Low-Income Fathers of Color in Responsible Fatherhood Programs: Lessons from the Parents and Children Together (PACT) Evaluation

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Session Overview

• Overview of PACT

• Introduction to Responsible Fatherhood (RF) programs in PACT

• Program strategies for engaging and retaining fathers

• Perspectives and experiences of participating fathers

• The role of culture in the design and operation of RF programs serving Hispanic fathers
PACT: A Foundation to Inform the Fatherhood Field

• **Process Study**
  – How were four RF programs designed and implemented?

• **Qualitative Study**
  – How do fathers view and carry out their roles as parents, providers, and partners?

• **Descriptive Study of Hispanic Fatherhood Programs (H-PACT)**
  – How are programs for Hispanic fathers designed, implemented and received?

• **Impact Study**
  – Do programs improve outcomes for enrolled fathers?
Early Findings from the Process Study of Four Responsible Fatherhood Programs
PACT’s Process Study

- Document how RF programs designed and operate their programs
- Identify challenges and promising practices
- Use multiple data sources
  - Staff interviews
  - Focus groups with participating fathers
  - Web survey with program staff
  - Enrollment and participation data
## Two Approaches To Service Delivery

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Integrated cohort</th>
<th>Open-entry workshop</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Core services</strong></td>
<td>Workshops integrate multiple content areas</td>
<td>Separate workshops for each content area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attendance</strong></td>
<td>Fathers enroll and attend with a specific group</td>
<td>Fathers begin attending anytime, open-entry/open-exit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intensity</strong></td>
<td>Daily participation</td>
<td>Weekly participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High intensity</td>
<td>Lower intensity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emphasis of content</strong></td>
<td>Early content emphasizes personal development as foundation</td>
<td>Fathers typically expected to complete parenting prior to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>relationship workshop or employment services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Integrated Cohort Approach

• Successful STEPS Program, Connections to Success, Kansas City
  – Two and a half week daily workshop integrating personal development, workforce readiness, and parenting content

• Family Formation Program at Fathers’ Support Center, St. Louis
  – Six-week daily workshop integrating personal development, parenting, employment, and relationship content throughout

• Common program features
  – Daily, full-day workshop
  – Cohort approach
  – Core content integrated
  – Individual employment support
  – Case management and follow-up services
Open-Entry Workshop Approach

- **FATHER Project at Goodwill-Easter Seals Minnesota, Minneapolis/St. Paul**
  - Separate, weekly 2-hour workshops for parenting and relationships
  - Full-day, stand-alone employment workshop offered twice monthly
  - Individual fatherhood plan specifies program activities and goals

- **Center for Fathering at Urban Ventures, Minneapolis**
  - Separate, weekly 1.5-hour workshops for parenting, relationships, and job readiness

- **Common program features**
  - Weekly/biweekly attendance
  - Open-entry/open-exit approach
  - Menu of services, core content not integrated
  - Case management and individual employment support
# Fathers in Four RF Programs Face Multiple Challenges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>Integrated cohort</th>
<th>Open-entry workshops</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average age (years)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black, non-Hispanic</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS diploma or GED</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recent paid work</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ever convicted of a crime</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of children</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children by multiple mothers</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live with at least one child</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recent time with child</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal child support arrangement</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
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Source: PACT Baseline Survey Data, through 8/22/14. N = 4,734 fathers overall; 2,333 fathers integrated cohort programs; 2,401 fathers open-entry workshop programs.

