



**GETTING AND KEEPING FATHERS  
INTERESTED IN YOUR PROGRAM**

# Table of Contents

## **INTRODUCTION**

## **RECRUIT**

Build a solid foundation

Go forth and recruit

## **RETAIN**

## **CREATE A POSITIVE IMAGE IN THE COMMUNITY**

## **CONNECT WITH YOUR COMMUNITY**

## **INNOVATE**



**As the nation's #1 provider of fatherhood skill-building programs and resources, National Fatherhood Initiative (NFI)** provides guidance for practitioners and organizations on how they can create and maintain a successful fatherhood program. From planning, to selecting a curriculum, to successfully facilitating your first session, we're here to help you along the way so that your program is another success story.

One of the areas that requires care and attention for a successful fatherhood program is that of recruiting and retaining fathers. Men can be initially reluctant to participate in a fatherhood program for many reasons, whether it be ego (e.g. a dad thinks he's a good dad already), unavailability (e.g. conflicting work schedule), or the unwillingness to seek help. But the good news is fathers tell us that after they have participated in one of these programs, they're glad they did.

So, whether you're just starting your program to support fathers or are looking for ways to expand an existing program, we have many proven tactics to help you in your endeavors.

**In the following sections of this ebook, you'll learn five keys to enrolling and keeping fathers in your program:**

**1) successful recruitment tactics, 2) successful retention tactics, 3) creating a positive image in your community, 4) ideas for connecting with your community, and 5) the importance of innovating in the first four areas.**



## RECRUIT

There's a popular saying that we're sure you've heard: **"Build it and they will come."**

This saying is sometimes true but oftentimes not realistic, especially when it comes to developing and implementing a fatherhood program.

There are many responsible fatherhood programs with great staff, curriculum, and facilities, but many of them lack participants. Logic dictates that there isn't a program without participants to serve. Unfortunately, some staff are very skilled in the business of program operations but don't know how to get fathers in the door.

This section will equip you with the essential tactics you'll need to begin recruiting for your fatherhood program.

### Build a Solid Foundation

**Before you can begin recruiting fathers to your program, it's important to have a solid foundation. If you don't, the whole infrastructure could collapse.**

**Successful recruitment and retention starts and ends not with creative marketing strategies and tactics, even though they're important. It starts and ends with getting every staff member and the entire organization behind serving dads. Staff must integrate this service into the organization's DNA—into every aspect of program and service delivery—by creating a father-friendly culture that creates a father-friendly environment that says to fathers, "You're welcome here."**



## Here are a few internal “must-have” tactics to build a solid foundation.

- Commitment from the leadership of your organization.
- A passionate program director/facilitator who doesn't mind a bunch of “NOs” and initial failure (e.g. in recruiting fathers).
- A strategy to deliver your program where fathers are, not just at the location of your organization.
- A willingness to try creative, innovative strategies, and a commitment to measure their effectiveness.
- Develop a marketing plan for the short- and long-term.
- An effective “hook” to recruit fathers, which might have nothing to do with becoming a better dad. Job training or education services provided in addition to your program, for example, could be more attractive for some fathers to initially work with your organization than to participate in a fatherhood program.
- Schedule program sessions at convenient times for fathers to attend.
- Implement multiple marketing tactics:
  - Make your program easy for fathers to use and make it accessible.
  - Send messages that motivate fathers and address myths and misconceptions fathers have about seeking assistance.
  - Help fathers overcome barriers to participation
  - Use credible spokespersons and multiple forms of media to deliver messages to fathers about your program and organization.

