



September 20, 2011

5th Annual Event

Annual Report 2011

Produced by:

Daniel Hekman Management & Program Analyst, Administration for Children & Families, Region II
Rodney Pride, Director of Community Relations/NYC, Office of Children & Family Services

Written by:

Rachel Fine Researcher, Office of Children & Family Services
Beth McFarland Researcher, Administration for Children & Families

Partners

New York State Office of Children and Family Services

New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Region II

Stronger Families New York Coalition

New York State Community Action Association

New York State Parent Education Partnership/Prevent Child Abuse New York

Fathers Incorporated

New York City Partners:

- Administration for Children Services
- Mayor's Fatherhood Initiative
- Department of Education
- Department of Youth and Community Development
- Human Resources Administration

And countless other partners including dads, schools, school districts, Head Starts, local and state elected officials, and faith and community based organizations.



Staff members from the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), and the Administration for Children Services (ACS) with dads at West Harlem Head Start

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	4
Introduction	5
Literature Review	6
Overview of the Day	7
Preparation & Success	8
Community Partnerships	9
Specific Objectives	12
Program Components	13
Follow-up Activities	14
Great Practices: Head Starts	16
Great Practices: Schools	17
Great Practices: Community Based Organizations	20
Stakeholders Recommendations	21
Recommendations for DTYCTS Sites	22
Recommendations for DTYCTS Planning Partners	23
Resources	24
References	25



We ♥ our Dads!!!!



Dads with their children at Head Starts and schools

Executive Summary

Dads Take Your Child to School (DTYCTS) is an annual event held throughout New York State celebrating the special relationship that fathers have with their children. It occurs at the start of the school year, inviting fathers to accompany their child to school on a specific day, and encouraging them to make a commitment to participate in their child(ren)'s education throughout the year. In 2011, DTYCTS had the most participants to date.



Dads with their children and school staff (Niagara Falls)

This report summarizes the findings of a follow-up study of participating schools and community partners from the 2011 Dads Take Your Child to School Day. Included in the discussion are quantitative data related to the number of participating sites and their specific program components, qualitative data related to the overall planning process, and recommendations for next year's event. This report captures the successes of the day and offers recommendations so that the event can continue to improve in future years.

The importance of a father's involvement in his child's education is well-documented. Father and/or male role model involvement has a distinct and significantly positive impact on a child's cognitive and social development. Moreover, children whose fathers are actively involved in their education have greater overall academic success. Unfortunately, fathers are often left out and mothers often take more active roles in school engagement.

Schools, Head Starts, and community-based organizations who participated in DTYCTS were invited to complete an online survey describing their planning process, the event itself, and their follow-up activities. The results of this survey were overwhelmingly positive:

- 207 educational sites across the state registered for the event.
- An estimated 9,000+ dads participated in the event.
- 65% of reporting sites said they felt the event went "Extremely Well."
- 73% of sites with community partners said that the partnerships worked well.

We also invited schools, Head Starts, and community based organizations to share what could have been better and what can be improved for next year. A number of areas for improvement emerged, including:

- Beginning the planning process as early as possible, ideally in the Spring of the previous school year.
- Working closely with a community partner to secure speakers and giveaways on the day of the event.
- Increasing media coverage of the day, especially in New York City.
- Further exploring funding and in-kind donation opportunities.
- Sharing best practices with participating sites.

This report contains the results of the follow-up study. The Administration for Children and Families—Region II and the NYS Office of Children and Family Services hope that the dissemination of this report will help schools, Head Starts, community partners, and others plan for even greater success next year and in the years to come.

***"The Children were proud of their dads
and dads were proud of themselves."***

Introduction

This report analyzes the 2011 New York State Dad Take Your Child to School Day (DTYCTS). First, it investigates literature related to father involvement. Second, it analyzes the survey data gathered after the event. Surveys were created and distributed to all participating sites after the event. One survey was tailored for educational sites, while the other was created for community partners. Surveys were distributed by email solicitations and follow-up phone calls were made to encourage survey completion. Third, the report highlights successful sites and community partners to gain insights or consider models for replication. In conclusion, it provides recommendation for improving the event in subsequent years.

Positive father involvement is an invaluable protective factor for children that cuts across all races and socio-economic levels. However, for communities that face many risk factors for children, father involvement is an even more vital protective factor that can produce tremendous positive outcomes, altering a child's life course trajectory.

Motivated by father involvement and inspired by the Black Star Project's Million Father March*, DTYCTS New York began in Fall 2006 at one school in Queens with the goal of increasing and supporting paternal involvement for students throughout the school year. Over the last five years, this event has gained attention and grown tremendously. Dads** and father figures alike have learned that their participation at schools is needed and that they are welcomed and wanted. In turn, schools have learned strategies to recruit dads for the event and then retain them for consistent involvement, whether by encouraging reading or homework help at home, engaging them in short-term volunteer projects, or sustaining their long-term involvement.

2011 DTYCTS had state-wide participation from over 200 schools/Head Starts with over 50 community-based organization partners and an estimated 9,045 dads.

Growing tremendously in five years, DTYCTS in 2011 had state-wide participation from over 200 schools and Head Starts, over 50 community-based organization partnerships and over 9,000 dads. Schools recruited dads for the event and they were encouraged to accompany their children to school 15-30 minutes before classes began. Many sites began with a morning celebration that welcomed dads and provided them with information for how they could continue their involvement with the school. Some sites were able to secure in-kind donations and gave dads food, t-shirts or children's books. Depending on the age-level of the school, father involvement activities were scheduled for the morning only or throughout the entire day.

Planning for 2011 began a year prior, and focused on expanding the event to more sites and increasing organizational capacity. Organizational capacity was strengthened by the Dads Take Your Child to School planning partners in six fundamental ways: (1) launching a website: <http://sites.google.com/site/dtyctsnny/>; (2) recruiting schools, Head Starts, and community partners; (3) creating a centralized registration system and encouraging all sites to register if they were going to participate; (4) broadcasting a webinar about the event and its importance; (5) providing technical assistance and event planning resources for participating sites; and (6) providing two Masters level students to complete post-event data collection and analysis.

*More information about the Black Star Project's Million Father March can be found at www.blackstarproject.org

**For the purposes of this report, the terms "dad(s)" and "father(s)" include biological fathers, significant male figures and mentors.

