

Parents and Children Together: How Low-Income Fathers in Responsible Fatherhood Programs Perceive and Provide Financial Support for Their Children

August 2020



Parents and Children Together: How Low-Income Fathers in Responsible Fatherhood Programs Perceive and Provide Financial Support for Their Children

OPRE Report #2020-82

August 2020

Quinn Moore, Rebekah Selekman, Ankita Patnaik, Heather Zaveri

Submitted to:

Samantha Illangasekare (OPRE-COR)
Kathleen McCoy (OPRE/BSC – Project Monitor)
Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation
Administration for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Submitted by:

Heather Zaveri, Project Director
Mathematica
P.O. Box 2393
Princeton, NJ 08543-2393
Telephone: (609) 799-3535

Contract number: HHSP23320095642W

Mathematica reference number: 06997.59K

This report is in the public domain. Permission to reproduce is not necessary. Suggested citation: Quinn Moore, Rebekah Selekman, Ankita Patnaik, and Heather Zaveri. (2020). *Parents and Children Together: How Low-Income Fathers in Responsible Fatherhood Programs Perceive and Provide Financial Support for Their Children*. OPRE Report # 2020-82. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

This report and other reports sponsored by the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation are available at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/index.html>.

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, the Administration for Children and Families, or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.



[Sign up for the OPRE Newsletter](#)



Follow OPRE
on Twitter
[@OPRE_ACF](#)



Like OPRE's page
on Facebook
[OPRE.ACF](#)



Follow OPRE
on Instagram
[@opre_acf](#)



Connect on
LinkedIn
[company/opreacf](#)



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We wish to thank the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) and the Office of Family Assistance (OFA) at the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) for its support of the Parents and Children Together (PACT) evaluation. We are deeply grateful for the excellent guidance and feedback provided by our OPRE project officer Samantha Illangasekare and project monitor Kathleen McCoy. This report also benefited from insightful comments from leadership and staff within ACF: Clarence Carter, Seth Chamberlain, Nicole Constance, Susan Golonka, Naomi Goldstein, Michael Hayes, Robin McDonald, Elaine Sorensen and Maria Woolverton.

Many individuals made important contributions to this report and we are fortunate to have a strong and collaborative study team composed of Mathematica staff and expert consultants. Sheena McConnell and Robin Dion shaped the entire PACT project. Their guidance greatly strengthened the impact evaluation. Numerous experts weighed in on the measures we developed or used for the surveys. We are especially grateful to Lawrence Berger, Natasha Cabrera, Jay Fagan, Ronald Mincy, and David Pate. In addition, we thank the team of dedicated survey staff members who collected the data for the evaluation, led by Shawn Marsh and Cleo Jacobs Johnson. We thank Jeremy Page and Alma Vigil for skillfully leading a team of talented programmers: Jacqueline Agufa, Molly Crofton, Sophie MacIntyre, Joseph Mastrianni, and Adele Rizzuto. We thank Pamela Holcomb for her thoughtful reviews of drafts of this report. We appreciate Effie Metropoulos for her diligent editing of the report; Sharon Clark for her efficient formatting; and Laura Sarnoski and Jessica Coldren for their report design and graphic design expertise.

We also wish to thank the grantees and their staff, who participated in PACT. In particular, we would like to thank the leadership at each program: Halbert Sullivan and Cheri Tillis (Family Formation Program); Andrew Freeberg and Guy Bowling (FATHER Project); Brad Lambert, Kathy Lambert, and Brandi Jahnke (Successful STEPS); and John Turnipseed and Stan Hill (Center for Fathering). Finally, we wish to thank the men who agreed to participate in the evaluation and responded to the surveys, so we could learn more about their lives and experiences in the programs.

OVERVIEW

Introduction

Financial support from fathers can lead to important improvements in child well-being. Financial support from noncustodial fathers, often provided through formal child support payments, can make up a substantial part of the income of single-parent families and lead to reductions in child poverty (ACF 2016; Sorensen 2010; Meyer et al. 2008; Takayesu 2011). Child well-being can be improved when child support programs enable and enforce fathers' financial support for children (Mincy and Sorensen 1998). Child support has been linked to a variety of positive outcomes, such as improved educational outcomes, increased health insurance coverage, and reduced risk of maltreatment (ACF 2016; Cancian et al. 2013; Knox 1996).

This report investigates how low-income fathers participating in RF programs perceive and provide support for their children. It uses both quantitative and qualitative information collected on fathers as part of the Parents and Children Together (PACT) evaluation, a multi-component evaluation of Responsible Fatherhood (RF) programs for low-income fathers funded by grants awarded by Administration for Children and Families (ACF) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Findings presented in this report build on earlier PACT RF evaluation efforts by combining information from the qualitative and impact studies conducted as part of PACT.

Primary research questions

This report addresses three primary research questions:

1. What amount and type of support do fathers participating in RF programs provide to their children? What are their attitudes toward providing this support?
2. What are the impacts of the PACT RF programs for key subgroups on outcomes relevant to fathers' financial support for their children, such as the amount of support provided and knowledge of the child support system?
3. What are the long-term impacts of the PACT RF programs on fathers' earnings and employment, which might be related to their long-term ability to provide support?

Purpose

Findings presented in this report shed light on how low-income fathers interested in RF programs perceive and provide financial support for their children. It complements earlier findings from PACT RF reports by combining findings from qualitative and quantitative analyses, documenting the patterns of support for fathers in the study, examining fathers with a child support order and

other subgroups relevant to child support policy, and highlighting findings from a broader range of outcomes related to financial support. The report describes the amount and type of support PACT RF fathers provided and identifies factors that drive their decisions about supporting their children. It examines impacts of the PACT RF program on outcomes related to child support for key subgroups of fathers. Finally, it examines long-term impacts on fathers' earnings and employment, which is related to their long-term ability to provide support for children.

Key findings and highlights

Fathers interested in RF programs provide financial support for their children in many ways, and their reasons for providing different types of financial support are complex. We found that most fathers provided support in a variety of ways. During the year after study enrollment, it was common for PACT RF fathers to provide more than one type of support, such as formal child support payments and noncash support. Fathers with greater ability to pay were more likely to provide any type of support. Financial support for children and contact with children are closely linked. In in-person interviews, fathers described a complicated set of factors that led to decisions about how they support their children. These factors include access to children, child well-being, co-parenting relationship with the mothers of their children, compliance with child support responsibilities, and ability to provide support given their income.

The PACT RF programs had several favorable impacts for fathers with a child support order, improving their involvement with their children and increasing their knowledge of the child support system. However, they did not improve fathers' perceived fairness of the child support system, nor did they increase the amount of support provided. These quantitative findings are consistent with qualitative findings that many fathers with child support orders find it difficult to make ends meet and might not have the resources to contribute more support.

Methods

To examine the amount and type of support fathers in PACT RF programs provide for their children, we examined fathers' one-year follow-up survey responses pertaining to financial support and child support payment activity during the year after study enrollment among fathers in the PACT RF program group. We also used data from the PACT qualitative study to examine what fathers say about the support they provide and to provide illustrative examples of the experience, knowledge, and attitudes of the child support system by fathers in PACT. We also examined the characteristics of fathers who provided financial support for their children during the follow-up period by comparing the baseline characteristics of fathers in the PACT RF program group who provided any financial support during the year after study enrollment and those who did not.

To examine subgroup impacts of PACT RF programs on financial support outcomes, we estimated impacts for key groups defined based on their characteristics at the time they enrolled in the study, such as RF program and initial child support order status. To do so, we compared the outcomes of the program group in each subgroup category with those of their control group counterparts.

We estimated impacts on long-term earnings and employment using administrative records on employment and earnings. These records are available for a three-year follow-up period for sample members who enrolled in the study in the early part of the enrollment period. Survey and administrative records data used in the main PACT analysis cover only a one-year follow-up period.

Recommendations

Findings presented here underscore the complexity of efforts to increase fathers' financial support for their children. Fathers interested in RF programs report wanting to provide support for their children, and quantitative findings indicate that those with greater ability to pay were more likely to do so. However, the types of support fathers provide are varied, as are the motivations for providing different types of support. This variation might make it difficult to influence the amount of support provided with a single programmatic approach.

To increase fathers' financial support for their children, RF programs might need to demonstrate changes for a range of outcomes, such as improving fathers' economic outcomes, increasing involvement with children, or improving attitudes toward parenting and child support. The PACT RF programs were able to improve some of these outcomes for some fathers. Among fathers with a child support order at baseline, PACT RF programs increased involvement with children and knowledge of the child support system, but they did not increase the amount of support provided. A missing link for generating impacts on support might be impacts on earnings and economic stability, particularly given the positive relationship found here between ability to pay and likelihood of providing support. Future studies of RF programs with more intensive economic stability services should investigate this possibility.

Glossary

- **Formal support:** Cash support provided by way of the child support system through wage withholding or payments
- **Informal support:** Cash support provided directly to the custodial parent
- **Noncash support:** The financial value of goods and services purchased in the interest of children

CONTENTS

OVERVIEW	iv
INTRODUCTION	1
PACT RF PROGRAMS AND EVALUATION	3
PACT RF programs and their relationships with child support agencies	3
PACT qualitative study data and reports	5
PACT impact study data and reports	5
Impacts of PACT RF programs on outcomes related to financial support	8
FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AMONG FATHERS IN THE PACT RF PROGRAMS	11
Methods for examining financial support for children among fathers in PACT RF programs	11
Examining the initial characteristics of the PACT RF programs' target population	11
Examining the amount and type of support fathers in PACT RF programs provide during the one-year follow-up period	14
Examining the characteristics of fathers who provided financial support for their children during the follow-up period	15
What were the initial characteristics of the PACT RF programs' target population?	15
Overall initial characteristics	15
Initial characteristics by child support order status	16
What do fathers say about the link between relationships with mothers, visitation, and support for their children?	19
What amount and type of support did fathers in PACT RF programs provide during the one-year follow-up period?	21
What do fathers say about the types of support they provide?	24
What are the characteristics of fathers who provided financial support during the follow-up period?	25
What are the characteristics of PACT RF group fathers who provided each type of support?	28
SUBGROUP IMPACTS OF PACT RF PROGRAMS ON FINANCIAL SUPPORT OUTCOMES	31
Methods for examining subgroup impacts of PACT RF programs on financial support outcomes	31
Selecting subgroups	31
Estimating subgroup impacts	31
Reporting on subgroup impacts	33
How did impacts vary based on whether the father had a child support order at the time of study enrollment?	33
How did impacts vary by site?	37
What did fathers say about their attitudes toward the child support system and the RF programs' services related to child support?	39

LONG-TERM IMPACTS ON EARNINGS AND EMPLOYMENT	43
Methods for assessing long-term ability to provide financial support	43
What were the impacts on fathers' longer term ability to provide support?	44
CONCLUSION	46
Discussion of findings	46
Closing thoughts	49
REFERENCES	51
APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY FOR PACT QUALITATIVE STUDY	54
APPENDIX B: ESTIMATED IMPACTS FOR SUBGROUPS	57
APPENDIX C: ADDITIONAL BASELINE CHARACTERISTICS	70

TABLES

1. Role of child support agencies in supporting RF program services	4
2. PACT RF evaluation outcomes related to financial support for children	7
3. Impacts of PACT RF programs on outcomes related to financial support	9
4. Construction of baseline characteristic measures	12
5. Baseline characteristics of fathers in PACT RF program group	17
6. Baseline characteristics of fathers in PACT RF program group, by whether they had a child support order at baseline	18
7. Overlap of different types of financial support among fathers in PACT RF program group who provided any financial support during the one-year follow-up period	24
8. Baseline characteristics of fathers in PACT RF program group, by whether they provided financial support at the 12-month follow-up	27
9. Baseline characteristics of fathers in PACT RF program group, by whether they provided financial support at the 12-month follow-up	29
10. Subgroups for PACT analysis of RF programs	32
11. Impacts of PACT RF programs on outcomes related to financial support, by whether fathers had at least one child support order at baseline	35
12. Site-level impacts of PACT RF programs on outcomes related to financial support	40
13. Impacts of RF programs in PACT on fathers' labor market success across three years	44
B1. Impacts of PACT RF programs on outcomes related to financial support, by whether fathers had at least one child support order at baseline	58
B2. Impacts of PACT RF programs on outcomes related to financial support, by site	59
B3. Impacts of PACT RF programs on outcomes related to financial support, by site	60

B4. Impacts of PACT RF programs on outcomes related to financial support, by implementation approach.....	61
B5. Impacts of PACT RF programs on outcomes related to financial support, by whether fathers were likely to provide any support at follow-up.....	62
B6. Impacts of PACT RF programs on outcomes related to financial support, by likelihood of providing above the median amount of support at follow-up.....	63
B7. Impacts of PACT RF programs on outcomes related to financial support, by father’s recent work experience.....	64
B8. Impacts of PACT RF programs on outcomes related to financial support, by fathers’ educational attainment.....	65
B9. Impacts of PACT RF programs on outcomes related to financial support, by fathers’ multipartner fertility status.....	66
B10. Impacts of PACT RF programs on outcomes related to financial support, by fathers’ contact with his children.....	67
B11. Impacts of PACT RF programs on outcomes related to financial support, by fathers’ quality of co-parenting with mothers.....	68
B12. Impacts of PACT RF programs on outcomes related to financial support, by fathers’ depression risk.....	69
C1. Characteristics of fathers in PACT RF control group that predicted whether they provided financial support at the 12-month follow-up.....	71
C2. Baseline characteristics of fathers in the control group.....	72
C3. Baseline characteristics of fathers in PACT RF program group who had a child support order at time of enrollment, by whether they provided financial support at the 12-month follow-up.....	73
C4. Baseline characteristics of fathers in PACT RF program group who did not have a child support order at time of enrollment, by whether they provided financial support at the 12-month follow-up.....	74

FIGURES

1. Percentage of fathers in the PACT RF program group who provided financial support for their children during the one-year follow-up period, by type of support.....	22
2. Mean and distribution of monthly financial support per child during the one-year follow-up period among fathers in PACT RF program group.....	22
3. Number of types of financial support provided by fathers in the PACT RF program group during the one-year follow-up period.....	23

INTRODUCTION

Financial support from fathers can lead to important improvements in child well-being. Financial support from noncustodial fathers, often provided through formal child support payments, can make up a substantial part of the income of single-parent families and lead to reductions in child poverty (ACF 2016; Sorensen 2010; Meyer et al. 2008; Takayesu 2011). Child well-being can be improved when child support programs enable and enforce fathers' financial support for children (Mincy and Sorensen 1998). Child support has been linked to a variety of positive outcomes, such as improved educational outcomes, increased health insurance coverage, and reduced risk of maltreatment (ACF 2016; Cancian et al. 2013; Knox 1996).

Financial support is often linked to involvement with children for nonresidential fathers (Nepomnyaschy 2007). Research has shown the importance of father engagement for child well-being (King and Sobolewski 2006; Adamsons and Johnson 2013). However, fathers might have less contact with their children if they feel they are not adequately providing for them financially, and many low-income fathers struggle to meet their child support obligations (Clary et al. 2017; Carlson et al. 2017; Turner and Waller 2016; Cancian et al. 2013). In addition, mothers who are unhappy with the amount of financial support they receive might restrict fathers' access to their children (Puhlman and Pasley 2013; Cherlin 1992; Fagan and Barnett 2003).

Recognizing both the importance of fathers and the challenges that many of them face, Congress has funded grants for Responsible Fatherhood (RF) programs since 2005. The Office of Family Assistance (OFA), which is in the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, has awarded and overseen three cohorts of RF grants since 2006. ACF designed the RF grants to help fathers overcome obstacles and barriers to effective and nurturing parenting, support their family formation and healthy relationships, and improve economic outcomes for themselves and their families (ACF 2015). To help fathers achieve these goals, ACF required the programs to offer all three services included in the authorizing legislation: parenting, healthy relationships and marriage, and economic stability. If effective, these services could improve fathers' economic outcomes, increase involvement with children, or improve attitudes toward parenting. These impacts could increase fathers' financial support for their children.

This report investigates how low-income fathers participating in RF programs perceive and provide support for their children. It uses both quantitative and qualitative information collected on fathers as part of the Parents and Children Together (PACT) evaluation, a multi-component evaluation of RF programs for low-income fathers funded by grants awarded by ACF. The design of the PACT evaluation and its findings are discussed in the next section. Findings presented in this report build on earlier PACT RF evaluation efforts by combining information from the qualitative and impact studies conducted as part of PACT. Research questions addressed in this analysis include:

- What amount and type of support do fathers participating in RF programs provide to their children? What are their attitudes toward providing this support?
- What are the impacts of the PACT RF programs for key subgroups on outcomes relevant to fathers' financial support for their children, such as the amount of support provided and knowledge of the child support system?
- What are the long-term impacts of the PACT RF programs on fathers' earnings and employment, which might be related to their long-term ability to provide support?

This analysis can help inform efforts by RF programs to improve the well-being of children through increased support from fathers and father involvement.

PACT RF PROGRAMS AND EVALUATION

To learn more about the effectiveness of RF programs, OFA funded, and ACF's Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) oversaw, a contract with Mathematica to conduct the PACT evaluation. The PACT evaluation included an implementation and impact study of four RF programs among other evaluation components.¹

In this section, we describe the PACT RF programs and their relationship to child support agencies. We also describe key elements of the evaluation's qualitative and quantitative methods and analysis that are relevant to the analysis conducted for this report.

PACT RF programs and their relationships with child support agencies

The evaluation team selected four RF grantees funded by the Office of Family Assistance in 2011 to participate in the PACT evaluation: (1) Connections to Success; (2) Fathers' Support Center; (3) FATHER Project at Goodwill-Easter Seals Minnesota; and (4) Urban Ventures. The evaluation team selected these grantees for their intensity of services, capacity for recruitment and enrollment, ability to adhere to random assignment, and absence of similar services in their communities. Although the grantees were not necessarily representative of the RF grantees in their cohort, these factors made them strong candidates for evaluation, providing good opportunities for detecting program impacts.

In each RF program in PACT, group-based workshops were a core service, covering topics such as the meaning of fatherhood, child development, co-parenting, and finding and retaining employment (Zaveri et al. 2015). Grantees also offered individualized support to help fathers with economic stability and three of the grantees—Fathers' Support Center, Connections to Success, and FATHER Project at Goodwill-Easter Seals—had specialized employment staff who met one on one with participants.

