

# Using a Change Framework to Design Systems That Effectively Engage Fathers and Paternal Relatives and Promote Racial Justice

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## Introduction

This brief describes how participants in a Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC) used a guiding framework called a Collaborative Change Framework to build practices and structures to improve engagement of fathers and paternal relatives in the child welfare system. It provides the context for using a Collaborative Change Framework and shares how the framework informed a multifaceted approach to engaging fathers and paternal relatives. The brief details how the BSC team members drew a connection between efforts to promote racial justice and work to engage fathers and paternal relatives, and emphasized this connection in the Collaborative Change Framework. The brief features video examples of strategies improvement teams (teams in charge of quality improvement around father engagement) tested within the domains of the Collaborative Change Framework to improve programming and practice to promote racial justice for men of color in the child welfare system.

## Background

The BSC is a continuous learning method used to test and spread promising practices to help organizations improve in a focused topic area (Institute for Healthcare Improvement 2003). For the Fathers and Continuous Learning in Child Welfare (FCL) project, the BSC was used to further a culture in child welfare agencies that prioritizes and values fathers and paternal relatives.<sup>1</sup> A BSC begins with a vision, called a Collaborative Change Framework, which guides the BSC's work and is created before teams engage in the collaborative. The change framework for FCL depicts an optimally functioning child welfare agency that engages fathers and paternal relatives at every level (Exhibit 1).

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### Box 1. Breakthrough Series Collaborative terminology

- The **Breakthrough Series Collaborative** is a continuous learning methodology used to test and spread promising practices to help organizations improve in a focused topic area. It has five key elements: (1) the Collaborative Change Framework; (2) inclusive multilevel improvement teams; (3) the Shared Learning Environment; (4) expert faculty; and (5) the Model for Improvement. Each plays a critical role and works with the other elements in interrelated ways.
- The **Collaborative Change Framework** is one component of a BSC and is used to guide the work of Improvement Teams. It creates a common language for BSC participants. For the Fathers and Continuous Learning in Child Welfare (FCL) project, it comprised five domains that collectively depict a child welfare agency that optimally engages fathers and paternal relatives.
- The **Plan-Do-Study-Act** cycle is part of the Model for Improvement and is a method for testing change on a small scale. In this process, improvement teams develop a plan (Plan), test a strategy (Do), observe and learn from the test (Study), and determine next steps (Act).

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With this overarching vision in place, multilevel and inclusive improvement teams are tasked with implementing small tests of change to improve their work. They test strategies of their choosing as part of Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles that are relevant to their agency's context. To build momentum, they

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<sup>1</sup> The project is sponsored by the Office of Family Assistance and administered by the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation in partnership with the Children's Bureau, all within the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. FCL is conducted by Mathematica and the University of Denver.

meet as a group to report back on results of their PDSA cycles, and plan to build on the strategy or spread it to others at their agencies or other agencies. The ultimate goal of a BSC is to change culture and sustain innovative practices.

## **The Fathers and Continuous Learning in Child Welfare Breakthrough Series Collaborative**

The six improvement teams in this BSC were made up of child welfare leaders, program administrators, frontline staff, fathers or paternal relatives with lived experience with the child welfare system, and system and community partners. The improvement teams learned from one another through monthly all-team topical calls, meetings of affinity groups, and learning sessions. Furthermore, all improvement teams collected metrics related to father and paternal relative engagement. In addition to a facilitator, six faculty coaches who are experts in child welfare policy or practice or father engagement helped lead the BSC. For more information about the elements of this BSC and how the teams implemented PDSA cycles, please see the pilot study report at [https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/opre/FCL\\_Pilot\\_Study\\_Report.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/opre/FCL_Pilot_Study_Report.pdf).

During the course of the BSC, improvement teams assessed their practices and discussed how comprehensive changes were needed to optimally engage fathers and paternal relatives. At the end of the BSC, teams revised the change framework to highlight three key lessons:

1. The engagement of fathers and paternal relatives begins with community-based prevention systems that promote children’s ability to remain safely in their homes and reduce the need for foster care.
2. Father and paternal relative engagement is not just an initiative but a set of values, practices, and priorities centered on a larger goal of comprehensively supporting families. It requires a broad vision for communities and child welfare agencies.
3. Father and paternal relative engagement is inextricably tied to addressing racism and promoting racial justice for families of color who are at risk of involvement with the child welfare system.

