



Result of the Quarter | Power of Fathers - a Five Year Collaborative Effort

Believing in the Power of Fathers so Families Thrive

Children's Home & Aid's dedicated work with fathers was founded on the belief that every father has the power within themselves to change their own life, their family, and their community. The Power of Fathers program, a 5-year innovative collaboration of four agencies - Children's Home & Aid, Fathers, Families & Healthy Communities, Family Focus, and Metropolitan Family Services – focused on improving outcomes for children by improving the life circumstances of their fathers. Power of Fathers worked with 309 low-income men in Chicago's Greater Englewood and North Lawndale communities. The challenges faced by fathers from these historically marginalized communities, including joblessness, mental health issues, and involvement in the criminal justice system, reflect disparities rooted in centuries of racism and structural violence. The Power of Fathers program reached beyond a traditional social service strategy. In addition to working directly with fathers, the program engaged fathers in promoting changes in their communities and addressing head on the biases organizations serving families bring into their work with fathers – consciously and unconsciously. These biases can limit fathers' contributions to their families. Through the program, fathers received the tools to overcome barriers blocking their success.

Children's Home & Aid served 309 fathers through our Power of Fathers program over the last 5 years, across the Chicagoland Area.

Power of Fathers: 2020– Cohort 2 Fall Results:

Involvement with Children

Father Involvement Dimension	Average Score at Beginning of Program	Average Score at End of Program	Direction of Improvement
Discipline and Teaching Responsibility	Good - 3.72	Good - 4.48*	↑
Time Together	Good - 3.73	Good - 4.33*	↑
Praise and Affection	Good - 4.07	Excellent - 4.75*	↑

*all are considered statistically significant differences

Co-Parenting Impact

Co-parenting Domains	Average Score at Beginning of Program	Average Score at End of Program	Direction of Improvement
My child's mother and I communicate well about our child	Not Sure - 3.06	Agreeing - 3.60	↑
Even if my child's mother and I have problems in our relationship, we can work together for our child.	Not Sure - 3.43	Agreeing - 3.90	↑

Expanding the work

he Power of Fathers experience is changing Children's Home & Aid's approach to engaging fathers. We are making decisions about our programs and agency policies and programs with fathers in mind. We are also expanding our direct services to fathers. Our [Thriving Fathers and Families](#) program launched in May 2021 through a multi-year federal grant and expands the programming to a nine-county area around Champaign and Bloomington and a three-county area around Rockford.

Why these results matter

Results from Power of Fathers shows participating dads:

1. Spent more time with their children
2. Improved their parenting and co-parenting skills
3. Improved their overall relationships with their children and co-parents.

There are also many child outcomes associated with positive father involvement, including positive child health outcomes, increased emotional, academic, social, and behavioral outcomes, and enhanced self-confidence. Research shows healthy co-parenting increases children's sense of security and self-worth and decreases the stress, anxiety and guilt children feel inside and outside of their homes. The impact of being a present parent has benefits for the fathers as well, including an increase in heightened regulation and expression of emotion, an overall greater sense of well-being, and a decrease in substance abuse and contact with the criminal justice system.