



“Strengthening Fathers; Strengthening Families”

**Minnesota Fatherhood & Family Services Summit  
January 19-20, 2005**

**OVERALL CONFERENCE EVALUATION**

82 overall evaluations were submitted and are compiled below.  
(Separate evaluations were submitted for each of the 13 breakout sessions.)

<b>PLENARY SESSION EVALUATION</b>	Excellent = 4.0 Good = 3.0 Adequate = 2.0 Poor = 1.0
Networking Reception, Wednesday evening: Dr. Mitch Pearlstein, Center of the American Experiment	3.1 average
Morning Plenary: Dwaine Simms, African American Men Project	3.6 average
Luncheon Awards Ceremony	3.3 average
Afternoon Plenary: Dr. Marti Erickson, University of Minnesota	3.6 average

<b>OVERALL CONFERENCE EVALUATION</b>	Strongly Agree = 4.0 Agree = 3.0 Somewhat Disagree = 2.0 Strongly Disagree = 1.0
This conference <b>stretched my mind</b> with new ideas regarding fatherhood and family services.	3.4 average
This conference provided <b>up-to-date information</b> related to the fatherhood field.	3.5 average
This conference provided ample opportunities for <b>networking and interaction</b> between presenters, participants, and exhibitors.	3.4 average
This conference provided a <b>good variety of topics</b> to meet my needs.	3.3 average
I am <b>motivated to use this information</b> in my work.	3.5 average

<b>How would you rate the following:</b>	Excellent = 4.0 Good = 3.0 Adequate = 2.0 Poor = 1.0
The overall quality of the conference?	3.6 average
The St. Cloud Civic Center’s facilities / rooms?	3.7 average
The meals and snacks?	3.6 average

**What was the highlight of the conference?**

- Thank you all for your hard work. Excellent job – well done – BRAVO!
- Dr. Erickson was great! (3 responses)
- Dr. Pearlstein was very good. (2 responses)
- Networking reception with Dr. Pearlstein and the co-parenting dialogue!
- Dwaine Simms – great program (I work in N. Mpls.)
- Dwaine Simms – great job! (5 responses)
- Co-parenting session was awesome – very real and helpful! (2 responses)
- Session on co-parenting – really enjoyed the discussion and ideas.
- Pre-conference workshop on poverty!
- Wed. session “Promoting Fatherhood from Childbirth...” was great! Very hands on with great ideas!
- “Promoting Fatherhood from Childbirth through the Early Years” was wonderfully positive and affirming. It is encouraging to have so many social service people talk about the importance of having father-friendly agencies and what their agencies are doing to move toward involving fathers more.
- Resources to use. Opened up my mind to father discrimination.
- Sam Simmons would be a great opening and closing keynote speaker.
- St. Cloud is a great central location.
- Really enjoyed young mother panel. (2 responses)
- Hearing the stories of the teen mothers.

- The excellent discussion in the workshops.
- Networking and gathering info. Also, Fathers' Adoption Registry and training on legal issues was excellent.
- The legal information provided about paternity. (2 responses)
- Topics: outstate/rural father involvement in agencies/programs.
- Great location!
- Great presenters.
- Scheduling – good time of year for this event.
- Breakout sessions and networking!
- I enjoyed the longer 1<sup>st</sup> day workshop option.
- I enjoyed the breakout sessions on Dads Early Literature and Connecting Rural Dads.
- Glen and Tom's workshop on Dads and Literacy. (2 responses)
- The 2 workshops I attended were very well done – Raising Teens (Pat and Rose) and Dads and Early Literacy (Tom and Glen).
- All was done very well.
- Workshop on recruiting and involving reluctant fathers.
- MAD DADS – love it!! More of it!!
- Talking to people about issues facing men. Very good information.
- It was all good.
- The rooms were filled to capacity – created a sense of excitement.
- I love the energy and excitement generated! The synergy of passionate people will propel fatherhood issues to the forefront of the discussion about positive community change.
- Meeting and networking with individuals from such a variety of business and resources. The wealth of information and experience was such a positive experience.
- The information shared; the recognition given to fathers and their roles in raising their children.
- Reconnecting; affirmations; varied workshop content.
- Male friendly location with the baseball memorabilia.
- Networking with area staff and it was nice to see so many non-Head Start staff.
- Networking was excellent! (2 responses)
- Small group workshops were very good.
- Really enjoyed getting to know about all the resources, agencies that are involved with families and fathers!
- The enthusiasm of the participants and becoming aware of the extent of support for fathers.
- The conference was exceptional in all ways from registration to actualizing it. Great topics and presenters!