The final Collaborative Change Framework is included here in Exhibit 1.

## **How racial justice related to father engagement in the FCL Breakthrough Series Collaborative**

Research increasingly highlights the child welfare system’s disproportionate impact on families of color (Font et al. 2012; Yi et al. 2020) and calls for agencies to address systemic racism (Berkman et al. 2022; Detlaff et al. 2020; Wright et al. 2022). Some research suggests that fathers of color may be uniquely disadvantaged in the child welfare system (Arroyo et al. 2019). The FCL BSC incorporated racial justice into father engagement work from the start and included a domain for racial justice work (Domain 2) in the Collaborative Change Framework.

## Using a Change Framework to Design Systems That Effectively Engage Fathers and Paternal Relatives and Promote Racial Justice

**Anti-racist practice.** The active process of identifying and challenging racism by changing systems, organizational structures, policies and practices, and attitudes to redistribute power (CSSP 2019).

**Racial justice.** The systematic, fair treatment of people of all races that results in equitable opportunities and outcomes for everyone. In a racially just society, all people are able to achieve their full potential regardless of race or ethnicity. Racial justice frameworks have been used to proactively address and prevent practices that unfairly disadvantage people of color (Annie E. Casey Foundation 2020).

**Racism.** The systematic subjugation of members of targeted racial groups, who hold less sociopolitical power and/or are racialized as non-White, as a means to uphold White supremacy (CSSP 2019).

**White supremacy.** An institutionally perpetuated and ever-evolving system of exploitation and domination that consolidates and maintains power and resources among White people (CSSP 2019).

The BSC facilitator and several faculty coaches had experience leading efforts to incorporate anti-racist practices into organizational culture. They facilitated conversations about racial justice throughout the BSC, and teams examined how racism and white supremacy operated at their own agency and system level. By the end of the BSC, improvement teams developed sustainability plans for father and paternal relative engagement that tied their long-term planning for father engagement to action plans for racial justice.

### A call to action

As a result of ongoing conversations during the BSC, the FCL BSC improvement team members decided to create a racial justice workgroup to further support team efforts to incorporate anti-racist practices into child welfare agencies and thereby promote father engagement. The racial justice workgroup, led by a faculty coach, outlined the following elements that were essential to raise up and make clearer and more deliberate in the Collaborative Change Framework. They suggested that a comprehensive approach to improving father and paternal relative engagement includes:

- Creating and amplifying an accurate and positive narrative of fathers and paternal relatives of color that recognizes and values them as assets to their children, families, and communities
- Helping child welfare staff (including those in contracted agencies) understand historical and deeply engrained racism in the child welfare system and develop an anti-racist mindset and behaviors to guide their work with fathers, children, and families
- Assessing and changing policies to support the involvement of fathers and paternal relatives using a racial justice lens

### Domains of the Collaborative Change Framework



## Using a Change Framework to Design Systems That Effectively Engage Fathers and Paternal Relatives and Promote Racial Justice

- Helping fathers and paternal relatives achieve economic, housing, and physical and mental health stability they need in order to thrive, and providing help in navigating systems they need to support themselves and their families
- Helping fathers and paternal relatives use their voices and power to advocate for their rights and their families' rights
- Aligning a community-wide, coordinated system of supports, services, and opportunities grounded in shared anti-racist values and practices that help fathers and paternal relatives and their families thrive

Improvement teams brought this call to action to life by using it to anchor their work in five domains of the Collaborative Change Framework and to invite others, including agency leadership, into their efforts. The domains are listed on the right and are further broken down into goals in Exhibit 1. For the full Collaborative Change Framework with change strategies, see Appendix A.

