

## Wanting to be Good Fathers: Helping Teen Fathers Become Parents

### OVERVIEW

This program was intended for adolescent fathers of Mexican descent in the juvenile justice system. It aimed to increase knowledge about becoming a father, offer resources, increase involvement with children, and teach childcare skills. The program emphasized the role that Hispanic culture plays in the lives of adolescent Latino fathers.

See [Elements of Promising Practice in Programs Serving Fathers Involved in the Criminal Justice System](#) for more information.

### Focus

Responsible Fatherhood

### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

#### Target Population

Adolescent fathers between the age of 13- and 17-years-old of Mexican descent who have been placed on probation for various offenses such as burglary, possession, and use of illegal substances, or assault with a deadly weapon

#### Service Delivery Unit

Individuals

#### Curriculum

The program included both therapeutic and psychoeducational parts, as well as a focus on Hispanic culture. Topics included family-of-origin issues, personal responsibility, the meaning of being a father, prevention of abuse and neglect, child development and child care, and fundamental parenting and discipline techniques.

#### Dosage

One session per month for six months lasting two hours each

#### Setting

Community-based Organizations

#### Location

Southwest United States

#### Adapted and/or Created for Hispanic Population

- Developed for adolescent fathers of Mexican descent
- The program highlighted the role that Hispanic culture plays in the lives of adolescent Latino fathers

### Demographics of Population Served

- Two of the 14 participants had 2 children each, and the rest had only one child, usually younger than 2-years-old
- Age ranged from 13 to 17

## PROGRAM EVALUATION

### Evaluated Population

Six adolescent fathers

### Study Design

- Descriptive Study
- 3 follow-up interviews conducted over a 2-month period after program completion

### Outcomes

Life-world context data; Lived experience data; and detailed descriptions of teen fathers' most relevant fathering experiences

### Results

- *Life-world context data*
  - Participants reported that they felt supported by the group, felt safe in the group, and appreciated that it was specifically designed to meet their needs.
- *Lived experience data*
  - Participants reported that although they were reluctant to be in the group, they came to appreciate its value, realized the group could help them become better fathers, appreciated being with other teen fathers, liked expressing their feelings freely, felt relief in writing letters to their fathers, and realized that they could not be good fathers and maintain their current lifestyle.
- *Detailed descriptions of teen fathers' most relevant fathering experiences*
  - Participants reported struggling with the knowledge that they would become fathers, discussed their relationships with their child's mother, wanted to take responsibility for their actions, and commented on how their cultural identity affected them.

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