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The Case for Fathers

Building a Father-Friendly Court

Presenter



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Health and Human Services Commission-Family Support Services (HHSC-FSS)

- Master of Science-Marriage, Family, and Human Development
- Fatherhood Specialist-10 years
- Father-10 years



Agenda

1. An Introduction to Family Support Services
2. Why Father Involvement Matters
3. A Case Study: Fatherhood EFFECT
4. Understanding the Intersection of Prevention and Specialty Courts
5. Building a Father-Friendly Court System

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What is Family Support Services (FSS)?



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Family Support Services

En Español

GENERAL INFORMATION

► Programs

FOR FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

- [Find Services](#)
- [Get Parenting Tips](#)

FOR PARTNERS AND GRANTEES

- [Partners In Prevention Conference](#)
- [Information for Grantees](#)

Family Support Services

The Family Support Services program promotes healthy families and communities through:



- Parent education.
- Home visiting programs for parents of infants, toddlers and preschoolers.
- Supporting family caregivers.
- Assisting families in finding resources.
- Youth and family counseling.
- Supporting positive youth development.

Family Support Services provides these and other supports for families through community-based programs. Read the [program descriptions](#) to learn more, and use the [service locator](#) to see what programs are available in your county.

<https://fss.hhs.texas.gov/>

The FSS Prevention Framework



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Promote healthy families and communities through home visiting, education, and counseling programs.



Help communities identify and meet needs, enhance local services, and improve existing programs.



Manage community-based programs that offer free, voluntary services to families.

<https://fss.hhs.texas.gov/>

FSS Program Overview



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Pregnancy

Prenatal Care
Family Self-Sufficiency
Parenting Resources

Texas Home Visiting (THV)
Texas Nurse Family Partnership (TNFP)
Service Members, Veterans and Families (SMVF)
Fatherhood EFFECT (FE)

New Parents

Parenting Support
Child Development Education
Parenting Education
Connections to Resources

Healthy Outcomes through Prevention and Early
Support (HOPES), THV, TNFP, SMVF, FE

Early Childhood

Positive Child Developmental Outcomes
Support Structures
Developing Protective Factors

HOPES, THV, TNFP, SMVF, FE

School-Age

Child and Family Resilience
Positive Family Dynamics

Community Youth Development (CYD)
Family and Youth Success (FAYS)
Statewide Youth Services Network (SYSN)
Long-Term Youth and Family Support (LTYFS)
SMVF, FE

