

Engaging Fathers: GETTING STARTED GUIDE



Ready to engage and educate fathers, but not sure where to start?

We've got a number of ideas to jump-start your efforts, plus some recommended resources.

- 1. FOCUS YOUR EFFORTS.** What kind of fathers do you want to engage? Before you implement a program, think about the fathers that may come to your organization, the types of families you serve, or the kind of fathers you're looking to serve. What are these fathers' interest points, and what barriers may they have for father involvement? The answers to these questions will inform what kind of resources you use, and how you structure and market your programs.
- 2. ASSESS YOUR FATHER-FRIENDLINESS.** When fathers come to your organization, do they only see images of mothers? Are there any male staff members in your organization? Your father involvement efforts won't be successful unless fathers feel comfortable. Not sure how father-friendly your organization is? Take our [Father-Friendly Assessment](#) for a customized evaluation and helpful recommendations.
- 3. THINK ABOUT SUSTAINABILITY.** Funding is a key part of any father involvement program. Many organizations sustain their efforts through local, provincial, and federal grants. Click here for a review of our "[Funding Your Fatherhood Program](#)" and get ideas for program sustainability.
- 4. MY DAD MATTERS COMMUNITY TRAINING.** Dad Central's training can assist your organization by providing information for staff, community partners and families about the importance of father involvement. We also provide [online certification](#) for engaging dads.
- 5. PARTNER WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS.** Be creative and look for a variety of non-profit and for-profit partners that will help you increase your reach and provide valuable resources that you may not have on your own. You can use partners to create a referral network, i.e., have other organizations who aren't prepared to work with fathers refer them to you. For-profit partners may be able to fund your efforts or help with promotion. Also, community partnerships can provide volunteers to help facilitate your fatherhood programs thereby increasing your capacity to educate fathers.
- 6. TRAIN YOUR FACILITATORS.** Consider working with Dad Central Canada to train your staff and/or volunteers to facilitate the program. This can include fatherhood curricula, best practices, and strategies to help ensure that your program is successful. Our expert trainers cover:
 - Characteristics of a successful facilitator
 - Program format and customization
 - How to evaluate your program
 - Recruitment and retention, and more!
- 7. LAUNCH YOUR PROGRAM.** Hold a community-wide kick-off event to create exposure and excitement! Whether it is a family fun day, father-child activities, or a basketball tournament, an event will help you expand your reach and create excitement for your upcoming programs and efforts.
- 8. KEEP THEM COMING BACK.** Consider an incentive or some type of reward if the attendees join you for "x" number of sessions; or offer points for participation during the program sessions. Partner with a local restaurant to receive a donation of dinner or refreshments to offer during your sessions to encourage participation. In exchange for the food donation, offer to give out promotional materials or coupons for that restaurant to encourage future business by your session attendees.
- 9. PLAN AHEAD: YOUR ALUMNI PROGRAM.** Think ahead about what happens after the dads finish your program! It can eventually carry on naturally and help sustain your future fatherhood work.

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