

Fathers' Support Group Pre-Assessment

Thank you for taking part in the Fathers' Support Group. Please spend a few minutes taking the following pre-assessment. The assessment is important since it will:

- Help you discover what you knew before taking the first module compared to what you know after taking the last module about:
 - the child welfare and court system; and,
 - the strengths and supports that you and your child and family have to ensure a better chance of plan success.
- Help us to make sure that the information we offer in the modules and the way we offer that information is as useful to you as we can possibly make it to give you, and others taking part in the group, the best possible chance of plan success now and in the future.

You will also be asked to complete a post-assessment when you complete all the modules. The questions on the pre- and post-assessments are very similar; so, you will see the questions below again when you take the post-assessment in a few months. Please answer the questions honestly and think about how your answers can help you gauge what you would like to discover during the support group sessions and how your answers can help us improve the information and delivery of the support group. Your guide will ask everyone to talk about their answers after completing the assessment.

Module 1 – Building Blocks

1. What are the two key Pennsylvania child welfare laws that allow child welfare agencies and the courts to become involved when allegations of abuse and neglect arise?
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 - _____
2. List one way that child welfare laws and regulations allow child welfare agencies and the courts to become involved when allegations of abuse and neglect arise.
 - _____
3. List two of your rights under child welfare law.
 - _____
 - _____

4. Briefly describe the purpose of your child welfare Family Service Plan.

5. List three important services available to you through the child welfare agency and community resources.

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6. Briefly describe the roles of the following people that you will/might meet while involved with the child welfare agency:

- Caseworkers:

- Judges:

- Child Attorneys:

- Parent Attorneys:

Module 2 – The Dynamic Father

1. Briefly describe how you see your role, as a father, as it relates to meeting the needs of your child.

2. List three ways to overcome any feelings and beliefs that might stop your family from succeeding with your case plan and in life in general.

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3. List two general feelings and beliefs that could occur when an absentee or incarcerated father attempts to reconnect with his child and family.

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4. Briefly describe two ways that a father (who never had, has lost, or has damaged the trust of his children and family) can create, regain, or rebuild the trust of his children and/or family.

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Module 3 – Enhancing Relationships

1. List at least three emotional needs your child has.

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2. List at least three basic physical needs your child has.

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3. List two typical behaviors seen as children and teenagers develop.

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4. Describe one way of communicating with a child (who is similar to yours in gender, age, and development) that considers the child's gender, age, and development.

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5. Describe one way of disciplining a child (who is similar to yours in gender, age, and development) that considers the child's gender, age, and development.

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6. Describe three gender-, age-, and developmentally-appropriate activities that children/teenagers, fathers, and the family in general can do together to form stronger bonds.

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Module 4 – Partnering for Success

1. List five families or community supports that will help you and your family achieve and maintain success – not only while involved with the agency but once you leave as well.

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2. List at least three tips to consider when creating a great résumé.

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3. List at least three resources (community or otherwise) to consider using when looking for a job.

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4. Briefly describe other important skills associated with finding and securing a job when the need arises.

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5. Think about and describe a plan to use resources available to you to better ensure the success of your family's case plan now and in the future.

My Expectations for the Support Group

Based on the pre-assessment:

1. Please list at least one strength you bring to the group that could help inform discussions.

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2. Please list at least one thing you'd like to make sure the group discusses.

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Program Outline

The Fathers' Support Group program is for fathers involved in the child welfare system. The curriculum is comprised of four modules in which participants will acquire the necessary skills to enhance their role as a father. The modules should be offered in conjunction with a self-help support meeting, held monthly. Each module consists of four weekly sessions, with each session lasting two hours. Fathers may begin the program at the first session of any module, as the modules do not build upon one another.

