

Racine Kenosha Community Action Agency
Kenosha County WIC Project –
Father Involvement Initiative
Kenosha, Wisconsin

RACINE/KENOSHA COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY, INC.



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Building & strengthening families through father involvement!



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Goal: Improve the health of low income infants and children participating in the Kenosha WIC Program through the support and engagement of fathers.

Why fatherhood?

- Kenosha Lifecourse Initiative for Healthy Families
- Dr. Michael Lu: Where is the F in MCH?
- Benefits of father involvement

WHERE IS THE F IN MCH? FATHER INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILIES

Objectives: To: 1) review the historical contexts and current profiles of father involvement in African American families; 2) identify barriers to, and supports of, involvement; 3) evaluate the effectiveness of father involvement programs; and 4) recommend directions for future research, programs, and public policies.

Methods: Review of observational and interventional studies on father involvement.

Results: Several historical developments (slavery, declining employment for Black men and increasing workforce participation for Black women, and welfare policies that favored single mothers) led to father absence from African American families. Today, more than two thirds of Black infants are born to unmarried mothers. Even if unmarried fathers are actively involved initially, their involvement over time declines. We identified multiple barriers to, and supports of, father involvement at multiple levels. These levels include intrapersonal (eg, human capital, attitudes and beliefs about parenting), interpersonal (eg, the father's relationships with the mother and maternal grandmother), neighborhoods and communities (eg, high unemployment and incarceration rates), cultural or societal (eg, popular cultural perceptions of Black fathers as expendable and irresponsible, racial stratification and institutionalized racism), policy (eg, Earned Income Tax Credit, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, child support enforcement), and life-course factors (eg, father involvement by the father's father). We found strong evidence of success for several intervention programs (eg, *Reducing the Risk, Teen Outreach Program*, and *Children's Aid Society - Carrera Program*) designed to prevent formation of father-absent families, but less is known about the effectiveness of programs to encourage greater father involvement because of a lack of rigorous research design and evaluation for most programs.

Conclusion: A multi-level, life-course approach is needed to strengthen the capacity of African American men to promote greater involvement in pregnancy and parenting as they become fathers. (*Ethn Dis.* 2010;20(Suppl 2):s2-49-s2-61)

Key Words: African American Fathers, Maternal Health, Child Health, Family

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BACKGROUND

Men are important to maternal and child health (MCH). Much has been written about fathers' influence on child health and development.¹⁻⁶ In early childhood, father involvement is associated with better cognitive and socio-emotional development in young children.^{2,7,8} During middle childhood, paternal involvement in children's schooling is associated with greater academic achievement and fewer behavioral problems.^{2,4} In adolescence, high involvement between fathers and adolescents is associated with better educational, behavioral, and emotional outcomes.⁹⁻¹³ Conversely, children growing up in father-absent families are at greater risk for various educational or behavioral problems and poorer developmental outcomes, even after

controlling for parental education, income and other factors.⁵ Less is known about the male partner's influence on maternal health. In ethnographic studies, pregnant African American women identified their male partners as a vital source of support or stress.^{14,15} A growing body of literature suggests that maternal psychosocial stress is an important risk factor for poor pregnancy outcomes,^{16,17} and partner support can modify that risk.¹⁸ One study found partner support to be associated with positive maternal health behaviors during pregnancy, including early prenatal care and decreased smoking and drug use.¹⁹

In this article, we examine father involvement in pregnancy and parenting among African American men. First, we review the historical contexts and current profiles of father involvement in African American families. Second, we identify barriers to, and supports of, father involvement. Third, we evaluate the impact of programs designed to increase father involvement. Lastly, we make recommendations on the directions for future research, programs and public policies. We contend that a multi-level, life-course approach is needed to strengthen the capacity of African American men for greater involvement in pregnancy and parenting.

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HISTORICAL CONTEXTS AND CURRENT PROFILES OF BLACK FATHER INVOLVEMENT

Father absence in Black families can be traced to several historical developments. The legacy of slavery played a



Silent Crisis

THE LIFECOURSE INITIATIVE
FOR HEALTHY FAMILIES (LIHF)

Addressing Infant Mortality Among
Wisconsin's African American Communities

Wisconsin Partnership
Planning & Program
Development grant
recipient

1. Tracking father involvement
2. Needs Assessment/focus groups
3. FI opportunities at WIC clinic
4. Research models
5. Mapping project
6. Determine model for Kenosha WIC office.



