

Presentation Outline: “Fostercare and Fatherhood”

SC Center for Fathers and Families

US Child Welfare Statistics

- Neglect represents 64.5% of cases
- Children in single parent homes more likely to experience abuse or neglect
- Poverty is single biggest predictor of abuse and/or neglect
- 80% of children in fostercare had a noncustodial father when removed from home

Primary Issue for Fatherhood Clientele

- Little to no effort made by CPS caseworkers to identify, locate, and notify absent father when his child is removed from the home of the custodial parent

Relevant Federal Laws

- PRWORA (1996) – state shall consider giving preference to relative over nonrelative
- ASFA (1997) – required state to consider giving preference to relative over nonrelative
- FCIAA (HR6893) – requires state agencies to exercise due diligence to identify and provide notice to all adult relatives of a child when child is removed from home

Partnering with CPS to Improve Policies Toward Absent Fathers

Assist CPS with development of written protocol to identify, locate, and notify absent parents

Common Barriers within CPS system

- caseworker bias
- mothers act as gatekeepers
- lack of paternity established by absent father

Putative Father Registries

Understand distinction between legal father and putative father

Using Fatherhood Programs as Service Providers

- only neglect cases around basic needs issues
- program is a part of an overall caseplan

Develop Criteria for those who can be helped by Program

- father wants to care for his child
- should have basic resources
- capable of taking responsibility

Develop Criteria for those who can not be helped by Program

- Criminal domestic violence charges
- Extreme anger management issues
- Assault or felony charges
- Substance abuse/ unless treatment provided in overall caseplan

Challenges of working with CPS

- communication lines may not flow
- short time frames to prepare father for child (father may face housing, daycare, and other new issues)
- dealing with protocols of DSS
- increased work demand for staff