



A FATHER'S PRESENCE: THE CRITICAL DIFFERENCE

A LOOK AT THE IMPACT OF THE 24/7 DADS
FATHERHOOD PROGRAM



PREPARED BY THE EXCHANGE CLUB PARENTING SKILLS CENTER
FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
DECEMBER 2017

"INVOLVED FATHERS BRING POSITIVE
BENEFITS TO THEIR
CHILDREN THAT **NO OTHER PERSON** IS
AS LIKELY TO BRING."

D. POPENOE, AUTHOR, *LIFE WITHOUT FATHER: COMPELLING NEW EVIDENCE THAT FATHERHOOD AND MARRIAGE ARE INDISPENSABLE FOR THE GOOD OF CHILDREN AND SOCIETY* (P.163)

Program Description

24/7 DADS FATHERHOOD PROGRAM represents a powerful new offering at THE EXCHANGE CLUB PARENTING SKILLS CENTER. It is the first ever program designed to help fathers build a platform for self-sufficiency, advancement and a thriving future for their families WITHOUT abuse. The National Fatherhood Initiative has completed fascinating research that indicates that the absence of a father or his inability to engage with his children is the root cause of many of society's ills affecting today's children. This new program is specifically designed to inspire and educate fathers about the positive, powerful impact of their involved, responsible, commitment.

Our home-based program, offered in English, Spanish and Creole, consists of 12 two-hour sessions. The Fatherhood educator visits weekly for a minimum of 2 hours to a maximum of 4 hours to complete the session work. The program addresses how the absence of a father contributes to child maltreatment. It addresses child development expectations and educational factors that will increase school attendance as research shows children living in father-absent homes are twice as likely to repeat a grade in school. Without the father's engagement children also show a much higher level of aggressive behaviors. The fatherhood program explores the father's role in the family, positive discipline, and working with Mom to co-parent. Educators are professionally trained and certified in the program, and supervised by Master's level professionals.



THE EXCHANGE CLUB
PARENTING SKILLS CENTER
Teaching Safe Parenting

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT FATHERS & FAMILIES

“THERE’S THIS WHOLE IDEA THAT GREW OUT OF PAST RESEARCH THAT DADS REALLY DON’T HAVE DIRECT EFFECTS ON THEIR KIDS, THAT THEY JUST KIND OF CREATE THE TONE FOR THE HOUSEHOLD AND THAT MOMS ARE THE ONES WHO AFFECT THEIR CHILDREN’S DEVELOPMENT,” SAID CLAIRE VALLOTTON, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AND PRIMARY INVESTIGATOR ON THE RESEARCH PROJECT. “BUT HERE WE SHOW THAT FATHERS REALLY DO HAVE A DIRECT EFFECT ON KIDS, BOTH IN THE SHORT TERM AND LONG TERM.”

WE NOW KNOW FATHERS PLAY A SURPRISINGLY LARGE ROLE IN THEIR CHILDREN’S DEVELOPMENT, FROM LANGUAGE AND COGNITIVE GROWTH IN TODDLERHOOD TO SOCIAL SKILLS IN FIFTH GRADE, ACCORDING TO NEW FINDINGS FROM MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY SCHOLARS. THE LATEST RESEARCH PROVIDES SOME OF THE MOST CONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE TO DATE OF FATHERS’ IMPORTANCE TO CHILDREN’S OUTCOMES AND REINFORCES THE IDEA THAT EARLY CHILDHOOD AND SOCIAL PROGRAMS SHOULD FOCUS ON THE WHOLE FAMILY, INCLUDING MOTHER AND FATHER ALIKE. THE FINDINGS ARE PUBLISHED ONLINE IN TWO ACADEMIC JOURNALS, EARLY CHILDHOOD RESEARCH QUARTERLY AND INFANT AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (2016).