Each RF program in PACT developed a partnership with at least one local child support agency, but the type and extent of agency involvement varied across programs (Table 1). At three grantees—Fathers' Support Center, Connections to Success, and the FATHER Project at Goodwill-Easter Seals—child support staff spoke to fathers about how to navigate the child support system in the core workshops. The relationships between RF programs and local child support

agencies also enabled program staff to advocate on behalf of participants on issues such as reinstatement of a driver’s license. One RF grantee, the FATHER Project at Goodwill-Easter Seals, established a particularly strong collaboration with two local child support agencies. Child support staff were co-located at least part time at the project’s RF program locations and participated in the program’s case review meetings. Connections to Success developed an agreement with the child support agency in Kansas to reduce state-owed child support arrears for program participation. For every hour of participation, Kansas Department of Children and Families reduced father’s state-owed child support arrears, up to a maximum of \$1,625 (\$50 for each of the first 15 hours, and \$25 per hour for up to an additional 35 hours). Fathers’ Support Center worked with its child support agency to establish child support courts in St. Louis and then helped to get legislation signed to create child support courts statewide in 2008. The fourth RF grantee, Urban Ventures, had little direct involvement from local child support staff but advocated for fathers with child support issues by directly reaching out to child support staff on an as-needed basis.

Table 1. Role of child support agencies in supporting RF program services

Role of child support agency	Connections to Success ^a		Fathers’ Support Center	The FATHER Project at Goodwill-Easter Seals Minnesota		Urban Ventures
	Missouri State Dept. of Social Services	Kansas Dept. of Children and Families	Missouri State Dept. of Social Services	Hennepin County Division of Child Support	Ramsey County Division of Child Support	Hennepin County Division of Child Support
Provide an orientation about the child support system	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-
Hold individual meetings with fathers	-	✓	-	✓	✓	-
Allow RF program staff to advocate for fathers in child support matters	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Participate in program case review meetings	-	-	-	✓	✓	-
Assign dedicated child support case managers to participants	-	-	-	✓	✓	-
Co-locate staff with program	-	✓ ^b	-	✓	✓	-
Reduce arrears based on program participation	-	✓	-	-	✓	-

Source: Site visits and program documents.

^a Differences in the child support services available through Connections to Success in Missouri and Kansas reflect variation in the partnership established with each state’s agency.

^b Connections to Success held workshops and information sessions at the office of the Kansas Department of Children and Families.

PACT qualitative study data and reports

The PACT qualitative study consisted of in-depth interviews about the views and experiences of a subset of fathers who voluntarily enrolled in one of the four RF programs participating in PACT.² Data collected through the qualitative study of the PACT RF programs informed a report documenting the experiences of participating fathers (Holcomb et al. 2015). It also resulted in a report on fathers' views of providing financial support for their children, particularly through their engagement in the child support program (Clary et al. 2017). Three themes emerged during in-depth interviews of fathers who had child support orders: (1) the challenge that economic instability posed to meeting their child support obligations; (2) the difficulty in requesting and obtaining modifications to make child support obligations align better with their income; and (3) their views of the disconnect between paying child support and having access to their children.

PACT impact study data and reports

The PACT impact study offers an assessment of how offering RF services to low-income fathers affects their parenting, co-parenting, economic stability, and well-being one year after study enrollment. The PACT impact study is supported by an experimental research design. Fathers who applied for one of the four RF programs in the PACT evaluation were randomly assigned to a program group that was offered RF services or to a control group that was not. We estimated program impacts by comparing mean outcome values for fathers randomly assigned to be offered PACT RF program services to those for fathers randomly assigned to the control group.

The impact analysis is based on data collected from three sources: (1) baseline surveys completed by all fathers when they applied to an RF program in PACT; (2) follow-up surveys conducted with fathers about one year after study enrollment; and (3) administrative employment records collected from the National Directory of New Hires (NDNH).

With multiple services, the RF programs had the potential to affect many areas of fathers' lives. We assessed a broad range of fathers' outcomes that aligned with the key goals and services of the programs. The outcomes are grouped into four areas: (1) parenting; (2) healthy relationships; (3) economic stability; and (4) well-being. Before conducting the analysis, the evaluation

team selected a set of outcomes across these four areas to serve as the main indicators of program effectiveness, referred to as the confirmatory outcomes. The confirmatory outcomes were selected to be closely aligned with the grant goals and likely to be affected by the program. We also examined a larger set of exploratory outcomes that were not key indicators of program effectiveness, but could broaden understanding of how the programs worked.³

This report focuses on a subset of the outcomes examined in the PACT RF evaluation, such as fathers' involvement with their children, financial support of their children, and knowledge of and attitudes about the child support system (Table 2). Based on alignment with program goals, three outcomes related to financial support for children were included in the confirmatory analysis of program effectiveness: in-person contact with children, engagement in age-appropriate activities with children, and average monthly financial support per child. Other related outcomes were examined as part of exploratory analyses intended to broaden our understanding of how the programs worked but not included as key indicators of program effectiveness.

The sample for these outcomes varies, with some relating to all children younger than age 21, and others relating to a single child with whom the father had contact, referred to as a focal child (see callout box). Most outcomes related to child support payments pertain to all children younger than age 21 with a mother to whom the father is not married.

What is a focal child?

The follow-up survey included some questions about all respondents' children and the children's mothers. However, to reduce the burden on survey respondents, we limited more-detailed questions to a single focal child and that child's mother. For each father, the evaluation team randomly selected a focal child who met two criteria at baseline: (1) the child was younger than 21; and (2) the child lived with or had in-person contact with the father in the month before random assignment. We used these criteria for selecting the focal child to increase the likelihood that the parenting outcomes used in our analysis were appropriate. About 70 percent of fathers had at least one child who met the two criteria.

Table 2. PACT RF evaluation outcomes related to financial support for children

Outcome	Type	Measure
Father's involvement		
In-person contact with children	Confirmatory	Percentage of father's biological or adopted children age 21 and younger with whom he had in-person contact during the past month
Age-appropriate activities with focal child	Confirmatory	Average of how frequently father participated in age-appropriate activities with the focal child in the past month, such as reading books or telling stories to the child, feeding the child or having a meal together, and playing with the child or working on homework together: 0 = never, 1 = once in a while, 2 = somewhat often, 3 = very often
Any contact with children	Exploratory	Percentage of the father's biological or adopted children age 21 and younger with whom the father had contact (in person or otherwise) within the past month
Had contact with focal child at least a few times a week	Exploratory	Frequency of in-person contact the father had with the focal child in the past month: 0 = never, 1 = once or twice, 2 = a few times a month, 3 = a few times a week, 4 = every day or almost every day
Frequency of in-person contact with focal child	Exploratory	Whether the father had any contact (in person or otherwise) with the focal child at least a few times a week in the past month
Father's financial support for children		
Average monthly financial support per child	Confirmatory	Sum of formal and informal child support the father paid in the past month plus the financial value of purchases the father made directly for the children divided by the number of biological and adopted children (for this outcome, children include those who are age 21 or younger and whose mother is not married to the father)
Average monthly formal child support per child	Exploratory	Formal child support the father paid in the past month divided by number of biological and adopted children up to age 22 he has with mothers to whom he is not married
Average monthly informal financial support per child	Exploratory	Informal child support the father paid in the past month, divided by number of biological and adopted children up to age 22 he has with mothers to whom he is not married
Average monthly noncash support per child	Exploratory	Financial value of purchases the father made in the past month directly for the children, divided by number of biological and adopted children up to age 22 he has with mothers to whom he is not married
Knowledge of and attitudes about the child support system		
Knowledge of child support system	Exploratory	Sum, with values from 0 to 4, of correct responses to the following four statements: "Fathers can get help with their child support by calling the child support agency." "A father has the right to ask for a change in the amount of his child support order." "A father is required to pay child support even if the mother of his child has a new partner." "A father is required to pay child support even if the child's mother prevents him from seeing his child."
Knows how to request change in child support order	Exploratory	Whether a father with a child support order knew how to request a change in his child support order if he lost his job or earned less money
Knows a contact person at the child support agency	Exploratory	Whether a father with a child support order knew the name of a specific person at the child support agency to call if he had questions about his order
Disagrees that child support system is unfair to dads	Exploratory	Whether the father disagreed or strongly disagreed that the child support system was unfair to dads
Agrees that he has a better understanding of child support system	Exploratory	Whether the father agreed or strongly agreed with the following statement: "I have a better understanding of the child support system than I did a year ago."

Impacts of PACT RF programs on outcomes related to financial support

Program impacts on the outcomes related to financial support for children shown in Table 3 provide the backdrop for the analysis conducted for this report. Therefore, it is useful to review impact findings for these outcomes. These findings are also presented in the main PACT RF impact report and the PACT RF technical supplement (Avellar et al. 2018; Covington et al. 2020).

Summary of overall impact findings on outcomes related to financial support

- The PACT RF programs improved several outcomes related to father involvement.
- The PACT RF programs did not affect financial support for children overall but led to a small increase in informal financial support.
- The PACT RF programs improved all outcomes related to knowledge of the child support system but did not affect fathers' attitude toward the child support system.

The PACT RF programs improved several outcomes related to father involvement. Among the 70 percent of fathers in the study sample with a focal child, the programs increased fathers' engagement in age-appropriate activities with their children, one of the confirmatory measures of program effectiveness (Table 3). The fathers in the program group had an average score of 2.00 (somewhat often) compared to 1.87 among those in the control group, a difference that is statistically significant. This is equivalent to one in eight fathers increasing their response to the activities scale from once in a while to somewhat often.

The PACT RF programs did not improve the proportion of children with whom the father had in-person contact, which was another one of the confirmatory measures of program effectiveness. However, in exploratory analyses conducted for the main impact report, we found positive impacts on the three other

outcomes related to father involvement: the proportion of children with whom the father had any contact, the frequency of contact with the focal child, and whether the father had contact with the focal child at least a few time per week.

Table 3. Impacts of PACT RF programs on outcomes related to financial support

Outcome	Program group	Control group	Impact	Effect size
Father's involvement				
In-person contact with children (percentage) ^a	73	72	2	0.041
Any contact with children (percentage)	85	82	2**	0.069
Had contact with focal child at least a few times a week (percentage)	80	75	5***	0.174
Frequency of in-person contact with focal child (range: 1–5)	2.8	2.7	0.1**	0.091
Age-appropriate activities with focal child (range: 1–4) ^a	2.00	1.87	0.13***	0.131
Father's financial support for children				
Average monthly financial support per child (\$) ^a	299	281	18	0.059
Average monthly formal child support per child (\$)	84	80	4	0.026
Average monthly informal financial support per child (\$)	51	43	8*	0.072
Average monthly noncash support per child (\$)	160	155	5	0.027
Knowledge of and attitudes about child support				
Knowledge of child support system (range: 0–4)	2.98	2.87	0.12***	0.119
Knows how to request change in child support order	58	51	7***	0.163
Knows a contact person at the child support agency (percentage)	41	35	6***	0.150
Disagrees that child support system is unfair to dads (percentage)	32	32	0	0.007
Agrees that he has a better understanding of child support system (percentage)	70	62	8***	0.210
Sample size				
All fathers	2,013	1,943		
Fathers of a focal child	1,356	1,386		

Source: PACT 12-month follow-up survey, conducted by Mathematica.

Note: Financial support covers children who are age 21 or younger and whose mother is not married to the father.

^aThis is a confirmatory outcome used as part of the main assessment of program effectiveness.

The PACT RF programs did not affect financial support for children overall but led to a small increase in informal child support.

As explained in Table 2, the PACT evaluation measured three aspects of financial support that fathers could provide their children: formal child support, informal child support, and the financial value of purchases

made directly for the children (noncash support). The confirmatory outcome in the main PACT RF impact report summed these three forms of financial support together to measure the total amount of financial support provided by fathers and presented this amount on a per child basis. The impact report found that fathers in both the program and control groups paid slightly less than \$300 per month in financial support for each child, on average. Further exploratory analysis presented in the PACT RF technical supplement found that program and control group fathers also provided similar amounts of both formal child support per child (about \$80) and noncash support per child (about \$160). However, fathers offered the PACT RF programs paid somewhat more in informal child support per child (\$51 versus \$43). This small difference is statistically significant at the 0.10 level.

The PACT RF programs had a positive impact on all outcomes related to knowledge of the child support system but did not affect whether fathers felt the system was fair. The follow-up survey included a series of questions about fathers' knowledge of and attitudes about the child support system. When asked four questions to gauge general knowledge of the child support system, fathers in the program group gave more correct answers than those in the control group (2.98 versus 2.87). Among fathers with at least one child support order, 58 percent of fathers in the program group reported knowing how to request a change in their order, compared with 51 percent of the control group. Fathers' attitude toward the child support system was measured using a question that asked participants whether they felt the child support system was unfair to dads. The PACT RF programs did not have an impact on this question.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AMONG FATHERS IN THE PACT RF PROGRAMS

The analysis presented in this section describes the PACT RF fathers in terms of the factors that drive their decisions about supporting their children and how their means of supporting their children overlap. We use quantitative and qualitative data to address three research questions:

1. What were the initial characteristics of the PACT RF programs' target population?
2. What amount and type of support did fathers in PACT RF programs provide during the one-year follow-up period?
3. What are the characteristics of fathers who provided financial support during the follow-up period?

In the remainder of this section we first describe the methods for addressing these questions and then present relevant findings for each question.

Methods for examining financial support for children among fathers in PACT RF programs

Examining the initial characteristics of the PACT RF programs' target population

We conducted analysis to describe the characteristics of the fathers served by PACT RF programs at the time they enrolled in the study. The analysis included measures for fathers' demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, child support status and activity, relationships with their children, and relationships with the mothers of their children. We constructed these measures based on responses to the baseline survey, which fathers completed at the time of study enrollment, as described in Table 4.

Because this report focuses on fathers participating in RF programs, we present the baseline characteristics for fathers in the PACT RF program group. This analysis sample aligns with those for other analyses in the report. Moreover, all qualitative analysis is based on interviews with program group fathers, so there is a direct linkage between qualitative findings and quantitative findings for the program group. That said, given the study's random assignment research design, patterns of baseline characteristics are similar for the program and control groups.

In addition to examining baseline characteristics for all fathers enrolled in PACT RF programs, we also examined them separately based on whether fathers had a child support order in place at the time of study enrollment. Fathers with a child support order in place are of policy interest because the child support order is a legal obligation. Fathers with a child support order have monthly payment responsibilities. Fathers without child support orders do not have set payment obligations and those who make economic contributions toward their children must do so on a voluntary, ad hoc basis. Moreover, fathers with a child support order in place have different mechanisms for providing support for their children than those who do not. For fathers with a child support order, wages earned through most formal employment are subject to automatic withholding, with proceeds going to the child support agency for distribution to the custodial parent and the state. In addition to these formal payments, some fathers with a child support order may choose to make informal contributions toward their children, although these contributions do not count toward the monthly payment responsibilities associated with their child support orders. The baseline analysis describes whether fathers with child support orders provide different levels of informal and overall support at the time of study enrollment compared to those without orders (by definition, there are differences between these groups in providing formal support). It also shows whether these fathers differ in other ways, such as in their relationships with their children and the mothers of their children.

Table 4. Construction of baseline characteristic measures

Characteristic	Description
Demographic and socioeconomic characteristics	
Worked for pay in past six months	Whether father reported having worked for pay in the six months before study enrollment
Earnings in past 30 days (\$)	Amount of earnings father reported receiving in the 30 days before study enrollment, including those with no earnings
Has high school diploma or GED	Whether father reported having a high school diploma or GED at the time of study enrollment
On probation or parole	Whether father reported being on probation or parole at the time of study enrollment
At risk for moderate or severe depression	Whether father had a score of 10 or more on the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-8) depression scale
Age (years)	Age of father at the time of study enrollment
Race and ethnicity	Whether father reported race and ethnicity was Hispanic; black and not Hispanic; or another race and ethnicity

(Continued.)

Table 4. Construction of baseline characteristic measures (Continued.)

Characteristic	Description
Relationships with children	
Number of biological and adopted children	Number of biological and adopted children for the father
Average age of biological and adopted children	Average age in years of the father's biological and adopted children
Resides with any of his children	Whether father reported that they live with any of their children or stayed in the same place as at least one of their children for 15 or more night in the month before study enrollment
In-person contact with any of his children who are age 21 or younger	Whether father reported spending any time in-person with any of his children in the month before study enrollment
Percentage of children age 21 or younger with whom father has in-person contact	Percentage of father's children who are age 21 or younger that they report having spent any time with in-person in the month before study enrollment
Child support order status and payments	
Provided financial support	
Any support	Whether father reported that he provided financial support to any of his biological and adopted children through formal or informal payments to a mother or money that he gave or spent directly on a child in the month before study enrollment
Formal support	Whether father reported paying any amount in the month before study enrollment due to a legal arrangement or child support order that required them to provide financial support for any of his biological or adopted children
Informal support	Whether father reported giving any amount directly to a mother he was not married to in the month before study enrollment, instead of or in addition to any formal child support
Noncash support	Whether father reported giving or spending any money directly on any of his biological or adopted children in the month before study enrollment
Average monthly financial support (\$)	
Total	Sum of formal and informal child support the father paid in the month before study enrollment plus the financial value of purchases the father made directly for the children divided by the number of biological and adopted children (for this outcome, children include those who are age 21 or younger and whose mother is not married to the father.)
Formal support	Formal child support the father paid in the month before study enrollment divided by number of biological and adopted children who are age 21 or younger he has with mothers to whom he is not married
Informal support	Informal child support the father paid in the month before study enrollment, divided by number of biological and adopted children who are age 21 or younger he has with mothers to whom he is not married
Noncash support	Financial value of purchases the father made in the month before study enrollment directly for the children, divided by number of biological and adopted children who are age 21 or younger he has with mothers to whom he is not married
Relationships with mothers of children	
Has children with multiple mothers	Whether father reports having biological or adopted children with more than one mother
In steady romantic relationship with a mother of one of his children	Whether father reports having a steady romantic relationship with any of the mothers of his children at the time of study enrollment
Married to a mother of one of his children	Whether father reports being married to any of the mothers of his children at the time of study enrollment
Resides with any mother of one of his children	Whether father reports living with any of the mothers of his children at the time of study enrollment
Being a good co-parenting team across all mothers of his children	Summary variable (ranging from 1 to 4) reflecting the average degree to which a father agreed with the following statement across all mothers of his biological and adopted children: "Mother and I are a good parenting team."
Relationship quality with mother of focal child	Summary variable (ranging from 1 to 4) that averaged a father's responses to three questions about the focal mother: (1) extent to which he agrees that she makes it hard for him to see their children; (2) extent to which he agrees that she supports him in how he wants to raise their children; and (3) whether he would rate their relationship as excellent, good, fair, or poor

Source: PACT baseline survey.