### Exhibit 1. The Collaborative Change Framework for Engaging Fathers and Paternal Relatives in Child Welfare and Achieving Racial Justice for Men of Color in the Child Welfare System (domains and goals)

Domain	Goal
Domain 1. Support community, system, and agency environments that value and respect all fathers and paternal relatives.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create environments and climates (in agencies, systems, and communities) that place strong emphasis on the value of fathers and paternal relatives in children's lives.</li> <li>2. Develop an atmosphere where the voices and active engagement of fathers and paternal relatives help create an inclusive environment.</li> <li>3. Actively promote and integrate inclusive practices and the value of fathers and paternal relatives into the community.</li> </ol>
Domain 2. Achieve racial justice for men of color in the child welfare system.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Acknowledge the impacts of historical, institutional, cultural, and structural racism on policy, practice, and decision making.</li> <li>2. Recognize and honor the cultural beliefs, values, and practices of fathers and paternal relatives, communities, and tribes to drive child welfare decision making.</li> <li>3. Align with related systems to identify, address, and change institutionally racist policies and practices.</li> <li>4. Promote personal awareness among staff to acknowledge implicit bias and implement practices that improve father and family outcomes.</li> </ol>
Domain 3. Identify and locate fathers and paternal relatives from the first point of contact with the family.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify fathers and paternal relatives.</li> <li>2. Actively locate fathers and paternal relatives.</li> </ol>
Domain 4. Assess and address the strengths and needs of, and barriers for, fathers and paternal relatives.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assess fathers' and paternal relatives' unique and individual strengths and needs.</li> <li>2. Identify and address barriers to engaging fathers and paternal relatives.</li> <li>3. Provide individualized plans that meet the unique needs of families and include fathers and paternal relatives.</li> </ol>
Domain 5. Continually involve fathers and paternal relatives throughout their children's lives.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Partner with fathers and paternal relatives to prepare them for active participation in decision making and other activities for their children.</li> <li>2. Continually engage fathers and paternal relatives as equally positive options as mothers and maternal relatives for caring for the child.</li> <li>3. Support healthy and productive relationships with fathers and other caregivers.</li> <li>4. Support relationships between fathers and paternal relatives and their children by maximizing the types of and opportunities for involvement.</li> </ol>

## Bringing the Collaborative Change Framework to life

A Breakthrough Series Collaborative is a continuous learning methodology that supports cultural transformation through small tests of change and a supportive learning community. The Collaborative Change Framework helps guide the work teams do to influence change in their agencies. Throughout the course of the BSC, teams used these small tests of change, called PDSA cycles, to test father and paternal relative engagement strategies in every domain in the Collaborative Change Framework. The descriptions and videos below highlight strategies improvement teams tested in the five domains of the Collaborative Change Framework. In the videos, Improvement Team members discuss their efforts to achieve each domain's goals. Domain 1 has additional engagement strategies that are hyperlinked stand-alone videos.

Box 1 defines the Breakthrough Series Collaborative, the Collaborative Change Framework, and PDSA cycles. Click on the links below for the domain videos and individual videos.



### Example strategies in Domain 1: Support community, system, and agency environments that value and respect all fathers and paternal relatives

**Hartford, Connecticut.** The Turning 50 Barriers Into 50 Opportunities strategy was a training offered to all Hartford staff about how to effectively engage fathers and paternal relatives. It reinforced the idea that for any barrier staff encountered in working with fathers or paternal relatives, there was also an opportunity to improve engagement skills.

A community partner and paternal relative from Hartford implemented the [Informing the Masses](#) strategy. In his role as a supervisor of Family Engagement Services, he met with community partners to support their work with the Connecticut Department of Children and Families. They developed a community network of partners who worked with the child welfare agency to better serve fathers and paternal relatives.

**Los Angeles County.** Los Angeles County used [Parent Partners](#), fathers with lived experience with child welfare, to better engage fathers in services. Parent Partners are paid staff who help fathers navigate the child welfare system and work to promote reunification. Child welfare staff learned from the fathers' experiences, and their work was improved by having a better understanding of fathers' perspectives.

The Father Strong Achievement Award strategy was implemented by parent partners from Los Angeles to recognize a social worker each month who did exceptional work with fathers. This award helped raise staff awareness of father engagement in the agency and provided positive reinforcement to staff who demonstrated noteworthy engagement skills with fathers and paternal relatives.

**Wake County, North Carolina.** To move from a sterile office-like setting for parent visits to a more comfortable, home-like setting, the Wake County team repurposed the [Wake House](#) and used it for fathers' visits with their children. It increased the agency's capacity for hosting supervised visits and uplifted the visit experience for all involved. The home includes a kitchen, playroom, living room, and murals and colorful artwork that feature Black fathers with their children.

**Prowers County, Colorado.** The Prowers team began an #ImADad media campaign to tag fathers and paternal relatives in videos highlighting their roles as fathers. Many community members recorded themselves talking about being a father. The videos promoted positive recognition of fathers among the community and generated conversation about services for fathers.

