

How Another Home-Visiting Program Benefits from the Flexibility of 24/7 Dad®



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Home-visiting programs continue to reap the benefits of the evidence-based **24/7 Dad®** program's flexibility.

I recently had the pleasure of interviewing Amy Bornhoft of **Child Development Resources** (CDR) in Williamsburg, Virginia. Amy is Director of Training for CDR. Part of her role is to oversee the CDR's home-visiting program that uses the evidence-based Parents as Teachers (PAT) home-visiting model as its foundation.

CDR has had a long-time commitment to serving dads. CDR started to work with dads more than 10 years ago. The foundation of this work is their **Rookie Dads** program. It includes:

- The use of fatherhood consultants (currently three male staff members) and fatherhood mentors (CDR volunteers who are dads who've been through the program) to deliver programs and services to dads.
- A two-hour class for new dads held at a local medical center and conducted by a fatherhood consultant and a fatherhood mentor.
- For new dads who complete the two-hour class, a "Rookie Dads Family Connection" service that includes: dad/child playgroups; developmental

screenings; home visits; resources and information on behavior, potty training, and development; and dad discussion groups.

- A “Linkages: Building Strong Connections” service that includes: weekly parenting education sessions; one-on-one coaching; and family support services for incarcerated fathers and their families.

Several years ago, CDR acquired the **24/7 Dad**® program to compliment PAT. Specifically, CDR acquired 24/7 Dad® to use content from it during home visits with dads that compliments content in PAT. (CDR subsequently acquired the **InsideOut Dad**® program for use with Linkages: Building Strong Connections.) They have a robust effort that recruits dads through:

- Moms who participate in home visits.
- Other programs the organization operates, such as Early Head Start.
- Courts that order dads to participate in a parenting course.

If you’re a regular reader of this blog, you know that the use of 24/7 Dad® in home-visiting programs is nothing new. (Read [this post](#) for another example of an organization that uses content from the program in this setting.) What makes CDR’s use of it so effective is how they empower the fatherhood consultants to use the program’s content however they see fit.

- In cases where a dad commits substantial time to participate in home visits, consultants take dads through the entire program, sometimes in only 8-10 weeks. That’s because they can cover more of the content when working with a dad one-on-one rather than in a group setting. (When delivered in a group setting, the program typically takes 12 weeks to complete.) In these cases, consultants give a dad the **24/7 Dad**® **Fathering Handbook** to use not only during each home visit but also as a tool to help the dad know what’s in store for the next and subsequent sessions—a preview mechanism, if you will.
- In cases where a dad can’t or doesn’t want to commit enough time to go through the entire program, the consultants simply draw upon the program’s content and activities as related topics arise during a home visit (e.g. how to effectively discipline a child).

In all cases, consultants integrate father-child activities they’ve developed that help a dad practice, during the home visit, what he learns with his child.

Amy says the dads enjoy their time with the consultants because of the program's activity-rich content. The dads take away knowledge and skills they can apply immediately and that help them focus on the practical aspects of being a dad. They also appreciate being able to apply what they learn in the privacy of their home. They especially appreciate the rapport and trust they develop with the consultants.

Amy offers these three tips for integrating 24/7 Dad® into home visits:

- Determine the needs of each dad. Then determine the fit of the program to meet those needs. If it will meet his needs, ensure that he'll participate in it. You must get his investment from the start.
- Provide a safe environment that makes your time with him about the dad, how important his role is in his child's life, and that cements his commitment to the program.
- 24/7 Dad® is very user-friendly, customizable, and applicable.

Amy and her fellow staff look forward to expanding their use of 24/7 Dad® by offering it soon in a group setting.

Did you realize how user-friendly, customizable, and applicable 24/7 Dad® is for use when working with dads one-on-one?

How do you get the most out of 24/7 Dad® in your setting?