A pre-assessment will be completed by a father when he starts the program to determine his knowledge about topics that will be covered in the modules and to help the facilitator adjust delivery as needed. Attendance will be taken at each session. Once a participant completes all four modules, by attending a minimum of three sessions per module, the father would complete a post-assessment to measure skills and knowledge gained. Fathers who attend sessions regularly and demonstrate an understanding of the information covered will be awarded a certificate of achievement. Those who receive their certificate of achievement will have an opportunity to become a peer mentor to other fathers in the program. As an ongoing support network, all fathers involved in the child welfare system are encouraged to participate in the self-help support meetings.

Fathers should bring their children to these sessions, when appropriate, as some sessions will include interactional activities. Additionally, there will be planned events for fathers and their children. Transportation will be available. A meal will be served at each session.

CURRICULUM:

Module 1 – Building Blocks

Goal: Fathers will gain knowledge about the child welfare and juvenile court systems.

Learning Objectives: A father will be able to:

1. Identify how certain child welfare laws and regulations allow child welfare agencies and the courts to become involved when allegations of abuse and neglect arise.
2. List his rights under child welfare-related law.
3. Describe the purpose of the service plan.
4. Identify important services available to him through the agency and community resources.
5. Describe the roles of key people that he will/might meet while involved with the child welfare agency.

Module Description:

Moving through the child welfare and related court system can be difficult since the systems are made up of many layers, are complex and, at times, confusing. To ensure a better chance of achieving successful outcomes for his child, it is important for a father to know the purpose of child welfare and the courts, the laws that guide child welfare agencies, who the people are that make up the system, what his rights are in the system, as well as what his role is throughout his involvement with the system. In this module, fathers will discuss the mission of the child welfare system and its philosophy. Fathers will also learn about the Family Service Plan: what it is, the importance of their involvement in creating the plan, and what occurs once the plan is created. They will discuss Juvenile Court proceedings and procedures as well as the roles and duties of caseworkers, probation officers, judges, child attorneys, parent attorneys, and others working in the child welfare system. In addition, fathers will learn about their rights and responsibilities as it relates to child welfare and any court involvement.

Weekly Session Breakdown:

- 1) An Overview of Child Welfare: Its Mission, Philosophy, and a Discussion about the Family Service Plan
- 2) Juvenile Court Proceedings and Procedures
- 3) The Roles and Duties of Child Welfare and Court Professionals
- 4) Your Rights and Responsibilities as Parents as they Relate to Child Welfare and Court Involvement

Module 2 – The Dynamic Father

Goal: Fathers will understand the importance of their role as it relates to healthy family functioning.

Learning Objectives: A father will be able to:

1. Identify his role, as father, in meeting the needs of his child.
2. Name ways to deal with feelings and beliefs that might stop him and his family from moving forward in the case process and in life in general.
3. Identify the feelings and beliefs that could occur when an absentee or incarcerated father attempts to reconnect with his child and family.
4. Use methods that will help him regain the trust of and build/rebuild strong relationships with his children and family.

Module Description:

Fathers play an important role in the lives of their children. For example, they are asked to be caregivers, playmates, protectors, role models, disciplinarians, and many other things. To accomplish this for their children, fathers must be dynamic. In this

module, fathers will discuss their role in the family, as it relates to reinforcing the role of the dynamic father (or reestablishing it in the case of fathers who have been absent in the lives of their children for whatever reason). Concepts presented in the module will help fathers in dealing with guilt associated with events that occurred in the past in order to get past the guilt and move forward. Since children need structure and proper guidance from a father, fathers will also learn how to become comfortable again setting ground rules for their children and saying “no” when the need arises – despite any feelings of guilt related to the past. Finally, and most importantly, fathers will also discuss effective methods of reconnecting with their family as well as ways to work toward building trust when it has been weakened and regaining trust when it has been lost.

Weekly Session Breakdown:

- 1) A Father’s Role in the Family
- 2) Dealing with Guilt – Letting It Go and Moving Forward
- 3) How to Say, “No” Despite the Past
- 4) Reconnecting and Regaining Trust

Module 3 – Enhancing Relationships

Goal: Fathers will improve their parenting skills by having a general understanding of the child’s needs at different developmental stages.