Wisconsin
Partnership Program

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND PUBLIC HEALTH

WIC Father Contact

Overview: 993 fathers visited the office 1,386 times (on average 1.4 visits)

Reason for WIC office Visit

- 37% Appointment for Infant or child
- 27% Check pick-up and Nutrition Session
- 21% Check pick-up only
- 7% waited in waiting room
- 6% WIC pregnancy apt



Racine Kenosha Community Action Agency

Kenosha Father Involvement Planning Project

Data collection instrument: A 35-item pencil survey. All questions were closed ended.

Survey captured **demographic information** (e.g. race, age, marital status, employment status) **family characteristics** (e.g. number and age of children and living arrangements) **fathering/parenting activities, information and service needs related to parenting and other areas** (e.g. employment and health), and **perceptions of the WIC program.**

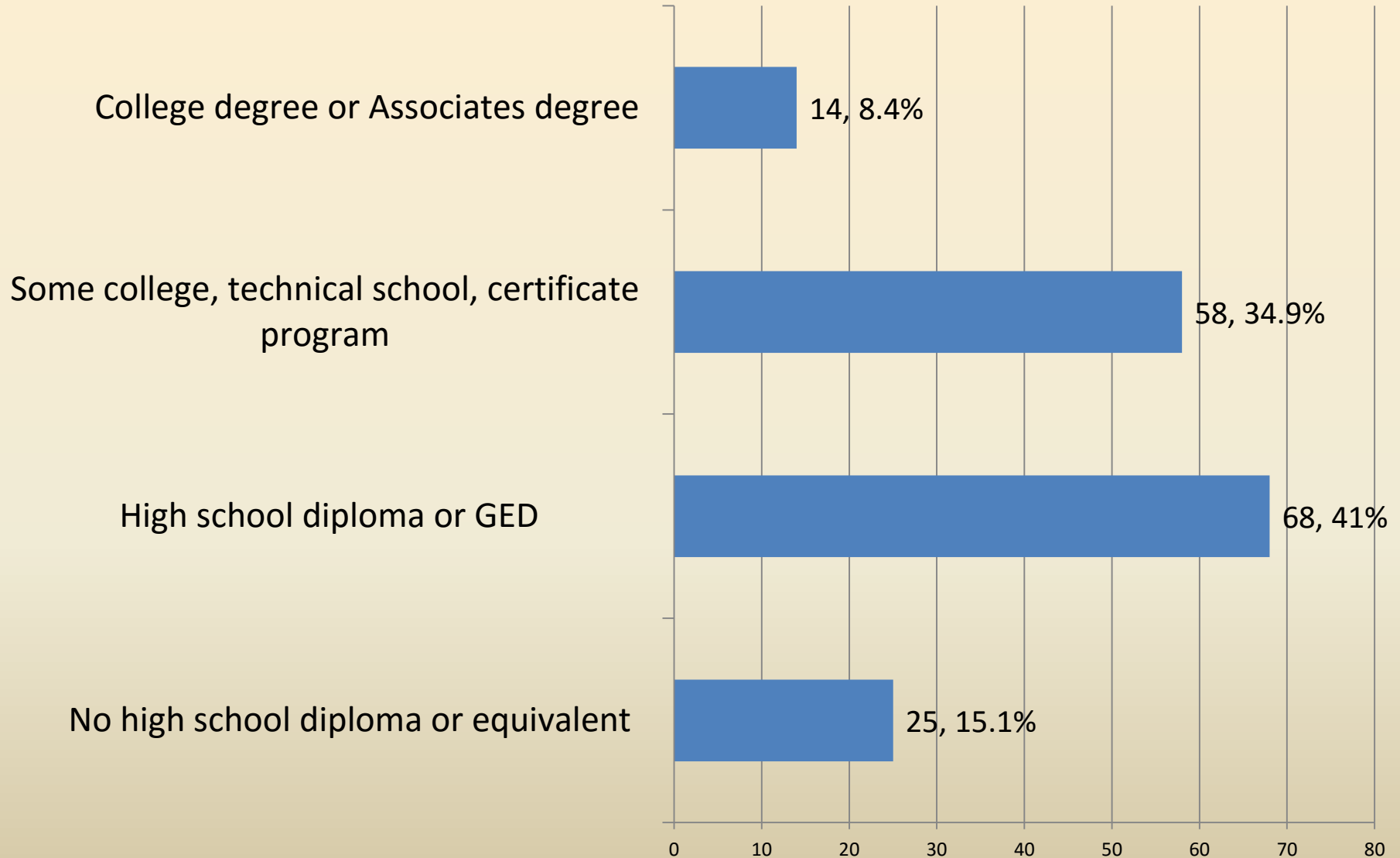
Survey data collection: **February 14, 2014 to April 14, 2014**

