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Children & Family Services Division Office of Child Abuse Prevention

SUPPORTING FATHER INVOLVEMENT

Research study determines effectiveness of active father involvement in their families

Supporting Father Involvement (SFI), an evidence-based research intervention, was funded by the California Department of Social Services' Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP) from 2002 until 2012. This five county pilot program was implemented in Santa Cruz, San Luis Obispo, Contra Costa, Tulare and Yuba Counties by the University of California Berkeley. Each county's child welfare services agency partnered with a local family resource center to provide direct services to the community.

The SFI study was employed to: (1) determine the effectiveness of increasing positive father involvement within their families, (2) reduce child abuse and neglect, and (3) measure organizational culture change to determine if the family resource center implementing the intervention had an increase in father participation in their other programs and services. Families with open Child Protective Services (CPS) or domestic violence cases were included in the study during the final year of funding.

Once accepted into SFI, families were randomly assigned to one of three categories: (1) a one-time educational presentation on improved outcomes for children in families where fathers take an active positive role, (2) a 16-week (2 hours per week) fathers' group, or (3) a 16-week (2 hours per week) couples' group. All project participants received case management services.

Data analyzed from family assessments administered to community families confirmed:

- Families and children are healthier when fathers are more involved with parenting and work with mothers as co-parents and partners.
- Parents experience reduced stress and anxiety and are more satisfied with their relationship with one another.
- Children are less hyperactive and aggressive.

Comparable success with families referred by Child Welfare Services has also been documented by the researchers involved in this study.

To encourage the replication of SFI within community based organizations throughout the state, CDSS/OCAP has funded Strategies (www.supportingfatherinvolvement.org), a three agency collaborative, to provide informational sessions, training and technical assistance.

Information regarding the SFI dissemination to county child welfare agencies is to be found in the CDSS All County Information Notice, [ACIN I-05-11 January 11, 2011](#).

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