Literature Review

Fathers have an undeniable effect on their children. Studies overwhelmingly argue that as fathers are more involved with their children, the outcomes become better for them. Positive paternal involvement is associated with improvements in academic performance, cognitive development, behavior, psychosocial development, health and wellbeing, household economics and general/overall parenting quality. Father involvement in particular is especially important for children in fragile families led by a single mother because these children face many risk factors due to their poor socio-economic status. In these cases, the involvement of a father has been shown to be a protective factor against risk and has the potential to alter the child's life trajectory. A study conducted by Black, et al. found that when controlling for variables such as maternal age and education levels, fathers have a unique and special role in child development (1999).

Academic and Cognitive

Analyzing data from the Fragile Families and Child Well-Being Study, Waldfogel (2010) found that an actively involved father, even if he is not living with his child, produces positive language development and cognition improvement for the child. Another recent study found that children who have involved fathers enjoy increased literacy rates and greater overall academic success (Howard, 2006). This is consistent with a study conducted by Black (1999) who shows that father involvement increased the likelihood of high school retention and graduation.

Behavior & Psycho-Social

In addition to improvements in academic performance, research shows that father involvement has a positive effect on behavioral development. Black's study suggests that father-child play in particular increases attachment, which leads to positive behavior and psycho-social development (1999). Waldfogel also found that father involvement led to fewer behavioral problems (2010). Supporting this, Sarkasi et al. argue that children exhibit less aggressive behaviors when they have a positive relationship with their father (2007). Less aggressive behavior also leads to lower levels of delinquency, criminality and substance abuse (Sarkasi et al., 2007 and Robbers, 2010). All of these conclusions support studies that find that increased father involvement leads to lower incarceration levels for their children (Black, 1999).

Health & Well-Being

Bzostek (2008) examined child well-being as measured by three behavioral outcomes (anxious or depressive behavior, aggressive behavior, and withdrawn behavior) combined with overall child health. She found that children born to unwed mothers have higher levels of well-being when there is paternal involvement in their life (2008). Moreover, girls who feel attached to their father experience lower levels of adolescent pregnancy (Mott, 1990).

Economic

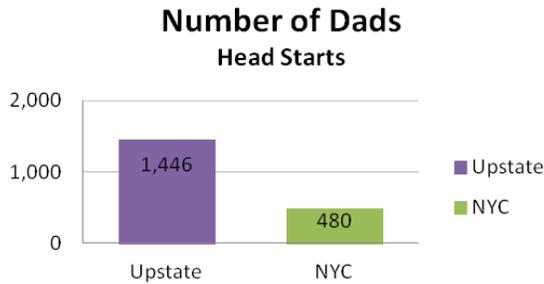
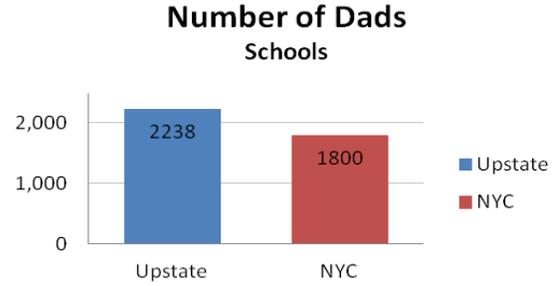
Noncustodial fathers who are actively involved with their children are far more likely to provide financial supports for their children. These can be in the form of formal child support payments, informal financial support, in-kind donations or providing child care so that the mother has the ability to work and save money on child care costs. Fathers' child support payments are associated with decreases in economic hardships for mothers, and in some cases help mothers raise themselves out of poverty (Nepomnyaschy & Garfinkel, 2011).

Parenting Quality

Because co-parenting helps reduce overall levels of emotional and financial stress in a single parent household, when fathers stay involved with their children in a positive manner they typically raise parenting standards of mothers (Waldfogel, 2010). Even if the father is a non-custodial parent, co-parenting has been shown to raise the overall quality of parenting from both parents.

Overview of the Day

Of the 108 schools that registered, 61 schools were represented in the follow-up survey (response rate=56%) and seven schools submitted post-event information by email. The 68 schools that submitted information reported a combined total of 4,038 dads participating (average=59 dads per school).



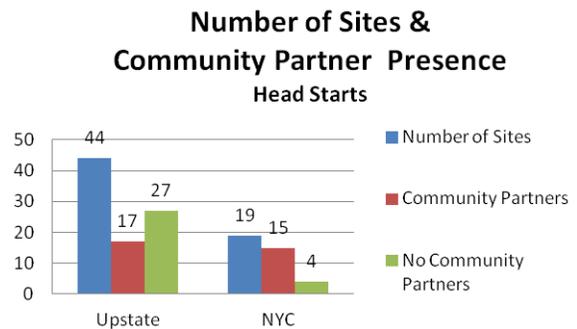
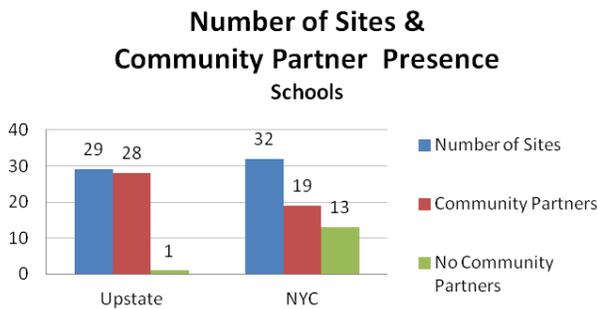
Of the 99 Head Starts that registered, 63 Head Starts were represented in the follow-up survey (response rate=64%) and nine sites submitted post event information by email. The 72 Head Starts that submitted information reported a combined total of 1,926 dads (average= 27 dads per site).

Across New York State, an estimated 9,045* dads participated in Dads Take Your Child to School day!



Father and son (ProAction Headstart)

The majority of schools across the state, as well as NYC-based Head Start programs, were supported by partnerships with community-based organizations. However, most upstate Head Starts did not have community partners. These Head Starts reported the desire for a small-scale event that could establish and build on close relationships with fathers, and therefore did not seek out a community-based organization to partner with.



*Estimate based on the average number of dads per site.

