

Fatherhood Initiative

Fathers are important at Family Focus. According to the National Fatherhood Initiative, youth with engaged fathers are four times **less likely to be poor**, more likely to **graduate from high school** and less likely to be incarcerated than children without fathers in their lives.

We are bringing together teen fathers (ages 15 and up), formerly incarcerated men, grandfathers and uncles all of whom share the same desire - to become better role models and parents.

Our support groups provide a **unique environment** for men to talk with other men in similar situations, and discuss the barriers they often face to fulfill their desire for a loving relationship with their children. Our skilled staff helps these men utilize **positive coping skills** to deal with their children, mothers of their children and family members. Increasing knowledge of their **role as parents** and of child development leads to **better interactions** with their children, **reduces neglect**, and diminishes the use of corporal punishment.

For example, while every good father wants his children to succeed, they may not know how to help them. At Family Focus, we help fathers understand that by showing an **interest in their child's academic performance**, through attending parent teacher **conferences**, picking up **report cards** or attending school functions, their children are more likely to be successful.

Many of our fathers need employment, so they can take care of their families. We work with them on **interviewing skills**, on how to dress appropriately, on developing active listening skills and **how to maintain employment**. If they need their GED (high school equivalency test) or need to learn English, we can provide them with classes and resources on site. Our fathers use the **Community Technology Centers** to take online classes or brush-up their **resumes**.

With many of our fathers being unemployed or underemployed, they may not have the funds to expose their children to new experiences. At Family Focus, we hold quarterly events such as **cookouts, baseball games**, trips to the zoo or **Chicago Children's Museum** to promote interaction between fathers and their children.

Through Family Focus **122 fathers and their children** built stronger relationships. With your support, we expect that number to reach over 150 fathers and families this year. Click [here](#) to support fathers and families.