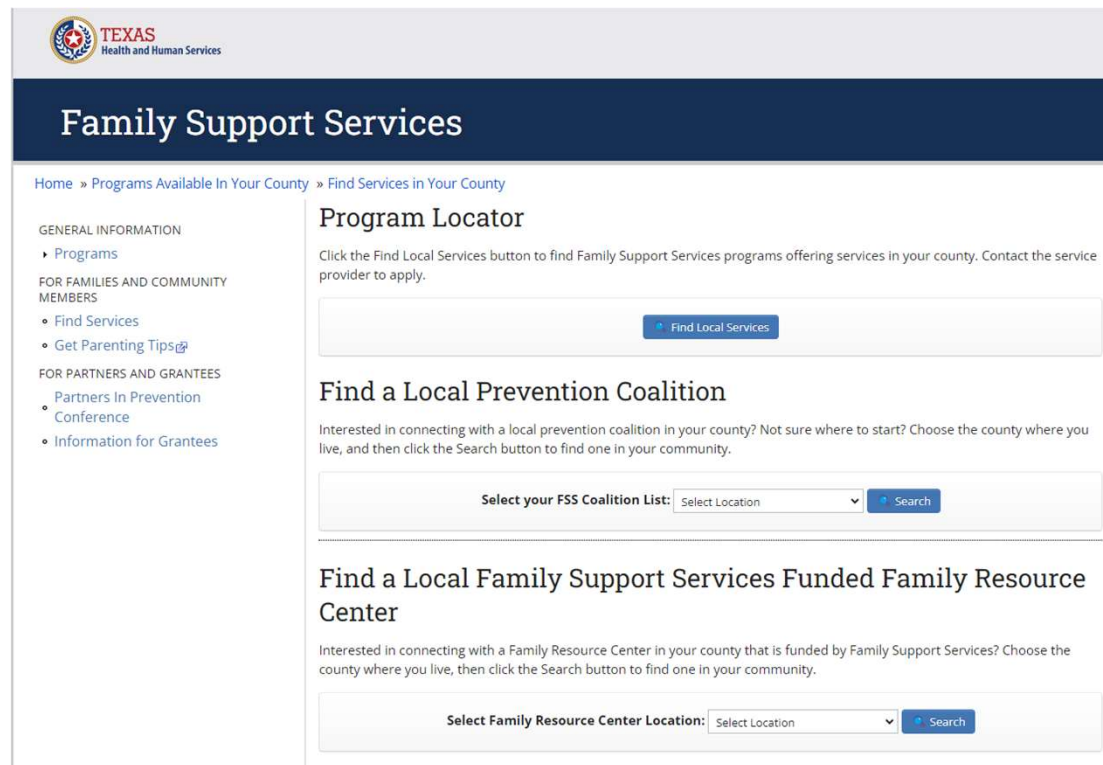
Adolescence

Youth and Family Resilience
Positive Youth Development
Positive Parental Involvement
Risk Prevention

CYD, FAYS, SYSN, LTYFS, SMVF, FE

<https://fss.hhs.texas.gov/programs/default.asp>

Locating Local FSS Services



The screenshot shows the 'Family Support Services' page on the Texas Health and Human Services website. The page has a dark blue header with the Texas Health and Human Services logo and the title 'Family Support Services'. Below the header, there is a breadcrumb trail: 'Home » Programs Available In Your County » Find Services in Your County'. The left sidebar contains a menu with the following items: 'GENERAL INFORMATION' (with a sub-link 'Programs'), 'FOR FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS' (with sub-links 'Find Services' and 'Get Parenting Tips'), and 'FOR PARTNERS AND GRANTEEES' (with sub-links 'Partners In Prevention Conference' and 'Information for Grantees'). The main content area is titled 'Program Locator' and includes a sub-header 'Find a Local Prevention Coalition'. Below this, there is a text box with the instruction: 'Click the Find Local Services button to find Family Support Services programs offering services in your county. Contact the service provider to apply.' This is followed by a button labeled 'Find Local Services'. Below this, there is a section titled 'Find a Local Prevention Coalition' with the text: 'Interested in connecting with a local prevention coalition in your county? Not sure where to start? Choose the county where you live, and then click the Search button to find one in your community.' This is followed by a form with a dropdown menu labeled 'Select your FSS Coalition List:' and a 'Search' button. Below this, there is a section titled 'Find a Local Family Support Services Funded Family Resource Center' with the text: 'Interested in connecting with a Family Resource Center in your county that is funded by Family Support Services? Choose the county where you live, then click the Search button to find one in your community.' This is followed by a form with a dropdown menu labeled 'Select Family Resource Center Location:' and a 'Search' button.

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Family Support Services

Home » Programs Available In Your County » Find Services in Your County

GENERAL INFORMATION

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- Partners In Prevention Conference
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Program Locator

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Find Local Services

Find a Local Prevention Coalition

Interested in connecting with a local prevention coalition in your county? Not sure where to start? Choose the county where you live, and then click the Search button to find one in your community.

Select your FSS Coalition List: Select Location Search

Find a Local Family Support Services Funded Family Resource Center

Interested in connecting with a Family Resource Center in your county that is funded by Family Support Services? Choose the county where you live, then click the Search button to find one in your community.

Select Family Resource Center Location: Select Location Search

<https://fss.hhs.texas.gov/Programs Available In Your County/default.asp>

Protective Factors

Protective Factors: characteristics or conditions that reduce or buffer the effects of risk, stress, or trauma. A protective factor is an asset of some kind.

Knowledge of
Parenting

Concrete
Supports

Resiliency

Nurturing and
Attachment

Social Support

Children's
Social and
Emotional
Competence

<https://friendsnrc.org/prevention/protective-factors/>

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Fatherhood EFFECT

Outcomes for Fathers

Understanding the Importance of Involved Fathers

- **Involved Fathers:**

- ▶ Are in constant contact with their child(ren).
- ▶ Are engaged with their child(ren).
- ▶ Have a sense of closeness with their child(ren).



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Fathers and the Protective Factors



Children who grow up with involved fathers experience better mental, emotional, educational and social outcomes.

