

**Family Advisory Council Meeting
November 19, 2011 – Addendum to Minutes
Selected Notes from Sean Brotherson Presentation**

Stereotypes, Societal Changes, and the Male Perspective

- Image of father figures is often “bumbling” rather than empowering in the media, which depicts a deficit perspective. Fathers have capacity, not deficiency.
- Changing roles in families – men and women’s paths are different. Men’s learning curve is higher.
- More single parent families. There is social risk in father-absent families.
- Men struggle with “competence” issue and whether they will be judged. Fathers are not “assistant” parents.
- Uncertainty is hard for men.
- Roles (provider 1st – nurturer 2nd) – Both roles are essential.
- Men may have perception that “support” indicates weakness.
- Sometimes need to negotiate “standard” of good fathering:
 - Women – comparison for men is to what she does
 - Men – use their dad or grandfather as the standard for comparison

Benefits to Father Involvement

- Fathers make a difference and are an untapped resource. Men have a direct and indirect influence (help mothers cope).
- Generativity chill – threats to provide for the next generation.

Strategies to Consider with a Father Support Network –How to Get Dads There.

- Focus on strengths, not deficiencies.
- Women can provide a positive invitation for men to be involved. Women are gate keepers. Build on “Ramps for Dads”. Child invites are powerful too.
- Address issues for fathers – need to increase knowledge, parenting expectations, time, access to support (awareness and ability to access).
- Start conversation with fathering experiences.
- Find what topics fathers want addressed. What are their information needs and what resources would be helpful (e.g., information for “dads at a distance”). What issues are on men’s minds regarding fatherhood with a CSHCN? Find common ground.
- Market directly to men. Reach out to men with a direct invite from other men.
- Start with a panel of dads who tell their story. Have men facilitators.
- Consider mentoring relationships vs. meetings.
- Use activity focused vs. support model. Father’s involvement is often “activity based”.
- Engaging fathers:
 - Research and dialogue
 - Attitude about father involvement
 - Who might have an interest – natural partners who might take the lead
 - What are their particular interests – what’s the outcome, vision, or criteria of success
 - Content – do what fathers want

- Address barriers to father involvement:
 - Work stress
 - Relationship conflict
 - Time and logistics
 - Personal attitudes
 - Program design

References/Resources

- Father Facts – Horn & Sylvester (4th edition) www.fatherhood.org.
- Dakota Fatherhood Initiative.
- FRED - reading every day program.
- National Fatherhood Initiative.
- Best practices on handout.
- “Doctor Dad” resource.

Ideas for CSHS

1. Rename “family support packet” in CSHS.
2. Include materials that will engage fathers in CSHS public information efforts. Add “father focused” materials.
3. Select “father involvement” activities for state performance measures addressing parent education, family support, and family partnership. Discuss the issue at Title V meetings.
4. Consider a Family Voices “Father Involvement/Father Support Network” topical call.