

SUPPORTING HEALTHY CO-PARENTING

Child Support Policy Fact Sheet

Introduction

Children do better when both parents actively raise and support them in healthy and collaborative environments.¹ Family-centered child support draws on multiple strategies to support parenting and co-parenting relationships and improve the ability of noncustodial fathers to work and pay support. Family-centered child support is a two-generation (2Gen), holistic approach that aims to set realistic policies and provide support to parents so that they can better support and care for their children.

This publication is part of the **Centering Child Well-Being in Child Support Policy** series produced by Ascend at the Aspen Institute and Good+Foundation to highlight family-centered child support policies. This fact sheet explores effective policies and services to strengthen family relationships; increase family and community stability; and increase parental trust, participation, and engagement in the child support program.

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
What the Research Shows	2
What Isn't Working	3
Why It Matters to Families	5
Why It Matters to States	6
A Better Way to Do Business	6

What the Research Shows

Research by the University of Texas found that nearly all fathers want to be closely involved in childrearing following the birth of a child, and 90 percent of mothers want fathers involved.² Three years later, most mothers continue to think father involvement is very important, but the percentage declines. The quality of the relationship between parents has a profound impact on whether a father stays involved in his child's life.³ Many of the risk factors associated with relationship instability during pregnancy are associated with poor relationship quality three years later. When parental relationships erode, some custodial mothers turn to the formal child support system to ensure that fathers provide financially for their children. A mother's decision to apply for child support services can signal a low-quality co-parenting relationship and breakdown of informal support arrangements.⁴

Parents with healthier relationships are more likely to voluntarily establish paternity at birth, which results in legal recognition of the father-child relationship. The vast majority of unmarried mothers and fathers think it is important to establish paternity for their children. In the Texas study, over 80 percent of fathers who acknowledged paternity stayed involved with their children, and many fathers increased their involvement over time. Parents who acknowledge paternity are more likely to work out informal support and parenting-time arrangements and stay out of the formal child support system. Fathers who acknowledge paternity and have support orders are more likely to pay child support, to pay more over time, and to increase their support payments as their children grow older.⁵ Increases in child support are associated with better educational outcomes and improvements in children's cognitive development.⁶

Legal parenting-time agreements are associated with increased parent-child contact, improved co-parenting relationships, improved child behavior, increased child support compliance and payments, and increased perception of fairness of the child support process.⁷ Mediation is effective in most cases, with parents reaching parenting-time agreements 65 to 70 percent of the time.⁸ Consistent with earlier research, an evaluation of *Parenting Time Opportunities for Children (PTOC)*, a five-state pilot program funded by the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE), found that child support agencies can effectively and safely incorporate parenting-time agreements into their child support orders. Evaluators observed improved parent-child and co-parenting relationships, more time spent by noncustodial fathers with their children, and small increases in child support compliance in some sites. Custodial and noncustodial parents reported high levels of satisfaction with the mediation process and reported that it increased their sense of fairness and being heard.⁹

Fatherhood and parenting programs, including curriculum-based and peer support components, are designed to help fathers form deeper connections with their children and increase emotional and financial support available to children.¹⁰ A recent research meta-analysis found that fatherhood programs produced small but statistically significant effects on father involvement, parenting, and co-parenting.¹¹ The *Parents and Children Together (PACT)* evaluation—a rigorous large-scale study of four responsible fatherhood programs sponsored by the federal Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE)—found that program participants increased their parenting skills by increasing nurturing behavior toward their children and engagement in age-appropriate activities, and experienced a modest increase in employment stability.¹²

The federal *Child Support Noncustodial Parent Employment Demonstration (CSPED)* model (specialized case management, employment services, and parenting services) increased noncustodial fathers' positive perceptions of the child support program, increased their sense of responsibility for their children, increased their involvement with their children, and decreased their use of harsh discipline.¹³

The federal *Procedural Justice-Informed Alternatives to Incarceration (PJAC)* model (incorporating procedural justice principles, enhanced case investigation, specialized case management, and case conferencing with both parents as an alternative to civil contempt proceedings for noncustodial parents with a history of not paying child support) improved noncustodial parent trust and cooperation, strengthened communication and information exchange, and improved caseworker satisfaction.¹⁴