#### **Plenary session comments:**

- Interesting speakers.
- Great keynotes all around! (2 responses)
- All were very enjoyable, enlightening and informative.
- Thanks for including Dr. Pearlstein; it is good to hear from various perspectives.
- I wish I had a greater familiarity with the sources referenced during Dr. Pearlstein's discussion.
- Dr. Pearlstein seemed to have a good heart regarding topic, however his session was scattered.
- It's always good to hear both sides of any situation, topic, idea etc. as we did with Dr. Pearlstein.
- Mitch seemed to talk around some questions when responding to them and glossed over Gore's influence on fatherhood movement. Need to hear viewpoints other than those I agree with but perhaps would have been interesting to have had both sides of the political spectrum present with even more interactive dialogue.
- Sorry Dr. Erickson didn't have more time (3 responses).
- I wish Dr. Erickson was given more time – 2 hours – maybe over lunch so as not to be rushed at the end of the day.
- Dr. Erickson was a little dry for after lunch.
- Political comments during acceptance speeches were unnecessary.
- More Q & A would always be nice.
- Dwaine was very engaging. What he had to say was very meaningful and engaging.
- Dwaine was wonderfully impactful.
- Dwaine was excellent but not quite related to the conference topic.
- Pleased about the flexibility to allow flow with plenaries when logistics required going a bit over time.
- Since the last plenary session title (Dr. Erickson's presentation) came from a question I asked at the 2004 Summit, I felt responsible to be here. Thanks – it was worth my time and effort. I felt welcomed and it made a difference.

### **If motivated to use this information, what do you plan to do?**

- Use co-parenting information.
- Recruit more males/fathers in Head Start.
- I will talk to trainers regarding the lack of opportunities to receive teaching and training in delivering client service face-to-face.
- This conference provided a ton of resources i.e. agencies that I can use or recommend immediately.
- Hope to have presenters here to present at my agency's future workshops.
- It was important to have the final session (on women's involvement in the fatherhood movement) over and over. Traditionally, if men's issues are talked about, then somehow women will be degraded.
- I will attempt to begin a FRED program.
- Mostly, I plan to network with other groups to enhance what my organization is doing.
- I now have new contact information for working with fathers.
- New ideas to use in developing a practice guide and training for county and tribal welfare staff.

### **What's missing? What would make this conference more useful to you (topics, scheduling, presenters, location)?**

- Nothing.
- I really can't think of anything – it was well organized, had a good turnout, good presenters good food and snacks!
- There was such a broad spectrum of occupations represented it was nearly impossible to address all the questions/needs.
- This was my first conference with MFFN. I thought it went very well. My hat goes off to those involved in the planning! Keep up the good work and I hope to see you again next year!
- -"Getting started" session did not have enough time to cover materials. I wanted more specific ideas/examples.
- I would recommend NOT including partisan viewpoints.
- Have a list of agencies & address/contact info on one sheet. Rural participants sometimes don't have access to these or know how to find these.
- I'm always on the lookout to promote father friendly world and that includes fathers who have "traditional" family settings.
- It is important to write out acronyms and also state what the letters stand for when presenting for those of us who are coming for the first time.
- Legislators.
- Provide CEUs or some type of certificate.
- Please ask folks to either turn off their cell phones or place on silent mode. I was surprised at how many times this happened.
- I have a concern over exhibits from Fathers 4 Justice and Center for Parental Responsibility. The system isn't perfect, but it works for most. These exhibits are so adversarial.
- Civic Center Facilities / Rooms:
  - o Conference rooms were generally too small – too much distraction from moving chairs, standing in doorways, insufficient handouts.
  - o The rooms were too small, too warm, too dark.
  - o Some noise from adjacent rooms was disturbing, esp. if they used video.
  - o Rooms were very cold (2 responses).
  - o Some breakout rooms were crowded (2 responses).
  - o Is there a way to keep everything on one floor for those of us with stair issues since the elevator is way at the other end of the building? Location is fine, but this time of year weather can always be an issue.
  - o Civic Center needs better labeled doors, elevators, etc.
- Schedule (Dates):
  - o Maybe a Mon/Tues or Thurs/Fri instead of mid-week.
  - o A January date is a problem due to uncertainty of weather.
- Schedule (Timing):
  - o For me, more networking would be good to allow others to learn about MDAH.
  - o More time with the vendors before the last session. They were gone after the last session and I wanted to get some of their materials.
  - o Maybe more time for networking and viewing exhibits. I felt rushed but was productive for me.
  - o Could use more networking time and time for discussions at workshops.
  - o Slightly longer breaks to get from the workshops, network, visit exhibits, etc. ( 2 responses)
  - o Some of the sessions could have been repeated in the second session. There were topics I would have like to see/hear, but was limited to only 1 session.