Number of completed and accepted surveys: **N = 166**

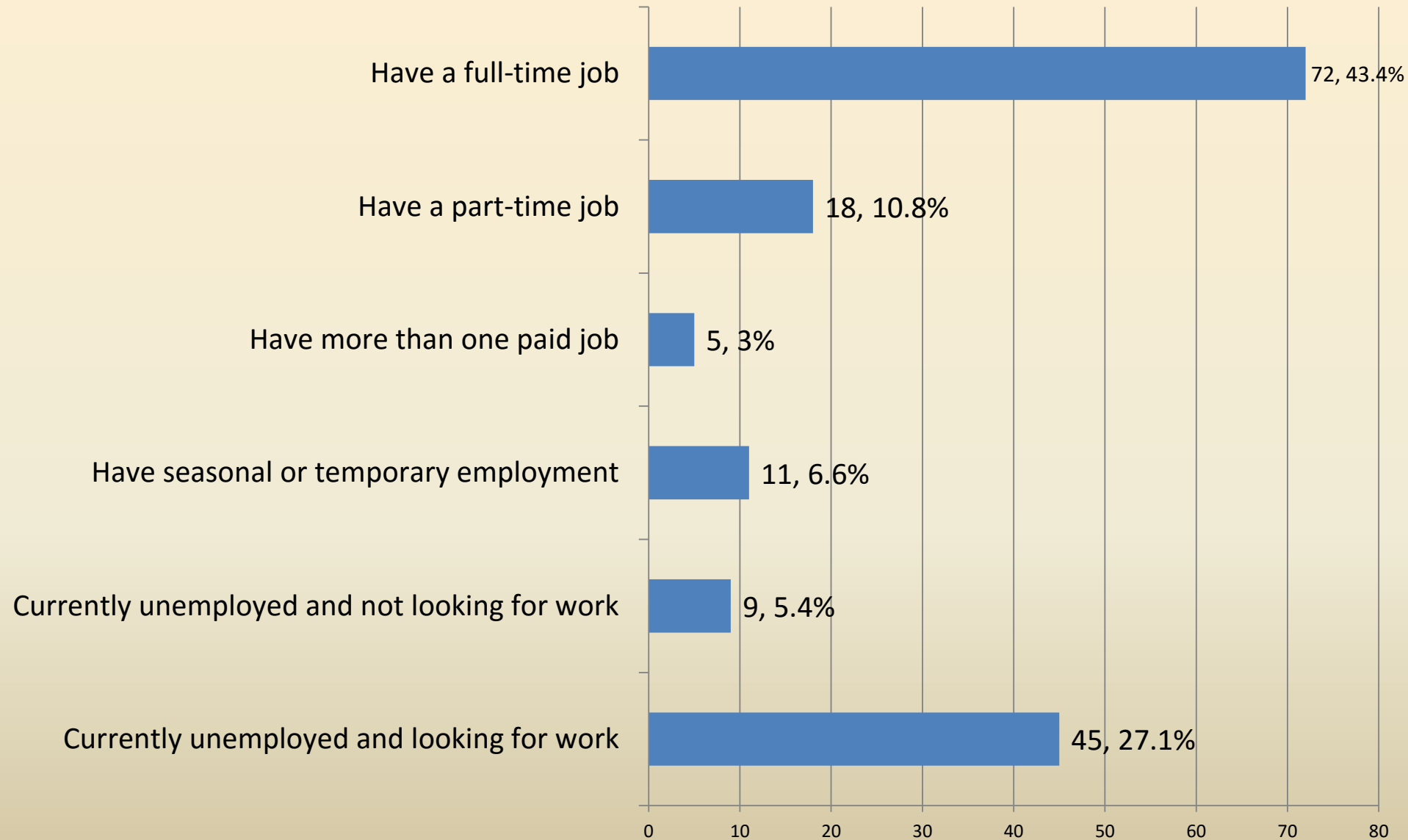
Eligibility: **Fathers 18 years and older receiving services onsite**

* adopted from a project sponsored by The Fatherhood Collaborative of San Mateo County.