Preparation and Success

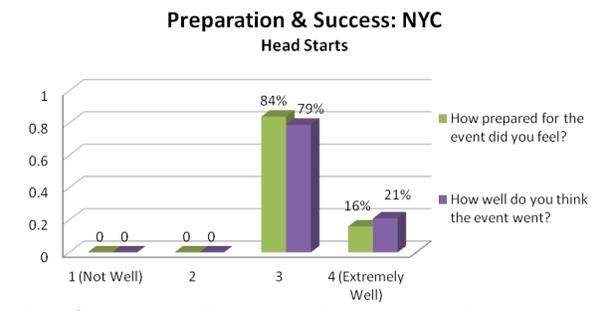
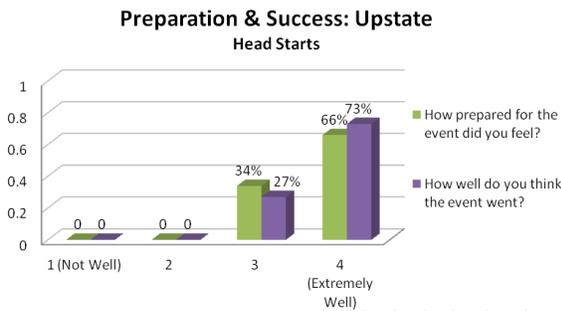
The overwhelming majority of both schools and Head Starts felt very well prepared for the event. Feelings of success, unsurprisingly, correlated closely with feelings of preparedness. However, the mean rating for success, 3.65, was a bit higher than the mean rating for preparedness, 3.54 (both on a 4-point scale).

It is encouraging to see that all sites selected either a 3 or a 4 on the 4-point scale for both preparation and success, with the exception of five NYC schools (16%) who selected a 2 on the 4-point scale.



Father and son at a school (East Harlem, NYC)

Head Starts

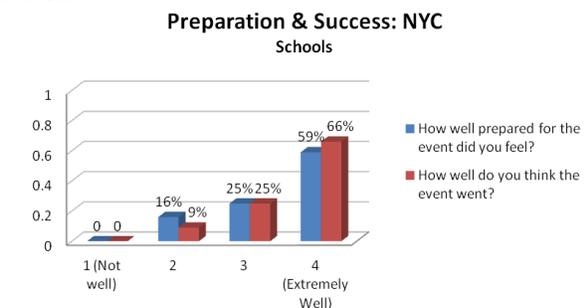
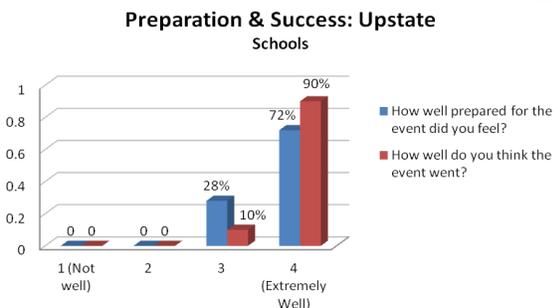


Upstate sites reported slightly higher levels of preparedness and success than NYC sites. 66% of Upstate Head Starts reported feeling “Extremely Well Prepared,” while only 16% of NYC Head Starts did so.

“Our staff does not return to work until the very end of August and this is the busiest time of year. I think it would be more beneficial to have this event at a time when we can have more of an opportunity to plan.”
- Upstate Head Start

“We would have loved to reach even more fathers, but considering that we have a majority of day laborers who can't just take the day off from work, it was a good turn out.”
- NYC Head Start

Schools



In general, schools reported higher levels of preparedness and success than Head Starts, with upstate schools reporting the highest level (72% were “Extremely Well Prepared” and 90% felt the event went “Extremely Well”).

“Most of our fathers are working during the school day and it's difficult for them to take the time to participate.” - NYC School

“Many Fathers made a commitment to stay in close contact with the school and their children's teachers.”
- NYC School

“The key to our greater success this year was early planning and meeting with principals and assistant principals.” - Upstate School

Community Partnerships

Although there were over 50 community partners that participated in this event, only seven completed the follow-up survey (13%). It is important to note that the responses of community partners in this report do not reflect the depth of involvement of community partners who participated across the state and cannot be generalized to all community partners who participated.

The reporting community partners were involved at many different levels in the planning process. On a four point scale from “Not at all involved” to “Very involved” the average level of involvement was 2.7, with community partners evenly distributed across all levels of involvement.

When community partners were asked how they felt the event went overall, their answers correlated closely with their level of involvement, although ratings for success were generally higher than ratings for level of involvement (the average rating for success was 3.29). The majority of the organizations (57%, N=4) felt that the event went “Extremely well.”

Community Partner Comments

Involvement:

Very involved:

“From the beginning to the end I planned the event and followed through with implementation and follow up.”

Not at all involved:

“We received a request to attend the event at the last minute.”

Success:

High:

“The event was a great opportunity for the fathers to spend quality time with their children and promote education.”

Low:

“The turn-out of dads was very low. Only about 15 came over to the refreshment tables for coffee and pastries. We were set up outside alongside the school building at around 8 AM. It began to rain lightly around 8:20 AM forcing us to close down the set up.”



Dads with their children (ProAction Head Start)

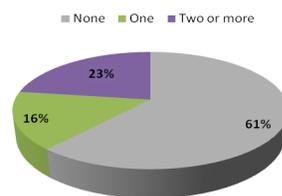
Community Partnerships

Upstate and NYC Head Starts had very different rates of community partner presence. Only 39% of upstate Head Starts had a community partner, while 79% of New York City Head Starts had at least one community partner.

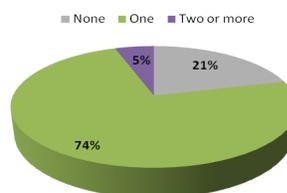
Some Head Start sites commented that they wanted to keep the atmosphere intimate and therefore did not want outside community partners involved with the event. Of the Head Starts that had a community partner some reported wishing that they had more support from their community partner, while others reported that their community partner was excellent.

Because the results are varied, we can only infer that Head Start community partners must be age appropriate for Head Start students and sensitive to the culture of Head Start programs.

Community Partner Presence: Upstate Head Starts

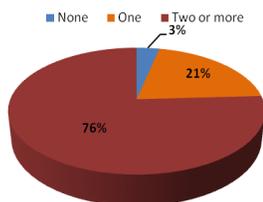


Community Partner Presence: NYC Head Starts

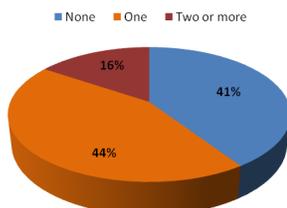


This year Scholastic Inc. partnered with the NYS Office of Children and Families Services to donate 5,000 age appropriate books as a featured gift.

Community Partner Presence: Upstate Schools



Community Partner Presence: NYC Schools



Of the schools that had a community partner, the majority reported that the community partnership worked well (90% of upstate schools; 56% of NYC schools) and only a few schools reported needing more support.

NYC had less community partner presence than upstate schools, but that does not indicate a lack of need. Of the NYC schools that did not have a community partner (N=13), 10 sites (31% of all NYC sites) reported wishing that they had.



