

Budget Study Session

Fatherhood Initiative Presentation

May 23, 2024





First 5 California Fatherhood Program

Goal: Achieve North Star & Audacious Goal by activating dads as part of the solution for SSNREs.

1

Systems & Policy Change

Statewide Long Term Impact

2

Media Campaign

Parent & Caregiver Audience

3

PR, Advocacy, & Programs

Partner, Stakeholder & Decision-Maker Audience



First 5 California Fatherhood Program

Goal: Achieve North Star & Audacious Goal
by activating dads as part of the solution for SSNREs.

Systems & Policy Change: Statewide Long Term Impact

Strategy: Drive statewide impact in systems change and other father-focused policies through coalition building with policymakers and key stakeholders.

F5CA as **Advocate/Leader:**

- Advancing general policy recommendations based on the literature review and formative research.
- Advancing a bold policy agenda systems change specific to fathers to benefit families and children.
- Nurturing development of the “Dads Caucus” within the California Legislature to advance policies.

Media Campaign

Parent & Caregiver Audience

Strategy: Educating and inspiring dads to provide SSNREs that kids need to thrive, in ways that work specifically for dads, to offset the historic disproportionate burden placed on moms.

F5CA as **Broadcaster:**

- Messaging Focus Groups (parents/dads)
- F5CA Website Landing Page
- Father Focused Education Video
- Promotion Media Campaign (future)

PR, Advocacy, & Programs

Partner, Stakeholder & Decision-Maker Audience

Strategy: Uncovering and uplifting insights, challenges and opportunities across systems that impact fathers and families to improve outcomes, build local capacity and advance the audacious goal.

F5CA as **Advocate/Convener:**

- Research Report Publication
- Fellowship Program (Train the Local F5 Program Trainers)
- Podcast (Content for Training, PR for Local Fatherhood Programs)
- Partnerships/Funders / Convenings

Theory of Change

We believe that if we....

- **Change Policy/Systems:** Help remove systems and policy obstacles that limit father involvement and engagement, and
- **Build Public Will:** Educate and inspire dads to provide SSNREs that kids need to thrive, and
- **Build Local Capacity:** Build the (educational and financial) capacity of local F5 fatherhood programs to educate, train and serve

We can activate Dad's to be buffers against toxic-stress, and provide the SNNRE's essential for reaching the north star and audacious goal in a generation.

Systems & Policy Change: Statewide Long Term Impact

Strategy: Drive statewide impact in systems change and other father-focused policies through coalition building with policymakers and key stakeholders.

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- Advancing general policy recommendations based on the literature review and formative research.
- Advancing a bold policy agenda systems change specific to fathers to benefit families and children.
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So, How Did We Get Here #1:

Recommendations for Fatherhood-Related Efforts based on Literature Review, Environmental Scan Full Literature Review, Environmental Scan Info. on slides **55-79**

Systems & Policy Change Work:

- Items in **yellow** on **slides 5-7** are Systems & Policy Change Work we have completed / working on.
- **Slides 8-11** are Targets for Systems & Policy Change Work in the 2025-26 Legislative Session.

F5CA Drivers	Recommendations for Potential Future First 5 California Investment in Fatherhood-Related Efforts
<p>Advocate</p> <p>Note: DCSS and other orgs are working on policy issues and are a part of our collective action team (OSG, CDE, OST...) focused on barriers to "father inclusion."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission: Include an explicit focus on serving the needs of fathers in their strategic plans and / or communications materials. (November Com. Item) • Sister Agencies: Share F5 Fatherhood Report, produce comprehensive report. Help state agencies change references to father engagement to father inclusion. (Started w/ DCSS – Fatherhood App. Targets: CDE, OSG, OST) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Federal: Engage in advocacy to public agency partners and the Administration to allocate a portion of state Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funding. (2025-2026 Federal Advocacy Plan) ▪ Federal: Engage in federal lobbying or advocacy activities on engaging fathers and supporting fatherhood. (2025-2026 Federal Advocacy Plan) ▪ State: Help establish a CA Leg. Dad’s Caucus (Like Federal Dad’s Caucus). (2025-2026 State Advocacy Plan) ▪ Local: Encourage local First 5 County Commissions to include an explicit focus on serving the needs of fathers in their strategic plans and / or communications materials. (Up for Discussion in Fatherhood Program Working Group & Fellows)

**Catalyst /
Convener**

Note: Our Systems works begins with internal alignment, small “s” systems, focus on NS/AG and ACES Toxic Stress.

- **Commission:** Co-sponsor local Fatherhood events (Alameda, Orange), Create a Network Partner Award. Fatherhood strand at F5 Summits. **(Completed)**
- **Sister Agencies:** Collaborate w/ CA Department of Social Services (CDSS), specifically on their Fatherhood Council and App/Good Grid project. Convene a State Agency Fatherhood workgroup. **(In Progress. Update in August)**
- **Statewide:** Convene F5 fatherhood programs to create statewide fatherhood program principles. **(Up for discussion in Fatherhood Working Group)**
- **Statewide:** Organize a statewide fatherhood funders collaborative, join national fatherhood funders collaboratives. **(Up for discussion in Fatherhood Working Group)**
- **Statewide:** Incentivize a specific focus on fathers 0-5. **(Working Group)**
- **Local:** Incentivize local investment in fatherhood program leaders: First Five Fatherhood Fellows Program (Based on Kellogg Foundation Fellows) Fund a technical assistance provider to support local fatherhood efforts across the State. **(Up for discussion in Fatherhood Working Group)**
- **Research:** Develop and implement a fatherhood research agenda, and local support for evaluation. Fund explicit research on fatherhood 0-5. **(2025-26)**

Broadcaster

Note: Expanding our current Stronger Starts Work to include Fatherhood and “Dad’s as buffers vs ACES and toxic stress response.

- . **Communications:** Explicitly fund fatherhood-focused messaging (media, social media, print, etc.) in Statewide communications campaigns focused on addressing dated stereotypes about fathers of color, fathers of different generations. Include fatherhood messaging in existing campaigns: Stronger Starts, Whole Child, Talk Read Sing, Toxic Stress and ACES. **(In Progress)**
- . **Statewide:** Publish interactive map of fatherhood locations (included in this report), Fatherhood website. **(In Progress)**
- . **Local:** Leverage communications campaigns to highlight, uplift the work of F5 Fatherhood Programs. **(In Progress – “This Is How Dad’s Do This – A Podcast by F5CA)**

Additional Obstacles/Systems Change Policy Work

Policy Obstacles

In California, while strides have been made to support father inclusion and engagement, several major policy and legal obstacles still persist. These barriers can impact fathers' ability to be actively involved in their children's lives, as well as their access to resources that support their role as parents. Here are **10 key challenges/ policy obstacles** that serve as our targets for the 2025-26 Legislative Session:

1. Parental Leave Policies

- **Limited Leave for Fathers:** California's family leave policies provide paid leave, but the duration may not be sufficient for meaningful paternal involvement, especially compared to international standards. Additionally, the wage replacement rate might not be adequate for lower-income fathers to afford taking leave.
- **Stigma and Workplace Culture:** There is still a cultural stigma attached to men taking long periods off for child care, which can deter fathers from utilizing parental leave benefits. Employers may also lack supportive cultures that encourage fathers to take leave.
- **Duration and Compensation:** California provides up to eight weeks of paid family leave, which is less than what some other regions offer. While this helps, it may not be sufficient for fathers who wish to have a more extended bonding period with their newborns.
- **Cultural and Workplace Stigma:** There is often a stigma associated with taking full advantage of parental leave, which can deter fathers from taking leave due to fear of negative career repercussions.

Additional Obstacles/Systems Change Policy Work

2. Child Custody and Family Law

- **Perceived Court Bias:** Fathers often face challenges in custody battles, where there's a perception of judicial bias towards mothers, especially in determining primary custody and visitation rights.
- **Complex and Costly Legal Processes:** The legal system can be daunting and financially draining, which may disadvantage fathers who cannot afford adequate legal representation.
- **Systemic Bias:** Fathers often report experiencing bias in family courts, where there is a perception that mothers are more natural caregivers.
- **Support Obligations:** Child support policies can be inflexible, not always taking into account the father's ability to pay, which can lead to financial strain and legal complications.

3. Economic Barriers

- **Employment Challenges:** Fathers, particularly those in low-wage jobs, may struggle with job security when needing time off for family responsibilities. This issue is compounded by a lack of job flexibility and paternal-specific support in the workplace.
- **Support Mechanisms:** Economic support programs such as CalWORKs often do not specifically address the needs of fathers, particularly single fathers, which can limit their ability to receive assistance.
- **Job Security and Wages:** Economic policies may not adequately support fathers, especially those in low-wage jobs that do not provide flexibility for family responsibilities.
- **CalWORKs:** While providing assistance to families in need, CalWORKs often focuses more on single mothers, and programs tailored specifically for single fathers are less common.

Additional Obstacles/Systems Change Policy Work

4. Support for Incarcerated and Reintegrating Fathers

- **Maintaining Parental Connections:** Incarcerated fathers face significant obstacles in maintaining relationships with their children, which is crucial for both the child's development and the father's rehabilitation.
- **Reentry Challenges:** Upon release, reestablishing familial roles and securing custody or visitation can be hindered by legal and systemic barriers.

5. Health and Social Services

- **Access and Stigma:** Health and social services are often not tailored to meet the needs of men, particularly in areas such as mental health, where there is significant stigma around seeking help.
- **Lack of Father-Focused Programs:** Few programs specifically address the unique challenges and needs of fathers, including support groups, parenting classes, and educational resources that are geared towards men.

6. Educational and Training Opportunities

- **Limited Targeted Programs:** There is a shortage of programs aimed at educating and training fathers, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, on effective parenting and engagement in their children's education and development

7. Institutional Recognition and Support

- **Lack of Policy Focus on Fathers:** Many policies and programs are traditionally mother-centric, with insufficient recognition of the importance of father involvement in policy formulation and implementation.
- **Data and Research Gaps:** There is a lack of comprehensive data on father engagement in California, which affects the development of informed policies and programs.

