that is frequented by young fathers (e.g., skateboard

Five Things to Know About Recruiting Young Fathers

This tip sheet offers a variety of resources to aid recruitment of young fathers. You may also refer to the box below for a list of all of the resources provided in this tip sheet.

1. National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse: Responsible Fatherhood Toolkit: Resources from the Field (<https://www.fatherhood.gov/toolkit/start/helpful-resources>)
2. Centers for Disease Control: The Health Communicator's Social Media Toolkit (http://www.cdc.gov/healthcommunication/ToolsTemplates/SocialMediaToolkit_BM.pdf)
3. Family & Youth Services Bureau: In Outreach Work, No Substitute for Peers (<http://ncfy.acf.hhs.gov/features/street-outreach-programs-reach-out-youth-diverse-needs/outreach-work-no-substitute-peers>)
4. Family & Youth Services Bureau: Bright Idea: Peer Outreach Programs Provide a Stepping Stone to Future Employment (<http://ncfy.acf.hhs.gov/news/2011/11/bright-idea-peer-outreach-programs-provide-stepping-stone-future-employment>)
5. National Resource Center for Youth Development: Youth Engagement (<http://www.nrcyd.ou.edu/publication-db/documents/youth-leadership-toolkit-youth-engagement.pdf>)
6. Office of Adolescent Health: Lights, Camera, Social Action: Using Video to Engage Youth and Stakeholders (http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/oah-initiatives/ta/experience_expertise_fleitman.pdf)
7. Child Welfare Information Gateway: The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children (<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/chaptereight.cfm#fn109>)
8. National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse: Promising Teen Fatherhood Programs: Initial Evidence Lessons From Evidence-Based Research (<https://www.fatherhood.gov/sites/default/files/files-for-pages/Promising%20Teen%20Fatherhood%20Programs-%20Initial%20Evidence%20Lessons%20From%20Evidence-Based%20Research.pdf>)
9. National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse: One-to-One Work (<https://www.fatherhood.gov/toolkit/work/one-to-one-work>)
10. Healthy Teen Network: The Unique Needs of Young Fathers (<http://www.healthyteennetwork.org/sites/default/files/Fast%20Facts%20Unique%20Needs%20of%20Young%20Fathers.pdf>)
11. National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse: Economic Stability/Employment (<https://www.fatherhood.gov/for-programs/for-your-fathers/economic-stability>)

- Q&A: What are the key ways programs can recruit young fathers?
- **Discussion Board Responses:**
 - Ask young moms to bring young dads
 - Meet young dads where they are (barbershops, sports programs, etc.)
 - Be visible in the community
 - Have peer mentors and recruiters



- Five things to know
 1. Visibility
 2. Include young fathers in planning & recruitment
 3. Flexibility and incentives
 4. Provide support to overcome challenges
 5. Create a safe space



Five Things to Know About Retaining Young Fathers



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- Key features:
 - Five detailed tips with multiple references
 - Extensive list of resources
- Suggested uses
 - Staff trainings
 - Retention efforts





Five Things to Know About Retaining Young Fathers

1. Young fathers generally want to be there for their child, but the challenges they face can feel overwhelming. Be sure to model respect and positivity in all your interactions.

It is important to respect young fathers' opinions and contributions when it comes to parenting. Take the time to learn about their personal circumstances so you can provide them with genuine encouragement and support as best you can. Staff should be aware of the negative stereotypes young fathers are facing in order to present them with [positive](#)¹ messages about their potential while emphasizing the importance of seeking help when needed. It's also important to train all staff to understand the [cultural perspectives](#)² relevant to young fathers in your community (this includes ethnicity and understanding local youth). Efforts to ensure your program space is young-father-friendly (for example, providing a place for young fathers to change their child's diaper, and displaying materials that include positive depictions of young fathers) will reinforce the value of father involvement.

2. Young fathers are often juggling roles as youth, students, employees, and parents. Strive to provide relevant programming and address barriers to participation.