Learning Objectives: A father will be able to:

1. Identify essential physical and emotional needs of children and teenagers.
2. List the typical behaviors seen as children and teenagers develop.
3. Use gender-, age-, and developmentally-appropriate communication skills.
4. Use gender-, age-, and developmentally-appropriate discipline techniques.
5. Describe gender-, age-, and developmentally-appropriate activities that children/teenagers, fathers, and the family in general can do together to form stronger bonds.

Module Description:

Parenting in general is a challenging but very rewarding process. Good parent-child relationships set the groundwork for a more rewarding parenting experience. In this module, fathers will learn about child development, age-appropriate behaviors, and what children tend to need as they grow from child to adult. This information will help fathers recognize generally what behaviors and abilities to expect at different ages and stages of growth and will also help fathers consider how best to communicate with and nurture their child as he/she grows. As part of considering child growth, fathers will also discuss methods of gender- and age-appropriate discipline. Finally, as part of reinforcing a good parent-child relationship, fathers will discuss age-appropriate activities that they and their children can do together.

Weekly Session Breakdown:

- 1) Child Development: Milestones and Age-Appropriate Behaviors
- 2) How to Communicate Effectively and Nurture Your Child
- 3) Gender, Age, and Appropriate Discipline
- 4) Activities for You and Your Child

Module 4 – Partnering for Success

Goal: Fathers will identify and build from their strengths and will know how to locate and use available family and community resources to have a better chance of achieving success now and in the future.

Learning Objectives: A father will be able to:

1. Develop a list of family and community supports that will help him and his family achieve and maintain success – not only while involved with the agency but once the agency ends its involvement.
2. Create a résumé and describe other important skills associated with finding and securing a job when the need arises.
3. Write, in concrete terms, a plan to use resources whenever necessary.

Module Description:

Internal strengths, in addition to a strong network of dependable external supports, are crucial to the success of any family – whether or not the family is involved in the child welfare system. However, those same internal strengths that a father and his family possess, when blended with a dedicated and capable support system, is especially important to a father and his child in times of need. In this module, fathers will take a critical look at the strengths they currently possess, as well as those that can be reinforced, that will help fathers as they work through their service plan for the benefit of the child(ren) and family. Recognizing that it can be difficult to ask for help when it is needed, fathers will explore both available supports – family, community, and others, as well as how to ask for help when the time comes. The module will also present information related to seeking a career, the tools necessary to obtain a job, whenever necessary, and planning for next steps related to accessing all the resources available to a father and his family to have a better chance of success while involved with the child welfare system and in the future.

Weekly Session Breakdown:

- 1) Identifying Personal Strengths and Discovering Supports
- 2) Learning How to Ask for Help
- 3) Preparing for Interview and Landing a Job
- 4) Where Do I Go from Here? Accessing Available Resources

Fathers' Support Group Post-Assessment

Again, thank you for taking part in the Fathers' Support Group. Please spend a few minutes completing the following post-assessment. The assessment is important since it will:

- Help you discover what you now know after taking part in the entire support group; and, again,
- Help us to make sure that the information we offered in the modules and the way we offered that information was useful to you and others taking part in the group.

Below is the post-assessment you heard about when you took the pre-assessment several months ago. These are the same questions you saw on the pre-assessment. Please answer the questions honestly and think about how your answers can help you gauge what you learned and how they can help us improve the information and delivery of the support group. Your guide will ask everyone to talk about their answers after they complete the assessment.

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- Judges:

- Child Attorneys:

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2. List three ways to overcome any feelings and beliefs that might stop your family from succeeding with your case plan and in life in general.

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4. Briefly describe other important skills associated with finding and securing a job when the need arises.

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5. Think about and describe, in concrete terms, a plan to use resources available to you to better ensure the success of your family's case plan now and in the future.

What I Gained from the Support Group

Based on the post-assessment and what you learned during your time with the Father's Support Group:

1. Please list at least three things you learned during your time with the group that you plan to use now and in the future.

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2. Please list at least one thing you'd like to see improved in the group to make it better for those attending in the future.

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