MORE ON FATHERS & FAMILIES

FATHER ENGAGEMENT POSITIVELY AFFECTS SOCIAL, BEHAVIORAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL AND COGNITIVE OUTCOMES IN CHILDREN, INCLUDING:

- HIGHER LEVELS OF COGNITIVE AND SOCIAL COMPETENCE
- INCREASED SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND CAPACITY FOR EMPATHY
 - POSITIVE SELF-CONTROL AND SELF-ESTEEM
 - MORE POSITIVE INTERACTIONS WITH SIBLINGS
- FEWER SCHOOL ADJUSTMENT DIFFICULTIES AND BETTER ACADEMIC PROGRESS

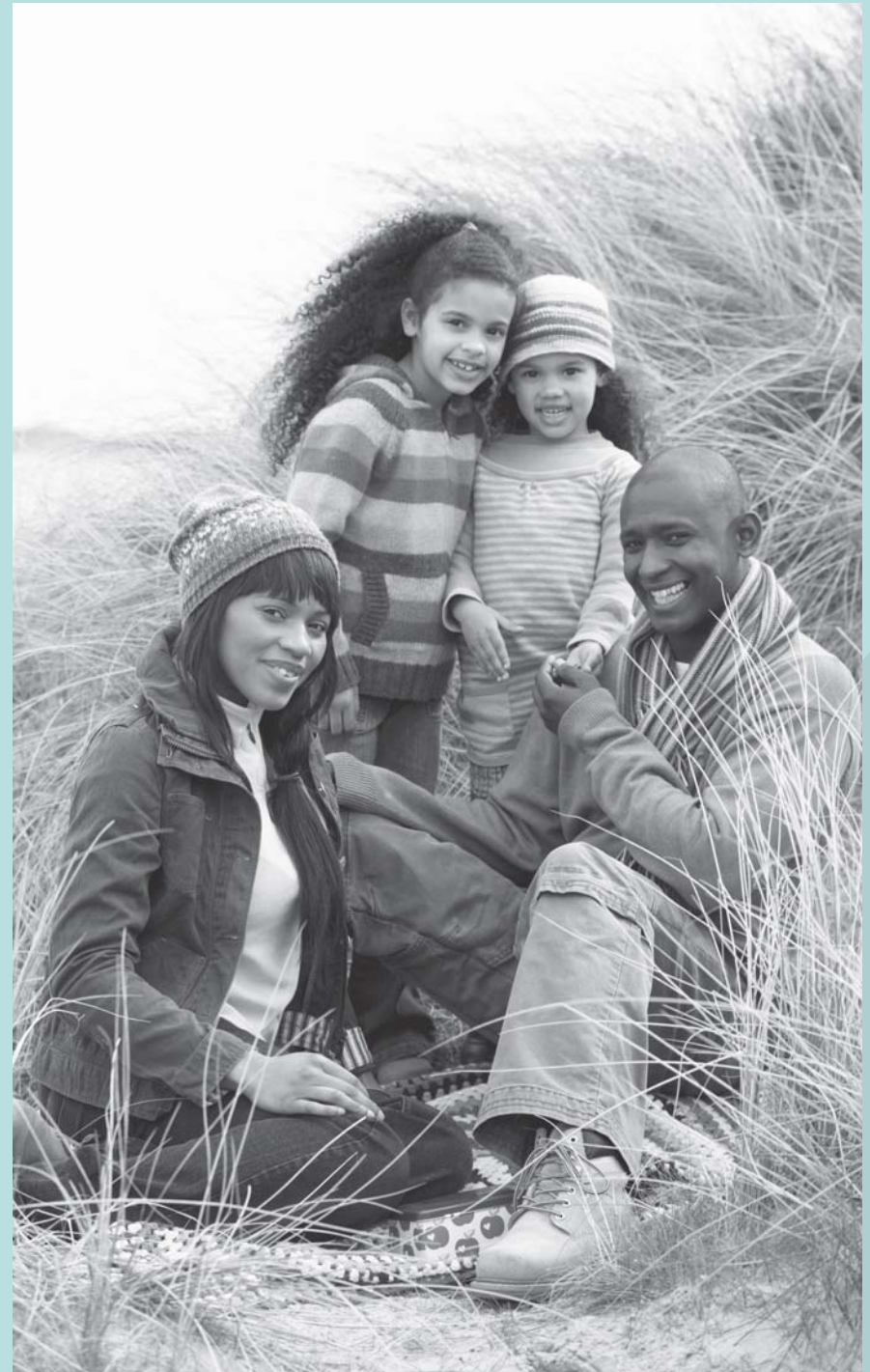
A FATHER'S INVOLVEMENT IS UNIQUE, AND DIFFERENT THAN MOTHER'S

EVIDENCE SUGGESTS THAT FATHERS CONTRIBUTE MOST TO PROVIDING PLAY EXPLORATION WHICH HELPS DEVELOP EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL SELF-REGULATION, WHILE MOTHERS TEND TO BE THE PROVIDERS OF COMFORT IN TIMES OF DISTRESS.