Father and son at MARC Academy Head Start (Bronx, NYC)

Community Partnerships

Comments from Head Starts & Schools

Community partnerships worked well:

We had multiple community partners who provided job counseling and resume building resources for the fathers.

- Upstate School

Our Community Partner was the Italian American League. The support was great: they came ahead of time, checked out how I was doing, and came in the morning to assist with taking pictures and with doing anything I wasn't able to, which was much more than I ever expected.

*Thanks for the help with the connection. I had a great time with my fathers. **One father remarked that he had put four children through school, but this was the first time he felt as though he was needed in the school, and he was so happy he came.***

- NYC School

We had El Centro which is a wonderful community partner with many programs: Legal counsel, Consulate representatives, OSHA classes for construction workers, ESL, GED in Spanish, food pantries, banking and financial literacy for the family, and many others. They brought with them the CEO of a local clinic who spoke on men's health and informed them about a future expansion of medical specialties coming next year to address the increase in adult and pediatric diabetes.

- NYC Head Start

We had a community partner(s) - But could have used more support:

We had a community partner who shared information and materials but we could have used help during the event. We had a total of 100 people (including dads and students) for the event. The teachers came forward to donate, along with administration, myself and Price Chopper. We had plenty of food but could've used more people support.

- Upstate School

We did not have a community partner - And did not need one:

We chose not to make it a huge community event because it was the beginning of the school year and it was very important for us to use this day to set the stage and comfort levels for dads for the rest of the year.

- Upstate Head Start

We did not have a community partner - But wished we did:

It was difficult for us because this event came right at the beginning of the school year when we are the busiest. We are trying to register new students and re-engage returning students. We also had very little notice that the event was coming. Hopefully next year we will have more notice and time to advertise and prepare. We love the idea of the event, just the timing is difficult.

- NYC School

We tried to get community involvement, but we didn't have enough time to prepare for the event. Letters went out late, there were scheduling conflicts, etc.

- NYC Head Start

Next time we will consider having a community partner join us.

- NYC Head Start



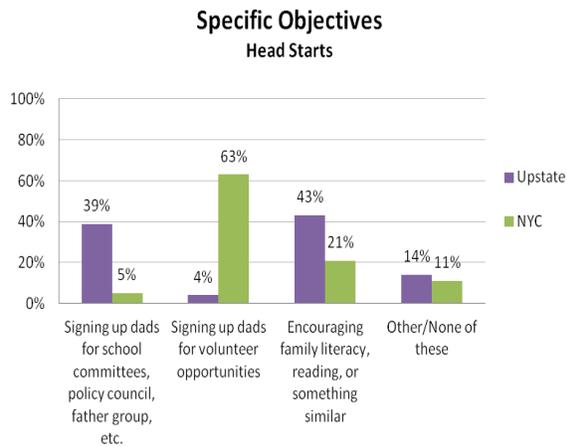
Dads picking out books to read to their children
(West Harlem Head Start)

Specific Objectives

Head Starts

There were striking differences in specific objectives pursued between upstate and NYC Head Start sites. The highest number of upstate Head Starts (43%) reported that their main objective was “Encouraging family literacy, reading, or something similar” while “Signing up dads for school committees, policy council, father group, etc.” was a close second, with 39% of the sites pursuing that specific objective.

In contrast, the vast majority (63%) of NYC Head Starts reported that their primary objective was “Signing up dads for volunteer opportunities.”



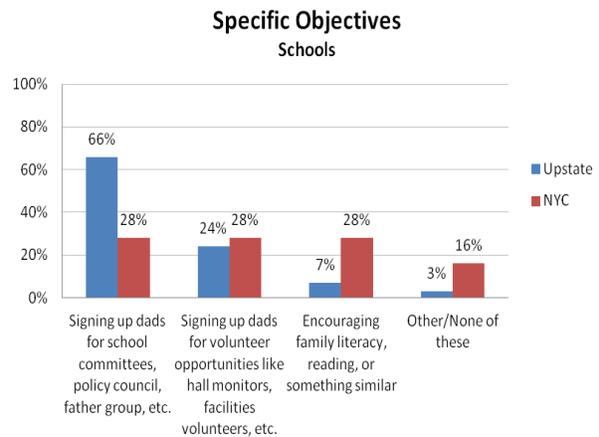
Dad with his daughter at ABC Head Start (Rochester)

Schools

The majority of upstate schools focused on “Signing up dads for school committees, policy council, father group, etc.,” while NYC schools were evenly spread across the board.

Five NYC schools (16%) and 1 upstate school (3%) focused on none of these objectives or some other objective. “Other” objectives listed for NYC schools included:

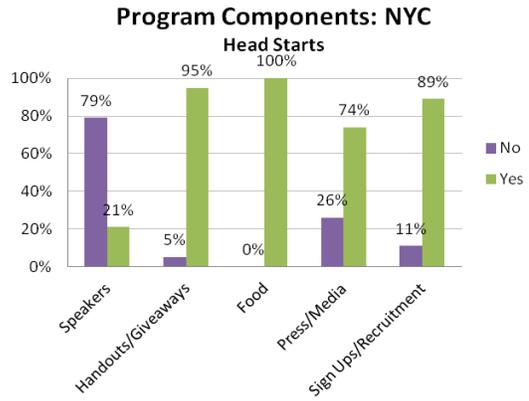
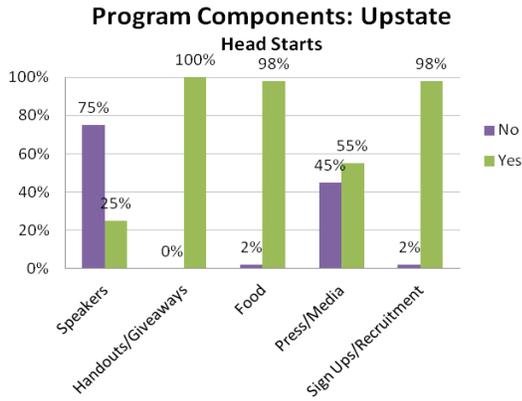
- Obtaining contact info to invite dads to future events
- “Just enjoying the time and activities with their children and helping them feel welcome.”
- “Signing up dads in general.”