## Go Forth and Recruit

**Now that you have a solid foundation, you're ready to recruit fathers. Listed below are some tactics that can encourage even the most reluctant fathers to attend and participate. While not an exhaustive list, here are some of the most common tactics used by fatherhood programs.**

- Use tactics that maximize word-of-mouth marketing (e.g. “bring a friend”). After fathers enroll, this kind of advertising will take off.
- Get referrals from community partners (e.g. Head Start and Early Head Start, government social service agencies, faith groups, and schools).
- Contract to provide your program to fathers served by government agencies (e.g. local health and human services departments) and other community organizations (e.g. shelters, mental health organizations, and hospitals).
- Use attractive, attention-getting print materials that appeal to men.
- Gain access to fathers by going to where they are (e.g. barber shops, sports arenas, and community centers). Target them through businesses frequented by men (e.g. car repair shops and sporting goods stores). Promote the program with fathers at workplaces.
- Contact expectant fathers during the prenatal period and immediately after their child is born, the “golden moment” when motivation and interest in parenting is highest and when mothers are most likely to want fathers’ involvement.
- Staff the program with men (e.g. as facilitators).
- Place advertisements in local print and online publications men use.
- Provide assistance or referrals for issues important to specific groups of fathers (e.g. legal assistance for fathers involved in custody issues).
- Market the program through well-respected fathers in the community.
- Use multiple communication mediums (e.g. flyers, email, social media, and mailings).
- Provide incentives of interest to fathers (e.g. gift certificates for landscaping or hardware and fix-up projects). Serve food at your program sessions and provide child care. Promote that both of those incentives will be available.
- Make the assistance program easy to access (e.g. along a bus or train route).
- Use positive portrayals of fathers in promotional materials and messages.
- Use public service announcements (PSAs).
- Advertise through the local news and radio shows (e.g. stories about fathers transformed by the program).

- Help arrange transportation to program sessions.
- Choose a comfortable training site.
- Keep the fee for participation low or free.
- Have fathers invite neighbors who are fathers.
- Invite local media to shoot parts of sessions and to conduct interviews of staff and fathers, with fathers' permission, of course.
- Don't call the program a "Father Absence Program" or something similar. Give your program a catchy name—like the 24/7 Dad® program—that fathers can relate to and would want to attend.
- Gather data on program effectiveness to include in promoting the program and help to draw the attention of local media.

## RETAIN

"It's easier to keep an existing customer happy than to get a new customer." That's a classic business mantra. The same can be said for a fatherhood program. Just because a father comes to the first session



of your program, it doesn't mean he'll come back. So before moving on, we'd like to share the most critical factors in keeping fathers coming back.

Create a father-friendly organization. Creating an organization with a father-friendly environment is the foundation of an effective fatherhood program. Therefore, it's the first step to keeping fathers in your program. Simple strategies, such as hanging posters that show fathers interacting with their

children and family, tell fathers that they're welcome and valued. Please visit our resource store where you can order posters like these.

You can [download our free Father Friendly Check-Up™](#) to assess how well your organization is set up to succeed with a fatherhood program. It will also help you create no- and low-cost strategies to make your organization and its environment even more father friendly!

Contact the father and family prior to the first session. Regardless of the manner in which fathers enter the program, if at all possible call or visit the father and the family before the first session. Introduce yourself, talk about the program a little, and discuss some of the concerns the father might express.

## Here are a few ideas for helping fathers find transportation.

- Select a site for program sessions that's accessible to public transportation.
- Contact the local department of social services, church groups, and volunteer programs for possible transportation assistance (e.g. staff or volunteers can pick up fathers).
- Arrange carpooling among program participants.
- Write a grant to purchase a vehicle staff can use to pick up fathers or to acquire funds that fathers can use for their own transportation (e.g. bus tokens).

Select a convenient, consistent time for each session. Just as scheduling sessions at times that will help recruit fathers, convenient times will maximize the probability of fathers' attending on a regular basis. An early evening start time during the week or an early morning starting time on the weekend, for example, can increase the probability of fathers' attendance. Be aware of times when session times conflict with fathers' other commitments (e.g. sport leagues, self-help support groups, Boy/Girl Scout meetings, church group meetings, etc.) Although eliminating conflicting schedules for every father is unlikely, try to minimize conflicts as best you can.