Note: Programs began PACT intake between 12/9/12 and 2/13/13.
Child Support Partnerships Address a Common Need

• Each RF program in PACT established a partnership with their local child support offices
  – Involvement ranged from limited to extensive

• Common services through partnerships
  – Fathers learn how to navigate child support system
  – Program participation viewed as “good-faith effort” to provide financial support, amenable to license reinstatement, modification of orders, and reduction of garnishments
  – Provide referrals to RF programs
  – Receptive to program requests for meetings with fathers

• Unique relationships
  – Co-location of staff
  – Fathers earn reductions in state-owed arrears through participation
  – Establish child support courts
Most Fathers Begin Attending Programs in PACT

![Bar chart showing participation in different program activities.](chart.png)

- **Any Program Activity**: 73% for Integrated cohort programs, 87% for Open-entry workshop programs, 80% for Overall.
- **Any Core Workshop**: 69% for Integrated cohort programs, 70% for Open-entry workshop programs, 69% for Overall.
- **Individual Contact**: 68% for Integrated cohort programs, 80% for Open-entry workshop programs, 74% for Overall.

Retention Varies by Workshop and Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshop Type</th>
<th>Successful STEPS</th>
<th>FATHER Project</th>
<th>Center for Fathering</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parenting Workshop</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended workshop at least once</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended half or more of sessions</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationship Workshop</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended workshop at least once</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended half or more of sessions</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment Workshop</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended workshop at least once</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended half or more of sessions</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Integrated Workshop</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Formation Program Only</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td></td>
<td>41%</td>
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### Fathers Receive Sizeable Dose of Programming

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Integrated cohort</th>
<th>Open-entry workshops</th>
<th>Overall</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average hours of participation</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>46</td>
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</table>

**Percentage of average hours in:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Integrated cohort</th>
<th>Open-entry workshops</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parenting</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic stability</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal development</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: PACTIS/Site MIS Data through 6/30/14. N = integrated cohort - 941 fathers; open-entry workshops - 913 fathers; overall – 1,854 father.
Program Practices: Encouraging Participation

- Limit time between enrollment and program start
- Introduce program and build excitement through orientation
- Offer financial incentives, including reductions in child support arrears
- Build relationships with fathers
- Host outings to facilitate father-child bonding
- Make reminder calls and reach out to absent fathers
- Contact other agencies involved with the father, if participation stops
Process Study Implications

- Participation affected by program structure, operations, and characteristics of clients
- Standalone healthy relationships component may mean many won’t receive co-parenting training
- Potential availability bias—drop-in services may lead to lower rather than higher attendance
- Reducing child support arrears may be a powerful incentive for participation
- Because most clients don’t complete, integration and sequence of topics important for the content received
Qualitative Study: Fathers’ Perspectives
Qualitative Study Expands Understanding of Participating Low-Income Men

• Longitudinal, in-depth interviews with RF participants
  – Complement what is learned through other methods
  – Obtain rich and nuanced detail about fathers’ lives
  – Learn whether and how fathers’ views and circumstances change over time

• Systematic qualitative analysis identified themes
  – Men’s childhoods
  – Views on fatherhood
  – Employment and child support experiences
  – Relationships with mothers of their children
  – Role of RF program in their lives
Fathers’ Early Years and Youth
Childhoods Often Fraught with Turmoil

• Absence of positive father role models
  – Over two-thirds of fathers experienced father absence
  – About 20 percent had never met their fathers or only as teens or adults

  It was kind of rough because my father wasn’t around. He was actually in the penitentiary for murder. When he got out last year, that’s the first time I met him, and then he passed away.

  – For others, fathers were in and out of their lives, neither “absent” nor “present”

  [he would] hang out a while and then he’d run off again. . . . A lot of times it was work and sometimes it was his own personal reasons. . . . But he’ll pop in and pop out, I mean, that’s my father.
Fathers Recall Instability in Family Life

• Early exposure to substance abuse and violence

My father . . . was a drug addict. He was abusive. . . . As a young boy . . . I thought that that was the right thing to do. . . . I mean, when he was on drugs and he felt that my mom was not really paying him any [attention] . . . his way of intimidating her [was] by putting his hands on her. . . . So I grew up just seeing that and it kind of like took a toll on me psychologically. It messed me up a little bit.