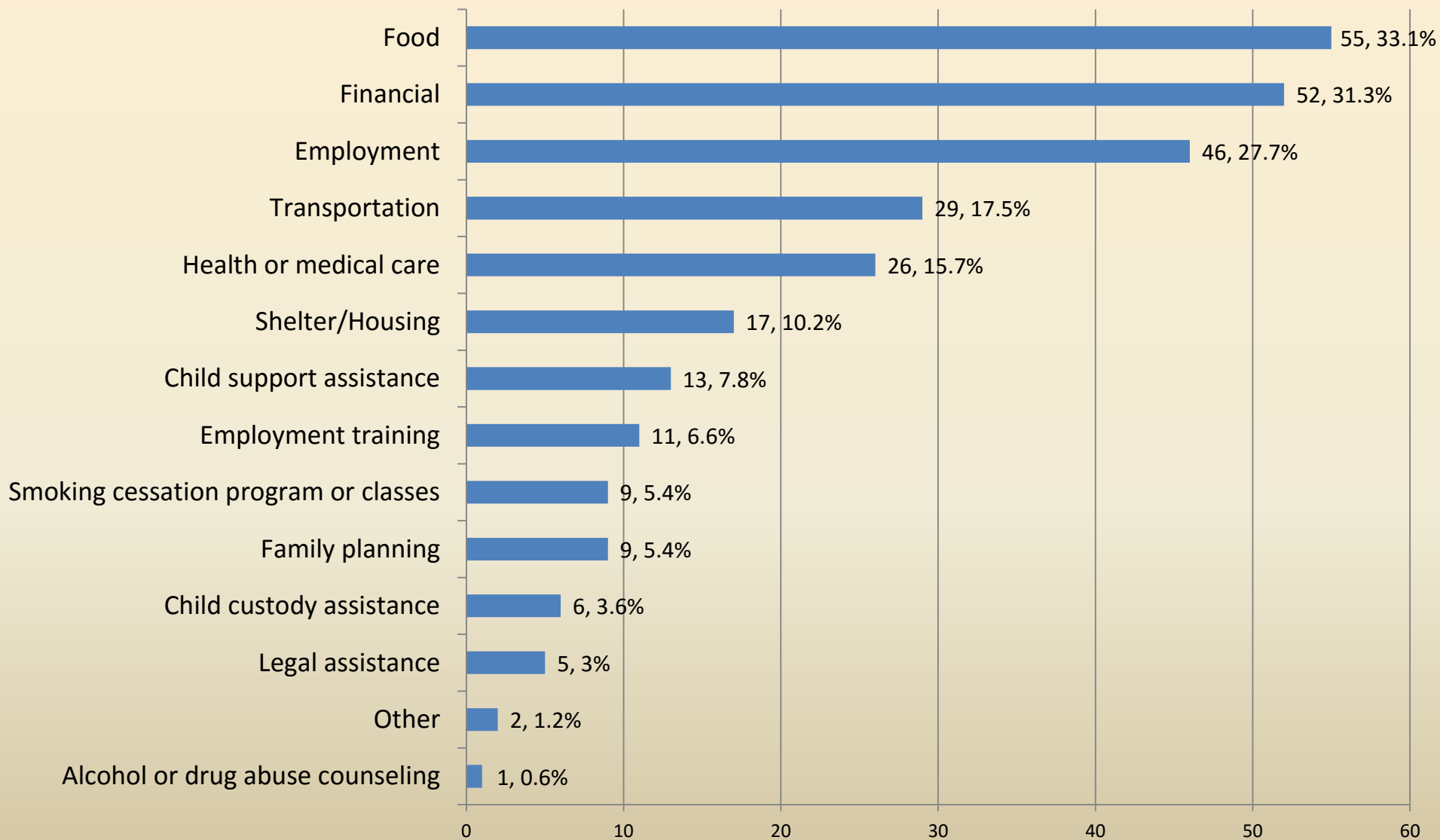
Respondent Educational Status



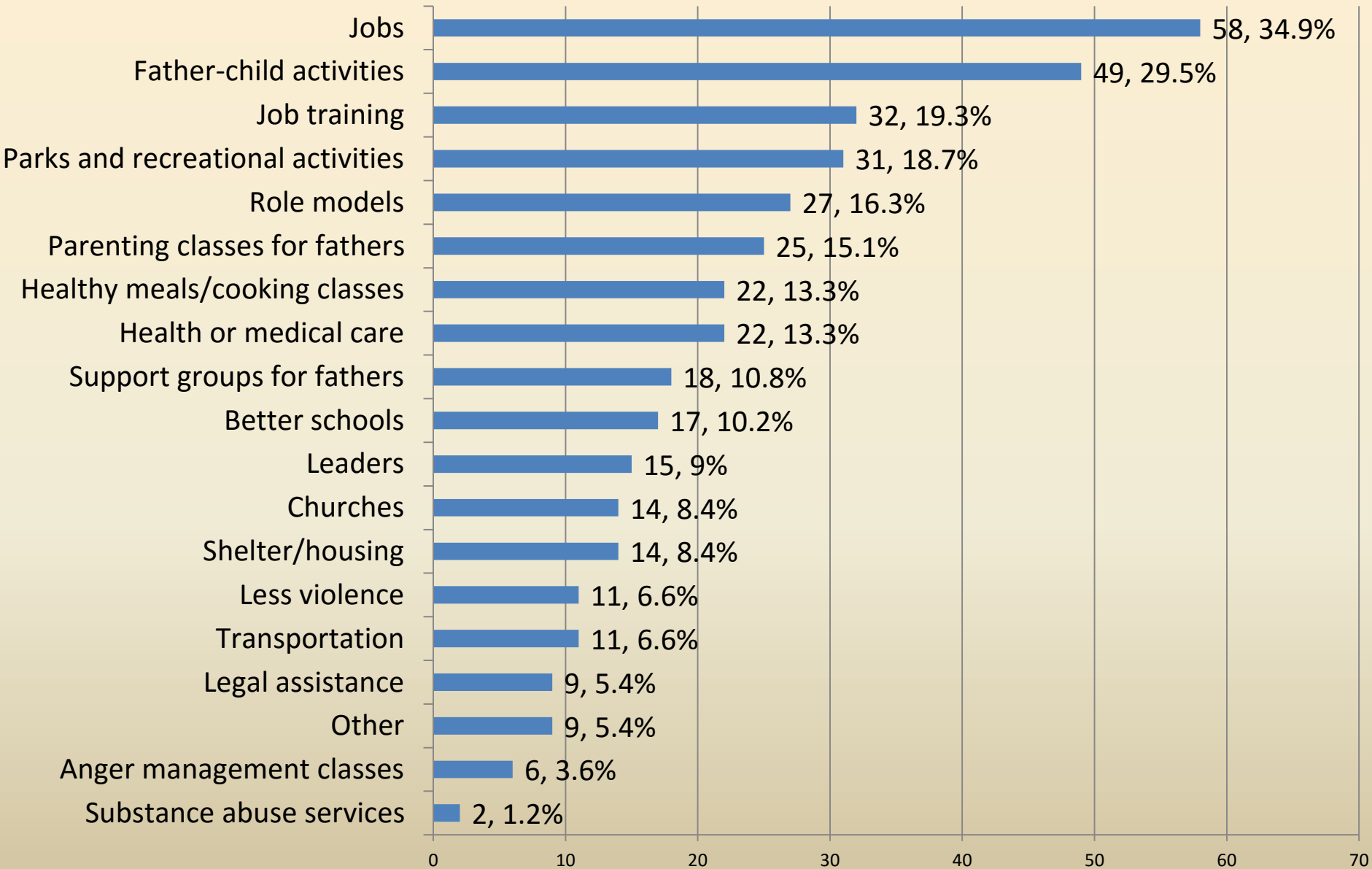
Respondent Employment Status



Do you have any of the following needs at this time? (Check all that apply)



What kind of support services do you need to help you become a better father?



Focus Groups

David J. Pate, Jr.

Associate Professor, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

David J. Pate, Jr. is an Associate Professor at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Helen Bader School of Social Welfare. His fields of special interest are welfare reform policy; child support enforcement policy; fatherhood; domestic violence; and the intersection of race, gender, and poverty.



3. Provide educational materials and services to fathers

Many focus group participants wanted to learn more about infant needs, childrearing, child development, and father roles - "I wanna find out what I can do to become a good father" and "...I never had a father in my life at all. I never met him, never seen him. But, I want to be different with my kids. I want to be there for them. I want to be connected more. I don't want to be apart." While the needs assessment survey suggested that WIC fathers take on many roles and responsibilities in their families, focus group participants expressed interest in receiving information to take on more parental roles in their families. Creating YouTube videos for changing diapers and materials on what to read to your children were some examples.

Findings

- 100% of focus group participants and 98% of survey respondents identified multiple roles for themselves as fathers and are engaged with their children (e.g., spend time with children, play games, and talk).
- 78% of survey respondents live with at least one child.