- There were several topics in breakout sessions. It would be nice to repeat some of those topics at other times. This might require extending conference to 2 days.
- Would be nice to have dinner Wed. night. And offer a choice at lunch (box lunches would be fine).
- I would like the afternoon speaker over luncheon; rather late in the afternoon.
- Additional topic ideas:
  - Expand workshop topic options.
  - Differences in the ways men and women parent and interact with children;
  - Equipping faith communities to empower men / facilitate male leadership;
  - Why it's best for children to have interaction / support from BOTH parents;
  - Father presence vs. father absence and kids' outcomes;
  - Panel of fathers and kids or youth talking about fathers' positive and negative impacts;
  - Some way to hear powerful stories of joys, challenges, pain;
  - How do we teach boys to be good fathers?
  - Teen fathers;
  - Some way to capture and illustrate the 85% incarcerated who grew up without fathers. If you can't bring them to speak, then video.
  - More on issues of fathers who are doing their best – issues of work/family, parenting approaches, relationship issues.
  - Teen fathers session should have been a father rather than or along side the teen mothers.
  - Something about preventing second pregnancies with teen dads or successful teen dad programs.
  - Legal issues for noncustodial fathers whose child is subject of a CHIPS on the mom;
  - Legal issues in family court for dads (whole session on this).
  - Straightforward academic research presenters on male health.
  - History of the fatherhood movement for beginners.
  - How is the fatherhood movement addressing masculinity and violence (work of Jackson Katz).
  - I think a panel discussion with fathers and their children would be a good addition (i.e. those who have custody and those who don't)
  - Ideas for "solutions" i.e. co-parenting (too much focus on barriers and not enough on strategies).
  - More information on rural Minn. – easy to make contact in metro; very difficult for rural Minn.
  - More ways to include males in schools.
  - I would like to see every year something to help with grant writing and resources.
  - A day of co-parenting strategies and issues would be great!
  - How to work with young parents to co-parent (more hand on ideas). Drug use (meth) and how to effectively teach fathers about the harm it can do to their families. It made me realize how important it is to get mothers to co-parent with the dads.
  - I heard a lot of information regarding the barriers to father involvement...would have liked more action-oriented ideas about how do we overcome them.
  - All of the topics were great but they were missing positive approaches to help us help the community. The panels need to stay focused on the issue!
  - Create round table rooms during morning breakfast where networking is facilitated (room for Head Start, Social Services, etc)
  - I'd like to see a more skills-based workshop (for example, on co-parenting).
  - 3 hour workshop on co-parenting;
  - 3 hour workshop on child protection and fathers.
- Meals and snacks:
  - Should be lighter and healthier: fruit and bagels instead of doughnuts; salads/sandwiches instead of meat and potatoes; fruit/granola/crackers instead of cookies.
  - More coffee.
  - Coffee after lunch breakouts.
  - Meals and snacks – wow!!
  - Real breakfast – even if it's fruit and bagel is better than the sugar fix provided.
  - Fruit for snacks.
  - Fruit would have been nice for breakfast.