

**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES
Policy Memo**

TO: Case Management Staff

**FROM: Winsome Stone
Assistant Director**

Effective: December 10, 2020

Subject: Family Engagement

The Department monitors casework trends as a part of our Program Improvement Plan (PIP). Staff continues to do great work engaging families; however, one area that the Department needs to strengthen is engaging with fathers. As you know, family engagement is a family-centered, strength-based approach to establishing and maintaining relationships with families and accomplishing change together. At the practice level, this includes setting goals, developing case plans, making joint decisions, and working with families to ensure their children's safety, permanency, and well-being. It encompasses the inclusion of children and youth (when age-appropriate) and **all** adult family members in case planning and case activities. Family engagement involves supporting the development of relationships between resource families and biological families.

Engaging and involving fathers is a crucial component of family engagement. Staff should continue to focus on creating more opportunities to partner with fathers to maintain their connections with their children and help establish permanency through reunification. Staff may connect fathers on their caseloads with the Parent Support Network or Children's Friend and Services. Both agencies offer various fatherhood groups and initiatives.

- Parent Support Network Fatherhood groups and Steering Committee 467-6855
- Children's Friend and Services: <https://www.cfsri.org/fatherhood-initiatives/>

As a reminder, in compliance with **DOP: 700.0100; Rhode Island Children's Information System (RICHIST)**, staff must enter case activity notes into RICHIST documenting family engagement or attempts, no later than 15 working days after the contact or attempted contact occurred.

In compliance with **DOP: 700.0075, Comprehensive Assessment and Service Planning**, the caseworker must ensure the family's service plan includes a plan for assuring that the child receives safe and proper care and that appropriate services are provided to **both** parents, the child, and if applicable, the foster parents.

Please discuss any questions or concerns you may have regarding engaging families, particularly fathers, on your caseload with your supervisor.