The Prowers team also worked with judicial partners to impact the judicial system. They met with judges to discuss how they could better support fathers' engagement with their children.



### Example strategies in Domain 2: Achieve racial justice for men of color in the child welfare system

**Denver County, Colorado.** The division of child welfare and adult protective services implemented a diversity, equity, access, and inclusion work group to explore policy, training, and hiring practices through a lens of improving racial equity.

**Hartford, Connecticut.** Staff in Hartford developed a newsletter and an associated Positive Dad Talk meeting series to discuss how fathers of color experience the child welfare system. Groups met monthly and discussed how child welfare staff could be more culturally sensitive when working with fathers of different backgrounds.

**Prowers County, Colorado.** The team used the Harvard Implicit Bias test to engage staff in their offices in assessing their own biases. They met as a group to discuss the results, their implications for practice at the agency, and how biases could impact families. They next made plans for addressing biases and creating a more inclusive culture.



### Example strategies in Domain 3: Identify and locate fathers and paternal relatives from the first point of contact with the family

**Los Angeles County, California.** Social workers began using more data systems to locate and engage fathers. They also developed and implemented a Father and Paternal Relative Inclusion Form to track the number of times investigators were able to answer questions about fathers and paternal relatives, such as whether fathers were identified early in a case. For children who had been in care for more than two years, they also tested efforts to contact fathers who had not been identified or contacted yet.

**Denver County, Colorado.** Team members expanded the use of databases to find fathers after receiving a report of child abuse or neglect and the father whereabouts were unknown.

**Hartford, Connecticut.** The office's Does Dad Know? strategy aimed to improve practices for locating and engaging fathers. This strategy required staff to inform fathers of the reasons why their children were in foster care and to assess fathers' homes as potential homes for children who were removed from a mother's home.

Another example of a strategy the Hartford team tested was creating a resource guide called Father’s Right to Know. This guide informs fathers of their rights and available resources to help support their taking a more active role in their children’s lives.



### Example strategies in Domain 4: Assess and address the strengths and needs of, and barriers for, fathers and paternal relatives

**Denver County, Colorado.** Staff surveyed fathers at the end of family team meetings to assess whether the meetings addressed fathers’ needs. They created best practice guidance for visitation with incarcerated parents and implemented a Fathering After Violence curriculum for families with issues related to domestic violence. They also enhanced staff training to incorporate content on working with fathers.

**Wake County, North Carolina.** The Wake County Department of Human Services began inviting male staff to child-family team meetings to better support fathers during the meetings. After the meeting, they asked fathers for feedback on whether they felt their voice was heard during the meeting, and whether their needs were met.

The Wake County team also implemented a strategy focused on supporting relatives who were caregivers, including paternal relatives. Staff offered more targeted services for relatives caring for children, including resource linkages, referrals, case management, support groups, and parent education to help children remain in stable living arrangements with their relatives.



### Example strategies in Domain 5: Continually involve fathers and paternal relatives throughout their children’s lives

**Hartford, Connecticut.** One supervisor from Hartford wanted to train her staff to effectively engage fathers. She created a form that caseworkers used to assess the level of contact they had with fathers on their caseloads, the reasons for that level, and how it could be improved. Then, during supervision, she was able to engage staff in tailored conversations about father engagement strategies.

## Conclusion

In a Breakthrough Series Collaborative, six teams at five child welfare agencies used a Collaborative Change Framework to guide their work to improve engagement of fathers and paternal relatives at several levels of the child welfare system. The framework helped create a shared language and motivated teams to challenge existing structures so they could engage fathers and paternal relatives more effectively and promote racial justice. Other child welfare agencies can use this Collaborative Change Framework to consider how to improve the system for engaging fathers and paternal relatives and promoting racial justice.



