

# Healthy Start Cohort Artifact

## Spring 2023 Fatherhood Cohort



### INTRODUCTION

The Healthy Start TA & Support Center (TASC) hosted its third Fatherhood Cohort from January through May 2023. Cohorts provide a space and place for Healthy Start (HS) grantees to come together to learn about what others are doing, document promising practices, and co-create tools and resources for the broader community around a specific topic (e.g., Evaluation, Fatherhood, Breastfeeding).

### COHORT OBJECTIVES

The Fatherhood Cohort focused on the following objectives:

- Develop a revised definition of ‘family’ for HS to assure the inclusion of fathers and other familial dynamics in communication materials.
- Identify and test nontraditional approaches and strategies for effective fatherhood programming.

### COHORT DELIVERABLES

During the cohort, members worked toward developing deliverables that could be shared with the broader HS community. Through activities, discussions, and homework assignments that were connected to the objectives, the cohort gathered information for the following:

- **Deliverable 1:** Respecting Diverse Family Dynamics & Using Inclusive Language
- **Deliverable 2:** Nontraditional Approaches to Effective Fatherhood Programming

These deliverables can be found on the following pages. Thank you to the 18 cohort members for their work and commitment to developing these documents for their fellow HS staff members. A full list of the cohort participants can be found on page 4. We encourage all readers to share this information with their fellow HS staff and any others who contribute to HS fatherhood work.

# Deliverable 1: Respecting Diverse Family Dynamics & Using Inclusive Language

This deliverable was developed as the result of an activity where cohort members discussed ways that entities (e.g., providers, institutions, agencies, community organizations) can be respectful of diverse family dynamics and use inclusive language when defining “family.” Listed below are strategies for being respectful of diverse family dynamics, inclusive language staff can adopt, and HS materials that can be modified to be more inclusive.

## STRATEGIES FOR BEING RESPECTFUL OF DIVERSE FAMILY DYNAMICS

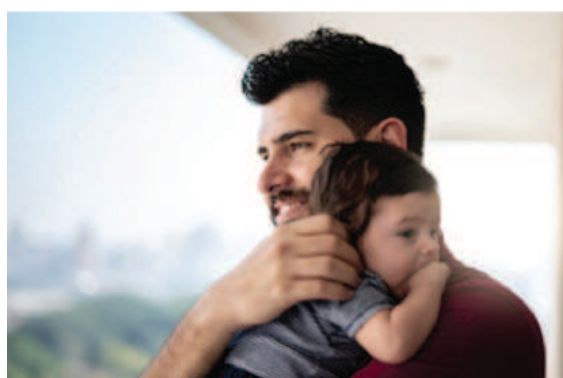
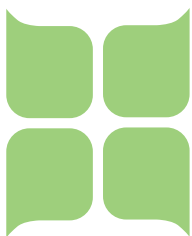
- Providers can work with pregnant people to create a birthing plan that includes the child’s family members (documented/legal). Some father figures may be uncles or grandfathers.
- Encourage staff to find out who the dad is when enrolling mothers into the program.
- Ensure all forms are inclusive of other family members, especially dads. The questions should be open-ended to allow the individual to define their own “family.”

## INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE THAT ORGANIZATIONS CAN USE

- Partner
- Spouse
- Parental figure
- Caregiver
- Father figure
- Stepfather
- Paternal (within maternal and child health)
- Family
- Village (within the context of community)

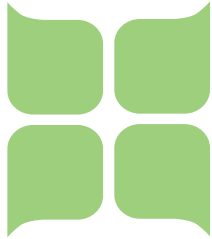
## HEALTHY START MATERIALS THAT CAN BE MODIFIED TO BE MORE INCLUSIVE

- HRSA data collection forms:
  - Update to be inclusive of all identities
  - Include cultural and historical assessment questions to determine each client’s family structure
  - Develop prenatal forms specifically for the second parent, including fathers
- Brochures, flyers, and other outreach materials



## Deliverable 2: Nontraditional Strategies for Effective Fatherhood Programming

This deliverable was created as the result of an activity where cohort members discussed nontraditional strategies for effective fatherhood programming, including how to leverage new methods to engage fathers. The information has been distilled into three sections: media/technology methods, engagement logistics, and engagement locations.



