



Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) Collaborative on
Engaging Non-Custodial Parents:
Change Package

PDSA Collaborative Change Package: Identifying, Locating, Contacting, and Engaging Non-custodial Parents

This Change Package provides county PDSA collaborative participants with several resource-based ideas on small changes to child welfare practice to improve practices related to identifying, locating, contacting, and engaging non-custodial parents. These change ideas reflect both the input of the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Advisory Committee and information compiled from a review of best practices related to worker visits from the child welfare academic literature and professional organizations. The CQI Advisory Committee includes participants from approximately 13 county child welfare agencies and one tribal child welfare agency as well as DCF staff.

During 2021, the CQI Advisory Committee engaged in planning exercises to develop a problem statement, collaborative mission, and goal statements to make improvements in Wisconsin practice related to non-custodial parents. These planning exercises included analysis of the Wisconsin administrative data related to non-custodial parents, review of the academic literature related to non-custodial parents, root cause analysis, and a causal chain exercise. The result of this work follows.

Definition of Non-custodial Parent (NCP): A parent who does not have placement of, live in the home with, or have legal physical custody of their child(ren)/youth.

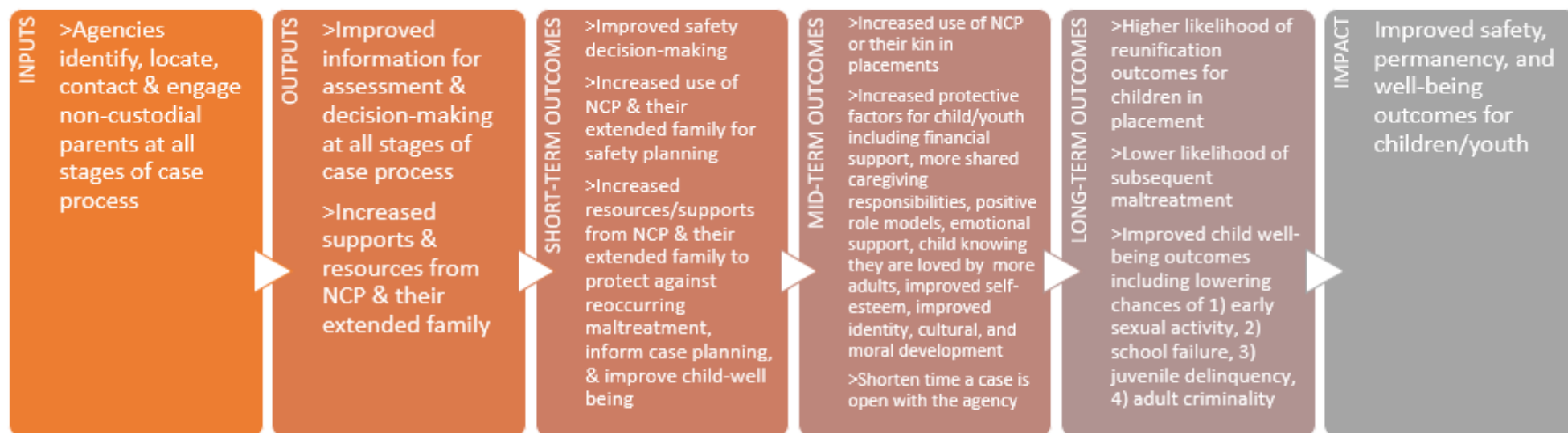
Problem Statement: Non-custodial parents (NCP) can provide valuable assessment and case planning information and physical and emotional supports for children. However, systems, standards, processes, and documentation are either missing, unclear, or inconsistently applied in identifying, finding, and engaging NCP early in the process and over the life of the case. Lack of locating and engaging the NCP can negatively impact case work; negative impacts may include incomplete information-gathering, missed supports/ resources for safety planning, delayed permanency or reunification, and overall decreased child well-being.

The mission of the 2022 & 2023 Plan-Do-Study-Act Collaboratives is to transform agency culture and practices to prioritize early, persistent, and continual efforts to identify, locate, contact, and engage non-custodial parents during the agency's involvement with the family to:

- increase natural supports and resources to children and families,
- benefit child and youth well-being in identity and moral development and cultural connections,
- provide resources for increased Child Protective Services in-home safety plans or Youth Justice evidence-based in-home services or interventions,
- increase likelihood that the child or youth remains with family through facilitating timely permanence with a custodial or non-custodial parent or placement with kin (congruent with Family First legislation), and improve county and/or tribal agency outcomes by engaging the non-custodial parent in child(ren), youth, and/or families' lives.