Additional Obstacles/Systems Change Policy Work

8. Health and Social Services

- **Access to Services:** There is a lack of targeted health and social services for men, particularly for mental health and counseling tailored to fathers. **Health Insurance and Care:** Challenges in obtaining and maintaining health insurance can prevent fathers from accessing necessary health services.

9. Education and Training for Fathers

- **Parenting Programs:** Educational resources and parenting programs specifically designed for fathers are limited, which can hinder their ability to engage fully in informed and effective parenting.
- **Workforce Training:** There are fewer initiatives aimed at integrating fathers, especially young and/or single fathers, into workforce development programs.

10. Policies in California State Agencies

- **Uniformity and Enforcement:** Policies affecting fathers can vary significantly between agencies, leading to confusion and unequal access to support services.
 - **Data and Research:** There is a lack of comprehensive data on the needs and outcomes for fathers in state-run programs, which can affect policy making and program effectiveness.
- These obstacles require multi-faceted policy approaches, including reforming existing laws, introducing new supportive measures, and ensuring that father-specific concerns are addressed within the broader framework of family and social services. Addressing these challenges would not only support fathers but also contribute positively to the welfare of their children and families.


PR, Advocacy, & Programs

Partner, Stakeholder & Decision-Maker Audience

Strategy: Uncovering and uplifting insights, challenges and opportunities across systems that impact fathers and families to improve outcomes, build local capacity and advance the audacious goal.

F5CA as **Advocate/Convener:**

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PR, Advocacy, & Programs

The First 5 Fatherhood Initiative presents a unique opportunity to empower and engage fathers across California. By leveraging our diverse resources and partnerships, we can create a comprehensive strategy that promotes active father involvement, strengthens families, and positively impacts the lives of children and communities. This multi-faceted approach will lay the groundwork for a sustainable, impactful program that puts the needs of fathers and families at the forefront. **A key first target that represents the best return on investment is Fatherhood Leadership. There are multiple existing local F% fatherhood programs including Alameda Father Corp which won the F5 Champions for Change Award at the F5 Summit. Recognizing and elevating the exemplary practices and voices of fathers as leaders, advocates, and role models, will inspire others to embrace the transformative power of father engagement.**

Leveraging Our Strengths: F5 Strategies

Advocate

As a trusted advocate, First 5 will use its influential voice to champion the importance of father involvement and elevate the needs and experiences of fathers in our communities.

Broadcaster

Leveraging our extensive communication channels, First 5 will amplify the stories, successes, and best practices of fatherhood programs, inspiring others to join the movement and elevate father engagement.

Convener

Drawing on our unique position as a convener, First 5 will bring together diverse stakeholders, including fatherhood programs, state agencies, and community organizations, to foster collaboration, share knowledge, and drive collective impact.

Catalyst

As a catalyst for change, First 5 will invest in innovative fatherhood initiatives, provide resources and support, and cultivate a dynamic ecosystem that empowers fathers and strengthens families across California.

Building a Sustainable Future

1

Stakeholder Engagement

Continuously engage with fatherhood program leaders, fathers, and community stakeholders to gather feedback, identify evolving needs, and adapt the initiative to ensure its long-term relevance and impact.

2

Evidence-Based Practices

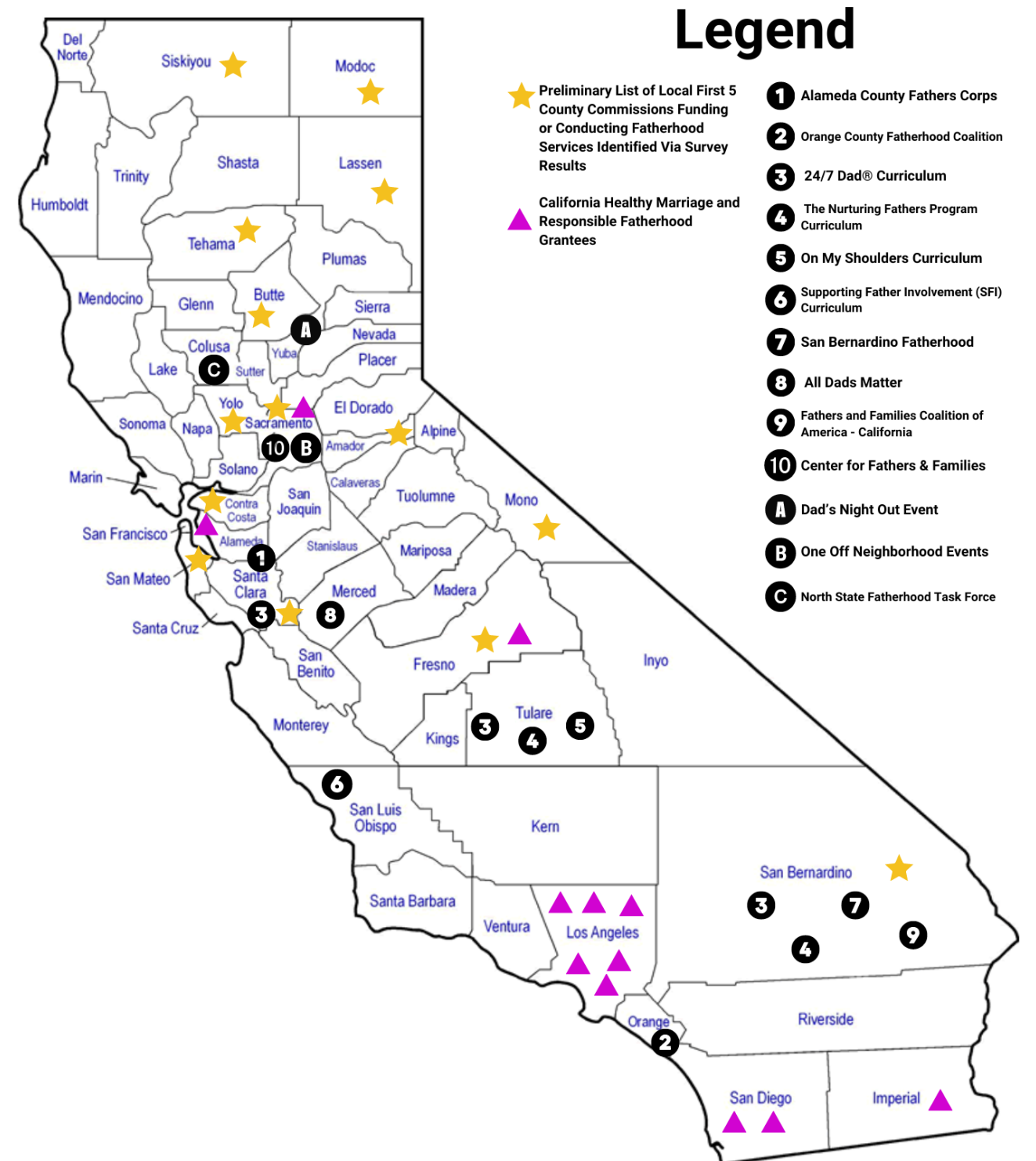
Incorporate evidence-based practices and data-driven decision-making to refine the fatherhood initiative, track progress, and demonstrate the tangible benefits for fathers, families, and communities.

3

Sustainable Funding

Explore diverse funding sources, including grants, partnerships, and innovative financing mechanisms, to ensure the long-term sustainability of the fatherhood initiative and its ability to meet the growing needs of fathers and families.

The First 5 Network Fatherhood Program Universe¹⁸





Phase 1: Engaging the F5 Fatherhood Community

What we did to Engage the local F5 Fatherhood Program Community

1 Literature Review & Environmental Scan

This report was informed by contemporary academic research on fatherhood, distribution and analysis of surveys with local First 5 County Commissions and program directors engaged in active fatherhood related efforts.

2 Site Visits

Conducted site visits to observe firsthand the innovative approaches and inspiring work being done by fatherhood programs across the state. This hands-on experience informed the development of the initiative and fostered meaningful connections with program leaders.

3 Listening Sessions

Engaged in active listening sessions with fatherhood program leaders within the First 5 network and beyond. These sessions provided valuable insights into the needs, challenges, and best practices of fathers and fatherhood programs in local communities.

4 Mapping the F5 Fatherhood Universe

Conducted a comprehensive mapping exercise to identify and connect the diverse fatherhood programs and resources within the First 5 network and beyond. This continues to help us understand the full scope of the fatherhood ecosystem and identify opportunities for collaboration and support.

Engaging Fatherhood Partners

Strengthening Partnerships

Cultivate strong partnerships with organizations and agencies that share our commitment to father engagement and family well-being. These collaborations will enable us to leverage expertise, resources, and networks to amplify the impact of the fatherhood initiative.

Collaboration with State Agencies

Partner with state agencies, such as the Department of Child Support Services (DCSS), to leverage existing resources, align efforts, and create synergies that amplify the impact of the fatherhood initiative.

Engaging the Fatherhood Community

Experiences with F5 Fatherhood Programs

Focus Group with Fathers

"I'm not soft like that, but for my child I'll do it."

Ethnic and Rural Media Op

Ed's related to fatherhood to establish CCFC space in the fatherhood universe.

Focus Group Media testing re: Fatherhood messaging.

Co-Sponsorship of F5 Fatherhood Events.

Champions for Children

Award: F5 Alameda

Goal: Relational Strength. Publicize F5 Fatherhood Programs.

Fatherhood Working Group

Establish a First 5 Fatherhood Fellows program to identify and nurture emerging leaders in the fatherhood field. This program will provide training, mentorship, and opportunities for Fellows to share their expertise and collaborate with others in the network.

Subsidiarity: Personal and program needs assessments for potential fellows.
Lead: Alameda Fathers Corps.

Goal: Structure Fellowship Program

Fatherhood Fellows Program

Establish a First 5 Fatherhood Fellows program to identify and nurture emerging leaders in the fatherhood field. This program will provide training, mentorship, and opportunities for Fellows to share their expertise and collaborate with others in the network.

Collective Impact: The goal for the fellowship is program alignment, Hub structure orientation, unified approach to foundation funding.