What Isn't Working

More than half of births to women under 30 now occur outside of marriage—reflecting a global trend. In 2016, 40 percent of all U.S. children, and 69 percent of Black children, were born to unmarried parents. Thirty percent of children living with one parent live in households with incomes below the federal poverty level (\$21,960 for a family of three in 2022), about three times the poverty rate of children living in households with both parents.¹⁵ Most children born to unmarried parents will become part of complex family structures that include their parents' new partners and half-siblings.¹⁶

Custodial parents participating in the child support program are more likely to have never married and less likely to be divorced than custodial parents who do not receive child support program services.¹⁷ They are more likely to be mothers,

to be younger, to lack full-time employment, and to have low incomes.¹⁸ These demographic changes in family structure impact child well-being and contribute to long-term economic, racial, and gender inequities.¹⁹

Most noncustodial fathers stay involved with their children after a family break-up. Custodial parents receiving child support program services reported that two-thirds of noncustodial parents spent at least some time with their youngest child, and 30 percent saw their child at least once a week on average. In Texas, one of the few states that addresses parenting time when child support is ordered, half of noncustodial fathers saw their children at least once a week, and a third at least every other day.²⁰

However, two-thirds of noncustodial parents with a child support order do not have a legal parenting-time agreement.²¹ Child support and parenting time are legally separate and distinct issues. However, as a practical matter, child support and parenting time are a two-way street: Fathers who are involved with their children are more likely to pay child support, and parents who pay support are more likely to stay involved.²² This means that most parenting-time arrangements are informal and depend upon the ability of the co-parents to negotiate and cooperate.²³ This can be deeply frustrating and painful for many noncustodial fathers.²⁴ Fathers participating CSPED said that lack of parenting time with their children is one of the top five reasons they do not pay child support.²⁵

The reality is that the legal system has not kept up with modern family dynamics. Instead, there is a two-tiered judicial process, one for divorcing couples and one for couples who never married.²⁶ When parents divorce, there is a legal framework for the courts to resolve interrelated family law issues experienced by the couple at the same time, including child support, child custody, parenting time, and property division. Family court resources that support families and facilitate conflict resolution, such as mediation and co-parenting education, are built around divorce.

For parents who do not marry, on the other hand, the legal process does not facilitate resolution of the interrelated legal issues involved in family separation. Although child support and parenting time are legally separate issues, parents view these issues as inextricably linked. If unmarried parents want to resolve custody and parenting-time issues, they must file separate court proceedings, sometimes in different courts. Consequently, when noncustodial fathers are ordered to pay child support, they do not receive a legal parenting-time agreement. In addition, courts do not offer the same level of resources to unmarried families going through a break-up.²⁷

While child support can be a significant source of family income, about a quarter of fathers in the child support program have low earnings, multiple

barriers to employment, and difficulty paying child support.²⁸ Many of these fathers do not have reliable health care or stable housing and can experience high levels of social isolation.²⁹ Get-tough child support strategies often backfire by making it harder for low-wage fathers to work, further stressing family relationships. Often, fathers experience deep distrust of the child support program and the legal system more broadly.³⁰

The mission of most public and private human services agencies, including child support, is to increase the financial stability and well-being of children and families. Although fathers and mothers are both responsible for supporting their children and face similar barriers to financial stability, human service programs are typically organized around the needs of mothers and children only. Fathers can be left out of the picture, treated as the problem, or seen only as a source of financial support. There is a lack of services available to fathers and men, leaving them with few places to turn and no one to talk to when they need help. Human service programs that fail to engage fathers ignore the important role of fathers in child well-being and community stability.³¹

Why It Matters to Families

Children do better when both parents actively raise and support them in healthy and collaborative environments. Positive noncustodial father involvement is associated with positive child outcomes, including improved cognitive development, increased educational achievement and attainment, and better psychological well-being. Children with involved fathers show more empathy, emotional security, curiosity, and pro-social behavior.³² Children who are connected to both parents can draw on the resources of both family networks.