Exhibit 1. Theory of Connection Between Identifying, Locating, Contacting, and Engaging Non-custodial Parents and Improved Child Outcomes

Theory of Change



Assumptions: All work functions (Access, IA, Ongoing, Youth Justice) are involved in this issue as identification and engagement of NCP is necessary over the life of the case including repeated efforts.

External Factors: Cross-system collaboration with child welfare and the legal and child support systems is necessary as the NCP may or may not be adjudicated or paying child support.

**Outcome indicators are based on literature review findings concerning identifying and engaging non-custodial fathers in the lives of their children. Information about engaging non-custodial mothers and other relatives (but not the non-custodial father) was not readily available in academic research.*

PDSA Collaborative Change Goals

Three themes were identified by the CQI Advisory Committee as the top contributing factors that must be addressed during the PDSA Collaborative to achieve the Collaborative mission.

CONTRIBUTING FACTOR 1: There is a lack of clear and consistent expectations about how to identify, locate, contact, and engage the non-custodial parent (NCP) during the entirety of agency involvement with the family.

GOAL #1: PDSA teams will apply consistent, realistic expectations for Access, Initial Assessment, Ongoing, and Youth Justice Intake and Ongoing workers on how and when to identify, locate, contact, and engage non-custodial parents (NCP).

- a. Child welfare professionals will demonstrate the importance of incorporating the non-custodial parent in assessment and planning to increase support for children by prioritizing consistent, persistent, and continual efforts to contact and engage NCP early and often during the agency's involvement with the family.
- b. Child welfare professionals will have guidance and/or tools to clarify when and how to identify, locate, contact, and engage non-custodial parents as a part of their standard workflow that is appropriate to the family situation.
- c. Guidance/tools will also clarify appropriate next steps for including the non-custodial parent in case planning to support positive child outcomes.

CONTRIBUTING FACTOR 2: Child welfare agencies lack measurement and accountability systems to track consistent and continual efforts to identify, locate, contact, and engage non-custodial parents during the agency's involvement with the family.

GOAL #2: PDSA teams will use measurement systems to increase accountability for continual efforts to contact and engage non-custodial parents during the agency's involvement with the family.

- a. Measurement systems will improve child welfare professionals' communication, information-sharing, and decision-making when working with non-custodial parents.
- b. Supervisors will consistently use data in supervision and training to create a culture where non-custodial parents are consistently identified, located, contacted, and engaged.
- c. Teams will explore ways to use measurement systems to identify cases where engaging non-custodial parents improved child/family outcomes and/or improved agency workload.

CONTRIBUTING FACTOR 3: Identifying, locating, contacting, and engaging non-custodial parents may create stressors for child welfare professionals as they balance their workload with concerns about conflictual parent relationships and well-being of all people involved (e.g., child(ren), both parents).

GOAL: Child welfare professionals will increase confidence in navigating conflictual and/or complicated relationships for cases with non-custodial parents and their relatives.

- a. Supervisors and agency leadership will provide supports and encouragement to child welfare professionals to decrease their concerns when engaging non-custodial parents/relatives.
- b. Child welfare professionals will have guidance and support on how to contact and engage non-custodial parents when concerns about conflictual relationships and well-being of case participants arise.
- c. Child welfare professionals will be able to set appropriate, beneficial boundaries with non-custodial parents and custodial parents that improve child outcomes.
- d. Child welfare professionals will improve communication about the child welfare role and case planning/progress to custodial parents and non-custodial parents/relatives.

Table 1, below, provides PDSA collaborative partners with a list of potential change ideas and resources. These examples may be used to assist PDSA Collaborative partners in supplementing their existing ideas on how to improve practice. Please note that additional readings and references are also available on the PDSA Collaborative Extranet for participating teams.

