



WithinReach™

2024 LEARNING SERIES

**PREGNANCY AND
POSTPARTUM SUPPORT**

Wednesdays in May

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Thank you to our premier sponsor



and Series Supporters



We want to acknowledge that we occupy the ancestral lands of the Coast Salish Peoples, in particular the Tulalip, Snohomish, Stillaguamish, Suquamish, Muckleshoot, Nisqually, Puyallup, and the first people of Seattle, the Duwamish People, past, present and future. We honor with gratitude the land itself.

We also want to recognize that the United States as we know it was built at the often-fatal expense of forcefully enslaved Black and Indigenous people. We must acknowledge that much of what we know of this country today, including its culture, economic growth, and development has been made possible by the labor of enslaved Africans, their descendants, and Indigenous peoples past and present. Today, we are indebted to their labor and the labor of many Black and brown bodies that continue to work in the shadows for our collective benefit.

Land and Labor Acknowledgement

2024 Learning Series: Pregnancy and Postpartum Support



**PREGNANCY AND
POSTPARTUM SUPPORT**

Wednesday, May 29
noon - 1 p.m.



Anne Stone



Jose Romo Ramirez



Steven Thibert

**Making Connections for Fathers
Toward Healthy Families**



Making Connections for Fathers Toward Healthy Families

Within Reach Lunch and Learn
May 29, 2024



Anne Stone
Washington State Fatherhood Council,
Director

Steven Thibert
Council Father

Jose Romo Ramirez
Department of Health, WIC



Washington
Fatherhood
Council





Your Strongest Father Memories

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Why do we need to focus on Fathering why not just Parenting?

We
know
that:

Child and family well-being improve when fathers are positively engaged in their children's lives.

Fathers play a unique and important role in children's development.

Fathers should have support and resources to become the fathers they aspire to be.

**Washington
Fatherhood
Council**



Washington State Fatherhood Council

- Founded in 2018 after the first Washington State Fatherhood Invitational Summit - state, local community based, academic, advocates and fathers with lived experience
- One third of the council members are fathers with lived experience with our systems



“Help by accepting us as fathers”.

Father respondent

Survey respondents

“Transforming systems through fathers voices” Washington Fatherhood Council 2019

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Fatherhood Council: Values, Goals, Vision



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Fathers' and Childrens' Development

Fathering impacts all areas of children's development

- Communication and language
- Learning and cognition
- Relationships and social-emotional skills

Fathers impact children

- Directly (father-child relationship, provision/protection)
- Family (coparenting relationship, family system)
- Uniquely



Factors Influencing Fathers

- Childhood experiences in caregiving relationships
- Male socialization
- Father identity and beliefs about fathering
- Father and child characteristics
- Co-parenting non cohabitating and maternal gatekeeping
- Broader ecological systems – family, community, work
- Historical, sociopolitical, and cultural context
- Systems biases get hardwired



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Unmarried Fathers' Involvement, By Parents' Relationship Status at Birth

	COHABITATING (%)	VISITING (%)	NON – ROMANTIC (%)
GAVE MONEY, BOUGHT THINGS	97	84	28
VISITED HOSPITAL	97	71	29
NAME ON BIRTH CERTIFICATE	96	80	52
MOTHER WANTS FATHER INVOLVED	99	99	74

“Father involvement declines over time. By age five, only 50% of non-resident fathers have seen their child in the past month.”

Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study - data sheet 2014

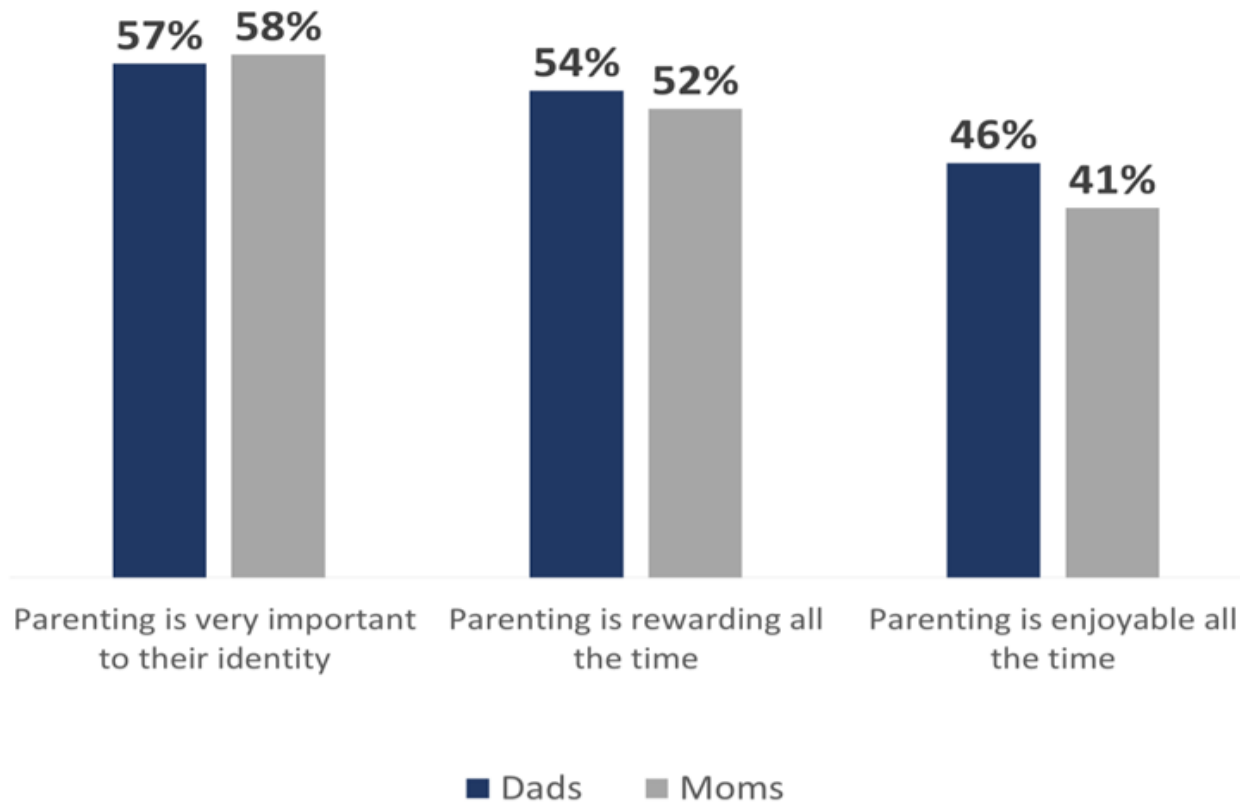
Study followed -5,000 children in 20 cities followed for 22 years

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Fatherhood Experience

☐ Dads and moms report similar attitudes about parenting₁



1. Pew Research Survey of parents with children under the age of 18, 2015

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At Six Weeks Old...

Infants respond differently to each parent's voice.

- A quiet and alert infant will focus more quickly on a mother's voice.
- An upset or fretting infant will calm more readily to a father's voice.

By one month of age, a mother will often pick up and hold her infant the same way 9 times out of 10.



On the other hand, a father will pick up and hold his infant a different ways 9 times out of 10.



At Eight Weeks Old...

When a baby sees daddy, the eyes widen,
shoulders raise, the heartbeat and
breathing increases.

The infant becomes excited in the presence
of dad.



When a baby sees mommy, the eyes
narrow, the shoulders relax, heartbeat and
breathing decrease. The infant becomes
calm in the presence of mom.