Goal: Foundation Funding

Engaging Fatherhood Partners

Strengthening Partnerships

Cultivate strong partnerships with organizations and agencies that share our commitment to father engagement and family well-being. These collaborations will enable us to leverage expertise, resources, and networks to amplify the impact of the fatherhood initiative. **Multiple Partners.**

Collaboration with State Agencies

Partner with state agencies, such as the Department of Child Support Services (DCSS), to leverage existing resources, align efforts, and create synergies that amplify the impact of the fatherhood initiative. **1. Fatherhood Council 2. Good Grid Investment**

Phase 2: Engaging the Larger F5 Community, Universe

1. **Catalyst** - Literature Review, Environmental Scan, Surveys and Focus Group interviews for Fatherhood Programs Outside of the F5 Universe
2. **Convener/Catalyst** - Co-sponsorship with additional F5 Community Fatherhood Programs
3. **Convener** - Fatherhood Fellowship Sponsored Strand at the 2026 Summit
4. **Advocate** - Working with "Sister Agencies" to establish a California Fatherhood Resource App (Good Grid)
5. **Advocate** - Continuing with State Agency Partners on the Fatherhood Council (Policy Change)
6. **Broadcaster** - Messaging and media products linking Stronger Starts (ACES, Toxic Stress Response) with Fatherhood engagement.

A Promising Future: Fathers As Buffers Against Toxic Stress Response

Empowered Fathers

Fathers equipped with the resources, support, and confidence to be actively engaged in their children's lives.

Strengthened Families

Families that nurture strong, positive father-child relationships, fostering healthy child development and well-being.

Thriving Communities

Communities that celebrate and uplift the vital role of fathers, creating an environment where fathers and families can thrive.

By embracing a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach to the First 5 Fatherhood Initiative, we are poised to create a transformative impact on the lives of fathers, families, and communities across California. Through strategic partnerships, innovative investments, and a steadfast commitment to empowering fathers, we will build a future where every child has the support and guidance of an engaged, nurturing father.



Can't Achieve the North Star and Audacious Goal w/o Dads As Buffers

- **MISSION:**

- Convene, partner in, support, and help lead the movement to create and implement a comprehensive, integrated, and coordinated system for California's children prenatal through five and their families. Promote, support, and optimize early childhood development.

- **VISION:**

- California's children receive the best possible start in life and thrive.

- **NORTH STAR STATEMENT:**²⁶

- Trauma-informed, healing-centered, and culturally responsive systems promote the safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments necessary to eliminate inequities and ensure healthy development for all children.

- **AUDACIOUS GOAL:**

- In a generation, all children 0–5 will have the safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments necessary to achieve healthy development.



Dad As Buffer: Fatherhood's Powerful Powerful Role in Mitigating ACEs

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) can have profound, long-lasting impacts on an individual's physical and mental health. However, research shows that engaged and supportive fatherhood can play a crucial role in buffering children against the toxic effects of ACEs.

- **Buffer 1: Emotional Support and Security**
- **Buffer 2: Reducing Household Stress**
- **Buffer 3: Positive Behavioral Modeling**
- **Buffer 4: Social -Cognitive Development**
- **Buffer 5: Strengthening Family Bonds**



Conclusion: Father Engagement is part of a a Holistic Approach to Mitigating ACEs

Comprehensive Interventions

As Dr. Nadine Burke Harris emphasizes in "The Deepest Well," addressing the impacts of impacts of ACEs requires a broad, holistic approach that goes beyond individual-level interventions. **Fatherhood engagement and inclusion should be seen as a crucial component of this comprehensive strategy**, as it addresses the social, emotional, and economic factors that contribute to building childhood resilience. resilience.

Fostering Healthier Futures Futures

By actively participating in their their children's lives, fathers not only contribute to their immediate well-being but also also impart lifelong resilience resilience against the profound profound effects of ACEs. This This intergenerational impact is impact is vital in fostering healthier, more resilient communities and breaking the the cycle of adversity for generations to come.

A Call to Action

The evidence presented in this guide underscores the urgent need to prioritize and support fatherhood engagement as a key strategy in mitigating the long-term impacts of adverse childhood experiences. Policymakers, healthcare providers, and community organizations must work together to create programs and initiatives that empower fathers to play a more active, nurturing role in the lives of their children.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

ACEs are potentially traumatic childhood events that can result in toxic stress. Prolonged exposure to ACEs can create a toxic stress response, which can damage the developing brain and body of children, affect overall health, and cause long-term health problems.

Abuse



Physical



Emotional



Sexual

Neglect



Physical
(including food restriction)



Emotional

Household Challenges



Divorce & family separation



Untreated mental illness/
suicidality



Substance use



Domestic violence



Incarcerated relative

Other Forms of Adversity



Bullying & violence



Poverty



Infectious disease outbreak
(pandemic) or medical trauma



Natural disasters & war



Discrimination



Involvement in child welfare

Prevalence of ACEs by Race/Ethnicity





Dad Data: 4 Numbers

119,300

As of the last reports, about 119,300 men in California **took paid family leave** for bonding with their children in the fiscal year ending June 2022. This represents a significant increase from previous years, reflecting a growing trend among new fathers to take advantage of family leave policies ([California Healthline](#)) ([The Good Men Project](#)). While this data specifically refers to those who took family leave under state programs, **it suggests a substantial involvement of fathers in early childcare**, providing a partial insight into the number of fathers actively participating in early parenting duties. However, this figure does not represent the total number of fathers in California, as it only accounts for those who took leave and not all fathers statewide.

75 million

There are **121 million men over the age of 15** in the United States, according to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#). Among them, **75 million are fathers to biological, step or adopted children. That's about 6 in 10 men.** Most of them, around 61%, became dads in their 20s. Another 20% became dads between the ages of 30 and 34.

7 percent

31

The percent of **fathers who are stay-at-home dads is slowly rising.** In 1989, about 4% of fathers were at home. By 2016, that number had risen to 7%, according to the [Pew Research Center](#). In that same time frame, the share of mothers at home has remained relatively stable, at around 27%. In general, dads are more involved in child care now than they were 50 years ago. In 1965, fathers reported that they spent [about 2.5 hours per week](#) caring for children. In 2016, that number had jumped to eight hours.

1.7 million

Of the 35 million fathers with children under 18, [1.7 million of them are single dads](#), in that they are living with a child with no spouse or partner present, according to the Census Bureau. **In total, 46% of dads have children under 18, the rest have adult children, and about 1 in 4 are grandfathers.**



Dad Data: One Highlight – Black Dad’s Buffering

- **Seventy percent** of Black fathers who live with their children were most likely to have bathed, dressed, changed or helped their child with the toilet every day, compared with their White (60%) or Hispanic (45%) counterparts, according to the **US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's 2013 National Health Stat Study**.
- Numbers high for biological, step and adoptive fathers and father figures.
- **Fatherhood like a spectrum:** Uncles and grandparents and coaches and community members, pastors. Even when a biological father isn't present, the role can be filled by other men and father figures who care about the child – an important concept in African American culture.
- **Dad’s As Buffers:** This is an initial and important part of the ACES and Toxic Stress Response work.

So How Do We Help F5 Fatherhood Programs Help Dad's to Become Buffers Against Toxic Stress?

1. Research: Literature and Environment

2. Listen & Learn: Site Visits, Interviews, Focus Groups

3. Phase 1: Map The F5 Fatherhood Universe, Phase 2: Fatherhood Universe Outside of F5 (Man Cave)

4. Lift Up Exemplary Programs (Evaluation), Fatherhood Fellowship to Align ACES Buffer Curriculum, Collective Action \$\$

Media Campaign

Parent & Caregiver Audience

Strategy: Educating and inspiring dads to provide SSNREs that kids need to thrive, in ways that work specifically for dads, to offset the historic disproportionate burden placed on moms.

F5CA as **Broadcaster:**

- Messaging Focus Groups (parents/dads)
- F5CA Website Landing Page
- Father Focused Education Video
- Promotion Media Campaign (future)

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First 5 California
Fatherhood Campaign
Research Report | Creative Concepts Testing

April 4, 2024

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First 5 California

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RESEARCH OVERVIEW

CREATIVE TESTING



Overview: **Background**

As an expansion of the “Stronger Starts” campaign, two phases of research (Formative & Creative Concept Testing) were conducted in March 2024 to inform a messaging campaign specifically for **California fathers**. The campaign aims to provide pathways to meaningful paternal-child relationships through resource sharing, building on skills that support children’s social and emotional development, as well as network building.

Methods

Recruitment

- Recruitment agency panel vendor
- Eligible participants must be 18 & older, California resident, self-report ≥ 1 ACE, experiencing lower income, fluent in English, and a male-identifying parent to at least 1 child aged 0–5

Procedures

- Eligibility assessed via Screener Survey; qualified participants invited (soft quotas in place)
- Virtual data collection over Zoom with trained Rescue moderator; 75 mins
- \$100 incentive provided to participants who completed the discussion

Data Collection

- N=20 total; sampling plan to ensure intentional equity (e.g., diverse audience segments)
- 4 focus groups (FGs) conducted that were stratified primarily by race & ethnicity

Activities & Analysis

- Discussion designed to gain insights on the primary research objective of assessing audience reactions to draft creative concepts (CCs)
- Rescue cleaned, managed, and analyzed all data
- Overarching themes from Formative and CC Testing to be provided in an expanded report

Overview: Participant Profile (N=20)

Four Creative Concept Testing focus groups (FGs) were conducted and a total of 20 fathers participated.

These FGs were segmented by race & ethnicity such that:

- 2 FGs were comprised of fathers who identify as **Black or African American** (n=10),
- 1 FG was comprised of fathers who identify as **Hispanic/Latino** (n=4), and
- 1 FG was comprised of fathers of **any race and ethnicity** (n=6).