POSITIVE EARLY EXPERIENCES WITH FATHERS CAN HELP FOSTER "SECURE EXPLORATION" OF CHALLENGING OR UNKNOWN SITUATIONS WHICH CAN HAVE A LASTING IMPACT THROUGHOUT CHILDHOOD, AND LIFE.

BETTER FATHERS
BETTER MOTHERS
BETTER FAMILIES

FATHERS MAKE IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTIONS INDIRECTLY TO CHILD DEVELOPMENT. RESEARCH INDICATES THAT MOTHERS ARE MORE PATIENT, FLEXIBLE, EMOTIONALLY RESPONSIVE, SENSITIVE, AND AVAILABLE TO THEIR INFANTS AND YOUNG CHILDREN WHEN THEY ARE SUPPORTED AND ENCOURAGED BY THE CHILD'S FATHER.



WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT 24/7 DAD FATHERHOOD PROGRAM

1. DADS LIKE IT

IT'S RATIONAL. THIS PROGRAM PROVIDES CLEAR DIRECTION TO DAD'S RATIONAL SIDE ON HOW - AND WHY - TO BECOME AN INVOLVED, RESPONSIBLE AND COMMITTED DAD, EDUCATING HIM ON THE POWERFUL IMPACT OF DOING SO.

IT'S EMOTIONAL: THE PROGRAM ENGAGES DAD'S EMOTIONAL SIDE BY MOTIVATING HIM TO FEEL THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING A GOOD DAD AND BY DEVELOPING AN OPTIMISTIC SENSE OF WHAT IS POSSIBLE FOR HIM WITH HIS CHILDREN.

IT PRESENTS OPPORTUNITY: THE PROGRAM PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY TO FOCUS ON DEVELOPING THE HABITS AND BEHAVIORS TO BE CHANGED.

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT 24/7 DAD FATHERHOOD PROGRAM