2019 WA Survey of Father's Greatest Needs

5 Greatest Challenges

- (1)** Custody and parenting time agreements
- (2)** No services available for fathers
- (3)** Social stigmas about fatherhood
- (4)** Issues related to child support
- (5)** Financial insecurity

“Allowing fatherhood to be an admirable position in the family”

Survey respondent

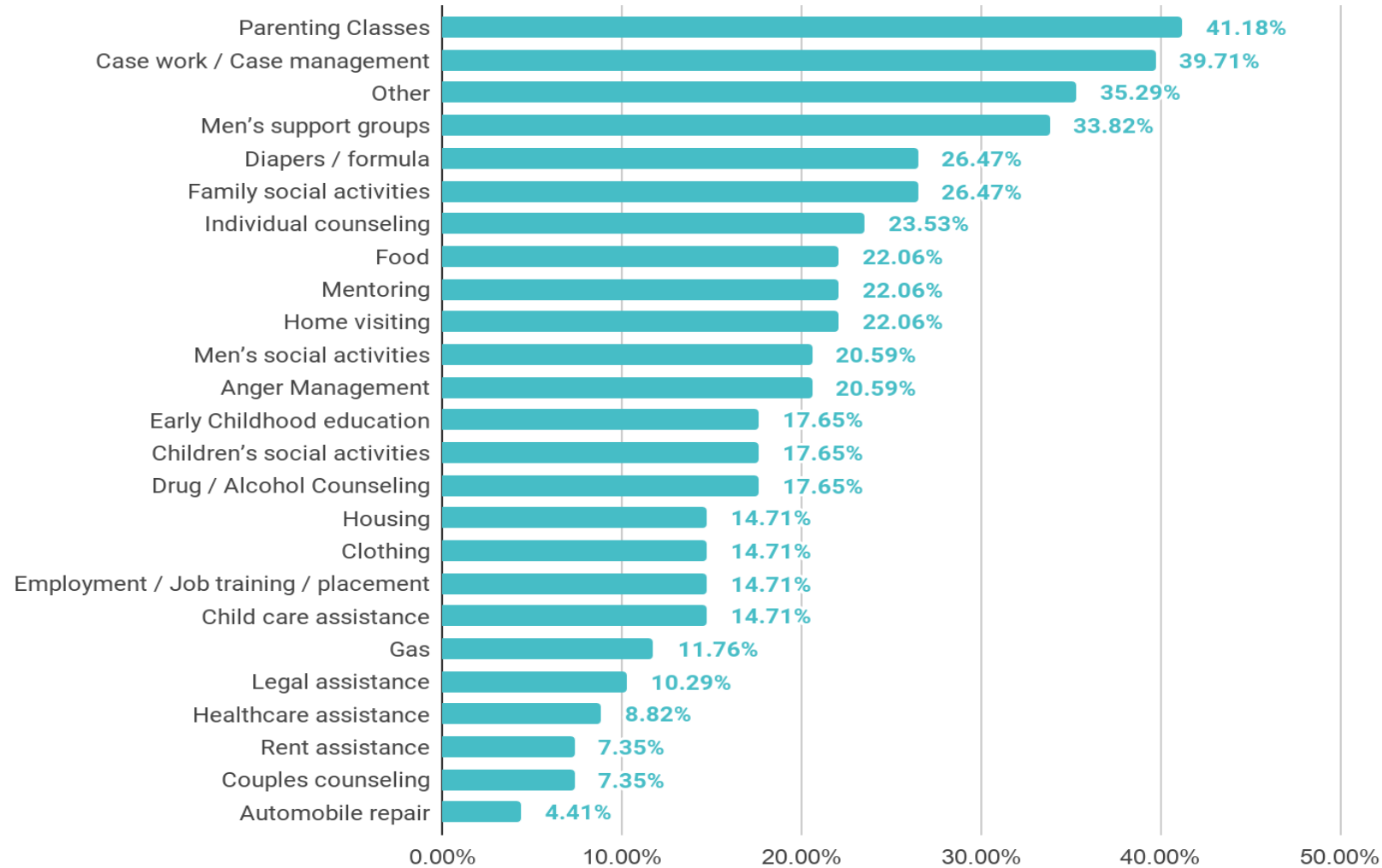
“Transforming systems through fathers voices” Washington Fatherhood Council Survey 2019

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Types of Services

Types of Services Organizations Provide, 2020, N=68



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What are Fathers looking for?

