

Shifting the Paradigm

Engaging Fathers in Child Welfare

The Importance of Fathers





- Investing in children and family
- Breaking cycles of negativity
- Leaving positive legacy

The Statistics



Children/Youth from Homes with Fathers
37 percent of youth suicides
10 percent of homeless and runaway youth
15 percent of youth who exhibit behavioral disorders
29 percent of all high school dropouts
25 percent of all youth in chemical abuse centers
30 percent of youth in state-operated institutions

The Statistics

Fatherlessness in Texas (Brewer)*

- In 2019, 35% of all children in Texas (2.5 million) were from single-parent homes
 - > 40% of all Hispanic/Latino children
 - > 60% of all Black children
- In 2020, 42% of all births in Texas were to unmarried mothers
 - > Nearly a half-million children in Texas have an incarcerated parent
 - ➤ 1.4 million children in Texas have one or more emotional, behavioral, or developmental challenges
 - > 22,641 children in Texas were born to teenage mothers
 - Rate of 22 teen births per 1000 (the national rate is 13.9 per 1000)







- **H.B. 567** prevents DFPS from removing children in nonemergencies. In addition, the bill prevents parents from losing their children solely due to marijuana use.
- **H.B. 2926** provides opportunity for permanency and reinforces the belief that all people –including children–heal from trauma through familial relationships.
- **H.B. 730** mandates investigators to notify parents accused of abuse or neglect of their legal rights.
- **H.B.1087** requires investigators to document via affidavits all reasonable efforts to keep a child and family together (*similar to S.B. 2120*).





Why Fathers Matter

Studies suggest that fathers' involvement in permanency planning has the potential to reduce impact to disproportionate number of children of color.







Changing the Narrative

- Reflecting on past/current experiences
- Exploring relationships with male role models (father, step-father, grandfather, mother's boyfriend, etc.)
- Identifying possible barriers to involvement with child
 - > Lack of understanding value of relationship
 - > Employment status
 - Medical history
 - ➤ Life history (domestic violence, incarceration, etc.)
- Challenging them to define their legacy as a father



Employing Engagement Concepts

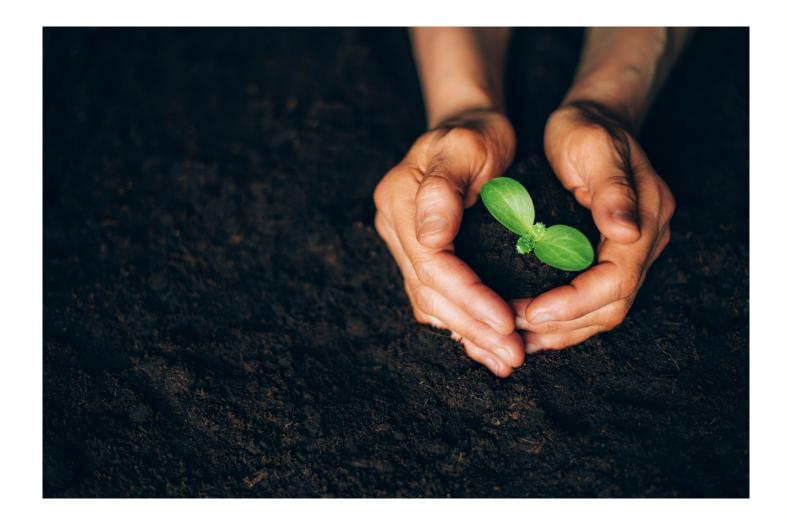
DFPS has unique opportunity for first contact between agency and father to establish strength-based relationships.

- Responsible Father Resources:
 - ✓ https://dfps.texas.gov/Child Protection/Family Support/fathering resources.asp
 - ✓ Family Help Line **1-844-888-6565**





Empowering Our Voices



2/2/2024

9



Thank you

Kenneth D. Thompson

DFPS Fatherhood Specialist
512-960-9315

Kenneth.Thompson@dfps.texas.gov