Table 1. Resources for Identifying, Locating, Contacting, and Engaging Non-Custodial Parents in Child Protection and Youth Justice

Category	Resource Description	Resource Location
Access	<p>Chippewa County’s PDSA Team created a Non-Custodial Parent and Relative Guide and NCP Location Resources document for search engines to use at Access</p> <p>Best Practice for Engaging Fathers: A Toolkit for Child Welfare Services Staff (Ohio Department of Job and Family Services).</p>	<p>Chippewa - Non-Custodial Parent and Relative Guide and NCP Location Resources found here: https://wcpds.wisc.edu/organizational-development/organizational-process-improvement/plan-do-study-act-pdsa-collaborative/pdsa-examples/</p> <p>Ohio Best Practice Guide for Engaging Fathers found here: https://uwmadison.box.com/s/s6yjghce7tkyjnqneqowy8e167got6c8</p>

Category	Resource Description	Resource Location
	<p>Strategies for Engaging Fathers: Screening and Referral (pages 9-10).</p> <p>Skills and Strategies for Working with Fathers (Georgia Division of Family and Children Services). Diligent Search: Online Search Engines (Appendix page B4)</p>	<p>Skills and Strategies for Working with Fathers found here: https://uwmadison.box.com/s/kzvc4oisa3ir0sp730dspwk5d4klc4up</p>
<p>Initial Assessment</p>	<p>Brown County PDSA team developed: Non-Custodial Parent Conversation Guide for IA, Case Transition Request and Checklist, CPS Definitions, NCP Search Tool Resource Document, Non-Custodial Dad Incarcerated Parent Letter, Non-Custodial Dad Non-Incarcerated Parent Letter</p> <p>Chippewa County’s PDSA Team created a Non-Custodial Parent and Relative Guide and NCP Location Resources and Non-Custodial Parent Staff Onboarding Checklist</p> <p>Best Practice for Engaging Fathers: A Toolkit for Child Welfare Services Staff (Ohio Department of Job and Family Services). Strategies for Engaging Fathers: Assessment/Investigation (pages 11-12).</p> <p>Skills and Strategies for Working with Fathers (Georgia Division of Family and Children Services). Strategies for Enlisting Mothers’ Support (page 21-22) and Reducing Barriers with Mothers Handout</p>	<p>Brown County PDSA team’s NCP tools found here: https://wcpds.wisc.edu/organizational-development/organizational-process-improvement/plan-do-study-act-pdsa-collaborative/pdsa-examples/</p> <p>Chippewa County PDSA team’s NCP tools found here: https://wcpds.wisc.edu/organizational-development/organizational-process-improvement/plan-do-study-act-pdsa-collaborative/pdsa-examples/</p> <p>Ohio Best Practice Guide for Engaging Fathers found here: https://uwmadison.box.com/s/s6yjghce7tkyjngneqowy8e167got6c8</p> <p>Skills and Strategies for Working with Fathers found here: https://uwmadison.box.com/s/kzvc4oisa3ir0sp730dspwk5d4klc4up https://uwmadison.box.com/s/fk6veh4fzi5tfu0wcgcgxu289ut7lseh</p>

Category	Resource Description	Resource Location
	<p>Best Practice for Engaging Fathers: A Toolkit for Child Welfare Services Staff (Ohio Department of Job and Family Services). Strategies for Engaging Fathers: <i>Strategies for Enlisting Support from Mothers (page 27).</i></p> <p>Skills and Strategies for Working with Fathers (Georgia Division of Family and Children Services). <i>Interviewing Fathers (page 31-41)</i></p> <p>Best Practice for Engaging Fathers: A Toolkit for Child Welfare Services Staff (Ohio Department of Job and Family Services). Strategies for Engaging Fathers: <i>Sample Absent Parent Search Checklist (pages 24-26).</i></p>	<p>Ohio Best Practice Guide for Engaging Fathers found here: https://uwmadison.box.com/s/s6vjghce7tkyjinqeqowy8e167got6c8</p> <p>Skills and Strategies for Working with Fathers found here: https://uwmadison.box.com/s/kzvc4oisa3ir0sp730dspwk5d4klc4up</p> <p>Ohio Best Practice Guide for Engaging Fathers found here: https://uwmadison.box.com/s/s6vjghce7tkyjinqeqowy8e167got6c8</p>
<p>Ongoing & Youth Justice</p>	<p>Brown County PDSA team developed: Case Transition Request and Checklist, CPS Definitions, NCP Search Tool Resource Document, Non-Custodial Dad Incarcerated Parent Letter, Non-Custodial Dad Non-Incarcerated Parent Letter</p> <p>Chippewa County’s PDSA Team created a Non-Custodial Parent and Relative Guide and NCP Location Resources and Non-Custodial Parent Staff Onboarding Checklist</p> <p>Eau Claire County’s PDSA Team created: Case Transition Checklist and NCP Engaging NCP – Tracking and Monitoring and NCP Review Forms</p>	<p>Brown County PDSA team’s NCP tools found here: https://wcpds.wisc.edu/organizational-development/organizational-process-improvement/plan-do-study-act-pdsa-collaborative/pdsa-examples/</p> <p>Chippewa County PDSA team’s NCP tools found here: https://wcpds.wisc.edu/organizational-development/organizational-process-improvement/plan-do-study-act-pdsa-collaborative/pdsa-examples/</p> <p>Eau Claire County PDSA team’s NCP tools found here: https://wcpds.wisc.edu/organizational-development/organizational-process-improvement/plan-do-study-act-pdsa-collaborative/pdsa-examples/</p>

