Implementing Home Visiting with Fathers: A Review of the SafeCare Dad2K Program

Shannon Self-Brown & Akilah Thomas,
Georgia State University, School of Public Health, National SafeCare Training & Research Center

Clinton Boyd, Jr.
Georgia State University, Department of Sociology

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Goals for session today

- Public Health approach to child maltreatment prevention
- Why target fathers in Child Abuse Prevention Efforts?
- Discuss what we have learned to date in our work with fathers
- Dad2K Overview: An Adapted SafeCare for Fathers
- Case sample from the Dad2K program
- Panel Questions
Thank You to Contributors

• Melissa Osborne, MPH
• Betty Lai, Ph.D.
• Whitney Rostad, Ph.D.
• Theresa Glasheen, M.S.
• Clinton Boyd, Jr., M.A.
• John Lutzker, Ph.D.
• Dan Whitaker, Ph.D.
• SafeCare Trainers
• GSU Graduate Students
• Study Participants
Child Abuse Prevention

- In this room, we all care about child abuse prevention
- We may approach prevention in different ways depending on discipline
- Our field is public health, and this foundation guides our approach to child abuse prevention
Child Maltreatment: A Public Health Problem

• Public health
  • Science focused on protecting and improving the health of people
  • Aims to provide the maximum benefit to the largest number of people

• Public Health Problem
  • What is the Magnitude of the Problem?
  • What is the Impact of the Problem?
  • Is it Problem Preventable?
  • Public Health Impact = Effect size x Reach
Magnitude of Child Maltreatment

- Global Phenomenon
- 683,000 victims of child abuse and neglect in U.S. in 2015
- A non-child protective services (CPS) study estimated that 1 in 4 children experience child abuse/neglect in their lifetimes
IMPACT of Child Maltreatment

**Health-risk behaviors**
- Sexual promiscuity
- Sexual perpetration of alcohol abuse
- Illicit/injected drug use
- Smoking
- Behavior problems

**Mental/Social Problems**
- PTSD
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Eating disorders
- Neurobiological
- Academic achievement
- Unwanted pregnancy
- Obesity
- Revictimization

**Health Conditions**
- Diabetes
- Stroke
- Cancer
- Suicide
- Skeletal fractures
- Chronic bronchitis/emphysema
- STDs (e.g., HIV)
- Hepatitis
- Obesity
- Revictimization
The Public Health Approach to Prevention

1. Define the Problem
2. Identify Risk and Protective Factors
3. Develop and Test Prevention Strategies
4. Ensure Widespread Adoption
What is Child Maltreatment?

- As defined by CDC
- Acts of Commission: Words or overt actions that cause harm, potential harm, or threat of harm
  - Physical abuse
  - Sexual abuse
  - Psychological abuse
- Acts of Omission: Failure to provide for needs or to protect from harm or potential harm
  - Physical neglect
  - Emotional neglect
  - Medical and dental neglect
  - Educational neglect
  - Inadequate supervision
  - Exposure to violent environments
Child Maltreatment Prevention: Where Do We Start?

- Perpetrators are most commonly the victims’ parents
- Neglect and Physical Abuse are the most common forms of maltreatment
- The youngest children are most vulnerable to maltreatment
  - Children in the first year of their life have the highest rate of victimization

Source: Child Maltreatment, 2015; Based on data from Table 5-5 and Exhibit 4-E
Important Details on Fathers/Male Caregivers as Perpetrators

- Male caregivers are...
  - involved in approximately 45% of substantiated cases (NCANDS, 2017)
  - Approximately 20% of the time, fathers are solely responsible for reported child abuse cases (Osborne, et al, 2016).
  - More likely to engage in severe forms of maltreatment (abuse that results in injury/fatalities)
- Yet, most child maltreatment prevention programs target mothers
Flip the Coin: Positive Father Involvement is incredibly beneficial

- Improves academic success
- Reduces delinquency and substance use
- Enhances a child’s physical health, mental health, social skill level, and emotional development
- Directly benefit to mothers
  - Reduce childcare burden and maternal stress
  - Reduce risk for postpartum depression
- Involvement of a male caretaker in child welfare-involved families is an indicator of reduced likelihood that children are placed into out-of-home care (Bellamy, 2009).
- Positive father involvement has important implications for child trajectories, as well as potential positive impacts on the costs to service systems.
Child Maltreatment Prevention Among Fathers

• Most child maltreatment prevention programs target mothers

• Little research has examined how to reduce risk for child maltreatment perpetration among fathers

• Studies have shown increased benefit for father and child outcomes when fathers are involved in behavioral parent training
  • Fathers demonstrate greater use of praise and less negative talk toward their children following intervention
  • Positive improvements in father-child involvement
  • Reductions in child externalizing problems

• Limited research has examined the impact of parent behavioral training programs for the outcome of child maltreatment risk among fathers.
Why SafeCare?

