



# Involving Fathers/Non-Resident Parents in Child Protection Cases

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## Statistics

- More than 1/3 of Minnesota's birth fathers, in 2004, had a high school diploma, or lower levels of education. These least-educated 1/3 of fathers averaged at least 50% more children than fathers with higher levels of education.
- 6% of Minnesota's households with children are led by single men. Single father families are among the fastest growing, by percent growth, of all families with children.
- More than 1/2 of all state prisoners in the U.S. report having at least one minor child. Were Minnesota's prison population to resemble the national population, an estimated 4,500 fathers were housed in state correctional facilities in 2006.

- According to a survey of Minnesota's fathers, the most important fatherhood role is "showing love and affection" (92%) while "providing financial care" ranked lowest (76%). The survey demonstrates that many fathers focus less on their role as provider and more on their role as nurturer.



## Implications for Lack of Father Contact with Children

- 5x More likely to live in poverty.
- Twice as likely to commit crimes and drop out of school.
- Twice as likely to become victims of abuse.
- More likely to commit suicide.
- Twice as likely to abuse drugs/alcohol.
- More likely to become pregnant as a teenager.



## Scott County's Policy/Procedure for Identification, Location, and Offer of Services to Fathers/Non-Resident Parents



Section 1 – Identifying & Locating Fathers/Non-Resident Parents.

Section 2 – Assessment of Fathers/Non Resident Parents.

Section 3 – Engaging Fathers/Non-Resident Parents.

### Section 1: Identifying and locating Fathers/Non-Resident Parents



#### Voluntary Case :

- Worker obtains information on the father and gets permission to contact Dad/Non-Resident.
- Meaningful conversations throughout life of case.
- Documentation.

#### Court Case:

- Worker to ask custodial parent to provide information and court, if needed, on Father.
- Document Search Efforts.

Child(ren) Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Custodial Parent Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Non-Resident Parent Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security # \_\_\_\_\_

**EFFORTS TO LOCATE NON-CUSTODIAL PARENT**

Resource	Date Checked	Last Address on Record	Explanation of Last Address on Record
SSIS/SWNDX (Social Service Records)			
MAXIS (economic assistance records, GA, MFIP)			
County Parental Fee Unit			
Child Support & Collections			
Telephone Directory			
Directory Assistance			
Reverse Directory			
Criminal Check			
County Corrections Department			
Tribe			
Other Parent			
Relatives (list name of relative and relationship)			
Internet Search			
Other			

CP #30  
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## Resources Search Engines



- Parent Locator Search–Child Support Unit
- SSIS/SWNDX, MAXIS
- Other relatives/FGDM
- Internet Searches (Switchboard, Peoplefinder, Yahoo, AT&T White Pages, MSN.com, zabasearch.com)
- International search engines (Catholic Charities–Family Search & Engagement. A Comprehensive Practice Guide).
  - FamilyLinks.icrc.org,
  - ISS’s national branches, affiliated bureaus and correspondents in over 100 countries facilitate communication between social services to resolve these problems. The location and contact information for the USA Branch located in Baltimore:  
International Social Service, USA Branch  
200 East Lexington Ste 1700  
Baltimore, MD 21202  
Phone (443)451-1200, Fax: (410) 230-2741,  
E-mail: [iss-usa@iss-usa.org](mailto:iss-usa@iss-usa.org)
- Telephone Directory
- County Corrections Departments
- Tribes

## Section II:

### Assessment of Father/Non-Resident Parent

- Expectation is that dad will be included in case planning unless “substantial documentation”.
- Complete assessment within 30 days of first Face-to-Face contact.
- Case Note entitled “Assessment of Non-Resident Parent”.
- Decision to not include – approved by supervisor and/or court.



Assessment should include:



- Social History Information – Medical, Legal, Chemical Health, Mental Health, Employment, Financial, etc.
- Assessment of the home environment.
- Identification of other paternal relatives.
- Contact with collateral resources.

Section III:

Engaging Dads/Non-Resident Parents



- When appropriate, develop individualized case plan with Father/Non-Resident Parent.
- When mom and dad reside together-worker must conduct joint meetings or individual meetings with mom and dad.
- Expectation for minimum monthly contacts with moms and dads.