Category	Resource Description	Resource Location
	<p>Best Practice for Engaging Fathers: A Toolkit for Child Welfare Services Staff (Ohio Department of Job and Family Services). Strategies for Engaging Fathers: <i>Ongoing Protectives Services (pages 13-16).</i></p> <p>Skills and Strategies for Working with Fathers (Georgia Division of Family and Children Services). Working with Men on Paternity Issues (page 17)</p> <p>Engaging Nonresident Fathers in Child Welfare Cases: A Guide for CASAs. <i>Questions & considerations for fathers who want to be placement or nonplacement resource (pages 13-24.</i></p> <p>A guide for father involvement in systems of care. Washington, DC: Technical Assistance Partnership for Child and Family Mental Health. <i>Supporting father involvement in service planning (pages 7-8)</i></p> <p><i>Best Practice for Father-Child Visits in the Child Welfare System</i> (National Quality Improvement Center for Non-Resident Fathers).</p> <p><i>Checklist for Father Involvement Efforts In Family Teaming Meetings</i> (California Department of Social Services).</p>	<p>Ohio Best Practice Guide for Engaging Fathers found here: https://uwmadison.box.com/s/s6vjghce7tkyjngneqowy8e167got6c8</p> <p>Skills and Strategies for Working with Fathers found here: https://uwmadison.box.com/s/kzvc4oisa3ir0sp730dspwk5d4klc4up</p> <p>Engaging Nonresident Fathers in Child Welfare Guide (CASA) found here: https://uwmadison.box.com/s/b8629siii25waydei677zkk14585ubmd</p> <p>Technical Assistance Partnership Guide for Father Involvement in System of care found here: https://uwmadison.box.com/s/ob5plgd273hwbs3mmbu7i9i5p8bqv6rg</p> <p>Best Practice for Father-Child Visits found here: https://uwmadison.box.com/s/wi48iz8p754sb183yj6cdl73hr5lmfqd</p> <p>Best Practice for Father-Child Visits found here: https://uwmadison.box.com/s/isqjmc1bto7q9ecrmt4urlm9rgxgpm1p</p>

