

# First 5 California Fatherhood Focused Environmental Scan & Literature Review

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## Executive Summary

Research indicates a connection between family structures that include fathers and positive outcomes for children and their mothers.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

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).<sup>3</sup>

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

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 engaged in active fatherhood related efforts.<sup>4</sup>

The report presents the landscape and research findings related to:

- Promising Practices in Fatherhood-Related Efforts
- A Landscape of Major Fatherhood-Related Efforts in California
- Funding for Fatherhood-Related Efforts

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<sup>1</sup> *National Fatherhood Initiative*. (2022). Why Involved Dads are Good for Moms. Retrieved February 15, 2023, from <https://135704.fs1.hubspotusercontent-na1.net/hubfs/135704/2022%20Strengths%20Based%20Infographics/involved-dads-good-for-moms.pdf>; The Strengths of Father Presence. Retrieved February 15, 2023, from <https://135704.fs1.hubspotusercontent-na1.net/hubfs/135704/2022%20Strengths%20Based%20Infographics/strengths-of-father-presence.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> F5CA requested this brief informational scan to inform Commissioners as they engage in a next phase of planning related to possible F5CA fatherhood investments in the future. Recommendations for additional research are embedded throughout the report.

<sup>4</sup> Interviews were conducted with representatives from: First 5 Alameda, First 5 Orange, First 5 San Mateo, First 5 Santa Clara, and First 5 Tulare.

Based on these findings, it makes the following recommendations for the First 5 California Commission and staff to consider and further assess:

F5CA Drivers	Recommendations for Potential Future First 5 California Investment in Fatherhood Related Efforts
<p><b>Advocate</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Sister Agencies:</b> Share F5 Fatherhood Report, produce comprehensive report. Help state agencies change references to father engagement to father inclusion.</li> <li>● <b>Federal:</b> Engage in advocacy to public agency partners and the Administration to allocate a portion of state Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funding.</li> <li>● <b>Federal:</b> Engage in federal lobbying or advocacy activities on engaging fathers and supporting fatherhood</li> <li>● <b>State:</b> Help establish a CA Leg. Dad’s Caucus (Like Federal Dad’s Caucus).</li> <li>● <b>Commission:</b> Include an explicit focus on serving the needs of fathers in their strategic plans and / or communications materials</li> <li>● <b>Local:</b> 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</li> </ul>
<p><b>Catalyst / Convener</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Sister Agencies:</b> Collaborate with the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), specifically on their Fatherhood Council and App/Good Grid project. Convene a State Agency Fatherhood workgroup.</li> <li>● <b>Statewide:</b> Convene local fatherhood programs to create statewide fatherhood program principles</li> <li>● <b>Statewide:</b> Organize a statewide fatherhood funders collaborative, join national fatherhood funders collaboratives.</li> <li>● <b>Statewide:</b> Incentivize a specific focus on fathers 0-5.</li> <li>● <b>Local:</b> Incentivize local investment in fatherhood program leaders: First Five Fatherhood Fellows Program (Based on Kellogg Foundation Fellows)</li> <li>● <b>Local:</b> Fund a technical assistance provider to support local fatherhood efforts across the State.</li> <li>● <b>Commission:</b> Include fatherhood strand at F5 Summits.</li> <li>● <b>Research:</b> Utilize the F5CA Research and Development Fund to develop and implement a fatherhood research agenda, and local support for evaluation. Fund explicit research on fatherhood 0-5.</li> </ul>

F5CA Drivers	Recommendations for Potential Future First 5 California Investment in Fatherhood Related Efforts
<b>Broadcaster</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Communications:</b> 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.</li> <li>● <b>Statewide:</b> Publish interactive map of fatherhood locations (included in this report), Fatherhood website.</li> <li>● <b>Local:</b> Leverage communications campaigns to highlight and uplift the work of F5 Fatherhood Programs.</li> </ul>

### Promising Practices in Fatherhood-Related Efforts

The report overviews promising practices related to fatherhood supports including: Alameda County Fatherhood Initiative [Father-Friendly Principles](#) for Agencies and Organizations in Alameda County (local brightspot); the [National Fatherhood Initiative](#) (national brightspot); and the [National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse](#) (NRFC) managed by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services ( a key resource for evidence-based and field-generated resources including the [Responsible Fatherhood Toolkit: Resources from the Field](#)). This section summarizes the common curricula used by fatherhood programs, and outlines some of the metrics used by fatherhood services and initiatives to measure and monitor their success.

Lessons learned related to implementing fatherhood efforts, as shared by local First 5 County Commissions in interviews and survey results included the following:

- Identify key system partners and principles early on;
- Avoid negative stereotypes about fathers, especially BIPOC fathers;
- Avoid using the framing of “responsible fatherhood” as it can be condescending and is not frequently accompanied by phrases such as “responsible motherhood” or “responsible parenthood”;
- Outreaching and engaging fathers can be a challenge, however, a number of strategies came up as potentially helpful for increasing participation and recruiting fathers including:
  - Hire male staff members;
  - Hire mentors or graduates of previous programs to lead, facilitate, or support programming;
  - Survey and ask fathers directly what they need to compensate them; and
  - Provide in person opportunities for engagement.

### A Landscape of Major Fatherhood-Related Efforts in California

The report provides an initial landscape of First 5 fatherhood related efforts and a selection of broader highlights from desk research findings. Two local First 5 collaboratives focused on

fatherhood include the [Alameda County Fathers Corps](#) and the Orange County Fatherhood Coalition. Most local First 5 County Commissions who reported serving fathers are currently doing so through providing fatherhood curricula and support groups, or through providing more general parenting and whole family related services.

Across California, nonprofits, public agencies, and community based organizations are providing high quality services and supports to fathers. An initial sampling of some of the organizations and service providers who have a strong online presence are described in this section and include the [California Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood Grantees](#), [San Bernardino Fatherhood](#), [All Dads Matter](#), [Fathers and Families Coalition of America - California](#), and [Center for Fathers & Families](#).

### Funding for Fatherhood-Related Efforts

For local First 5 Commissions, **the primary funding source to implement fatherhood efforts is their Prop 10 funds**, most often going to fund Family Resource Centers to implement fatherhood curricula. Beyond the local Prop 10 funding stream, the report identifies nine other federal and state grant opportunities and funding streams that can be utilized to support fatherhood services. These funding opportunities are described in additional detail in the full report.

## Introduction

### Report Purpose and Structure

First 5 California (F5CA) requested this brief informational scan to inform Commissioners as they engage in a next phase of planning related to possible F5CA fatherhood investments in the future. This report is not exhaustive, and was developed on a rapid timeline to provide information and recommendations to inform ongoing planning work. Recommendations for additional research are embedded throughout the report.

This report serves as an informational resource for First 5 California Commissioners and staff to enhance their understanding of existing research and initiatives related to supporting fathers in California and nationally. It presents information about promising practices, a brief landscape of existing California-based efforts, and information about funding available to support fatherhood-related initiatives and programming. It also features voices from the field to uplift successes and challenges related to implementing fatherhood initiatives and programming in California.

Finally, the report makes specific recommendations for how First 5 California might consider engaging and funding future fatherhood related efforts in California.

Importantly, the ecosystem of organizations and initiatives serving fathers is complex; some organizations focus specifically on serving fathers, some focus on serving parents; and others focus on enforcing specific parts of systems that interact with fathers or parents such as enforcing child-support payments. These services, while adjacent to serving fathers, may have some negative implications on fathering and fatherhood that F5CA should consider when assessing if these types of programs and investments align with First 5 California's priorities.

### Context

In the United States, 18.4 million children, or 1 in 4, live without a biological, step, or adoptive father in the home.<sup>5</sup> In California, of families with their own children under age 6, 8.83% are families with a male householder and no spouse present.<sup>6</sup>

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)'s National Health Statistics Report, "fathers' involvement in their children's lives has been shown to have a positive effect on children and their well-being in many areas for example, on increasing the chances of academic success and in reducing the chances of delinquency and substance abuse."<sup>7</sup>

Research by the National Fatherhood Initiative indicates that a child raised in a father-absent

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<sup>5</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). Living arrangements of children under 18 years old: 1960 to present. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Census Bureau.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. (2021). American Community Survey 2021 1 Year Estimates Table B11003

<sup>7</sup> Jones, J., & Mosher, W. D. (2013, December 20). *National Health Statistics Reports Number 71, December 20, 2013*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved April 4, 2023, from <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhsr/nhsr071.pdf>

home is:<sup>8</sup>

- At a four times greater risk of poverty
- At a two times greater risk of infant mortality
- At a seven times greater risk of teen pregnancy
- At a two times greater risk of obesity
- At a two times greater likelihood of dropping out of school
- More likely to have behavioral problems
- More likely to go to prison
- More likely to commit crime
- More likely to face abuse and neglect
- More likely to abuse drugs and alcohol

While this research paints a stark picture, children can and do grow and thrive in all family structures.<sup>9</sup> Over time, family types have increased in diversity with blended families, same-sex parent families, children living with non-parent relatives, among others. It is important to note that not all children living in single parent households face the same circumstances; children born to single parents who choose to have children through donors or surrogacy may not face the same socioeconomic disadvantages and parental stress faced by some other single parents. As noted by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the topics of family structure and single-parent families are “nuanced and evolving issues.”<sup>10</sup>