2. IT'S MAKING A DIFFERENCE

THE LIVES OF DAD, THEIR CHILDREN, FACILITATORS AND THE COMMUNITY ARE
IMPROVED FROM DAD'S

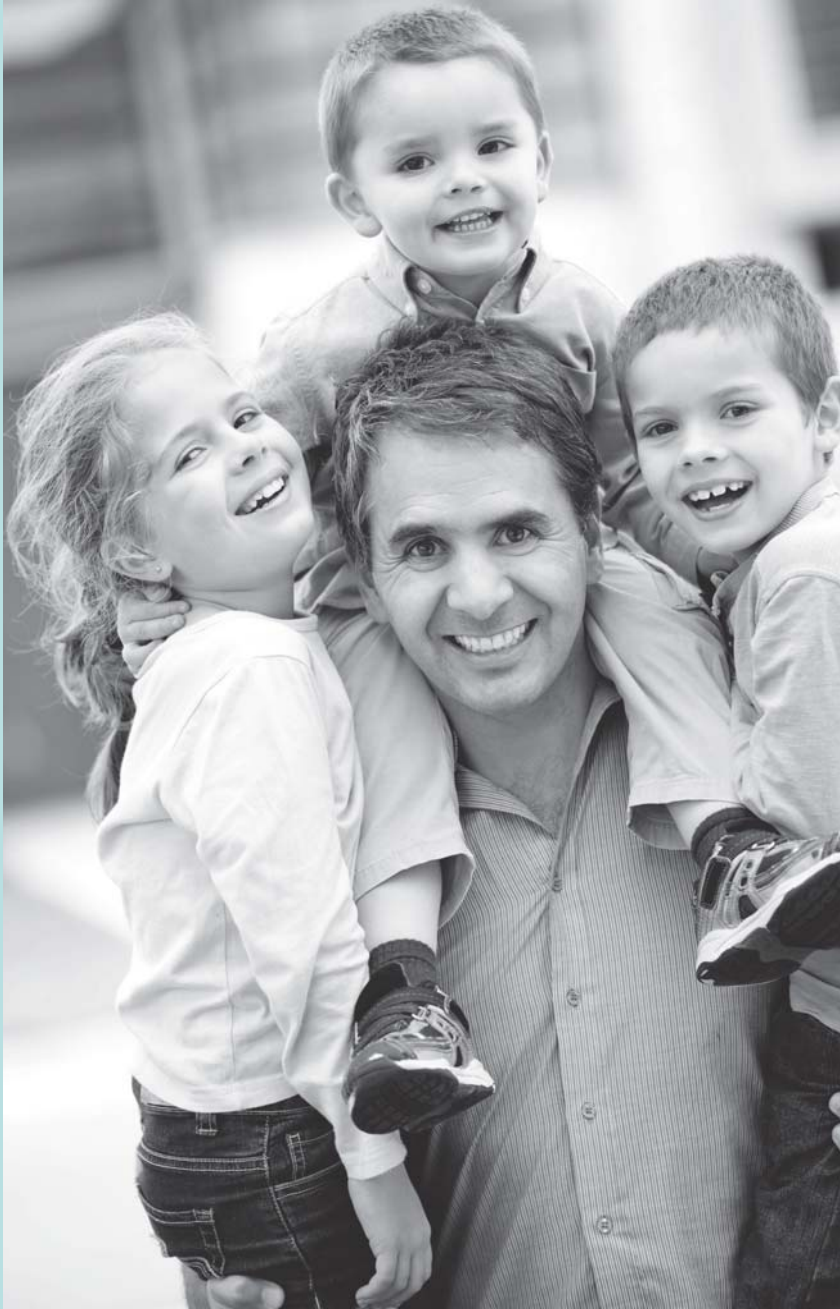
INCREASED

HABITS OF GOOD FATHERING/FATHER INVOLVEMENT
IPRO-FATHERING KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ATTITUDES
FREQUENCY OF AND HEALTHY INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN
HEALTHY INTERACTION WITH THE MOTHER OF FATHER'S CHILDREN

DECREASED

IMPOVERISHED CONDITIONS
HABITS OF POOR FATHERING/FATHER ABSENCE
ANTI-FATHERING KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ATTITUDES
SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL ILLS OF CHILDREN
ABUSE - OUR FACILITATORS ARE CERTIFIED MANDATED REPORTERS

**ONLY 3 PARTS. ONLY 12 SESSIONS.
BUT A LIFETIME OF CHANGE.**



24/7 DAD FATHERHOOD PROGRAM

**EDUCATES FATHERS HOW
POWERFUL THEIR IMPACT
CAN BE ON
CHILDREN/FAMILY**

**TEACHES FATHERS HOW TO
BE A POSITIVE PRESENCE
IN LIFE OF
CHILDREN/FAMILY**

**WORKS WITH FAMILY
TO INTEGRATE
FATHER INTO
DAILY LIFE**



CRITICAL FINDINGS TO DATE

24/7 DAD FATHERHOOD PROGRAM **IS NEEDED:**

- ➔ Most fathers **DO NOT REALIZE** the impact they have on their children
- ➔ Most fathers **DO NOT KNOW** the power of positive parenting
- ➔ Most fathers **ARE SURPRISED TO LEARN** the importance of role-modeling for their children
- ➔ Most fathers **WANT TO HELP, AND TO BE A POSITIVE PRESENCE** IN THEIR FAMILIES



CRITICAL FINDINGS TO DATE (continued)

24/7 DAD FATHERHOOD PROGRAM IS **BEING UTILIZED**:

Programs that don't gain acceptance among their target audiences are not effective, no matter how well designed or intended. **The 24/7 Fathers program has gained 100% acceptance** to date among those who know about the program and who are in a position to refer, and among those eligible to participate and benefit.

ACCEPTANCE/WILLINGNESS TO LEARN & CHANGE

100% of fathers who were offered the program, and were eligible and able to participate, enrolled in the program.

PARTICIPATION/ENTHUSIASM & EXCITEMENT

100% of fathers enrolled in the program have continued: To date we have a **ZERO PERCENT DROP OUT RATE** in the program (but for two who had to leave due to relocation.)



24/7 DADS IGNITES A
DRASTIC REALIGNMENT OF
DAD'S UNDERSTANDING OF
THE AGES AND STAGES OF
DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR
CHILDREN AND THE CRITICAL
IMPORTANCE OF THE FATHER'S
ROLE AT EVERY STAGE,
RESULTING IN:

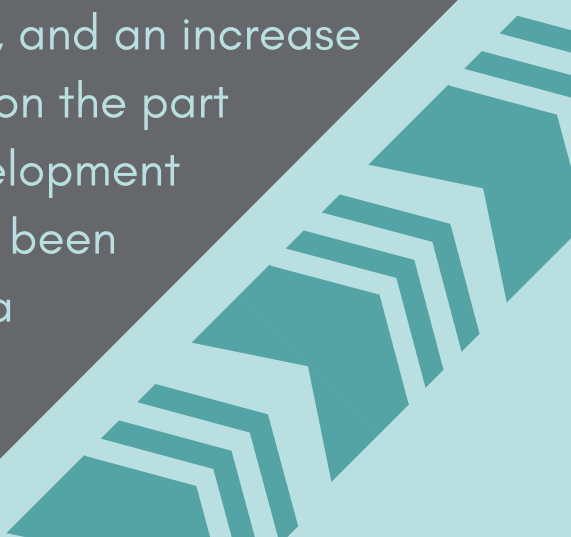
- IMPROVED ATTITUDES
- FEWER ARGUMENTS
- MORE UNDERSTANDING
- DECREASED VIOLENCE
- TIGHTER BONDS
- SAFER CHILDREN
- APPROACHABLE DADS
- LESS STRESSED MOMS
- HEALTHY COPING SKILLS
- MORE TIME TOGETHER
- MORE ACTIVE PRESENCE
- REAL RELATIONSHIPS
- A REAL AND SUSTAINABLE
CYCLE OF POSITIVITY



CRITICAL FINDINGS TO DATE (continued)

24/7 DAD FATHERHOOD PROGRAM **IS WORKING:**

Steady progress has been shown across participants in the program since it began less than a year ago. So far, 100 percent of fathers enrolled in the program have shown significant progress, changing not only the trajectory of their relationship with their children, but also the futures of their children and their families. Fathers have shown a consistent ability to transform from either negative presence or completely absent to positive and present, some moving from once a month visitation or no visitation to being integrated into the daily life of - even living with - the family. Cases have been closed or are preparing to close, with no repeat calls for intervention. Families have reported and we have witnessed relationships flourishing, families thriving, and an increase in bonding between fathers and families, and an understanding on the part of fathers that they play an important role in their children's development and future success and wellbeing. We have witnessed and it has been reported that there is more collaboration and less conflict, with a marked **DECREASE IN VIOLENCE**. Success is fostering repeat positive behaviors on the part of all family members, putting families on an upward spiral and cycle of success.



THE HAPPY CYCLE OF POSITIVE PARENTING BROUGHT ABOUT BY OUR 24/7 DAD FATHERHOOD PROGRAM

CHILD: I want to please my father.
FATHER: I want to be a good dad.



CHILD: I like how that made me feel/how my father reacted. I am going to do that again.
FATHER: I like how that made me feel/how my child reacted. I am going to do that again.

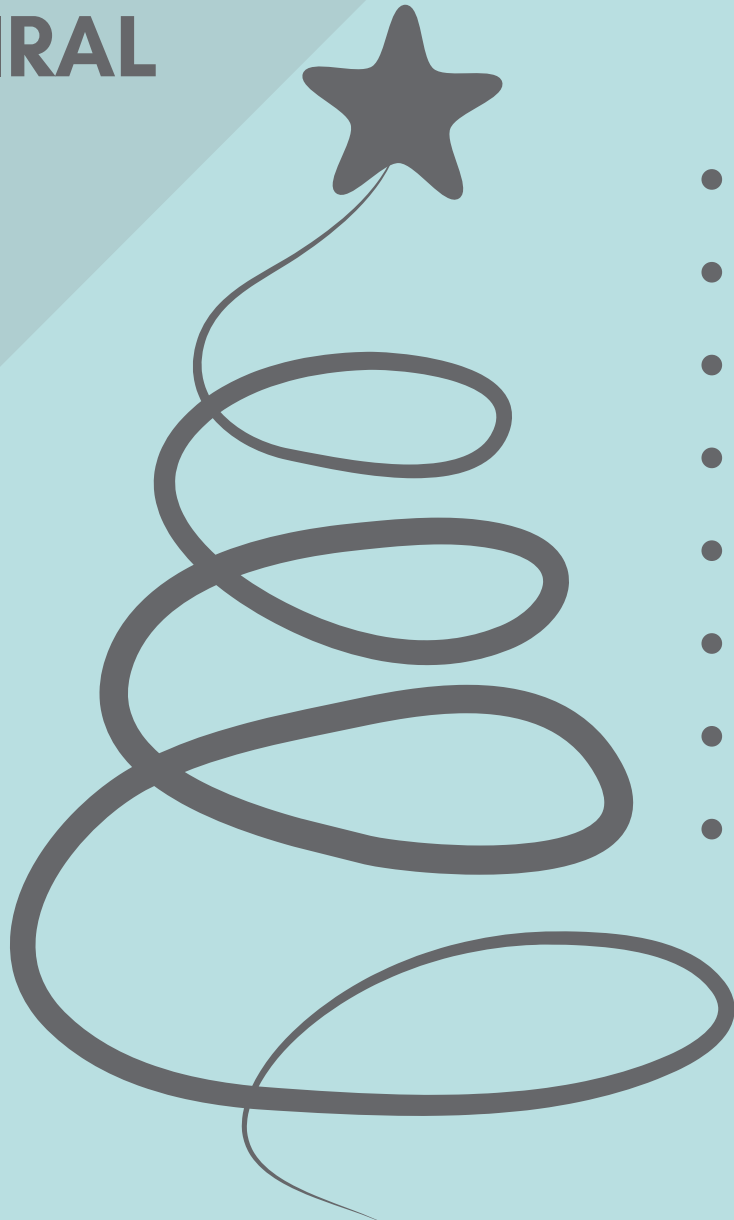
CHILD: Wow. That feels good. I am a good kid.
FATHER: Wow. That feels good. I am a good dad.

