

The South Carolina Center for Fathers and Families

Jobs Not Jail: Alternatives to Incarceration for Low – Income, Noncustodial Parents



Benefits of Fathers

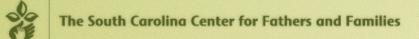
Researchers have found that displays of warmth and support from nonresident fathers were associated with lower levels of:

Anxiety Depression Delinquency Drug use among adolescents



Deadbeat or Dead-broke?

- For most men, fulfilling their obligations to financially provide for their children is a powerful expectation.⁸
- Given the relatively high rates of unemployment for African American (9.8%) and Latino (7.6%) men, their involvement with their families and successfully providing for them is often difficult.¹⁷
- A study by Duke University and University of Wisconsin (2006) found that fathers contributed to the support of their children if they had the means to do so.⁴ Incarceration, unemployment, and lack of resources were the primary explanations for low levels of child support payments.⁴



Deadbeat or Dead-broke? (cont.)

In 1990, there were 9.5 million noncustodial fathers in the United States and 18 million children potentially eligible for child support.

Only 46% reported that they paid child support.

23% of the fathers who did not pay child support had gross incomes below 130% of the poverty level for two consecutive months.¹⁴

70% of the national child support debt is owed by noncustodial parents who have no quarterly earnings or who have annual earnings of less than \$10,000.¹⁶
 Only 4% of child support arrears are held by noncustodial parents with more than \$40,000 in annual income.⁹



Present Options to Incarceration

Work release

An option only if the inmate has both a job and an employer who is willing to complete extensive work-release paperwork.

It does not address the overcrowding issue.

Home detention

A less viable option for low-income fathers as these programs charge high monitoring fees to utilize their services but offer no employment or other services to the father. Most low-income fathers cannot meet these expenses for any period of time and are re-incarcerated within a few months.

Low-income fathers need support and jobs; not jail.

Alternative to Incarceration

The Alternative to Incarceration Component of a Fatherhood Program is utilized by the Family Court and Child Support Enforcement to provide an alternative sentencing strategy for low-income fathers who are behind in the payment of child support. Fathers who are court ordered to attend a fatherhood program must work, must pay both their ongoing and debt related child support, and must attend a weekly support group on the core fatherhood curriculum for 24 weeks. Unlike jail, however, low-income fathers who have little education or job skills are also given the necessary support services to provide financially for their children well into the future.

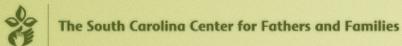
Demographics of ATI Participants

78% African Americans
20% Caucasian
Median age 33 years*
40% had less than a high school education
Only 8% had formal schooling beyond high school
46% were unemployed upon entering the program
50% had never been married
21% were divorced
78% lived with their mothers
11% lived with at least one of their children
The median age of the participants' children was 8 years



Core Services offered through the Fatherhood Programs

Responsible Fatherhood Spiritual Development Effective Communication Job Readiness and Employment Understanding Child Support and the Legal System Financial Management Parenting and Co-Parenting Healthy Relationships Men's Health and Education Referrals for Additional services on a Case-by-Case Basis



Skills: Effective Communication

Proper verbal and nonverbal communication

Active listening

Seeking feedback

Practicing effective communication with children, co-parent and employer (role-plays, scenarios, modeling, 1:1 counseling)



Skills: Job Readiness and Employment

Job etiquette

Application completion

Resume writing

Interview skills

Conflict resolution

Effective decision-making (thinking through consequences)



Skills: Financial Management

Budgeting

Setting up a checking/savings account

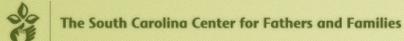
How to balance a check book

How to keep a positive credit record



Skills: Parenting and Co-Parenting

Recognizing and responding to needs of child (based on developmental stage) Building children's self-esteem Disciplining techniques How to effectively handle common issues that arise as a co-parent Creating a support network



Skills: Healthy Relationships

Different communication styles between men and women

Anger/Conflict management

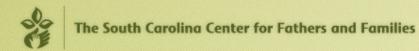
Dealing with stress

Effective communication

Decision making

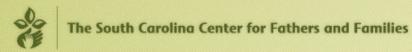
Two Year Results of ATI Component

	Year 1	Year 2
# ATI PARTICIPANTS ENTERED:	491	536
# ATI PARTICIPANTS CURRENTLY ACTIVE:	196	150
# ATI PARTICIPANTS TERMINATED:	123	116
# ATI PARTICIPANTS WHO IS/HAS COMPLIED: 368	420	
AMOUNT OF CHILD SUPPORT ARREARS PAID BY ATI:	\$ 177,905 \$ 117,787	
# ATI PARTICIPANTS GRADUATED:	172	270
AMOUNT OF ONGOING CHILD SUPPORT PAID BY ATI:	\$ 468,976 \$ 479, 822	
AMOUNT OF GROSS WAGES EARNED BY ATI:	\$ 3,142,965 \$ 2,860,698	



Financial Costs

<u>Cost Savings</u> Cost to operate 7 ATI components for 12 months	<u>Yea</u> \$ 575,000	<u>r 1 Year 2</u>
Cost to operate 9 ATI components for 12 months		\$ 585,000
Cost to incarcerate men for 6 months	\$ 2,760,000	\$ 3,360,000
TOTAL SAVINGS:	\$ 2,185,000	\$ 2,775,000



Financial Benefits

В	er	nef	its
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Total amount of child support paid: (arrears plus ongoing)	\$ 646,881 \$ 597,	609
Total gross earnings of participants:	\$ 3,142,965	\$ 2, <mark>860,698</mark>
TOTAL BENEEITS TO FAMILIES AND SOCIETY:	\$ 3,789,846	\$ 3,458,307
TOTAL SAVINGS AND BENEFITS TO FAMILIES AND SOCIETY:	\$ 5,974,846	\$ 6,233,307



"As administrative judge and speaking for the Family Court judges in Charleston County, we believe that the Father to Father Program in North Charleston has been an excellent program that has helped fathers consistently pay their child support in lieu of being incarcerated."

> Judge Judy Bridges McMahon Family Court Judge



"In the past we tried just finding employment but quickly learned that almost all of these men have multiple issues. These programs are a great tool to help the Detention Center lower its population and reduce the recidivism rate. The goal of these programs is to empower these men by addressing their issues of unemployment or underemployment, substance abuse, court issues and parenting skills. By addressing all potential obstacles each inmate and their children face, each are given a more positive out-look for the future."

> Lt. B. Keyes Head Officer Charleston County Detention Center Work Camp



"I am convinced that this strategy of enforcing child support against very lowincome people is the most effective strategy thus far. In fact, I have become a disciple of the program, and believe that is has provided much needed support for these low-income fathers that are ordered to pay support through child support enforcement."

> Larry McKeown State Director Department of Social Services Child Support Enforcement