Accessible information from credible sources

Father-focused resources

- Guidance about how to be a supportive partner

Information about childhood development

- How to engage with young children to promote healthy development
- Age expectations and behavior management

Ways to access services that are non-stigmatizing and focused upon their unique needs

Normalize the frustrations of parenting

Lee, Walsh, et al., 2013; ; Lee, Walsh, et al., Under Review; Walsh et al., 2014; Walsh, 2020



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Changing the Narrative?

- Promote Fatherhood Inclusion in existing services,
- Build Capacity for Dads to come together in informal ways,
- Rethink our family engagement when Mom is the presenting parent without Father,
- Foster Positive Co-Parenting Relationships,
- Use Father Friendly imagery – open source free!

[Fatherhood Photo Bank](#) | [WA Interagency Fatherhood Council](#)
(wafatherhoodcouncil.org)

Bring Dads with lived experience into our program design, implementation and evaluation



Steven

My Journey



Ways to Support a Dad in Prenatal and Postpartum

- Is dad being acknowledged? Is he being supported?
- Why is it important to involve dad?
- If dad needs help, what resources are available?
- Where would you start?

Early Relational Health

Early Relational Health (ERH) is the state of emotional well-being that grows from the positive emotional connection between young children and their caregivers when they experience strong relationships with each other.

ERH is vital for creating the foundation for healthy development and lifelong health and well-being.



Why Early Relational Health Matters

- Creates the necessary footing for young children to optimally learn about and engage in the world around them
- Helps children to cultivate relationships throughout their lifetime
- Lays the foundation for healthy brain development, which supports their well-being, learning, and behavior into adulthood
- Foundational early relationships shape the well-being of both the child and the caregiver
- The two-way nature of early relationships affects two-generational health and well-being, both in the moment and for the long term

Daddy can do it too!

ERH for Infants

Eye contact

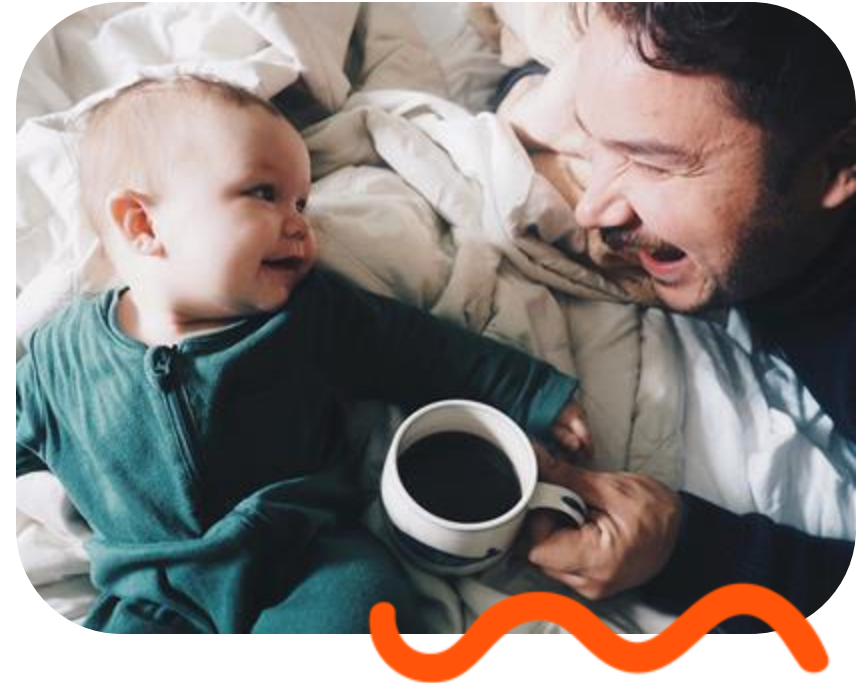
Mirroring

Holding baby

Feeding baby

Soothing baby

Changing baby





Making Connections for Fathers Toward Healthy Families





Hospital Birth



Home Birth



Romo Familia

Early Relational Health: is the state of emotional well-being that grows from the **positive emotional connection** between babies and toddlers and their parents/caregivers when they experience strong, **positive**, and **nurturing relationships** with each other.