• Mothers and extended family could be sources of support

[My grandfather] went to work. He took care of his family. He loved the Lord. He was a very positive figure in my life and I had that to look up to. . . . I grew up in the hood, around a lot of drugs and prostitution. . . . but I always remember. . . . he just used to talk to me a lot, always telling me education was key.
Many Fathers Turned to the Streets and Drugs

• About 1 in 3 joined gangs and/or sold drugs during their youth

*My mother started doing drugs and my father was in jail so they [the gang] was my second home. They helped me when I needed help.*

• Half of the fathers described past and recent problems with substance abuse

*As I got older, I started getting into the drug usage myself.... I basically started using tobacco and crack mixed together. I did that just for the first time when I was about fourteen.*

• Problems often led to arrests and incarceration
Interrelated Life Challenges
Lives Marked by Economic Insecurity

• Long-term chronic unemployment the norm for many; felony record cited as biggest barrier to employment

I was struggling hard to find a job…I got turned down by multiple McDonalds…So, I go into a Family Dollar one day, they so under-staffed they got boxes on the floor…and I got years of stock clerk experience and you don't hire me? Just because I got a felony? And the pay was $6 an hour. I'm like, that really opened my eyes. I was like, “This felony thing is real.”

• Child support cuts into already-strapped finances

If I’m not making anything and child support is taking everything, how can I pay for rent? How can I take care of my personal needs? How can I get out of debt myself? Then all my money’s going to child support. How can I live? That’s what makes it hard.
Manuel’s Story:
“Needing a place to rest my head”

“I want to work, but I want to secure my housing so when I get off of work I have some place to lay my head. A place to lay my head so I can get that rest I need to go to work.”
Personal Challenges Limit Fathers’ Involvement

• Incarceration took a heavy toll on fathers’ ability to be part of their children’s lives

*I recently was released from prison two years ago. I did eight and a half years. My daughter was born during [this] time . . . so I never had a personal experience with her…, it was all from visitation.*

• Fathers’ lack of stable housing made visits with children difficult; criminal record made securing housing difficult

*I didn’t want to see my kids until I was together because I was just staying in my car.*
Views on Fatherhood
Fatherhood as a Catalyst for Making Positive Life Changes

• Turning their lives around: “I'm not going to be no help to my kids in prison or dead”

The street life was my life through childhood. . . . [Two months] before my son was born I was incarcerated. Then I had my son and it changed my life, I wanted to do something better in life. . . . I can’t go to jail, I need to [be] out there with him, with her. I gotta be there, man.

• Taking responsibility: “It’s all about the kids”

. . . .having kids gave me a different look on life, as far as the things I go through and the things I do now, I do it for my children. The decisions I make in my life are the decisions that was gonna affect them. . . . if I didn’t have them, I could just go on and do whatever I want but I just can’t do that now.
Focused on Giving Their Children a Better Life

• Ensure children do not make the same mistakes they made earlier in their lives

I’m going to be there for my son . . . show him the ropes and the routines, where to go and the roads not to take. I’m not going to let him get into that street life like I did. You’re going to go to school, you’re going to do good, you ain’t going to go to jail like I did. . . . Man, I hope he become a better man than I was . . . Don’t take the route I went. There’s a better route I want him to go. The right road, not the wrong road, not the street road.

• Motivated by a desire to parent differently than their own fathers

The best part of being a dad is being able to give your kids structure and show them how to do something different because for me it was like I never really had my father in my life, so I made a vow when I was a kid that when I had kids that I ain’t going to run away . . . no matter what the situation is, I’m going to stick right there . . . so even with us [he and his partner] separating and stuff, I still was there.
• Even if they can’t provide financially, fathers believe just “being there” has inherent value

*I mean, being a good father is just really being there. You ain’t got to have no money or, I mean, be able to give your kids all the material things. You just got to be there for them. I mean, talk to them, I mean, keep they head held high. If yours is down, you can’t let them see yours being down. I mean, you got to fake it and keep your head high…*

