“Children in the Parachute?”

Building a Culture to Engage Fathers
Mike Kildee –

Genesee Intermediate School District
Family Engagement Coordinator – Head Start (present)
F.A.M.E. Fathers And Men Engaged

Carman-Ainsworth Community Schools Head Start
(1997 – 2013)
Men at W.O.R.K. Working On Relationships with Kids

Michigan Fatherhood Coalition “Practitioners Network”
Co-founder
Strategies to Engage Fathers

Changing the Culture

Staff “buy in”

Understanding the benefits for children
  How Mothers and Fathers nurture their children

Understanding female staff resistance

Changing the way we do business
Strategies to Engage Fathers

Changing the Culture

Understanding the hidden fears of fathers
  Low self esteem

Programs viewed as another “agency”
  Engage fathers in the “intake process”
  How men communicate differently

Understanding resistance by mothers
  Job Corps – parenting education male perspective

Reflective supervision with staff
Strategies to Engage Fathers

Changing the Culture

Staffing trends – Female dominated profession

Listening to fathers – offer programming that is meaningful for fathers by identifying barriers.

Unemployment, Distrust of Systems, Low-Education, Health, Parenting. Nurturing Fathers, Parenting Through Play, Health Screenings...

Give fathers “ownership” F.A.M.E. & Men at W.O.R.K.
Strategies to Engage Fathers

Lessons Learned

Engaging fathers is not one person's job.

Do not become frustrated when things don’t appear to be “successful” (culture change takes time).

Fathers are your greatest resource for recruiting fathers and keeping them engaged.

Expand your network and learn from others’ best practices — Michigan Fatherhood Coalition
Building meaningful partnerships and collaborations expand services, improve programming and can influence policy.

State Legislature – Michigan Responsible Fatherhood Awareness Month (February)

Friend of the Court – Genesee County. ADAPT Program
PACT Program

State agencies – DHS Proud Fathers/Proud Parents

Michigan Fatherhood Policy Forum—collaboration with the Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board