- Concrete Supports:
 - Education, Employment, and Financial Security
- Resiliency:
 - Decision-making
- Nurturing and Attachment:
 - Security, Confidence, and Attachment
- Social and Emotional Competence:
 - Self-Worth and Self-Advocacy
 - Cognitive, Verbal, and Motor Development

Fatherhood EFFECT: An Overview

- Since 2014, Fatherhood EFFECT programs have brought prevention and early intervention services directly to fathers.

Programming

- Education, counseling
- Case management
- Basic needs support

Organizational Strategies

- Increase father-involvement
- Leverage dedicated staff
- Support father-leaders

Community and Systems Building

- Increase community capacity
- Father-focused community partnerships
- Father perspective and voice

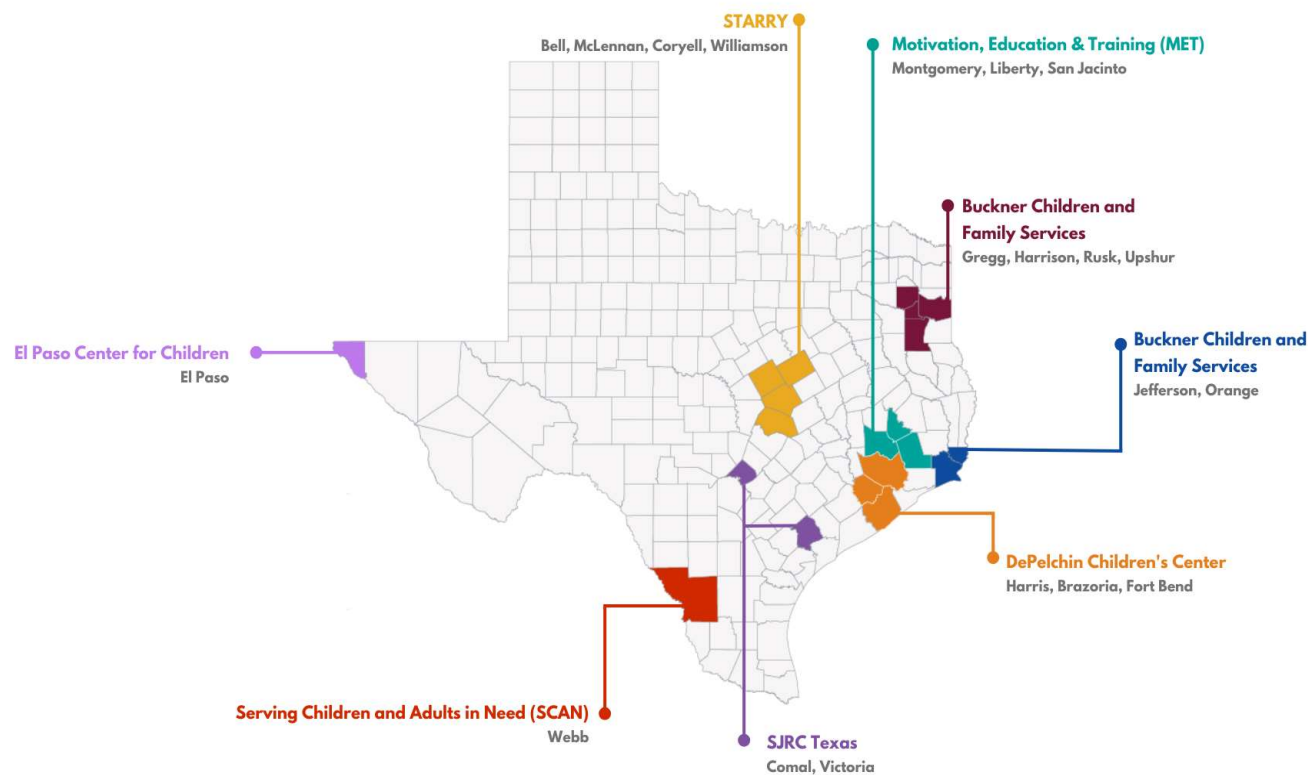


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Fatherhood EFFECT Providers



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What Fatherhood EFFECT Has Accomplished

- In Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 - FY2024*:
 - ▶ 4,292 fathers served
 - ▶ 44,397 services provided
 - ▶ Protective factors
 - ◇ 2,523 responded to the post-service survey
 - ◇ 100% saw an increase in 1+ protective factors from the pre-service survey
 - ◇ 83% saw an increase in all protective factors

