

HRSA's HV-ImpACT (Home Visiting Improvement Center Action Team)

Webinar: Engaging Fathers in MIECHV

October 15, 2019

>> Hello and welcome to HV-ImpACT's webinar on maximizing father engagement to improve outcomes within MIECHV. We will be talking today for the next hour with several national experts and other folks representing their MIECHV programs for their states and territory. So we're really eager to have you with us today and get started.

As you enter the room, if you could please introduce yourself in the chatbox to the left of the slide deck. It will give us a chance to know who is with us today. You can say your names, your position, or your role within your organization, and then what organization you're representing. I am Karen Cairone. I'm up in the left-hand corner. I'm the universal technical assistance manager for HV-ImpACT and again very happy to have you with us today.

If at any point during the session you have technical issues, there is a technical support box beneath the slide deck that you can type in your questions, and we will have one of our support team get back to you. You'll also see a file share pod. This has the slide deck that we will be presenting today. So at any point you can gather those slides and upload them and have them for yourself in a PDF form.

Finally, we've asked you to call into the audio today. The number is there that you can see. Some of you may prefer just to listen through your computer speakers, but if you're having any audio issues or any technical issues, please do reach out to our support team. All right with that, we're going to start our webinar.

So just a reminder, if you're having any kind of issues, you might want to mute your computer speakers if you're having an echo. You can use the technical support box. We will use the chat throughout the session to introduce ourselves and also to use for comments and questions. If you have a resource or something you want to share with fellow participants, please feel free to use that in the chatbox as well.

And I will remind you that we are recording this webinar, and it will be on HRSA's website typically two to three weeks after the session ends. We will be able to put the 508 compliant transcripts and the recording of this webinar up on the site for you to view. So if you have colleagues who are not able to make it today, you can then share the link with them at that time.

We really do value your feedback. So when you leave the session today, you'll have a reminder to fill in an evaluation. We ask that you would take a few minutes to please give us feedback so we can continually improve our webinars for other MIECHV awardees.

Our objectives for this session today we have an action packed hour. We will go through and review the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluations research on father engagement in MIECHV programs. We'll then hear from the national fatherhood initiative on the importance of engaging fathers and how this impacts various aspects in MIECHV programs. And then we'll learn about MIECHV awardee's successes. We'll talk to Texas and hear some of their interesting practices. We'll talk to Maryland and we also will be able to hear from American Samoa today.

I want to point out that unfortunately, we will not be able to have West Virginia present today. There was a last-minute emergency that prevented them from being on the call, but you will still see the slides that they were planning to share in the PDF slide deck in the file share pod. If you have any questions, please do follow up, and we'll make sure that we connect you to ask questions of the West Virginia folks as well.

Our presenters for today's call we have Dr. Amanda Coleman. She is the senior social science research analyst with the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, also representing the Administration for Children and Families in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. We have Christopher Brown us with today. He is President of the National Fatherhood Initiative. We have Kaeley Benson, Research Director, child and Family Research Partnership from the University of Texas at Austin. We have Jarvis Patterson-Askew. He is the Data and Fiscal Program Administrator, Office of Family and Community Health Services of the Maryland Department of Health Prevention and Health Promotion Administration. And finally, we have Tina Ioane. She is the Quality Improvement and Quality Assurance Representative for

her program at American Samoa MIECHV Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood MIECHV program.

So thank you to our presenters for being here today. And at that, I'm going to go turn it over first to our first presenter, Amanda Coleman.

>> Okay. Thank you, Karen. So today I'd like to share some information about a project OPRE undertook in 2014 to learn more about approaches to father engagement and fatherhood experiences in home visiting programs. The study was guided by two main goals. The first was to share lessons learned from the perspective of both program staff and fathers and mothers about how to effectively engage dads in home visiting programs.

And the second goal was to provide insight and give a voice to fathers' own experiences, perceptions, and opinions about the home visiting programs they were participating in. So to conduct the study we talked to a number of different stakeholders to identify five home visiting programs in the United States actively engaging fathers. And within each of these five programs, we conducted interviews of staff and parents to gain information from multiple perspectives. So we talked to program leaders about the program history, philosophy, structure, the population and communities served, how they train staff, and how decisions were made to involve fathers in home visiting activities.

Our interviews with home visitors informed us of their own personal experiences working with fathers including concerns, and challenges, the strategies they used to recruit and engage fathers. As well as the type of supervision they received in training. We also conducted in-depth interviews with fathers to address a range of topics related to their home visiting experience such as their motivation for participating, what home visit was like for them, and what home visitors did to engage.

We also talked to them about what they liked and didn't like about the programs. What they felt like they gained from participating, and what recommendations they had for program improvement. The interviews also probed fathers on their individual circumstances including their relationship with their children's mothers, their involvement with their children, and also their unique strengths and struggles with being their father.