Father and daughter (Schenectady)

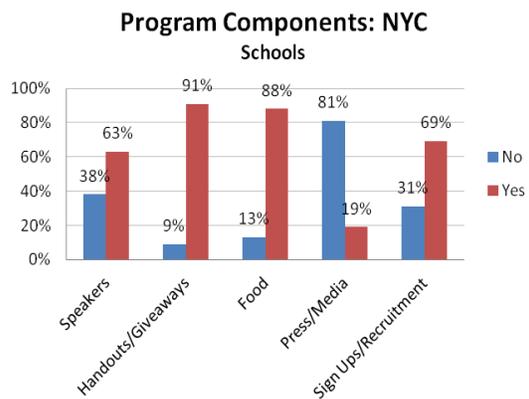
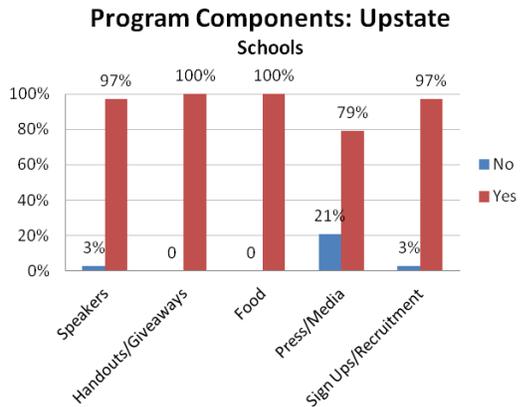
Program Components

Few upstate or NYC Head Starts reported having speakers during the event, although this was likely a conscious decision based on their desire to develop an intimate atmosphere. Head Starts were very successful in obtaining food for the event, with 100% of NYC Head Starts and 98% of upstate Head Starts providing food. This is likely due to the fact that Head Starts provide meals to their students as part of their program.



Overall, most of the Head Start and school sites incorporated a wide variety of program components. One component that was lacking was media presence. However, it is important to note that any media presence at Head Starts should be appropriate to their organizational culture since some sites expressed concerns about the potential for media to be disruptive.

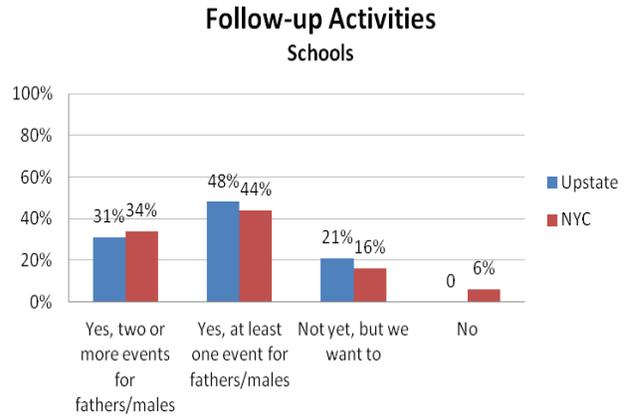
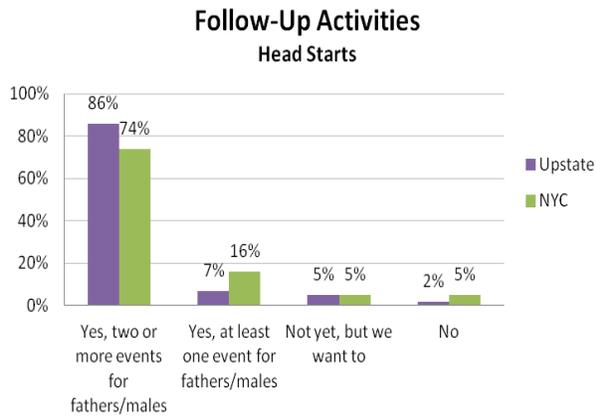
NYC schools reported the lowest level (19%) of press/media coverage. Generally, Upstate Schools reported having more of the program components (speakers, handouts/giveaways, food, press/media, and sign-ups/recruitment) than NYC schools.



Grandfather and grandson
(Wayne CAP Head Start)

Follow-up Activities

The majority of sites have at least one follow-up activity planned. Only 7% of upstate Head Starts, 10% of NYC Head Starts, 21% of upstate schools, and 22% of NYC schools do not yet have any follow-up events planned. Of all sites, upstate Heads Starts reported having planned the most follow-up events (86% reported having two or more events planned).



Specific Examples of Follow-up Activities

Head Start (Harlem, NY)

- Launched a Father’s Resource center where dads had the opportunity to receive computer literacy classes and employment assistance. They also partnered with New York Life to offer financial planning services and with a local GED provider and CUNY to help dads further their education.

School (Schenectady, NY)

- Plan to host a family fun night as well as an end of the year family run to keep families involved and end the year on a high note. They also host periodic “Coffee Chats” where they invite families in to discuss what’s going on at the school.

School (White Plains, NY)

- During the DTYCTs event Principal Laura Mungin led a read aloud of the book “What Daddies Do Best” by Laura Numeroff. After, the dads and their children were able to take paper, pencils and crayons to write their own version of the story—what George Washington Elementary School students think his or her dad does best. The school is taking what the fathers and students wrote and are compiling a book, “What GW Dads Do Best.”



Father and daughter at MARC Academy Head Start (Bronx, NYC)

Follow-up Activities

Community Partner Responses

Six of the seven reporting community partners (86%) said that they will continue to partner with the same school/Head Start next year. One organization commented: “This was our first time hosting the event. We are looking forward to making next year's event bigger, and better.”

Examples of the plans already in place include:

- Outreach to local schools to offer to give presentations about the Fatherhood Initiative to dads during PTA meetings and other events.
- Working with a few schools and PTA presidents to establish fathering groups in two schools.
- Hosting two additional dad day events that will encourage fathers to be active participants in their children's education.
- Currently operating a truancy prevention program and a Walking School Bus Program with the district.

Another organization reported that they would not continue to work with the educational site because they thought that the “event felt very disorganized and last minute. Great ideas, but not very well executed.”



Father and son (Schenectady)

Great Practices: Head Starts

We asked Head Starts to share what worked well for their sites and to provide advice for other Head Starts. Below is a summary of the responses we received. Although all of these were responses from Head Starts many suggestions could also be incorporated by schools and community partners.

Pre Event

- Prepare early! Start preparing the spring prior to the fall event. Remind presenters, volunteers, and community partners over the summer with emails and/or phone calls.
- Meet with school staff early and clearly define the responsibilities and expectations of staff for the event.
- Talk about the day and its importance during the Parent Orientation at the start of the school year.
- Send informational flyers home advertising and encouraging dads to participate in the event.
- Be prepared with follow-up/next steps before the event happens.
- Encourage dads to bring their child to school but also offer breakfast and other activities for those who choose to stay.
- Involve the students! For example, some Head Starts had the students make muffins as a classroom activity the day before the event and then were able to have muffins for breakfast with their dads.

Day of Event

- Provide Certificates of Participation to recognize dads.
- Set up a picture booth for parents to take pictures with their children. Print the pictures on the spot so that families can take them home.