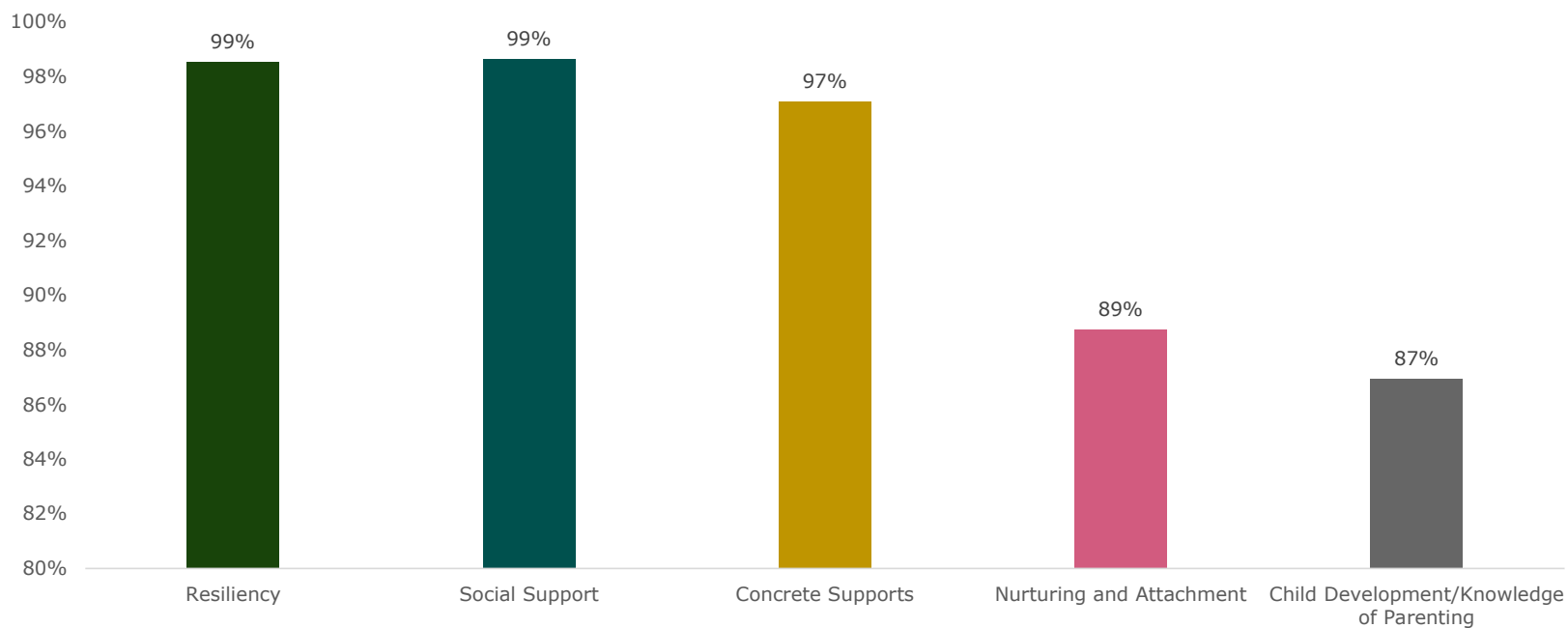
Data retrieved from HHSC-FSS Data Warehouse 12/5/2024
*September 2019-August 2024



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Outcomes by Protective Factors (FY20-24*)

Percentage of Respondents Experiencing an Increase in Protective Factors by Protective Factor



Data retrieved from HHSC-FSS Data Warehouse 12/5/2024
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Meeting at the Intersection