- SafeCare research has shown reductions in child maltreatment risk among at-risk parents
- Targets child neglect and physical abuse, but also focuses on improvement in positive parent-child interaction
- Targets families with children 0-5 years
- Two pilot studies indicate that fathers exhibit positive improvement in target parenting skills in response to the SafeCare Parent-Child Interaction module (Bigelow & Lutzker, 1998; Self-Brown et al., 2015).
- Broadly disseminated
Why SafeCare?

- International:
  - Australia
  - Belarus
  - Canada
  - Israel
  - Spain
  - United Kingdom
Evidence-Based Prevention Programming Exists: SafeCare

- **Behavioral**, in-home parent-training curriculum
- Targets high-risk parents with children ages 0-5 years
- 3 modules:
  - Home Safety, Child Health, Parent-Child Interaction
- Use structured teaching model across 3 modules

Assess (session 1) → Train (sessions 2-5) → Assess (session 6)

Explain → Model → Practice → Feedback
An Augmentation of SafeCare for Fathers

• How did we augment?
  • Just Parent-Child Interaction module. Why?
  • Incorporated Technology. Why?
  • Incorporated co-parenting. Why?
SafeCare Supplemented with Technology

- Computer-assisted delivery
  - Motivational content
  - Psychoeducation
  - Video modeling
- Home visitor instruction for practice and feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assess Session 1</th>
<th>Train Sessions 2-5</th>
<th>Assess Session 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

[Diagram showing the process: Explain → Model → Practice → Feedback]
PCI Skills: cPAT

**BEFORE**
- Say what you expect and what will happen
- Explain activity
- Prepare in advance

**DURING**
- Talk
- Physical interaction
- Choices
- Follow through
- Praise
- Redirect

**END**
- Wrap-up and transition
Dad2K Video
How was Dad2K Implemented in Atlanta?

• This program took place as part of a research project funded by National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities

• Fathers did receive payment for assessments and $10 per session since it was experimental

• 99 fathers participated in the project

• 51 fathers assigned to Dad2K (Other fathers assigned to control group)

• 53% retention
  • Completed the intervention with 27 fathers
Lessons TO Date: Data outcomes

- Fathers who participated in Dad2k were very satisfied and engaged in the program
- Fathers completed SafeCare at the same or higher rates that mothers did in other studies
- Fathers with higher education level were more likely to complete
- The gender and ethnicity of the home visitor DID NOT MATTER
- Fathers who participated did learn the target skills
  - Demonstrated significantly improved positive parenting behavior
- Fathers who participated did not appear to decrease in child maltreatment behaviors
  - Caveat: Fathers appeared to underreport child maltreatment behaviors on the self-report measure leaving little room for impartment
**Table 2. Responses from Fathers Who Participated in the Qualitative Study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Program Enrollment Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brad</strong></td>
<td>I decide to participate because I was already going through this stuff with child support, so I’m thinking this will be a good if these people (child support staff and personnel) find out I’m doing this Dads to Kids program… and I can learn some of these points (C-PAT skills).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cory</strong></td>
<td>Just to see where it could take me. I always want to know more as a father.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jake</strong></td>
<td>When I first heard about the program, my cousin kept talking about the money. But I wasn't doing it for the money. I did it because I felt it was going to help me as a father.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Karl</strong></td>
<td>I participated so I can have a better relationship with my son. I also decided to participate so I could have better procedures when talking with him. I just wanted different techniques to use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>John</strong></td>
<td>I was approached by a man and he asked if I would like to participate in this program…I said yeah! Because my experience was, when I needed help for me and my children, there wasn’t too many places that would help a father. All the programs are geared toward women with children. There hasn’t been one for men with children and that’s ridiculous! Me and my kids were almost homeless.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mike</strong></td>
<td>I decided to participate because it’s never enough learning that you can get. It’s never enough parenting methods that you can use. It’s never enough information that you can have when it comes to parenting. I felt like I could take the information that was being given and use it in a lifestyle for me and my son.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shawn</strong></td>
<td>Umm… just the way it was described to me. They said I could learn new things about fatherhood. I was like, anything new I can learn about being a good dad, I’ll check it out!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paul</strong></td>
<td>I signed up because it’s never a such thing as too much information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Matthew</strong></td>
<td>I knew I wasn't the best father. I knew I needed help planning stuff, make preparations, and all of that. So, when they asked me if I wanted to do Dad2K, I said yes. I like people who are teaching me new things. Teaching me right away. If it’s going to better me as a person, I’m going to try it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>David</strong></td>
<td>I knew I had already daddy skills, but I didn’t have much. So, if they could teach and show me how a better father than I already am, I’m with that. Practice make perfect.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I feel like it (Dad2K Program) helped me develop as a father. And it helps me talk to my kids more and do more activities and stuff with them, and learn how to discipline them without just whipping and yelling at them. Just the little things
“It’s a big impact because I started doing things very differently. And it (Dad2K Program) made me realize that I was maturing into a better father. And I can’t be the same person that I was when I was 20, 21, and 22, and 23. Like, you got to be better, you got to be better than before. And that’s what was always in my mind, “how can I be a better father each day?” and this program has shown me how to become a better father each day. So yeah, the program was a success to me.”
Learn more about the research:


Up Next...

• Let’s get into the clinical applications involved in Dad2K.
What is Dad2K®?

• In-home training for fathers, using an adapted version of SafeCare’s Parent-Child Interaction module.
• Target Population: disadvantaged minority fathers
• Focused on children aged 2-5 years.
• Technology augmented
• Co-Parenting and structured problem was incorporated into the program.
Dad2K SafeCare® Implementation

- Dad2K® is 6 sessions, once a week for about 60-90 minutes
Dad2K® Structure

- The use of a structured assessment allows the Provider to “see” change and measure it objectively
- Validated tools exist for measuring change
- Working towards mastery or success in demonstrating Parenting skills
Rationale

• Increase positive interactions and bonding between fathers and children

• Engage children in activities by using effective interaction skills and incidental teaching

• Prevent challenging child behavior

• Plan stimulating play and daily routine activities in advance

“Jf two wrongs don’t make a right, how many does it take?”
Dad2K Session 1: Baseline Assessment

• Complete Daily Activities Checklist with Father
• Assess two activities for baseline observation based on Daily Activity Checklist (i.e., feeding, dressing, bathing, diapering)
• Assess a play activity
• Introduce the father to the Dad2K computer program
• Participant Agreement
• Family Orientation discussion
PCI Assessment Measures: Daily Activities Checklist

- Fathers rate the level of difficulty they have with their children during a variety of situations

- Use the Fathers’ ratings to pick the situations that give them the most difficulty

- If they rate community settings, tell them that these will be discussed at session 5
Baseline Assessment

• Provide rationale and explanation for observation
  — “In order to find out how we can best help, we would like to observe some of your daily activities and a play activity.”
  — “Do whatever you would normally do during the activity, as well as how you would typically start or finish that activity.”
  — “Please try to pretend I’m not here.”

• Assess three activities for about 5 minutes

• Complete a cPAT Assessment for each activity
Participation Agreement Form

• Expectation of Father

• Expectation of Dad2K Provider

• Signed by both father & Provider
Family Orientation Discussion

• Children cared for by father
  • Name, age, residence & frequency of contact
• Other people who support the focal child
  • Relationship to child, gender, residence, program interest
• Anyone father would be interested in joining Dad2K sessions
  • Co-parenting discussion
Dad2K Motivation

• Provider gave father a wallet sized “my motivation” card
• Father could write what would motivate him to complete the program
Session 1, Part 2: About You as a Dad
How can you stay motivated?

What is one positive thing you could tell yourself if you start feeling overwhelmed?