Post Event

- Make sure that staff are encouraging all male caregivers to be full-fledged partners in their child's education. Use the male-involvement program "I. C.A.N." (Involved, Committed, Achieving Nurturers).
- Follow up with dads who want to volunteer year-round.

"The males appreciated the opportunity to take part in this activity with their children. Some dads and children cried when it was time to go. Some dads commented, 'it's good to know we can come back anytime.' We even had a mom say it brought her to tears to think we would plan such an awesome event. Her husband was deployed in Afghanistan for a year. He got back recently and was sent to help with flooding down south. They enjoyed this special time and were grateful for such an event. The children were happy as well!" - Upstate Head Start



Father and son at MARC Academy Head Start (Bronx, NYC)

Great Practices: Schools

We asked schools to share what worked well for their sites and to provide advice for other schools. Below is a summary of the responses we received. Although all of these were responses from schools, many suggestions could also be incorporated by Head Starts and community partners.

Pre Event

- Prepare early! Start preparing the spring prior to the fall event. Remind presenters, volunteers, and community partners over the summer with emails and/or phone calls.
- Meet with school staff early and define clearly the responsibilities and expectations of staff for the event.
- Send informational flyers home advertising and encouraging dads to participate in the event.
- Study your dads and see if the morning or afternoon is a better time for the most dads to participate.
- Involve students! Have them make invitations for their dads or another important male in their lives and ask that they RSVP.
- Encourage coaches, mentors, grandfathers, etc., to participate if a dad is not available.
- Encourage parents to pre-register to assist in preparing for the day.
- Follow up with dads who registered leading up to the day of the event.
- Have the media or a political figure involved in addition to partnering with an organization
- Collaborate with other planners to ease the amount of legwork. Delegate assignments and make the workload lighter.

Day of Event

- Have a sign-up sheet on the day of the event for future volunteer opportunities.
- Keep the presentation simple; keep it within an hour.
- Survey dads to find out their expertise/hidden talent for future activities (i.e. workshops, career day, etc.). Then, go through the surveys each month to see how the dads can help with upcoming events. For example, one dad works for a balloon decorating company and he helped decorate the school for the back-to-school bash.
- Set up a picture booth for parents to take pictures with their children. Print the pictures on the spot so that families can take them home.
- Be creative and have fun! For example, one school created a "Victory Lap." Fathers and their children walked around the school (inside because it was raining) chanting "I'm glad you're my kid," and "I'm glad you're my Dad." Another schools had fathers make the morning announcements over the PA system.

Post Event

- Multiple schools are planning follow-up events such as the District 29 Men's Conference. The Men's Conference will be a half day of workshops and speakers geared towards fathers and male role models in the community.
- A school that surveyed dads to assess their hidden talents will use this information to engage dads in specific events and activities through the year. This way, they can increase involvement by inviting dads to participate in activities in which they are likely to be interested.

Great Practices: Schools—Spotlight on District 29

This year, Community Education District 29 in Queens stood out as an excellent example for schools participating in Dads Take Your Child to School day. District 29 used a unique organizing model, which proved to be very successful and resulted in an impressive 65% district-wide participation rate (20 out of 31 elementary and middle schools participated). Instead of schools acting individually, the Community District Education Council (CDEC) took the lead as a community organizer for the district. The CDEC provided all of the macro level support and technical assistance for the event. This allowed schools to focus their resources on recruiting dads and creatively planning how to maximize the potential of the event for their individual school. If schools ran into any challenges they were able to capitalize on district level support from the CDEC.

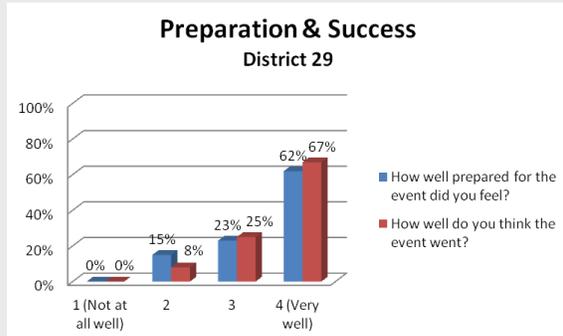


Fathers and staff at PS/MS 147 Ronald McNair School in District 29

“I’ve never seen that many dads and I’ve been working here for seven years!”

District 29 had an estimated* total of 550 dads participate in the event! (Average=39 dads per site)

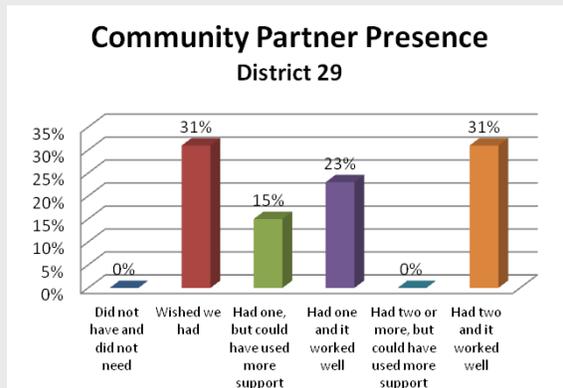
When asked how prepared they felt, and how successful they felt the event was, the majority of the District 29 schools rated their feelings very highly. On the 4-point scale from “Not at all well” to “Very well,” 62% of the schools reported feeling “Very well” prepared and 67% of the schools reported feeling that the event went “Very well.”



“It was so successful because we had a point person for the event and we had a volunteer that physically went into the schools to promote it. Emails and phone calls aren’t the same as a hands-on approach.”

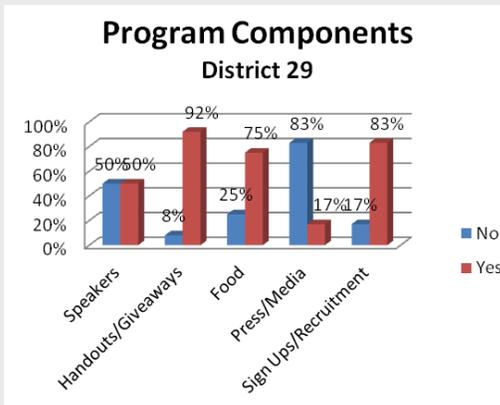
“The feedback from the dads was very positive. They would like to see more events like this, including different types of workshops, and are eager to help out.”

69% of the schools had community partners and 31% had two or more community partners. Although 31% reported not having a community partner, it is worth noting that no school was completely on their own since all received support from the CDEC.



*Estimate is based on the average number of dads per site. 14 of the 20 schools that participated were represented in the follow-up survey.