• Some focused on “being there” by providing emotional support and security

... *[being able to] count on you and look up to you ... and being able to have your kids be like, ‘You know what, Daddy? I love you, I miss you.’ And being able to say it back and giving them the hugs and the kisses and being able to be their security blanket and somebody that they know that will look out for them, to count on.*
Fathers’ Relationships with the Mothers of their Children
Relationships Often Marked By Instability and Conflict

• Sources of instability and conflict:
  – Infidelity and mistrust
  – Volatile and violent behaviors
  – Father’s substance abuse, criminal behavior, and anger problems
  – Mother’s life challenges: trauma from abuse, mental and physical issues, substance abuse, and unstable housing

• Break-ups and make-ups, on-again off-again relationships were common
  – Sometimes reunions perpetuated by long history between mother and father; break-ups were often acrimonious
Father Involvement Affected by Poor Quality of Parents’ Relationship

• Relationships with mothers were often described as contentious and included gatekeeping behaviors

I don’t really know where she lives at. Yeah, she said I wasn’t never going to see him again, you know. Hopefully he can know that his daddy cared. I paid child support for him.

[my children’s mother] be saying “I’m a bit busy. I’ll bring her by on Friday.” Friday comes, she does not answer the phone. . . . You say you’ll be there a certain time, but don’t show up?

This is the problem. . . . Our big problem is she won’t let me talk to my kids, or see my kids [unless she feels like it].

She doesn’t really tell me anything. She leaves me out in the dark about literally everything—doctors and all, medical and dental . . . She doesn’t tell me anything. . . . She makes it really hard to be a dad.
Fathers’ Experiences in Responsible Fatherhood Programs
Why Fathers Join RF Programs

• To gain parenting skills to become better fathers

  I know how it feels when a child doesn't have their parent around. So, I went to Fathers’ Support Group to get some more parenting skills . . . for me to raise my daughter.

  I wanted to get a better relationship with my children. I wanted to learn how to start listening to my kids . . . and pay attention to them.

• To increase involvement by gaining greater access to children
  – Learn their rights as fathers, get assistance with access and visitation

• To obtain job search assistance and employment
Fathers Learned Specific Parenting Skills

• Learned new ways to interact and communicate with their children
  – Providing age-appropriate instructions to children
  – Taking alternative approaches to disciplining children
  – Improving communication techniques when child lives far away

You ain’t got to scream and holler at your kids. You ain’t really got to spank them. You take one little thing from them, say like a videogame. You take that from them, that’s going to make them think “No, I want to play my game. So I know I got to do this here in order for me to get this game.” It’s like a swap . . . . Usually I be ready to whoop them—I ain’t even going to lie—I be ready to whoop them. But now I know another way around it . . . that I didn’t know before I come to these classes.
• Gained deeper appreciation for the importance of different facets of father involvement

[the program] taught me [that] if you can't be there financially, you still need to be there mentally. They connected a whole lot of the dots for me . . . . Just being a dad or a parent doesn't just stop at the financial responsibility . . . . It just made me think about a lot of the different areas that I wasn't there. It was kind of an awakening . . .

We did a survey at [the program] that asked “How often do you hug the kids? How often do you tell them you love them?” I'm looking at the questions . . . I started to cry actually, because I . . . really hadn’t told my kids I love them . . . . These classes reminded me of that. I was kind of down about it and the next morning I woke up . . . and they were getting ready to go to school and . . . . I said, “You know what? I love you guys . . . .” They just gave me the most big embrace that a dad could ever get in life.
What Fathers Value Most about RF Programs

• Peer group sessions and interactions with staff

  . . . these guys [group facilitators], they’re knowledgeable and they… understand the magnitude of the problem. They’re passionate about trying to help people . . . . They’re not only teaching theoretical stuff, they’ve actually got personal experience that they can actually relate to whatever they’re trying to teach people. Their delivery method is beautiful.