Lastly, we also interviewed a small number of mothers in each program to gain mothers' perspectives on fathers' involvement in the home visiting program. For example, we asked mothers how they see fathers' involvement in home visiting as being beneficial to them and their children. As well as mothers' views about the way that home visiting staff can better attempt to engage fathers.

So given the limited time today, I'm not going to get into, kind of, the coding and analysis approach that we used for this study. But if there is time, I'm happy to answer any questions you may have about that. I'm going to focus today on our findings around the strategies for engagement as well as the benefits and the challenges to engaging fathers in home visiting. On the OPRE website, we have a full report available from this study that also highlights things around recruitment of fathers to home visiting programs and also information about fathers' first impressions of home visiting programs, but I can't cover all of that today.

So to jump right into the findings, we found that programs used a number of strategies to engage fathers, and they mostly fall into three broad buckets that you see here on this slide. The first bucket is around working to improve fathers' access to programs. So programs that typically have a broad overall program-wide approach of scheduling visits on days and times that work for fathers' work and school schedules. And programs would also emphasize planning visits for fathers' separate from the visits for the mother. So they would have father specific home visits.

The second set of strategies were around providing incentives and awards for participation. So programs would provide gift cards, and baby products to fathers for participating. And the third goal was around tailoring services to fathers' preferences and needs. So at the program level, programs may hire male home visitors or use content during the visit that are specific to fathers and the ways that they interact with kids such as by using, like, hands-on games and activities.

In addition, some programs may supplement home visits with fatherhood support groups and family outings which programs reported the dads seem to really like. At the staff level, there were several strategies that home visitors talked a lot about using to engage

fathers. So one of the primary strategies staff emphasized was the importance of meeting fathers where they are. So being flexible in terms of logistics as well as the content.

So kind of similar to the strategy that we saw at the program level, home visitors were also doing some level of tailoring to what fathers needed. They also emphasize that it was important to not be judgmental about fathers' circumstances and to also be just the persistent and consistent present -- presence in the family's lives. This also helped home visitors connect with parents as a trusted advocate.

So home visitors emphasize that the program is here to help, not investigate. And I think some of this is illustrated by this quote on the slide. So one home visitor said "With this one particular dad, he didn't want me around. He didn't want people in his house. We get that sometimes. He grew up in the system and is scared of the system. I explained it is good to have an advocate. I am on your side."

Across participants for both home visitors, fathers, mothers, administrators several key themes emerged regarding specific benefits of father engagement in home visiting. So the first two themes reflect the emotional and instrumental support that fathers reported receiving specifically around connections to a peer community and instrumental support from home visitors. Several fathers discussed the value of having someone to turn to for help. And that help went beyond just teaching parents about parenting. This home visitor was sometimes serving even as, like, more of a mentor.

The second set of themes reflected changes in father's knowledge and behavior including increased knowledge of child development and improved parenting skills, better communication with partners and anger management. And then there was a third set of themes around improvements and self-sufficiency. Specifically linkages to employment, referrals to community services and resources as well as material goods.

Despite the benefits that were perceived by fathers, mothers, and staff. There were also challenges that they reported. Gatekeeping staff resistance came up both if recruiting and engaging fathers in home visiting? Mothers and grandparents can sometimes oppose recruitment and can block access once fathers are recruited to a home visiting program. And

this seems to be particularly true for programs who try to engage fathers through mother-focused visits.

Similarly, home visitors who work with both mothers and fathers can put up resistance to engaging fathers in mother-focused visits for a variety of reasons. There may be safety concerns about the father's role. There may also be just concerns about being able to meet the mother's need while the father is present especially if the mother has multiple needs that require a lot of attention and the home visitor is limited in the amount of time they may have to spend with a family.

The most common challenge was just logistics. Many fathers may work irregular schedules making finding a time for home visits somewhat difficult. There were also challenges just around transportation. Especially if a home visit is occurring somewhere outside of where the dad lives. So, in conclusion, the study's findings suggest that there is a lot of promise in engaging fathers in-home visits and we really hope the program, the MIECHV program and other home visiting programs can continue to do this important work. And we also hope that research is able to dig more into this understudied topic. Thank you.

>> Thank you so much, Dr. Coleman, for presenting today and sharing that great information. If anyone on the line has questions, we do have a couple of minutes before our next presenter. So please feel free to type them into the chat. We have a question coming in right now from Karen McWhorter. How did you address concerns about domestic violence and emotional abuse? Would you address that, Dr. Coleman?

>> Sure. That's a great question. So we -- a lot of our questions in the interviews were open-ended. And so home visitors did mention in their interviews that what happened kind of in this bucket with challenges, safety concerns-- that's where most often they would bring up domestic violence or emotional abuse concerns and so engaging the dad in-home visits with the mother can be problematic. And so most of the home visiting programs and home visitors we talked to didn't necessarily have solutions, but in those situations, they honestly said that they would often just focus on the mother and her wellbeing. This was a small study - only five programs. So there may be other programs out there who have, kind of, better solutions for

dealing with situations where they want to engage fathers but domestic violence or safety concerns were a challenge. But most the partners we talked to did not have, kind of, concrete solutions for that type of situation.