Additional sample characteristics were also assessed in order to ensure a diverse sample, as follows:

Fatherhood Experience	
Non-first time father	17
First time father	3
Child's Age*	
0 to 2 years old	9
3 to 5 years old	17
Relationship Status	
Married or partnered	15
Single, separated, or divorced	5

Educational Attainment	
High School Graduate or GED	9
Associate's degree or technical school	6
Bachelor's degree	2
Graduate courses or degree	3

Primary Language Spoken at Home	
English only	13
English & another language	7

Living Area Type	
Urban	12
Suburban	6
Rural	2
California Region	
Northern	12
Southern	7
Central	1
Additional Characteristics	
LGBTQ+	2

*Inclusive of all children 0–5 years old in the household



TESTING INSIGHTS



**CREATIVE
CONCEPT**

Creative Concepts | Overview

Quantitative and qualitative feedback was elicited for **three testing boards** as part of creative concept testing. After viewing these concepts, participants completed a series of Zoom polling questions to rate the information being conveyed. The moderator then posed concept-specific questions to qualitatively assess overall receptivity, as well as style, tone, language, characters, settings, and message framing preferences. After all three concepts were shown and discussed, participants answered a poll on which one they liked the most, liked the least, and found the most motivating.

A fourth concept, “The Dad Network,” was shown at the end of the discussion as a *bonus concept* that was tested for future implementation approaches. Brief qualitative feedback only was elicited for this concept.



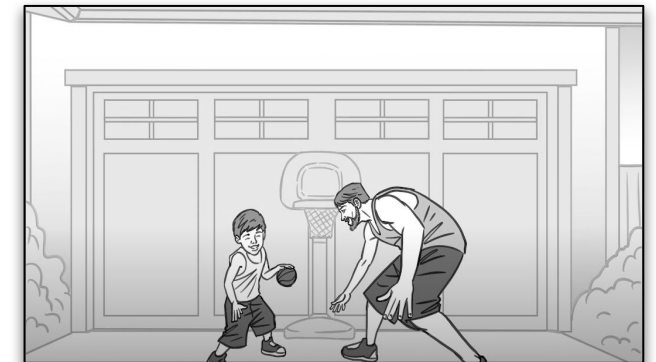
“What Kids See”



“How Dads Do It”



“Dadvice”



“The Dad Network”

“Bonus” concept

Creative Concepts | Perceived Effectiveness

Perceived effectiveness was assessed for three concepts. **Perceived Effectiveness** (PE) is a six-item index in which each statement is rated on a 5-point Likert scale: 1) Strongly Disagree to 5) Strongly Agree.

- A mean score is calculated from the six items, and higher scores indicate higher levels of PE. PE scores of
- **3.0 or higher** are generally considered effective and likely to stimulate thought or action among participants (Zhao et al., 2022).

This ad is worth **REMEMBERING**

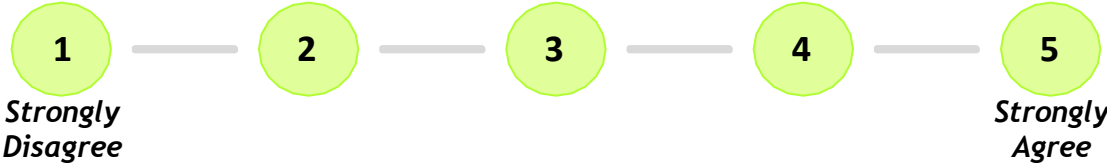
This ad grabbed my **ATTENTION**

This ad is **POWERFUL**

This ad is **INFORMATIVE**

This ad is **MEANINGFUL** to me

This ad is **CONVINCING**



“What Kids See”



“How Dads Do It”



“Dadvice”

Creative Concepts | Quantitative Findings & Results

“What Kids See”



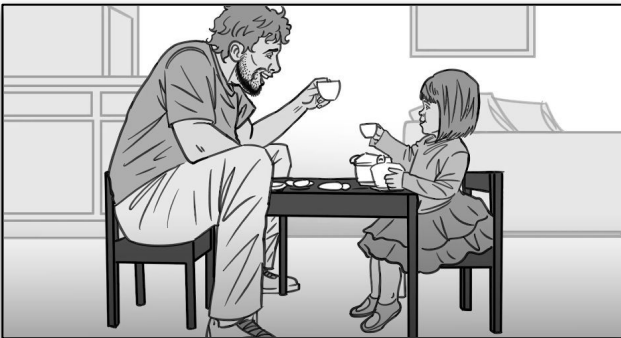
PE SCORES



SELECTED AS FAVORITE AD*

11 participants

“How Dads Do It”



4 participants

“Dadvice”



4 participants

*1 participant did not complete this section of the ad test survey

Qualitative Findings & Results: **Overarching Reactions to Messaging**

Showed Ongoing Desire to Break Generational Norms

- Participants expressed that their **identity as a father was multifaceted**, thus they felt seen by messaging that presents them as so. Concepts were perceived to normalize sides of a father that aren't always acknowledged (i.e., warm, emotionally attuned, etc.).
- Most resonated strongly with a **desire to break multi-generational social and gender stereotypes and norms** (including "machismo" values impacting Hispanic/Latino fathers).
- Pairing these aspects of identity with SSNREs fit well with participants' views of being a **provider** (i.e., physical *and* emotional safety).

SSNREs Benefits are Believable & Compelling

- Messages about providing affection, attention, patience, and emotional support were very compelling.
- These actions were perceived to **build trust and strong bonds** between child and parent, provide **validation** and **security** to their child (which many expressed they did not get growing up), and contribute to a **strong future** for their child. For many, it further motivated current actions, or inspired them to try more.
- Several expressed they would still find it **challenging** to provide physical affection and talk about feelings with their **sons versus their daughters**.

Toxic Stress Response Requires Explanation

- The mention of toxic stress in concepts either stood out to participants as being **distracting** (i.e., too brief, forced, "buzzword"), or went **unnoticed**.
- When the moderator provided a definition of toxic stress response, participants found it motivating, and it further bolstered their initial takeaway; including recognizing and protecting their children from stressors.
- Yet, the main messages were **well understood and meaningful without explicit incorporation of toxic stress**.

Qualitative Findings & Results: **Overarching Reactions to Creative Executions**

Explicit Focus on Fathers (& Their Kids) Caught Attention

- Fathers aren't used to seeing themselves reflected positively in media and have **low visibility on parenting resources specifically for dads**. Thus, showcasing fathers in familiar situations with their kids, sharing familiar feelings grabbed their attention and provided a refreshing and accurate reflection of their reality.
- Participants **across different races and ethnicities, ages, and family backgrounds** found aspects of the concepts relatable.
- **Some visuals were surprising**— like braiding a child's hair, or remaining calm—but often enhanced the takeaway of the **"complete father"** they strive to be.

Diverse Characters & Families are Important

- Showcasing characters of **various races and ethnicities** was noticed and resonated well. Participants felt this was done in an **authentic manner** and that it is important to have diverse representation.
- There was also an appreciation for concepts that were suggestive of diverse family situations, and some wanted to see more of this (i.e., single and partnered fathers, fathers caring for more than one child, and children of different ages and genders).

Use Caution when Incorporating Stereotypes

- Participants were **highly attuned** to language describing fatherhood. When framed as stemming from a **past generation and supported with a hopeful tone**, stereotypes were evocative in a productive way that **affirmed fathers' progress**.
- Yet, in some cases, the mention of norms or challenges (especially when conveyed as participants' **current behaviors**) caused fathers to **reject** some aspects of the message.
- The inclusion of stereotypes to communication expectations of fathers should be **carefully balanced** with an overall message and/or tone that conveys **positive momentum**.

Qualitative Findings & Results: Overarching Reactions to Support & Resources

Many Fathers are Not Ready to Seek Support, but Majority Saw Benefits of Support

- Receptivity to concepts promoting supportive resources for fathers varied, and was largely **based on current experience with parenting-related help-seeking behaviors**, such as consultation with **friends/family**, or involvement with **local institutions or groups** (e.g., church, Dad Facebook groups).
- **Black or African American fathers in particular, tended to have existing support networks** and, thus, were more open to forming or joining a network given the perceived benefits.
- However, many fathers were not open to support, given that they don't currently do this or have visibility on spaces specific to dads. Some perceived a support network was **unnecessary** or would try to tell them what to do; and a few stated **pride** could get in the way.
- Despite mixed motivation to seek more resources, participants discussed potential benefits having support, including: **validation, reassurance, normalization of struggles, and companionship**. Most of all, fathers wanted to **know what other dads were going through**.

“The Dad Network” Implies a Tangible, Interactive Place to Connect

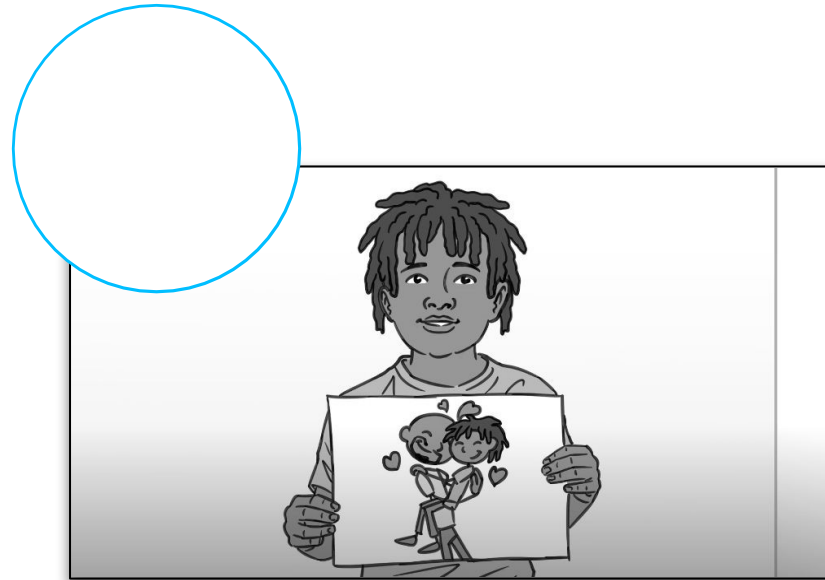
- Mentions of “The Dad Network” made participants think primarily of **actual support groups** and an **interactive network to connect with peers** (in person or online).
- There was strong interest in a **“non-judgemental” forum** where fathers could interact in a way that **didn't feel like asking for help**, more so gaining exposure to others' experiences. Fathers expressed it was important that resources allowed for **flexibility and autonomy** (i.e., ability to 'take it or leave it').
- Many suggested something like a **“Reddit for Dads”** would be a preferred format for this interactive resource that could offer the added benefit of anonymity. Some mentioned a desire for **in-person events**, or connections to such as **local activities** or playgroups, that could also help foster friendships among fathers.