SIMULATION OF THE TREND OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A FATHER'S POSITIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH A CHILD / POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR THE CHILD

A father's increased, positive involvement significantly increases positive outcomes, and significantly decreases the possibility of negative ones.



KICKSTARTING THE UPWARD SPIRAL



**A FATHER'S POSITIVE PRESENCE CAN
MAKE THE DIFFERENCE IN A FAMILY,
causing**

- an increase in positive behaviors
- which leads to better attitudes
- which leads to less conflict
- which means more harmony
- which creates closer bonds
- and develops better relationships
- making the family stronger
- and setting both children and parents up for continued success

A FATHER'S POSITIVE PRESENCE IN THE FAMILY MAKES A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

FATHERS WANT TO BE A POSITIVE PRESENCE IN THEIR FAMILIES

24/7 DAD FATHERHOOD PROGRAM
OPTIMIZES THE POSSIBILITY
OF HAVING A POSITIVE FATHER
PRESENCE IN A FAMILY



WHY US?

THE EXCHANGE CLUB PARENTING SKILLS CENTER IS
EXPERIENCED, QUALIFIED AND PROVEN
IN 24/7 DAD FATHERHOOD PROGRAMMING

OUR CURRENT PROGRAM HAS SERVED OR IS SERVING 68 PEOPLE INCLUDING 39 CHILDREN (33 AGES 0 - 12, 6 AGES 13 - 18) AND 29 ADULTS, AND IS DIVERSE IN ITS MAKEUP: OF THE FAMILIES ENGAGED IN THE PROGRAM 10 ARE HISPANIC, 5 AFRICAN AMERICAN, 3 CAUCASIAN, 2 BI-RACIAL AND 1 HAITIAN.

100% OF THE FATHERS WHO WE INTRODUCED TO THE PROGRAM WERE INTERESTED, AND COMMITTED TO THE 12-WEEK PROGRAM. AND SO FAR WE HAVE A ZERO PERCENT DROP OUT RATE: ALL FATHERS WHO BEGAN THE PROGRAM ARE STILL WORKING WITH US TO COMPLETE THEIR PROGRAM (BUT FOR TWO WHO HAD TO LEAVE DUE TO RELOCATION).

ABUSE IS DOWN. FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND INTERACTIONS ARE STRENGTHENED AND CALMED. CHILDREN ARE SAFER, FATHERS MORE APPROACHABLE, MOTHERS LESS STRESSED AND FAMILIES THRIVING.

IT'S WORKING!