In fatherhood programs, men often describe growing up with adversity, deprivation, and danger. Half of fathers who participated in CSPED had a poor or no relationship with their own fathers.³³ Fathers participating in PACT described losing a parent in different ways—through separation, abandonment, abuse, substance use, depression, incarceration, or death.³⁴ Some men never met their father. Some men describe the pain of not having a father as a wound or hole in their lives that can impact their sense of safety, trust, and identity. They describe their struggle to learn how to become better fathers when they did not grow up with their own father in stable, healthy circumstances. Lack of paternal involvement affected their education, social networks, intimate relationships, and confidence in their ability to raise their own children.³⁵ Losing a parent is an adverse childhood experience that can contribute to poor physical and mental health outcomes in adulthood, troubled relationships, despair, and intergenerational trauma.³⁶

Fathers decide to participate in fatherhood and employment programs like CSPED and PACT for several reasons, including improving their prospects for employment and addressing child support debt. However, the most common reason fathers cite is improving their relationship with their children.³⁷ Men want to be good fathers and give their children a better life.³⁸ Becoming a father can be transformative, inspiring them to make changes in their own lives.³⁹ When noncustodial fathers form close relationships with their children, maintain effective co-parenting relationships, and have hope for the future, they are more likely to pay child support.⁴⁰ But more importantly, their children will grow up with the support and care of both parents, which can improve their life trajectory.

Why It Matters to States

Parents and children across two generations benefit from evidence-based family-centered policies and strategies that increase the financial stability of noncustodial fathers and custodial families, and increase the positive involvement of fathers in their children's lives. By improving parent and child outcomes, states can reduce costs to the public, society, and families. For example, the overall benefit of CSPED was expected to outweigh its operational costs over time.

Strategies that help fathers improve their financial stability, overcome barriers to employment, and increase their wages can increase lifetime labor force participation, earnings, child support payments, and tax revenues. Similarly, strategies that increase paternal involvement and parenting skills can improve children's social, emotional, and cognitive functioning and their educational outcomes. Effective family-centered strategies can reduce costs across government in legal, child welfare, public education, health care, unemployment insurance, public assistance, and housing systems.⁴¹

A Better Way to Do Business

Over the past several years, state and local child support programs have been transitioning toward a family-centered mission that recognizes that parents with limited incomes may struggle to pay child support. Family-centered child support draws on multiple strategies to support parenting and co-parenting relationships and improve the ability of noncustodial fathers to work and pay support. Family-centered child support is a two-generation (2Gen), holistic approach that aims to set realistic policies and provide better support to parents so that they can better support and care for their children.

Like many mothers, many fathers are at the end of their rope. Fathers need empathic and practical services across human services agencies. Men can be

reached through their roles as fathers. The child support program is well-positioned to serve as a service gateway because it interacts with men in their role as fathers. Child support agencies, along with other human services programs, can deepen their family-centered culture by building relationships with both parents. Research shows that integrating family-centered strategies into the child support program can result in a meaningful culture change that can gain the trust and cooperation of fathers. By changing the culture and strategies of their child support program, states and counties increase positive outcomes for children and their parents.

States can effectively implement or expand evidence-based strategies to increase paternal engagement and parenting skills, such as:

- Increasing parent access to and information about paternity acknowledgment as part of prenatal care, including the right to genetic testing, which emphasizes the emotional investment of both parents in their child and the ability to include the father's name on the birth certificate;⁴²
- Allowing parents to request services to establish paternity for their child without opening a case to establish and enforce a support order under a state option contained in federal rules;⁴³
- Coordinating child support orders and parenting-time agreements and extending judicial mediation and parenting education resources to unmarried parents. Child support and parenting time should be resolved at the same time using alternative dispute resolution procedures or other processes that put the child's best interests at the center, aim to reduce conflict between parents, and support healthy co-parenting relationships;
- Creating specialized child support case management and service referral activities in non-paying cases, incorporating procedural fairness principles and trauma-informed practices;⁴⁴
- Funding public and community-based fatherhood programs and services across health and human services domains; and
- Implementing the family-centered child support policies and practices, described in this fact sheet series, which increase the ability and willingness to pay child support, including ensuring families receive child support payments, setting accurate and realistic child support orders, implementing sensible debt reduction strategies, ensuring equal access to justice, and providing employment services and income supports.

