

The following Appendix provides best practice guidelines for locating, engaging and empowering fathers. Although this guide focuses on fatherhood involvement, it may also be used to address absent mothers as well. Another resource available is the National Fatherhood Initiative. <https://www.fatherhood.org/>

Concerted efforts should be made to include fathers throughout the life of the case (assessment to case closure), unless it is determined contrary to the safety and well-being of the child. Concerted efforts are more than one attempt using more than one strategy. Children benefit from the positive, active involvement of fathers in their lives. The father’s unique parenting style contributes to the healthy development of the child(ren). At times the mother may object to the father’s involvement in the case, however the mother may also benefit from the increased support from paternal involvement. Gain the mother’s trust by developing a relationship with her, uncover possible trauma issues, and explore her feelings of reluctance to share information about the father. Allow the father to express his feelings and validate them through reflective listening. Exhibit empathy, respect, and genuineness, and reassure him you want to assist him in strengthening his relationship with his children.

Fatherhood Involvement Throughout the Life of the Case	
<p>DCF Investigation and Assessment- Conduct comprehensive assessments including the fathers’ and paternal family members’ basic information, such as name, addresses, and phone numbers.</p>	<p>Explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checking history and other system checks such as Clear and Child Support Services (CSS) for the father • Check school records for father’s contact information if school is cooperative, releases are signed by parent, or if the CPS Specialist is conducting an abuse or neglect investigation/assessment. • What is the current living arrangement of the father in relation to the home in which his child lives? • How often does the father see his child? If he does see the child, what is the nature of the interaction? • If the father does not see his child, what are the reasons for non-involvement, what barriers to involvement exist, and what strategies could be implemented to address these barriers? • Explore with the mother her concerns regarding the father’s involvement. (PFA, PFS, court orders, LE involvement, etc.) • Explore with the child the his/her wishes, if age appropriate. • Identify the benefits of father involvement for the mother and child. If father involvement is not advised, document why. • Actively involve fathers and paternal family members in the development of a safety plan, if appropriate. • Father’s current view of the family and the factors that led to the maltreatment. • Resources available to the father in the community. • Collaborate with agencies that work extensively with fathers. • Referrals made or being made. • See below for additional tips for Incarcerated Fathers
<p>In-Home Services (in addition to the information gained from investigation and assessment):</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore with DCF information gained regarding the father’s involvement. • Providers/DCF communicate risk and safety concerns identified regarding the father. • The steps he has taken to strengthen his role as a father. • Complete genogram with family to obtain paternal relatives’ identifying information. • Develop relationship with paternal relatives to learn about the father, with mother’s permission. • The role of the worker may include assisting mothers and fathers in

	<p>navigating the systems to resolve legal issues such as establishing paternity, complying with child support orders, DUI's, Outstanding Warrants, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support engagement, ensure that services to both parents address issues of co-parenting, effective communication between the parents, and avoidance of placing the children in the middle of the parental conflict. • See below for additional tips for Incarcerated Fathers
<p>Out of Home Services (in addition to the information gained from investigation and assessment, and in-home services, if applicable):</p> <p>Actively involve fathers in setting goals, encourage them to express their concerns or questions about services, and involve them in all reviews of the service plan as well as in the development of the child's permanency plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dynamics of the relationship between the father and the mother. • How other adult members of the family and adults living in the household view the nonresidential father. • The dynamics of the relationship, if any, between the nonresidential father and these other adult family members and adults living in the household. • Engage fathers in ways that are relevant to their situation and sensitive to their culture. • If incarcerated, find creative and appropriate ways to involve the father. See below for additional tips for Incarcerated Fathers
<p><u>Incarcerated Fathers</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess reasons for father's incarceration, including whether mother or any child was a victim of the father's actions, to determine if the father is a threat to the mother or the children's safety. • Focus on building a trust relationship with the mother, ensuring she understands the importance of expanding her support system, including the father and/or his relatives, who may assist her and the children in maintaining the family together. • Reach out to paternal relatives to foster relationships with the father. • Reach out to the Department of Corrections (DOC) to determine location of father if unknown. https://kdocrepository.doc.ks.gov/kasper/search/disclaimer • Determine visitation/contact rules at the facility, as appropriate.