Research does demonstrate a connection between family structures that includes fathers and positive outcomes for children and mothers.<sup>11</sup> Many moms and dads agree that a father’s involvement is an important part of ensuring a child’s well-being.<sup>12</sup> Despite the significance of a father’s involvement, many human service organizations are primarily mother-focused, and many often lack the funding, resources, and staff training to be intentionally father-inclusive.<sup>13</sup>

While recent data in the United States regarding the attitudes and beliefs of fathers is lacking, a poll from the United Kingdom released in 2022 indicates that 2/3 of new dads in a survey of 1,015 UK parents admit to feeling “left out” in the early days of parenting.<sup>14</sup> Data from the United States

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<sup>8</sup> *National Fatherhood Initiative*. (2022). The Father Absence Crisis in America. Retrieved February 19, 2023, from <https://135704.fs1.hubspotusercontent-na1.net/hubfs/135704/2022%20Strengths%20Based%20Infographics/NFIFatherAbsenceInfoGraphic.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> *Child Well-Being in Single-Parent Families*. (2022, August 1). The Annie E. Casey Foundation. Retrieved February 10, 2023, from [https://www.aecf.org/blog/child-well-being-in-single-parent-families?gclid=Cj0KCOjA3eGfBhCeARIsACpJNU\\_qPccnWJp0Tj9y4xMlgfpxd-kX\\_hBPTnfp5xgMI8cdXUFtVy\\_qjkaAILpEALw\\_wcB](https://www.aecf.org/blog/child-well-being-in-single-parent-families?gclid=Cj0KCOjA3eGfBhCeARIsACpJNU_qPccnWJp0Tj9y4xMlgfpxd-kX_hBPTnfp5xgMI8cdXUFtVy_qjkaAILpEALw_wcB)

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> *National Fatherhood Initiative*. (2022). Why Involved Dads are Good for Moms. Retrieved February 15, 2023, from <https://135704.fs1.hubspotusercontent-na1.net/hubfs/135704/2022%20Strengths%20Based%20Infographics/involved-dads-good-for-moms.pdf>; The Strengths of Father Presence. Retrieved February 15, 2023, from <https://135704.fs1.hubspotusercontent-na1.net/hubfs/135704/2022%20Strengths%20Based%20Infographics/strengths-of-father-presence.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> *Who We Are*. (2021). National Fatherhood Initiative. Retrieved February 09, 2023, from <https://www.fatherhood.org/who-we-are>

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Brnjarchevska, A., Brooks, R., Hoffman, A., Chang, G. G., Miller, A., Bryen, S., Faris, D., & Tobin, J. (2022, April 26). *Two-Thirds of New Dads Feel 'Left Out' in the Early Days of Parenting*. Newsweek. Retrieved March

is slightly older; according to the Mott National Poll on Children’s Health Report released in 2019, in a national sample of fathers of children 0-13 years old, 25% of surveyed fathers felt excluded from communication about their child’s activities.<sup>15</sup> After BuzzFeed requested stories from single fathers in honor of Father’s Day 2022, one anonymous father described feeling excluded by sharing “I have majority custody of my kids and do almost 100% of the day-to-day responsibilities for them, yet any time their mom is with us, all questions about the children are directed to her. Not mostly to her, but basically exclusively as if she’s the only one caring for them.”<sup>16</sup>

There is a wealth of recent research and evidence-based strategies related to ensuring human service agencies are prepared to serve the whole family, including fathers. Findings from this *First 5 California Fatherhood Focused Environmental Scan & Literature Review* indicate that there are opportunities to:

- Support existing ECE and other perinatal through age 5 service providers to have a more father-friendly and father-inclusive approach;
- Support standalone fatherhood efforts: such as implementing specific curricula, coordinating fatherhood support groups, hosting events for fathers, etc.

Given F5CA’s focus on advancing systems change at the state and local levels, consideration should be given to striking a balance between these two opportunities. Opportunities to develop, pilot, and/or expand standalone services to support fathers (an important demographic often overlooked and excluded from other systems) can be a helpful approach and can reveal lessons about broader system-change efforts to better incorporate fatherhood into family-focused policies and services. To systematically and systemically support fatherhood, existing ECE- and family-focused systems should be appropriately prepared to not only include, but also to respond to the needs of fathers and to integrate fatherhood support into their overall approach.

California has a rich landscape of existing fatherhood related initiatives and efforts to learn from and expand upon. This *First 5 California Fatherhood Focused Environmental Scan & Literature Review* provides high level summaries of the existing research base related to fatherhood initiatives, as well as a landscape of California’s fatherhood related efforts and initiatives, in order to inform potential future investments and work of F5CA.

### Acknowledging an Evolving Definition of Fatherhood

Due to the limited scope of this report, this report focuses specifically on individuals identifying as fathers as a way to narrow scope and focus research on targeted strategies. Fathers are an integral part of serving the whole family, however, not all families have members who identify as men or as fathers. Nevertheless, all families deserve services that are inclusive and responsive to

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5, 2023, from <https://www.newsweek.com/two-thirds-new-dads-feel-left-out-early-days-parenting-1701107>

<sup>15</sup> C.S. Mott Children’s Hospital. (2019, June 12). *Parenting Put-downs: How Criticism Impacts Fathers*. Mott Poll Report. Retrieved February 16, 2023, from [https://mottpoll.org/sites/default/files/documents/061219\\_DadShaming.pdf?utm\\_source=National+Poll+on+Children%27s+Health+List&utm\\_campaign=1230b0d7b9-NPCH\\_DadShaming\\_061219&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_ba6e5a0194-1230b0d7b9-108193673](https://mottpoll.org/sites/default/files/documents/061219_DadShaming.pdf?utm_source=National+Poll+on+Children%27s+Health+List&utm_campaign=1230b0d7b9-NPCH_DadShaming_061219&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_ba6e5a0194-1230b0d7b9-108193673)

<sup>16</sup> Ishak, R. (2022, June 14). *19 Single Dads Share Myths And Misconceptions About Fatherhood*. BuzzFeed. Retrieved March 2, 2023, from <https://www.buzzfeed.com/ravenishak/single-dad-myths-misconceptions>



their needs and identities.

In many families, grandparents are caretakers and in particular grandfathers now make up a sizable number of who we call fathers and fathers that care for children 0-5. In addition, research shows “the relationship that a father had with his parents, and specifically with his father, can be a source of motivation regarding the investment a father puts into relationship building with his child.”<sup>17</sup> Grandfathers can play an integral role in family dynamics. Recent research has also illuminated the need for improved supports and services specific to grandfathers. According to the article “Grandfathers and The Impact of Raising Grandchildren” in the Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare, “Grandfathers experience powerlessness that has not been reported in the literature on grandmothers raising grandchildren. Results affirm the need for special attention to elderly men who take on the role of parent for their grandchildren.”<sup>18</sup> This report focuses on all individuals who identify as fathers, inclusive of identities that may not traditionally be incorporated into the definition of a father.

The information presented in this report focuses on serving the specific gender identity of men as fathers; however, it is important to note that this definition is changing and will continue to change as national and international conversations and efforts continue to create a more gender inclusive society. 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.

Historically, accepted definitions of masculinity were contradictory to active and nurturing fathering and caregiving. Historically, child-rearing was a domestic task, performed by women, who were responsible for all aspects of domestic life. Accepted definitions of masculinity positioned men as breadwinners that provided moral guidance to their children and family, but not as caregivers more specifically.<sup>19</sup>

As society pivots from this restrictive definition of masculinity, there is growing need for support for men to be active and equal decision makers and nurturers in the lives of their children. These activities are important characteristics of a modern father.

As described by The Trevor Project, “gender identity isn’t an easy topic to understand,” and the definition of modern masculinity has been evolving as part of a larger overall movement related to shifting definitions around gender identity.<sup>20</sup> Gender is a social construct, meaning it is a concept that is created by humans to help them organize and categorize their world.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> *Father Involvement and Father-Child Relationship Quality: An Intergenerational Perspective*. (2018, January 9). NCBI. Retrieved April 4, 2023, from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6415916/>

<sup>18</sup> Bullock, K. (2005). “*Grandfathers and The Impact of Raising Grandchildren*” by Karen Bullock. ScholarWorks at WMU. Retrieved April 4, 2023, from <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol32/iss1/5/>

<sup>19</sup> Lamb, M. E. (2000). The History of Research on Father Involvement: An Overview. *Marriage & Family Review*, 29(2-3), 23-42. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1u03usyRJvVuD6TGd8gE7W-8zuz5qN0tZ/view>

<sup>20</sup> *Understanding Gender Identities*. (2021, August 23). The Trevor Project. Retrieved February 16, 2023, from <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/resources/article/understanding-gender-identities/>

<sup>21</sup> The Trevor Project highlights that “each gender comes with a set of expectations, like how to act, talk, dress, feel emotion, and interact with other people... In America, we have very defined gender roles that

There are a range of gender identities beyond the traditional dichotomy of male and female. The Trevor Project explains this range in the visual below and provides additional information in their [“What is Gender?”](#) overview.