CREATIVE CONCEPT

RECOMMENDATION:

“What Kids See”

Concept Testing: "What Kids See"



This ad opens with three dads speaking directly to the camera in succession answering the question, "we asked men how they feel they have to show up in the world." The dads reflect on norms about identity, such as showing less emotion. In the second part, their kids speak directly to the camera about ways "their dad shows up for them." The kids hold up drawings that show their dad hugging them, being silly with them, and talking to them about their feelings. The kids are seen running up to their dads to show them their drawings and are met with warmth and affection.

KEY QUALITATIVE INSIGHTS

Overall, there was very positive receptivity to the message and execution. The contrast of adult and child perspectives was perceived as effective and emphasized that their children are attuned to and impacted by their actions. Scenes highlighting children's views were seen as "sincere," "heartwarming," and a positive reminder of the impact fathers can have.

Participants easily understood the message and found it compelling. It was believable and motivating that providing affection and emotional support could positively affect their child's current and future social and emotional development. Though, some fathers stated that affection is easier with daughters, rather than sons. Extending the benefits of these SSNRE actions to protecting against toxic stress was not noticed.

The two distinct parts of the concept were attention-grabbing and thought-provoking. Some displayed reactivity at the mentions of traditional social and gender stereotypes because it didn't reflect their current identity. However, because the second part emphasized they were on the right path (as seen through their child's eyes), fathers felt encouraged by the hopeful tone. For most, the concept amplified the desire to challenge stereotypes, not reinforce them.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR PRODUCTION

Given the strong comprehension and perceived benefits of providing affection, attention, and patience, remove the explicit mention of toxic stress as it did not add to comprehension or motivation (adjust script lines as needed). Ensure that the 'stereotypes' referenced in the beginning are clearly referring to a past generation.

Concept Testing: “What Kids See”

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

*“I find [“What Kids See”] motivating. Because, knowing that **the little things that a dad puts in like this love, attention, affection, can really change, you know, a human being** and make him a better person in the future. And the reverse is if you don't put in those things that they could turn into, like, you know, broken people, and you're gonna have a very bad life in the future. So **it motivates me to, like, you know, play a role and do what I have to do to, you know, make an impact in this kid's life.**” –Black/African American Father*

*“... when it **shows the kids and how they drew pictures of how the dad makes them feel, it kind of makes me think of my kids.**” –Hispanic/Latino Father*

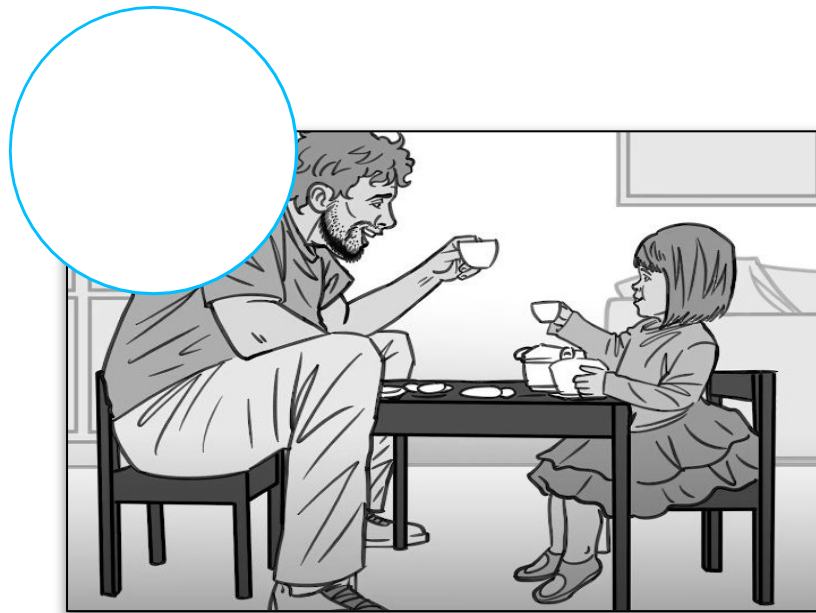
*“I just liked the fact that [“What Kids See” is] **changing the narrative of how the world looks at fathers. That was a really good sign to see, you know, that people are becoming more aware that, you know, we have other strengths and capabilities rather than what you know, we were brought up on ... I didn't agree with [the first part of the video] based off like my own trauma, but you had to ... know what it was back then, or in those experiences and how it's transitioning now. So I think [showing] both [sides] is pretty useful.**” –Black/African American Father*

*“ I loved it... This one was **pulling at my heartstrings, [it] resonated. It shows that giant contrast. So I thought it was great.**” –Hispanic/Latino Father*

*“I like [“What Kids See”] the most. ... **It just showed us other strengths, that we're appreciated. And just from the image of the young boy holding the picture, that's the image and that's what I want to resonate with themselves, to be proud of our relationship, to be able to talk about it and want to express it to other people.**” –Black/African American Father*



**ADDITIONAL
CONCEPT
FEEDBACK**



The ad opens on a dad looking lovingly at his baby. Another dad is shown braiding his son's hair into cornrows as he looks into the camera and says, "How's this for Dad Strong?". A third dad is shown being affectionate towards his son after he spills blueberries in the kitchen. The ad closes on a dad sitting at a tea party with his daughter as the narrator states, "Dad Strong helps to defend against toxic stress. The Dad Network is here to help you exercise your dad strength."

KEY QUALITATIVE INSIGHTS

This concept was generally well received and the playful tone stood out. Most participants expressed that the concept fit well with their perceptions of being a well-rounded provider. Several perceived "dad strong" means doing whatever it takes for your child's benefit—whether that it be physically, emotionally, or mentally. Although the overall idea resonated, a few expressed that the phrase "dad strong" seemed like a buzzword.

The main message was comprehended and fathers agreed with the positive impacts that come from providing emotional support (e.g. patience, calmness, validation). The mention of preventing toxic stress was not well understood unless provided with a definition.

Participants appreciated the diversity of the characters and resonated with most of the scenarios (especially for "girl dads"). The scenarios helped convey the many sides of being a father (including some "less traditional" roles), but some were distracted by elements they did not relate to (e.g., wouldn't be calm/playful when berries were dropped; braiding son's hair, which was particularly polarizing among Black or African American fathers).

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Some participants noted that they would like to see additional roles or some of the "traditional ways" fathers support their children to balance the emotional portrayals, such as playfulness/sports, and leadership.

Concept Testing: “How Dads Do It”

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

*“They don't see what we go through ... people don't know that my kids don't got a mom around. **I've got to pick up all the pieces. So it's like strong, weak, soft—I've got to do it all. I think [“How Dads Do It”] hit on the nose. Not to play devil's advocate, but even the twisting the hair, sh*t happens sometimes ... It's part of our manhood. It gets tested. But we've got to show that we're strong. We've got to be powerful. We've got to live up to that image.**”*

—Black/African American Father

*“What I got from [the phrase] ‘dad strong’ is **a dad could be physically strong, emotionally strong, or mentally strong. It just depends on the situation. It's just like an unwavering commitment, seeing to the healthy production of your child. Whatever avenue they need to go down, you're strong enough as a dad to engage to do what you need to do.**”*

—Black/African American Father

*“I feel like what went through my head is that the dad is the foundation to the energy, the vibe that goes on with the kids ... **patience and just calmness really plays a part in teaching these kids on how to behave and what's right and what's wrong. It's more on the patience side and remembering that these are kids. Sometimes things get frustrating. At times they can be chaotic, but as a dad, we should be able to stay strong enough to control the whole situation.**”*

—Hispanic/Latino Father

*“... there is something missing for me, and I can't put words to it ... I think fatherhood is a spectrum, but **it does show being flexible and being open and also being there. Those are all important things, and I think it showed that. ... But something is missing for me.**”* —Hispanic/Latino Father

*“I really like the initial scene. ... and then that last scene, the dad and the girl. And she's like “Pinkies up.” I thought that was **super sweet. I'm a girl dad myself, so that really touched my heart** because we're these masculine, strong figures, and then there we are on this chair that's way too small for us, sipping tea. So I like that.”* —Hispanic/Latino Father



This ad opens on a close-up of a man walking down a sidewalk. As he speaks to the camera, it pans out to reveal him pushing his son in a stroller. As he mentions going to other dads for “dadvice,” two other dads and their kids join the main “spokesdad” in walking down the street. As the spokesdad talks about ways to connect, additional dads and their kids—some in a wagon, riding a bike, or being carried—join the growing group. The ad closes on a close-up of the spokesdad promoting First 5 California’s Dad Network to “help you create your own team of dad support.”

KEY QUALITATIVE INSIGHTS

Many participants liked this concept for its explicit focus on enhancing resources for fathers, though not all were ready to take action. Those who were used to getting support from their networks (primarily fathers of color), were motivated to seek out further connection, and felt that it permitted fathers to open up the dialogue in a comfortable way. Yet, some were uninterested and/or displayed discomfort with taking this unfamiliar step. A few thought the line “asking for help doesn’t come naturally” was unnecessary.

Even among participants less apt to seek support, many perceived benefits were discussed, including hearing/relating to others’ experiences and struggles; sharing different perspectives; reducing isolation/facilitating friendship; and gaining validation without explicitly having to ask for help. Visuals of fathers together and positive tone helped convey this message.

Preventing toxic stress was not picked up on as a benefit of connecting with fathers.

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Motivation to utilize the suggested methods of support varied, but fathers were generally in favor of more resources and connection for dads. Joining a network would be a big step for some. In particular, the call to *start their own network* felt unrealistic due to perceived barriers like time, pride, or wariness of connecting with those they don’t share a “mutual understanding” with. Many expressed that a “jumpstart” from F5CA could make connecting easier (e.g. conversation prompts).