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## Appendix A. Collaborative Change Framework

### Change Framework for Engaging Fathers and Paternal Relatives in Child Welfare and Achieving Racial Justice for Men of Color in the Child Welfare System

Domain 1. Support community, system, and agency environments that value and respect all fathers and paternal relatives	
Goal	Change strategy
<p>1. Create environments and climates (in agencies, systems, and communities) that place strong emphasis on the value of fathers and paternal relatives in children’s lives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support physical spaces (such as agency offices, courts, and partners’ offices) that feel welcoming to fathers and paternal relatives (including accessibility and scheduling).</li> <li>• Demonstrate the value of actively engaging fathers and paternal relatives early with the child welfare agency (before placement is needed) by clearly requiring father and paternal relative engagement in the agency’s mission, policies, and materials.</li> <li>• Ensure that leaders shape, frame, and model the value of engaging fathers and paternal relatives.</li> <li>• Provide ongoing education to all staff about the value of and skills for engaging fathers and paternal relatives in children’s lives.</li> <li>• Provide ongoing supervision to staff to enhance their ability to effectively engage fathers and paternal relatives.</li> <li>• Encourage male staff to share their experiences as fathers. However, do so in ways that feel mutually supportive to male staff and those they are educating. Avoid overburdening male staff with all the work with fathers and paternal relatives.</li> </ul>
<p>2. Develop an atmosphere where the voice and active engagement of fathers and paternal relatives helps create an inclusive environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop, support, and promote peer mentorship and support for fathers and paternal relatives.</li> <li>• Solicit, respect, and affirm the varied perspectives of fathers and paternal relatives.</li> <li>• Build trust and find ways to systematically receive feedback from fathers and paternal relatives to guide system improvement.</li> <li>• Develop and foster leadership and advocacy programs for fathers and paternal relatives.</li> </ul>
<p>3. Actively promote and integrate inclusive practices and the value of fathers and paternal relatives into the community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide education and coaching to community and system partners so they value and support fathers and paternal relatives in children’s lives.</li> <li>• Partner with families’ natural supports (including community, faith-based, and other “informal” supports) to promote and support father involvement in children’s lives.</li> <li>• Provide ongoing education and skill building to staff so they value, understand, and can identify and authentically partner with natural supports identified by families.</li> <li>• Cultivate cultural brokers and “father figures” in the community as additional supports for staff and for engaging fathers.</li> </ul>

## Using a Change Framework to Design Systems That Effectively Engage Fathers and Paternal Relatives and Promote Racial Justice

<b>Domain 2. Achieve racial justice for men of color in the child welfare system</b>	
<b>Goal</b>	<b>Change strategy</b>
<p>1. Acknowledge the impacts of historical, institutional, cultural, and structural racism on policy, practice, and decision making.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage staff in regular conversations, education, and coaching about historical, institutional, cultural, and structural racism.</li> <li>• Demonstrate an understanding of the impact of historical, institutional, cultural, and structural racism and trauma on how fathers are engaged through clearly articulating the agency’s mission, policies, and materials.</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for staff to discuss issues related to racial equity in group and individual supervision.</li> <li>• Review and reform policies that harm families of color.</li> <li>• Effectively support implementation of new policies to promote justice at all levels.</li> </ul>
<p>2. Recognize and honor the cultural beliefs, values, and practices of fathers and paternal relatives, communities, and tribes to drive child welfare decision making.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish an organizational environment and climate that is humble and responsive to the communities being served.</li> <li>• Use an anti-racist lens (specifically anti-racist toward Black individuals) to engage partners and communities.</li> <li>• Use culturally appropriate assessments, decision-making practices, and antiracist tools to capitalize on the strengths and needs of fathers and paternal relatives at every decision point in the child welfare continuum.</li> </ul>
<p>3. Align with related systems to identify, address, and change institutionally racist policies and practices.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide conversations, education, and coaching to system and community partners about institutionally racist policies and practices, including how to identify them and the impact they have on fathers and paternal relatives.</li> <li>• Partner with experts working on racial justice in child welfare and related fields to receive guidance on how to address and change racist policies and practices.</li> <li>• Actively include fathers and paternal relatives of color in identifying, addressing, and changing racist policies and practices.</li> </ul>
<p>4. Promote personal awareness among staff to acknowledge implicit bias and implement practices that improve father and family outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Require staff to successfully complete mandatory trainings and have regular conversations, education, and coaching about implicit bias and cultural humility.</li> <li>• Give staff opportunities to discuss issues related to cultural differences during group and individual supervision to address bias in case decision making.</li> <li>• Include work with fathers and paternal relatives in supervision and performance reviews and support frontline staff to effectively engage fathers and paternal relatives.</li> </ul>
<b>Domain 3. Identify and locate fathers and paternal relatives from the first point of contact with the family</b>	
<b>Goal</b>	<b>Change strategy</b>
<p>1. Identify fathers and paternal relatives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Require frontline staff to ask mothers, children, and other caregivers and relatives to help identify fathers and paternal relatives from the first point of contact with the family.</li> <li>• Educate and collaborate with community members and other agencies to identify fathers and paternal relatives on an ongoing basis.</li> <li>• Find and use available technology to help identify fathers and paternal relatives.</li> </ul>
<p>2. Actively locate fathers and paternal relatives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop information-sharing agreements with community partners and agencies that allow for data sharing and collaboration to locate fathers and paternal relatives, while honoring family confidentiality.</li> <li>• Identify and use available technology to help locate fathers and paternal relatives</li> </ul>