**Trevor Project Visual<sup>22</sup>**

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describe what it means to be masculine or feminine, or a boy or a girl, and we learn what’s expected of us at a very early age from parents, family, friends, culture, religion, television, movies, and more. Even though these expectations are made up – there is not an objective reason why boys shouldn’t be encouraged to practice ballet, for example – gendered characteristics, activities, expressions, and stereotypes are really ingrained in our society, and shape most of our lives.”

<sup>22</sup>*The Coming Out Handbook*. (2021). The Trevor Project. Retrieved February 16, 2023, from <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/resources/guide/the-coming-out-handbook/>

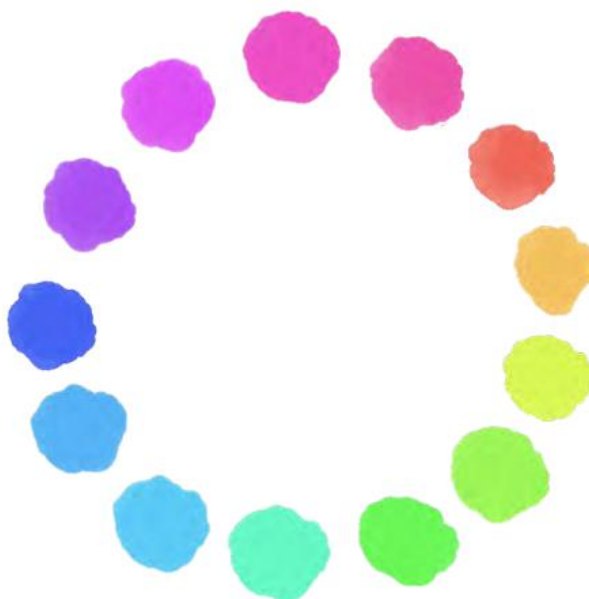
Some people say that gender looks like this:



Others say gender is this:



In actuality, gender often looks a lot like this:



This report focuses on people who identify as men and fathers specifically because there is a need for current early learning and care services to be more inclusive of this identity group; as highlighted by the statistic shared above that some fathers surveyed in a recent national poll felt that the professionals who interact with their child are dismissive of their parental role.<sup>23</sup> While the ultimate goal is for all services to be inclusive to all peoples, this report is centered around fatherhood as an identity group that has been traditionally underserved and underrepresented in

<sup>23</sup> C.S. Mott Children's Hospital. (2019, June 12). *Parenting Put-downs: How Criticism Impacts Fathers*. Mott Poll Report. Retrieved February 16, 2023, from [https://mottpoll.org/sites/default/files/documents/061219\\_DadShaming.pdf?utm\\_source=National+Poll+on+Children%27s+Health+List&utm\\_campaign=1230b0d7b9-NPCH\\_DadShaming\\_061219&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_ba6e5a0194-1230b0d7b9-108193673](https://mottpoll.org/sites/default/files/documents/061219_DadShaming.pdf?utm_source=National+Poll+on+Children%27s+Health+List&utm_campaign=1230b0d7b9-NPCH_DadShaming_061219&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_ba6e5a0194-1230b0d7b9-108193673)

early care and education systems.

## F5CA Fatherhood Focused Environmental Scan & Literature Review Methodology

This *F5CA Fatherhood Focused Environmental Scan & Literature Review* was informed by three primary methods of information gathering:

1. Review of existing data, recent reports, news articles, and other archival resources.
2. Distribution and analysis of a survey of local first 5 county commissions. This survey received 35 responses.
3. Interviews with local First 5 County Commissions engaged in active fatherhood related efforts: F5 Alameda, F5 Orange, F5 San Mateo, F5 Santa Clara, and F5 Tulare.

One important finding across methodology is the gap in services and efforts targeted specifically at fathers of children age birth through five years old. Most of what was uncovered across this report is related to fatherhood more generally, which **suggests opportunities for First 5 California to consider how to integrate a 0-5 specific focus within existing efforts.**

## Promising Practices in Fatherhood-Related Efforts

### Common Strategies & Promising Practices<sup>24</sup>

This section of the report:

- Shares an overview of promising practices related to fatherhood supports at the local and national levels by sharing bright spots.
- Highlights the [National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse](#) managed by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services as a key resource for additional promising practices and evidence-based resources, including the [Responsible Fatherhood Toolkit: Resources from the Field](#).
- Uplifts some of the significant lessons learned related to implementing fatherhood efforts shared by local First 5 County Commissions in interviews and survey responses.
- Summarizes curricula commonly used by fatherhood programs and shares details related to known usages of the curriculum within California.

### Local Bright Spot: Alameda County Fatherhood Initiative Father-Friendly Principles for Agencies and Organizations in Alameda County

The Alameda County Fathers Corps was identified as an important local resource for working with fathers in both survey results and interviews with local First 5 County Commissions. The Alameda County Fathers Corps is a collaboration between First 5 Alameda and the Alameda

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<sup>24</sup> This report is primarily focused on programs and efforts that explicitly address fathers as a key target of their services. There are a number of organizations and efforts aimed at supporting broader goals, such as marriage stability or parental knowledge, that are effective in supporting fathers as well. The information in this F5CA Fatherhood Focused Environmental Scan & Literature Review however, is centered around programs and efforts with an explicit fatherhood focus.

County Public Health Department, Social Services Agency, and Department of Child Support Services that began in 2013.<sup>25</sup> It is a countywide team of male service providers working to help strengthen families. Their goal is “that every father is fully engaged and supportive of their children and that agencies and organizations in Alameda County be fully prepared to help them succeed.”<sup>26</sup>

This collaboration has a set of [father-friendly principles](#) for agencies and organizations serving families. These principles were adopted by the Alameda County Fathers Corps and are based on the five protective factors of the [Strengthening Families Framework](#) developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy.<sup>27</sup> Each of these principles is an important promising practice related to serving fathers.

### Father-Friendly Principles<sup>28</sup>

1. **Include needs of fathers:** Fathers, and the needs of fathers, are included in the structure and delivery model of all family services in agencies and organizations.
2. **Provide father-friendly services:** Agencies and organizations are open, supportive, helpful and inclusive towards the needs of fathers and further the goal of increasing fathers’ involvement in their children’s lives.
3. **Portray positive father images:** Materials, illustrations, posters, brochures and other collateral include positive, diverse images of fathers. Facilities provide father-friendly environments consistent with the needs of men and fathers.
4. **Create positions that serve fathers:** Agencies and organizations create positions that serve fathers and actively recruit men to fill those positions in order to better address the needs of fathers.
5. **Train staff on fatherhood issues:** Agencies and organizations working with families strive to provide training for all staff on working with men and on fatherhood issues.
6. **Expect father participation:** Agencies and organizations develop program policies with a clear expectation that fathers should and will participate.
7. **Design programs for fathers:** Agencies and organizations make every effort to create the image that programs are designed for fathers as well as for mothers and children.

The Alameda County Fathers Corps also offers an [Implementation Guide](#) to help support programs to assess and improve their abilities to implement the father friendly principles.

### National Brightspot: National Fatherhood Initiative

The National Fatherhood Initiative came up as a key resource both in survey results and in

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<sup>25</sup> *Fathers Corps Year 1 Overview*. (2014). Alameda County Fathers Corps. Retrieved February 17, 2023, from <https://acphd-web-media.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/media/programs-services/fatherhood-initiative/docs/alameda-county-fathers-corps-overview.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> *Father-Friendly Principles for Agencies and Organizations in Alameda County*. (2014). Alameda County Fathers Corps. Retrieved February 16, 2023, from <https://acphd-web-media.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/media/programs-services/fatherhood-initiative/docs/father-friendly-principles-for-agencies.pdf>

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

interviews of local First 5 County Commissions. The National Fatherhood Initiative is a nonprofit organization founded in 1994 and based in Philadelphia that describes itself as “the nation’s leading provider of research on father presence and father involvement, research and evidence-based fatherhood programs and resources, staff training, and father-engagement planning services for human service organizations and practitioners.”<sup>29</sup> First 5 California is a featured partner alongside other national and local partners such as Head Start, San Bernardino Fatherhood, Maine Families, and Alabama Parent Education Center.