A. This is an important goal for me and my family
B. Other sessions might be more interesting
C. I can't give up so easily
D. Nothing worth doing is ever easy
E. Maybe I can move my session day or time
F. This will be beneficial for my child
G. There's another positive phrase I'd like to remember
Dad2K Sessions 2-5: Child Planned Activities Training (cPAT)

- cPAT Skills:
  1. Prepare in advance
  2. Explain the activity
  3. Explain the rules & consequences
  4. Give choices
     - Open-ended/forced
  5. Talk about what you are doing
  6. Use good interaction skills
  7. Praise
     - Labeled/unlabeled
  8. Ignore minor misbehavior
  9. Provide consequence
 10. Wrap-up & give feedback
# Child Planned Activities Training—cPAT

## Home Visitor Assessment Form – Father Study Video Coding Version

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rater ID #</th>
<th>Video ID #</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Activity Type (interactive or non-interactive)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Scoring
- **✓** Demonstrated the behavior consistently and with ease
  - Parent must perform all bulleted items to receive this score
- **✓** Needs improvement in ease and/or consistency of the behavior
  - Parent must perform at least one bulleted item to receive this score
- **—** Did not demonstrate behavior at all

### Notes on N/A: Score “N/A” for behaviors that are assumed to have taken place but you do not observe them (e.g. “Prepare” or “Wrap-Up”).

## Parent Behavior

### BEFORE
- **Prepare in advance**
  - Gets supplies/toys ready in advance (includes items already present)
  - Informs child activity is going to happen
- **Explain activity**
  - Gets the child’s attention
  - Explains the activity
- **Explain rules & consequences**
  - Gives 1+ positively stated rule
  - Gives 1+ positive consequence

### DURING
- **Talk about what you and your child are doing**
  - Talks warmly about activity
  - Uses incidental teaching
- **Use good physical interaction skills**
  - Gets on child’s level
  - Uses good eye-contact
- **Give choices (score even if this occurs before activity)**
  - “Check” for an open-ended choice
  - “Check-plus” for a forced choice
- **Praise desired behaviors (labeled)**
  - Uses 2+ *labeled* praises
- **Praise desired behaviors (unlabeled)**
  - Uses 2+ *unlabeled* praises
- **Ignore minor misbehavior**
  - Ignore minor misbehavior
  - Score N/A if no misbehavior
- **Provide consequences**
  - Follows through with positive and/or negative consequences as appropriate
  - Score N/A if “Wrap-Up” is scored N/A

### END
- **Wrap-up and give feedback**
  - Informs child activity is ending
  - Describes what child did well
  - Lets child know what to do better next time (if applicable)

### Score

### Notes

---

Number of (—): Number of (✓): Number of (✓+):
Dad2K Skills: cPAT

### Prepare in advance

| **What**       | • Have a plan for the activity |
|               | • Get supplies/toys ready in advance |
|               | • Give a warning that the activity is going to happen |

| **Why**       | • Reduces stress |
|               | • Prepares the child for transition |
|               | • Helps the activity begin smoothly |
|               | • Informs child the activity is changing |
Dad2K Skills: cPAT

**Explain the activity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What</th>
<th>Why</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Get your child’s attention</td>
<td>Lets your child know what to expect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe the activity</td>
<td>Gets your child excited and prepared for the upcoming activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be positive and excited</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dad2K Skills: cPAT

State the **rules** and consequences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What</th>
<th>Why</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Give 1-2 rules</td>
<td>• Lets the child know specific expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• State rules in positive, simple and realistic way</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Give rules for behaviors that are likely to be challenging</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Why • Lets the child know specific expectations
# Dad2K Skills: cPAT

## State the rules and consequences

**What**
- Use simple consequences
- Deliver immediately after the activity
- Be consistent! Follow through
- Give positive and negative consequences
- Use natural, logical consequences

**Why**
- Child knows what to expect
- Child can make good decisions about behavior
## Dad2K Skills: cPAT

### Talk about what you are doing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What</th>
<th>Why</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Talk in a friendly tone of voice about what you and your child are doing</td>
<td>• Helps with language development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use “incidental teaching”</td>
<td>• Teaches simple concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Improves parent-child relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Keeps child interested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Keeps the activity positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Makes activities more rewarding/engaging</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Dad2K Skills: cPAT

### Use good physical interaction skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What</th>
<th>Why</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Get on your child’s level</td>
<td>• Helps with bonding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use good eye contact</td>
<td>• Lets child know you care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Touch your child in an affectionate, gentle, and helpful way</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Dad2K Skills: cPAT

### Give choices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What</th>
<th>Let your child have choices throughout the activity (open-ended vs. forced)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Make the choices clear and specific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Give simple choices – materials, what comes first, play activities, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why</th>
<th>Keeps your child interested</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lets your child use age-appropriate independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Makes them less likely to misbehave</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dad2K Skills: cPAT