**Begin and end on time. Your session times must be consistent and predictable. If the starting time is 6:30 p.m., begin at 6:30 p.m., even if only half of the fathers are present. Make every attempt to end the sessions on time. Transportation schedules, baby sitters, children's bedtime, and other factors will be affected should start and end times fluctuate.**



- **Choose a comfortable site for the sessions.** The facility in which you conduct your sessions affects learners. A setting that feels a bit like home promotes a more relaxed group atmosphere than does a traditional classroom setting. Soft or cushioned chairs and a carpeted room with soft lighting (but not with overhead fluorescent lights) are more conducive to learning and sharing, and they make the setting father friendly. Have fathers sit in a circle to promote group cohesion and participation of fathers.

- **Have snacks and beverages.** Unless your organization, the facility in which you will conduct the sessions, or funding source prohibits providing snacks and beverages, see to it that there is plenty to eat and drink. This might sound cliché, but the fastest way to a man’s heart is through his stomach. Facilitators of NFI’s fatherhood programs say providing snacks and beverages is one of the most vital retention and recruitment tools. Snacks and beverages are for fathers to nurture themselves. Fathers with varying degrees of dysfunction often forget or simply don’t know how to slow down and nurture their body. The offering of snacks and beverages teaches fathers the importance of nurturing themselves, and that not everything in life needs to be tense.
- **Make phone numbers and emails of facilitators available to fathers.** Unless prohibited by your organization or funding source, encourage fathers to call, text, or email if they can’t attend a session. Build a sense of responsibility for their participation in the program. Telling them to call, text, or email if they can’t make a session sends the message to fathers that they’re important and their presence is important.
- **The group is not the same without them.** It also creates respect for you and the program among fathers. Tell fathers to enter the phone numbers and email addresses of the facilitators directly into their phone. We recommend sharing only your business phone number and email address, not your personal one. Some fathers can develop an extremely strong attachment to a facilitator such that they impose on the facilitator’s personal life. It’s critical that you maintain a boundary with fathers to prevent this kind of unhealthy attachment from negatively affecting your personal life.
- **Share fathers’ phone numbers and email addresses among group members.** Many fathers often feel that they’re the only ones having difficulty raising their children and establishing a positive relationship with the child’s mother. After they realize that many fathers have the same problems, they feel a sense of relief and community. Unless prohibited by your organization or funding source, enhance these feelings by encouraging fathers to make contact with one another outside of the sessions by phone, text, or email. Contact among fathers outside of the group is a good way to share efforts to apply what fathers learn, attempts at behavior management, or some new self-awareness. Such sharing begins to destroy feelings of isolation and despair that some fathers might experience.
- **Make contact with a father who has missed a session.** If a father is absent from a session and he didn’t contact you ahead of the session to let you know of his absence, contact him after the session or the next day. Tell him that his absence was obvious and that the group missed him. Briefly review what went on during the session, tell him about any assignment for the next session (e.g. if your program involves homework between sessions), and tell him what he can do to make up a missed session.
- **Scheduling a brief review with the father to get him caught up with the program’s concepts is important.** Sessions in NFI’s 24/7 Dad® program, for example, build upon knowledge and skills in previous sessions, so it’s vital that fathers don’t get behind. Scheduling 30 to 45 minutes before the start of the next session to meet with a father who missed the previous session is a sound way to keep him on course. Encourage the father to make contact with other fathers to discuss what he missed.