We use data from the PACT qualitative study to complement this quantitative analysis, examining what fathers say about the link between the relationship with mothers and support for children. This analysis provides important context to the quantitative findings, providing a more textured understanding of the factors that might be driving the patterns identified in the quantitative analysis. For this purpose, researchers reviewed the database created for the PACT qualitative study from the first two interview rounds. This data was previously analyzed for themes related to child support and reported in Clary et al. (2017) before the impact study was conducted. For this study, a different set of researchers applied the same inductive approach to reviewing the qualitative data, allowing themes related to fathers' support for their children, relationships with the mother of their children, and experiences with the child support system to arise naturally from the data. Our re-review of this data supports the findings of Clary et al. and is used to enhance the interpretation of the quantitative findings of this report.

Examining the amount and type of support fathers in PACT RF programs provide during the one-year follow-up period

We conducted descriptive analysis to give a fuller picture of the ways in which fathers financially support their children and how those means of support overlap. We examined financial support and child support payment activity during the year after study enrollment among fathers in the PACT RF program group. This analysis is based on outcomes described in Table 2. We examine the distribution of overall, formal, informal, and noncash support separately, as well as the frequency of providing more than one type of support during the follow-up period.

We also use data from the PACT qualitative study to examine what fathers say about the support they provide and to provide illustrative examples of the experience, knowledge, and attitudes of the child support system by fathers in PACT. The qualitative data provide context for understanding the financial support behavior demonstrated in the quantitative analysis.

Importantly, results in this section describe PACT RF fathers' financial support behavior after they are assigned to the program, but they do not reflect impacts of the program. As described earlier, we estimate program impacts by comparing outcomes of fathers who were offered the PACT RF program services and those who were not.

Examining the characteristics of fathers who provided financial support for their children during the follow-up period

Understanding the characteristics of fathers receiving RF program services that are associated with providing financial support for their children can inform future programming approaches. Doing so could help identify which fathers are less likely to provide support and thus would be best suited for more intensive services.

We compared the baseline characteristics of fathers in the PACT RF program group who provided any financial support during the year after study enrollment and those who did not.⁴ This analysis identifies which fathers, at the time of study enrollment, are more likely to provide support during the follow-up period. We conduct this analysis separately for overall support, as well as for formal, informal, and noncash support.

Importantly, these associations do not reflect causal relationships. Estimates presented here should not be interpreted as the change in financial support that would be expected for fathers with different baseline characteristics. For example, the analysis suggests that fathers with stronger employment histories at the time of study enrollment are more likely to provide support during the follow-up period. The analysis does not provide information on why this occurred. It may result from a direct link between employment and financial support or an indirect link reflecting that some soft skills may contribute to both a stronger attachment to the workforce and an increased sense of responsibility for meeting child support obligations.

What were the initial characteristics of the PACT RF programs' target population?

Overall initial characteristics

At the time of enrollment, fathers who were randomly assigned to the PACT RF programs had histories of limited employment and low earnings, on average (Table 5).⁵ About 30 percent had not worked in the past six months, and their average earnings during the month before enrollment were less than \$400.

Most fathers (77 percent) had in-person contact with some of their children at the time of enrollment. About one-third resided with any of their children. About 45 percent had children with multiple mothers. It was relatively uncommon for these fathers to be in a relationship with one of these mothers, with less than one-fifth reporting a steady romantic relationship with a mother.

Key findings on characteristics of PACT RF programs' target population

- PACT RF fathers had limited employment histories at the time of study enrollment. When asked about their employment challenges, many fathers described involvement with the criminal justice system to be a barrier to obtaining steady employment.
- Most support provided to children before study enrollment took the form of noncash support, such as providing child care, clothing, and food. Average levels of support were high relative to fathers' earnings.
- Fathers with child-support orders at the time of study enrollment provided more formal support than those without a child support order (\$76 monthly per child versus \$0), but these fathers provided less informal and noncash support. Fathers with orders had less contact with their children compared to those without orders and described having poorer relationships with the mothers of their children.

A large majority of fathers—about 75 percent—provided some financial support for their children. The average amount of support provided was relatively low in absolute terms, but high relative to fathers' earnings. On average, the fathers provided \$185 in monthly financial support per child. More than half of financial support took the form of noncash support, such as purchasing clothing for children or helping the mother pay her bills; about one-quarter was formal financial support and one-fifth was informal financial support.

Initial characteristics by child support order status

There are key differences in the characteristics of fathers who were randomly assigned to the RF programs based on whether they had a child support order in place at the time of study enrollment (Table 6). Examining these differences helps describe the distinguishing characteristics of study fathers with child support orders, but they are not causal relationships; they do not imply that child support caused the differences.

Fathers with an order in place were more likely than those without an order to work for pay before study enrollment (71 versus 66 percent), although they had similar levels of earnings. These findings could be consistent with fathers in the

formal child support system needing to work more in order to meet their child support obligation. In the qualitative study, several fathers described “working for child support,” in that all their time and money go toward meeting their child support obligation.

Table 5. Baseline characteristics of fathers in PACT RF program group

Characteristic	Average
Demographic and socioeconomic characteristics	
Worked for pay in past six months	69
Earnings in past 30 days (\$)	374
Has high school diploma or GED	69
On probation or parole	33
At risk for moderate or severe depression	27
Average age (years)	35.5
Race and ethnicity	
Hispanic	6
Black, non-Hispanic	77
White and other	17
Relationships with children	
Number of biological and adopted children	2.5
Average age of biological and adopted children (years)	10.8
Resides with any of his children	34
In-person contact with any of his children who are age 21 or younger	77
Percentage of children age 21 or younger with whom father has in-person contact	66
Child support order status and payments	
Has child support order in place	60
Provided financial support	
Any support	75
Formal support	28
Informal support	31
Noncash support	65
Average monthly financial support per child (\$)	
Total	185
Formal support	47
Informal support	40
Noncash support	102
Relationships with mothers of children	
Has children with multiple mothers	46
In steady romantic relationship with a mother of one of his children	18
Married to a mother of one of his children	6
Resides with any mother of one of his children	15
Being a good co-parenting team across all mothers of his children	3.22
Relationship quality with mother of focal child	2.73
Sample size	2,607

Source: PACT baseline survey.

Note: Values are percentages unless otherwise noted. The four RF programs were weighted equally for these calculations. Financial support covers children who are age 21 or younger and whose mother is not married to the father.

Table 6. Baseline characteristics of fathers in PACT RF program group, by whether they had a child support order at baseline

	Had at least one child support order at baseline?	
	Yes	No
Demographic and socioeconomic characteristics		
Worked for pay in past six months	71**	66
Earnings in past 30 days (\$)	369	377
Has high school diploma or GED	70	68
On probation or parole	34	34
At risk for moderate or severe depression	29**	25
Average age (years)	36**	35
Race and ethnicity		
Hispanic	6	7
Black, non-Hispanic	78	76
White and other	17	17
Relationships with children		
Number of biological and adopted children	3***	2
Average age of biological and adopted children (years)	11*	10
Resides with any of his children	29***	39
In-person contact with any of his children who are age 21 or younger	78	76
Percentage of children age 21 or younger with whom father has in-person contact	63***	70
Child support order status and payments		
Average monthly financial support per child (\$)		
Formal support	76***	0
Informal support	23***	68
Noncash support	82***	136
Total of formal, informal, and noncash support	177**	202
Relationships with mothers of children		
Has children with multiple mothers	59***	31
In steady romantic relationship with a mother of one of his children	14**	17
Married to a mother of one of his children	4	3
Resides with any mother of one of his children	12***	16
Being a good co-parenting team across all mothers of his children	3.1***	3.3
Relationship quality with focal mother	2.6***	2.8
Sample size		
Number	1,546	1,061
Percentage of total	59	41

Source: PACT baseline survey.

Note: Values are percentages unless otherwise noted. The four RF programs were weighted equally for these calculations. Financial support covers children who are age 21 or younger and whose mother is not married to the father.

***/**/* Differences are statistically significant at the .01/.05/.10, two-tailed test.

Fathers with a child support order are older (36 versus 35 years old) and have more children (3 versus 2), on average, than those without an order. Fathers with an order also have contact with fewer of their children than those without an order (63 versus 70 percent of their children). They are less likely to reside with any of their children (29 versus 39 percent).

By definition, fathers with a child support order can provide formal support while those without a child support order cannot. In the month prior to enrollment, fathers with a child support order reported that they paid, on average, \$76 per child in formal child support and fathers without a child support order paid none. Fathers with a child support order provided less informal support than fathers with a child support order (\$23 versus \$68), although the sum of their formal and informal support was larger (\$99 versus \$68). Fathers with a child support order provided less noncash support than fathers without a child support order (\$82 versus \$136). Across all types of support, fathers with orders in place provided somewhat lower levels of support for their children overall compared to those without a child support order (\$177 versus \$202).

Fathers with a child support order tend to have less favorable relationships with the mothers of their children. Fathers with a child support order are more likely to have children with multiple mothers, and they are less likely to be in a romantic relationship or live with a mother of any of their children than fathers without a child support order. Furthermore, fathers with a child support order are less likely to report being a good co-parenting team with the mother of each of his children (3.1 versus 3.3 on a four-point scale). Although this difference is statistically significant, the magnitude is small, with a difference equivalent to one in five fathers having a scale value of agree rather than strongly agree. They also report lower relationship quality with their children's mothers (2.6 versus 2.8 on a four-point scale). This difference is also statistically significant but fairly small, equivalent to one in five fathers having a scale value of agree rather than strongly agree.

What do fathers say about the link between relationships with mothers, visitation, and support for their children?

The linkages between fathers' support for their children, their access to their children, and relationships with the mothers of their children was a frequent topic during the qualitative interviews with fathers who received the PACT RF

program. Some fathers described that the mothers engaged with the child support system to demonstrate anger with the fathers. One father said, “She just put me on child support out of spite,” while other fathers described that the mother threatens to “put me on child support.” Access and visitation with children were also important to fathers and, in the fathers’ opinions, closely tied with the support they provide for their children. Some fathers expressed frustration when they were paying and providing support and mothers were keeping their children from them. One father described, “I just want my rights to where I can see [my children] when I want to... I just want to be able to see my kids.” However, barriers to legal assistance made it more difficult for fathers to enforce their right to their children (see callout box).

In a father’s words

“The toughest part is actually this court system and not having the right to be a father. As far as the child support comes out of my check, I have no rights to see my children. I have to get a lawyer for things that I cannot afford. If the women say you can’t see the child then I’m just not seeing them. I just don’t think that’s cool. I just don’t think that’s cool. So that’s it, someone telling me when I can be a father to my children.”

Many of the RF programs were designed to inform fathers about the child support system, but few offered follow-up services that helped fathers address the challenges they encountered with access and visitation and the child support program. Some fathers reported receiving referrals to legal assistance programs or help preparing court documents. Other fathers reported that the program gave them information about the child support system and court procedures but did not provide any services. Still other fathers reported receiving no assistance from the program related to child support or access to their children. In the interviews, some fathers described wishing PACT programs had done more to help them gain legal access to their children and help with modifying child support orders (see callout box).

In a father's words

“What was missing? That’s a good question. I would say that was probably the thing that was—more legal help to get people on the right track of their child support and things and explain it. They had this form where they brought in the child support case workers and things and you go in there and you talk to them and you tell them what your situation is. Oh, you need an attorney. You know? It’s like I don’t have the money for an attorney.”

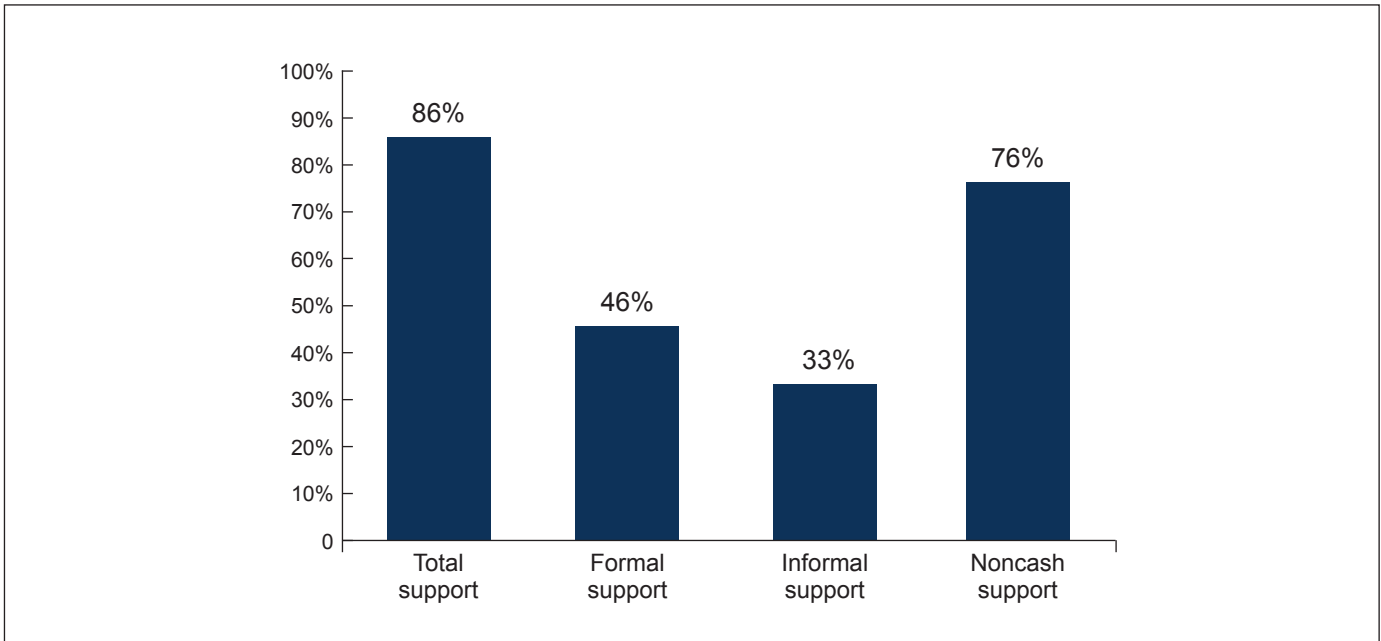
What amount and type of support did fathers in PACT RF programs provide during the one-year follow-up period?

One year after study enrollment, more than five in six fathers in the PACT RF group had provided their children with financial support (Figure 1). On average, fathers provided about \$295 monthly in financial support per child, summing across formal, informal, and noncash support and including fathers who provided no support (Figure 2).⁶ The distribution of total financial support at follow-up is fairly narrow; half of these fathers provided \$70 to \$400 per child monthly (Figure 2).⁷

Key findings on the amount and type of support fathers provided during the follow-up period among fathers in PACT RF programs

- Most fathers—about 85 percent—provided some support during the year after study enrollment. On average, monthly support totaled \$295.
- About half of support provided was noncash support but providing more than one type of support was common.
- Fathers in the qualitative study describe advantages and drawbacks of various forms of support. Informal support is preferred over formal support as it can be provided directly to the family. Noncash supports are preferred over informal cash payments as the fathers can ensure their children have their needs met.

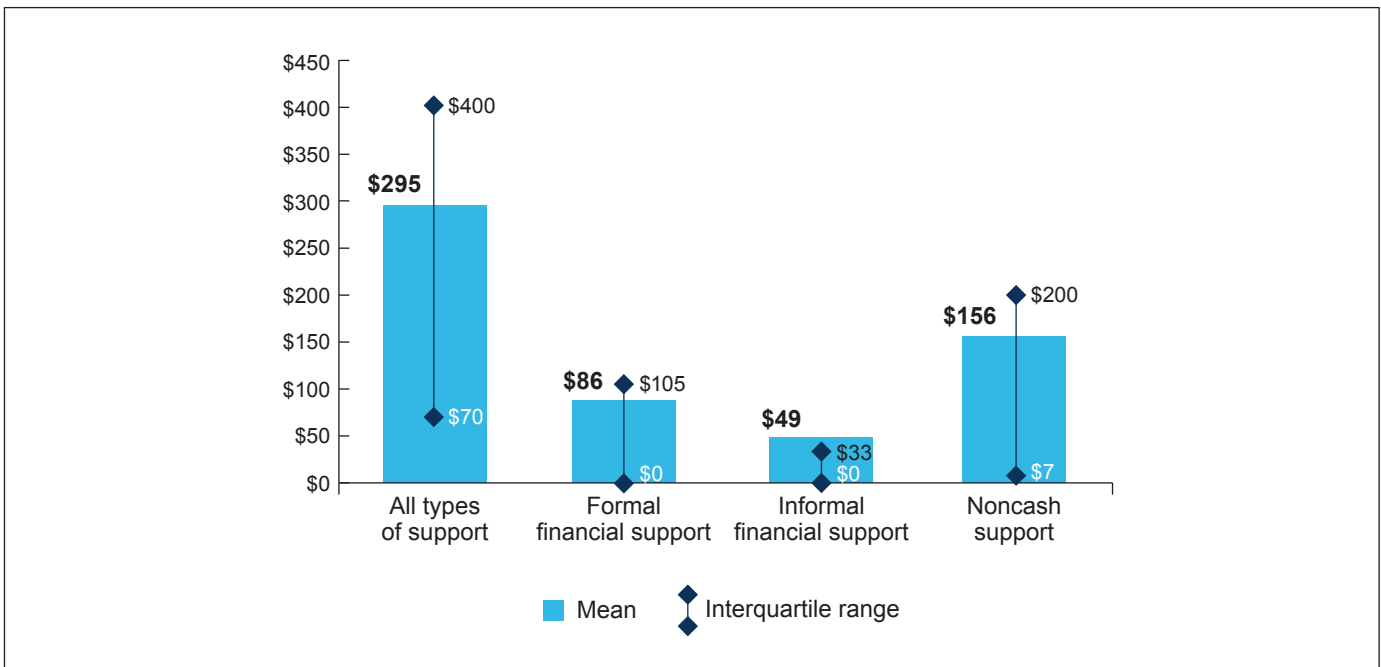
Figure 1. Percentage of fathers in the PACT RF program group who provided financial support for their children during the one-year follow-up period, by type of support



Source: PACT 12-month follow-up surveys, conducted by Mathematica.

Note: Financial support covers children who are age 21 or younger and whose mother is not married to the father.