National Fatherhood Initiative Mission and Vision Statements <sup>30</sup>	
<b>Mission</b>	<i>National Fatherhood Initiative works to increase father involvement by equipping communities and human service organizations with the father-engagement training, programs, and resources they need to be father-inclusive.</i>
<b>Vision</b>	<i>Our vision is that all communities and human service organizations are proactively father-inclusive so that every child has an involved, responsible, and committed father in their lives.</i>

This organization provides a number of resources including:

National Fatherhood Initiative Resources	
<b>Free Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Father Involvement Data including <a href="#">infographics</a> and <a href="#">research</a></li> <li>● <a href="#">Ebooks</a> (including <a href="#">7 Steps to Starting a Successful Fatherhood Program</a>)</li> <li>● Free <a href="#">trainings</a></li> <li>● Free videos (<a href="#">PSAs</a> and <a href="#">Impact Stories</a>)</li> </ul>
<b>Store</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Purchasable posters, brochures, and publications including father-friendly materials for facilities to appeal to fathers and men available in English and Spanish</li> <li>● Purchasable curricula bundles, curriculum, and booster sessions related to launching specific fatherhood programs including:<sup>31</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 24/7 Dad AM: a program for any dad</li> <li>○ 24/7 Dad PM: a program for dads who have completed 24/7 dad (or other similar program) and are looking to go deeper</li> <li>○ 24/7 Dad Key Behaviors Workshop: an abbreviated fatherhood workshop</li> <li>○ Fathering in 15: an online program for dads</li> <li>○ InsideOut Dad: a program for incarcerated dads</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<sup>29</sup> *Who We Are*. (2021). National Fatherhood Initiative. Retrieved February 09, 2023, from <https://www.fatherhood.org/who-we-are>

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> *Which NFI Core Program(s) Is Right for You?* (2021). National Fatherhood Initiative. Retrieved February 20, 2023, from <https://135704.fs1.hubspotusercontent-na1.net/hubfs/135704/Miscellaneous%20Documents/NFI-Program-Comparison-Chart.pdf>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Understanding Dad: An awareness and communication program for moms</li> <li>● Purchasable trainings</li> </ul>
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In addition to these resources, the National Fatherhood Initiative provides the [Father Friendly Check Up](#) as a free tool for organizations to assess and improve their capacity to increase father involvement. Organizations are asked to score their level of agreement related to a number of indicators. These indicators are examples of activities and approaches that have been effective in serving fathers in a variety of settings. This tool was initially developed in 2000 and has undergone a series of revisions to incorporate emergent research and promising practices.<sup>32</sup>

Organizations can select strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree for each indicator. Indicators are organized into four categories: Leadership Development (27 indicators), Organizational Development (50 indicators), Program Development (34 indicators), and Community Engagement (34 indicators). Organizations tally their scores after completing the assessment and focus improvement efforts on the areas of greatest need based on their scores.

The [Father Friendly Check Up](#) serves as an important resource based on decades of national research and their site includes the full list of 145 indicators. A selection of indicators is provided below to show examples of the types of indicators organizations assess.

National Fatherhood Initiative Father Friendly Check Up Select Indicators <sup>33</sup>	
<b>Leadership Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Has developed a vision or mission statement that specifically mentions serving fathers as clients in their role as a dad.</li> <li>● Provides adequate funding and other resources (e.g. staff) to effectively serve fathers.</li> <li>● Provides staff with tools (e.g. print materials and training) to help fathers become the best fathers possible.</li> </ul>
<b>Organizational Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Encourages fathers to shape existing and emerging programs, services, or products, and company policies and procedures.</li> <li>● Includes forms for clients (e.g. intake forms, applications, and questionnaires) that are gender neutral (i.e. that ask about both parents or mom and dad separately, and not mom only).</li> <li>● Includes reading materials (i.e. books, magazines, and other literature) directed toward fathers / men.</li> </ul>
<b>Program Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Includes a program or service approach that begins with where the father is in his development as a man and father, not on where the staff thinks he should be.</li> <li>● Educates mothers about the importance of fathers to child wellbeing.</li> </ul>

<sup>32</sup> *Father Friendly Check-Up*. (2021). National Fatherhood Initiative. Retrieved February 19, 2023, from <https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hub/135704/file-566753775-pdf/FatherFriendlyCheck-Up.pdf>

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.



National Fatherhood Initiative Father Friendly Check Up Select Indicators <sup>33</sup>	
<b>Community Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develops marketing plans to effectively engage fathers that are clear, focused, and feasible.</li> <li>• Employs male staff in marketing, promotion, or outreach positions.</li> </ul>

Key Source: National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)

Funded by the Office of Family Assistance (OFA), the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse (NRFC) is a U.S. Government Website and resource for fathers, practitioners, programs, states, and the public at-large “who are serving or interested in supporting strong fathers and families.”<sup>34</sup> This clearinghouse contains a wide range of resources, including research and best practices for programs as well as resources for fathers.

The goals of the NRFC are to “provide, facilitate, and disseminate current research and proven and innovative strategies that will encourage and strengthen fathers and families and providers of services via the following activities:

- Robust NRFC website – [www.Fatherhood.gov](http://www.Fatherhood.gov)
- [Media Campaign](#) that promotes the Responsible Fatherhood field and efforts of local programs
- Social media engagement via [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#), and [LinkedIn](#)
- Development and dissemination of [written products](#) that advance responsible fatherhood research and practice
- Outreach and presentations at [conferences and events](#)
- National Call Center for dads and practitioners (1-877-4DAD411)
- [Virtual trainings](#)<sup>35</sup>

The NRFC is organized by a number of key features including:<sup>36</sup>

- [For Dads](#): tips and activities specifically for dads and their kids
- [For Programs](#): resources that help programs best serve fathers including the [Responsible Fatherhood Toolkit: Resources from the Field](#)
- [Events](#): a calendar of upcoming events hosted by the NRFC (i.e., conferences and webinars) for programs and individuals working with fathers and families
- [Program Map](#):<sup>37</sup> The Responsible Fatherhood Program Map contains data to help dads

<sup>34</sup> *Homepage*. (ND). National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse. Retrieved February 21, 2023, from <https://www.fatherhood.gov/>

<sup>35</sup> *About Us*. (ND). National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse. Retrieved February 21, 2023, from <https://www.fatherhood.gov/about-us>

<sup>36</sup> *Overview of the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse (NRFC) Website* *Fatherhood.gov*. (2021). National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse. Retrieved February 22, 2023, from [https://www.fatherhood.gov/sites/default/files/resource\\_files/NRFC%20Website%20Overview%20for%20Webinar-Formatted%20V3\\_508.pdf](https://www.fatherhood.gov/sites/default/files/resource_files/NRFC%20Website%20Overview%20for%20Webinar-Formatted%20V3_508.pdf)

<sup>37</sup> While this tool can be helpful, the organizations that are included in the search results are often



connect with state agencies and federally funded responsible fatherhood programs and allows users to search for programs and agencies by city and state, or five-digit zip code

- [Research and Resources](#): a library of over 4,000 resources
- [The DadTalk Blog](#): blog posts from dads, NRFC team members, and responsible fatherhood practitioners from around the country with the goal to start conversations about important issues relevant to fatherhood programs and dads

While the NRFC contains a multitude of helpful resources, the [resources for programs](#) section of the Clearinghouse specifically lists “tips and best practices” related to topics of interest to programs serving fathers including:

National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse Tips and Best Practices	
<a href="#">Planning a program</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Program design and planning</li> <li>● Staffing</li> <li>● Measuring results and fundraising</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Running a program</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Engaging participants and facilitating groups</li> <li>● Addressing domestic violence</li> <li>● Enhancing cultural competence</li> <li>● Enhancing relationship skills</li> <li>● Outreach and recruitment</li> <li>● Communications</li> <li>● One-to-one work</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Working with...</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Young Fathers</li> <li>● Dads of Children with Special Needs</li> <li>● The child welfare system</li> <li>● Incarcerated and reentering fathers</li> <li>● Non-residential fathers</li> </ul>

Many of these best practices overlap with those already highlighted in the [Alameda County Father-Friendly Principles](#) and the [Father Friendly Check Up](#). All of these resources highlight the importance of: training and supporting staff to be responsive to fathers; incorporating fathers in regular messaging, forms, and images displayed in the facility; and expecting participation from fathers.

The NRFC is a federal resource for common strategies and promising practices related to serving fathers. The NRFC contains many resources for a variety of audiences, and was highlighted both in survey results and in interviews with local First 5 County Commissions as a major resource for serving fathers.

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organizations offering services that fathers are utilizing (such as economic and workforce development programs), but are not specifically fatherhood related initiatives or services.

## A Selection of Common Fatherhood Related Curricula

Regarding fatherhood curricula, interview results highlighted that “one size does not fit all.” The demographics and needs of fathers across the state vary, and the curricula and tools used to support them should appropriately differ.

This section highlights a selection of available fatherhood related curricula in California that emerged from desk research, survey results, and interviews; however, the selection listed is not an exhaustive list and additional research would be needed to fully inventory available curriculum.

Curriculum	Description	Identified California Usage <sup>38</sup>
<a href="#">24/7 Dad®</a> <i>National Fatherhood Initiative Curriculum Evaluations</i>	<p>“24/7 Dad® is a unique program designed to equip fathers with the self-awareness, compassion, and sense of responsibility that every good parent needs...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 24/7 Dad® A.M., the basic version, is for first-time dads, or for fathers lacking vital skills, knowledge, and attitudes.</li> <li>• 24/7 Dad® P.M. includes more in-depth information for more experienced fathers, or for dads who have completed the A.M. program.”<sup>39</sup></li> </ul>	Offered in Tulare, Santa Clara, San Bernardino
<a href="#">The Nurturing Fathers Program</a>	<p>“The Nurturing Fathers Program is an evidence - based, 13-week training course designed to teach parenting and nurturing skills to men. Each 2 ½ hour class provides proven, effective skills for healthy family relationships and child development.”<sup>40</sup></p>	Offered in Tulare, San Bernardino
<a href="#">On My Shoulders</a>	<p>“On My Shoulders (OMS) is a strengths-based, experiential curriculum designed to give fathers from a variety of backgrounds effective tools for being strong, effective fathers.”<sup>41</sup></p>	Offered in Tulare
<a href="#">Supporting Father Involvement (SFI)</a>	<p>“SFI is... designed to enhance fathers' positive involvement with their children. The curriculum is based on an empirically-validated family risk model. This model predicts that children's development is predicted by risks and buffers in five interconnected domains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family members' characteristics</li> <li>• 3-generational expectations and relationship patterns</li> <li>• Quality of parent-child relationship</li> </ul>	Offered in San Luis Obispo

<sup>38</sup> Curricula may be implemented in additional counties that were not represented in interview or survey results.

