

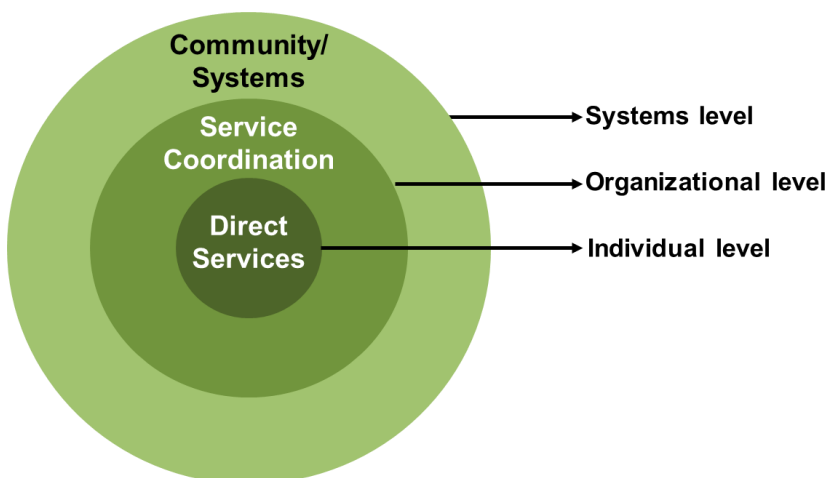


Building a community coalition to support fathers

Most fathers want to be involved in their children's lives, but fathers often face many barriers to becoming the parent they want to be, such as difficulty finding meaningful employment, incarceration, or juggling multiple parenting roles among residential and nonresidential children.

By thinking of your services in the context of the community system, you can build a coalition with other community stakeholders and work to address the complex needs of those fathers through systems-level change.

What is systems-level change?



Many communities already focus on service coordination but can build on existing work to address broad policy, practice, or community infrastructure issues that impact fathers and the community at-large. **Systems-level change** in a community works to coordinate and align services and programs that are unable to individually meet all of the varied needs of families; remove barriers to access, create policies and practices that support families; and develop healthy communities with positive child and family norms.

Systems-level change is an active, iterative process that requires key stakeholders to work collaboratively toward a shared, measurable goal. Instead of reinventing the wheel, coalitions working toward systems-level change should use existing research, prior collective impact initiatives, and community experience and anecdotal information to identify evidence-based drivers of change.

Why build a community coalition to take a systems-level approach?

The **complex needs** of families extend beyond what an individual program can support. **Community-level issues** can negatively affect families.

Working with stakeholders in the community toward systems-level change can benefit fathers, children, families, and the community as a whole. By working toward systems-level change, coalitions can also help set communities up for success by focusing often-limited resources in the most efficient way possible.



Building a community coalition to support fathers

For organizations interested in creating a coalition that works toward systems-level change, you will need to assess if your community has the necessary resources and how your organizations fits into the coalition process. Asking the following questions, based on the evidence-based predictors of father involvement, can help your organization prepare to form a coalition to serve fathers in your community.

As you start building a coalition to support fathers, ask yourself:

Are your organization and community ready to build a coalition?

- Does your community have the services to support the four predictors of father involvement (positive coparenting relationship; financial stability; reduction of risky & criminal behavior; and parenting confidence, knowledge, & skills)?
- Do you already have the inter-organizational relationships and resources to build a coalition?
 - If inter-organizational collaboration is lacking in your community, what steps can you take to form new relationships and increase collaboration to lay the foundation for a coalition?

What predictor(s) of father involvement does your organization support?

Who in your community supports the other predictors of father involvement?

INCREASED

FATHER INVOLVEMENT

Positive
Coparenting
Relationship

Financial
Stability

Reduction of
Risky &
Criminal
Behavior

Parenting
Confidence,
Knowledge, &
Skills

CHILD & FAMILY

RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP

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