“Fathers, like mothers, are not born. Men grow into fathers and fathering is a very important stage in their development.”

– David Gottesman.



### Case Scenario #1 (Baby V):

Case specifics –

Age of child: Baby V age 1 month



- Reason for involvement: police responded to a domestic between Baby V's mother and mother's younger sibling. Maternal grandmother told police Baby V and Baby V's mother needed to leave her home. Baby V and her mother went to a motel for one night and then to live with a friend but the friend was due to be evicted. Baby V wasn't making it to the recommended medical appointments to check Baby V's weight as the Dr. had concerns that Baby V's mother wasn't feeding her properly. Baby V was placed into foster care.
- CP History with Baby V's mother: Previous involvement with another county which terminated her parental rights to her toddler a few months prior to SCHS involvement. Basis for termination was due to mother's instability and mental health issues.
- Baby V's mother: was homeless, diagnosed mental health issues with no treatment, no means to support self or child, hopeless, no supports (maternal grandmother history of CP and domestics involving Baby V's mother).
- Baby V's alleged father: illegal and scared of county involvement, untrusting, and unwilling to give much information.

### Process and benefits of getting father involved –



- Use of office as a safe/non-threatening place to meet w/SW and for supervised visits.
- TRUST increased for SW and Baby V's dad. Baby V's mom's trust in system also increased.
- Baby V's mother moved into Baby V's father's home. They allowed SW to visit the home. Visits changed to occur in the home and the parents got parenting direction from the visit supervisor.
- Baby V's father began taking an active role in parenting Baby V which eventually led to Baby V returning to his physical custody on a trial home visit (with Baby V's mother residing in the home as well).
- Baby V's mother and father had supports (public health nurse, father's family).
- Baby V was eventually returned to the joint legal/physical custody of both parents with primary residence with the father.
- Benefits – unlikely mom would have gotten baby V back without fathers and fathers' extended family involvement. Baby V gets both parents in her life. Mom has stability.

### Case Scenario # 2 (Toddlers H and L):

#### Case Specifics –

Child's ages: Toddler H-3 years and toddler L-2 years



- Reason for involvement: case transfer from another state due to verbal and physical domestic violence, as well as mother's mental health, and physical abuse of toddler L by mother.
- Parents: mom and dad of toddler L live together and are married. Dad is not the father of toddler H.
- Mom: concerns with major depression with no mental health care, lack of motivation, hopeless, lack of ability to provide structure for the children, daily verbal domestics with dad, inability to put children first/relationship-focused.
- Dad of toddler L living in the home: controlling of mom, stable, employed, unable to put children first/relationship-focused.
- Dad of toddler H: not living in the home, no involvement with child or mother.
- Relationship between parents: daily verbal domestics, very immature, couldn't put children first, difficulty even agreeing on a safety plan, very jealous and resentful of one another.

Process and benefits of strengthening father's involvement:



- Physical domestic assault placed children with paternal grandparents.
- Numerous services offered to help the couple's relationship and parenting focus.
- Trial home visit – parents had made some progress with their relationship and ability to focus on children.
- Physical domestic assault placed children again with paternal grandparents.
- Couple split – SW worked with both parents individually on reunification.
- Dad – SW saw potential with dad so worked extensively with him (he learned from his parents). SW encouraged dad by complimenting each new thing he tried with the kids.
- Mom – continued to need supervision due to mental health needs not being met and concern with her meeting children's needs (focused on computer games and computer relationships).

- Dad got custody of children with the support of his parents. Mom got visitation.
- Dad of toddler H – SW continued phone contact and eventually face to face – he agreed with the plan for custody of his child to other father. He voluntarily terminated his parental rights.
- Maternal grandmother – also agreed with custody arrangement and planned for continued involvement with the children and the paternal relatives.
- Paternal grandparents/foster parents – agreed with custody arrangement and continued to help their son parent the children.
- Benefits of father's involvement: the extended family's help, his confidence in caring for the children, stability and less drama for the children.

\*\* Recent news makes this a success! !