**Praise desired behaviors (Labeled)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What</th>
<th>Why</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Praise good behavior throughout</td>
<td>Lets child know what behavior you like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use labeled or specific praise about what your child did well</td>
<td>Makes your child more likely to repeat good behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Praise makes you both feel good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Dad2K Skills: cPAT

### Praise desired behaviors (Unlabeled)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What</th>
<th>Why</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Praise good behavior throughout</td>
<td>• Lets child know that you are proud of them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use unlabeled or nonspecific praise, such as great job, awesome, etc.</td>
<td>• Makes your child more likely to repeat good behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Praise makes you both feel good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dad2K Skills: cPAT

Ignore minor misbehavior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What</th>
<th>Why</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ignore behaviors that do not harm self, others, or objects</td>
<td>Use good supervision while ignoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay attention to behaviors you want to see instead</td>
<td>Misbehaviors are often a way of seeking attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ignoring can decrease a behavior, while attention can increase it</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Dad2K Skills: cPAT

### Provide consequences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What</th>
<th>• During and/or after the activity, follow through with positive and negative consequences (as stated earlier)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Why  | • Lets child know you mean what you say  
• Follow-through increases good behavior  
• Consistency connects behavior to consequence  
• Inconsistency may cause challenges |
Dad2K Skills: cPAT

Wrap-up and give feedback

What
• Inform your child the activity is ending
• Describe what you liked about child’s behavior
• Let your child know how to improve

Why
• Helps child make the upcoming transition
• Lets child know what he did or did not do well
• Helps promote good behavior in future
cPAT Skill Practice
Daily Activity (Bedtime)
Activity Cards

Sock Matching Game
Activity for 1-3 year olds

Materials
- Lots of colorful pairs of socks and a bag or box

Suggestions
- Place one sock from each pair on the floor
- Put the match to each sock in the bag or box
- Pull out one sock at a time and ask your child to find the match

Tips
- Follow your child’s lead by letting them have a turn asking you
- Talk about the patterns and colors as a way of teaching
- Most importantly... HAVE FUN!!!

On, under or behind
Activity for 1-3 year olds

Materials
- Household items that your child might recognize

Suggestions
- Ask questions about what items are inside another object, on top of another object, behind another object, etc.

Tips
- When labeling objects found on, under, or behind other objects, use an excited tone of voice
- Use items your child will be interested in finding
- Be ready to answer your own questions
- Take turns asking questions to each other
Co-Parenting

• Talking with Mom Workbook: *Essential Communication Skills For Dad*
  • National Fatherhood Initiative

• Activities used:
  • The Emotional Bank Account
  • Mutual Purpose & Mutual Respect
  • Apologize, Contrast, & Think Win-Win
Problem-Solving Skills

• Sometimes, fathers need help solving a problem. In these cases, the Provider’s responsibility is to:
  — Help the client understand the problem situation
  — Think of alternative solutions
  — Evaluate each solution
  — Select the best solution

• It is important to assist the father in solving problems, but not to solve the problems for him.
Problem-Solving: How It’s Done

• State usefulness of problem-solving to the Father
  — This will make it easier to solve future problems

• Explain the process:
  — We will think of possible ways to solve your problem
  — We will start out by having you telling me as many solutions as you can think of
  — I will write these options down and we will look at each option and determine the pros and cons of each

• Conduct problem-solving with Father
Problem Solving Worksheet

My problem is ____________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option 1</th>
<th>Why is this a good option?</th>
<th>Why is this a bad option?</th>
<th>Rate this option</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option 2</th>
<th>Why is this a good option?</th>
<th>Why is this a bad option?</th>
<th>Rate this option</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option 3</th>
<th>Why is this a good option?</th>
<th>Why is this a bad option?</th>
<th>Rate this option</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Best option
Steps to do ____________________________

Backup option
Steps to do ____________________________
Dad2K Session 6: End of Module

- Use cPAT form to assess Father’s skills (Success/Mastery)
- Review and summarize what Father has learned
- Highlight positive Father change
- Problem-solve for the future
- Provide father with a Dad2K completion certificate
The Power of Perseverance

The Case of Mike Wells*

*Mike Wells is a fictitious name. The purpose of its usage is to protect the true identity of the featured father.
Who Is Mike Wells?