Figure 2. Mean and distribution of monthly financial support per child during the one-year follow-up period among fathers in PACT RF program group



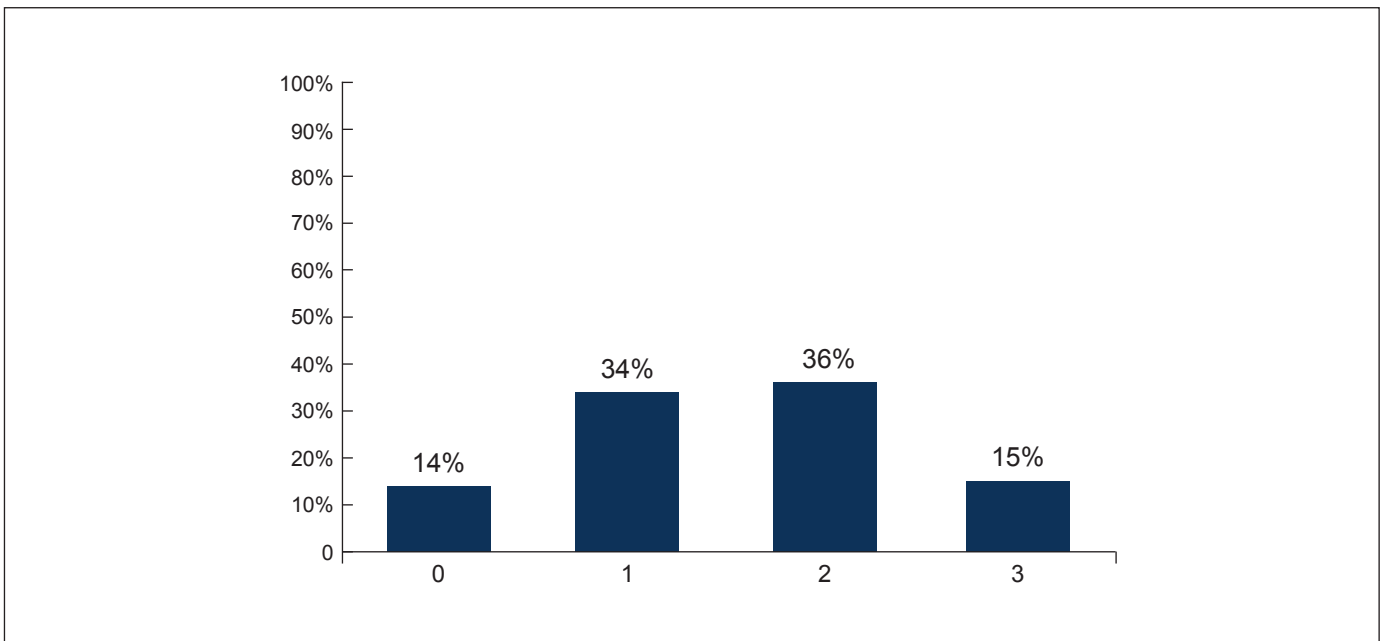
Source: PACT 12-month follow-up surveys, conducted by Mathematica.

Note: The bars represent the mean. The brackets represent the interquartile range, which is the range from the 25th to the 75th percentile of the distribution of monthly financial support per child. Half of the sample fathers provided monthly financial support per child within this range. Financial support covers children who are age 21 or younger and whose mother is not married to the father.

As was true at baseline, noncash support is the most common type of financial support. More than half of support comes in the form of noncash support, with the reported value of that support averaging about \$156 monthly per child (Figure 2). Formal financial support averages about \$86 monthly per child, and informal financial support averages about \$49.⁸

We examined overlap in types of financial support, finding that it is common to provide more than one type of support. About one third of fathers provided only one type of support, another third provided two types of support, and 15 percent provided three types of support (Figure 3). It is particularly common to provide noncash support in addition to either formal or informal support. About 80 percent of those who provided formal support also provided noncash support; among those who provided informal support, 94 percent also provided noncash support (Table 7). Interestingly, 35 percent of fathers who provided formal child support also reported that they provided informal child support even though these payments would not offset their formal obligation.

Figure 3. Number of types of financial support provided by fathers in the PACT RF program group during the one-year follow-up period



Source: PACT 12-month follow-up surveys, conducted by Mathematica.

Note: The values might not sum to 100 percent due to rounding.

Table 7. Overlap of different types of financial support among fathers in PACT RF program group who provided any financial support during the one-year follow-up period

	Percentage of fathers who during the follow-up period provided		
	Formal financial support	Informal financial support	Noncash support
Among fathers who provided formal financial support during the follow-up period	100	35	80
Among fathers who provided informal financial support during the follow-up period	49	100	94
Among fathers who provided noncash support during the follow-up period	48	40	100
Sample size			
Number of fathers	788	560	1,304
Percentage of fathers who provided any support	53	38	88

Source: PACT 12-month follow-up surveys, conducted by Mathematica.

Note: Values are percentages. Financial support covers children who are age 21 or younger and whose mother is not married to the father.

What do fathers say about the types of support they provide?

The qualitative data provide context for understanding findings indicating that fathers provide more noncash support and frequently provide more than one type of support. Many PACT RF fathers described a preference for providing noncash supports over cash supports, informal or otherwise, as they feel confident this support will benefit the children, rather than relying on the mother to use formal or informal payments to benefit the children. One father described, “I support [my children] directly because my children don’t see that money that I pay in child support, other than bills, maybe, for rent or whatever she puts the money on. But, I buy them whatever they want directly, clothes and whatever.” Others described providing noncash support as an opportunity to show their children support for their needs and interests.

Some fathers also expressed a preference for providing informal support over formal support. One father said, “I have a child support order, but I don’t pay that. I just give her the money...I mean, I can’t be waiting on child support to turn the lights back on, or you know, whatever it might be. So, I just give it to her...You know, I mean, if she don’t get it, [my son] don’t get it.” In addition to concerns about the timeliness of formal child support payments meeting the needs of their families, many fathers in the qualitative study described the economic hardship that formal child support obligations cause for them. Multiple fathers described having little money left to meet basic needs such as rent, food, transportation, and even clothing after meeting their formal child support obligation. One father

noted, “I’m working an \$8.00-an-hour job at 40 hours a week, my check is \$270. I only get \$130 of it. There’s not much I can do with that. I mean, a bus pass is \$25 a week, so that’s a fourth of it right there.” One respondent described that by being in the formal child support system, he is limited in being able to provide informal and noncash support to his children (see callout box).

In a father’s words

“You don’t never put the money in the woman hand. [The child support program] call them gifts. The child support enforcement agency tell you that ‘you never put money in the parent hand. You always send the money to us, go through the process, we approve it, and then we’ll post it on your account. Then we’ll disperse the money to mom or another parent. You get credit for that. If it don’t come through us, if it don’t hit our hands, it’s considered as a gift.’ That’s why it be kind of hard for me to do extra stuff for them, because I don’t have it like that. I ain’t living like that to get them all the things they want. I just focus on getting them what they need. Stuff that I feel like it’s important.”

What are the characteristics of fathers who provided financial support during the follow-up period?

Program group fathers who provided financial support for their children during the follow-up period differed in important ways from those who provided no support, in terms of their characteristics at the time of study enrollment. Broadly speaking, we find that more favorable employment histories, more involvement with their children, and stronger histories of providing support at the time of study enrollment are all positively associated with providing support during the follow-up.

Fathers who provided any financial support during the follow-up period had more favorable employment histories at the time of study enrollment than those who did not provide support (Table 8). They were much more likely to have worked for pay in the six months before study enrollment (73 versus 55 percent) and had higher earnings in the 30 days before enrollment (\$394 versus \$270). They were also less likely to be on probation or parole (32

versus 45 percent), younger (33 versus 37 years old), and had somewhat different racial and ethnic composition (78 versus 72 percent Black, non-Hispanic and 15 versus 20 percent White and other; these differences were statistically significant at the .10 level).

Fathers who provided support during the follow-up period were more involved with their children in a number of ways compared to fathers who did not provide support. They were more likely to have had in-person contact with their children at the time of study enrollment than those who did not provide support (82 versus 44 percent). They were more likely to reside with one of their children at baseline (36 versus 13 percent). They also had in-person contact with a greater percentage of their children (71 versus 36 percent).

Fathers who provided support during the follow-up period were more likely to have had a child support order in place at baseline (67 versus 49 percent) and provided more than double the total support before they enrolled in the study (\$201 versus \$76).

Fathers who provided support at follow-up were more likely to be in a relationship with a mother of one of their children at enrollment (19 versus 11 percent) and less likely to reside with a mother of one of their children at enrollment (4 versus 6 percent), but there were no differences in co-parenting or relationship quality.

Key findings on characteristics of fathers who provided any financial support

- Key factors associated with providing support were greater ability to provide support (reflected in the strength of their employment histories), stronger history of providing support (reflected in levels of support before study enrollment), contact with children, and relationships with the mothers of their children.
- There are differences in factors associated with providing formal, informal, and noncash support. For example, fathers who provided informal and noncash support had better relationships with the mothers of their children compared to those who did not provide this type of support. This pattern does not emerge for formal support.

Table 8. Baseline characteristics of fathers in PACT RF program group, by whether they provided financial support at the 12-month follow-up

	Provided any financial support at 12-month follow-up?	
	Yes	No
Socioeconomic and demographic characteristics		
Worked for pay in past six months	73***	55
Earnings in past 30 days (\$)	394***	270
Has high school diploma or GED	68	69
On probation or parole	32***	45
At risk for moderate or severe depression	27	30
Average age (years)	33***	37
Race and ethnicity		
Hispanic	7	8
Black, non-Hispanic	78*	72
White and other	15*	20
Relationships with children		
Number of biological and adopted children	2.6	2.4
Average age of biological and adopted children (years)	8.8***	11.4
Resides with any of his children	36***	13
In-person contact with any of his children who are age 21 or younger	82***	44
Percentage of children age 21 or younger with whom father has in-person contact	71***	36
Child support order status and payments		
Has child support order in place	67***	49
Average monthly financial support per child before study enrollment (\$)		
Total	201***	76
Formal support	54***	26
Informal support	40***	17
Noncash support	110***	36
Relationships with mothers of children		
Has children with multiple mothers	49	47
In steady romantic relationship with a mother of one of his children	19***	11
Married to a mother of one of his children	4	6
Resides with any mother of one of his children	4***	6
Being a good co-parenting team across all mothers of his children	3	3
Relationship quality with mother of focal child	3	3
Sample size		
Number of fathers	1,490	235
Percentage of fathers	86	14

Source: PACT baseline survey.

Note: Values are percentages unless otherwise noted. The four RF programs were weighted equally for these calculations. Sample sizes accounting for survey design range from 1,323 to 1,674 depending on the measure. Financial support covers children who are age 21 or younger and whose mother is not married to the father.

***/**/* Differences are statistically significant at the .01/.05/.10, two-tailed test.

What are the characteristics of PACT RF group fathers who provided each type of support?

We also compared the characteristics of fathers who did and did not provide support during the follow-up period separately for formal, informal, and noncash support (Table 9).⁹

For formal and informal support, those who provided support at follow-up had higher earnings before study enrollment than those who did not. The difference in pre-enrollment earnings for those who provided support and those who did not was larger for formal support (\$471 versus \$296) than for informal support (\$435 versus \$355).

For informal and noncash support, there were differences in average age and the race and ethnicity of fathers who provided support compared to those who did not. Fathers who provided informal and noncash support during the follow-up period were younger than those who did not (34 versus 36 years old for informal support and 33 versus 36 years old for noncash support). Fathers who provided these types of support were also more likely to be Black, non-Hispanic and less likely to be White or other race/ethnicity compared to fathers who did not provide support. There were no differences in age or race and ethnicity for formal support.

For all three types of support, fathers who provided any support during the follow-up period were more likely to have had in-person contact with any of their children at baseline (81 versus 73 percent for formal support, 89 versus 71 percent for informal support, and 85 versus 53 percent for noncash support). For formal support, there were no statistically significant differences between fathers who provided support during the follow-up period and those who did not in the other measures of baseline father involvement—whether the father resides with any children and the percentage of children with whom the father has contact. However, there were differences for both of these baseline measures between fathers who did and did not provide both informal and noncash support. For example, fathers who provided noncash support were more likely than fathers who did not to reside with any of their children at the time of enrollment (39 versus 14 percent) and had contact with a larger percentage of their children (73 versus 42 percent).

Fathers who provided formal support during the follow-up period were more likely to have had a child support order in place at baseline (89 versus 45 percent). Having a child support order in place at baseline was not related to providing informal or noncash support.

Patterns of several baseline measures of relationships with the mothers of their children differ for formal support relative to informal and noncash support. For formal support, fathers who provided support during the follow-up period were less likely to be in a romantic relationship with a mother of one of their children at baseline compared to fathers who did not provide support (15 versus 20 percent). However, for informal and noncash support, fathers who provided support during the follow-up period were more likely to be in a romantic relationship with a mother of one of their children at baseline compared to fathers who did not provide support (27 versus 13 percent for informal support and 20 versus 10 percent for noncash support). Fathers who provided formal support at follow-up and those who did not had similar relationship quality with the mothers of their children at the time of study enrollment and were similarly likely to reside with a mother of one of their children. However, fathers who provided informal and noncash support during the follow-up period had better relationship quality with the mothers of their children at baseline than those who did not provide those types of support (2.8 versus 2.5 scale values for informal support and 2.7 versus 2.5 scale values for noncash support) and were more likely to reside with one of these mothers at baseline (21 versus 9 percent for informal support and 18 versus 8 percent for noncash support).

Table 9. Baseline characteristics of fathers in PACT RF program group, by whether they provided financial support at the 12-month follow-up

Baseline characteristics	Provided any formal financial support at 12-month follow-up?		Provided any informal financial support at 12-month follow-up?		Provided any noncash support at 12-month follow-up?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Socioeconomic and demographic characteristics						
Worked for pay in past six months	78.4***	64.0	75.0***	68.5	72.7***	64.5
Earnings in past 30 days (\$)	470.5***	296.4	434.7**	354.5	391.3	349.6
Has high school diploma or GED	68.1	67.9	66.0	69.2	66.8	71.0
On probation or parole	30.0***	36.7	32.0	34.6	32.3**	38.4
At risk for moderate or severe depression	27.0	27.5	28.7	26.5	26.2	30.2
Average age (years)	34.2	33.6	32.6***	34.5	33.1***	36.3

(Continued.)

Table 9. Baseline characteristics of fathers in PACT RF program group, by whether they provided financial support at the 12-month follow-up (Continued.)

Baseline characteristics	Provided any formal financial support at 12-month follow-up?		Provided any informal financial support at 12-month follow-up?		Provided any noncash support at 12-month follow-up?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Race and ethnicity						
Hispanic	6.9	6.2	6.9	6.5	6.4	7.6
Black, non-Hispanic	76.5	78.3	81.2***	75.4	79.0***	71.5
White and other	16.6	15.6	11.9***	18.1	14.5***	20.8
Relationships with children						
Number of biological and adopted children	2.8***	2.4	2.8***	2.4	2.6	2.5
Average age of biological and adopted children (years)	9.4	9.0	7.8***	9.9	8.5***	11.1
Resides with any of his children	30.9	34.3	43.6***	27.3	38.9***	14.4
In-person contact with any of his children who are age 21 or younger	81.3***	73.1	89.1***	70.6	85.1***	52.7
Percentage of children age 21 or younger with whom father has in-person contact	66.5	64.5	75.5***	60.4	73.4***	41.9
Child support order status and payments						
Has child support order in place	88.7***	44.6	61.9	64.8	64.7	62.7
Average monthly financial support per child before study enrollment (\$)						
Total	200.2***	167.9	229.8***	160.9	209.8***	105.4
Formal support	85.4***	19.6	38.7**	55.1	48.3	56.5
Informal support	28.2***	43.0	68.5***	22.1	44.3***	14.5
Noncash support	89.1**	107.4	125.1***	86.4	120.3***	36.7
Relationships with mothers of children						
Has children with multiple mothers	56.8***	41.8	54.2***	45.4	48.5	48.1
In steady romantic relationship with a mother of one of his children	14.5***	20.0	26.8***	13.3	20.2***	10.4
Married to a mother of one of his children	4.2	4.1	3.4	4.5	3.6	5.6
Resides with any mother of one of his children	13.4	16.4	24.8***	10.6	17.7***	7.9
Being a good co-parenting team across all mothers of his children	3.1*	3.2	3.3***	3.1	3.2*	3.1
Relationship quality with mother of focal child	2.6	2.7	2.8***	2.5	2.7***	2.5
Sample size						
Number of fathers	788	929	558	1,159	1,306	419
Percentage of fathers	46	54	33	67	76	24

Source: PACT baseline and 12-month follow-up surveys, conducted by Mathematica.

Note: Values are percentages unless otherwise noted. The four RF programs were weighted equally for these calculations. Sample sizes accounting for survey design range from 1,316 to 1,721 depending on the measure. Financial support covers children who are age 21 or younger and whose mother is not married to the father.

***/**/* Differences are statistically significant at the .01/.05/.10, two-tailed test.

SUBGROUP IMPACTS OF PACT RF PROGRAMS ON FINANCIAL SUPPORT OUTCOMES

In this section, we address the research question “What were the impacts of the PACT RF program on outcomes related to child support for key subgroups of fathers?” using quantitative and qualitative data. This analysis helps identify the ways in which program effects differ across participants or sites. Findings showing stronger or weaker program impacts for groups with select characteristics contributes to our understanding of overall program impacts. Such findings may have implications for programs offering services similar to those offered by PACT RF programs and that seek to target services to the groups most likely to benefit from them.

Methods for examining subgroup impacts of PACT RF programs on financial support outcomes

Selecting subgroups

We examined impacts on outcomes relevant to financial support separately for the four RF programs in PACT. Before beginning the analysis, we also identified a set of subgroups that past research has suggested might be differently affected by the program or might have implications for future program operations and development (Table 10). All of these subgroups are defined based on participants’ characteristics at the time they enrolled in the study.

Estimating subgroup impacts

To estimate impacts for each subgroup analysis, we followed methods similar to those used for the full sample. We compared the outcomes of the program group in each subgroup category with those of their control group counterparts. We used statistical models that adjusted for small differences in the initial characteristics of the research groups that may have arisen by chance or because of survey nonresponse.

We report results from two tests of statistical significance for each subgroup impact estimate. First, we test whether the impact estimate for each subgroup category is significantly different than zero. In addition, we test for statistically significant differences between the impact estimates for subgroup categories. For example, we test whether the impact on financial support for fathers who had a child support order at the time of study enrollment was significantly

different from the impact for those who did not. This test tells us whether the program appears to have had different impacts for the two groups. If the impacts for the subgroup categories are similar, the subgroup analysis does not meaningfully contribute to our understanding of how the program affects participants beyond the impacts estimated for the full sample.