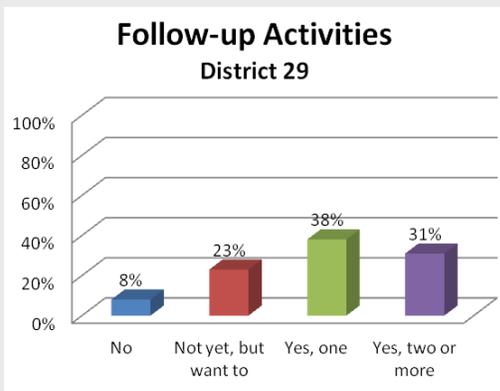
Great Practices: Schools—Spotlight on District 29



The schools had a wide range of program components. One school took pictures of the dads with their children. Another school asked dads to fill out a survey describing their hidden talents so that they could utilize dads' talents for future school events or projects.

"There were over 100 dads present for our breakfast, a special speaker from the community and for our basketball game. The fathers took part in a basketball game with one another and their children were there with pride to cheer them on."

69% of the schools are planning one or more follow-up activities for the dads. Multiple schools and CDEC 29 worked together to plan the "Men's Conference" on December 10th, 2011. The conference provided an opportunity to maintain or reengage dads by offering workshops, access to relevant information and the chance to get more deeply involved in their child's school.



OCFS Community Relations Director Rodney
Pride with fathers and staff at PS 134

Recommendations from District 29 Schools:

"Plan events that actively involve the participants, don't only lecture them. Look for speakers who will get to the point and create a relationship that promotes unity."

"Process your plan and get started early. Keep your presentation simple, keep it within an hour, and be prepared with follow-ups and next steps before the event happens."

"Partner with the PTA because they have access to mailing lists, email list, call lists, etc. Cast a wide net and reach out to everyone, not just males. Use the females as conduits of information since they tend to be more involved in the school already. Partner with school administration to get as much support from them as you can. Create handouts for the kids to carry home. Make the event as festive as possible: get there early, set up outside to greet the dads as they come in, and set up tables inside too. Be visible! Focus on creating lot of lead up and having a big presence on the day of."



PTA president and parents at the Greater Allen Christian School in District 29

Great Practices: Community Partners

We asked community partners to share what worked well for their sites and to provide advice for other community partners. Below is a summary of the responses we received. Although all of these were responses from community partners, some suggestions could also be incorporated by Head Starts and schools.

- Register formally for the event.
- Set aside funding in your budget to help support the event.
- Help with the planning process.
- Bring materials about your organization.
- Continue to support schools and Head Starts after the event - e.g. help them establish a fathering group and host follow-up events.

Great Practices: Spotlight on Scholastic Inc.

This year, one of the key community partners was the publishing company Scholastic Inc. Scholastic recognizes the importance of parents and children reading together, and works hard to get books into the hands of public school parents and teachers.

For this year's Dads Take Your Child to School Day, Scholastic generously donated **5,000 books** tailored to Head Start, elementary, and middle school children. These books were distributed to schools and Head Starts according to their age group and the sites were able to offer the books as meaningful gifts to participating dads. The dads felt appreciated, and went home feeling encouraged to read to their children. Parents and children reading together positively impacts children and families in many ways. Not only does it promote literacy and foster a love of reading, but reading together opens the lines of communication between parents and children, allowing children to ask questions and parents to address issues that may not otherwise come to the surface.

*"It was exciting to see fathers walking through our doors with their children. Most dads were initially withdrawn because they have not previously volunteered in a school setting. **Having your books available for them helped to put them at ease as they helped their child pick a book.** Dads were then encouraged to read the books with a small group of children or to the class."*



Father and son choosing books together (Wayne CAP Head Start)

Stakeholder Recommendations

We asked all survey respondents to consider how the DTYCTS stakeholders (i.e., NYS Office of Children and Family Services, NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families, etc.) could better provide support for next year's event. Below is a summary of the comments we received. Although responses varied slightly between community partners, Head Starts and schools, there were many common threads.

Community Partners

Pre-Event

- Place advertisements on the buses, subways, bus stops and local radio stations weeks in advance. Follow up with public service announcements a few days before the event.
- Help facilitate better communication between schools and organizations.
- Connect with community partners earlier in the planning process.

Follow Up

- Encourage and support follow-up events throughout the year.
 - Support funding opportunities to initiate fatherhood programming.
-

Schools

Pre-Event

- Assist with securing media/press for the event.
- Help schools to identify and secure funding and/or in-kind donations for the event.
- Provide earlier opportunities to meet and network with community partners.
- Share event details including the date and resources early so that schools can begin planning earlier.

Day of Event

- Provide more in-person support on the day of the event.
- Telecast/teleconference prominent speakers and broadcast to other sites.

Follow Up

- Share best practices that come out of this year's event.
 - Disseminate education and information about new resources and services for dads as they become available throughout the year.
-

Head Starts

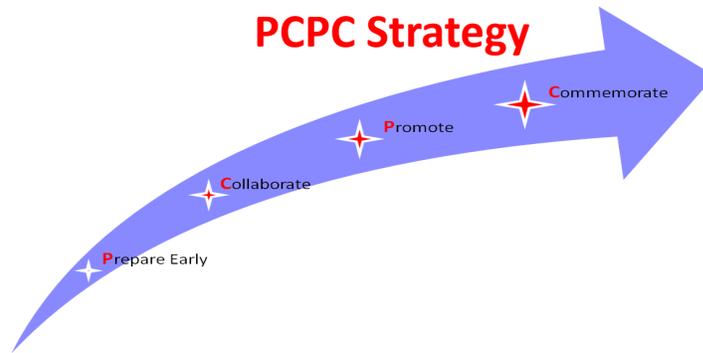
Pre-Event

- Take a more proactive role in promoting the event for increased awareness and participation.
- Help facilitate more communication with statewide partners.
- Plan and formalize the date earlier so that sites have more time to prepare.
- Provide Spanish translations for handouts and other materials.
- Provide information about who the stakeholders are, what they do, and how it relates to Head Starts.
- Provide information that is specific for preschool settings.

Day of Event

- Participate in the event.

Recommendations for DTYCTS Sites



PPrepare Early:

This event takes place at the start of a new school year for an important reason — to encourage and sustain father involvement from the beginning. But this timing makes it particularly challenging for staff, especially staff educational sites who are very busy with the start of a new school year. In order to be successful with this event, sites need to plan early and have the support of their staff.

If you are an educational site, involve the children with age appropriate preparation activities (i.e. make muffins, cookies, or other treats for the dads in school the day before, decorate a classroom, or create invitations).