• Single-father (custodial parent)
• African-American male
• 30 years of age
• Divorced
• Employed (low-wage worker)
• Some college experience (2 years)
Where Did Mike Wells Grow Up?

- Native of Atlanta
  - Raised in Atlanta’s Summerhill neighborhood
    - Mike described his childhood neighborhood as one negatively affected by “crime and drug dealing,” which made his fellow neighbors “afraid to go outside.”
  - Summerhill is considered a neighborhood of “Concentrated Disadvantage”
    - Racial composition (Percentage Black) = 81%
    - Poverty rate = 39%
    - Unemployment rate = 17%
    - Female-headed households = 38%
    - Number of children = 21%
    - Welfare Recipients = unknown
- For those interested, Christopher Silver's, *The Separate City: Black Communities in the Urban South, 1940-1968*, and Alexander von Hoffman’s, *House by House, Block by Block: The Rebirth of America's Urban Neighborhoods* both document Summerhill’s rich and storied history.
How Did Mike Wells Grow Up?

• Mike and his sibling lived with their parents, who were married.
  • Mike’s parents eventually divorced, which led to him being separated from his siblings.

• Despite the marital breakdown between Mike’s parents, Mike remained especially close with his father throughout his childhood.
  • However, due to an unforeseen tragedy, Mike laid his father to rest at the tender age of 14. Mike’s father was just 38 years old.
How Did Mike Wells Grow Up Cont....

- After the premature and untimely death of Mike’s father, Mike relied on “a group of men” who were his “cousins, uncles, teachers, and mentors” to show him “the ways of life.”
  - This “collective group of guys” became father figures to Mike.
- Mike also has “a very strong relationship” with his mother. Whenever Mike is unsure of himself, he often depends on “the wisdom and knowledge” of his mother to help him see the forest for the trees.
What Has Been Mike Wells’ Fatherhood Experience?

• After getting married, within a year, Mike and his wife received a surprise package from the stork.
  • Mike and his wife soon discovered they were expecting their first child together.
    • As Mike stated, the pregnancy was “unplanned but wanted. Very exciting moment though... I was ecstatic and overjoyed... I was jumping up and down.”

• However, soon after the birth of Mike’s son, the initial wave of excitement surrounding the marital couple’s first child vanished into thin air.
  • Mike and his wife’s marriage chaotically ended due to irreconcilable differences, which, from Mike’s perspective, stemmed from alcohol addiction.
  • Therefore, Mike felt it was best for them to “just separate” and “work on co-parenting” because of a “bunch of unforeseen things like abuse...physical abuse” where he was the “victim.”
What Has Been Mike Wells’ Fatherhood Experience Cont. . .

• Also, due to major disagreements between Mike and his ex-wife, Mike was consistently denied access to his son for 3 years.

• However, after a wearisome and grueling legal battle, Mike ultimately gained full-custody of his son.
What Was Mike Wells Dad2K Experience?

- Mike decided to participate in Dad2K out of a desire to strengthen his parenting skills in targeted areas.
  - As Mike stated, he joined Dad2K because “I felt like I could take the information that was being given and use it in a lifestyle for me and my son.”
- Mike initially thought Dad2K was going to be a group-based fatherhood program, but was pleasantly surprised once he discovered the individualized nature of the program.
  - Mike appreciated that him and the home visitor “could focus more on what we need to focus on instead of being in a group and being distracted.”
- Mike had nothing but positive things to say about his interactions with program staff.
  - In Mike’s view, the positive and uplifting interactions Mike had with Dad2K staff made him want to go “further with the program.”
How Did Mike Wells Benefit From Dad2K?

• Dad2K allowed Mike to develop a “new way of parenting.”
  
  • Mike stated, “I gained a new way of parenting. I gained an ease of life for me and (son). Gained more involvement through the information, the skills, and the services that I received from the program. I gained better preparation skills. I gained better skills about playtime with my kid.”

• Mike attributes both positive cognitive and behavioral changes in his son’s behavior to Dad2K as well.
References


Panel Questions

• What do you think is unique about trying to engage fathers in child maltreatment prevention services versus mothers?

• Can you speak about ways fathers may feel ignored when professionals are discussing the importance of parenting in various settings?

• What is 1 point about father engagement that you most hope the audience will leave with today?
Panel Contact Information

• Shannon Self-Brown, Ph.D.
• Professor, School of Public Health
• Georgia State University

• sselfbrown@gsu.edu