>> Okay. Thank you. We're going to transition to our next presenter from the National Fatherhood Initiative. I will turn it over now to Christopher Brown.

>> Thank you, Karen. And thank you to everyone who's joined today. We're certainly honored to have been invited to present today and honored to share the stage so to speak, the virtual stage with lots of fantastic work that's going on in different states around engaging dads in home visits.

So in that regard, my role today is really to, kind of, set the stage for examples of the wonderful work that's going on around the country to engage dads. By talking, first, broadly about what the research shows around the consequences to child wellbeing, father absence, and also the benefits to child wellbeing and father involvement. And then to drill down a little bit further to talk specifically about the benefits of engaging dads for home visiting programs specifically MIECHV programs operating at both the state and territorial level.

And in third, to share some lessons that we've learned with our work partnering with different state MIECHV programs to help them figure out what are the best ways for them to integrate the work that they're doing with local home visiting programs, the LIAs, so that they can approach this work from a very, kind of, integrated strategic and tactical perspective.

So the data that I'm going to share with you on the first few slides, you can find all of that data studies that we've pulled from for this presentation from our Father Facts publication which we just released the eighth edition of a few weeks ago. And so you see that source down at the bottom. So this is just a collection of some of the most widely researched outcomes related to the consequences of father absence. So children in father-absent homes are more likely on average to live in poverty, perform poorly in school, develop emotional and behavioral problems, engage in early sexual activity, abuse drugs or alcohol, be neglected or abused, commit crimes, and also to commit suicide.

On the bright side, what we know from research about the benefits to children when fathers are involved is that these children are on average more likely to have better cognitive outcomes and we see this even as infants. Higher self-esteem and less depression including as teenagers. Higher grades, test scores, and overall academic achievement. A delayed engagement in sexual activity, lower levels of drug and alcohol misuse. And finally, higher levels of empathy and other prosocial behavior.

So that's kind of the wide view of this issue. So specifically, when we start to look at how does engaging dads in home visiting programs benefit MIECHV, you can look at it from the perspective of what does the research tell us around the benefits of father involvement related to the 19 performance measures. And many of these measures are directly or indirectly impacted in a positive way when you engage dads. So for example, in terms of the preterm birth outcome measurement, we know that when dads are involved prenatally that babies are more likely to be born full-term and at a healthy weight.

And when they are born preterm when dads are involved with their infants, those babies are more likely to have improved weight gain. In terms of the breast-feeding performance measure, we know that dads who are involved and support breastfeeding results in moms who are more likely to breastfeed. In terms of the performance measure related to depression screening, we know that when dads are involved, moms are less likely to have postpartum depression and maternal stress as their child ages.

In terms of the wellchild visit performance measure, we know that when dads are involved, mothers are more likely to receive prenatal care. In terms of child injury, we know that when dads are involved in their children's lives, their children are less likely to suffer from injuries. In terms of child maltreatment, we know that when dads are involved, we know that children are less likely to be neglected or abused. And in terms of the early language and literacy activities construct, we know that when dads are involved, particularly when they read to their children on a regular basis, their children have higher reading achievement.

We also know that fathers can encourage children's literacy development in a number of ways such as through reading to or with their children and discussing books with their

children. Now in terms of the work that we've done across the country partnering with state-level MIECHV programs, we've learned that what really helps these programs to do, first of all, is one of two steps either in concert or one after the other. And these can be done in either order.

First of all, is to take a step back and do a comprehensive assessment of LIA's level of father engagement to, kind of, look at what is the foundation that we're starting with. And what does that suggest about the direction that we need to go to help LIAs more effectively engage dads? And then also, to enter into a strategic planning process where they bring in the key decision-makers at the state level and also local level with local representation to plan in concert with LIAs how they are going to address in a comprehensive way father engagement.

The third step is that you turn the results of the first two steps into a strategic plan with action steps that are either centralized at the state level, meaning that all of the action steps are implemented by all of the LIAs, or to do it into a decentralized way where the LIAs can use the results of their own assessments to create their own customized approaches to more effective father engagement. And we've worked with state-level programs in both ways: centralized and decentralized approaches.

And then finally, LIAs integrate father specific resources. These are resources designed specifically for dads that allow them to maintain the fidelity of whatever evident based home visiting model the MIECHV program in that state funds, and of course, many states fund multiple models. So it's those four steps that we found really are effective at integrating the work of state-level, territorial-level MIECHV programs in those local programs that they fund. Thank you.

>> Thank you so much, yeah, thank you so much for presenting. If there are additional questions please ask them in the chat, and we'll either address them now if we have a couple that come in. Otherwise, we have time saved at the end of the presentation if you have questions then. So thank you for that. And at this point, we're going to transition to our next presenter. We will turn it over to Dr. Kaeley Benson. And she's presenting on behalf of Texas MIECHV.