Explore funding or in-kind donation opportunities. Add it to next year's budget.

Collaborate:

Identify partners and delegate responsibilities in planning activities for the event. Plan activities that encourage fathers to interact with their children (e.g., interactive games, reading).

Maintain communication with your community partner or school partner throughout the year and keep your eyes and ears open for the possibility of collaborating with new community partners or education sites.

Host activities in the community throughout the year. (e.g., District 29 Men's Conference in Queens or financial literacy for dads). Capitalize on the existing relationships you have and the momentum from the day.

Promote:

Recruit dads and other partners! If you are an educational site, have the children make invitations for their dads or male roles models. This adds a special sentimental value that is more effective than a teacher inviting dads. Follow up with phones and flyers leading up to the day before the event.

Recruit media and political leaders or community leaders.

Follow up with dads throughout the year. Promoting DTYCTS is more than just encouraging dads to come to school for one morning or day, it is about long-term involvement. Promote father involvement all year long.

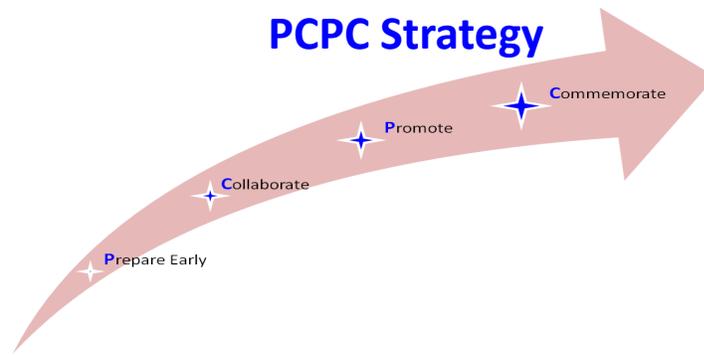
Commemorate:

Taking photos is a great and fun way to record the day. Consider taking father/child portraits and printing the photos for dads to take home with them.

Be creative and have fun!

Most importantly, celebrate success with dads, staff, children, etc.

Recommendations for DTYCTS planning partners



Prepare Early:

In order to provide better support for community partners and education sites, DTYCTS planning partners should plan early by conducting a mid-year needs assessment survey.

DTYCTS planning partners should encourage and support follow-up activities (e.g. Men's conference) by assisting sites with disseminating information.

Improve the DTYCTS website to use as a better tool for outreach, recruitment, year-round support & post-event analysis.

Collaborate:

Look at the educational sites that did not have a community partner but reported that they and wanted one. Assist those sites in identifying and securing a community partner.

For subsequent years, focus on how to elicit a higher survey response rate from community partners so that a thorough post-event analysis for community partners can be completed.

Involve asset building and employment focused community partners for the event in subsequent years.

Promote:

Utilize institutional networks to increase foundation/organizational support (funding and other in-kind donations) for education sites.

Help educational sites that desire a press/media presence by writing press releases or obtaining publicity.

Create a Speakers Bureau (listing sorted by location & topic) and publish on the DTYCTS website, as well as a resource guide for education sites (add to post-event survey, "please list the partners you had" to obtain this information).

Commemorate:

Acknowledge the educational sites and community partners who participated with a Certificate of Appreciation.

Create a question on next year's post-event survey that asks educational sites to report what their DTYCTS follow up activities are.

Across the board, education sites and community partners reported needing:

1. More funding & resources
2. More time to plan for the event
3. A better understanding of community and state resources

Resources

Dads Take Your Child to School Official Website

<https://sites.google.com/site/dtyctsnyc/about>

New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance/NYS Fatherhood Initiative

<http://otda.ny.gov/programs/fatherhood/>

New York State Office of Children and Family Services

<http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/fatherhood/>

New York State Community Action Association

<http://www.nyscommunityaction.org/>

New York State Parent Education Partnership

<http://www.parentingeducationpartnership.org/>

New York City Department of Youth and Community Development

http://www.nyc.gov/html/dycd/html/family_support/fatherhood_initiative.shtml

New York City Department of Education

<http://schools.nyc.gov/default.htm>

New York City Human Resource Administration/NYC Dads

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/hra/nycdads/html/home/home.shtml>

Fathers Incorporated

<http://www.fathersincorporated.com/>

Federal Administration for Children and Families, Region II

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/region2/>, <http://www.fatherhood.gov>

Black Star Project

<http://blackstarproject.org/action/>

Want to know more? Want to get involved? Contact:

Greg Owens

Director of Special Projects
Office of Children and Family Services

Greg.Owens@ocfs.state.ny.us

Daniel Hekman

Management & Program Analyst
Administration for Children and Families, Region II

Daniel.Hekman@ACF.hhs.gov

Mike Bobbitt

Director, Fatherhood Initiative
NYC Department of Youth and Community Development

mbobbitt@dycd.nyc.gov

References

- Black, Maureen M., Dubowitz, Howard, and Starr, Raymond H. (1999). African American Fathers in Low Income, Urban Families: Development, Behavior, and Home Environment of Their Three-Year-Old Children. *Child Development*. July/August, Vol. 70, No. 4, (967-978).
- Bzostek, Sharon H. (2008). Social Fathers and Child Well-Being. *Journal of Marriage and Family*. 70 (950-961).
- Howard, K., Burke, J., & Whitman, T. (2006). Fathers' Influence in the Lives of Children with Adolescent Mothers. *Journal of Family Psychology*. 20(3), (468-476).
- Nepomnyaschy, Lenna & Garfinkel, Irwin. (2011). Fathers' Involvement with Their Nonresident Children and Material Hardship. *Social Service Review*. Vol. 85, No. 1, (3-38).
- Mott, Frank L. (1990). When is a Father Really Gone? Paternal-Child Contact in Father-Absent Homes. *Demography*. 27 (499-517).
- Robbers, Monica L. (2009). Facilitating Fatherhood: A Longitudinal Examination of Father Involvement Among Young Minority Fathers. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*. Vol. 26, No. 2 (121-134).
- Sarkadi, Anna, Kristiansson, Robert, Oberklaid, Frank, & Bremner, Sven. (2007). Fathers' Involvement and Children's Development Outcomes: A Systematic Review of Longitudinal Studies. *Acta Paediatrica*. Vol. 97 No. 2 (153-158).
- Waldfogel, Jane, Craigie, Terry-Ann, & Brooks-Gunn, Jeanne. (2010). Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing. *The Future of Children, Princeton-Brookings*. Vol. 20, No. 2 (87-112).



Father and son at a school (Niagara Falls)