<sup>39</sup> *24/7 Dad.* (2022). The California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare. Retrieved February 21, 2023, from <https://www.cebc4cw.org/program/24-7-dad/>

<sup>40</sup> *Home.* (2023). Nurturing Fathers Program. Retrieved February 25, 2023, from <https://nurturingfathers.com/>

<sup>41</sup> *On My Shoulders (fatherhood).* (ND). PREP Inc. Retrieved February 26, 2023, from <https://prepinc.com/collections/on-my-shoulders>

Curriculum	Description	Identified California Usage <sup>38</sup>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of parents' relationship</li> <li>• Balance of stressors versus social support for the family<sup>42</sup></li> </ul>	

The NRFC developed a [Compendium of Curricula Used by Fatherhood Programs](#) in August 2011, and despite the age of this publication, it does offer an overview of additional fatherhood related curricula, organized by the target population of the program. Additional research would be required to determine which curricula are being offered in California.

### Local Lessons Learned

Across survey results and interviews, several lessons learned related to launching and implementing fatherhood services and initiatives emerged including:

**Identify key system partners and principles early on:** many public agencies already serve and interact with fathers. It is important to engage these partners early on and to identify core principles to guide the collaboration’s efforts.

- First 5 Alameda partners with Alameda County's Health Care Services Agency, Social Services Agency, Department of Child Support Services, and Department of Probation.
- Survey results indicate that a number of counties are integrating fatherhood activities with key partners and networks such as Help Me Grow and Home Visiting services.

**Avoid negative stereotypes about fathers, especially BIPOC fathers;** provide programming that is cognizant of the negative stereotypes about fathers, and that is cognizant of how harmful notions of masculinity can make it challenging for men to be vulnerable and ask for the resources they need.

- **Avoid using the framing of “responsible fatherhood” as it can be condescending and is not frequently accompanied by phrases such as “responsible motherhood” or “responsible parenthood.”** According to interviewees, it is important to have an “intentional and unapologetic” focus on supporting fathers because of the negative stereotypes associated with fathers. There still exists an outdated belief that fathers know less about their children than mothers; and that fathers are less interested in and less skilled at caring for their children than mothers are. There is a need to actively work against these (and other) negative stereotypes about fathers so that the father, child, and whole family can thrive.

**Outreaching and engaging fathers can be a challenge, however,** a number of strategies came up as potentially helpful for increasing participation and recruiting fathers including:

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<sup>42</sup> *Supporting Father Involvement*. (2022). The California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare. Retrieved February 25, 2023, from <https://www.cebc4cw.org/program/supporting-father-involvement/detailed>

- **Hire male staff members** so that organizations are reflective of the community they intend to serve.
- When possible, **include mentors or graduates of previous programs** to lead, facilitate, or support programming.
- **Survey and ask fathers directly what they need: compensate them** for their time and empower their abilities to advocate.
- **Provide in person opportunities for engagement:** consider offering weekend engagement opportunities or other times that may be convenient for the schedules of the fathers being served.

### Metrics to Track Success of Fatherhood-Related Efforts

To ensure services are effectively serving fathers and meeting the needs of the family, organizations track different metrics to monitor success; and ideally to inform continuous improvement of programming based on the indicators.

For a large set of process indicators for fatherhood efforts to monitor and improve, please see the National Fatherhood Initiative's [Father Friendly Check Up](#) (145 indicators) described in additional detail in the [National Brightspot: National Fatherhood Initiative](#) section above.

Insofar as local First 5 efforts, interview results indicated that fatherhood efforts consistently track the number of participating fathers, and multiple counties are using pre and post surveys. Interviewees shared example survey questions such as:

- Survey for Participants:
  - Do you feel supported as a parent now?
  - Do you know where to go in a time of need?
  - Has communication with your co parent improved?
  - Are you spending more time with your child?
- Survey for Partner Organizations:
  - Have you hired male staff?
  - Have you accessed our [photo bank](#) of father related images and incorporated them into collateral materials and websites? (F5 Alameda: Alameda County Fathers Corps)

Interviewees also shared tracking the following data points:

- Fathers who have gone from no contact to supervised contact with their children
- Fathers who have progressed from supervised to unsupervised contact with their children
- Fathers who return to become mentors for other fathers

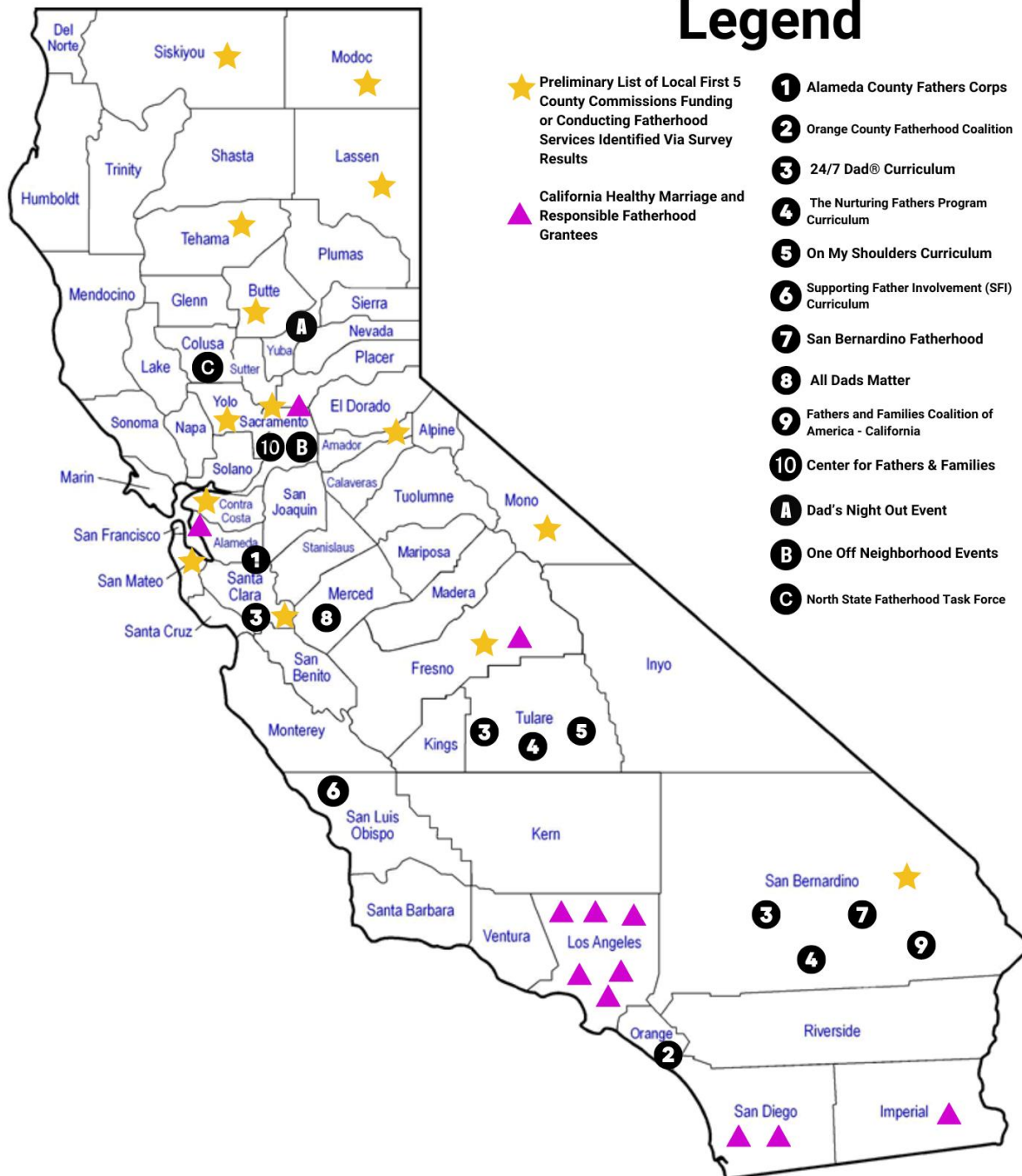
Appropriate and meaningful indicators of success depend on the specific fatherhood related service provided.

## A Landscape of Major Fatherhood-Related Efforts in California

This section is organized into two sections: an initial landscape of First 5 fatherhood-related efforts, followed by a selection of broader highlights from desk research findings.