>> Thank you, Karen. So we have been working with our partners at the state of Texas to evaluate the Texas home visiting federally funded through MIECHV since 2012. And one of our first evaluation projects was to understand how home visiting programs were engaging fathers in the program in response to a committed effort on the part of Texas to involve -- to increase father involvement and engagement in home visiting.

So we conducted focus groups across the state with fathers whose children were participating in home visiting programs. And we conducted surveys of mothers to understand how their children's fathers participate. Our biggest finding was that the most effective strategy to get dad involved happened to be the easiest. Invite dad. Specifically, ask him to participate. Sometimes he might have been in another room. Home visitors left notes specifically for fathers. So sometimes they would, you know, schedule home visits in the evening or over the lunch hour so that dad could be there.

So that was -- so inviting dad, just actually asking fathers to participate was the most effective strategy to getting dad there. And then the most effective strategy to keeping dad involved was to help him understand his value to both his child and his family. And in the course of this evaluation we identified other key strategies including using inclusive or gender-neutral language. So referring to parents mom and dad. These programs are not just programs for mothers, but they're for parents.

Again, like I said just a second ago, when we -- when possible, home visitors would schedule visits or schedule the group meetings and the outside of home visit events at times when fathers were available. And this is an important one that actually resulted in a change which was wonderful, was to address all documents to both parents and include space for both parents' names on all of the home visiting forms.

And this is precisely why we had to resort to a survey of mothers about fathers because none of the program models at the time, and like I said, this has changed, reliably collected dad's contact information. So we had no way of reaching out to fathers to get them to complete a survey. We actually had to recruit fathers through mothers for the focus groups and one dad brought the flyer that we had left with mom for the focus group, and, you know, that

his child's mother had given him and he asked us, "Why did I learn this about -- or why did I did learn about this focus group through her and not from you? Why didn't you just ask me directly?" And the simple answer was a logistic one and it was we had no way of contacting you.

And again, another helpful strategy that we learned that home visitors were doing was leaving materials behind for dad when he couldn't actually be at the visit. Whether that was information that he might find particularly interesting or specific homework or activities that he could do with his child when he was available. We also learned importantly that fathers are engaging with home visiting programs in ways that we do not typically measure or observe.

So as you can see, approximately 40% of mothers reported that their child's father at least sometimes participated in ways that were observable to the home visitor. So this included things like participating in the actual home visit, attending events or meetings, asking questions. In contrast, approximately three-quarters -- sorry, let me advance that. In contrast, approximately three-quarters of mothers reported their child's father engaged in ways unobservable to the home visitor. So this included practicing lessons or doing the homework at home in the evenings or on the weekends once dad was home, or even just asking mom questions about the visits that he couldn't attend. And oftentimes dads would ask questions and moms would ask the home visitor at the next visit and report back to dad. And so dads are engaging in the programs without actually attending visits.

Which really suggested that we need to rethink how we conceptualize father engagement. It's not necessarily just attending the visits or the events in person, but dads are participating and involved in home visiting programs in a much broader way. And then a couple of years later we extended that first evaluation on father engagement to look at the link between father participation and family retention in home visiting programs. And we found even after controlling for important selection characteristics that across program models, and in Texas at the time we had HIPPO, NFP, and Parents as Teachers, that families in which fathers attended at least one home visit were more likely to remain enrolled overtime compared to families in which fathers never attended.

Families with engaged fathers participated an average of seven months longer compared to families in which dads never participated. So in sum, Texas is thinking strategically about how to engage fathers across programs. Not just home visiting or our father specific programs that we have in Texas, but any program that serves families and children more generally. And to make sure that we are receptive to engaging fathers in general. Thank you, Karen.

>> Yes, thank you, Dr. Benson. We did have a question that came in about what could I do to call the father's attention in and include him in an assessment if there are assessments being done. Can you share any strategies you might have around that? Or maybe our other presenters have some ideas too.

>> Yeah. I would definitely open the floor too if any of the other presenters have ideas on that. So are we thinking, kind of, when -- if, kind of, if dad is there in the house or in the home during the visit but not actually participating in the visit, kind of, how we would get dad to participate in the visit if he's there? Which I think is the question. Which I think, you know, for -- we did this evaluation -- what it's 2019 now, so, you know, five, six years ago -- and at that time this idea of engaging fathers in home visiting programs was relatively new. And when we, you know, did surveys of mothers about father participation, we also did surveys of home visiting program staff about their efforts to engage fathers and importantly some of their biases and kind of their perceptions about whether these programs were actually for fathers.