Table 10. Subgroups for PACT analysis of RF programs

Topic	Subgroup	Subgroup definition and proportion of sample
Child support status	Whether had child support order	Had child support order at the time of study enrollment Did not have child support order at the time of study enrollment
Site characteristics	Site-specific	Center for Fathering at Urban Ventures Family Formation Program at Fathers' Support Center Successful STEPS at Connections to Success The FATHER Project at Goodwill-Easter Seals
	Implementation approach	Integrated cohort: The Family Formation Program at Fathers' Support Center and Successful STEPS at Connections to Success Open-entry workshop: The FATHER Project at Goodwill-Easter Seals and The Center for Fathering at Urban Ventures
Likelihood of providing support	Likelihood of providing any support	Predicted probability based on baseline characteristics indicates not likely to provide any support. Predicted probability based on baseline characteristics indicates likely to provide any support.
	Likelihood of providing more than median amount of support	Predicted probability based on baseline characteristics indicates not likely to provide more than median amount of support. Predicted probability based on baseline characteristics indicates likely to provide more than median amount of support.
Socioeconomic characteristics	Recent work experience	No recent work experience. Time that father had most recently worked for pay was at least six months before baseline. Recent work experience. Father was employed at baseline or worked within six months of baseline.
	Educational attainment	No high school diploma or GED credential. Father reported that he did not complete high school or receive a GED credential. High school or more. Father has a high school diploma, GED credential, or more education.
Parenting	Multi-partner fertility	Multi-partner fertility. Father has biological children with two or more women. No multi-partner fertility. All of father's biological children are with one woman.
	Contact with all children	Contact with all children. Father reports contact with all of his biological or adopted children within one month of baseline. Does not have contact with all children. Father reports that he did not have contact at baseline with at least one biological or adopted child at baseline.
Relationships	Quality of co-parenting with mothers	Poor co-parenting quality with mothers. In upper half of distribution of average responses to following questions (for all women with whom father has children): mother makes it hard to see child, relationship with mother is excellent/good/fair/poor, he and mother make a good parenting team, mother supports him in the way he wants to raise his children. Good co-parenting quality with mothers. In lower half of distribution of average responses.
Well-being	Depression risk	At risk for moderate or severe depression. Based on the eight-item Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-8); scores of 10 or higher indicate moderate to severe depression. Not at risk for moderate or severe depression. Score on PHQ-8 was 9 or less.

Reporting on subgroup impacts

By increasing the number of comparisons, subgroup analysis increases the risk of finding statistically significant impacts by chance. In reporting on subgroup impacts, we took proactive steps to reduce the chance of reporting spurious findings in the report.

We designated initial child support order status as a priority subgroup that should be discussed in this report regardless of the pattern of findings. We did so because this subgroup is of particular interest for child support policy and, as a result, subgroup findings are valuable regardless of the pattern of findings.

The following discussion focuses only on subgroup findings based on initial child support order status and site. For other subgroups, we determined that a subgroup must show a strong pattern of differences in impacts between the two groups to be highlighted in our discussion of subgroup findings.¹⁰ None of the subgroups met this standard. Appendix A presents findings from all subgroup analysis.

How did impacts vary based on whether the father had a child support order at the time of study enrollment?

As noted above, fathers with a child support order in place have monthly payment responsibilities, and wages they earn through formal employment are subject to automatic withholding. These mechanisms could affect the extent to which programs are successful in affecting outcomes relevant to financial support.

The PACT RF programs improved father involvement for fathers who had a child support order in place at the time of study enrollment but had no effect on father involvement for fathers who did not. Fathers in the program group who had a child support order at the time of study enrollment were more likely to have in-person contact with their children during the follow-up period than their control group counterparts (72 versus 69 percent, a difference that is statistically significant; Table 11). In contrast, among fathers without a child support order at the time of study enrollment, program and control group fathers had similar levels of in-person contact with their children (74 versus 75 percent).

Impact findings based on whether the father had a child support order

- The PACT RF programs improved father involvement for fathers who had a child support order in place but had no effect on father involvement for fathers without a child support order.
- The PACT RF programs did not affect financial support for children among fathers with a child support order but increased informal financial support among those without an order.
- The PACT RF programs improved several measures of knowledge of the child support system for fathers with and without a child support order.

Among the 70 percent of fathers in the study sample with a child support order at the time of study enrollment who had a focal child, the programs increased the frequency of in-person contact with their children during the follow-up period. About 79 percent of PACT RF program group fathers with a child support order at the time of study enrollment had in-person contact with the focal child at least a few times a week during the follow-up period, compared to 72 percent for their control group counterparts. On a scale of frequency of contact with values from 0 (never) to 4 (almost every day), fathers with a child support order in the program group had an average score of 2.7 (between a few times per month and a few times per week), compared to 2.5 for the control group. This impact is statistically significant and equivalent to one in five fathers increasing their response to the scale from a few times per month to a few times per week. In contrast, the PACT RF programs did not affect the frequency of in-person contact with their children for fathers who did not have a child support order at baseline.

Table 11. Impacts of PACT RF programs on outcomes related to financial support, by whether fathers had at least one child support order at baseline

Outcome	Had a child support order			No child support order		
	Program group	Control group	Impact	Program group	Control group	Impact
Father's involvement						
In-person contact with children (percentage)	72	69	3**†	74	75	-1
Any contact with children (percentage)	83	81	2	86	85	1
Had contact with focal child at least a few times a week (percentage)	79	72	6***†	78	80	-1
Frequency of in-person contact with focal child (range: 1–5)	2.7	2.5	0.2***†	2.8	2.8	0.0
Age-appropriate activities with focal child (range: 1–4)	2.0	1.8	0.2***†	2.0	2.0	0.0
Father's financial support for children						
Average monthly financial support per child (\$)	304	292	12	294	260	34*
Average monthly formal child support per child (\$)	114	113	0	34	24	10
Average monthly informal child support per child (\$)	36	36	0††	79	52	27***
Average monthly noncash support per child (\$)	150	141	10	174	181	-7
Knowledge of and attitudes about the child support system						
Knowledge of the child support system (range: 0–4)	3.0	2.9	0.1**	3.0	2.9	0.1
Knows how to request change in child support order (percentage)	59	52	7***††	70	33	37**
Knows a contact person at the child support agency (percentage)	42	36	6**	44	30	14
Disagrees that child support system is unfair to dads (percentage)	28	28	0	38	37	0
Agrees that he has a better understanding of child support system (percentage)	70	60	10***	69	63	6*
Sample size						
All fathers	1,167	1,141		732	680	
Fathers of a focal child	858	869		447	459	

Source: PACT baseline and 12-month follow-up surveys, conducted by Mathematica.

Note: Sample sizes accounting for survey design range from 905 to 2,308 depending on the measure. Financial support covers children who are age 21 or younger and whose mother is not married to the father.

***/**/* Impact estimates are statistically significant at the .01/.05/.10, two-tailed test.

†††/††† Statistically significant differences among the subgroup impact estimates at the .01/.05/.10 level.

The RF programs also increased fathers' engagement in age-appropriate activities with their children among fathers who had a child support order at baseline but not among those who did not. Depending on the age of the child, activities included reading books or telling stories to the child, feeding the child

or having a meal together, playing with the child, or working on homework together. Values on the scale ran from 0 (never) to 3 (very often). The fathers in the program group had an average score of 2.0 (somewhat often) compared to 1.8 among those in the control group, a difference that is statistically significant. This is equivalent to one in five fathers increasing their responses to the activities scale from once in a while to somewhat often.

The PACT RF programs did not affect any type of financial support for children among fathers who had a child support order at baseline, but they increased informal financial support among those who did not and there is some evidence that they improved total financial support. Fathers with a child support order at baseline in both the program and control groups reported providing total financial support of about \$300 monthly per child. Program and control group fathers with a child support order at baseline also provided similar levels of formal, informal, and noncash support.

In contrast, program group fathers without a child support order provided \$294 monthly per child, on average compared to \$260 per month for their control group counterparts, a difference that is statistically significant at the .10 level. This difference is driven by an increase in informal child support payments during the one-year follow-up period. Fathers in the program group without a child support order at baseline provided an average \$79 monthly per month per child in informal support compared to \$52 for fathers in the control group, a difference that is statistically significant.¹¹

The PACT RF programs had some positive impacts on outcomes related to knowledge of the child support system both for fathers with and without a child support order at the time of study enrollment, although there were more positive impacts for fathers with a child support order. Our expectation is that knowledge of the child support system is more relevant to those with a child support order. For that group, we found significant, positive effects on four of the five measures in this area: knowledge of the child support system, knowledge of how to request a change in child support orders, knowing a child support agency contact, and agreement to having a better understanding of the child support system.

For fathers who did not have a child support order at the time of study enrollment, the programs also had positive impacts on knowing how to request a change in a child support order and perception of having a better understanding of the child support system; the former impact is statistically significant at the .05 level and the latter is statistically significant at the .10 level. Some of these fathers received a child support order during the follow-up period.

The PACT RF programs did not affect the attitudes of fathers toward the child support system either for fathers with or without a child support order. Among fathers with a child support order at the time of study enrollment, about 28 percent of fathers in both the program and control groups disagreed that the child support system is unfair. Among fathers without a child support order, this figure was slightly less than 40 percent for both program and control group members.

How did impacts vary by site?

The four PACT RF programs varied in the strength of their partnerships with child support agencies. These programmatic differences could translate to differences across sites in impacts on knowledge and attitudes toward the child support system (Table 12).

Impact findings by site

- Fathers attending Fathers' Support Center and FATHER Project at Goodwill-Easter Seals improved their knowledge and attitudes toward child support, but this was not the pattern for fathers at Connections to Success and Urban Ventures.

The PACT RF programs improved some outcomes related to father involvement for Urban Venture and Fathers' Support Center but not Connections to Success or the FATHER Project at Goodwill-Easter Seals grantees. Among fathers who enrolled in the study at Urban Ventures, those offered the program were more likely to have contact with their focal child at least a few times a week, engaged in more age appropriate activities with the focal child compared to control group fathers at that site, and had more frequent contact with their focal child; the first two of

these differences are statistically significant at the .05 level and the third is statistically significant at the .10 level. At Fathers' Support Center, program group fathers engaged in more age appropriate activities than control group fathers at that site, a difference that is statistically significant at the .05 level.

There is no strong evidence that PACT RF programs affected financial support at any of the sites. We found a favorable impact on informal child support payments at the FATHER Project at Goodwill-Easter Seals that is statistically significant at the .10 level. None of the other site-level impacts on financial support outcomes were statistically significant.

The PACT RF programs improved outcomes related to knowledge of the child support system for the Fathers' Support Center and the FATHER Project at Goodwill-Easter Seals grantees, but not for the Connections to Success and Urban Ventures grantees.

Fathers offered the PACT RF program at the Fathers' Support Center, compared to their control group counterparts, reported more knowledge of the child support system, more knowledge of how to request a change in a child support order, and were more likely to agree that they have a better understanding of the child support system. All of these differences were statistically significant. At the FATHER Project at Goodwill-Easter Seals, this same pattern held, and in addition, fathers offered the PACT RF programs were more likely than control group fathers to know a contact at the child support agency. For fathers offered to attend the RF program at Connections to Success or Urban Ventures, there were no significant differences in outcomes related to knowledge of the child support program. As noted earlier in this report, Connections to Success operated in two states, Kansas and Missouri. In Kansas, Connections to Success had a strong relationship with the child support agency and the RF program staff could advocate on behalf of fathers with regard to their child support cases. The relationship with the Missouri child support agency was more limited. It may be that the impact of Connections to Success on child support knowledge varied by the state, but we were unable to examine this hypothesis.

The PACT RF programs did not affect attitudes toward the child support system at any of the sites. None of the site-level impacts on whether fathers disagreed that the child support system is unfair were statistically significant.

What did fathers say about their attitudes toward the child support system and the RF programs' services related to child support?

In interpreting findings for site impacts on knowledge of and attitudes toward the child support system, it is useful to consult the qualitative data for insight into how fathers feel about the child support program and the RF program services related to child support. The qualitative data indicate that fathers' perceptions of the child support program were complicated and complex. As noted above, and thoroughly documented in the literature, many fathers describe experiencing great financial hardship as a result of being involved in the formal child support system (Clary 2018; Achatz and MacAllum 1994; Waller and Plotnick 2001; Martinson and Nightingale 2008; Turner and Waller 2016). These experiences contribute to fathers' preference for providing informal support. Furthermore, fathers were acutely aware of the compounding effects that getting behind on their child support obligations had on their financial well-being. Some fathers described that paying child support depends on being employed, but when they get behind on their child support obligations, some of the enforcement mechanisms, such as driver's license suspension, makes it challenging to find work. Despite their very serious concerns about the formal child support system and the frequently negative impacts the system has on their well-being, most fathers described an intense desire to provide for and support their children. This led to an understanding of the underlying purpose of the child support system but a frustration with how the system approaches working with fathers (see callout box).

It is important to note that the fathers describe their experiences with the formal child support system up through the time of their interviews. However, in the past several years, the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (2016) has provided extensive policy guidance to states regarding procedures for setting current support orders based on the noncustodial parent's ability to pay, ensuring noncustodial parents are able to meet their basic subsistence needs, and how to handle nonpayment of child support during periods of incarceration. Interviews conducted for the PACT qualitative study were conducted largely before this guidance was developed and implemented. Thus, the fathers' experiences described below do not necessarily reflect how the formal child support system would handle similar cases in the current policy environment.

Table 12. Site-level impacts of PACT RF programs on outcomes related to financial support

	Connections to Success	Fathers' Support Center	FATHER Project at Goodwill–Easter Seals	Urban Ventures
Father's involvement				
In-person contact with children	○	○	○	○
Any contact with children	○	○	○	○
Frequency of in-person contact with focal child	○	○	○	+
Had contact with focal child at least a few times a week	○	○	○	+++
Age-appropriate activities with focal child	○	+++	○	++
Father's financial support for children				
Average monthly financial support	○	○	○	○
Average monthly formal child support per child	○	○	○	○
Average monthly informal child support per child	○	○	+	○
Average monthly noncash support per child	○	○	○	○
Knowledge and attitudes toward the child support system				
Knowledge of the child support system††	○	+++	++	○
Knows how to request change in child support order	○	+++	+++	○
Knows a contact person at the child support agency	○	○	++	○
Disagrees that child support system is unfair to dads	○	○	○	○
Agrees that he has a better understanding of child support system†††	○	+++	+++	○
Sample size	516	1,468	796	1,065

Source: PACT baseline and 12-month follow-up surveys, conducted by Mathematica.

○ No statistically significant impact.

+++/++/+ Statistically significant positive impacts at the .01/.05/.10 level.

†††/††/† Statistically significant differences among the subgroup impact estimates at the .01/.05/.10 level.

The qualitative data provides illustrative examples of the levels of knowledge fathers in these RF programs had during program operations. The majority of qualitative sample members were aware that their formal child support payments did not flow directly to the child, and in some instances would be retained by the state because the custodial parent received public assistance. Regarding his child support obligation, one father said, “It wasn’t her that pursued me for [child support], it was the state, because she was on assistance, so they’re making me pay back whatever assistance she had.” Another father described, “The child support system is helpful. It’s what helps to support and take care of the child. A mother may have to be on welfare because they can’t survive and make it because the other parent is not there to provide and help. Therefore, it costs for the states to help that child and help that family out. So, they’re looking for some reimbursement.” Despite this understanding, fathers also expressed frustration when custodial parents

reported not receiving any or full child support payments: “I’ll ask [child support], ‘Did y’all get this money?’ because [the custodial parent] is still asking me for money, and I’m like, ‘Well shoot, they just took like \$200 or \$300 something dollars from me, what did you get?’ ‘Well, I only got a check here for \$34 or something,’ I’m like, ‘What?’”

Most fathers described extreme financial hardship from their child support obligation. One father stated, “Child support was just taking everything to where I couldn’t even survive and I was doing 18-hour days. I’d work one job in the morning, get off, be off for two hours, go to the next job, wasn’t off until 4:00 a.m., then be off for a couple hours to go back to the first job.” Other fathers described that paying child support depends on being employed, but when they get behind on child support, some of the enforcement mechanisms, such as driver’s license suspension, makes it challenging to find work.

In a father’s words

“I understand that every man who ... brings about a child, they’re supposed to take care of their responsibility. But if a male is incarcerated and the child support doesn’t stop, which it should...because the more time you do, the further back you get in arrears. Then when you come out, if you go to these people and say, ‘Hey, I just got released. I’m x amount of dollars in arrears. I can only pay you \$20, \$25 a week to try to help on this,’ they’re going to say no. They’re going to lock you back up if you’re too far in arrears. But this money is still calculating on. So instead of locking them up, give them a job. Let them know, ‘Okay, we know that you’ve got to have money to live off of. You owe us this amount of money so we’re not going to take all of your check, we’re going to take 30%,’ which leaves them 70% to live off of to get back and forth to work and to eat and pay bills. Don’t take all the money and then when the guy gets their check they got \$10, \$15 to last them for another two weeks.... Yeah, and they suspend men’s driver’s licenses so that they can’t even drive back and forth to work. Well, you’re not giving them enough money to get a bus pass. It’s \$3 to ride a bus here in St. Louis one way....Yeah. So you’re not helping the fathers that’s really wanting to try to catch up on this child support, you’re hurting them by taking all their money out of their checks and then they decide, ‘Well, hell, I’m going to work for nothing. I can’t even buy a pack of cigarettes. I can’t buy a pack of ramen noodles.’ They don’t want to work anymore so then they go to the streets again.”

In contrast, some fathers' perspectives of the child support system were divided between understanding the responsibility that they have to financially support the children and frustration with the economic struggles that they feel are caused by child support obligations (see callout box). The experiences of these fathers are not uncommon and have been well documented in literature regarding fathers' perceptions of the child support program (Achatz and MacAllum 1994; Waller and Plotnick 2001; Martinson and Nightingale 2008; Turner and Waller 2016).

LONG-TERM IMPACTS ON EARNINGS AND EMPLOYMENT

The long-term well-being of children is of keen interest. Thus, assessing PACT RF programs' long-term impacts on fathers' financial support for their children would be a valuable contribution to our understanding of program effects. Unfortunately, we are unable to measure fathers' financial support directly beyond the one-year follow-up period covered by the study follow-up survey. However, we can indirectly assess longer-term ability to pay through administrative records on employment and earnings. In this section, we address the research question "What were the impacts on fathers' longer term ability to provide support?" using these administrative records data.