Prevention Never Stops

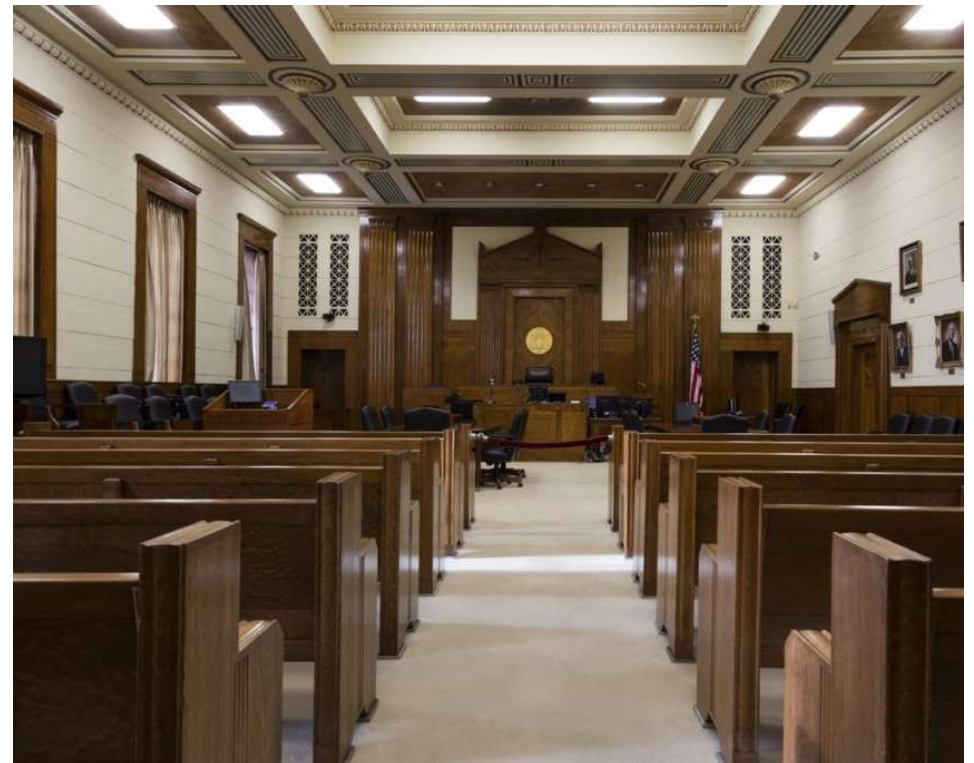
The Data



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Fatherhood EFFECT providers indicate a small percentage of the fathers served are also involved in the court system in some way.

- ▶ Family courts
- ▶ Child protection
- ▶ Drug courts
- ▶ Mental health



Fathers' Perspective

What do Fatherhood EFFECT grantees hear from the fathers about their experience with court systems?

Frustration with
pace of the
process

Missed
opportunities to
be with their
child

"Impossible"
orders

Feel minimal
support

Feel overlooked

Relational
stress

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Specialty Courts and Prevention

- Specialty courts are uniquely positioned to support specific needs.
- By better engaging fathers, we all benefit from their strengths.
- Together we can support families by building father-friendly courts.



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Building a Father-Friendly Specialty Court

Engaging Fathers to Support the Interests of the Child

Defining Father Engagement



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Father engagement refers to the **purposeful involvement of fathers** in program services and activities with the **goal of improving outcomes for fathers, children, and families.**

Strategies to promote father engagement may include:

1. Recruiting, enrolling, and maintaining active participation of fathers in programs.
2. Involving fathers in developing policies and programs.
3. Integrating fathers into program operations.