Concept Testing: “Dadvice”

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

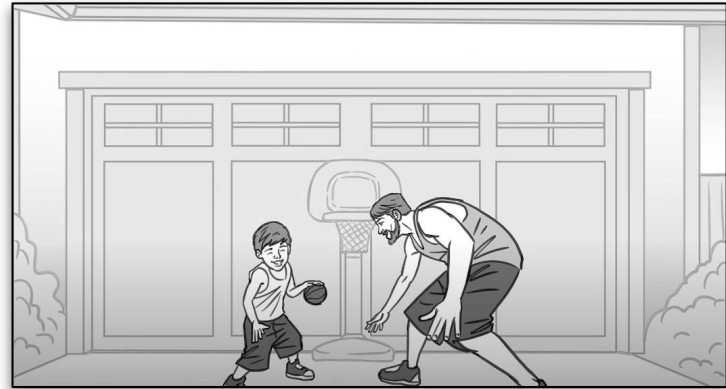
*“... sometimes our days get busy, and **men like to hear what others are going through. Not to be directed, but to implement our own way of doing things** if we get lost or if it gets too hard. So talking to other men about how to handle different situations, **it's healthy. And I like how it showed the guys coming together. I wish I was part of a group like that** or something that was available.” –Hispanic/Latino Father*

*“I kind of got like it was saying that **fathers are here too**, and we're going through stuff also. **It's okay for us to talk about it, I guess.**” –Any Race & Ethnicity Father*

*“**It's important to build community. And having the ability to share the wealth of your knowledge and your mistakes** because I think ultimately it comes down to we're not perfect people. We're not perfect humans. **And if we can share our mistakes, don't worry.**” –Hispanic/Latino Father*

*“**And I did like that visual, all the men together, baby-wearing, stroller pushing, hand holding, all that. That was cool.**”
–Hispanic/Latino Father*

*“So I feel like hanging around other dads and even having discussions like this [focus group], it kind of helps me out to understand things or actually be prepared ... **I can relate to the video on that when they're talking about hanging out with other dads and stuff like that just to get some advice and some support and to learn some things that we may think we know but don't really know.**” –Black/African American Father*



As an alternative to “Dadvice”, this bonus concept featured slightly different scenes and call to action. This ad opens on the main “spokesdad” walking with his son in a stroller. A second dad struggling to soothe a crying baby then joins the “spokesdad.” Another dad pulling his kids in a wagon also joins and mentions the Dad Network as a place “to go to for answers.” The camera whips to a dad playing basketball with his son. This dad passes the ball to the camera and the second dad catches this ball and hands it to his baby. The ad closes on the spokesdad’s encouragement to “join a First 5 California Dad Network in your community.”

KEY QUALITATIVE INSIGHTS

Similar to the “Dadvice” concept, there was variation in desire or willingness to seek support in general. Though, many noted that this concept featured a stronger call to action to join a tangible Dad Network than “Dadvice” and felt this concept was straightforward, clear, and “packaged nicely.”

This concept spurred further conversation about what participants thought the Dad Network might include. Some imagined it might offer things like text-based interactions; Reddit-style forum; local activities; tips for newer fathers on potty training, teething, etc.). Many said they wanted a non-judgemental space that offered flexibility to ‘take it or leave it’.

Some fathers found the basketball-related scene/line to be “cheesy,” while others appreciated the inclusion of sports, as this was an activity they typically do with their kids.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

*“[‘The Dad Network’] seemed a little bit more simpler. Faster. ... **this one is just straight to the point. Find a region and just connect. Find support.**”* –Hispanic/Latino Father

*“I think that this one was **packaged nicely. I think that it provided snapshots of a lot of the different videos that we watched, and it didn't seem like an after-school special. It was very clear.**”*
–Hispanic/Latino Father

*“... something like a **nonjudgmental forum** ... It's a relief to see that there is other people going through or that have gone through whatever the hell you're going through ... **So that way, as a dad, you don't feel like such a failure.**”*
–Black/African American Father

Summary

- **We recommend moving forward with production of “What Kids See” which was well-received for its powerful message, attention-grabbing style, and emotional tone.** Fathers felt validated for challenging traditional norms surrounding fatherhood, given most desired to be part of a new generation of fathers. The concept’s emphasis on the benefits of providing SSNREs like affection and emotional support rang true to benefit their child’s future, and was seen as motivating to continue these behaviors or implement more often.
- **Findings from this research revealed important themes surrounding fatherhood roles and identity, motivators to providing SSNREs, and resource needs.** Insights from Formative and Creative Concepts research (*which will be further described in an Expanded Report*) will be applied to future strategic directions, including a father-focused webpage.
- **Findings do not indicate the need to include Toxic Stress response as a motivator in this 30 second spot.** However, the father-focused web page will link directly to the *Stronger Starts* campaign featuring Toxic Stress Response information, as many would benefit from this information.

-
- **Merits of support were acknowledged, but interest and readiness to join a network varied**
 - Some already have network of family and friends, but recognize the need for more information
 - Some wanted a deeper network than they currently have, and more opportunities for relatable connection
 - Others are not interested in joining anything
 - Many are not particularly open to asking questions or receiving guidance
 - Most were not open to starting their own network

 - **The word/phrase “Dad Network” indicates there’s a tangible offering**
 - Dads assumed in-person/local groups or Reddit-style forums with open-dialogue
 - Moving forward with “network” as a name will make more/less sense depending on level of offering

Overall, the state we seek is:

Systems Change through Research, Leadership Engagement, Partnerships, Policy Advocacy, Media, PR (Levers)



Research & Findings:

Phase 1 – Internal F5 Fatherhood Programs

Phase 2 – External Fatherhood Programs

Background: First 5 California Fatherhood Focused Environmental Scan & Literature Review

- Executive Summary Research indicates a connection between family structures that include fathers and positive outcomes for children, families and communities.
- Despite the significance of a father's involvement, many human service organizations are primarily mother-focused, and often lack the funding, resources, and staff training to be intentionally father-inclusive. California has a rich landscape of existing fatherhood related initiatives and efforts to learn from and strengthen.
- This First 5 California Fatherhood Focused Environmental Scan & Literature Review provides high level summaries of the existing research on fatherhood initiatives, as well as a preliminary landscape of California's fatherhood related efforts and initiatives, in order to inform potential future investments and work of First 5 California (F5CA).





Scope and Approach

1 Focused on Fathers

This report focuses specifically on individuals identifying as fathers as a way to narrow scope and focus research on targeted strategies.

2 Evolving Gender Constructs

As societal definitions of gender and parent identity continue to evolve, future father-focused efforts and investments should consider a more nuanced approach to supporting fatherhood within evolving gender constructs.

3 Research Methods

This report was informed by research on the current landscape, distribution and analysis of a survey of local First 5 County Commissions, and interviews with local First 5 County Commissions and program directors engaged in active fatherhood related efforts.

Key Findings

Promising Practices

- Alameda County Fatherhood Initiative
- National Fatherhood Initiative
- National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse

California Landscape

- Alameda County Fathers Corps
- Orange County Fatherhood Coalition
- Local First 5 fatherhood curricula and support groups

Funding Sources

- Prop 10 funds for local First 5 Commissions
- 9 federal and state grant opportunities identified

Recommendations for First 5 California



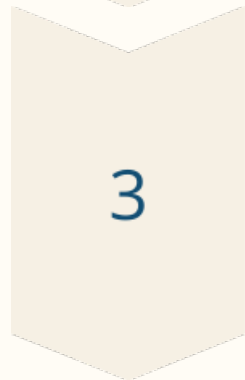
Advocate

Share report findings, engage in advocacy efforts with agencies and legislators, encourage explicit focus on fathers in strategic plans.



Catalyst / Convener

Collaborate with state agencies, convene fatherhood programs, organize funders collaborative, incentivize local investment, provide technical assistance.



Broadcaster

Fund fatherhood-focused messaging campaigns, publish interactive map and website, highlight local fatherhood program work.

Promising Practices Highlights



Father-Friendly Principles

Alameda County Fatherhood Initiative provides principles for agencies to be father-friendly.



National Fatherhood Initiative

A national organization promoting father involvement and responsible fatherhood.



Responsible Fatherhood Fatherhood Toolkit

The National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse offers evidence-based resources.

Lessons Learned

Lesson	Details
Identify Key Partners	Establish key system partners and principles early on.
Avoid Negative Stereotypes	Avoid negative stereotypes about fathers, especially BIPOC fathers.
Framing Language	Avoid using "responsible fatherhood" framing, as it can be condescending.
Outreach Strategies	Hire male staff, mentors, compensate fathers, provide in-person opportunities.

California Fatherhood Landscape



Alameda County Fathers Fathers Corps

A collaborative focused on fatherhood in Alameda County.



Orange County Fatherhood Fatherhood Coalition

A coalition promoting father involvement in Orange County.



CA Healthy Marriage & Fatherhood Grantees

Organizations receiving state grants for marriage and fatherhood programs.

Funding Opportunities

Prop 10 Funds

The primary funding source for local First 5 County Commissions to implement fatherhood efforts.

Federal Grants

Federal grant opportunities identified that can support fatherhood services.

State Grants

State grant opportunities identified that can support fatherhood services.

Private Funding

Potential to organize a statewide fatherhood funders collaborative.



Research Needs

Fatherhood 0-5 Focus

Need for explicit research on fatherhood during the 0-5 age range.

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Fatherhood Research Agenda

Utilize F5CA Research and Development Fund to develop and implement a comprehensive fatherhood research agenda.

Evaluation Support

Local support needed for evaluation of fatherhood program efforts.