Federal child support funds are available to match state child support program expenditures at a 66 percent matching rate. States have significant flexibility in how they use federal matching funds to implement a family-centered child support program. For example, states may claim federal child support matching funds to implement specialized case management and to coordinate and cross-train with other programs. They also may claim matching funds for

educational and outreach activities related to child support, including responsible parenting, co-parenting, and financial education. States may claim matching funds to pay for alternative dispute resolution processes and *pro se* access related to child support activities as well as bus fare or other minor transportation expenses to enable parents to participate in them.⁴⁵

Although Congress has encouraged states to support safe parenting-time arrangements, it has not authorized child support matching funds provided under title IV-D of the Social Security Act to pay for the development of parenting-time agreements or other parenting-time establishment and enforcement activities.⁴⁶ However, federal guidance recognizes that states may use the matching funds to coordinate child support and parenting-time services provided by another program or court so long as those costs are minimal and incidental to child support activities and the state complies with generally accepted accounting practices (for example, a state attorney representing the child support program making the court aware that the parents wish to include a parenting-time plan in their support order).⁴⁷

States may use federal Access and Visitation funds, another OCSE-administered program, to support and facilitate noncustodial parents' access to their children through mediation, counseling, education, parenting plans, visitation enforcement (including supervised visitation), and visitation and custody guidelines. The Access and Visitation program is a state formula grant program, through which each state receives an annual grant of at least \$10 million based on the number of children in the state living with one parent.⁴⁸ Most funds are used for parent education, mediation, and the development of parenting plans. In 2018, over 80,000 custodial and noncustodial parents nationwide participated in the Access and Visitation program, with almost half of participating⁴⁹ noncustodial parents experiencing increased parenting time. Most participants were never married, and more than a quarter of participants had annual incomes of less than \$10,000.⁵⁰

States also may obtain OCSE approval to use federal child support performance incentive funds to develop parenting plans.⁵¹ In addition, Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood competitive grants, administered by the federal Office of Family Assistance, may be awarded to programs that promote skills-based parenting education, mediation, counseling, mentoring, and encouraging child support payments.⁵²

¹ Both fathers and mothers living apart from their children are legally responsible for paying child support, and the incomes of both parents are taken into account in setting support orders. Although the focus of this fact sheet is on noncustodial fathers, gender-neutral terms are used to accurately describe specific research findings and state practices. This fact sheet is authored by Vicki Turetsky, Esq., former federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) commissioner.