When young fathers see your program as relevant to their needs, they are more likely to make time in their busy schedules to participate. One way you can make sure young fathers have time to participate is by being

flexible. [Flexibility](#)³ can mean scheduling events in the evenings or being available to respond to a call or text message outside of regular work hours. Young fathers also respond to consistency; having a meeting at the same time, same day, and the same place means that there is something in their life that is consistent that they can depend on. Young fathers generally take the role of provider and protector very seriously, and acknowledging a young father's effort in this area can be empowering. Helping them set goals and then linking them to relevant services, especially [employment opportunities](#)⁴ or education support, can enable young fathers to feel more successful in meeting the needs of their families, while demonstrating your interest in supporting them in achieving their goals. Providing meaningful [incentives](#)⁵ can also be motivating—like diapers or other items for their child— and can help young fathers feel more successful as parents. Other incentives—like food or transportation vouchers or pickup—can make it more convenient for young fathers to attend your program. Finally, take some time to think about the content and delivery of your programs. Young fathers tend to value lessons that are [interactive](#)⁶ and include practical skills.

3. Young fathers benefit from developing positive relationships with caring adults and peers. Find ways to incorporate mentoring into your program.

Make sure your program builds in opportunities for young fathers to develop supportive relationships that will keep them connected and engaged. Mentors can provide a number of positive [benefits](#)⁷, including social support, role modeling, skill development, and advocacy. It is important to recognize that relationships take time to build, and trust must

Five Things to Know About Retaining Young Fathers

This tip sheet offers a variety of resources to aid retention of young fathers. You may also refer to the box below for a list of all of the resources provided in this tip sheet.

1. Healthy Teen Network: Supporting Young Fathers (http://www.healthyteennetwork.org/sites/default/files/ARG_Supporting%20Young%20Fathers.pdf)
2. Office of Adolescent Health: Cultural Competence (http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/oah-initiatives/teen_pregnancy/training/cultural-competence.html)
3. Office of Adolescent Health: Getting them to Come Back: Strategies for Retaining and Engaging Participants (http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/oah-initiatives/assets/retention_webinar_slides.pdf)
4. National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse: 2012.04 Webinar Audio: Achieving Economic Stability: Strategies for Successfully Connecting Dads to Jobs (<https://www.fatherhood.gov/multimedia/201204-webinar-audio-achieving-economic-stability-strategies-successfully-connecting-dads>)
5. Office of Adolescent Health: Promising Strategies and Existing Gaps in Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Teens (http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/resources-and-publications/info/Assets/paf_expert_panel_rpt_2012.pdf)
6. Office of Justice Programs: Responsible Fatherhood Toolkit Resources From the Field (<http://ojp.gov/fbnp/pdfs/fatherhood.pdf>)
7. The National Mentoring Partnership (MENTOR): Fostering Close and Effective Relationships in Youth Mentoring Programs (http://www.mentoring.org/downloads/mentoring_385.pdf)
8. Office of Adolescent Health: Incorporating Strategies for Engaging Young People A Guide for Grantees of the Office of Adolescent Health and the Administration on Children, Youth and Families (http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/oah-initiatives/teen_pregnancy/training/tip_sheets/youth-engagement-508.pdf)
9. SAMHSA-HRSA Center for Integrated Health Solutions: Motivational Interviewing (<http://www.integration.samhsa.gov/clinical-practice/motivational-interviewing>)
10. The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy: Tips for Using Digital Media (<http://thenationalcampaign.org/sites/default/files/resource-primary-download/CDC-digital-media.pdf>)

- Q&A: What are the key ways programs can retain young fathers?

