



Office of Child Support Enforcement Responsible Fatherhood Programs Supportive Services for Non-Custodial Parents (CA)

OVERVIEW

Between 1998 and 2000, California's San Mateo County ran a responsible fatherhood program, Support Services for Non-Custodial Parents, with the goal of increasing child support payments among non-custodial parents. Additionally, the program intended to increase non-custodial parents' (mostly fathers) access to their children by offering mediation services for the parents. The program did not record significant increases in non-custodial parents' access to their children.

See [Elements of Promising Practice for Fatherhood Programs: Evidence-Based Research Findings on Programs for Fathers](#) for more information.

Focus

Responsible Fatherhood

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Target Population

Non-custodial fathers

Service Delivery Unit

Couples

Curriculum

Issues discussed include: seeing the children; activities during visits; location of children's home; childrearing; custody of children

Dosage

- One, two-hour mediation session
- Half of parents had a second mediation session

Setting

Community-based Organizations

Location

San Mateo County, California

Adaptation for Hispanic Population

Bilingual Mediator

Demographics of Population Served

- 57% Hispanic

- Average age was 33.5 years old
- Approximately 75% of non-custodial fathers were employed full time; more than half (55%) were employed in labor/service type jobs

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Evaluated Population

183 non-custodial fathers

Study Design

- Pre-post-test, no control group
- Outcomes were measured at 1-3 months and 4-6 months post-enrollment

Outcomes

Child support payments; child interaction; and satisfaction with access to child.

Results

- *Child support payments*
 - Child support payments increased significantly from the three month period prior to enrollment to the months after mediation. The average amount paid in child support rose from \$650 three months prior to the program to \$970 for the first three months post-mediation referrals. The percentage of non-custodial fathers not making any payments dropped from approximately 40% to 20% in this period.
 - All five groups showed equivalent increases in payments from the period three months prior to the referral to the three months following referral. Furthermore the percent of non-custodial fathers not making payments dropped by approximately equal amounts for all five groups in the same period.
 - An analysis of child support payment patterns between non-custodial fathers who reported unemployment income 4-6 months post-mediation and fathers who reported no income in the same period revealed that 11% of fathers with income did not make any payments to child support compared to 37% of the fathers with no income.
- *Child Interaction*
 - Approximately 38% of non-custodial fathers reported that they were seeing their children the same amount of time post-enrollment as they were pre-enrollment into the mediation program.
 - About an equal number of non-custodial fathers (41%) reported that they were seeing their children more often.
- *Satisfaction with access to child*
 - 45% of the non-custodial fathers said they were less satisfied with the level of access to their children post-enrollment in the mediation program compared to their satisfaction level prior to mediation.



Results for Hispanic Subgroups

None reported

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