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	<p>Blended Perspectives Team Meeting Facilitator Agenda & Decision-Making Team Meeting Facilitator Agenda. (Restoring the Network Through Family Find & Engagement Curriculum – WCWPDS).</p> <p>Father Well-being Screening Tool (Ohio Department of Job and Family Services). Screening tool assessing mental and physical health of fathers.</p>	<p>WCWPDS Team Meeting Agendas found here: https://uwmadison.box.com/s/c1gfx3yig2yocj121hkah75odw3jzqt6</p> <p>Father Well-being Screening Tool found here: https://uwmadison.box.com/s/ib0vzkwbuo0nvn19gakk504mzfb7mw2</p>
<p>Direct practice strategies for identifying/locating non-resident parents and their kin</p>	<p>Genogram resources (a picture of person’s family relationships and history):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>User-guide for creating a genogram in eWISACWIS.</i> 2. Training video: <i>Genograms: When a picture is worth a thousand words.</i> <p>Napa County Family Find Search Sheet. (Napa County, CA). Example of a checklist tool that a worker could use to gather and document family find and engagement efforts.</p> <p>Tree of Life Tool Handout and Training Video. (Restoring the Network Through Family Find & Engagement Curriculum – WCWPDS). Activity that focuses on strengthening child’s relationships with their own history, culture, and any significant people and places.</p> <p>Questions to Assess for Connection. (Restoring the Family Through Family Find & Engagement Curriculum – WCWPDS).</p>	<p>eWISACWIS user guide for genograms found here: https://uwmadison.box.com/s/h24j27j8e4nhqysc1wre13fwsorxqo3b</p> <p>Genograms: When a picture is worth a thousand words available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F1tcrVdIYpw</p> <p>Napa County Family Find Search Sheet found here: https://uwmadison.box.com/s/kzvc4oisa3ir0sp730dspwk5d4klc4up</p> <p>Tree of Life Handout found here: https://uwmadison.box.com/s/7gtqp12pm3oe5fx4zpkufrdud0b63iff</p> <p>Tree of Life Video found here: https://uwmadison.box.com/s/7pragbwvajktxoyije5idnwutfrl495f</p> <p>Questions to Assess for Connection found here: https://uwmadison.box.com/s/y9t8wqdteo72t0pxfbhbr8mhe364fr5o</p>

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	<p>Mobility Mapping Handout and Training Video. (Restoring the Network Through Family Find & Engagement Curriculum – WCWPDS). Facilitated process that allows children to rediscover important people and places from their past.</p> <p>Connectedness Map (Wisconsin Department of Children and Families). Used to clarify the connections or lack of connections of a child by showing family members and others connected to a child. Caseworkers view the Connectedness Map as less intrusive than mobility mapping.</p>	<p>Mobility Mapping Handout found here: https://uwmadison.box.com/s/k7uekvfh2sr7kfae1y9glcfxetgyflt4</p> <p>Mobility Mapping Video 1: https://uwmadison.box.com/s/0llvn4flxx9il777mm1r1gu5nowgvwnx</p> <p>Mobility Mapping Video 2: https://uwmadison.box.com/s/u3hh60q9xnbt39ze5oa429bz5rk6izuf</p> <p>Mobility Mapping Video 3: https://uwmadison.box.com/s/5bicj8krmaofi1s4u73382mxeu266trm</p> <p>Connected Map Instructions found here: https://uwmadison.box.com/s/zfha49dmaacxf43di339jjq0kgnz5731</p>
<p>Resources for Non-Resident Fathers/Parents</p>	<p>Bringing Back the Dad’s Model Curriculum. Tip Sheets for What Dad’s Can Do With…Babies, Toddlers, 4-6 year-olds, 7-12 year-olds, and teens. (pages 30-36)</p> <p>Tip for Dads: Advice to Non-Residential Fathers. Quality Improvement Center on Non-Resident Fathers.</p> <p>Best Practice for Engaging Fathers: A Toolkit for Child Welfare Services Staff (Ohio Department of Job and Family Services). Strategies for Engaging Fathers: Sample Community Resource/Referral Packet for Fathers (Dad’s Packet (pages 20-22)).</p>	<p>Bringing Back the Dad’s Model Curriculum found here: https://uwmadison.box.com/s/omcaf1s5409cfpfn3q9ugew7zvjr6xn</p> <p>Tips for Dads found here: https://uwmadison.box.com/s/dnurbl79p0f6pjugton1gc9u2x9e3aj8</p> <p>Ohio Best Practice Guide for Engaging Fathers found here: https://uwmadison.box.com/s/s6vjghce7tkyjngneqowy8e167got6c8</p>