- **Discussion Board Responses:**

Strengths-based programming

Meaningful ways to participate

Involve them in developing program

Incentives and meals when possible

Non-traditional hours for activities

Use social media and interesting activities

Follow-up when they miss program

Build relationships and mentor them



- Five things to know
 1. Respect and positivity
 2. Relevant programming/address barriers
 3. Mentoring
 4. Varied communication strategies
 5. Continuous quality improvement





Opening Doors to

Young Fathers:

A Checklist



- Key features:
 - Checklists on key characteristics of young father friendliness:
 - Environment/atmosphere
 - Staff practices
 - Programming
 - Messaging
 - Policies
 - Tips and suggestions for improvement
 - Resources

Ways to improve your program in each category of the checklist

Environment/atmosphere

- Print and post flyers and materials about the positive aspects of fatherhood and young fathers. Fatherhood.gov has a variety of posters and advertisements that feature young fathers, including some in Spanish (<http://www.fatherhood.gov/multimedia/print>).
- Provide space for fathers and children to interact with one another when waiting for services or assistance. Also, make sure there is a diaper changing area available to fathers and mothers.
- If you are in a clinic setting, contact schools, the local department of parks and recreation, or community college and gather information pertinent to young fathers to showcase in your facility.



Checklist

- Office of Adolescent Health Resource and Publications page (<http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/resources-and-publications/>)
- National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse Print Media (<https://www.fatherhood.gov/multimedia/print>)
- Centers For Disease Control and Prevention Overview of Teen Dating Violence (http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/intimatepartnerviolence/teen_dating_violence.html)
- National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse Responsible Fatherhood Toolkit: Resources from the Field (<https://www.fatherhood.gov/toolkit/start/helpful-resources>)
- California Department of Social Services, Office of Child Abuse Prevention's Father-Friendliness Organizational Self-Assessment and Planning Tool (http://my.nhsa.org/download/parents/org_self_assess.pdf)

Checklist- Environment/Atmosphere

Questions to assess environment/atmosphere	Describes us well	Almost there	Just getting started	Does not describe us
We exhibit positive images of young fathers and children in photos, posters, bulletin boards, and display materials.				
We display materials that fathers may find useful, such as job postings, information on educational opportunities, health services and health insurance, and social or recreational events that may be appealing to young fathers.				
We have space for fathers and children to interact with one another when waiting for services or assistance (for example, a diaper changing area or a play area for children).				
Our space is appealing to young fathers; we use a gender-neutral color scheme.				

- Poll: How would you describe your program for this category?
 - Mostly “describes us well”
 - A few “describes us well”
 - No “describes us well”



Checklist- Environment/Atmosphere

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Our space is appealing to young fathers; we use a gender-neutral color scheme.				

- Ways to improve the environment:
 - Positive flyers and materials
 - Space for interaction
 - Diaper changing area
 - Collaborate with local schools, community colleges, and local departments (such as parks and recreation)
 - Collaborate with school nurses or school-based health centers





Getting to Know Young Fathers:

A Toolkit for
Understanding the Role
of Young Fathers in the
Lives of their Children



- Key features:
 - Three sections:
 - Who are young fathers? How involved are they?
 - Effect of positive father involvement
 - Educating your community on the important role of young fathers
 - The numbers
 - Impacts on children, mothers, and fathers
 - Interactive activities
 - Resources



Time: Approximately 30 minutes



Audience: Groups of 2-3 young mothers/family members



Materials: Make copies of the worksheet “Getting to Know Young Fathers” for each group, which can be found at the end of the toolkit



Worksheet: Getting to Know Young Fathers

According to the research and data presented in this toolkit, which of the statements below are true and which are false?

	TRUE	FALSE
1. Most young fathers have their first child in their late teens/early twenties rather than in their early teen years.		
2. Most young fathers were involved with their partner for less than six months before becoming a father.		
3. Most young fathers are not involved with their child in the first year of life.		
4. One in 10 fathers pay formal child support payments by the child's first birthday.		
5. Most young fathers were involved with their partner for at least 18 months before becoming a father.		
6. Most young fathers provide some kind of financial support, like buying clothes, diapers, etc.		

- Poll: Most young fathers were involved with their partner for less than six months before becoming a father.

- True
- False



- Poll: Most young fathers provide some kind of financial support, like buying clothes, diapers, etc.

- True
- False



- Describe stereotypes and their negative influence
- Divide into groups and ask them to select answers for the handout “Getting to Know Young Fathers”
- Lead group discussion on which statements were true or false
- Discuss the effects of misconceptions



- Next steps
- Where to find the tools
- Upcoming webinars
- Feedback



Questions?



FEEDBACK