And so at that point, this idea of home visiting -- of home visitors actually just asking dad to participate or encouraging dad to participate or finding ways to loop dad in was a really big step. And oftentimes it meant overcoming a lot of personal biases on the part of the home visiting staff, and, you know, that's not to say that always works, but I think it was an important strategy to just acknowledge the fact that oftentimes dad would be there and the home visiting staff or mom would never really even think to include fathers.

And so it was a really important, important first step. Now, once that first step has been taken, you know, I think that if dad is not particularly engaged at the beginning, I think persistence is key. We heard a lot -- we heard from home visiting staff that, you know, just kind

of continuing to invite dad and reminding dad that that he's important and that this is for him as well was helpful. You know, sometimes it didn't work on the first try or the second try, but you know, several visits in, dads, kind of, started slowly coming in.

You know, giving him tangible ways to interact with his kiddo is also a really important strategy for the programs that, you know, enroll and engage with families after the baby is born is also a helpful strategy that we heard.

>> Okay. Thank you, Dr. Benson, for taking the time for that question. We do have another question that came in. What I'd like to do is move onto our next presenter and we're going to put the additional question that came in into our presenter sort of queue. We'll come back to that question. But the question that's come up that I want to make sure we address near the end, it says, "It's great that that works for you, but how do you know that you're not overstepping boundaries when trying to get dads involved?" And I think because this webinar in particular is designed for MIECHV awardees that it's a great question to think about how we can advise our LIAs, how they can advise then their home visitors not to overstep boundaries, and some of the things that they might do to make sure that that's a policy and a practice that they have in their own programs. So we will think about that as presenters and come back to that question when we have some time at the end. With that, I'd like to turn the presentation at this time over to our next presenter. We have from -- representing on behalf of Maryland MIECHV, we have Jarvis Patterson-Askew who is going to share some of the efforts going on in Maryland. Jarvis.

>> All right. Thank you, Karen. Good afternoon, everyone. So here in Maryland we know that -- and across the country, we know that fathers have a boundless impact on the lives of their children. You could see here a picture of a father and his son which also happens to be my nephew and his father. And you could see how they have a source of joy between each other. You see their smiling faces and the body language is good, them playing together.

We know coming from a strength-based approach that when fathers are involved in their children's lives that children go on to succeed and, you know, obtain the goals that they have in life. MIECHV we know is a true two-generational approach type of a program. So it's not

just about the child and the family in our programs. It's also about the parents and making sure that we're addressing the needs that they have: if they have some apprehensions about being a father, if they have some apprehensions about how to, you know, interact with their child. You know, we're in -- we're there in their lives to give them resources, to give them the tools and the tactics to be positive influences in their children's lives.

So it's important that we consistently communicate to our sites or LIAs that fathers have a place in MIECHV because sometimes it can get lost. And it can also feel as though fathers do not belong in the programs simply because of, you know, the acronym that we have, the Maternal, Infant, Early Childhood Home Visiting program. But we know that not to be the case. You know, we have several of our primary caregivers here in the state of Maryland that are fathers, and they are active in their children's lives. But, you know, funny story that, if I can have an anecdote, that we had a new program manager come on from one of our sites, and they were unaware that fathers could be primary caregivers for a number of months. And until, you know, we had a conversation, and we were kind of starting the Fatherhood Initiative and, you know, it wasn't apparent to him that fathers were, you know, primary caregivers or could be primary caregivers because of some of the nature of the work. You know, when you look at our curriculums if it's HSA or if it's HIPPIY or if it's, you know, Nurse Family Partnership that they can be heavily concentrated on, you know, mother, baby and the connection that they have. They can be heavily concentrated on things like breastfeeding and those sorts of things. But it's important that we connect these issues much like Chris said to father engagement. How fathers improve those results, improve those outcomes when they're active in their children's lives.

So first step first, there is always the state or leadership that has to come and set a goal to prioritize a certain topic or subject matter. So in Maryland we wanted to make sure that fathers were engaged they were welcomed in our programs and that way we could give fathers the skills, and the tactics, and the tools that they needed to be positive influences in their children's lives. So we started with the National Father Initiative so we can attest to the Fatherhood Readiness Assessment and how it is a good tool for sites to take and also at the state level for administrators to take because it highlights the areas of strengths that we have in engaging fathers and mothers, and also lets us know where we can build from a strengths-

based approach, how we can highlight our weaknesses at the time and turn those into strengths.

So through that process, you know, we shared a number of tools, and we continue to share a number of tools through our newsletters and emails. If it's tool kits or whatever it may be, we have some on the preceding slides that you all can jot down and use with your own sites. But we wanted to be real intentional of including and engaging fathers. So if it's a home visit, when the home visitor comes, the father just doesn't go upstairs because this is mother's time to be with the baby and to get skills and those sorts of things. But we want to be welcoming and say hey, you know, you can stay. You can get on the floor with us. You can play with the toys that we have. And you can do the assessments with us as well. And just being welcoming and positive with our fathers.