This report’s methodology included a survey that represented 35 counties and five interviews with local First 5 County Commissions. Desk research uncovered preliminary findings, but other community-based organizations and initiatives could be identified through additional research. See the [Methodology](#) section above for more information.

### Map



## Initial Landscape of First 5 Fatherhood Related Efforts

### Local Collaboratives

#### Alameda County Fathers Corps

The [Alameda County Fathers Corps](#) is a partnership funded by First 5 Alameda and Alameda County's Health Care Services Agency, Social Services Agency, Department of Child Support Services, and Department of Probation.

<b>Alameda County Fathers Corps<sup>43</sup></b>	
<b>Mission</b>	The Alameda County Fathers Corps promotes and supports fathers and father figures to be meaningfully engaged with their children and families, and advocates for family service providers to assist fathers in strengthening their parenting skills and provide father friendly services.
<b>Program Goals</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increase opportunities for fathers to strengthen their parenting skills</li> <li>2. Advocate for government and philanthropy to include language for all family service funding allocations that requires partners to provide services consistent with the Alameda County Fathers Corps Father-Friendly Principles</li> <li>3. Promote and assist with the implementation of the Alameda County Fathers Corps Father-Friendly Principles throughout Alameda County</li> <li>4. Increase awareness of the importance of strengthening the bond between fathers, their children and families</li> <li>5. Expand the pool of Father Engagement Specialists and Mentors who are available to support Alameda County family service programs</li> </ol>
<b>Learning Community Goals</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increase providers' knowledge of environmental, nutritional, and social and emotional factors affecting the healthy development of children birth to 5 years and an increased awareness of father specific services</li> <li>2. Assist participants in implementing Alameda County Fathers Corps Father-Friendly Principles at home agencies</li> <li>3. Train participants for inclusion in the pool of Father Engagement Specialists and Mentors who are available to support family service programs</li> </ol>

The Alameda County Fathers Corps allows the members of their learning community who are directly serving fathers to determine the demographics of the fathers served. This initiative is able to support fathers with children of mixed ages due to the blended funding model. Interviewees also shared that a broader goal is to replicate the father corps model in other geographies.

#### Orange County Fatherhood Coalition

The Orange County (OC) Fatherhood Coalition is funded by First 5 Orange County and is a collaboration of 15 local agencies and service providers including organizations such as County

<sup>43</sup> *Mission and Goals*. (2015). The Alameda County Fathers Corps. Retrieved February 24, 2023, from [http://www.first5alameda.org/files/Fathers\\_Corps/Mission\\_and\\_goals.pdf](http://www.first5alameda.org/files/Fathers_Corps/Mission_and_goals.pdf)

of Orange Child Support Services, County of Orange Social Services Agency, Hoag Healthcare, Priority Center, MOMS OC, Family Resource Centers, Latino Dad Connection, Fristers, and Latinx Parenting. This group recently began after First 5 Orange County conducted a local landscape analysis of fatherhood services and initiatives and from the results, saw a local gap that this coalition hopes to address.

The coalition is comprised of two parts: a steering committee and a larger group aimed at sharing information and problem solving among service providers. The larger group meets every other month. The steering committee guides the work of the OC Fatherhood Coalition and can be joined by any member of the coalition or other community members (i.e., work is underway to include two Orange County fathers on the steering committee). The group is inherently focused on serving fathers with children birth through age 5, however, most of the partners provide services to fathers of children of all ages.

### **Providing Local Fatherhood Services (offering curricula, support classes, home visiting, etc.)**

Across survey results and interviews, the largest areas of work related to supporting fathers reported by local First 5 County Commissions was funding and conducting fatherhood services like the implementation of specific fatherhood curriculum and fatherhood support groups, as well as more general support services like parenting classes and home visiting services that may include elements that are designed around the specific needs and roles of fathers.

#### **Preliminary List of Local First 5 County Commissions Funding or Conducting Fatherhood Services Identified Via Survey Results**

- First 5 Amador
- First 5 Contra Costa
- First 5 Lassen
- First 5 Mono
- First 5 Sacramento
- First 5 Santa Clara
- First 5 Tehama
- First 5 Butte
- First 5 Fresno
- First 5 Modoc
- First 5 San Bernardino
- First 5 San Mateo
- First 5 Siskiyou
- First 5 Yolo

Many of these local First 5 County Commissions are leveraging existing partnerships with Family Resource Centers (FRCs) to implement specific fatherhood curricula. Some interviewees reported including a request to their FRCs to include a fatherhood focus, while others reported having FRCs come to them and suggest implementing fatherhood curricula in their proposed scopes.

A number of local First 5 County Commissions are also partnering with other community-based organizations such as Head Start and Home Visiting providers to support fathers across the State. Not all of these partnerships are providing father-specific programs; some reported supporting fathers as a part of their overall efforts to support parents, or their overall efforts to support the whole family. These efforts are important and inclusive of fathers, however, while fathers continue to face negative stereotypes, there remains a need for programs and services



that focus specifically on fathers.

Lastly, Sutter County Children & Families Commission shared that in the past, their local partner Family SOUP provided a fathers support group targeted towards fathers with children with special needs for six weeks at a local restaurant. This support group stopped meeting after Family SOUP ran into staff capacity issues.

### Father-Focused Events

Survey results uncovered several father-focused events described in additional detail in the table below.

Local First 5 County Commission Events for Fathers & Service Providers Working with Fathers	
<b>Dad's Night Out</b> <i>(First 5 Yuba)</i>	Dad's Night Out is a monthly event that began in July 2022 hosted by First 5 Yuba where dads are invited to participate in activities and network with service providers (including those representative of the early childhood and school age populations). Yuba County Probation Department, Sutter-Yuba Behavioral Health, Federally Qualified Health Centers, and the Yuba County Office of Education are partners in hosting these events.
<b>One Off Neighborhood Events</b> <i>(First 5 Sacramento)</i>	First 5 Sacramento reported using mini-grants and small one-time funding sources to provide one-off neighborhood events aimed at engaging fathers and connecting them with resources.
<b>North State Fatherhood Task Force</b> <i>(First 5 Colusa)</i>	First 5 Colusa reported that prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, there was an annual North State Fatherhood conference that rotated through: Colusa, Butte, Glenn, Tehama, and Shasta. It was a free event for fathers or any male figure and included a keynote speaker, workshops, and a resource fair. <b>This event has not relaunched since the COVID-19 pandemic.</b>

### Broader California Highlights

Across California, nonprofits, public agencies, and community based organizations are providing high quality services and supports to fathers. An emerging list of organizations and service providers who have a strong online presence and were uncovered through desk research are summarized in the table below.

List of Broader California Highlights from Desk Research	
<b><a href="#">California Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood</a></b>	The United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Administration for Children and Families (ACF) funds <a href="#">Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood Grants</a> . There are three types of these grants: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>“Family, Relationship, and Marriage Education Works (FRAMEWorks):</b> grants that support healthy marriage and relationship education promotion activities for adults;</li> <li>2. <b>Fatherhood Family-focused, Interconnected, Resilient, and Essential</b></li> </ol>



List of Broader California Highlights from Desk Research	
<b>Grantees</b>	<p><b>(Fatherhood FIRE)</b>: responsible fatherhood promotion activities for adult fathers; and</p> <p>3. <b>Relationships, Education, Advancement, and Development for Youth for Life (READY4Life)</b>: healthy marriage and relationship education promotion activities for youth, including parenting youth."<sup>44</sup></p> <p>The California grantees include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Dibble Institute for Marriage Education, Berkeley               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Title: Building Brighter Futures</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Office of Samoan Affairs of California, Inc., Carson               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Title: Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander (NHOP) Healthy Marriage and Relationship Project</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Imperial Valley Regional Occupational Program, El Centro               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Title: Project Juntos</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission, Fresno               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Title: Proving our Parenting Skills Pathway to Responsible Fatherhood</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Healthy Relationships California, Leucadia               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Title: California Community-Centered Healthy Marriage and Relationship Project</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Cambodian Association of America, Long Beach               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Title: Marriage Enrichment Project</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Children's Hospital Los Angeles, LA               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Title: Responsible Young Fathers Project</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Children's Institute, Inc., LA               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Title: <a href="#">Project Fatherhood</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>● The East Los Angeles Community Union (TELACU), LA               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Title: Futuro Now Family Strengthening Initiative: Fatherhood Project</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Friends Outside in Los Angeles County, Pasadena               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Title: "Dads Back!"</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Sacramento Healthy Marriage Project, Sacramento               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Title: Flourishing Families Program</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Social Advocates for Youth (SAY) San Diego, SD               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Title: Project COMPASS (Creating Options for Men to Participate Actively, Safely, and Supportively)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<sup>44</sup> *Healthy Marriage & Responsible Fatherhood | The Administration for Children and Families*. (2020, December 17). The Administration for Children and Families. Retrieved February 28, 2023, from <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ofa/programs/healthy-marriage-responsible-fatherhood>