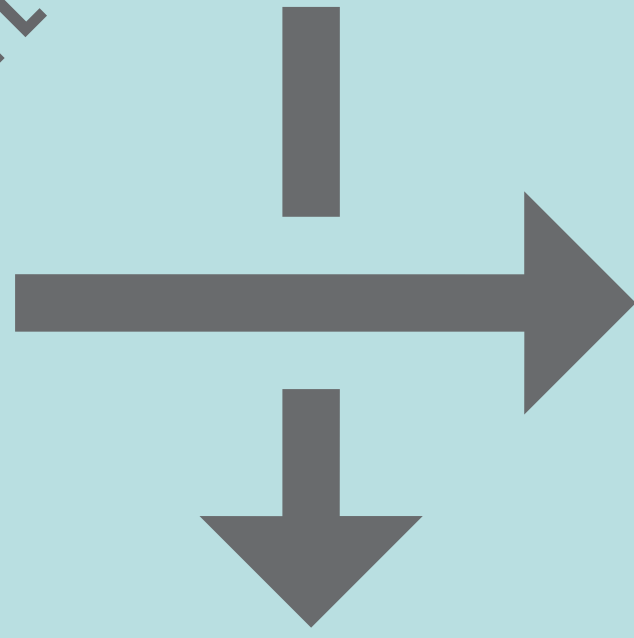
WHO WE ARE: THE EXCHANGE CLUB PARENTING SKILLS CENTER

OUR MISSION IS TO STOP THE CYCLE OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT BY STRENGTHENING THE FAMILY. WE KNOW FROM EXPERIENCE THAT A HEALTHY, STRONG FAMILY UNIT IS KEY TO PUTTING AN END TO WHAT CAN BE A VICIOUS, ENDLESS CYCLE OF FEAR AND VIOLENCE. FAMILIES BREAK DOWN FOR A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT REASONS, AND IT IS CRITICAL TO IDENTIFY THE "WHY" - MOST OFTEN POVERTY, SINGLE PARENTHOOD, HISTORY OF FAMILY VIOLENCE, MENTAL HEALTH OR ADDICTION ISSUES - BEFORE WE CAN DETERMINE AND PRESCRIBE THE "HOW." ONCE WE IDENTIFY THE THINGS THAT ARE INCREASING STRESS, WEAKENING THE FAMILY UNIT AND BREEDING THE ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR, WE CAN ADDRESS IT BY UTILIZING ONE OF OUR UNIQUE, HOME-BASED, EFFECTIVE INTERVENTION PROGRAMS, SUCH AS 24/7 DADS.

FOUNDED IN 1989 AS A LOCAL OUTPOST OF THE NATIONAL EXCHANGE CLUB FOUNDATION, WE ARE LOCATED IN STAMFORD, CT IN A BUILDING THAT HOUSES SEVERAL LOCAL SOCIAL SERVICES AND SHELTERS; WE MOSTLY SERVE THE GREATER STAMFORD AREA BUT OUR SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE TO ALL OF FAIRFIELD COUNTY. OUR HOME-BASED INTERVENTION PROGRAMS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN BASED ON CONNECTICUT'S FAMILY PROTECTIVE FACTORS SUCH AS NURTURING AND ATTACHMENT; KNOWLEDGE OF PARENTING STRATEGIES; PARENTAL RESILIENCE INCLUDING COPING SKILLS AND ANGER MANAGEMENT; SOCIAL CONNECTIONS INCLUDING BUILDING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE FAMILY AND COMMUNITY; AND ENSURING SUPPORT SYSTEMS SUCH AS FOOD, CLOTHING, HOUSING, HEALTH CARE, TRANSPORTATION AND ADVOCACY.

OUR STAFF HAS, BY DESIGN, LOWER CASELOADS, ACCESSIBLE SUPERVISION AND FLEXIBLE HOURS IN ORDER TO BEST MEET THE NEEDS OF FAMILIES THAT MAY BE IN CRISIS AND ALSO, TO BEST TAKE CARE OF THEIR OWN WELLBEING. THIS IS EMOTIONAL WORK, AND WE KNOW THAT IN ORDER TO TAKE GOOD CARE OF OTHERS WE NEED TO ALSO TAKE CARE OF OURSELVES. OUR STAFF IS PROFESSIONAL AND EXPERIENCED. THEY ARE ABLE TO IDENTIFY THE REASONS A FAMILY MAY BE IN CRISIS, TO ADDRESS THOSE ISSUES. TO PROVIDE HOPE AND HELP MOVING FORWARD, THEY TEACH POSITIVE PARENTING TECHNIQUES AND LIVING SKILLS TO FAMILIES IN NEED AND AT RISK.

DEPARTMENT OF
CHILDREN & FAMILIES
TOGETHER WITH
THE EXCHANGE CLUB
PARENTING SKILLS CENTER



HELPING
CHILDREN
AND
FAMILIES
TO BE

SAFE
SMART
STRONG

TOGETHER





THE EXCHANGE CLUB PARENTING SKILLS CENTER

Teaching Safe Parenting

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