So as a result of our Fatherhood Readiness Assessment, there were a number -- 90 odd results that printed out for each site, and what we wanted them to do to convey the importance of fathers is that we told them to choose three results or outcomes that they had from the assessment in the areas of leadership, organizational development, program development, and community engagement. And really hone in and plan against or towards strengthening a particular weak area that they had.

So that is what we -- this is the dashboard that we created and really aligned with our CQI process. So we wanted the site's program managers and CQI team members to look at this exercise and see CQI in it and how evaluating ourselves and examining our processes in our organizations can really strengthen father engagement intentionally on an everyday basis, on a daily basis. So sites have been getting those back to us, and we've been sharing some of the results from the sites to kind of make sure that we're not siloed, and, you know, because challenges are shared across sites. So we want to make sure that exercises or ideas that have been thought of from our sites are shared amongst each other.

So we have -- or I have had the opportunity to kind of share some of these action plans that we developed or the sites developed with other sites in our state. So outside of the Fatherhood Readiness Assessment, we wanted to make sure that this exercise wasn't a one-off

training. It wasn't something that we paid attention to for a short amount of time and then we throw it into the recycling bin or we throw it in the file cabinet and it's something that we never address again. So in order to do that, we began asking our sites what sorts of trainings, or professional developments, or exercises, activities programs that you feel will be important for your sites, for your staff members, and for your families.

So this could be like peer support groups for fathers, this could be, you know, training around implicit biases that staff members might have because of their relationship with their fathers or their relationship with the fathers of their children, and these sorts of things. So we really wanted to get into an increased buy-in from our sites by asking them what direction should we go. What do you feel your weak in or what do you feel your site is weak in so that way, you know, from the state collaborative level we can really support everyone in the work that they do each and every day.

And also, we wanted to communicate to our sites that's when you have your staff meetings, you know, that's the perfect time. You have everyone in the same room, you can ask them questions about, you know, how they are engaging their fathers. You know, what tools do you think that they need in engaging fathers. And also share some best practices. We all know that, you know, some of the easiest or one of the easiest ways to get in contact with a man is to call his mother. Or to have some sort a contact with his family member that is a good way to, as a gatekeeper, to get in there and let him know about the services that we're providing for his family.

And also again, to reiterate, the strengths-based approach that when fathers have involved in their children's lives, you know, their children go onto succeed, and they go on to be ready for kindergarten, they go on ready to learn. They, you know, they're reading, they're talking, and they're engaging socially and in an acceptable manner.

So the networking opportunity scan just talks about some of the resources that we've had available to us here at the state -- in the state of Maryland and some programs that we participated in, some conferences that we participated in. Actually today, one of our sites shared with myself and the chief here of home visiting about a father family seminar or

workshop that's going on in California. And, you know, again, to prevent that siloed effect, we want to include those types of resources in our newsletters, in our communications with our site so that way other sites can kind of get the tools that they need.

And a lot of the workshops deal with things like child support and breaking down barriers there when it comes to engaging fathers, and them not just being a revenue stream. Or it talks about incarcerated fathers and, you know, their incorporation into their children's lives. And, you know, the number and the list of workshops that are out there goes on and on. But those are some of the top ones along with as noncustodial parents and how even though a father might not be the custodian of their child, they still have a place in that child's life.

And there is a number of local fatherhood programs here in Maryland. We're beginning to connect with them in Baltimore City. We're beginning to connect with them in Prince George's County. And we're beginning to connect with them in other counties across the state to see how we can collaborate and build our systems and our system of care for our families when it comes to early childhood education, and early childhood health, and maternal health, and the health of our families across the state. Thank you.

>> Okay. Thank you so much, Mr. Patterson-Askew. That was excellent and thanks for sharing those resources as well. If there are any questions, please make sure you to the chat and put them in the chat. We'll have some time at the end for Q&A. At this time I would like to turn over our next presentation to Tina Ioane with American Samoa MIECHV. And she is here today also along with her is one of her father -- her male advocate Fa'i, and he will be joining in a little bit as well. So I'd like to turn it over to you, Tina, for the presentation.

>> Thank you, Karen. I'm hoping everyone can hear me. So father engagement --

>> We here you.

>> Okay. Father engagement in American Samoa. We're the MIECHV awardee, and we're also the LIA [indiscernible] program. So we have a CQI fam theme since nine -- 2017. It takes a village to raise a child. So for this presentation, we have a father of the baby, mother of the baby. We talk about the home visitors' role, the supervisors' role, and the management

team's role of the supporting of father engagement and including messages taken out to the community.

So for mothers and fathers, we have our way their way. So Mother of the Baby way, she has to decide when we recruit, she has a desire to share the -- we share the information of regarding the program to the father of the baby, and to engage with the home visiting services. In addition, mother also shares values with home visiting services with her partner. And there are activities that the home visitor shares about the information about child-appropriate age milestones. And also linking with services and more.