-
- ² Cynthia Osborne, *et al.*, *A Portrait of Father Involvement and Support in the First Three Years after a Nonmarital Birth*, CFRP Report R.003.1013, LBJ School of Public Affairs, University of Texas, 2013.
- ³ Osborne, *et al.*, 2013; Erin Kramer Holmes, *et al.*, "The Effectiveness of Responsible Fatherhood Programs Targeting Low-Income and Nonresident Fathers," in Jay Fagan and Jessica Pearson, eds., *New Research on Parenting Programs for Low-Income Fathers*, New York: Routledge, 2021.
- ⁴ Risk factors include having children with other partners, infidelity, unemployment, incarceration, substance use, and domestic violence. Osborne, *et al.*, 2013.
- ⁵ Osborne *et al.*, 2013; Patricia R. Brown and Steven T. Cook, *A Decade of Voluntary Acknowledgment in Wisconsin: 1997-2007*, Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2008; Ronald Mincy, Irwin Garfinkel, and Lenna Nepomnyaschy, "In-Hospital Paternity Establishment in Fragile Families," *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 2005, vol. 67, 611-626. Both parents must agree to acknowledge paternity, and the father's name may only appear on the child's birth certificate if paternity has been established. 42 U.S.C. § 666(a)(5)(D)(i).
- ⁶ Child support increases the academic test scores of elementary school children. Older children who receive child support obtain significantly more schooling, are more likely to finish high school, and are more likely to attend college than those who do not. Elaine Sorensen, *The Child Support Program is a Good Investment*, Office of Child Support Enforcement, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016.
- ⁷ Jessica Pearson, Lanae Davis, and Nancy Thoennes, *Child Access and Visitation Programs: Participant Outcomes*, Center for Policy Research, 2006.
- ⁸ Jessica Pearson and Anne Byrne, *Parenting Time and Child Support: Information for Fatherhood Programs and Fathers*, Office of Family Assistance (OFA), Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2020; Jessica Pearson, Nancy Thoennes, David Price, and Robert Williams, *Evaluation of the Child Access Demonstration Projects: Report to Congress*, Center for Policy Research and Policy Studies, Inc., 1996. For additional research, see Jessica Pearson, "Establishing Parenting Time in Child Support Cases: New Opportunities and Challenges," Special Issue: Parenting Time and Co-Parenting for Unmarried Parents, *Family Court Review*, vol. 53, 2015; Jessica Pearson, *Research Brief: Child Support, Parenting Time, and Safety Concerns*, 2015; Jessica Pearson and Rasa Kaunelis, *Child Support Program and Parenting Time Orders: Research, Practice, and Partnership Project: Site Visit Report*, Center for Policy Research, 2015; Jessica Pearson and Lanae Davis, *Ensuring Access, Encouraging Support: Final Report*, Center for Policy Research, 2007; Office of the Inspector General, *Effectiveness of Access and Visitation Programs*, OEI-05-02-00300, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2002.
- ⁹ PTOC pilot sites adopted stronger domestic violence protocols, including screening for all cases in their caseloads, in partnership with domestic violence community partners. OCSE recently announced new funding to establish the national Safe Access for Victims' Economic Security (SAVES) program to increase safe access to child support and parenting-time services when there is a risk of domestic violence. OCSE, FOA No. HHS-2022-ACF-OCSE-FD-0018. For PTOC, see OCSE, *Parenting Time Opportunities for Children: Research Brief*, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2019; Jessica Pearson, Nancy Thoennes, and Lanae Davis, *An Evaluation of the Oregon Parenting Time Opportunities for Children Grant*, Center for Policy Research, 2017 (mediation, interactive parenting plans); OCSE, "Discretionary Grants for Parenting Time Opportunities for Children in the Child Support Program," *Promoting Child Well-Being and Family Self-Sufficiency* series, no. 14, 2013; OCSE, *Child Support and Parenting Time: Improving Coordination to Benefit Children*, *Promoting Child Well-Being and Family Self-Sufficiency* series, no. 13, 2013.
- ¹⁰ Bright Sarfo and Vernon Wallace, "Does Curriculum Matter? A Randomized Control Study of the 'Developing All Dads for the Manhood and Parenting' Program (DAD MAP) Curriculum," in Fagan and Pearson, 2021; Dina A. Israel, Michelle S. Manno, and Leah Jacobson, *Testing Innovations in Fatherhood Programs: A Roundup of Findings from the Building Bridges and Bonds Study*, Office of Research and Evaluation (OPRE), Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2021; Daniel Schroeder, Kimberly Walker, and Amna Khan, *Noncustodial Parent Choices: PEER Pilot: Impact Report*, Ray Marshall Center, LBJ School of Public Affairs, University of Texas, 2011; Jose Y. Diaz and Richard Chase, *Return on Investment to the FATHER Project*, Wilder Research, 2010; Cynthia Miller and Virginia Knox, *The Challenge of Helping Low-Income Fathers Support Their Children: Final Lessons from Parents' Fair Share*, MDRC, 2001.
- ¹¹ Holmes, *et al.*, 2021. See Jessica Pearson and Jay Fagan, "What Have We Learned and Where Do We Go From Here?" in Fagan and Pearson, 2021.
- ¹² The PACT project also included two healthy marriage programs. Sarah Avellar, *et al.*, *Parents and Children Together: Effects of Four Responsible Fatherhood Programs for Low-Income Fathers*, Mathematica, 2018.
- ¹³ Maria Cancian and Daniel R. Meyer, *Final Impact Findings from the Child Support Noncustodial Parent Employment Demonstration (CSPED)*, Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2019; Maria Cancian and Daniel R. Meyer, *Impact Results from the Child Support Noncustodial Parent Employment Demonstration (CSPED)*, Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2019 (power points).
- ¹⁴ PJAC sites were required to implement domestic violence plans that included additional safeguards. Caseworkers received training in procedural justice concepts, domestic violence, dispute resolution, and trauma-informed practices. Melanie Skemer, Jennifer Hausler, Olivia Williams, Louisa Treskon, and Jacqueline Groskaufmanis, *A Comparison of Approaches Informed by Procedural Justice and Traditional Enforcement in the Procedural Justice-Informed Alternatives to Contempt Demonstration*, MDRC, June 2022, table A-3; Louisa Treskon, *et al.*, *Procedural Justice in Child Support Enforcement: Lessons from an Implementation Study of Procedural Justice-Informed Alternatives to Contempt Demonstration*, MDRC, March 2022; Kate Wurmfeld, *Procedural Justice in the Child Support Process: An Implementation*