- **Establish group rules during the first session.** Clear and consistent rules are essential to conducting any group. Fathers will know what to expect (e.g. no cross-talk), and the structure will provide a sense of individual safety and group security, both essential to encourage fathers' return.
- **Provide group leadership.** To gain the respect of fathers, and to cover the content in the program, you must clearly exhibit leadership. Fathers will feel comfortable knowing who is in charge. When fathers learn to count on you as the group's leader, it will be easier for you to hold them accountable to attend regularly. If you will have a co-facilitator, that person must also exhibit leadership.
- **Praise fathers.** Whenever opportunities arise, praise fathers for attending, completing the program assignments, attempting new pro-social and pro-fathering behavior, sharing about themselves (e.g. challenges), etc. Changing specific behaviors and their entire life is often scary for fathers, so praise and encourage them often for their effort and accomplishments.
- **Promote respect and dignity among fathers.** During their time in the program, fathers might experience anxiety and stress about different parts of their lives. They might express their anxiety and stress in a variety of ways, from simple concerns to full-blown crises. They might say things that seem unrealistic or far-fetched. They might give the impression that they have the right solution to addressing their anxiety and stress, even when they don't. If they feel out of control, they might try to take control of the group (e.g. by dominating discussions) in an attempt to exercise some control over their life. They might try to develop an unhealthy connection with a facilitator to provide a positive feeling that counteracts their anxiety and stress. They might use denial, projection, and rationalization as defense mechanisms to prevent you and others from "getting in." Regardless of how fathers express their anxiety and stress, remember this vital point: As a facilitator, your responsibility is to model and promote respect and dignity for all of the fathers. The positive actions you take will go a long way to enhancing cohesion, expressiveness, and support within the group, three group dynamics that will keep fathers coming back.

### A few final tips.



- Don't allow new fathers into the group after the responsible fatherhood program starts, known as "closed enrollment." Research shows that this form of enrollment increases program impact compared to adding fathers at any time during the program, known as "open enrollment."
- Avoid "cutting fathers down," making snide remarks, and taking a father's side during a disagreement he has with another father(s).
- If a father has a caseworker, make contact with the caseworker to discuss how each of you is helping the father and how you can support each other's work with him. Keep in mind, of course, commitments of confidentiality you might be required to maintain.
- If any fathers come from cultures with which you aren't familiar, they might have learned different approaches to fathering and parenting that you might not expect. Be tolerant of these differences, not critical. It's wise to talk with such fathers prior to their entering the program as a way to understand these differences and how they will affect the delivery of your program's content.
- If a father says during group something like, "I'm going to tell you (the facilitator or the group) something if you promise not to tell anyone," make no such promise. Tell the father that you will discuss the issue in private and only after the session ends.
- If the father is a teen, you might have to visit with his parents or the parents of the mother (the grandparents) because one or both teen parents might be living with the grandparents. Inform them about the program and the importance of the father's consistent attendance.

There's a popular saying that we're sure you've heard:

**"Build it and they will come."**



This saying is sometimes true but often times not realistic, especially when it comes to developing and implementing a fatherhood program.

There are many responsible fatherhood programs with great staff, curriculum, and facilities, but many of them lack participants. Logic dictates that there isn't a program without participants to serve. Unfortunately, some staff are very skilled in the business of program operations but don't know how to get fathers in the door.

This section will equip you with the essential tactics you'll need to begin recruiting for your fatherhood program.

Creating a positive image in your community is essential to your program's success. It will help you create a strong referral network. Next to word-of-mouth advertising, a strong referral network is the most important recruitment tactic. Current and potential referral sources will be more likely to trust you and your organization if they continually hear positive stories about the impact of your fatherhood program specifically and organization generally.

Remember that you represent your fatherhood program and organization. You and others associated with your program are often the first impression community members will have about your program. Beyond being professional, here are a few other tips on how you and others associated with your program can help create a positive image in the community.

- Create productive, reciprocal relationships with community organizations. If you ask them to refer fathers to you, ask what you can do for them in return.
- Use child-centered messages. Promote the positive impact and benefits of the program and of involved fathers for children.
- Organize Father's Day events and other celebrations of fatherhood.
- Sponsor events that focus on father-child activities.
- Encourage participants to get involved in the community and promote the fatherhood program.
- Create media opportunities that present the program and fathers in a positive light.
- Become a resource of fatherhood information for the media and other community organizations.
- If there are other fatherhood programs in your community, establish relationships with them to eliminate "turfism."