Methods for assessing long-term ability to provide financial support

We focus on two outcomes available in the administrative records: steady employment and average monthly earnings. Versions of these measures that relate to a one-year follow-up period after study enrollment were part of the analysis used to assess program effectiveness in the main report, as shown in Table 2. These records are available for a three-year follow-up period for sample members who enrolled in the study in the early part of the enrollment period. We estimated impacts on these outcomes using the same methods used with other outcomes in the impact analysis.

Increased steady employment could be associated with more financial support if the continuous stream of earnings allows for more reliable formal, informal, and noncash support. Increased earnings would be directly related to more retained formal child support payments. They could also be related to more voluntary formal, informal, and noncash support resulting through increased ability to contribute. Consistent with these expectations, when we examined fathers' outcomes at the one-year follow-up as part of the main impact analysis, we found fathers' employment outcomes such as employment stability and average monthly earnings to be positively and significantly correlated with the amount of average financial support they provided.¹²

Notably all employment in these data represents formal employment from which formal child support payments could be retained by relevant child support agencies. However, the data do not include earnings from work

that is not covered by Unemployment Insurance, such as self-employment, informal employment, and employment in certain sectors. Survey-reported earnings does include these types of earnings, but is not available beyond the one-year follow-up.

What were the impacts on fathers' longer term ability to provide support?

Fathers in the program group worked 5.2 consecutive quarters, on average, compared with 4.7 quarters for fathers in the control group (Table 13), a difference that is statistically significant.

Table 13. Impacts of RF programs in PACT on fathers' labor market success across three years

Outcome	Program group	Control group	Impact
Long-term employment stability			
Number of quarters of longest employment spell			
During the three years after study enrollment (range: 0 to 12)	5.2	4.7	0.5**
During the first year after study enrollment (range: 0 to 4)	2.0	1.8	0.2*
During the second year after study enrollment (range: 0 to 4)	2.0	1.8	0.2*
During the third year after study enrollment (range: 0 to 4)	1.9	1.8	0.1
Long-term earnings			
Average monthly earnings during the three years after study enrollment (\$)			
During the three years after study enrollment	669	603	65
During the first year after study enrollment	555	502	52
During the second year after study enrollment	704	635	68
During the third year after study enrollment	748	673	75
Sample size	769	768	

Source: National Directory of New Hires

Notes: Results are based on administrative records for all respondents with at least three years of administrative data. Results for the first year after study enrollment differ slightly from those presented in Avellar et al. (2018) because those results pertain to the larger sample of all respondents with at least one year of administrative data.

***/**/* Impact estimates are statistically significant at the .01/.05/.10, two-tailed test.

The effect on employment stability meant that about one of every two fathers in the program group worked up to one consecutive quarter longer than those in the control group during the three years after study enrollment. The positive findings for continuous employment for the three-year follow-up are consistent with the positive findings for the one-year follow-up period reported in the main impact study, which were also statistically significant (Avellar et al. 2018). The impact during the second year after study enrollment was similar to the first-year

impact and also statistically significant at the .10 level. The impact during the third year after study enrollment was not statistically significant.

We did not find statistically significant impacts on earnings in the third year after study enrollment (Table 13). The lack of a significant impact on earnings for the three-year follow-up is consistent with findings for the one-year follow-up period reported in the main impact study (Avellar et al. 2018). Impacts on earnings for the second and third years after study enrollment were also not statistically significant.

CONCLUSION

Findings presented in this report shed light on how low-income fathers interested in RF programs perceive and provide financial support for their children. It complements earlier findings from PACT RF reports by combining findings from qualitative and quantitative analyses, documenting the patterns of support for fathers in the study, examining fathers with a child support order and other subgroups relevant to child support policy, and highlighting findings from a broader range of outcomes related to financial support.

Discussion of findings

Fathers interested in RF programs provide financial support for their children in many ways, and their reasons for providing different types of financial support are complex. We found that most fathers provided support in a variety of ways. During the year after study enrollment, it was common for PACT RF fathers to provide more than one type of support, such as formal child support payments and noncash support (Table 5). In in-person interviews, fathers described a complicated set of factors that led to decisions about how they support their children. These factors include access to children, child well-being, co-parenting relationship with the mothers of their children, compliance with child support responsibilities, and ability to provide support given their income. Fathers cited different advantages for different types of support. Some felt that informal financial support more directly benefited their children because, unlike formal child support, none of those funds were redirected to the state. Some fathers felt noncash support offered opportunities to positively interact with their children and directly meet their children's needs. Fathers' attitudes toward formal support were complicated. A few fathers recognized the ease and benefits to their children of automatic wage withholding for child support payments. However, many fathers felt that the amounts of child support orders left very little for them to support themselves, that the system could be punitive, and that complying with the orders did not help them secure access to their children. These potentially competing interests could be relevant to RF programs as they develop approaches to help fathers support their children financially.

Fathers with greater ability to pay were more likely to provide any type of support. Fathers who provided support during the follow-up period were more likely to have recent work histories at the time of

study enrollment and had higher earnings (Table 6). This is consistent with qualitative findings on fathers' strong interest in providing for their children in that fathers with the ability to provide support do so. It is also consistent with fathers' reports of the relatively large burden that paying child support represented for them.

Financial support for children and contact with children are closely linked. For all types of support, fathers who had contact with at least one child at baseline were more likely to provide support to their children during the follow-up period. For informal and noncash support, but not formal support, fathers who resided with one of their children or had contact with a greater percentage of their children at baseline were more likely to provide support to their children during the follow-up period than fathers who did not (Table 7). These findings are supported by qualitative findings that fathers report that providing support, particularly informal and noncash support, can lead to opportunities for contact with their children and better relationships with the mothers of their children. The findings are also consistent with existing research showing the strong relationship between providing support and contact with their children (Huang 2009; Nepomnyaschy 2007; Peters et al. 2004).

The PACT RF programs had several favorable impacts for fathers with a child support order, improving their involvement with their children and increasing their knowledge of the child support system, although they did not increase the amount of support provided (Table 11). Baseline analysis found important differences between fathers with a child support order at the time of study enrollment and those without—for example, they had less contact with their children and poorer relationships with the mothers of their children.

Impact analysis also found that the PACT RF programs had positive impacts on four outcomes related to knowledge of child support among fathers with a child support order. However, they did not improve fathers' perceived fairness of the child support system, nor did they increase the amount of support provided. These quantitative findings are consistent with qualitative findings that many fathers with child support orders find it difficult to make ends meet and might not have the resources to contribute more support.

Although the PACT RF programs were not successful in increasing financial support for children overall, they were successful in increasing support among fathers who did not have a child support order at baseline.

The PACT RF programs did not affect any type of financial support for children overall or among fathers who had a child support order at baseline. However, the programs increased informal financial support among those who did not have a child support order at baseline and there is some evidence that they improved total financial support from those fathers. These findings suggest that the programs' message of the importance of financially supporting children may have motivated fathers without a child support order to increase the amount of informal support they provided. The fact that fathers with a child support order did not pay more either formally or informally could be consistent with these fathers already providing as much financial support as they could.

Intensive approaches to providing content related to child support might be necessary to affect knowledge of child support and other related outcomes.

PACT RF programs took different approaches to supporting fathers' interactions with child support agencies. The grantee with the most comprehensive approach, the FATHER Project at Goodwill-Easter Seals, had child support agency staff co-located at the RF program locations where they spoke to fathers about how to navigate the child support system and participated in the program's case review meetings. Although the Fathers' Support Center did not have child support staff co-located at its program, its staff were able to advocate for their participants with the child support system. Child support staff spoke to fathers about the child support program as part of their regular services and developed other services related to child support. Connections to Success operated in two states and had a strong relationship with the local child support agency in one state but not the other. The grantee with the least comprehensive approach, Urban Ventures, could advocate for fathers on child support issues but did not directly involve the local child support agency. We found the FATHER Project at Goodwill-Easter Seals and Fathers' Support Center improved fathers' knowledge of child support while Urban Ventures and Connections to Success did not (Table 12). That impacts emerged for two grantees, including the one with the most comprehensive approach, suggests that RF programs that coordinate with the local child support agency and provide child support-related

services can improve fathers' knowledge of child support. That impacts did not emerge for the grantee with the least intensive approach suggests that a comprehensive approach to child support education is required to improve fathers' child support knowledge.

However, none of the subgroup analyses find a significant impact on fathers' perceived fairness of the child support system (Table 12). This finding is supported by the qualitative data, which indicate that fathers' attitudes toward the child support system are complicated. Fathers place a high value on supporting their children emotionally and financially but face many barriers to doing so. Fathers recognize that the child support system can play an important role in ensuring that children receive child support. However, fathers find the child support system to be inflexible when they are unable to pay their support, which pushes them away from engaging with the system and providing formal support to their children. Moreover, some fathers indicated that it would have been helpful if PACT programs had done more to help them gain legal access to their children and modify child support orders. Most RF programs are unlikely to have direct control over the extent to which amounts of child support orders align with fathers' economic circumstances or how they stipulate access to children. However, partnering with child support programs and family courts can help RF programs address these issues.

Closing thoughts

Findings presented here underscore the complexity of efforts to increase fathers' financial support for their children. Fathers interested in RF programs report wanting to provide support for their children, and quantitative findings indicate that those with greater ability to pay were more likely to do so. However, the types of support fathers provide are varied, as are the motivations for providing different types of support.

Results from the PACT evaluation suggest that to increase fathers' financial support for their children, RF programs might need to demonstrate changes for a range of outcomes, such as improving fathers' economic outcomes, increasing involvement with children, or improving attitudes toward parenting and child support. The PACT RF programs were able to improve some of these outcomes for some fathers. Among fathers with a child support order at baseline, PACT RF programs increased involvement with children and

knowledge of the child support system, but they did not increase the amount of support provided. A missing link for generating impacts on support might be impacts on earnings and economic stability, particularly given the positive relationship found here between ability to pay and likelihood of providing support. Future studies of RF programs with more intensive economic stability services should investigate this possibility.

REFERENCES

- Achatz, M. and C.A. MacAllum. "Young unwed fathers: Report from the field." Public/Private Ventures, Philadelphia, PA, 1994.
- ACF (Administration for Children and Families). "New Pathways for Fathers and Families." HHS-2015-ACF-OFA-FK-0993, 2015. Available at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ofa/programs/healthy-marriage/responsible-fatherhood>. Accessed February 28, 2018.
- ACF. "The Child Support Program is A Good Investment." December 2016. Available at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/programs/css/sbtn_csp_is_a_good_investment.pdf. Accessed February 18, 2020.
- Adamsons K, and S. Johnson. "An updated and expanded meta-analysis of nonresident fathering and child well-being." *Journal of Family Psychology*, vol., 27, 2013, pp. 589–599.
- Avellar, Sarah, Reginald Covington, Quinn Moore, Ankita Patnaik, and April Wu. "Parents and Children Together: Effects of Four Responsible Fatherhood Programs for Low-Income Fathers." OPRE Report Number 2018-50. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2018.
- Avellar, Sarah, Reginald Covington, Quinn Moore, Ankita Patnaik, and April Wu. "Effects of Four Responsible Fatherhood Programs for Low-Income Fathers: Evidence from the Parents and Children Together Evaluation." OPRE Report Number 2019-05. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2019.
- Bell, S.H., L.L. Orr, J.D. Blomquist, and G.G. Cain. "Methods Used to Evaluate Employment and Training Programs in the Past." In *Program Applicants as a Comparison Group in Evaluating Training Programs: Theory and a Test*. Kalamazoo, MI: W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, 1995, pp. 1-19.
- Cancian, M., Yang, M., & Slack, K. "The Effect of Additional Child Support Income on the Risk of Child Maltreatment." *Social Service Review*, vol. 87, no. 3, 2013, pp. 417-437.
- Cancian, M., Heinrich, C., & Chung, Y. "Discouraging Disadvantaged Fathers' Employment: An Unintended Consequence of Policies Designed to Support Families." *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, vol. 32, no. 4, 2013, pp. 758–784

Carlson, M.J., A.G. VanOrman, and K.J. Turner. "Fathers' investments of money and time across residential contexts." *Journal of Marriage and Family*, vol. 79, no. 1, 2017, pp. 10-23.

Cherlin, Andrew J. "Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage." Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992.

Clary, Elizabeth, Pamela Holcomb, Robin Dion, and Kathryn Edin. "Providing Financial Support for Children: Views and Experiences of Low-Income Fathers in the PACT Evaluation." OPRE Report Number 2017-14. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2017.

Fagan, J., and M. Barnett. "The relationship between maternal gatekeeping, paternal competence, mothers' attitudes about the father role, and father involvement." *Journal of Family Issues*, vol. 24, no. 8, 2003, pp. 1020-1043.

Holcomb, Pamela, Kathryn Edin, Jeffrey Max, Alford Young, Jr., Angela Valdovinos D'Angelo, Daniel Friend, Elizabeth Clary, and Waldo E. Johnson, Jr. "In Their Own Voices: The Hopes and Struggles of Responsible Fatherhood Program Participants in the Parents and Children Together Evaluation." OPRE Report Number 2015-67. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2015.

Huang, C. "Mothers' reports of nonresident fathers' involvement with their children: Revisiting the relationship between child support and payment visitation." *Family Relations*, vol. 58, no. 1, 2009, pp. 54-64.

King, Valarie, and Juliana Sobolewski. "Nonresident Fathers' Contributions to Adolescent Well-Being." *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, vol. 68, 2006, pp. 537-557.

Knox, V. "The Effects of Child Support Payments on Developmental Outcomes for Elementary School-Age Children." *The Journal of Human Resources*, vol. 31, no. 4, 1996, pp. 816-840.

Marsiglio, W., P. Amato, R.D. Day, and M.E. Lamb. "Scholarship on fatherhood in the 1990s and beyond." *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, vol. 62, 2000, pp. 1173-1191.

Martinson, K., and D. Nightingale. "Ten key findings from Responsible Fatherhood initiatives." Washington, DC: The Urban Institute, 2008.

Meyer, D.R., Y. Ha, and M.C. Hu. "Do high child support orders discourage child support payments?" *Social Service Review*, vol. 82, no.1, 2008, pp. 93-118.

Mincy, R.B., D.P. Miller, and E. De la Cruz Toledo. "Child support compliance during economic downturns." *Children and youth services review*, vol. 65, 2016, pp. 127-139.

Mincy, R.B., and E.J. Sorensen. "Deadbeats and turnips in child support reform." *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management: The Journal of the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management*, vol. 17, no. 1, 1998, pp. 44-51.

Nepomnyaschy, L. "Child support and father-child contact: Testing reciprocal pathways." *Demography*, vol. 44, no. 1, 2007, pp. 93-112.

Peters, H. E., Argys, L. M., Howard, H. W., & Butler, J. S. "Legislating love: The effect of child support and welfare policies on father-child contact." *Review of Economics of the Household*, vol. 2, 2004, pp. 255-274.

Puhlman, D.J., and K. Pasley. "Rethinking maternal gatekeeping." *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, vol. 5, no. 3, 2013, pp. 176-193.

Sorensen, E. "Child Support Plays an Increasingly Important Role for Poor Custodial Families." Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 2010.

Takayesu, M. "How do child support order amounts affect payments and compliance." Prepared by the Research Unit of the Orange County Department of Child Support Services, 2011.

Turner, K.J., and M.R. Waller. "Indebted relationships: Child support arrears and nonresident fathers' involvement with children." *Journal of Marriage and Family*, vol. 79, no. 1, 2016, pp. 24-43.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Child Support Enforcement. "Action Transmittal 16-06, Final Rule: Flexibility Efficiency and Modernization in Child Support Enforcement Programs." 2016.

Waller, M.R., and R. Plotnick. "Effective child support policy for low-income families: Evidence from street level research." *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management: The Journal of the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management*, vol. 20, no. 1, 2001, pp. 89-110.

Zaveri, Heather, Scott Baumgartner, Robin Dion, and Liz Clary. "Parents and Children Together: Design and Implementation of Responsible Fatherhood Programs." OPRE Report Number 2015-76. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2015.

APPENDIX A

METHODOLOGY FOR PACT QUALITATIVE STUDY

The PACT qualitative study consisted with a sample of fathers who voluntarily enrolled in one of the four RF programs participating in PACT. The same fathers were asked to participate in subsequent interviews at approximately one-year intervals over a three-year period, beginning in October 2013. For the first round of interviews, the study team identified fathers using a stratified random sampling approach that selected fathers who had participated in each of the programs (for more information about methods used in Round 1, see Holcomb et al. 2015). Round 1 included 87 low-income, predominantly African American fathers. For Round 2, we attempted to reach all 87 fathers again, ultimately reaching and interviewing 59 of them. An analysis of the background characteristics of the 59 fathers in Round 2 shows they were similar to those of the full sample of fathers interviewed in Round 1. To build and enhance rapport, we matched each father in Round 2 with the same interviewer who conducted the Round 1 interview whenever possible.

Each interview lasted 1.5 to 2 hours. A qualitative researcher who was trained to take a conversational approach and encourage fathers to convey their views and experiences in their own words conducted each interview. A predefined set of topics guided the interviews in each round. Round 1 topics focused on fathers' childhoods, relationships with their children and the mothers of their children, views on fathering, employment experiences, financial and non-financial support of children, and participation in the fatherhood programs. Round 2 interviews captured updates on the information collected from Round 1 and collected more detailed information about the amount and type of informal support they provided for their children, their views of the child support system, efforts to modify their child support orders, and their perspectives on paying through the system versus informally contributing money to mothers or buying items directly for their children. Round 3 topics did not specifically ask about financial and non-financial support of children in the third round of data collection and thus do not contribute to the findings of this report.

After each round of interviews, researchers transcribed the conversations and coded the content to create a database of fathers' experiences and views. The resulting databases allow the research team to systematically analyze topics of interest and identify key themes.

Data collected through the qualitative study of the PACT RF programs informed a report documenting the experiences of participating fathers (Holcomb et al. 2015). It also resulted in a report on fathers' views of providing financial support for their children, particularly through their engagement in the child support program (Clary et al. 2017).