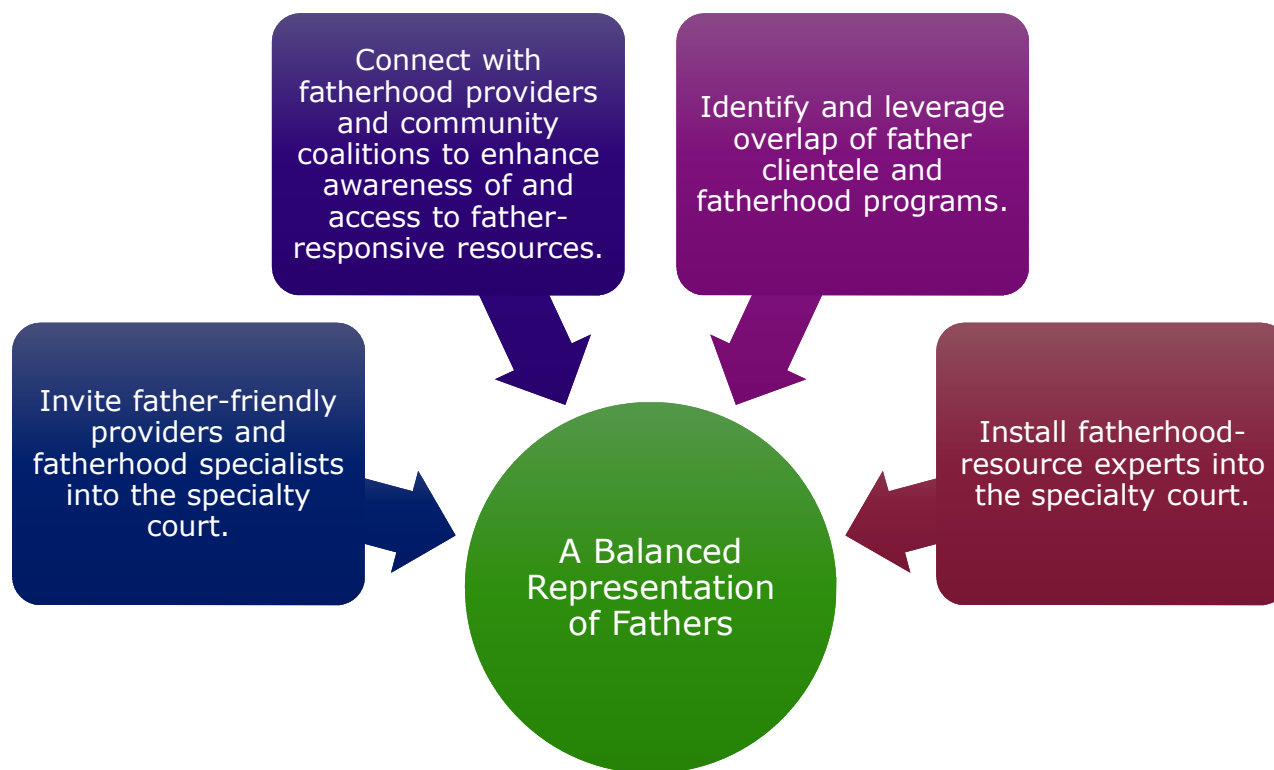
Father-Friendly Solutions

1. Dad is involved *because* he is Dad.
2. Dad's story matters. Listen without pre-judgement.
3. Approach Dad from a strengths-based position.
4. Treat Dad as a party with equal stakes to every other party.
5. Make invitations and referrals clear, genuine, and realistic for Dad.
6. Immediately get buy-in from Dad. He is an expert on his own life and his children.
7. Ask Dad why he feels it is important for him to be involved.
8. Dad cannot be replaced. He is not an afterthought.



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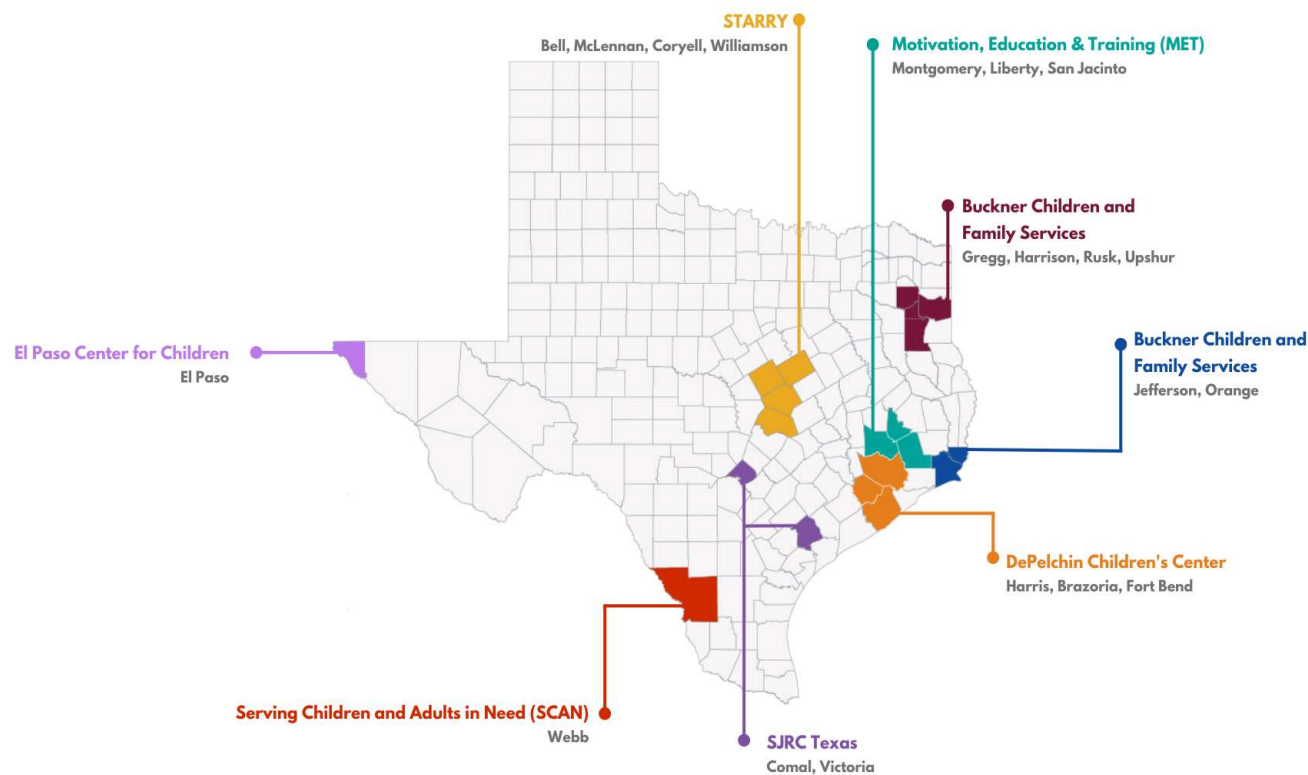
Father-Friendly Strategies