Given that the foundation for creating a positive image is developing a strong referral network of community organizations, you might wonder where to start. To create such a network, start by identifying a staff person(s) who will be responsible to reach out to, meet with, and maintain given that the foundation for creating a positive image is developing a strong referral network of community organizations, you might wonder where to start. To create such a network, start by identifying a staff person(s) who will be responsible to reach out to, meet with, and maintain regular contact with other community organizations and partners about your program. One-time contact won't generate the long-lasting connections you need.



Start to develop this network before you launch your program. Doing so will give you the nascent network you need to generate initial referrals and increase your success in getting your program off on the right foot. But like most of things we've shared here, success in developing this network takes some planning, follow through, and rigorous management to identify who you will contact, what messages you'll deliver about your program, and how often you'll follow up to remind organizations about it and inform them of program developments (e.g. changes and successes).

## CONNECT WITH YOUR COMMUNITY



Giving fathers and mothers an opportunity to voice their concerns will help alleviate some of their fears. Furthermore, fathers will feel more comfortable walking into the first session knowing they've had some contact with you. If you will have a co-facilitator, they should participate in this visit, too.

Help arrange transportation when necessary. Fathers can't attend the program if they can't get to program sessions. Transportation will be a big problem for some fathers. Lack of a car and the cost of using public transportation, a cab, or a ride

share—not to mention gasoline and parking—can prevent some fathers from attending. It's not unusual to find that the fathers who can't get transportation are the fathers who would profit the most from participating in the program.

**There is a slew of possible community partners. But there are many types of possible partners common to many communities. During the 2017 Texas Fatherhood Summit, which was attended by staff from seasoned fatherhood programs across the state, attendees generated the list below.**

- Social service programs of government agencies at the federal, state, and local levels (city and county)
- Courts, and court-appointed programs
- Workforce commission/career development/workforce centers
- Alcoholics Anonymous and other rehabilitation programs
- State/County home visiting programs
- Healthcare organizations (e.g. pregnancy centers and health clinics)
- Schools, colleges/universities
- Parole officers
- Reentry programs
- WIC/SNAP offices
- Housing authorities
- Community Coalitions and Community Action Agencies
- Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Clubs
- Local University Extension Office(s) that often have daycare or family programs
- Churches
- Head Start and child care Locations
- Parent Teacher Associations (PTA)
- Libraries
- YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs
- Salvation Army

**Develop a list for your own community. Follow these tips for honing that list to the most effective organizations to include in your referral network:**

- Don't bite off more organizations than you can chew. Think about which ones are most likely to serve the kind of father(s) you currently serve or want to serve.
- Pick a few that you think will be a good fit and prioritize them for contact.
- Test your messages and tactics for generating referrals with those few.
- Refine your messages and tactics based on the reaction of those few and the referrals they generate.
- Rinse and repeat until you get it right.
- Expand your referral network after you learn what works and what doesn't.

# INNOVATE

When it comes to recruiting fathers, we encourage you to be innovative in your efforts. Be bold. Implement creative ideas to recruit and retain fathers in your program, create a positive image in the community, and connect with your community.

Don't be afraid to step outside of the box. Look for what other social service organizations with a different focus have done to successfully engage their populations of interest in their programs and services and to influence behavior change. You can even look at the success of marketing efforts by organizations in other industries.

As such, here are two innovative and creative ideas to recruit and retain dads that are based on research in the social sciences about what works to influence behavior change.

## Idea 1: Cues, Triggers, and Nudges

**By understanding cues, triggers and nudges, you can get fathers to habitually participate in a service, workshop, or program as well as help fathers develop the habits of good fathering above and beyond reliance on the resources (e.g. programs/curricula) you might currently use.**



- Cues are stimuli in the environment that lead to developing a routine that is the basis for a habit. On the other side of the routine is a reward. (Cues, routines, and rewards go hand in hand in creating a habit.) Charles Duhigg in *The Power of Habit* describes the research on the power of habits and the role that cues perform in creating them.

