



# Why Dads and Who Cares?

a  Wheeler | **CONNECTICUT Clearinghouse** **webinar**  
a program of the Connecticut Center for Prevention, Wellness and Recovery

*presented by Doug Edwards*

Real Dads Forever | [www.realdadsforever.org](http://www.realdadsforever.org) | [dedwards@realdadsforever.org](mailto:dedwards@realdadsforever.org) | 860-930-3431

1

## learning objectives



- Why does CT have a Fatherhood Initiative?
- Why do Dads matter to Moms and kids?
- Why do Dads matter to our communities
- Why do we need to partner with Dads?

2



### Honest Review of Daughter's Kitchen

I have been waiting on my order to get done for 45 minutes, and I'm the only customer here. She was making good progress at first, then she stopped for 20 minutes to go watch Paw Patrol . . . Overall, the customer service could be better, but the cook is a cutie; so, I'll give her another chance.

3

teach • love • inspire  
CONNECTICUT  
FATHERHOOD  
INITIATIVE

*Connecticut's Efforts to Support  
Fathers & Families*

06  
•  
16  
•  
2022

Connecticut Department  
of Social Services  
Making a Difference

CT CLEARINGHOUSE TRAINING

4



teach · love · inspire  
CONNECTICUT  
FATHERHOOD  
INITIATIVE

## LEGISLATION



- Initial Act, P.A. 99-193, passed in 1999  
*An Act Establishing a Fatherhood Initiative, a Fatherhood Council and a Research & Demonstration Program and Concerning Other Methods to Strengthen Child Support Enforcement* [PUBLIC ACT NO. 99-193 FOR SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL NO. 6466](#)
- P.A. 99-193 codified in CGS Section 17b-27a  
*John S. Martinez Fatherhood Initiative of Connecticut* [CHAPTER 319O - DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES \(CT.GOV\)](#)
- Senate Bill 289, passed 2022 session  
*An Act Concerning Oversight and Funding of The Connecticut Fatherhood Initiative*  
[AN ACT CONCERNING OVERSIGHT AND FUNDING OF THE CONNECTICUT FATHERHOOD INITIATIVE.](#)

CT CLEARINGHOUSE TRAINING 06 • 16 • 2022 2

5



teach · love · inspire  
CONNECTICUT  
FATHERHOOD  
INITIATIVE

## Who Are We?



- If you are a part of a system serving fathers and families in CT, **WE ARE YOU!**
- The CFI is a statewide multi-agency collaboration, led by DSS, working toward a common goal: to support children, mothers and fathers by focusing on the important influence of men who are or will be in fathering roles
- CFI partners do this through systems change efforts as well as supporting direct services and programming for fathers
- We are committed to racial equity, gender equity and safe engagement of fathers with their children.

CT CLEARINGHOUSE TRAINING 06 • 16 • 2022 3

6



*Council*

- Dept. of Social Services (DSS)
- Dept. of Children & Families\*
- Dept. of Correction
- Dept. of Developmental Services
- Dept. of Housing
- Dept. of Labor
- Dept. of Mental Health & Addition Svcs
- Dept. of Public Health
- Dept. of Veterans Affairs
- Office of Early Childhood
- State Dept. of Education
- Judicial Court Support Svcs Division
- Judicial FSM Division
- Judicial Support Enforcement Svcs
- Board of Pardons and Parole
- CWCSEO
- Real Dads Forever
- CCADV
- Greater Hartford Legal Aid
- Community Organizations Serving Fathers and Families
- CT State Colleges & Universities
- UConn Health Disparities Institute
- UConn HDFS Department
- United Way of CT
- Consultation Center, Yale University



