



The National Partnership for Community Leadership (NPCL)  
*Strengthening Organizations to Serve People and Communities for the Future*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### FATHERHOOD DEVELOPMENT CURRICULUM

#### **Building Strong Families: Expanding Services to Work with Men and Fathers**

The NPCL *Fatherhood Development Curriculum* has the distinction of being the only fatherhood curriculum recommended and used in four national demonstration projects targeting fathers from diverse backgrounds. They include the Young Unwed Fathers Pilot Project; Parent's Fair Share; The Partners for Fragile Families Site Demonstration; and The Fathers at Work Demonstration. In total, these demonstration sites represented 40 communities nationwide. In each of the four evaluation reports, the peer support component, which utilized the *Fatherhood Development Curriculum*, was consistently identified as "the glue" that held the program together. When combined with support services such as employment, education, family counseling, and housing, the *Fatherhood Development Curriculum* provides the foundation for an effective program working with men and fathers.

The *Fatherhood Development Curriculum* is based on real-life experiences and challenges of fathers in fragile family settings. Through 25 streetwise group sessions, the curriculum offers practitioners a field-tested guide to working with fathers in providing support, information and motivation in areas of life skills, parenthood, relationships (including exploring marriage and co-parenting), and health. The *Fatherhood Development Curriculum* also offers a methodology for training and learning, and assessment tools.

The 25 sessions of *The Fatherhood Development Curriculum* are organized around five areas of content, as follows:

**Module I: Personal Development.** This module includes team-building activities and incorporates interactive session on values, manhood and self-sufficiency. Fathers are encouraged to consider their own values and how they communicate them to their children; messages that society and their own families send them about what it means to be a man and a father; and how close they are to being able to take care of themselves and their children independently.

**Module II: Life Skills.** This module includes skill-building sessions on communication, decision-making, dealing with stress, and coping with discrimination. A key theme here is that the ability of individuals to live satisfying, productive lives depends largely on their effectiveness as communicators and decision-makers.



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**Module III: Responsible Fatherhood.** This module is the heart of the curriculum, focuses on the important role that fathers play in the lives of their children. Topics covered include the roles and responsibilities of fatherhood, the impact fathers have on the way their children develop, what to expect from children at different stages of development, how to have a positive influence on children, how to handle the daily needs of children, and how to discipline children in an effective way. There is also a session that explains how the child support enforcement system works, and provides a forum for developing strategies to successfully navigate the system.

**Module IV: Relationship Skills for Healthy Marriage and Co-parenting.** This module explores ways to communicate effectively and considers differences in male and female styles of communication; how to have a more positive relationship with the child's mother, how to manage anger, resolve conflicts and negotiate successful relationships.

**Module V: Health and Sexuality.** This module emphasizes awareness of potential health problems, suggests ways to take charge of one's own health, replaces myths that men may hold about sexuality and substance abuse with facts, and provides skills for reducing sexual risks.