Moving Forward

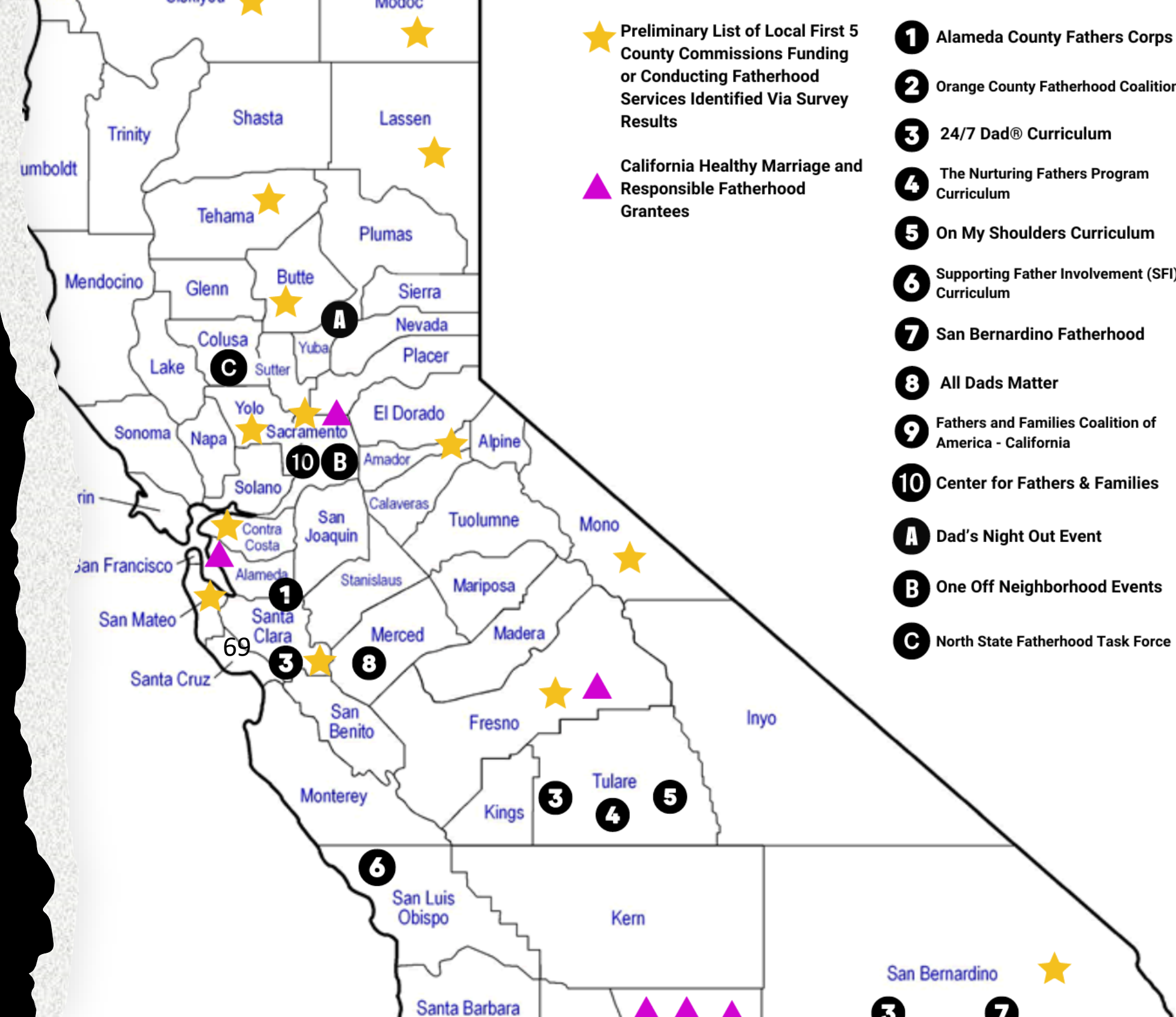
This First 5 California Fatherhood Focused Environmental Scan & Literature Review provides a foundation for potential future investments and work related to supporting fathers in California. By advocating for father inclusion, convening stakeholders, broadcasting key messages, and continuing research, First 5 California can play a vital role in strengthening fatherhood initiatives to promote positive outcomes for children, families, and communities across the state.

A **Landscape** of Fatherhood Efforts in California

This report provides an overview of various fatherhood-related initiatives and efforts across California. It highlights the work of local First 5 County Commissions, as well as broader statewide and community-based organizations supporting fathers. The information is organized into an initial landscape of First 5 fatherhood efforts, followed by highlights from desk research findings.

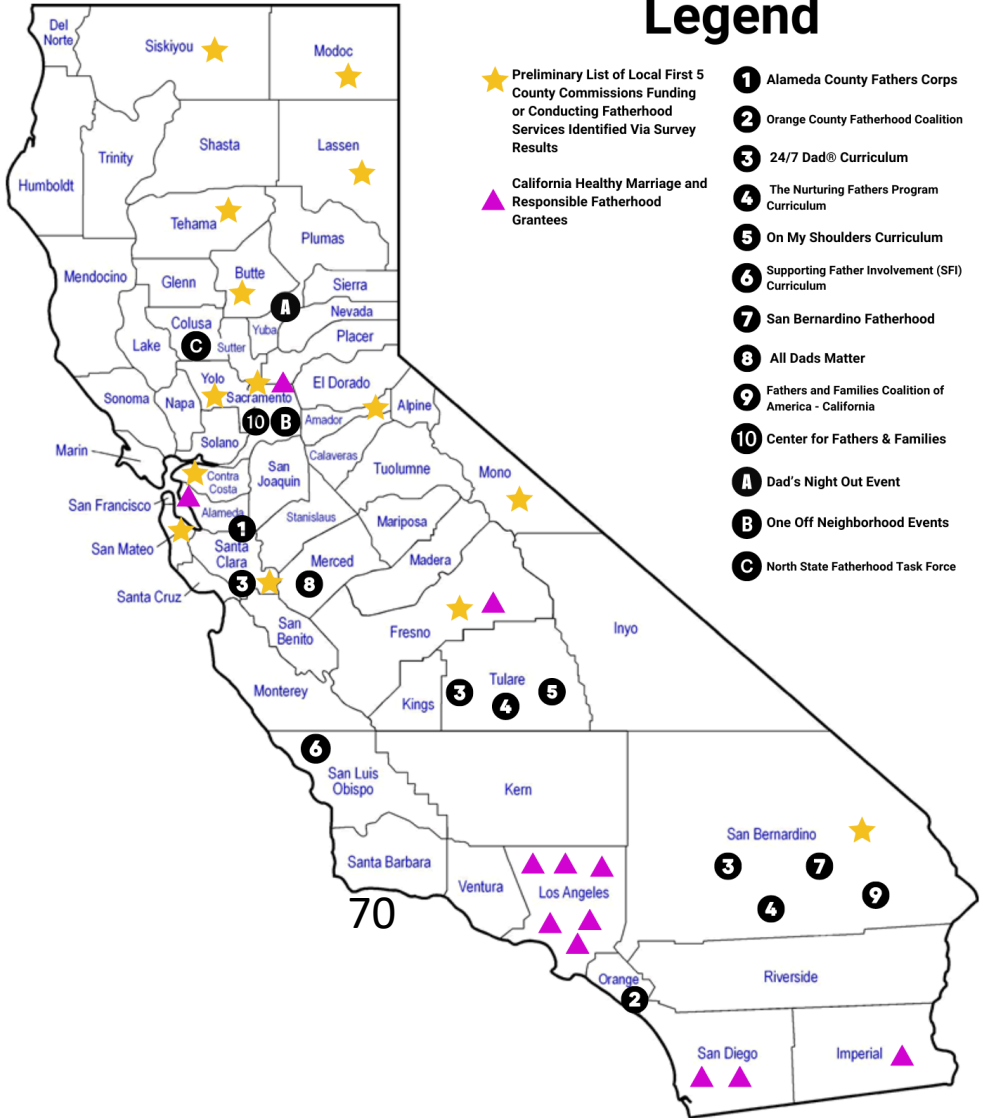


The First 5 Network Fatherhood Program Universe



Legend

- ★ Preliminary List of Local First 5 County Commissions Funding or Conducting Fatherhood Services Identified Via Survey Results
- ▲ California Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood Grantees
- 1 Alameda County Fathers Corps
- 2 Orange County Fatherhood Coalition
- 3 24/7 Dad® Curriculum
- 4 The Nurturing Fathers Program Curriculum
- 5 On My Shoulders Curriculum
- 6 Supporting Father Involvement (SFI) Curriculum
- 7 San Bernardino Fatherhood
- 8 All Dads Matter
- 9 Fathers and Families Coalition of America - California
- 10 Center for Fathers & Families
- A Dad's Night Out Event
- B One Off Neighborhood Events
- C North State Fatherhood Task Force



70

Local First 5 Fatherhood Initiatives

Alameda County Fathers Corps

A partnership funded by First 5 Alameda and local agencies, the Alameda County Fathers Corps promotes and supports fathers' engagement with their children and families.

It provides opportunities for fathers to strengthen parenting skills, advocates for father-friendly services, and trains Father Engagement Specialists.

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Local Fatherhood Services

Many First 5 County Commissions fund and conduct fatherhood services, such as implementing fatherhood curricula, support groups, parenting classes, and home visiting services tailored to fathers' needs.

Orange County Fatherhood Coalition

Funded by First 5 Orange County, this coalition of 15 local agencies aims to address gaps in fatherhood services. It includes a steering committee and a larger group for

Father-Focused Events

1 Dad's Night Out (First 5 Yuba)

A monthly event where dads participate in activities and network with service providers, hosted in partnership with local agencies.

2 One-Off Neighborhood Events (First 5 Sacramento)

Small, one-time events aimed at engaging fathers and connecting them with resources, funded through mini-grants.

3 North State Fatherhood Task Force (First 5 Colusa)

An annual conference that rotated through several counties, featuring a keynote speaker, workshops, and a resource fair for fathers (on hold since the COVID-19 pandemic).

The 18th Annual
FATHER'S DAY
FAMILY CELEBRATION
Saturday, June 18th

EVENTS

10:30AM
PRAYER BREAKFAST ON THE LAWN
AFRICAN CHURCH MBC LAWN
ROAD
PASTOR ANDREW EATON OF COMMONWEALTH CITY CHURCH &
MICAH GAINES OF CONSOLIDATED BAPTIST CHURCH.

11:30AM
FAMILY COMMUNITY MARCH
ST AFRICAN MBC TO DOUGLASS PARK
LET'S FOR ALL WHO MARCH!
WELCOME TO COME!