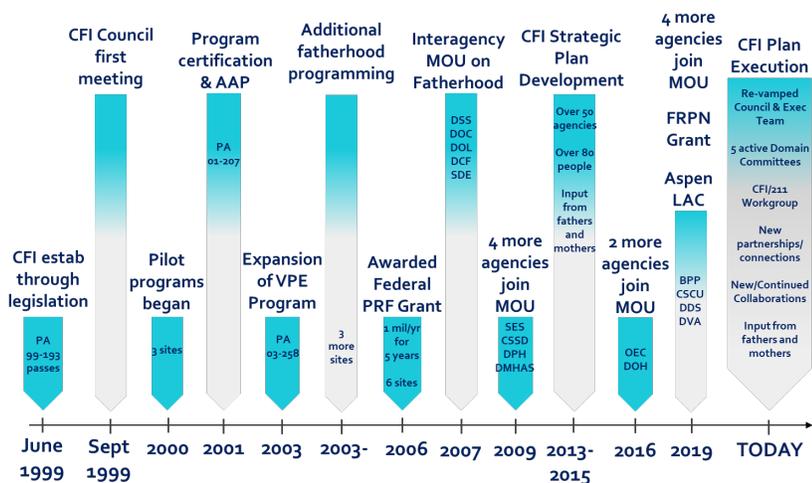
CT CLEARINGHOUSE TRAINING 06 • 16 • 2022

7

7



**CFI Highlights  
1999-present**



Date	Milestone
June 1999	CFI estab through legislation (PA 99-193 passes)
Sept 1999	CFI Council first meeting
2000	Pilot programs began (3 sites)
2001	Program certification & AAP (PA 01-207)
2003	Expansion of VPE Program (PA 03-258)
2003-2006	Additional fatherhood programming (3 more sites)
2006	Awarded Federal PRF Grant (5 mil/yr for 5 years, 6 sites)
2007	Interagency MOU on Fatherhood (DSS, DOC, DOL, DCF, SDE)
2009	4 more agencies join MOU (SES, CSDD, DPH, DMHAS)
2013-2015	CFI Strategic Plan Development (Over 50 agencies, Over 80 people, Input from fathers and mothers)
2016	2 more agencies join MOU (OEC, DOH)
2019	4 more agencies join MOU (BPP, CSU, DDS, DVA)
TODAY	CFI Plan Execution (Re-vamped Council & Exec Team, 5 active Domain Committees, CFI/211 Workgroup, New partnerships/connections, New/Continued Collaborations, Input from fathers and mothers)



CT CLEARINGHOUSE TRAINING 06 • 16 • 2022

5

8



**Website**  
**CT 2-1-1 Webinar**  
**and**  
**Contact**  
**Information**

<https://portal.ct.gov/fatherhood>

**Connecticut Fatherhood Initiative -**  
**YouTube**

**Anthony Judkins,**  
**CFI Program Manager, DSS**  
[anthony.Judkins@ct.gov](mailto:anthony.Judkins@ct.gov)

**Diana DiTunno**  
**OSD Consultant & Project Manager, DSS**  
[diana.ditunno@ct.gov](mailto:diana.ditunno@ct.gov)



CT CLEARINGHOUSE TRAINING 06 • 16 • 2022

6

9

dad's value

during the pregnancy



- Early prenatal visits
- Nutrition, exercise, stress management
- Smoking, substance abuse
- Understand mom and baby
- Co parenting
- Communication



- Full term
- Adequate weight
- Paternity establishment
- Breast feeding
- Together more than 3 years
- Emotional, financial support

10

# STILL with DADS FACE

experiment created by  
Dr. Ed Tronick

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BUwEvv3WI58>

11

messages
*barriers to good father involvement*




- man up
- no check-ups
- take risks
- can't celebrate failure
- handle it
- fake strength
- don't cry
- bury things
- mask up
- secret depression
- dominate
- resist partnering
- don't compromise
- stubborn