<https://nurtureconnection.org/early-relational-health/early-relational-health-explained/>



Parenting

The act or
process of
becoming a
parent



<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/parenting>

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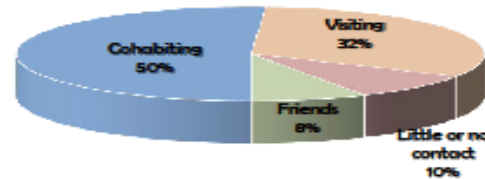
From the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study Fact Sheet

fragilefamilies.princeton.edu/publications

Non-marital childbearing has increased dramatically since the 1970s. At that time, about 10% of all births were to unmarried parents. In 2006, the number was nearly 40%. To gain a better understanding of what these trends imply for parents, children and society, the *Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study* has been following approximately 5,000 children born in large U.S. cities between 1998 and 2000, including a large oversample of children born to unmarried parents. The study has yielded a number of important findings.

A large proportion of unmarried parents are in "marriage-like" relationships at the time of their child's birth. One-half of unmarried parents are living together at the time of their child's birth, and another 32% are in 'visiting unions,' defined as romantically involved but living apart. Less than 20% are not romantically involved at the time of the child's birth.

Figure 1. Unmarried Parents' Relationship Status at Birth



Most unmarried fathers are very involved during pregnancy and immediately after the birth, especially fathers in cohabiting and visiting unions. Over 80% provide support to the mother during the pregnancy and over 70% visit the mother and baby at the hospital. In addition, the vast majority of unmarried fathers say they want to help raise their child.

Table 1. Unmarried Fathers' Involvement, By Parents' Relationship Status at Birth

	Cohabiting (%)	Visiting (%)	Non-romantic (%)
Gave money, bought things	97	84	28
Visited hospital	97	71	29
Name on birth certificate	96	80	52
Mother wants father involved	99	99	74

Unmarried parents are much more disadvantaged than married parents.

Compared to married parents, unmarried parents are:

- ✓ more likely to have started parenting in their teens,
- ✓ less likely to have lived with both biological parents growing up,
- ✓ more likely to have had children with other partners,
- ✓ more likely to be poor,
- ✓ more likely to suffer from depression,
- ✓ more likely to report substance abuse,
- ✓ more likely to have spent time in jail, and
- ✓ disproportionately African American and Hispanic.

Despite their high hopes, most parental relationships do not last, and as a result many children experience high levels of instability. Only 35% of unmarried couples are still living together five years after the birth of their child, and less than half of the 35% are married. Couples that were cohabiting at birth are more likely to be together than couples in 'visiting unions.' Just over 50% of cohabiting couples are married or cohabiting five years after the birth.

Once their relationship with baby's father ends, many unmarried mothers form new partnerships and many have children with new partners. Nearly 40% of all unmarried mothers



Rituals= Parenting
Experiences



CONSCIOUS FATHERING™



A Guide for Expectant Fathers

By Bernie Dorsey

"The hardest thing we will ever do is parent.
Funny that it will also be the single most important thing we do."

Conscious Fathering Jose Romo Ramirez

<https://www.multicare.org/event/conscious-fathering-class-at-good-samaritan-hospital-2/>



PARENT TRUST
FOR WASHINGTON CHILDREN



Conscious Fathering-Jose Romo Ramirez
<https://www.multicare.org/event/conscious-fathering-class-at-good-samaritan-hospital-2/>

A soft-focus background image showing a pair of adult hands gently cupping a baby's feet. The baby's feet are the central focus, with toes clearly visible. The hands are positioned on either side, with fingers slightly curled to support the feet. The overall tone is warm and nurturing.

Conscious Fathering Overview

- Parenting C.P.R.
- Baby's Basic Needs
- Cycle of Care
- Handling with Care
- Partnership
- Define Your Fatherhood



Why engage men and dads at WIC? Research shows that children and families do better when fathers are involved. Kids exhibit better school performance, increased self-esteem and improved relationships with peers, while parents feel less stress when they support each other and co-parent.

