

Two New Evaluations Add to 24/7 Dad®'s Efficacy



Posted: 9/17/2019

By Christopher A. Brown

Two new federally-funded, independent evaluations add to the efficacy of 24/7 Dad®, the flagship, evidence-based program of **National Fatherhood Initiative®** (NFI), especially when implemented as part of a comprehensive intervention that addresses dads' fathering and non-fathering needs.

Research teams at the University of Louisville and Auburn University-University of Maryland conducted evaluations of fatherhood programs that use **24/7 Dad®** as the foundation of their component that builds dads' pro-fathering attitudes, knowledge, and skills. These programs imbed 24/7 Dad® into comprehensive interventions that address the fathering and non-fathering needs of diverse dads who are primarily low-income, noncustodial, and nonresidential.

4 Your Child

The research team at the University of Louisville conducted a **preliminary project evaluation** (i.e. the evaluation is still ongoing) of **4 Your Child**, based in Louisville, Kentucky. *4 Your Child* is a responsible fatherhood intervention for nonresident fathers ages 16 and older that increases their capacity for taking more active roles in their children's lives. It includes 28 hours of parent education and up to 6 months of case management services. The parent education component of the program contains fatherhood, parenting, and healthy relationship training delivered via group workshops that features content from 24/7 Dad®.

The team evaluated the impact of the program on **505 dads** served in locations in several Kentucky counties. More than 93 percent of the dads were Black or White with a roughly equal distribution between those two groups. Most of the dads were single, had a high school diploma or GED, were unemployed, and had an income of less than \$25,000 a year.

To evaluate the impact of 24/7 Dad®, the team used the Fathering Survey, the evaluation tool included with the program. This tool measures the impact of the program on pro-fathering attitudes, knowledge, and self-efficacy (skills) related to the content in the curriculum. The dads completed the survey before they started 24/7 Dad® (pre-program) and after they completed it (post-program). **The team found that the 24/7 Dad® had a highly significant effect (p<.001).** Armon Perry, PhD, who led the research team, concluded that:

“These results provide support for the efficacy of 24/7 Dad® in increasing skills that are central to fathers’ ability to take more active roles in their children’s lives.”

To learn more about the details of the impact of 24/7 Dad® and the other components of *4 Your Child*, **download** and read the report. Of particular importance is the impact of *4 Your Child* on conflict resolution skills. NFI staff will continue to monitor this evaluation. A final evaluation report on the project should be available in late 2020.

20 Alabama Fatherhood Programs

The Auburn University-University of Maryland research team conducted an **evaluation of 20 fatherhood programs** across the state of Alabama that serve nonincarcerated, noncustodial dads. The team assessed multiple target outcomes over a one-year period. They explored variations in retention and in outcomes based on geographic setting of the programs (rural or urban), sequencing of services (case management and classes), and dads’ race. The fatherhood programs provide a comprehensive intervention that addresses dads’ involvement with their children and economic security. Dads receive around 150 hours of services that include curricula-based instruction on parenting, coparenting and employability-related skills, and case management. Each of the programs uses 24/7 Dad® as the component that builds pro-fathering attitudes, knowledge, and skills.

The team evaluated the impact of the fatherhood programs on a combined **630 dads**. The sample was similar to that in the evaluation of *4 Your Child*. Ninety-four (94) percent of the dads were either Black or White with a distribution of 60 percent Black and 34 percent White. Most of the dads were single, had a high school diploma or GED, were unemployed, and had an income of less than \$20,000 a year.

The team employed a number of evaluation tools completed by dads before they started the program (pre-program), after they completed the program (immediate post-program), six months after they completed the program, and one year after they completed the program.

(Note that not all 630 dads completed the six-month and one-year follow-ups.) **This team found that the dads experienced significant sustained improvement on 14 outcomes over a one-year period.** These outcomes fell within the following areas:

- Relationship skills and functioning (couple and coparenting)
- Hope for ensuring a positive future
- Father involvement, positive parenting practices, and parent-child relationship quality
- Child academic adjustment
- Monthly income, job status

The team placed these outcomes within the **5-Factor Strengthening Families Protective Factor Framework**. This framework consists of the following factors that research shows reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect: Social Connections; Parent/Family Resilience; Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development; Social and Emotional Competence of Children; and Concrete Support in Times of Need. **Using this framework, these programs built those protective factors in dads, thus reducing the risk that they will neglect or abuse their children.**

This team did not include an evaluation tool that measured the impact of 24/7 Dad[®] specifically. **Nevertheless, because it served as the fathering education component for the comprehensive intervention in all 20 programs, it undoubtedly contributed to the positive impact on the protective factors.** (Indeed, as noted in this [previous post](#), a research team at the University of Texas at Austin found that 24/7 Dad[®] helped build these protective factors in **645 dads** in Texas. Click [here](#) to download and read that report.) The Auburn University-University of Maryland research team concluded that this evaluation provides:

“...validation that a diverse group of fathers served in fatherhood programs in diverse settings experienced changes sustained for up to one year in many target areas related to family strengthening and protection of children from maltreatment. This is quite impressive for an educational program with support services. We also find positive growth in areas, such as coparenting and monthly income, that were not evident in other studies (e.g., Avellar et al., 2018). The emphasis in our sites on healthy relationship skills in the 24/7 Dad[®] curriculum may help explain this difference [emphasis added], as most sites in other studies provide this information as optional services.”

To learn more about the details of the impact of these 20 Alabama fatherhood programs, [download](#) and read the report. Of particular importance is what the research team learned about the importance of the sequencing of components within a fatherhood program (i.e. the order in which a program provides its components) on retention rates and outcomes,

a little understood dynamic until now. The evaluation also uncovered some differences in impact on urban versus rural dads and dads of different races.

These two evaluations add to the **growing body of research and evidence** on the efficacy of 24/7 Dad®. All of us at NFI thank these two research teams for conducting the evaluations and the United States Department of Health and Human Services for funding these and other evaluations of fatherhood programs.

Are you aware of the importance of imbedding NFI's fatherhood programs within comprehensive interventions that address dads' fathering and non-fathering needs?

Are you aware that evaluations have shown a positive impact of 24/7 Dad® on reducing the risk of child abuse and neglect?