• Encouragement and support for personal growth and development

  The program helped me. . . . stop making excuses and figure out a way keep trying. As long as you keep trying you’re eventually going to find your way through…. Once you start thinking that way, the doors start opening up for you as soon as you stop being your own worst enemy. That's what you learn. You learn more about yourself than anything.
Implications for Programs and Policy

• Themes suggest men may benefit if programs intensify efforts to remove barriers to father involvement and economic security
  – Facilitate “parenting time” agreements, where appropriate; provide access to legal services; offer third-party conflict mediation
  – Emphasize strategies for anger management, positive communication skills, and conflict resolution with co-parents, as appropriate
  – Intensify efforts to help fathers navigate child support and court systems, modify orders, reduce arrears
  – Strengthen employment component, including providing assistance in addressing felony records
  – Expand partnerships with resources to address mental health, substance abuse, legal problems, and housing instability
H-PACT: 
The Role of Culture in the Design and Implementation of RF Programs Serving Hispanic Fathers
• **Purpose:** describe how programs for Hispanic fathers are designed, structured, and operated to address their needs, and how Hispanic fathers respond

• **Two broad goals**
  – Identify social, cultural, and other factors that influence program operators’ decisions about design and implementation
  – Collect information from Hispanic participants about their experiences with the program

• **Conducted program visits in Spring 2014**
  – Interviewed program directors and staff (23 staff members total)
  – Held 5 focus groups with a total of 56 program fathers (8-14 per group)
Four Sites Participating in H-PACT

• *Project Padres* at Imperial Valley Regional Occupational Program, El Centro, CA

• *Project Fatherhood* at the Children’s Institute, Inc., Los Angeles, CA

• *Responsible Fatherhood* program at Southwest Key, San Antonio, TX

• *Futuro Now* at Kidworks, Santa Ana, CA

• Served predominantly Hispanic men (70-100%)

• Well-established with common structural elements
### Characteristics of H-PACT Focus Group Fathers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sociodemographic Characteristic</th>
<th>Descriptive Statistics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age when first became a father</td>
<td>Median = 26 (SD = 7) 20% were 19 or younger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of children</td>
<td>Average = 3 (SD = 1.5) 34% had 4 or more children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currently lives with all children</td>
<td>67% yes 33% no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country of origin</td>
<td>39% United States 41% Mexico 20% Other countries (e.g. El Salvador, Guatemala) or not reported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>68% high school diploma, GED, or greater 18% had six years or less of school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>64% Employed; 32% Unemployed; 4% not reported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Role of Hispanic Culture in Program Operations
Programs Deeply Rooted in Hispanic Communities

• All programs operated in a majority or near-majority Hispanic community

• All organizations provided RF services as part of a suite of other community programs

• All programs felt that RF services were unique and integral to their communities
  – Program staff felt that there were few positive outlets for men to gather and form bonds with each other
  – Other parenting programs were geared towards mothers
  – Little public recognition of fatherhood

• Only one organization explicitly defined itself as “Hispanic”
Influence of Hispanic Culture in Services

• Hispanic culture provided a foundation and context for program services

• All programs echoed key values common in Hispanic cultures to uplift fathers and their role in the family
  – *Familismo*: centrality of family
  – *Personalismo*: warmth, friendliness, and non-judgment
  – *Dignidad*: dignity, worth, and self-respect
  – *La familia*: valuing collectivistic, strong community relationships over an individualistic, independent experience

• Actively countered stereotypical notions of gender and fatherhood implied by *machismo*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>How Value was Used to Promote Responsible Fatherhood</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hombre noble</td>
<td>- A “man of his word”: this concept was used to support the idea that fathers should take responsibility for children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familismo</td>
<td>- Programs reinforced the idea that families can be the source of inspiration for making life changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dignidad</td>
<td>- Programs strove to treat fathers with dignity, by not focusing on their past shortcomings or failures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personalismo</td>
<td>- Facilitators used informal language, storytelling and humor to engage fathers and make them feel at ease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La familia</td>
<td>- Facilitators encouraged fathers to talk with each other in workshops, rather than to facilitators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Programs provided shared meals before workshops</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Implementing Services for Hispanic Fathers
Programs Hired Well-Qualified Hispanic Staff