APPENDIX B

ESTIMATED IMPACTS FOR SUBGROUPS

Table B.1. Impacts of PACT RF programs on outcomes related to financial support, by whether fathers had at least one child support order at baseline

Outcome	Had a child support order			No child support order		
	Program group	Control group	Impact	Program group	Control group	Impact
Father's involvement						
In-person contact with children (percentage)	71.9	68.5	3.4**†	73.8	75.2	-1.5
Any contact with children (percentage)	83.2	81.4	1.9	85.6	84.6	1.0
Had contact with focal child at least a few times a week (percentage)	78.9	72.5	6.4***†	78.8	79.7	-0.9
Frequency of in-person contact with focal child (range: 1–5)	2.7	2.5	0.2***†	2.8	2.8	0.0
Age-appropriate activities with focal child (range: 1–4)	2.0	1.8	0.2***†	2.0	2.0	0.0
Father's support for children						
Average monthly financial support per child (\$)	304	292	12	294	260	34*
Average monthly formal child support per child (\$)	114	113	0	34	24	10
Average monthly informal child support per child (\$)	36	36	0 ††	79	52	27***
Average monthly noncash support per child (\$)	150	141	10	174	181	-7
Knowledge of and attitudes about child support						
Knowledge of the child support system (range: 0–4)	3.0	2.9	0.1**	3.0	2.9	0.1
Knows how to request change in child support order (percentage)	58.5	51.6	6.9***††	69.9	32.9	37.0**
Knows a contact person at the child support agency (percentage)	41.6	35.9	5.7**	44.0	30.2	13.9
Disagrees that child support system is unfair to dads (percentage)	27.6	28.0	-0.4	37.7	37.3	0.3
Agrees that he has a better understanding of child support system (percentage)	70.1	59.9	10.2***	68.5	63.1	5.5*
Sample size						
All fathers	1,167	1,141		732	680	
Fathers of a focal child	858	869		447	459	

Source: PACT baseline and 12-month follow-up surveys, conducted by Mathematica.

Note: Sample sizes accounting for survey design range from 631 to 1,503 depending on the measure.

***/**/* Impact estimates are statistically significant at the .01/.05/.10, two-tailed test.

†††/††/† Statistically significant differences among the subgroup impact estimates at the .01/.05/.10 level.

Table B.2. Impacts of PACT RF programs on outcomes related to financial support, by site

Outcome	Urban Venture			Fathers' Support Center		
	Program group	Control group	Impact	Program group	Control group	Impact
Father's involvement						
In-person contact with children (percentage)	72.1	68.3	3.8	76.1	73.5	2.6
Any contact with children (percentage)	84.7	81.3	3.4	85.7	83.3	2.4
Had contact with focal child at least a few times a week (percentage)	81.5	72.6	8.9***	80.7	77.0	3.8
Frequency of in-person contact with focal child (range: 1–5)	2.8	2.6	0.2*	2.8	2.7	0.1
Age-appropriate activities with focal child (range: 1–4)	2.0	1.8	0.2**	2.1	1.9	0.2***
Father's support for children						
Average monthly financial support per child (\$)	298.9	275.9	23.0	271.7	248.6	23.1
Average monthly formal child support per child (\$)	69.6	61.3	8.2	89.8	79.2	10.7
Average monthly informal child support per child (\$)	54.6	54.7	-0.1	36.7	33.8	2.9
Average monthly noncash support per child (\$)	165.5	159.1	6.4	142.6	133.3	9.4
Knowledge of and attitudes about child support						
Knowledge of the child support system (range: 0–4)	3.0	3.0	0.1††	3.0	2.8	0.3***
Knows how to request change in child support order (percentage)	63.8	60.9	2.9	53.0	41.8	11.2
Knows a contact person at the child support agency (percentage)	48.1	47.4	0.7	25.8	21.9	3.9
Disagrees that child support system is unfair to dads (percentage)	41.0	39.7	1.2	25.5	25.0	0.5
Agrees that he has a better understanding of child support system (percentage)	66.5	67.9	-1.5†††	70.9	60.4	10.5***
Sample size						
All fathers	569	54		764	739	
Fathers of a focal child	311	320		577	569	

Source: PACT baseline and 12-month follow-up surveys, conducted by Mathematica.

Note: Sample sizes accounting for survey design vary depending on the measure.

***/**/* Impact estimates are statistically significant at the .01/.05/.10, two-tailed test.

Table B.3. Impacts of PACT RF programs on outcomes related to financial support, by site

Outcome	Connections to Success			FATHER Project at Goodwill–Easter Seals		
	Program group	Control group	Impact	Program group	Control group	Impact
Father's involvement						
In-person contact with children (percentage)	70.9	70.9	0.0	73.6	73.5	0.0
Any contact with children (percentage)	83.6	82.1	1.5	84.7	84.7	84.7
Had contact with focal child at least a few times a week (percentage)	79.8	72.8	6.9	78.1	77.9	0.3
Frequency of in-person contact with focal child (range: 1–5)	2.8	2.6	0.2	2.8	2.7	0.1
Age-appropriate activities with focal child (range: 1–4)	2.0	1.9	0.1	2.0	1.9	0.1
Father's support for children						
Average monthly financial support per child (\$)	269.6	271.8	-2.2	354.4	326.6	27.8
Average monthly formal child support per child (\$)	64.7	69.2	-4.5	111.0	112.7	-1.7
Average monthly informal child support per child (\$)	52.1	39.2	12.9	59.5	43.1	16.4*
Average monthly noncash support per child (\$)	149.0	159.6	-10.6	181.0	164.4	16.7
Knowledge of and attitudes about child support						
Knowledge of the child support system (range: 0–4)	2.9	2.9	0.0††	3.0	2.8	0.1**
Knows how to request change in child support order (percentage)	48.0	47.7	0.3	65.3	53.2	12.1***
Knows a contact person at the child support agency (percentage)	32.3	24.9	7.4	59.2	47.9	11.3**
Disagrees that child support system is unfair to dads (percentage)	36.8	40.4	-3.6	25.9	24.6	1.4
Agrees that he has a better understanding of child support system (percentage)	65.5	59.7	5.8†††	74.4	58.3	16.0***
Sample size						
All fathers	275	259		405	401	
Fathers of a focal child	159	169		309	328	

Source: PACT baseline and 12-month follow-up surveys, conducted by Mathematica.

Note: Sample sizes accounting for survey design vary depending on the measure.

***/**/† Impact estimates are statistically significant at the .01/.05/.10, two-tailed test.

Table B.4. Impacts of PACT RF programs on outcomes related to financial support, by implementation approach

Outcome	Integrated cohort			Open-entry workshop		
	Program group	Control group	Impact	Program group	Control group	Impact
Father's involvement						
In-person contact with children (percentage)	73.5	72.2	1.3	72.8	70.9	1.9
Any contact with children (percentage)	84.7	82.7	2.0	84.7	82.2	2.5*
Had contact with focal child at least a few times a week (percentage)	80.3	74.9	5.3**	79.8	75.2	4.6*
Frequency of in-person contact with focal child (range: 1–5)	2.8	2.7	0.1	2.8	2.6	0.1*
Age-appropriate activities with focal child (range: 1–4)	2.0	1.9	0.1**	2.0	1.8	0.1***
Father's support for children						
Average monthly financial support per child (\$)	270.6	260.2	10.4	326.7	301.3	25.4
Average monthly formal child support per child (\$)	77.3	74.2	3.1	90.3	87.0	3.3
Average monthly informal child support per child (\$)	44.4	36.5	7.9	57.1	48.9	8.2
Average monthly noncash support per child (\$)	145.8	146.4	-0.6	173.3	161.7	11.5
Knowledge of and attitudes about child support						
Knowledge of the child support system (range: 0–4)	3.0	2.8	0.1***	3.0	2.9	0.1**
Knows how to request change in child support order (percentage)	50.5	44.8	5.7*	64.5	57.0	7.5**
Knows a contact person at the child support agency (percentage)	29.1	23.4	5.7*	53.6	47.7	6.0*
Disagrees that child support system is unfair to dads (percentage)	31.1	32.7	-1.6	33.5	32.2	1.3
Agrees that he has a better understanding of child support system (percentage)	68.2	60.0	8.2***	70.4	63.1	7.3***
Sample size						
All fathers	1,039	998		974	945	
Fathers of a focal child	736	738		620	648	

Source: PACT baseline and 12-month follow-up surveys, conducted by Mathematica.

Note: Sample sizes accounting for survey design range from 1268 to 2037 depending on the measure.

***/**/* Impact estimates are statistically significant at the .01/.05/.10, two-tailed test.

†††/††/† Statistically significant differences among the subgroup impact estimates at the .01/.05/.10 level.

Table B.5. Impacts of PACT RF programs on outcomes related to financial support, by whether fathers were likely to provide any support at follow-up

Outcome	Likely to provide any support			Not likely to provide any support		
	Program group	Control group	Impact	Program group	Control group	Impact
Father's involvement						
In-person contact with children (percentage)	76.0	74.5	1.5	52.6	50.7	1.9
Any contact with children (percentage)	86.3	84.6	1.7	73.8	67.1	6.7
Had contact with focal child at least a few times a week (percentage)	79.2	75.5	3.7**†	86.1	60.0	26.1**
Frequency of in-person contact with focal child (range: 1–5)	2.8	2.7	0.1†	2.8	2.1	0.7**
Age-appropriate activities with focal child (range: 1–4)	2.0	1.9	0.1***†††	2.1	1.4	0.7***
Father's support for children						
Average monthly financial support per child (\$)	312.9	301.5	11.4	187.2	167.7	19.4
Average monthly formal child support per child (\$)	87.5	85.7	1.8	52.7	53.3	-0.6
Average monthly informal child support per child (\$)	53.4	46.9	6.5	31.8	13.5	18.3
Average monthly noncash support per child (\$)	168.1	164.7	3.4	98.6	100.3	-1.7
Knowledge of and attitudes about child support						
Knowledge of the child support system (range: 0–4)	3.0	2.8	0.1***	3.0	3.0	0.0
Knows how to request change in child support order (percentage)	58.6	50.5	8.1***	47.2	55.1	-7.9
Knows a contact person at the child support agency (percentage)	41.2	35.9	5.3**	46.1	35.1	11.0
Disagrees that child support system is unfair to dads (percentage)	28.7	28.0	0.8	37.9	38.5	-0.6
Agrees that he has a better understanding of child support system (percentage)	68.9	59.7	9.1***†	64.7	65.8	-1.1
Sample size						
All fathers	1,489	1,457		234	216	
Fathers of a focal child	1,225	1,254		63	68	

Source: PACT baseline and 12-month follow-up surveys, conducted by Mathematica.

Note: Sample sizes accounting for survey design range from 130 to 2,479 depending on the measure.

***/**/* Impact estimates are statistically significant at the .01/.05/.10, two-tailed test.

†††/†††/† Statistically significant differences among the subgroup impact estimates at the .01/.05/.10 level.

Table B.6. Impacts of PACT RF programs on outcomes related to financial support, by likelihood of providing above the median amount of support at follow-up

Outcome	Not likely to provide more than median amount of support			Likely to provide more than median amount of support		
	Program group	Control group	Impact	Program group	Control group	Impact
Father's involvement						
In-person contact with children (percentage)	65.4	63.6	1.8	79.9	78.1	1.8
Any contact with children (percentage)	78.7	77.9	0.8	89.6	86.8	2.8**
Had contact with focal child at least a few times a week (percentage)	75.0	66.4	8.6***†	82.4	81.1	1.3
Frequency of in-person contact with focal child (range: 1–5)	2.6	2.4	0.2**	2.9	2.8	0.1
Age-appropriate activities with focal child (range: 1–4)	1.9	1.7	0.2**	2.1	2.0	0.1**
Father's support for children						
Average monthly financial support per child (\$)	217.8	187.3	30.5**	372.7	372.1	0.7
Average monthly formal child support per child (\$)	56.1	51.1	5.0	108.9	108.8	0.1
Average monthly informal child support per child (\$)	36.3	24.9	11.4**	63.7	60.2	3.5
Average monthly noncash support per child (\$)	120.5	109.3	11.2	195.6	198.8	-3.2
Knowledge of and attitudes about child support						
Knowledge of the child support system (range: 0–4)	3.0	2.8	0.1**	3.0	2.9	0.1
Knows how to request change in child support order (percentage)	56.4	48.1	8.3**	58.9	52.6	6.3
Knows a contact person at the child support agency (percentage)	43.6	33.2	10.4***††	38.9	38.2	0.7
Disagrees that child support system is unfair to dads (percentage)	32.5	32.5	0.0	28.4	27.2	1.2
Agrees that he has a better understanding of child support system (percentage)	66.9	59.3	7.6***	69.2	62.5	6.7***
Sample size						
All fathers	847	813		876	860	
Fathers of a focal child	564	578		732	749	

Source: PACT baseline and 12-month follow-up surveys, conducted by Mathematica.

Note: Sample sizes accounting for survey design range from 1175 to 1736 depending on the measure.

***/**/* Impact estimates are statistically significant at the .01/.05/.10, two-tailed test.

†††/†††/† Statistically significant differences among the subgroup impact estimates at the .01/.05/.10 level.

Table B.7. Impacts of PACT RF programs on outcomes related to financial support, by father's recent work experience

Outcome	Recent work experience			No recent work experience		
	Program group	Control group	Impact	Program group	Control group	Impact
Father's involvement						
In-person contact with children (percentage)	75.6	73.0	2.5*	67.3	67.4	-0.1
Any contact with children (percentage)	86.5	83.7	2.9**	79.8	79.6	0.2
Had contact with focal child at least a few times a week (percentage)	81.3	76.2	5.1***	75.7	72.5	3.2
Frequency of in-person contact with focal child (range: 1–5)	2.9	2.7	0.1**	2.6	2.5	0.1
Age-appropriate activities with focal child (range: 1–4)	2.0	1.9	0.1**	1.9	1.7	0.2***
Father's support for children						
Average monthly financial support per child (\$)	322.0	302.2	19.8	239.7	221.5	18.2
Average monthly formal child support per child (\$)	94.7	92.1	2.6	52.0	50.1	1.9
Average monthly informal child support per child (\$)	53.0	46.9	6.1	44.0	32.4	11.6
Average monthly noncash support per child (\$)	169.7	158.0	11.7	138.4	140.6	-2.2
Knowledge of and attitudes about child support						
Knowledge of the child support system (range: 0–4)	3.0	2.8	0.1***	3.0	2.9	0.1
Knows how to request change in child support order (percentage)	59.2	51.6	7.6***	51.1	49.6	1.4
Knows a contact person at the child support agency (percentage)	42.3	36.8	5.5**	39.4	32.7	6.7
Disagrees that child support system is unfair to dads (percentage)	30.8	28.8	1.9	36.7	40.3	-3.6
Agrees that he has a better understanding of child support system (percentage)	70.9	61.6	9.3***	65.5	62.2	3.3
Sample size						
All fathers	1,431	1,401		582	542	
Fathers of a focal child	1,024	1,055		332	331	

Source: PACT baseline and 12-month follow-up surveys, conducted by Mathematica.

Note: Sample sizes accounting for survey design range from 557 to 2,832 depending on the measure.

***/**/* Impact estimates are statistically significant at the .01/.05/.10, two-tailed test.

†††/††/† Statistically significant differences among the subgroup impact estimates at the .01/.05/.10 level.

Table B.8. Impacts of PACT RF programs on outcomes related to financial support, by fathers' educational attainment

Outcome	High school or more			No high school diploma or GED		
	Program group	Control group	Impact	Program group	Control group	Impact
Father's involvement						
In-person contact with children (percentage)	71.7	71.2	0.5	76.3	72.7	3.6*
Any contact with children (percentage)	84.0	82.3	1.6	86.2	83.2	3.0*
Had contact with focal child at least a few times a week (percentage)	77.9	74.4	3.5	84.2	77.0	7.2**
Frequency of in-person contact with focal child (range: 1–5)	2.7	2.6	0.1	2.9	2.7	0.2*
Age-appropriate activities with focal child (range: 1–4)	2.0	1.9	0.1**	2.1	1.9	0.2***
Father's support for children						
Average monthly financial support per child (\$)	303.1	289.7	13.5	283.5	270.9	12.6
Average monthly formal child support per child (\$)	87.4	82.9	4.4	70.3	81.7	-11.5
Average monthly informal child support per child (\$)	50.2	42.1	8.0	49.1	46.2	2.9
Average monthly noncash support per child (\$)	159.2	161.3	-2.2	161.2	140.0	21.2*
Knowledge of and attitudes about child support						
Knowledge of the child support system (range: 0–4)	3.0	2.9	0.1***	3.0	2.9	0.1
Knows how to request change in child support order (percentage)	59.4	54.0	5.5**	53.0	42.9	10.2**
Knows a contact person at the child support agency (percentage)	42.1	38.0	4.0 †	41.0	27.7	13.3***
Disagrees that child support system is unfair to dads (percentage)	31.3	31.5	-0.2	35.5	33.9	1.6
Agrees that he has a better understanding of child support system (percentage)	67.7	60.1	7.7***	73.8	65.0	8.8***
Sample size						
All fathers	1,378	1,359		635	584	
Fathers of a focal child	906	961		450	425	

Source: PACT baseline and 12-month follow-up surveys, conducted by Mathematica.

Note: Sample sizes accounting for survey design range from 713 to 2,737 depending on the measure.

***/**/* Impact estimates are statistically significant at the .01/.05/.10, two-tailed test.

†††/††/† Statistically significant differences among the subgroup impact estimates at the .01/.05/.10 level.

Table B.9. Impacts of PACT RF programs on outcomes related to financial support, by fathers' multipartner fertility status

Outcome	All of father's biological children are with one woman			Father has biological children with two or more women		
	Program group	Control group	Impact	Program group	Control group	Impact
Father's involvement						
In-person contact with children (percentage)	78.3	75.1	3.2*	67.5	67.5	0.0
Any contact with children (percentage)	87.2	85.0	2.2	82.2	79.5	2.7*
Had contact with focal child at least a few times a week (percentage)	82.7	77.2	5.5**	77.4	73.5	3.9
Frequency of in-person contact with focal child (range: 1–5)	3.0	2.8	0.2**	2.6	2.6	0.1
Age-appropriate activities with focal child (range: 1–4)	2.1	2.0	0.2***	1.9	1.8	0.1*
Father's support for children						
Average monthly financial support per child (\$)	333.3	305.4	27.9	259.4	257.1	2.4
Average monthly formal child support per child (\$)	87.1	82.9	4.1	79.5	79.1	0.4
Average monthly informal child support per child (\$)	58.9	44.1	14.9**	41.5	40.9	0.6
Average monthly noncash support per child (\$)	180.9	174.5	6.4	135.0	135.1	-0.1
Knowledge of and attitudes about child support						
Knowledge of the child support system (range: 0–4)	3.0	2.9	0.1**	3.0	2.8	0.1**
Knows how to request change in child support order (percentage)	56.3	48.8	7.6**	58.6	51.9	6.7**
Knows a contact person at the child support agency (percentage)	39.8	34.6	5.2	42.5	35.9	6.6**
Disagrees that child support system is unfair to dads (percentage)	34.6	35.3	-0.8	29.2	29.6	-0.4
Agrees that he has a better understanding of child support system (percentage)	68.5	62.9	5.5**	70.6	59.8	10.7***
Sample size						
All fathers	1,059	1,047		954	896	
Fathers of a focal child	621	660		735	726	

Source: PACT baseline and 12-month follow-up surveys, conducted by Mathematica.