Guide, Center for Court Innovation, 2022; Jacqueline Groskaufmanis, *Integrating Procedural Justice Principles into Child Support Case Management*, MDRC, 2021; Riley Webster, *Working Toward a Resolution: Facilitating Dialogue Between Parents Using Principles of Procedural Justice*, MDRC, 2020; Zaina Rodney, *Incorporating Strategies Informed by Procedural Justice into Child Support Services: Training Approaches Applied in the Justice-Informed Alternatives to Contempt (PJAC) Demonstration*, MDRC, July 2019.

¹⁵ Timothy Grall, *Custodial Mothers and Fathers and Their Child Support: 2017*, Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce, 2020.

¹⁶ Maria Cancian, Daniel R. Meyer, and Steven T. Cook, *Are Complex Families Becoming More Common?* Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2013 (power points); Maria Cancian and Daniel R. Meyer, *The Implications of Complex Families for Poverty and Child Support Policy*, Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2012. See Osborne, *et al.*, 2013 (cohabiting parents are five times more likely to break up than married parents).

¹⁷ Among custodial parents who participated in the program, 41 percent never married compared to 34 percent who do not receive program services. Elaine Sorensen, *Characteristics of Custodial Parents and Their Children: Who Receives Child Support (IV-D) Services and Who Doesn't?* OCSE, 2021.

¹⁸ Sorensen, 2021.

¹⁹ Osborne, *et al.*, 2013.

²⁰ Sorensen, 2021; Wildsmith, Manlove, and Cook, 2018.

²¹ Sorensen, 2021.

²² Sorensen, 2016.

²³ This was true whether or not noncustodial parents had a child support program case. Sorensen, 2021.

²⁴ Holcomb, 2015.

²⁵ Vogel, 2020.

²⁶ Ronald B. Mincy, Monique Jethwani, and Serena Klempin, *Failing Our Fathers: Confronting the Crisis of Economically Vulnerable Nonresident Fathers*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.

²⁷ Jessica Pearson and Anne Byrne, *Parenting Time and Child Support: Information for Fatherhood Programs and Fathers*, Center for Policy Research, 2021.

²⁸ Sorensen, 2021; Natalie Demyan and Letitia Logan Passarella, *Lifting Families Out of Poverty: Child Support is an Effective Tool for Maryland Families*, School of Social Work, University of Maryland, 2019; Sorensen, 2016.

²⁹ Irwin Garfinkel, Sara S. McLanahan, Daniel R. Meyer, and Judith A. Seltzer, eds., *Fathers Under Fire: The Revolution in Child Support Enforcement*, New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation, 1998.

³⁰ Pamela Holcomb, *et al.*, *In Their Own Voices: The Hopes and Struggles of Responsible Fatherhood Program Participants in the Parent and Children Together Evaluation*, Mathematica Policy Research, 2015.

³¹ Jessica Pearson and Rachel Wildfeuer, *Policies and Programs Affecting Fathers: A State-by-State Report*, Fatherhood Research & Practice Network and Center for Policy Research, 2022; ACF-ACF-IM-18-02, *Integrating Approaches that Prioritize and Enhance Father Engagement* (Oct. 17, 2018).

³² Lenna Nepomnyaschy, Daniel P. Miller, Maureen R. Waller, and Allison Dwyer Emory, "The Role of Fathers in Reducing Socioeconomic Inequalities in Adolescent Behavioral Outcomes," *Social Service Review*, vol. 94(3), 2020; Osborne, *et al.*, 2013.