- **Staff were mostly Hispanic men**
  - 20 of 23 staff members were Hispanic
  - All staff at two programs were male
  - Many staff were bilingual

- **Many staff had firsthand experience with clients’ challenges**
  - Low-income background
  - Program graduates

- **Staff were well educated and experienced**
  - Most staff had BA and MA degrees plus past experience in health and social services fields (e.g., psychology, social work)
  - Three sites had minimum educational requirements; at other program, staff directed by a PhD, but no degree required
## Most Curricula Selected and Adapted for Hispanic Fathers

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curricula used</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
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| Raising Children with Pride*   | • Responsible Fatherhood program at Southwest Key | • Informed by *la cultura cura*: healthy development and wellbeing exists within one’s cultural values and traditions  
• Engaged fathers in exploring cultural values and background |
| Siempre Papá*                  | • Project Padres  
• Futuro Now                                  | • Addressed gender stereotypes and concepts of masculinity and manhood  
• Included culturally-relevant expressions, concepts, and examples |
| Men in Relationship Groups     | • Project Fatherhood                          | • Program-developed, based on founder’s work in community  
• Participant-directed and open-ended |

* Developed specifically for Hispanic populations
Services Tailored to Meet Participants’ Needs

• Participants could choose English- or Spanish-language workshops and individual services

• Programs made accommodations to make it easier for low-income Hispanic fathers to participate
  – Meals and transportation
  – Flexible schedules and multiple opportunities to participate

• Programs screened out fathers who required more intensive services or who were not a good fit
  – Untreated mental health or substance abuse issues
  – Convicted pedophiles and open domestic violence cases
Hispanic Fathers’ Perceptions of RF Programs
Fathers’ program experiences

Fathers felt they were regaining the dignity and self-respect they needed to move forward

“They gave us our integrity back. I know what that word is; I didn’t know what integrity was before. They gave me values.”

Fathers formed strong bonds with each other, which made them want to return for more

That’s what they teach us, too, that when one falls, the one carries the other and is supportive.

Just having that unity, it gives you motivation and strength. We’re more like family than friends.
Lessons Fathers Learned: Nurturing Children and Reducing Inter-Parental Conflict

**Communicating and managing anger**

That’s how this program has helped, because it diffused the buttons that [his child’s mother] used to push…. Don’t let these things bother you. Take your time and take a breath.

**Being nurturing and emotionally supportive**

The program gave us such value to know we are the fathers, not just the suppliers, but those people who know how to change diapers, how to hold a kid when he is crying and talk to him, hug him.

**Parenting sons**

I want him to feel that I am his friend; that I will be with him, creating that bond that I never had with my dad. With my dad, there was only fear.
Conclusions

• Programs tended to view Hispanic culture and identity as a contextual element of their programs

• Programs designed services specifically for Hispanic men
  – Used Hispanic-oriented curricula
  – Emphasized Hispanic values that support positive father involvement
  – Provided services in the language with which men were most comfortable
  – Employed Hispanic staff, mostly men

• Hispanic cultural values emphasized by the programs such as *familismo*, *dignidad*, and *la familia* resonated with fathers and made them want to come back

• Men in focus groups said they learned to better control their anger and be more emotionally supportive
Next Steps for PACT

• The PACT study is providing in-depth findings on
  – The lives of fathers who voluntarily enroll in programs
  – The programs that serve them
  – The effects of the programs on fathers’ outcomes

• Recent and upcoming reports
  – Released
    • Briefs on fatherhood and healthy marriage program implementation
    • First report from qualitative study
  – Upcoming
    • First report on implementation of fatherhood programs in the process study
    • Report on H-PACT

• For more information or to join the PACT listserv, contact
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