- Triggers are, quite simply, reminders to engage in a specific behavior. They help generate more word-of-mouth advertising, which is the most impactful form of advertising for a fatherhood program. Jonah Berger in *Contagious* describes the research on the role that triggers play in keeping behaviors top of mind (e.g. attending a fatherhood program) and in generating word-of-mouth (e.g. advertising a fatherhood program).
- Nudges are small changes in the world around us (environment) that influence us to make better decisions. A nudge is not an economic incentive in which choice is eliminated (e.g. a father who owes child support will go to jail if he doesn't attend a fatherhood program—a hammer, not a nudge).

**Here is a list of ideas for integrating cues, triggers, and nudges that could help you address two major pain points in fatherhood programming—retention of fathers and consistent involvement of fathers in their children's lives. Think of ways in which you could apply these ideas to each pain point.**

- Direct fathers to select an easy, frequent, strong (obvious) cue and a powerful reward for them to engage in the behavior (regular attendance or consistent involvement in their child's life) that doesn't exist in their environment. Choose a cue that is customized to each father's circumstances (e.g. access to his children) and a reward that is, ideally, emotional so that it will stand a good chance of reinforcing the behavior every time he engages in it.
- Help your fatherhood group select a cue and reward that doesn't exist in the fathers' environments and that all of them can implement. Each father can report at the start or end of each session on how well the cue and reward worked in helping him engage in the behavior.
- Help fathers identify bad habits that keep them from engaging in the behavior. This identification will involve naming the cues, routines (behaviors), and rewards for these bad habits. Research shows that you should focus on changing the behavior (routine) when trying to change a bad habit rather than trying to change the cue or reward. This idea involves identifying a competing habit (cue-routine/behavior-reward system) that keeps fathers from regular attendance or consistent involvement in the life of their child. Help fathers see how they can respond to the cue with the behavior you want them to engage in (rather than the competing behavior) and how the new behavior can be reinforced by the same reward.
- In between sessions, call or send email or text reminders to specific fathers or the entire group as a trigger (reminder) to attend the next session or engage in a specific action of involvement in their children's lives. This idea will keep the behavior "top of mind." Consider asking each father at the end of his time with the group, for example, to identify a specific action he will take to be involved in his child's life before the group sees him again. Send an email or text reminder, one or more times, to take that action before the group sees him again.
- Create a "buzz" around your program by getting graduates (alumni) to generate "ongoing" word-of-mouth advertising by talking with potential participants about how much they loved/benefited from it.

- Link the behavior to a frequent trigger that already exists in a fathers’ environments. Consider what fathers do on an everyday or almost everyday basis. Could you, for example, create a simple reminder card or magnet fathers could attach to their bathroom mirror so that every time they shave they’re reminded to attend the next program session?
- Link the behavior to a trigger that happens near where the behavior will or should take place. If fathers receive a service or participate in another program at the same location as your program, could you include a reminder as part of that other service or program to attend the next part or session of your fatherhood program?
- A nudge can involve a financial incentive as long as it doesn’t limit the choices available to fathers. Some organizations have found, for example, that fathers who owe child support are more likely to attend a fatherhood program when the organization works with courts to reduce child support orders (e.g. make them more affordable) or eliminate some arrears in exchange for participation in the program.
- Consider non-financial nudges that have been used in other social-service programs or fields and see how they work with fathers. You could try journaling for instance. Encourage fathers in your program to journal daily or weekly about their attempts to become more involved dads. (Consider assigning journaling as “homework” between sessions.) Some job-placement programs in the United Kingdom have found that when participants journal about their experiences trying to find jobs that they’re more persistent in their efforts to land jobs. You could also implement a checklist of father-involvement behaviors tailored for your group (e.g. a group of non-custodial fathers) or each father. Researchers in healthcare have found that using checklists in U.S. operating rooms that include procedures vital to reducing the risk of patient deaths actually reduce deaths. Similarly, fathers who use a father-involvement checklist might become more involved than they would otherwise. (NFI integrated such a checklist into the third edition of the 24/7 Dad® program.)