List of Broader California Highlights from Desk Research	
<a href="#">San Bernardino Fatherhood</a>	San Bernardino Fatherhood is a community-based nonprofit organization located in San Bernardino County. The vision of this organization is “a society where children thrive, families are strong, and communities are safe as a result of responsible fathering,” while the mission of the organization is “to enhance the engagement of fathers by promoting a culture of father inclusion and responsible fatherhood in communities. This mission will be accomplished in collaboration with local schools, community partners, faith-based organizations and public and private agencies.” <sup>45</sup> This organization includes <a href="#">specific support services</a> for Black fathers as well as broader services for fathers.
<a href="#">All Dads Matter</a>	The All Dads Matter Program is located in Merced and is funded by Merced County Human Services. This program includes regular classes for fathers as well as support groups and community events to celebrate fathers. There is the All Dads Matter Resource Center which is intended to serve as “one-stop where dads can receive one-on-one support with accessing services, navigating systems or meet one-on-one” with a staff member. <sup>46</sup> There is a children’s area with puzzles, toys, and games for children to engage with while their father is connecting to services.
<a href="#">Fathers and Families Coalition of America - California</a>	First 5 California is a sponsor of the larger affiliate, <a href="#">Fathers and Families Coalition of America</a> , which was founded in 1996 with the mission of “finding a cause bigger than self to support opportunities that increase family and child protective factors with a focus on the impact of fathers by providing professional development for those who work with parents and caregivers so that they have the skills, knowledge, and access to resources they need to support their child's development, wellness, restorative justice, social justice, early childhood education, criminal justice and more that help children and their families thrive.” <sup>47</sup> Fathers And Families Coalition Of America California is headquartered in San Bernardinos’ West County. For a complete list of partners, see <a href="#">here</a> .
<a href="#">Center for Fathers &amp; Families</a>	Located in Sacramento, the Center for Fathers & Families (CFF) serves all members of the family, inclusive of fathers. There are specific fatherhood support groups and one-on-one sessions offered to fathers, as well as more general parenting classes and other adult services.

## Funding for Fatherhood-Related Efforts

A number of funding streams for providing fatherhood related services were identified through desk research and interviews. **The primary funding source used by local First 5 County**

<sup>45</sup> *What is San Bernardino Fatherhood?* (2023). San Bernardino Fatherhood. Retrieved March 1, 2023, from <https://sbfatherhood.com/about>

<sup>46</sup> *All Dads Matter*. (ND). Merced County. Retrieved March 1, 2023, from <https://www.countyofmerced.com/981/All-Dads-Matter>

<sup>47</sup> *About FFCA*. (2022). Fathers and Families Coalition. Retrieved March 1, 2023, from <https://fathersandfamiliescoalition.org/about-us/about-ffca.html>

### **Commissions to fund implementation of fatherhood efforts is their core Proposition 10**

**dollars**, most often awarded to Family Resource Centers to implement fatherhood curricula. Local First 5 County Commissions are also using their local Proposition 10 dollars to conduct the other efforts described above (i.e., the OC Fatherhood Coalition, the Alameda County Fathers Corps), often in partnership with additional local public agency funders.

Not all local First 5 County Commissions are prioritizing their Proposition 10 funding for fatherhood services: 14 of the 35 survey respondents shared that they do not conduct or fund partners to conduct initiatives or work focused specifically on supporting fathers. In addition, six of the 35 respondents shared that support for fathers is mentioned in their organization's strategic plan or priorities at this time, three shared that it was mentioned in the past (but is not currently mentioned), and 26 shared that it is not a stated priority for their organization at this time.

Beyond the Proposition 10 funding stream, there are several federal and state grant opportunities and funding streams that can be utilized to support fatherhood services. These range in how directly they focus on fathers versus promoting larger marriage and family goals. There are two opportunities (one federal and one state) that are explicitly focused on serving and engaging fathers. There are also a number of other programs that could be used to fund parts of fatherhood services, but also have broader aims. Many of these sources were identified via the National Fatherhood Initiative's blog post, [The Quest for Fatherhood Program Funding](#).

### **State Grant Opportunity: Father Engagement Program (California Department of Social Services)**

The California Department of Social Services' (CDSS) Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP) released a competitive RFA in April 2022 for their [Father Engagement Program](#). These applications were due May 20, 2022, and the project period is from October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2025. According to OCAP, "grantees will support evidence based or evidence informed / promising practice father engagement activities through the following three broad categories: fatherhood education, case management, and peer-to-peer support to strengthen positive father-child interaction; improve social and economic outcomes for fathers and their families; and improve healthy relationships."<sup>48</sup>

Grant activities are organized into three categories and include services such as:<sup>49</sup>

- Fatherhood Education
  - Evidence-based or evidence-informed programs
  - Counseling, coaching, mediation
  - Marriage and relationship education

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<sup>48</sup> *OCAP Grant/Contract Opportunities*. (2022). California Department of Social Services. Retrieved February 27, 2023, from <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/ocap/grants>

<sup>49</sup> *RFA Father Engagement*. (2022, April 22). California Department of Social Services'. Retrieved March 1, 2023, from [https://www.cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/OCAP/PDFs/Grants/5822\\_OCAP\\_Father\\_Engagement\\_RFA\\_Final\\_4.19.22\\_ADA.pdf](https://www.cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/OCAP/PDFs/Grants/5822_OCAP_Father_Engagement_RFA_Final_4.19.22_ADA.pdf)

- Financial planning education
- Case Management
  - Casework practice services
  - Intake / assessment of needs
  - Service planning
  - Navigation services
  - Crisis intervention
  - Home visiting
- Peer-to-Peer Support
  - Father support groups / circles
  - Mentoring initiatives

OCAP also noted that the Father Engagement grants are supported by federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) funds provided through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Approximately \$4,200,000 of total federal funding was made available to fund up to eight grantees at approximately \$175,000 per year. First 5 San Luis Obispo shared in survey results that a local partner, Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo County (CAPSLO), is utilizing this funding source to operate their [Positive Opportunities for Parenting Success \(POPS\)](#) program.

### Federal Grant Opportunity: Fatherhood Family-focused, Interconnected, Resilient, and Essential (Fatherhood FIRE) (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families)

The United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Administration for Children and Families (ACF) funds [Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood Grants](#). As described above, there are three types of these grants, one of which is the [Fatherhood Family-focused, Interconnected, Resilient, and Essential \(Fatherhood FIRE\) grant](#).

FatherhoodFIRE is explicitly designed to focus on serving fathers and is funded under the Office of Family Assistance (OFA). "OFA identifies these qualities of Fatherhood – Family-focused, Interconnected, Resilient, and Essential (Fatherhood FIRE) – as representative of the passion, warmth, vision, intensity, and love all fathers have for their families, and as the inspiration for the activities funded under this grant program. Fatherhood FIRE grants fund projects that integrate robust economic stability services, healthy marriage education, and activities designed to foster responsible parenting. Grantees also serve fathers who are within nine months of release from incarceration and who intend to return to their communities and families."<sup>50</sup>

Activities are organized by 3 primary goals and include services such as:<sup>51</sup>

- Promoting Marriage or Sustaining Marriage
  - Education on how to control aggressive behavior

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<sup>50</sup> *Responsible Fatherhood*. (2020, October 23). The Administration for Children and Families. Retrieved February 28, 2023, from <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ofa/programs/healthy-marriage/responsible-fatherhood>

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

- Sharing information on the causes of domestic violence and child abuse
- Marriage preparation programs
- Premarital counseling
- Mediation and counseling
- Responsible Parenting
  - Counseling, mentoring, and mediation
  - Sharing information about good parenting practices
  - Skills-based parenting education
  - Encouraging child support payments
- Economic Stability
  - Job training
  - Subsidized employment
  - Career-advancing education
  - Sharing of employment materials
  - Coordinating with existing employment services

**This program was last funded in 2020**, which was the fourth cohort of grants. In 2020, there was a \$150 million appropriation for all types of Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood grants, and a \$75 million set aside for Responsible Fatherhood efforts.<sup>52</sup>

### Funding Opportunities that Could be Leveraged by Fatherhood Services (but are not Solely Fatherhood Focused)

Beyond the grants outlined above, there are a number of other grants that could be leveraged by organizations providing fatherhood services, even though the primary focus of the grant may extend beyond fatherhood services. Please see the table below for a summary of these additional funding sources.