2:00PM
CELEBRATION
PARK
RESOURCE FAIR, PRIZE GIVE-AWAYS,
FAMILY PHOTOS, AND MUCH MORE!

EVENT SPONSORED BY

CHANCE, LG& KU, LEXINGTON, Prevent Kentucky, PNC, FAYETTE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS, UK

Broader California Highlights

California Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood Grantees

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services funds several California organizations through grants focused on healthy marriage, responsible fatherhood, and youth development.

San Bernardino Fatherhood

A community-based nonprofit organization promoting responsible fathering and father inclusion, with a vision of creating strong families and safe communities.

All Dads Matter (Merced)

A program funded by Merced County Human Services, offering regular classes, support groups, and community events for fathers, as well as a resource center.

Fatherhood Services in California



Center for Fathers & Families

Located in Sacramento, this center offers fatherhood support groups, one-on-one sessions, parenting classes, and other adult services for fathers and families.



Fathers and Families Coalition of America - California

Sponsored by First 5 California, this affiliate organization provides professional development and resources to support fathers and families.



Family, Relationship, and Marriage Education Works (FRAMEWorks)

A federal grant program that funds activities such as public advertising campaigns, marriage and relationship education, and premarital education.

Engaging Fathers in Early Childhood

Organization	Efforts
Head Start and Early Head Start	Provide resources to grantees on engaging fathers and male caregivers in early childhood programs.
First 5 County Commissions	Many commissions fund Family Resource Centers to implement fatherhood curricula and services for fathers with young children.
Community-Based Organizations	Organizations like All Dads Matter and San Bernardino Fatherhood offer programs and support specifically for fathers of young children.

Fatherhood Services for Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Fathers



Fatherhood FIRE Grants

The Fatherhood FIRE grants from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services serve fathers who are within nine months of release from incarceration and intend to return to their communities and families.



Friends Outside in Los Angeles County

A Fatherhood FIRE grantee, Friends Outside in Los Angeles County operates the "Dads Back!" program for formerly incarcerated fathers.

Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges

Despite the efforts highlighted in this report, many First 5 County Commissions do not prioritize or fund fatherhood services. Negative stereotypes about fathers persist, and there is a need for more programs focused specifically on fathers.

Opportunities

There is an opportunity for advocacy efforts to request the use of California TANF funding to support fatherhood services. Additionally, the various grant opportunities and funding streams outlined in this report could be leveraged to expand fatherhood services across the state.

National Fatherhood Initiative

Mission

The National Fatherhood Initiative works to increase father involvement by equipping communities and organizations with father-engagement training, programs, and resources.

Vision

Their vision is that all communities and organizations are proactively father-inclusive so that every child has an involved, responsible, and committed father.

Resources

The NFI provides free resources like research, ebooks, trainings, and videos, as well as purchasable curricula, posters, brochures, and trainings.

Father Friendly Check Up

1 Leadership Development

Indicators assess if the organization has a father-focused mission, provides adequate resources for serving fathers, and tools to help fathers.

2 Organizational Development

Indicators look at if fathers are involved in shaping programs, if forms are gender-neutral, and if materials portray positive father images.

3 Program Development

Indicators check if programs start from where fathers are at, educate mothers on father importance, and other promising practices.

4 Community Engagement

Indicators assess marketing plans to engage fathers, employing male staff for outreach, and more.

National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse

Website

The NRFC website at Fatherhood.gov provides resources for dads, programs, a program map, research library, blog, and more.

Products & Outreach

The NRFC develops written products, provides virtual trainings, hosts a national call center, and presents at conferences.

1

2

3

Media Campaign

The NRFC runs a media campaign promoting responsible fatherhood efforts across social media platforms.

Common Fatherhood Curricula But No Exclusive 0-5 Programing

Curriculum	Description	CA Usage
24/7 Dad	Equips fathers with self-awareness, compassion and responsibility. Includes basic and advanced	Tulare, Santa Clara, San Bernardino
Nurturing Fathers	13-week course teaching parenting and nurturing skills to men.	Tulare, San Bernardino
On My Shoulders	Strengths-based, experiential curriculum giving fathers effective	Tulare
Supporting Father Involvement	Enhances positive father involvement based on family risk model.	San Luis Obispo



Local Lessons Learned

1

Identify Key Partners Early

Engage system partners like social services and child support agencies from the start, and identify guiding principles.

2

Avoid Negative Stereotypes

Be cognizant of harmful stereotypes about fathers, especially BIPOC fathers, and notions of masculinity that discourage vulnerability.

3

Effective Outreach Strategies

Hire male staff, involve program mentors/graduates, compensate fathers for input, offer convenient engagement opportunities.

Why start with A Fatherhood Program Fellowship?

Values: Research Based, NS/AG Aligned, Hub Structured

1. WKKellogg Foundation Fellows Prog., Subsidiarity, Generative

2. Program Exemplars with Evaluation Studies

3. Addresses Declining Revenue Through Collective Action

4. Moderate Investment, High Yield (Treasure, Time, Talent)

5. End Goal, Program Alignment, Foundation Funding for Local F5's to combat declining revenue.

Strategy Notes

Triangulation of the Data - Lit. Review, Environmental Scan, Surveys, Interviews, Focus Groups, Podcast.

Content as Curriculum – Podcast Interviews (ex. w/Dr. Nadine Burke Harris) will be repurposed as Fellowship Curriculum re: ACES, Toxic Stress

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Content as Public Relations – Podcast collaboration with Sac Observer + Ethnic Media to ensure message subsidiarity, trusted community voice. Podcast interviews will be hosted on F5 Fatherhood programs websites

F5 Fatherhood Fellowship: Fellowship: Empowering Fathers to Buffer ACEs

The "This Is How Dads Do It" podcast serves as a foundation foundation for First 5 California's proposed Fatherhood Fellowship. This initiative aims to educate and and empower fathers, father figures, and caregivers about about Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and their their mitigation. Inspired by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation Foundation Fellowship program, this fellowship seeks to unify to unify and enhance fatherhood programs across California's California's 58 counties using an ACEs buffering curriculum. curriculum.



Fellowship Purpose and Goals

1

Consolidate Efforts

The Fatherhood Fellowship aims to consolidate and consolidate and amplify the efforts of fatherhood fatherhood programs across California.

2

Unified Curriculum

Focus on a unified ACEs buffering curriculum to equip participants with advanced skills and knowledge.

3

Support Fathers

Better support fathers in their crucial role as primary agents of support and protection against childhood stressors.

4

Empower Practitioners

Empower local practitioners from across California's 58 counties to enhance their fatherhood programs.

Role of the Podcast in the Fellowship

Continuous Learning Platform

"This Is How Dads Do It" podcast will provide ongoing education and insight into effective practices and new research in father engagement and ACEs management.

Community Building

The podcast will facilitate the sharing of stories and strategies among fellows, promoting a sense of community and mutual learning.

Advocacy and Awareness

It will raise awareness and advocate for the importance of father involvement in child development, crucial for securing support and funding.

Unifying Curriculum Across Counties

- 1 Collaboration**

The fellowship will bring together practitioners from all 58 county First 5 commissions to collaborate on refining and implementing a standardized ACEs buffering curriculum.
- 2 Consistency**

This unified approach ensures consistency in program quality and delivery across different regions.
- 3 Scalability**

It makes it easier to scale successful strategies and adapt local programs based on proven methodologies.

Funding Opportunities

Foundation Funding

With a unified curriculum and network of trained professionals, First 5 California will be better positioned to attract substantial foundation funding.

Philanthropic Support

The fellowship's unified front and shared success stories will make a compelling case for investment from philanthropic entities.

Federal Funding

The standardized practices and collaborative reach of the fellowship will appeal to federal funding sources looking for programs with greater impact and scalability.

Year-Long Fellowship Overview



Kickoff and Introduction

Month 1: In-person kickoff meeting and Zoom introduction to ACEs and their impact on child development.

Deep Dive into ACEs

Month 2: Workshop with guest speakers and in-person meeting on strategies to mitigate ACEs.

Fathers as Buffers

Month 3: Zoom meeting on fathers' role as buffers against toxic stress and in-person workshop on enhancing father-child interaction.

Curriculum Development

Month 4: Begin curriculum development for local fatherhood programs and training on curriculum design.

Fellowship Goals and Activities



Enhance Knowledge

Enhance knowledge and practical skills regarding the mitigation of toxic stress in children.



Develop Curriculum

Develop a standardized ACEs buffering curriculum for implementation across various fatherhood programs.



Build Network

Build a cohesive network of fatherhood practitioners throughout California.



Secure Funding

Secure substantial funding to ensure sustainability and expansion of fatherhood initiatives focused on ACEs.

Fellowship Schedule Highlights

Month 5	Expert Sessions: Guest experts on childhood resilience
Month 6	Mid-Year Review and Feedback
Month 7	Enhancing Engagement Techniques
Month 8	Advanced Buffering Strategies
Month 9	Aligning Curriculum with state standards
Month 10	Preparing for Funding: Grant application workshops
Month 11	Final Review and Practice Presentations
Month 12	Graduation and Launch of standardized curriculum

Additional Fellowship Elements

1

Monthly Podcast Discussions

Scheduled post-podcast discussions via Zoom to integrate recent learnings from "This Is How Dads Do It" podcast.

2

Ongoing Mentorship

Pairing each fellow with a mentor for the duration of the program to provide personalized guidance and support.

3

Online Community

Creation of an online forum for continuous sharing of ideas, resources, and support among fellowship participants.

Impact and Future Prospects

Empowered Fatherhood

The F5 Fatherhood Fellowship ensures a thorough educational experience focused on reducing the impact of ACEs through empowered fatherhood.

Robust Support

The fellowship provides robust support and resources to maximize the effectiveness and reach of fatherhood initiatives across California.

Statewide Impact

By unifying efforts across all 58 counties, the fellowship aims to create a significant and lasting impact on child development throughout California.

Sustainable Growth

With its focus on securing funding and developing standardized curricula, the fellowship lays the groundwork for sustainable growth and expansion of fatherhood programs.

Video

[Fatherhood Summit 2023 Short Version Seminar \(youtube.com\)](#)