Note: Sample sizes accounting for survey design range from 916 to 2,106 depending on the measure.

***/**/* Impact estimates are statistically significant at the .01/.05/.10, two-tailed test.

†††/†††/† Statistically significant differences among the subgroup impact estimates at the .01/.05/.10 level.

Table B.10. Impacts of PACT RF programs on outcomes related to financial support, by fathers' contact with his children

Outcome	Has contact with all children			Does not have contact with all children		
	Program group	Control group	Impact	Program group	Control group	Impact
Father's involvement						
In-person contact with children (percentage)	81.1	79.0	2.1	47.9	47.2	0.7
Any contact with children (percentage)	92.4	88.5	3.9***††	60.6	64.2	-3.6
Had contact with focal child at least a few times a week (percentage)	80.5	76.3	4.2**	76.7	67.4	9.2
Frequency of in-person contact with focal child (range: 1–5)	2.8	2.7	0.1	2.7	2.3	0.4**
Age-appropriate activities with focal child (range: 1–4)	2.0	1.9	0.1***	1.9	1.7	0.2*
Father's support for children						
Average monthly financial support per child (\$)	325.8	299.2	26.6***††	207.5	231.3	-23.8
Average monthly formal child support per child (\$)	86.7	80.2	6.4	76.7	87.3	-10.6
Average monthly informal child support per child (\$)	56.9	45.5	11.4***†	28.5	32.1	-3.6
Average monthly noncash support per child (\$)	176.8	170.3	6.5	100.7	109.8	-9.2
Knowledge of and attitudes about child support						
Knowledge of the child support system (range: 0–4)	3.0	2.9	0.1***	2.9	2.9	0.0
Knows how to request change in child support order (percentage)	58.9	50.8	8.1***	57.4	47.3	10.1**
Knows a contact person at the child support agency (percentage)	40.3	37.0	3.3	42.5	31.8	10.6**
Disagrees that child support system is unfair to dads (percentage)	30.3	31.2	-1.0	29.9	30.3	-0.3
Agrees that he has a better understanding of child support system (percentage)	68.7	62.2	6.4***	66.5	56.7	9.8***
Sample size						
All fathers	1,309	1,328		475	402	
Fathers of a focal child	1,113	1,167		243	219	

Source: PACT baseline and 12-month follow-up surveys, conducted by Mathematica.

Note: Sample sizes accounting for survey design range from 665 to 2,637 depending on the measure.

***/**/* Impact estimates are statistically significant at the .01/.05/.10, two-tailed test.

†††/††/† Statistically significant differences among the subgroup impact estimates at the .01/.05/.10 level.

Table B.11. Impacts of PACT RF programs on outcomes related to financial support, by fathers' quality of co-parenting with mothers

Outcome	Good co-parenting quality with mothers			Poor co-parenting quality with mothers		
	Program group	Control group	Impact	Program group	Control group	Impact
Father's involvement						
In-person contact with children (percentage)	81.0	80.5	0.5	62.9	61.3	1.7
Any contact with children (percentage)	92.0	89.1	3.0**	75.4	75.7	-0.3
Had contact with focal child at least a few times a week (percentage)	83.5	81.1	2.4	73.5	66.6	6.9**
Frequency of in-person contact with focal child (range: 1–5)	2.9	2.9	0.1	2.5	2.4	0.1
Age-appropriate activities with focal child (range: 1–4)	2.1	2.0	0.1	1.8	1.7	0.1**
Father's support for children						
Average monthly financial support per child (\$)	320.0	303.7	16.3	272.1	255.7	16.5
Average monthly formal child support per child (\$)	70.9	65.8	5.2	96.9	97.0	-0.1
Average monthly informal child support per child (\$)	69.8	57.7	12.1*	32.2	23.3	9.0*
Average monthly noncash support per child (\$)	173.3	179.5	-6.2	138.9	130.6	8.3
Knowledge of and attitudes about child support						
Knowledge of the child support system (range: 0–4)	3.1	2.9	0.2***	2.9	2.8	0.1
Knows how to request change in child support order (percentage)	61.3	52.1	9.2***	54.4	49.7	4.7
Knows a contact person at the child support agency (percentage)	42.5	40.1	2.4	39.4	32.3	7.1**
Disagrees that child support system is unfair to dads (percentage)	34.6	34.8	-0.1	29.0	28.5	0.5
Agrees that he has a better understanding of child support system (percentage)	71.8	63.1	8.8***	66.6	58.2	8.4***
Sample size						
All fathers	977	989		949	875	
Fathers of a focal child	783	826		561	552	

Source: PACT baseline and 12-month follow-up surveys, conducted by Mathematica.

Note: Sample sizes accounting for survey design range from 1,065 to 1,966 depending on the measure.

***/**/* Impact estimates are statistically significant at the .01/.05/.10, two-tailed test.

Table B.12. Impacts of PACT RF programs on outcomes related to financial support, by fathers' depression risk

Outcome	Not at risk for moderate or severe depression			At risk for moderate or severe depression		
	Program group	Control group	Impact	Program group	Control group	Impact
Father's involvement						
In-person contact with children (percentage)	74.1	73.5	0.6†	72.0	65.1	6.9**
Any contact with children (percentage)	85.6	83.2	2.3*	82.7	80.6	2.0
Had contact with focal child at least a few times a week (percentage)	80.4	76.6	3.8**	78.6	70.6	8.1*
Frequency of in-person contact with focal child (range: 1–5)	2.8	2.7	0.1*	2.6	2.5	0.1
Age-appropriate activities with focal child (range: 1–4)	2.0	1.9	0.1**	1.9	1.7	0.2*
Father's support for children						
Average monthly financial support per child (\$)	305.0	287.5	17.5	289.2	265.6	23.7
Average monthly formal child support per child (\$)	87.2	80.2	7.0	78.5	81.6	-3.1
Average monthly informal child support per child (\$)	50.7	44.8	5.9	52.1	38.2	13.8
Average monthly noncash support per child (\$)	161.0	160.2	0.9	154.5	142.8	11.7
Knowledge of and attitudes about child support						
Knowledge of the child support system (range: 0–4)	3.0	2.9	0.1***	3.0	2.8	0.2***
Knows how to request change in child support order (percentage)	60.9	53.1	7.9***	47.3	45.8	1.5
Knows a contact person at the child support agency (percentage)	43.3	36.6	6.7***	36.9	33.5	3.5
Disagrees that child support system is unfair to dads (percentage)	34.1	34.1	0.0	26.2	27.8	-1.6
Agrees that he has a better understanding of child support system (percentage)	69.5	61.9	7.6***	68.4	61.5	6.9*
Sample size						
All fathers	1,444	1,424		569	519	
Fathers of a focal child	986	1,021		370	365	

Source: PACT baseline and 12-month follow-up surveys, conducted by Mathematica.

Note: Sample sizes accounting for survey design range from 668 to 2,868 depending on the measure.

***/**/* Impact estimates are statistically significant at the .01/.05/.10, two-tailed test.

APPENDIX C

ADDITIONAL BASELINE CHARACTERISTICS

Table C.1. Characteristics of fathers in PACT RF control group that predicted whether they provided financial support at the 12-month follow-up

Baseline characteristic	Coefficient
Socioeconomic and demographic characteristics	
Worked for pay in past six months	0.49***
Earnings in past 30 days (\$)	0.000
Has high school diploma or GED	0.13
On probation or parole	-0.10
Average age (years)	-0.02**
Race and ethnicity	
Hispanic	-0.19
Black, non-Hispanic	-0.04
White and other	(omitted)
Foreign-born	-0.26
Child support order status and payments	
Has child support order in place	0.33
Number of child support orders	0.11
Average monthly financial support per child before study enrollment (\$)	0.001***
Relationships with children	
Number of biological and adopted children	0.06
Has a focal child	2.05***
Resides with focal child	-0.14
Age of focal child	-0.03
Percentage of children younger than age 22 with whom father has in-person contact	-0.61*
Relationships with mothers of children	
Has children with multiple mothers	-0.07
In steady romantic relationship with a mother	-0.05
Resides with any mother	0.43
Being a good co-parenting team	0.03
Relationship quality with focal mother	-0.26***
Any mother gatekeeps children	-0.29
Well-being	
At moderate or severe risk of depression	-0.35**
Locus of control	0.09
Sample size	1,673

Source: PACT baseline and 12-month follow-up surveys, conducted by Mathematica.

Note: Values are coefficients from logit regressions where dependent variable indicates whether father paid support at the 12-month follow-up. The four RF programs were weighted equally for these calculations.

***/**/* Differences are statistically significant at the .01/.05/.10, two-tailed test.

Table C.2. Baseline characteristics of fathers in the control group

Characteristic	Average
Demographic and socioeconomic characteristics	
Average age (years)	35.3
Race and ethnicity	
Hispanic	6
Black, non-Hispanic	77
White and other	17
At risk for moderate or severe depression	25
On probation or parole	35
Has high school diploma or GED	69
Worked for pay in past six months	72
Earnings in past 30 days (\$)	382
Child support order status and payments	
Has child support order in place	61
Provided financial support	
Any support	75
Formal support	26
Informal support	32
Noncash support	66
Average monthly financial support (\$)	
Total	190
Formal support	47
Informal support	45
Noncash support	103
Relationships with children	
Number of biological and adopted children	2.4
Average age of biological and adopted children (years)	10.8
Resides with any of their children	35
In-person contact with any of their children younger than age 22	80
Percentage of children younger than age 22 with whom father has in-person contact	69
Relationships with mothers of children	
Has children with multiple mothers	45
In steady romantic relationship with a mother of one of their children	20
Married to a mother of one of their children	7
Resides with any mother of one of their children	15
Being a good co-parenting team across all mothers of their children	3.26
Relationship quality with mother of focal child	2.69
Sample size	2,761

Source: PACT baseline survey, conducted by Mathematica.

Note: Values are percentages unless otherwise noted. The four RF programs were weighted equally for these calculations.

Table C.3. Baseline characteristics of fathers in PACT RF program group who had a child support order at time of enrollment, by whether they provided financial support at the 12-month follow-up

Baseline characteristics	Provided any formal financial support at 12-month follow-up?		Provided any informal financial support at 12-month follow-up?		Provided any noncash support at 12-month follow-up?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Socioeconomic and demographic characteristics						
Worked for pay in past six months	78.4***	64.4	76.7	71.7	75.5***	66.7
Earnings in past 30 days (\$)	444.2***	249.3	434.2**	346.9	382.6	358.4
Has high school diploma or GED	69.1	66.6	64.1*	70.1	66.5	72.4
On probation or parole	30.1**	37.5	34.3	32.3	33.0	32.9
At risk for moderate or severe depression	27.9	31.8	32.1	28.1	29.1	30.1
Average age (years)	34.7	35.6	33.9***	35.5	34.2***	37.6
Race and ethnicity						
Hispanic	6.8	5.7	7.1	6.1	6.1	8.2
Black, non-Hispanic	76.9	81.0	83.1***	76.2	80.1***	72.2
White and other	16.3	13.2	9.8***	17.7	13.9**	19.6
Child support order status and payments						
Has child support order in place	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Average monthly financial support per child before study enrollment (\$)						
Total	199.3***	140.1	192.7	170.0	193.8***	124.5
Formal support	97.1***	46.3	62.6**	85.8	75.4	89.5
Informal support	20.3	19.6	38.1***	12.0	23.9***	8.0
Noncash support	84.7	76.2	94.8**	75.2	97.5***	30.0
Relationships with children						
Number of biological and adopted children	2.9	3.0	3.4***	2.7	3.0	2.8
Average age of biological and adopted children (years)	9.8*	10.5	8.9***	10.6	9.4***	12.1
Resides with any children	29.6	29.2	40.1***	24.5	34.1***	14.7
In-person contact with any children	81.6***	72.6	88.1***	73.6	85.7***	55.6
Percentage of children younger than age 22 with whom father has in-person contact	65.7**	60.0	69.6***	60.7	70.4***	42.5
Relationships with mothers of children						
Has children with multiple mothers	60.2	58.8	69.6***	55.0	60.8	56.2
In steady romantic relationship with a mother	13.4**	18.9	25.0***	11.1	17.4***	9.6
Married to a mother	3.7	5.4	4.2	4.4	3.8	5.9
Resides with any mother	12.3	13.9	20.7***	9.4	14.4**	8.0
Being a good co-parenting team	3.1	3.1	3.2	3.1	3.1	3.0
Relationship quality with focal mother	2.6	2.6	2.8***	2.5	2.6	2.5
Sample size	689	396	338	747	827	262

Source: PACT baseline and 12-month follow-up surveys, conducted by Mathematica.

Note: Values are percentages unless otherwise noted. The four RF programs were weighted equally for these calculations.

***/**/* Differences are statistically significant at the .01/.05/.10, two-tailed test.

Table C.4. Baseline characteristics of fathers in PACT RF program group who did not have a child support order at time of enrollment, by whether they provided financial support at the 12-month follow-up

Baseline characteristics	Provided any formal financial support at 12-month follow-up?		Provided any informal financial support at 12-month follow-up?		Provided any noncash support at 12-month follow-up?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Socioeconomic and demographic characteristics						
Worked for pay in past six months	81.4***	64.9	73.1**	63.1	69.1	61.6
Earnings in past 30 days (\$)	717.3***	357.7	442.5	359.0	408.8	303.2
Has high school diploma or GED	64.3	71.3	70.1	68.2	67.9	70.1
On probation or parole	21.8	31.2	27.2**	38.5	30.7***	46.4
At risk for moderate or severe depression	26.2	25.9	24.2	22.1	20.5*	28.8
Average age (years)	30.6	32.5	31.0**	33.1	31.6***	34.3
Race and ethnicity						
Hispanic	8.7	7.1	6.4	7.0	6.7	6.5
Black, non-Hispanic	76.3	78.0	80.0	74.3	78.7	72.1
White and other	15.0	14.9	13.6	18.7	14.5*	21.3
Child support order status and payments						
Has child support order in place	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Average monthly financial support per child before study enrollment (\$)						
Total	219.8	210.9	295.0***	142.4	239.8***	74.1
Formal support	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Informal support	89.7	70.2	116.2***	38.2	79.3***	24.4
Noncash support	131.6	143.9	179.8***	107.4	163.2***	51.9
Relationships with children						
Number of biological and adopted children	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
Average age of biological and adopted children (years)	5.9**	7.6	6.0***	8.5	6.8***	9.4
Resides with any children	35.9	41.4	50.0***	32.4	47.8***	13.7
In-person contact with any children	81.1	78.8	90.7***	66.1	83.9***	47.3
Percentage of children younger than age 22 with whom father has in-person contact	72.5	73.2	85.3***	60.7	78.7***	41.8
Relationships with mothers of children						
Has children with multiple mothers	38.3	30.1	32.9	29.8	29.3	33.3
In steady romantic relationship with a mother	18.4	19.0	28.8***	14.5	24.4***	8.9
Married to a mother	1.1	1.7	0.7	2.4	1.4	2.7
Resides with any mother	17.6	16.8	31.8***	11.0	23.4***	7.0
Being a good co-parenting team	3.0**	3.3	3.5***	3.2	3.4	3.3
Relationship quality with focal mother	2.7	2.8	2.9*	2.8	3.0***	2.6
Sample size	82	427	205	382	439	149

Source: PACT baseline and 12-month follow-up surveys, conducted by Mathematica.

Note: Values are percentages unless otherwise noted. The four RF programs were weighted equally for these calculations.

***/**/* Differences are statistically significant at the .01/.05/.10, two-tailed test.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ For more information on PACT, please see the project's landing page on OPRE's website.
- ² Please see Appendix A for more details on the methodology used for the qualitative study.
- ³ The distinction between confirmatory and exploratory outcomes is discussed in greater detail in the main PACT RF report (Avellar et al. 2018) and technical supplement (Covington et al. 2020, pages 17-18).
- ⁴ In addition to these comparisons, we estimated statistical models identifying the relationship between each baseline characteristic and whether the father provided support during the follow-up period, controlling for other baseline characteristics. These models identified a similar set of factors associated with providing support. For example, controlling for other baseline characteristics, those with more work experience at the time of study enrollment provided more support during the follow-up period, as did those who had provided more support before study enrollment. See Appendix Table B.1 for results from these models.
- ⁵ Values for this analysis refer to fathers randomly assigned to the PACT RF program group. Values for the control group are similar; see Appendix Table B.2.
- ⁶ This is about 50 percent more than the approximately \$180 per month provided before study enrollment but is not significantly different from the amount provided by the control group during the follow-up (Avellar et al. 2019). Thus, the program did not affect total financial support. The increase in payments for the control group during the follow-up period is consistent with other studies that have found improved outcomes, such as earnings, for experimental control groups during follow-up periods (Bell et al. 1995).
- ⁷ The distribution of average monthly informal support is such that the mean value of \$49 is greater than the 75th percentile of \$33. Most fathers provided no informal support (Figure 1), so the median value is \$0. Some fathers provided relatively large amounts of informal support. For example, the 95th percentile of the distribution is \$250. The mean amount of informal support provided among those who provided support was \$148.
- ⁸ The figure for formal child support includes fathers who did not have a child support order at follow-up. Average monthly formal child support payments per child among the 62 percent of fathers who did have a child support order at the time of the follow-up survey were \$135.
- ⁹ We also examined differences among fathers who did and did not pay formal support separately for fathers who had a child support order in place at baseline. Patterns from that analysis are similar to those discussed here. See Appendix Table B.3.
- ¹⁰ This standard required statistically significant differences between the subgroup impacts for at least three outcomes related to child support.
- ¹¹ The difference between this \$27 impact on informal support for fathers without a child support order at baseline and the \$0 impact for fathers with a child support order at baseline is statistically significant.
- ¹² The correlation coefficient between employment stability and average child support was 0.07 and the coefficient between average monthly earnings and average child support was 0.08.

