

# ENGAGING FATHERS IN CHILD WELFARE

Historical Perspective of Efforts from  
the Department of Human Services

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## Benefits of Engaging Fathers in Child Welfare

- Fathers provide support related to the safety, permanency, and well being of their children
- Fathers who provide consistent child support and interaction with their children give benefits to the whole family
- Their children display enhanced social skills
- Their children develop and demonstrate greater problem-solving skills

## Benefits Continued

- Fathers provide additional leadership and guidance
- Their children demonstrate increased cognitive abilities
- They provide mentoring and role modeling
- They provide other supports which contribute to their children becoming healthy successful adults.
- Children in single-parent households are twice as likely to experience physical, emotional and educational neglect\*

\*Source: National Fatherhood Initiative's *Father Facts*

## Key Department Initiatives

2003

- Annual Progress Services Report
  - Established the goal of Increasing the use of relatives, including fathers as a placement resource and options for permanency in Minnesota

2004

- Partnership with MFFN in promoting the annual Father's Summit, hosted by MFFN

## Initiatives Continued

2005

- MN Child and Family Services Plan
  - Established the goal of expanding the capacity to Identify fathers in planning and care of children across Minnesota
    - 2005 VPC training
      - Engaging and involving fathers

## Initiatives Continued

2006

- Strategic Initiative promoting practices to improve CCSA outcomes led to policy developments;
  - Up front father search protocol for children entering out of home placement
  - Search and notification of non adjudicated fathers

## Initiatives Continued

2007

- Engaging Fathers Practice Guide
  - Internal identification of current known best practice strategies and barriers to father engagement in MN
- Work with Strengthening Families Grantees, supporting and serving parents across the state in strengthening families
  - Boyz II Dads in Duluth MN

## Initiatives Continued

- Statewide Assessment
  - identifies need to improve capacity to evaluate social service agencies efforts to identify and engage fathers

2008

- Child and Family Services Review
  - Identified the need to further address the engagement of fathers regarding safety permanency and wellbeing

## Initiatives Continued

- Citizen Review Panels incorporate father engagement strategy for promoting child wellbeing

2009

- Development of the Resource Guide for Counties
  - Working with Fathers, A Program Improvement Resource

## Initiatives Continued

- **MCWTS Training**
  - Engaging Fathers: Making Room for Dad
- **Creation of the CSP sponsored collaborative workgroup with participating county social service agencies and private agencies**
  - To develop a fathers' policy and practice guide, and a father's resource directory for incorporation into child welfare practice across the state

## Key Legislation

### **1997**

- MN Statute 259.52 is established creating the Fathers Adoption Registry (FAR)
- MN Statute 259 is further amended to define a Putative Father and to declare they receive notice of an adoption petition where they are registered with the FAR

## Key Legislation continued

### **1999**

- MN Statute 260c.212 is amended to indicate diligent efforts must be made to identify, locate, and offer services to both parents of a child, which included noncustodial and non-adjudicated parents

## Key Legislation continued

### **2008**

- MN Statute 259 is amended allowing county social service agencies access to search the FAR when a CHIPS petition for a child is filed
  - To further promote the early identification of fathers

## Key Legislation continued

### **2009**

- MN Statute 13.46 is amended to allow for data sharing between Child Support program and county social services to promote establishing parentage or determining who has or may have parental rights with respect to a child
  - Related to permanency planning.

## Key Legislation continued

- MN Statute 259.52 is amended to allow Putative Fathers to register with the FAR in TPR proceedings in addition to adoption proceedings, to assert their interests in gaining custody of their children

## Key Legislation continued

- MN Statute 260C.007 is amended to make the definition of a parent consistent with language of the parentage act, and clarifies requirements for Putative Fathers to become legal parents
- MN Statute 260C.150 is created requiring county social services to make diligent efforts to identify both parents of a child subject to Minnesota Rules of Juvenile Protection Procedure

## Key Legislation continued

- This provision further allows genetic testing to be treated as a presumption of paternity
- County social services now must
  - Ask custodial parent to identify nonresident parent
  - Obtain information from child support office
  - Search the fathers adoption registry
  - Use other reasonable means to identify nonresident parents

## Key Legislation continued

- The courts now must
  - Make inquiries regarding identity and whereabouts of both parents
  - Establish that county social services has made reasonable efforts to locate both parents
  - Determine that reasonable efforts have been made to do so