

## What are some of the barriers to fatherhood involvement?

- Lack of role models and realistic expectations
- Economic situations and how fathers see themselves
- Lack of community support
- Lack of financial resources
- Lack of knowledge about custody issues after divorce/separation
- The armor and habits of manhood

## How do we help break some of these barriers?

- Engaging fathers
- Empowering fathers
- Educating fathers about their rights
- Educating fathers on how to navigate the school system
- Educating fathers on how to apply for services
- Assisting fathers connect with community providers
- Changing the overall perception on fathers
- Assisting incarcerated or convicted fathers engage with their children by making them aware of DCF's involvement, encouraging fathers to participate in their children's plan for welfare and permanency decision making.

## Did you know...?

- Fathers (custodial and non custodial) have rights to be involved in their children's academics and request their academic records / progress, attend school activities and most importantly be informed of decisions being made regarding the children's learning,
- Fathers have the right, whenever appropriate, to seek custody or visitation of their children through Family / Probate Court,
- Fathers have rights to request financial assistance from the Department of Social Services,
- Fathers have the right to apply for housing assistance, and
- There are services for fathers to learn how to be great supportive parents to their children.

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Visit our Facebook page:  
<https://www.facebook.com/dadsmatter2>

National Fatherhood Initiative:  
[www.nationalfatherhood.org](http://www.nationalfatherhood.org)

Department of Social Services:  
<http://www.ct.gov/fatherhood>



# Dads Matter Too!

**Region 5 F.E.L.T.**  
**MISSION STATEMENT**  
To educate, inform and empower fathers while strengthening and increasing their roles in the lives of their children.

**REGION 5 F.E.L.T.**  
**Fatherhood Engagement**  
**Leadership Team**



**DEPARTMENT OF**  
**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**



## Fatherhood Initiative's Goals:

- For fathers and their family members to become involved in the lives of their children
- To promote public awareness of the role of fathers
- To provide linkages for fathers to public and community providers
- To improve our current service delivery to fathers
- To educate DCF staff and Community Providers to better serve fathers and their children.

## Fatherhood Engagement Leadership Team (F.E.L.T) Overview

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) has developed F.E.L.T to combat internal and external perceptions of the value of fathers and their perceived inability to nurture and parent.

The F.E.L.T team is comprised of DCF (internal) Staff at all levels from Office Assistants, Case Aides, Social workers, Supervisors, Program Managers and the Area Director. The initiative is also supported by the Regional Director and Commissioner.

The External Team consists of members of different community providers at the State and Local level.

## STATISTICS

Research suggests, over 24 million children live apart from their biological fathers. That is 1 out of every 3 (33%) children in America. Nearly 2 in 3 (64%) African American children live in father-absent homes. One in three (34%) Hispanic children, and 1 in 4 (25%) white children live in father-absent homes. In 1960, only 11% of children lived in father-absent homes.

Children in father-absent homes are almost four times more likely to be poor. Children who are born to single mothers show higher levels of aggressive behavior, than children born to married mothers. Premature infants who have increased visits from their fathers during hospitalization have improved weight gain and score higher on developmental tests. Even after controlling for income, youths in father-absent households still had significantly higher odds of incarceration than those in mother-father families. A more positive father-child relationship predicts a reduced risk of engagement in multiple first risky behaviors. Adolescent girls who reported higher levels of relationship quality with their fathers were less likely to have sex before age 16, compared with adolescent girls who reported lower levels of father-daughter relationship quality.

These children are also more likely to use drugs, to experience educational, health, emotional and behavioral problems, commit suicide, teen pregnancy, become victims of child abuse, and to engage in criminal behavior. It must be noted that despite fathers own educational successes, involvement with the child enhances the child's educational outcomes.

The federal government spends \$99.8 billion dollars every year on programs - such as child support enforcement and anti-poverty efforts - to support father-absent homes. This is a conservative estimate; it does not include federal benefit programs for communities, indirect costs related to poor outcomes of children from father-absent homes, and long-term costs in reduced tax income from low-earning single-parent families.

## Why is it important to have fathers engage in their children's lives?

Researchers have found that childhood fatherlessness decreases education attainment and adult wages, and has adverse effects on a number of other socioeconomic outcomes.

Father-absence creates a significant decrease in school performance, a significant increase in disruptive school behavior, a significant decrease in performance on aptitude tests, in cognitive skills, in terms of grades, and is cumulative in nature; and predicts truancy and grade repetition. Fatherless children also account for 71% of all high school dropouts. Some of the affects of this low academic achievement can be seen in the substantial increase in men's odds of ending up in the lowest occupational stratum repeating the "illegitimacy cycle, and ending up "dead-broke" unable to support their children.

In contrast to this academic destruction of children, father-present children "are more likely to get mostly A's, enjoy school, and to participate in extracurricular activities if their non-resident fathers are involved in their schools than if they are not. There are ample studies to show that this is lack of involvement is not entirely by their choice.

Sources: [www.Fatherhood.org](http://www.Fatherhood.org)