## Using a Change Framework to Design Systems That Effectively Engage Fathers and Paternal Relatives and Promote Racial Justice

### Domain 4. Assess and address the strengths and needs of, and barriers for, fathers and paternal relatives

Goal	Change strategy
1. Assess fathers' and paternal relatives' unique and individual strengths and needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote awareness training to ensure staff understand the unique strengths and needs of fathers and paternal relatives.</li> <li>Ensure staff use assessments to build on strengths.</li> <li>Explicitly include strengths, needs, and supports in the initial and ongoing assessment of fathers and paternal relatives.</li> <li>Integrate fathers and paternal relatives' strengths and needs into the overall and continual assessment of the child and family.</li> </ul>
2. Identify and address barriers to engaging fathers and paternal relatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure staff understand and can appropriately respond to the unique situations that fathers and paternal relatives might present or experience.</li> <li>Ask fathers and paternal relatives to identify potential barriers they perceive to their engagement.</li> <li>Incorporate mechanisms to mitigate multisystem involvement for fathers and paternal relatives and to reduce barriers to child welfare engagement.</li> <li>Collaborate with community partners and other agencies to address barriers to engaging fathers and paternal relatives.</li> </ul>
3. Provide individualized plans that meet the unique needs of families and include fathers and paternal relatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify, incorporate, and continually revisit the various roles that fathers and paternal relatives might play in the lives of their children.</li> <li>Ensure that family plans reflect the various strengths, needs, and roles of fathers and paternal relatives.</li> <li>Include fathers and paternal relatives' own words, points of view, and goals in the individualized plans for their children.</li> </ul>

### Domain 5. Continually involve fathers and paternal relatives throughout their children's lives

Goal	Change strategy
1. Partner with fathers and paternal relatives to prepare them for active participation in decision making and other activities for their children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use team-meeting practices, such as family group conferences or family group decision making.</li> <li>Engage fathers and paternal relatives in permanency planning meetings and other decision making.</li> <li>Prepare fathers and paternal relatives before meetings so they know their role and how the meeting could help them.</li> <li>Value and respect fathers and paternal relatives as active participants in meetings, activities, and decisions related to their children.</li> </ul>
2. Continually engage fathers and paternal relatives as equally positive options as mothers and maternal relatives for caring for the child.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess whether children can live with their fathers and paternal relatives.</li> <li>Be transparent with fathers and paternal relatives about why children are or are not living with them.</li> <li>Assume fathers and paternal relatives play a vital parenting role in their children's lives.</li> </ul>

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Domain 5. Continually involve fathers and paternal relatives throughout their children's lives	
Goal	Change strategy
3. Support healthy and productive relationships with fathers and other caregivers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continually mitigate issues between maternal and paternal sides, regardless of where children are living.</li><li>• Facilitate ongoing communication between fathers and paternal relatives, foster families, and other alternate caregivers.</li><li>• Support various roles that fathers and paternal relatives might play in partnership with alternate caregivers (relative and nonrelative resource parents) while the children are in out-of-home care.</li></ul>
4. Support relationships between fathers and paternal relatives and their children by maximizing the types of and opportunities for involvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use supportive visitation practices that nurture relationships between fathers, paternal relatives, and children.</li><li>• Ensure visits occur in settings that are comfortable for fathers and paternal relatives.</li><li>• Create and nurture opportunities for fathers and paternal relatives to connect with children outside of agency visitation.</li><li>• Communicate regularly with fathers and paternal relatives about case progress and how their children are doing; give them updates and continually ask for their input about parenting decisions when possible.</li></ul>

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