Federal Funding Opportunities that Could be Leveraged by Fatherhood Services (but are not Solely Fatherhood Focused)	
<p><b><u><a href="#">Family, Relationship, and Marriage Education Works (FRAMEWorks)</a></u></b></p>	<p>One of the <a href="#">Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood Grants</a>, the FRAMEWorks program was last funded in 2020. The FRAMEWorks grantees provided activities such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● “Public advertising campaigns: public advertising campaigns on the value of marriage and the skills needed to increase marital stability and health.</li> <li>● Marriage and Relationship Education / Skills (MRES): marriage education, marriage skills, and relationship skills programs that may include parenting skills, financial management, conflict resolution, and job and career advancement.</li> <li>● Premarital education: premarital education and marriage skills training for engaged couples and for couples or individuals interested in marriage.</li> </ul>

<sup>52</sup> *Responsible Fatherhood*. (2020, October 23). The Administration for Children and Families. Retrieved February 28, 2023, from <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ofa/programs/healthy-marriage/responsible-fatherhood>

Federal Funding Opportunities that Could be Leveraged by Fatherhood Services (but are not Solely Fatherhood Focused)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Marriage enhancement: marriage enhancement and marriage skills training programs for married couples.</li> <li>● Divorce reduction: divorce reduction programs that teach relationship skills.</li> <li>● Marriage mentoring: marriage mentoring programs that use married couples as role models and mentors in at-risk communities.</li> <li>● Reduction of disincentives to marriage: programs to reduce the disincentives to marriage in means-tested aid programs.”<sup>53</sup></li> </ul>
<b><u><a href="#">Relationships, Education, Advancement, and Development for Youth for Life (READY4Life)</a></u></b>	<p>One of the <a href="#">Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood Grants</a>, the READY4Life program was last funded in 2020. The READY4Life grantees provided activities such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● “Education in high schools: education in high schools on the value of marriage, relationship skills, and budgeting.</li> <li>● Marriage and Relationship Education / Skills (MRES): marriage education, marriage skills, and relationship skills programs that may include parenting skills, financial management, conflict resolution, and job and career advancement.</li> <li>● Public advertising campaigns: public advertising campaigns on the value of marriage and the skills needed to increase marital stability and health.”<sup>54</sup></li> </ul>
<b><u><a href="#">Head Start and Early Head Start Opportunities</a></u></b>	<p>The Department of Health and Human Services’ Office of Head Start funds Head Start and Early Head Start Opportunities. Head Start and Early Head Start programs include a strong family engagement component, and share specific resources with their grantees related to engaging fathers and male caregivers (see <a href="#">here</a>).</p>
<b><u><a href="#">Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)</a></u></b>	<p>Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) is a federal block grant that “provides states and territories with flexibility in operating programs designed to help low-income families with children achieve economic self-sufficiency. States use TANF to fund monthly cash assistance payments to low-income families with children, as well as a wide range of services.”<sup>55</sup> While there is no federal requirement to use TANF funding to support fatherhood services, it is an allowable expense under TANF’s priorities. There is an opportunity for advocacy efforts to request the use of California TANF funding in part go towards funding fatherhood services.</p>

<sup>53</sup> *Healthy Marriage*. (2020, October 23). The Administration for Children and Families. Retrieved March 1, 2023, from <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ofa/programs/healthy-marriage-responsible-fatherhood/healthy-marriage>

<sup>54</sup> *Youth*. (2020, October 23). The Administration for Children and Families. Retrieved March 1, 2023, from <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ofa/programs/healthy-marriage/youth>

<sup>55</sup> *Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)*. (2022, June 29). The Administration for Children and Families. Retrieved March 2, 2023, from <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ofa/programs/temporary-assistance-needy-families-tanf>

Federal Funding Opportunities that Could be Leveraged by Fatherhood Services (but are not Solely Fatherhood Focused)	
<a href="#"><u>Child Support Enforcement (CSE) Program</u></a>	According to the Congressional Research Service, “the Child Support Enforcement (CSE) program was enacted into law on January 4, 1975. When the program was first established, its goals were to reimburse the states and the federal government for the cash assistance payments they provided families, and to help other families remain self-sufficient by obtaining consistent and ongoing child support payments from the noncustodial parent. Over time, the CSE program has evolved from a cash assistance cost-recovery program to a family-first program that seeks to enhance the well-being of families by making child support a more reliable income source.” <sup>56</sup> This program is primarily focused on recouping child support payments from noncustodial parents, however, there is a focus on promoting families and supporting the economic stability of both parents.
<a href="#"><u>Adult Education and Literacy Programs</u></a>	The Department of Education’s Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education Division of Adult Education and Literacy offers funding opportunities to promote and support adult literacy activities. While these programs are not specifically aimed at supporting fathers, fathers are included as participants and fatherhood services could use funding from these programs to support literacy and workforce development efforts for fathers.
<a href="#"><u>Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative Evidence-Based and Community-Defined Evidence Practices Round 1: Parent and Caregiver Programs and Practices Grants</u></a>	“As part of the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI), the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) released a Request for Application (RFA) on December 1, 2022 seeking proposals for the first round of grant funding totaling \$30 million to scale throughout the state specified evidence-based practices (EBPs) and community-defined evidence practices (CDEPs). For the first round of EBP and CDEP grant funding, DHCS seeks proposals from various individuals, organizations, and agencies to scale parent and caregiver support and training services to parents, caregivers, and children and youth with emerging or existing mental health and/or substance use disorders.” <sup>57</sup>

<sup>56</sup> *The Child Support Enforcement (CSE) Program*. (2022, September 8). Congressional Research Service Reports. Retrieved March 2, 2023, from <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF10113>

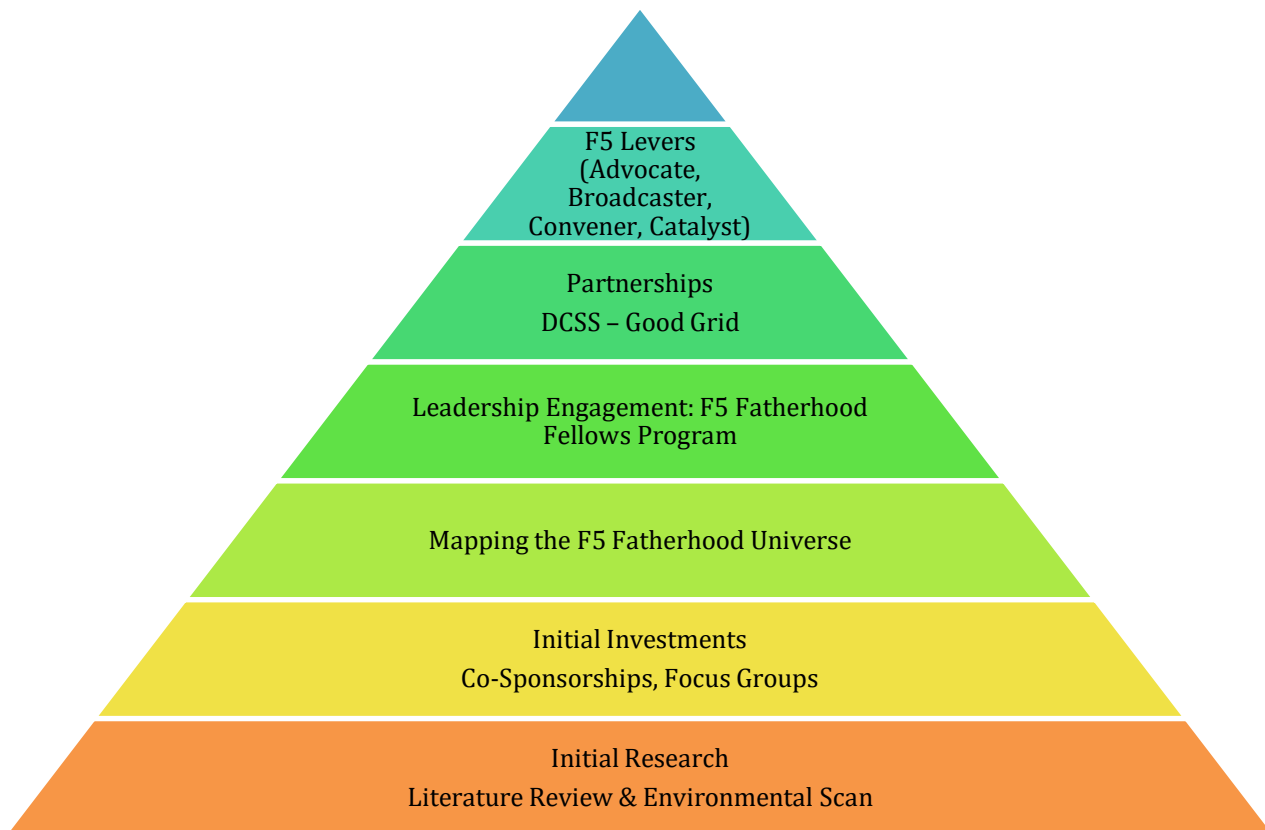
<sup>57</sup> *Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative Evidence-Based and Community-Defined Evidence Practices Round 1: Parent and Caregiver Programs and Practices Grants - California Grants Portal*. (2022, December 27). California Grants Portal. Retrieved March 8, 2023, from <https://www.grants.ca.gov/grants/children-and-youth-behavioral-health-initiative-evidence-based-and-community-defined-evidence-practices-round-1-parent-and-caregiver-programs-and-practices-grants/>



## Preliminary Strategy of Action

We believe that based upon the multiple possible actions (outlined in the Executive Summary pg. 3) that can be taken the following are the “first best steps” on the road to a comprehensive strategy related to a First 5 Fatherhood Initiative.

With explicit intention related to Information Items leading to Action Items staff will, after the presentation to the Commission, continue engaging with fatherhood program leaders within the First 5 Universe and beyond including listening sessions, site visits, collaboration with state agency partners, collaboration with fatherhood programs at F5’s upcoming Summit and additional research. Based on input from local first 5’s and additional research First 5 staff will present an action item for consideration at the May Commission meeting.





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