³³ Cancian and Meyer, 2019.

³⁴ Mathematica, *Supporting the Fatherhood Journey: Findings from the Parents and Children Together Evaluation (PACT)*, OPRE, 2019 (website report); Robin Dion, *et al.*, *Parents and Children Together: The Complex Needs of Low-Income Men and How Responsible Fatherhood Programs Address Them*, 2018.

³⁵ Holcomb, 2015.

³⁶ Christina Rariden, *et al.*, "Screening for Adverse Childhood Experiences: Literature Review and Practice Implications," *The Journal for Nurse Practitioners*, 2021; Zaina Rodney, *Incorporating Strategies Informed by Procedural Justice into Child Support Services: Training Approaches Applied in the Justice-Informed Alternatives to Contempt (PJAC) Demonstration*, MDRC, July 2019; Heather Larkin, Vincent J. Felitti, and Robert F. Anda, "Social Work and Adverse Childhood Experiences Research: Implications for Practice and Health Policy," *Social Work in Public Health*, vol. 29, 2014.

³⁷ Cancian and Meyer, 2019.

³⁸ Sarah McLanahan, Irwin Garfinkel, and Maureen Waller, *The Fragile Families and Child Well-being Study*, Center for Research on Child Wellbeing and the Public Policy Institute of California, 1999.

³⁹ Mathematica, 2019 (website report); Dion, *et al.*, 2018; Benheim-Thomas Center for Research on Child Wellbeing, *Dispelling Myths About Unmarried Fathers*, Fragile Families Research Brief, no. 1, Princeton University and Columbia University, 2000.

⁴⁰ Alexander E. Chan and Francesca Adler-Baeder, "Child Support Compliance in Fatherhood Programs: The Role of Hope, Role Salience, and Parenting Skills," *Journal of Human Sciences and Extension*, vol. 7, 2019.

⁴¹ Richard A. Chase, "Estimating the Monetary Value of Fatherhood Programs," in Fagan and Pearson, 2021; Jose Y. Diaz and Richard Chase, *Return on Investment to the FATHER Project*, Wilder Research, 2010.

⁴² 45 C.F.R. § 302.70(a)(5)(iii); 303.5(a)(1) and (g).

⁴³ 45 C.F.R. § 302.22(a)(6).

⁴⁴ "Specialized case management" can include increased case worker engagement with parents, enhanced case investigation, order modification, debt reduction, suppression of some enforcement mechanisms, parenting time assistance, domestic violence safeguards, and referrals to employment, fatherhood, and social services. See Jessica

Pearson and Rachel Wildfeuer, *Policies and Programs Affecting Fathers: A State-by-State Report*, chapters 2, 7, and 8, Fatherhood Research & Practice Network, Center for Policy Research, 2022; Jessica Pearson, "Developing Father Inclusion Policy at the State Level," in Fagan and Pearson, 2021; Robin Dion, *et al.*, *Creating a Trauma-Informed System of Care for Formerly Incarcerated Dads*, PACT, Mathematica, 2019; Pearson and Kaunelis, 2015.

⁴⁵ 45 C.F.R. § 304.20(b)(3) and (12); OCSE-PIQ-12-02, *Partnering with Other Programs, Including Outreach, Referral, and Case Management Activities* (Dec. 7, 2012). Federal matching funds are limited to "necessary and reasonable costs" for services and activities that are "properly attributable" to the child support program.

⁴⁶ *Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act*, Pub. L. No. 113-183, § 303 (2014).

⁴⁷ 81 *Fed. Reg.* 93529-93530, 93551-93552.

⁴⁸ 42 U.S.C. § 669b.

⁴⁹

⁵⁰ OCSE, *Access and Visitation Program Update, FY 2018, 2020*.

⁵¹ 42 U.S.C. § 658a.

⁵² 42 U.S.C. § 603(a)(2). During this grant cycle, OFA has made 111 grant awards to states and organizations in 30 states to provide activities to promote healthy marriage and responsible fatherhood activities. See OFA website for information.