- Thirty-four respondents (20.5%) reported attending a support group, class or other program for parents; 129 (77.7%) did not.
- The top three activities needing information:
 - disciplining (49, 29.5%)
 - taking care of a sick infant or child (48, 28.9%)
 - handling temper tantrums (46, 27.7%)

FUN WITH FLAPJACKS

**WEDNESDAY,
MARCH 5TH
8:15-4:00PM**

Racine Kenosha Community Action Agency
Upstairs in the Kitchen

HOW DOES YOUR DAD MAKE PANCAKES?

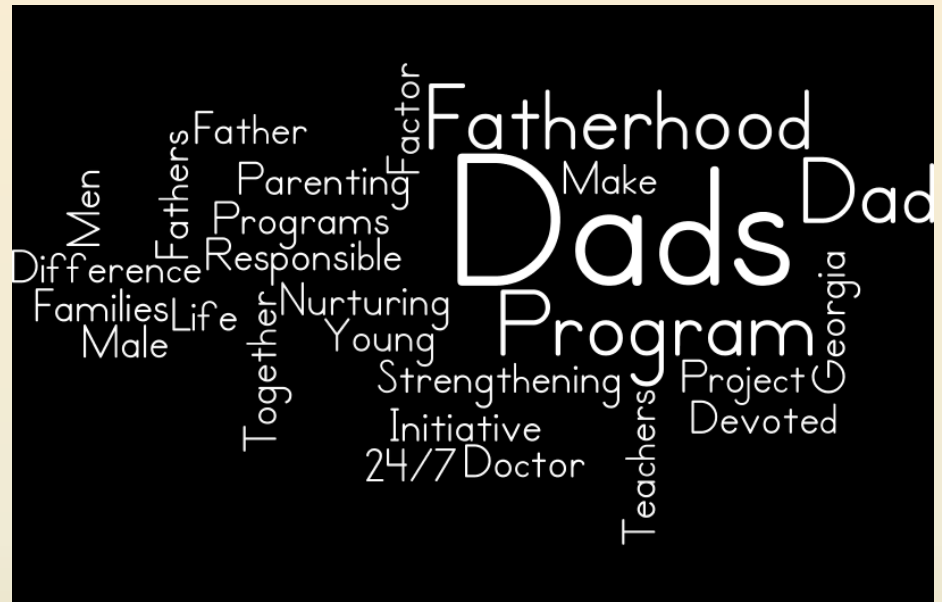
Join us for a day of pancake possibilities!

Our very own WIC dads will be flipping
flapjacks upstairs in our kitchen.

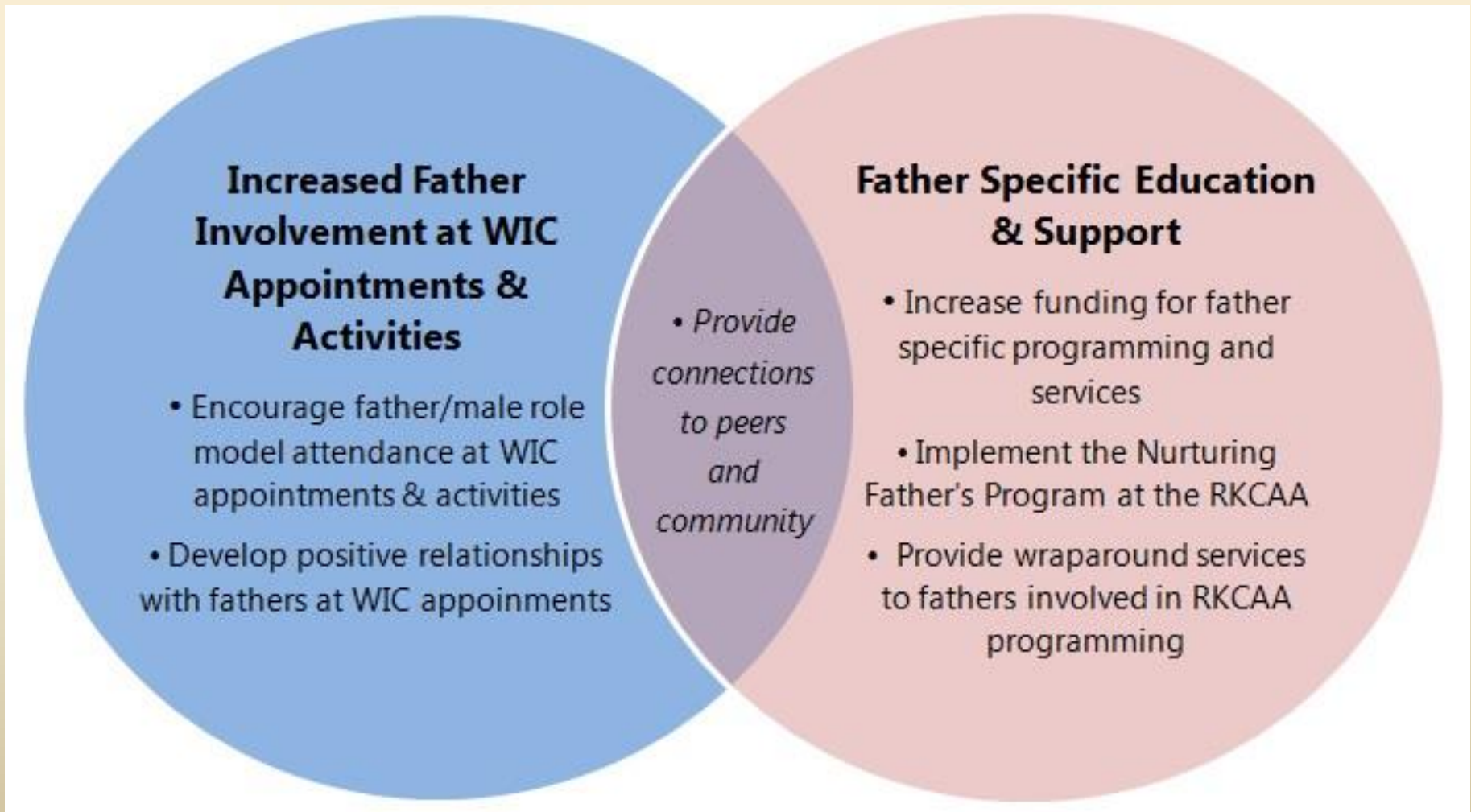
*Come sample the dads' pancake
creations & take home new ideas
for a nutritious breakfast!*