## Idea 2: Planning Prompts

Sometimes simple changes can have a big impact. Such is the case with planning prompts, which involve prompting people to plan when they’ll follow through on and engage in a beneficial behavior. Integrating this research could make you more effective in your work with fathers.

The reason that planning prompts work is the desire for humans to remain consistent with their commitments (i.e. to stick to their commitments). Think about when, during a political campaign, one politician running against another accuses his or her opponent of “flip-flopping.” The accused typically denies flip-flopping. The media jump all over this development in a political campaign and unwittingly pour gas on the fire by looking for evidence that the accused politician has changed her or his mind “as the political winds blow,” even in the face of evidence that should have led to a change in position.



Why is it that this tactic is so often applied in political campaigns? The reason is people want their politicians to be consistent with their commitments. Moreover, the public nature of politics makes changing position even more difficult for a politician. As a result, the media and public tend to ignore cases in which there is clear evidence that a politician should have changed his or her position. Simply accusing an opponent of flip-flopping is all a politician needs to do to discredit an opponent.

The good news is the need for people to be consistent with their commitments can be leveraged for good as well as ill, especially when commitments are made public.

**Here are a few ideas on how to apply this to your work with fathers.**

- Direct fathers to fill out reminder cards for future sessions. It's important that they fill out the cards. Don't fill them out for the fathers. Include the date and time of the next interaction. (NFI made such cards available for use with its programs to help facilitators increase retention of participants.)
- Direct dads to fill out the reminder cards in front of other dads to make their commitment public—that is at the end of each session. To increase the likelihood that dads will maintain their commitment to attend the next session, assign dads to pairs of “accountability partners” in which the fathers in each pair call each another ahead of the next session to remind each other to attend.
- Create a catchy pledge of commitment to attend that the fathers recite at the end of each interaction. Just a few sentences should do. Reciting such a pledge will make each father's commitment public. (NFI integrated such pledges into the 24/7 Dad® and InsideOut Dad® programs.)
- Use a checklist—a kind of planning prompt—to help you prepare for every session. Develop two checklists. The first one will help you prepare for any session, regardless of content. It should contain the same things you need to do for every session (e.g. what to communicate to fathers before the session; how you will communicate it; and how far in advance of the session you need to communicate it; room set up; and materials needed). The second should contain the things you need to do that are specific to a session (e.g. what to communicate to the fathers that is unique about the session, materials

needed unique to that session, and engaging an expert to deliver content unique to that session). NFI uses such checklists in its programs to help facilitators prepare for every session and for each unique session. The programs contain a checklist of pre-session procedures that apply to every single session and a checklist for each session that contains unique procedures for a session. Using these checklists helps facilitators run the programs smoothly (e.g. they have less to worry about knowing they've adequately prepared and can focus on facilitation).

- Help arrange transportation to program sessions.
- Choose a comfortable training site.
- Keep the fee for participation low or free.
- Have fathers invite neighbors who are fathers.
- Invite local media to shoot parts of sessions and to conduct interviews of staff and fathers, with fathers' permission, of course.
- Don't call the program a "Father Absence Program" or something similar. Give your program a catchy name—like the 24/7 Dad® program—that fathers can relate to and would want to attend.
- Gather data on program effectiveness to include in promoting the program and help to draw the attention of local media.

**Would you like our help making your fatherhood program a success?  
Contact us to discuss a Father Friendly Check-Up™ or many of the other  
fatherhood resources we have available for support.**