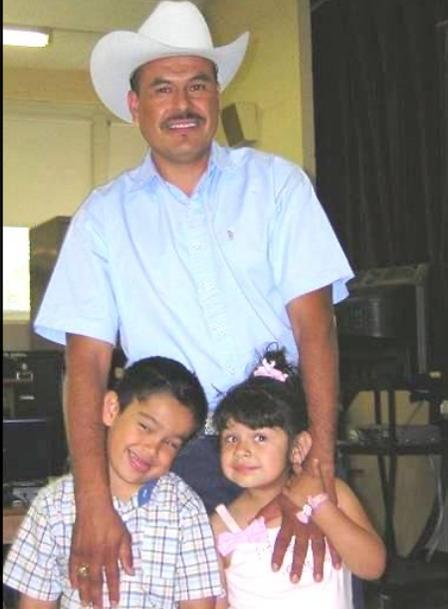
**Armor causes us to lose the deep joy  
of connection, of attachment, and of intimacy.**

12



13

**good family man**
*benefits of father involvement*

- ❑ He cares, means he loves me
- ❑ Children love to rise to high expectations
- ❑ Enhanced enjoyment of school
- ❑ Better emotional regulation
- ❑ More likely to get A's
- ❑ More likely to graduate
- ❑ Less likely to get suspended or expelled
- ❑ Less criminal justice system involvement

14

## good family man

*benefits of father involvement*



- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prenatal stress relief              | <input type="checkbox"/> Boundary setting       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Postnatal stress relief and support | <input type="checkbox"/> Empathy                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cognitive stimulation               | <input type="checkbox"/> Risk-taking            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Literacy opportunities              | <input type="checkbox"/> Competition            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional regulation                | <input type="checkbox"/> Sexless masculine love |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mobilization modulation             | <input type="checkbox"/> Frustration tolerance  |

*Men need to be called out!*

15

15

## communities matter



### Inside / Get

- nest building
- family
- relationship modeling
- responsibility

### Outside / Give

- responsibility
- connection
- volunteer
- change

16

**partnering matters** *unconscious bias* 

- Prenatal care
- Childcare
- Health care
- School
- Workplace
- Courts

We leave them out  
and then we wonder why  
they don't show up.

We step/stay out  
and then we wonder why  
you don't invite us in.

- Don't commit
- It's Mom's job
- I'm not a provider
- No role model
- Failure fear
- Self-worth

self-sabotage

17

**partnering matters** 

## Opportunities for Relationship Building

- Know your family
- Maintain a list of providers
- Know your fatherhood service provider
- Know your fatherhood program facilitator
- Keep their program material available
- Provide a warm handoff
- Do a follow-up check
- **Recommend and use 211**

18



## Father Friendly Site Assessment

- Staff Approach
- Policies
- Practices
- Physical Environment

19



Respond to your *partner's challenge*  
with compassionate curiosity  
about their subjective experience.

20

yearning



In a young child who has not felt  
***some form of masculine nurture,***  
the hunger for a paternal presence  
can be insatiable.

*Dr. Kyle Pruett, Yale Child Study Center*

21



love & marriage  
HUNTSVILLE

Children Speak

22



23

**dads and family men**
*who are they?*


<input type="checkbox"/> dad	<input type="checkbox"/> big cousin
<input type="checkbox"/> step-dad	<input type="checkbox"/> foster dad
<input type="checkbox"/> adoptive dad	<input type="checkbox"/> pastor
<input type="checkbox"/> grandfather	<input type="checkbox"/> coach
<input type="checkbox"/> uncle	<input type="checkbox"/> neighbor
<input type="checkbox"/> big brother	<input type="checkbox"/> teacher

***The guy that does the job gets the title.***

24

color him father

color him love

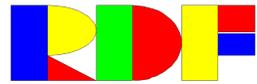
*by The WINSTONS*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sQdd1RjWfV8>

25



26



*RealDadsForever*

Fatherhood Strategies Development



## *CONTACT INFO*

Doug Edwards

P.O. Box 684  
Manchester CT 06045

860-643-7364 Office  
860-930-3431 Mobile

[dedwards@Realdadsforever.org](mailto:dedwards@Realdadsforever.org)

[www.Realdadsforever.org](http://www.Realdadsforever.org)

27