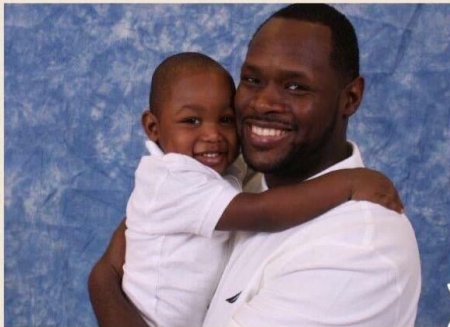


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Based on needs assessment findings and literature reviews, the team developed a two-pronged approach for engaging fathers at the RKCAA.





PICCOLLAGE

Baby steps to implementation



- WPP grant ends 12/2014
- Sharmain volunteers, trained as a facilitator
- United Way grant
- Hire Father Involvement Specialist (10 hrs/wk)
- Wisconsin DHS: Minority Health grant
- Integrate position to include some WIC responsibilities: FT position 10/2015– WIC & Community Liaison

Father Involvement: Recruitment



Dedicated Dads



Attention ALL Kenosha WIC Dads!!

Join us for weekly discussions using the

Nurturing Fathers Program

Are you looking to be more involved in a positive and consistent way?

Do you need information on father involvement with your children?

Are you struggling to find resources to better support you as a father?

Are you having child support or custody issues?

Are you expecting a child or are you a new dad?



Contact: Sharmain Harris, WIC & Community Liaison

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Building & Strengthening Families through Father Involvement.

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What is the Nurturing Fathers Program

It is a 13 week evidence based curriculum created to cultivate and support the attitudes and skills for male nurturance, hoping to benefit men, woman and children in family relationships.

We currently have 2 ½ hour sessions twice a week.



Nurturing Fathers

Grant expectations

Class descriptions

Daddy Day Out events

Table of Contents:

<i>Week #1</i>	<i>The Roots of Fathering</i>
<i>Week #2</i>	<i>Self-Nurturing Skills I: Fathering “The Little Boy Within”</i>
<i>Week #3</i>	<i>Self-Nurturing Skills II: The Power To Meet My Own Needs</i>
<i>Week#4</i>	<i>The World of Feelings and Male Nurture</i>
<i>Week#5</i>	<i>The Power To Nurture: Fathering without Violence or Fear</i>
<i>Week#6</i>	<i>Overcoming Barriers to Nurturing Fathering: Anger, Alcohol/Other Substances, and Stress</i>
<i>Week#7</i>	<i>Discipline and Fun & Games</i>
<i>Week#8</i>	<i>Playshop: Fun & Games for Fathers and Their Children</i>
<i>Week#9</i>	<i>Nurturing Relationships I: Fathering Sons / Fathering Daughters</i>
<i>Week#10</i>	<i>Nurturing Relationships II: Teamwork between Father and Spouse/Co-parent</i>
<i>Week#11</i>	<i>A Time and Place for Fathering</i>
<i>Week#12</i>	<i>Healing the Father Wound</i>
<i>Week#13</i>	<i>Graduation Ceremony and Closing Activities</i>