TESTED TOOLS

This toolkit is based on a programmatic review of fatherhood involvement efforts in early childhood programs and is a collection of many tangible steps your WIC site can take to become more inclusive of men and dads.

Research indicates that having a commitment to including men and dads and creating a strategy to do so may be the most important thing and actually more important than what the strategy is. There is not one "right way" of implementing any of these practices. Rather, this toolkit will provide you with options and recommendations from previous program success.

DEFINING DAD

Many times in this toolkit the word dad will be used, but it should be noted that "dad" can include biological fathers as well as grandfathers, uncles, mother's partner, etc. Dad may be the single head of a household, married, cohabitating, or non-residential.

KEEP IN MIND

A focus on dads should not stigmatize children. Be sensitive to those kids who do not have a dad or significant male figure in their lives if you hold special events or recognition for dads.



ENGAGING MEN AND DADS AT WIC TOOLKIT

TOOLKIT SECTIONS:

- I. Engage and Train WIC Staff on Inclusion of dads
- II. Make the Environment Welcoming to dads
- III. Communicate Directly with dads
- IV. Help dads to Support moms and Breastfeeding
- V. Encourage moms to Include dads
- VI. Provide Service Referrals to dads and Build Community Partnerships

SECTION I: ENGAGE AND TRAIN WIC STAFF ON INCLUSION OF DADS

1. Reach Out and Train Staff on Involving dads
 - » Introducing the idea to your coworkers - improving staff's observation and assessment skills
 - » Learning about the benefits of father involvement - ways to connect with and support fathers in their relationships with their children
 - » Ways to include and interact with dads so that staff can develop positive, goal-oriented relationships with fathers - reflecting and examining stereotypes about fathers
2. Promote Healthy Relationships between Women and Men at WIC
 - » Discussion in your office about concerns that staff may have about working more with dads
 - » Maintain open communication if new concerns arise
 - » Review hiring practices and advertise new positions that might attract men to the position
 - » Help female staff to become comfortable working with fathers

TOOLKIT SECTIONS:

I. Engage and Train WIC Staff on Inclusion of dads

II. Make the Environment Welcoming to dads

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VI. Provide Service Referrals to dads and Build Community Partnerships

Washington's North Star Father Friendly Principles

- Recognize - promote **co-parenting for better outcomes** of children & families
- Factor in the essential role of fathers in the growth and development of children
- Involve **fathers with lived experience** in the design of programs and policies
- **Recruit and retain staff** that better reflect the communities they serve
- **Train service providers** on effective fatherhood inclusion communication and practices
- Increase **fatherhood specific resources**
- Increase **data collection and analysis** to show importance of fathers and father figures
- Recognize, address **individual and system biases** that marginalize fathers

Commit to
equity, fairness
and justice for all
fathers and
families.



What thoughts do you have?

- *What shows up in your work? What are you already doing to support father-child relationships?*
- *How might you stay mindfully aware of the emotional and relational experiences of children and fathers who are in this journey?*
- *What more might you do to explicitly value, attend to, and support father-child relationships?*





PSA from the
National
Fatherhood
Council.

“Lets Crawl.....”

Washington
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Questions and Comments

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Register for the 6th Annual Washington
Fatherhood Summit

[2024 Fatherhood Summit | WA Interagency
Fatherhood Council \(wafatherhoodcouncil.org\)](https://wafatherhoodcouncil.org)



[Fatherhood Photo Bank | WA Interagency
Fatherhood Council
\(wafatherhoodcouncil.org\)](https://wafatherhoodcouncil.org)



Thank you for attending today's session

We want to hear from you.
Please fill out the survey.

Learning Series 2024: Making
Connections for Fathers for
Healthy Families - May 29

A photograph of a pregnant woman with dark hair, wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt, smiling and looking towards a man. The man, wearing glasses and a green shirt, is smiling back at her and has his hands resting on her pregnant belly. They are in a bright, indoor setting, possibly a kitchen.

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Wednesdays
May 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29