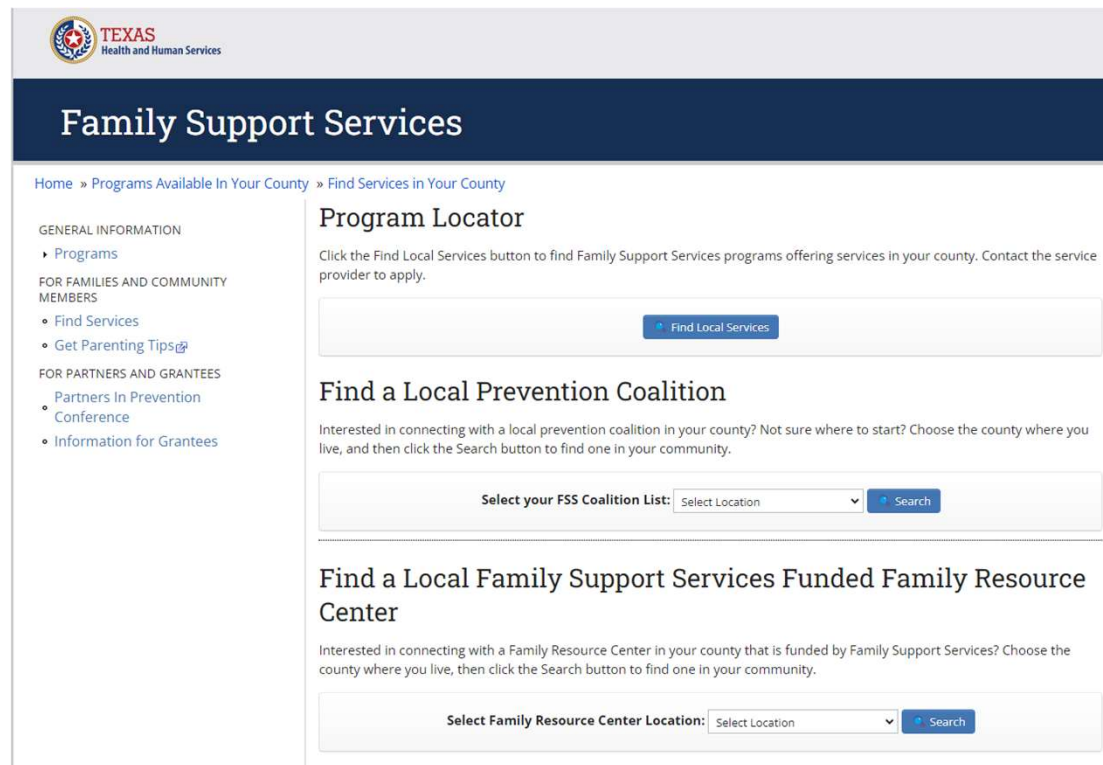
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Conclusion



Healthy father involvement promotes positive outcomes.

What role will you play?



Questions?



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Thank you!

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