Added Incentives for fathers

- Gift Cards
 - Free occasional meals
 - Child Support Services
 - Employment assistance
- Referrals to other Social Services agencies
 - Volunteer opportunities
- Free admission to Community Events
 - Peer support

YMCA-MILWAUKEE BUCKS GAME- ZOO-
MUSEUM-WATERPARKS-PARKS

Community Linkages & Support



- The local Newspaper
- Child Support Services
- Employment support
- Referrals to other Social Services agencies
- Volunteer opportunities
- Probation and Parole & Criminal Court Judges
- Kenosha Unified School District

Father engagement in WIC

Strategy: Develop positive relationships with fathers/male role models at WIC appointments					
Activities	Timeframe	Person Responsible	Anticipated Success	Measure of Success	Source of Measure
Continue to encourage male role model attendance at appointments (father, step father, grandpa, uncle)	Ongoing	WIC staff	Increased father/male role model attendance at WIC appointments	# fathers that attend WIC appointments	ROSIE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask father to help check the child's weight and height and hold the child for iron (Hemoglobin) and blood lead testing. 	Ongoing	Health Screener	Fathers report feeling engaged at WIC appointments and activities	# fathers completing annual survey	Annual survey
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively engage father by speaking directly to him. Ask him if he has any questions or concerns. Actively engage father in health and diet assessment questions/conversation. 	Ongoing	Nutrition staff	Fathers report feeling respected at WIC appointments and activities	# fathers completing annual survey	Annual survey
Involve father in setting a goal for next visit	Ongoing	Nutrition staff	Fathers report feeling engaged at WIC appointments and activities	# fathers completing annual survey	Annual survey

Strategy: Provide father/male role model connections to peers and community					
Activities	Timeframe	Person Responsible	Anticipated Success	Measure of Success	Source of Measure
Host family events (with focus on recruiting fathers) – Open House, Healthy eating, etc.	Ongoing	WIC staff, WIC father(s)	Increased father/male role model attendance at WIC appointments and activities	# fathers/male role models attending club/ advisory groups	Attendance sheets/ registration
Identify local father(s) to help recruit other fathers to attend WIC-hosted activities	Ongoing				
Develop a Dad's Club or Father Advisory group – Fathers can assist with outreach and recruitment	Ongoing				
Redesign magnetic wall to include section targeting fathers	2015	WIC Director		# fathers that attend WIC appointments	ROSIE

Father Involvement at WIC appointments





"A family is a group of people who eat the same thing for dinner!"

Children are great imitators. So give them something great to imitate.



How many spoonfuls of sugar are in ONE cup (8oz) of your drink?

Drink	Spoonfuls of sugar
200% Orange Juice	14
Mountain Dew	11
Sunny Delight	11
Chocolate Milk	11
Jarritos	11
Snappea	11
Mountain Dew Energy	11
200% Apple Juice	11
Coca-Cola	11
100% Orange Juice	11
Submarine	11
Vitamin Water	11
Popart	11

Breast milk—some is better than none

If this is harmful... Don't write for an audience, and be real. Write.

Healthy babies start with you!

Make changes to increase your family's health.

Healthy Habits Workshop! BODY

baby bottle tooth decay



Father friendly environment

- Posters
- Brochures through the State WIC office





JORD

Next steps

Nurturing Fathers classes continue

1:1 monthly coaching for 1st time dads (modeled after our Fit Families program)

2016 - 2017 trainings/classes & events



WIC Father Involvement Team



ROSIE – WI WIC

- Tracking & Nurturing Fathers participation

The screenshot displays the ROSIE web application interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the following text: "ROSIE Home / System Administration / Project / Project Specific Data". Below this, there are several menu items: "System", "Areas", "EBT", "Help", and "Exit". The main content area is titled "Basic Info" and contains two sections: "Family" and "Participant".

Family Section:

- Family Data Field 1:
- Family Data Field 2:
- Family Data Field 3:

Participant Section:

- Family Participant Field 1:
- Family Participant Field 2:
- Family Participant Field 3:

- fiy = yes/fin = no

Kenosha WIC Father Involvement Initiative:

1. Strengthen families through father engagement and involvement
2. Improve the health and well-being of WIC women, infants, children and families.



- What will the data show?