And also mother of the baby sees a difference between their older children and the index child that we serve in our program. And that's also a positive impact MIECHV program for our program, and it encourages the mother to -- for the father, for the partner to get involved with the partnership with their child, taking care of their child.

So Father of the Babys, father of the baby's way is when not interested at first, but often then is curious and indirectly from listening to the home visiting services conducted by a home visitor, and also he has good information from the mom and then either he will directly ask his partner or wife regarding the home visiting services that we offer. And then sometimes the father joins in occasionally in discussion or questioning about the services that we offer. And then more often the father buys into our home visiting services. It's the basics.

So what I'm trying to say is the home visitor takes a message to the mother, and the mother in their own way and desire shares with the home visitor, get involved and also shares the message with the father of the baby. So the Home Visitor Way, the home visitor is more focus is on the mother of the baby during visits. So she's our primary caretaker. And continually offers any advice the father of the baby at any time when he is available. And she is flexible if the father's available.

And also stresses the importance of father's role in the family and with the child. And also engaging with the child. And encouraging the father -- the mother and the father to get involved with raising their child. If the father of the baby needs intervention or needs some kind of help, the home visitor will also request support. And will also link with the management and

communicate with our management team, and we'll develop an action plan to engage and help the father of the baby. Especially the mother of the baby if she's also asking for help.

And this will also help enrich and encourage the father to get involved with our home visiting services. So for our supervisors, so we have a male advocate here with me. So they do a reflective supervision. So we have a Healthy Families America. That's our evidence-based model. So when they do a reflection supervision regarding family needs, there is understanding and engaging of father, baby in the MIECHV program. And there is a strategic action plan for visiting a family to engage father, baby. And then we have a male advocate, also a father advocate that will get involved to come up with a strategic plan, to take the message out to the father of the baby. And more importantly, is understand and can face the importance of father engagement in the cultural context.

We have a strong cultural essence over here in American Samoa. In addition to that, we also serve multi-generational. So it's not just two generations, but more than three at times that our home visitors have to work with and with our fathers in the family. So the Management Way it usually supports the supervisor, it supports the home visitor and the family. And manager will also help schedule a visit and will help gather information so they could schedule strategically and be flexible around the father's availability so that way they can -- the father is available when they are there to visit a family with father involved.

And with the management, the management team or one of the management will go out for this one example is for me and the program coordinator. We'll get involved in finding out what their family strengths, the father and the mom. What are their family dynamics, their family strengths? And they want to bring out the best in the family utilizing the reflective strategies that we have been trained on from the Healthy Families America.

So after developing a plan, we participate in certain visits, and we go through the process of explaining confidentiality. We explain the importance of the home visiting services, and also just have them buy in what their family rights and responsibilities into the program. And our hope is to have them trust our home visitors and our program and have faith that we

are providing a great service to our fathers and mothers. Especially for our fathers, to engage fathers into the program.

So for our messages that we take out to the community, there are regular reminders for this program that goes out to the families especially for mothers to pass down to our fathers. The program is voluntary, they can quit anytime when they don't -- are not -- are no longer interested. And our home visitor will ask the mother of the baby if doing a home visit what with they gain from this program, ensure that home visiting impacts the lives of fathers too, not just them. But also fathers, having fathers involved is so important. And it's a parenting -- both parents are important to raise their child.

And we have a cultural aspect. And our home visiting and our program have a focus and it's important on culture. Because culture plays a big role in serving our clients especially for fathers. They're traditional. And they are head of the family. And the majority of them makes the decision for the family. So our home visitors are sensitive to that, and they want to ensure the mom is comfortable with the service that we offered. And if they are also asked to wait until they provide the answer later, they would.

The home visitors will respect that as well. And that also goes well for the management when they are engaging with the families with fathers involved. And also we also remind them there are no materialistic things that we offer. The service is free, and we're there to impact the lives of families and engaging fathers to enrich them and encourage them and empower them to get involved in their families.

And then making sure the families, they can terminate services at any time. Also, we have for our graduation 2016, we had four, but the number has been climbing up. And 2018, we had about 25 families. This year we have 35 families. And that's a milestone for our program. And then we have fathers that testify in our program during the graduation regarding about the MIECHV and home visiting services that we offer.

Okay. Our highlights for this year was our graduation. We graduated 35 index children. And it's our fourth anniversary for the program for those children age three. More fathers participated, and we have fathers that testified and provide their testimony during our

graduation. And our graduation was aired on KVZK our network here in American Samoa. And the message was shared the importance of father. And this also provides a good message sharing how important father engagement is in our island.

And then we're here to share, we're so proud for our fathers that are in our program, and two-thirds of our fathers are involved in our home visiting services. And that concludes my presentation. If there are any questions, please.

>> Okay. Thank you so much for sharing. We had a lot of good information today. We have one or two lingering questions I'm going to turn to our presenters right now. The first question came in from Natalie Perla. She asked a question. She said, "This is great. I'm happy this all worked out, but how do you know that you're not overstepping boundaries when trying to get dads involved? I'm going to turn this question over to Kaeley, and ask if she will address this?"