Category	Resource Description	Resource Location
	<p>Skills and Strategies for Working with Fathers (Georgia Division of Family and Children Services). Resources for Fathers (Appendices pages C14-C24). Includes fatherhood tip sheets, activity examples, questions to know your child, long distance activities, tips from a father in prison.</p> <p>Engaging and Supporting Native Fathers. (Capacity Building Center for Tribes, 2016).</p> <p>For Dads (resources and links to topics of interest) National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse.</p> <p>Just in Time Parenting (newsletter series about child development by age).</p> <p>24-7 Dad (National Fatherhood Initiative). 24/7 Dad is a voluntary, comprehensive fatherhood program designed to help men improve their parenting skills and fathering knowledge. (Curriculum cost ~ \$700)</p> <p>Nurturing Fathers Program: a 13-week training course designed to teach parenting and nurturing skills to men (curriculum cost ~ \$400-1000).</p>	<p>Skills and Strategies for Working with Fathers found here: https://uwmadison.box.com/s/kzvc4oisa3ir0sp730dspwk5d4klc4up</p> <p>Engaging and Supporting Native Fathers found here: https://uwmadison.box.com/s/mcs2owjnb8peugs2wpff55pl9hzzksa0</p> <p>For Dads resources found here: https://www.fatherhood.gov/for-dads</p> <p>Just in Time Parenting newsletters found here: https://jitp.info/</p> <p>24-7 Dad curriculum available for purchase here: https://store.fatherhood.org/complete-program-kit-24-7-dad-am-3rd-ed/#tab-4</p> <p>Nurturing Fathers Program curriculum available for purchase here: https://nurturingfathers.com/</p>
<p>Legal/Court Resources</p>	<p>Best Practice for Engaging Fathers: A Toolkit for Child Welfare Services Staff (Ohio Department of Job and Family Services). Strategies for Engaging Fathers: Legal Considerations (page 17).</p>	<p>Ohio Best Practice Guide for Engaging Fathers found here: https://uwmadison.box.com/s/s6vjghce7tkyjinqeqowy8e167got6c8</p>

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	<p>Bringing Back the Dad’s Model Curriculum. Questions for Ask Your Lawyer and Tips for Court (pages 91-93).</p> <p>Bringing Back the Dad’s Model Curriculum. Understanding the Juvenile Court Process (pages 107-114).</p> <p>Best Practice for Engaging Fathers: A Toolkit for Child Welfare Services Staff (Ohio Department of Job and Family Services). Strategies for Engaging Fathers: Sample Incarcerated Parent Introduction Letter (page 28-29).</p>	<p>Bringing Back the Dad’s Model Curriculum found here: https://uwmadison.box.com/s/omcaf1s5409cfpfng3q9ugew7zvjr6xn</p> <p>Bringing Back the Dad’s Model Curriculum found here: https://uwmadison.box.com/s/omcaf1s5409cfpfng3q9ugew7zvjr6xn</p> <p>Ohio Best Practice Guide for Engaging Fathers found here: https://uwmadison.box.com/s/s6vjghce7tkyjngneqowy8e167got6c8</p>
Agency-wide	<p>Father engagement specialist (Allegheny County, PA). A staff member available to work with the father one-on-one to help support closer relationships with their children, families, and communities.</p> <p>Bringing Back the Dad’s Model Curriculum. Facilitator Guide for Hosting Dad Support Groups.</p> <p>Father Interview Questions (to understand their view of the agency). (Appendix pages 638-639.) An Appraisal of Father’s Perspectives on Fatherhood and Barriers to Their Child Welfare Involvement (Coakley, 2013).</p>	<p>Father Engagement Specialists information: https://www.alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/Programs-Services/Children-Families/Especially-for-Fathers.aspx</p> <p>Father Engagement Specialist brochure: https://uwmadison.box.com/s/4nrnftmkk48kctdn94xvt3kcjy7h3dak</p> <p>Bringing Back the Dad’s Model Curriculum found here: https://uwmadison.box.com/s/omcaf1s5409cfpfng3q9ugew7zvjr6xn</p> <p>Coakley - Barriers to Father Involvement found here: https://uwmadison.box.com/s/bf1v2bu7xeqkxncqvxkonjwh7thl8qs</p>

Category	Resource Description	Resource Location
	<p>PIP TIPS: Involving Fathers. Minnesota Department of Human Services and County Social Service Agencies. Primer of child welfare agency-wide best practice approaches to involving fathers.</p> <p>Social Worker Training Curriculum: Engaging the Non-Resident Father (National Quality Improvement Center on Non-resident Fathers and the Child Welfare System). Has case studies and training examples about engaging non-resident parents in practice situations.</p>	<p>PIP TIPS: Involving Fathers found here: https://uwmadison.box.com/s/u21woh74eo7d6nmcke2keybhi8gxzrht</p> <p>SW Training Curriculum on Engaging Non-resident Fathers found here: https://uwmadison.box.com/s/02t3omenqqgdjetvaum0lflg8yxbt1o1</p>