Strengthening Responsible Fatherhood Programs through Research and Evaluation: PACT and FaMLE Cross-Site

Texas Fatherhood Summit
Austin, TX
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Robin Dion
Overview

• Parents and Children Together (PACT)
  – Focus on selected grantees from ACF’s 2011 cohort of Responsible Fatherhood programs

• Selected Findings from PACT Implementation and Qualitative Studies

• Fatherhood and Marriage Local Evaluation (FaMLE) and Cross-Site Project
  – Focus on ACF’s entire 2015 cohort of Responsible Fatherhood grantees
The Parents and Children Together Evaluation – PACT
PACT: A Multi-Component Evaluation

• Qualitative Study
  – How do fathers view and carry out their roles as parents, providers, and partners?

• Implementation Study
  – How were PACT programs designed and implemented?

• Impact Study
  – Do programs improve outcomes for enrolled fathers?

• Study of Hispanic Fatherhood Programs
  – How are programs for Hispanic fathers designed and received?
PACT: Robust Study Methods

• Mixed-method implementation study
  – Staff interviews and web survey
  – Enrollment and participation data
  – Focus groups with participating fathers

• In-depth 2-hour interviews with participating fathers
  – Obtain rich and nuanced detail about fathers’ lives
  – Complement what is learned through other methods

• Experimental impact evaluation
  – Baseline survey; random assignment to program or control
  – Twelve month follow-up survey with fathers in both groups
  – Administrative data on fathers from NDNH
**PACT: Current Status**

- Four RF programs in the implementation, qualitative, and impact study
  - Connections to Success in Kansas City MO and Kansas City KS
  - Fathers’ Support Center in St. Louis MO
  - Goodwill-Easter Seals Minnesota in Minneapolis and St. Paul MN
  - Urban Ventures in Minneapolis MN

- Study enrollment ended February 2015 with 5,522 fathers

- Baseline surveys complete; currently completing 12-month followup; 71% response rate so far

- 87 fathers participated in first wave of in-depth interviews; 59 in second wave; third wave this spring

- Implementation data for full period of evaluation collected; findings from initial period being updated
Who are the Fathers that Enrolled in PACT?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Overall</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average age (years)</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black, non-Hispanic</td>
<td>81%</td>
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<tr>
<td>HS Diploma or GED</td>
<td>69%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recent paid work</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal conviction</td>
<td>73%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unstable housing</td>
<td>54%</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Structure</th>
<th>Overall</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of children (avg)</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children by multiple mothers</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal child support order</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living with any of their children</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spent time with any of their children in past month</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Note: Programs began PACT intake between 12/9/12 and 2/13/13.
PACT Qualitative Study: Fathers’ Perspectives
Selected PACT Qualitative Study Findings

• Fathers expressed intense desire to be a positive influence in their children’s lives

• Appreciated parenting workshops--early family instability and fatherlessness left men unprepared

• Fathers inspired and motivated by staff who had overcome similar challenges

• Most common barrier was limited access to children due to contentious relationships with mothers

• Effect of past criminal records on employability and large child support arrearages made financial support of children challenging
Implications from Qualitative Study

• Strengthen efforts to improve fathers’ access to children
  – Focus relationship services on co-parenting
  – Seek to resolve co-parenting conflicts between parents, such as through mediation
  – Help fathers secure legal parenting time orders
• Augment existing employment services, assist with expunging criminal records when possible
• Increase collaboration with child support and court system to modify orders, reduce arrearages
• Expand and intensify supplementary services (mental health, housing, drug treatment, legal assistance)
PACT Implementation Study of Four Fatherhood Programs
Selected PACT Implementation Study Findings

• All programs went beyond the three core services to include content on “personal/father development”

• All programs partnered with local child support, but assistance ranged from very limited to extensive

• Initial program engagement relatively high, but retention best in cohort-based programs
  – Standalone relationship skills workshops for fathers had the least take-up

• Setting performance targets, using data to monitor progress helped programs enroll and engage fathers
Implications from Implementation Study

• To improve take-up of relationship skills component, increase accessibility and relevance of content.

• To maximize participation, carefully consider service delivery structure:
  – Open entry may not result in more participation because of availability bias.
  – Offer services in larger time blocks.

• Working closely and creatively with child support agencies may promote positive outcomes.

• Reducing child support arrears may be a powerful incentive for program participation.
Published and Forthcoming PACT Reports

Published: RF Only

• “In Their Own Voices” ... report on Wave 1 of Qualitative Study, June 2015

• “Design and Implementation of RF Programs” ... report on first wave of data on RF programs, September, 2015

• “H-PACT” ... report on a study of RF programs serving Hispanic men, November 2015

• Practitioners’ Brief on Responsible Fatherhood programming, April 2015

Forthcoming: RF Only

• Three research briefs on findings from Qualitative Study Wave 2

• Research brief on quality of program implementation

• Report integrating findings from all waves of implementation and qualitative study

• Report on impacts of RF programs (estimated July 2017)

• Policy forum, webinar, podcasts
For More Information about PACT

• Contact Robin Dion at Mathematica Policy Research
  – rdion@mathematica-mpr.com

• For published reports see

ACF website

Mathematica’s website
Family and Marriage Local Evaluation and Cross-Site Project
FaMLE Cross-Site Project

- Supports all Responsible Fatherhood (RF) and Healthy Marriage (HM) grantees awarded 2015 ACF funding

- Key activities
  - Develop comprehensive set of evidence-informed performance measures (inputs, outputs, and outcomes)
  - Design and implement a new management information system to facilitate data collection by grantees
  - Provide training and technical support as grantees collect and report data
  - Support grantees as they conduct “local” evaluations
  - Conduct cross-site analyses of RF/HM grantees’ program design, implementation, and outcomes
FaMLE Cross-Site Website

www.famlecross-site.info

- Designed specifically for OFA’s RF and HM grant applicants
  - Program design
  - Evaluation design
  - Performance measures
  - nFORM prototype
- Questions to consider
- Tips
- Links to other resources