>> Sure, Karen. It's a really, really important question. And definitely a very delicate balance. And I would say that I think that, you know, training and providing the guidance to staff and to your programs that just engaging dads also needs to be an ongoing dialog with mothers, right. And so, I mean, obviously, there are instances where engaging fathers is neither safe nor appropriate. So outside of those circumstances, you know, if it's an issue of maternal gatekeeping, if it's an issue of mom not knowing how important fathers are for their kiddos, sometimes just helping mom understand the value that a relationship with the child's father can have for the child, can be really helpful.

And again, this is an ongoing dialog. And so I think that whether it is a co-parenting issue, if mom and dad are not together and not living together, you know, working with mom about those things. Again, within the context of, you know, it being a safe and appropriate thing. And I think, again, those -- that's information that you have to ascertain, you know, in the home with mom. But I think that, you know, there is -- there sometimes is resistance from mom for getting dads involved. Whether it's mom wanting this to be her thing, or not knowing that, you know, that it is very, very important for kiddos to have a relationship with their dad and is very beneficial for them.

And so, again, I think that this helping staff and the LIAs understand that these are ongoing dialogs and conversations and not something that necessarily is going to happen overnight. And, you know, I don't mean for our, you know, simplistic "invite dad" strategy to over or understate how difficult that this can be. You know, I think it was an important strategy, kind of, right out of the gate, and, but, beyond that in getting dads involved beyond that for whom that strategy did not work, just continues to be an ongoing discussion and dialog with mom and getting her input, and you know, investment in making that happen is important.

>> Thank you so much for addressing that, Dr. Benson. We do have two additional questions I'm going to go pose to our presenters, but I'm also going to ask if we will open our CQI polling. At the end of our sessions, we do ask you if you plan to take an action step based on this webinar. Yes, or no. If you do plan to take an action step, could you please briefly describe what that action step would be. And if you do not, what could we have done or helped you with that would have helped you further identify an action step.

We also have two additional pods at the bottom. If you'll take just a minute to answer. One thing you learned today, and one thing you still need after attending this webinar so that we can continue to help meet needs around this important area. While you're looking into these questions, I'm going to ask -- there were two other questions that came into our chat. One was from Christina Seranio [ph]. She asked: How would we be able to access the fatherhood action plan tool. And Christopher, I believe you're going to address that question.

>> Yes. Thanks, Karen. Yes. So the -- I believe you're referring to the Father Readiness Network Assessment that we worked on with the state of Maryland that Jarvis mentioned. And the tool that is the basis for that is the free Father-Friendly Checkup. You can access it at our website. You can download it. It's fatherhood.org. That's fatherhood.org. And I'd be happy to speak with you or anyone else on the call about how we work specifically with state and territory level MIECHV programs to use that tool to assess the father readiness of their LIAs.

>> Okay. Thank you so much. We had one additional question that came in. I'm going to go ask Kate or April to read it allow for me. I cannot see that pod at the bottom. What was the question that came in from, I believe it was Tim asked a question. From my fatherhood classes -

- sorry it keeps moving. Different cultures have different historical views of the roles of dad involvement. What are some suggestions to break that barrier? What an excellent question. What any of our presenters like to tackle that in our last minute as we wrap up?

>> This is Kaeley. I'll answer another question.

>> Thank you.

>> Yeah, no problem. Tim, I totally hear you. This issue of, kind of, cultural and gender norms and it's, you know, it's mom's role to raise the kiddos, and dad's role to provide. And those types of things are very ingrained in some cultures. And so I don't -- I certainly don't have the answer for you for how we change those large cultural and societal norms. But, just to empathize with you that it is definitely a struggle, and it's definitely a challenge. And I think, you know, to some extent, just keep at it. I think, again, it's this idea of these things don't happen overnight and its ongoing dialogs and conversations with both mom and dad. That both of them have very, very important roles and impacts on their kiddos. But that those roles don't necessarily have to be as distinct as we often make them out to be or that it is so ingrained in some cultures.

And so, you know, you certainly have to accept that and meet people where they are for sure. So I don't have any words of wisdom other than I know that we heard that all over the place in Texas from a cultural perspective. So I here you, and I wish I had the answer.

>> I like that meet people where they are. I think that's so important. So thank you. Thank you to all of our presenters today. I just wanted to share with you that all of the resources, these webinars as well as other resources that have been published are on HRSA's website at the link that you see here. We have another webinar coming up in December for HV-ImpACT that will be on Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation in Home Visiting. So I hope you will join us for that webinar. And then finally we do have an evaluation that we value your feedback very much. Please take a few minutes to give us some additional feedback.

Thanks again to everyone for joining us today, to our presenters, and I hope you have a wonderful rest of your day.