### MEDIA/TECHNOLOGY METHODS FOR ENGAGEMENT

*Healthy Start projects can use the following tools to engage with fathers:*

- Free group messaging services (e.g., WhatsApp) to connect with fathers
- Text messaging (dependent on pricing), with boundaries and expectations around communications
- Social media to celebrate and/or highlight fathers' successes and share resources
- Google documents to digitally share files, curricula, and resources
- YouTube or Zoom as a source for advocacy, troubleshooting issues, etc.
- National Healthy Start Association's (NHTSA) *Text for Dads* program

### ENGAGEMENT LOGISTICS TO CONSIDER

*Healthy Start projects can consider the following logistics when engaging with fathers:*

- Consider that fathers may work different shifts and rotate timing of activities accordingly
- Adopt an "any time, any place" approach to ensure services are available to those who can't be served during traditional work hours
- Use technology to make services more accessible and engage fathers who cannot participate in person
- Provide incentives for participation

### POTENTIAL ACTIVITY LOCATIONS

*Healthy Start projects can host a variety of activities at various locations, such as:*

- Hikes
- Mini golf
- Family game night\*
- Dad book club\*
- Father-child card game night\*
- Video game competition in a local recreation center\*
- "Dad and Donuts"/father-child breakfasts
- Father-child dinners\*
- Father engagement with teens in schools during study halls
- Men's breakfast at community church
- Parking lot events (e.g., baby shower)
- Barbershop events
- Cookouts

\*could be hosted virtually or in person

# Spring 2023 Fatherhood Cohort Participant List

Name	Title	Site	State	Site Type	Services
Ashley Torres	Father Involvement Specialist	Southern New Jersey Perinatal Cooperative, Inc.	New Jersey	Urban	Community-based organization
Christopher Gibson	Program Specialist	County of Alameda	California	Urban, Border	Health Department
David Comer	Fatherhood Service, Supervisor	Children's Service Society of Wisconsin	Wisconsin	Urban	Health Department
Devin Anderson	Fatherhood Coordinator	Government of the District of Columbia	District of Columbia	Urban	Health Department
Johnny Alicea	Fatherhood Specialist	Connecticut Department of Public Health	Connecticut	Urban	Community-based organization
Kendric Thomas	Male Engagement Coordinator	Healthier Moms and Babies, Inc.	Indiana	Urban	Community-based organization
La Sondra Keys	Project Director	University of Houston System	Texas	Urban	Community-based organization
Lacey Everett	Case Manager, Chair of Recruitment and Engagement	The Corporation of Mercer University	Georgia	Rural	Community-based organization
Lydia Harris	Perinatal Care Coordination Specialist	Healthy Start, Inc.	Pennsylvania	Urban	Community-based organization
Michelle Clark	Supervisor	Northeast Florida Healthy Start Coalition, Inc.	Florida	Urban	Community-based organization
Norman Goldston	Fatherhood Facilitator	Connecticut Department of Public Health	Connecticut	Urban	Health Department
Obed Nkuriragenda	Worker -Community Health	Children's Hospital Medical Center	Ohio	Urban	Community-based organization
Onaje Muid	Fatherhood Coordinator	The Foundation for Delaware County	Pennsylvania	Urban	Foundation
Reginald Van Appelen	Senior Manager, Community Collaboration and Partnerships (Fatherhood Coordinator)	County of Los Angeles	California	Urban, Rural	Health Department
Rich DeRosa	Fatherhood Manager	Boston Public Health Commission	Massachusetts	Urban	Health Department
Shantai Young	Clinical Program Manager	University of Miami	Florida	Urban	Community-based organization
Stefan Johnson	Fatherhood Case Manager	Family Road (of Greater Baton Rouge)	Louisiana	Urban	Community-based organization
Will Naugles	Male Involvement Community Health Worker	University of Illinois	Illinois	Urban	FQHC/Health Center