



Parents and Children Together (PACT) Evaluation, 2011-2016

Project Overview

To learn about the implementation and effects of these programs, ACF awarded a contract in 2011 to Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. to conduct the Parents and Children Together (PACT) evaluation. The evaluation has multiple components: separate impact and process studies for responsible fatherhood and healthy marriage programs and two sub-studies.

Study Rationale

Since 2006, Congress has provided funding for grants to provide healthy marriage and responsible fatherhood services to help interested couples and fathers enhance or improve adult and parent-child relationships and meet other objectives.

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF), within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), oversees these grants and provides supports to assist grantees to meet their goals and objectives. ACF is also interested in learning about the challenges and successes of service implementation, the needs and experiences of participants, and the effectiveness of these services.

Undertaken by: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.

Impact/Process Studies

Seven grantees are involved in rigorous impact and process studies. There are four responsible fatherhood grantees:

- Connections to Success (Kansas City MO)
- Fathers' Support Center (St. Louis MO)
- Goodwill/Easter Seals Minnesota (Minneapolis/St. Paul MN)
- Urban Ventures (Minneapolis MN)

There are three healthy marriage grantees:

- El Paso Center for Children (El Paso TX)
- Jewish Family and Children's Services (Sarasota FL)
- University Behavioral Associates (Bronx NY)

Individuals who are eligible for the programs and agree to be in the study are randomly assigned to either a program group or a control group. Program group members are offered program services; control group members are not offered those services but are able to receive other services available in the community. The impact studies will examine whether the programs improve outcomes for fathers, mothers, families, and children in the program group compared to outcomes of those in the control group.

Members of both program and control groups are surveyed twice: before they are randomly assigned and 12 months later. At the 12-month follow-up, both groups will be asked to complete a telephone survey. The survey will cover a range of questions related to adult relationships and interactions, parent-child interactions and economic stability. Corresponding process studies will examine multiple aspects of the implementation and operation of the programs. Information for the process studies will be obtained through: interviews with program and partner organization managers and staff; observations of program operations; from focus groups with program participants and non-participants; and from data from each grantee's management information system.

Sub-studies

The two PACT sub-studies involve (1) a series of three annual in-depth, in-person interviews with selected fathers participating in the responsible fatherhood study programs; and (2) a study of the program strategies and adaptations that selected responsible fatherhood programs serving Hispanic fathers use.

To Find Out More

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