



Male Roles in Family Networks

Historical Perspectives & Contemporary Challenges for Enhancing Father Involvement

Waldo E. Johnson, Jr., Ph.D., MSW
University of Chicago



Conceptual Framework

- Juxtaposes developmental, racial and ethnic and socioeconomic statuses with family structure in assessing paternal involvement outcomes
- Offers a precis to understanding how historical research perspectives have shaped our conceptual scope and contemporary challenges that mandate a broader lens for facilitating paternal involvement roles and outcomes in family and kinship networks



Contemporary Outcomes

- How does the gender affect the selection of father involvement activities viewed as most important?
- How does parenting in various geographical and social contexts mandate the adoption of father involvement accessibility and engagement that are seldom assessed or evaluated?



Historical Perspectives

- Fatherhood and father involvement has evolved over time
- Although multi-faceted, shifts in the dominant motifs characterizing father involvement has resulted in varying degrees of engagement across the fatherhood spectrum
- Historically, unequal access to undertaking the changing dimensions of father involvement



Historical Perspectives

- The benefits of father involvement have been largely assessed in terms of their contributions to child well-being outcomes
- The scientific documentation of father involvement activities have been largely based on mother reports



Contemporary Challenges

- Racial and ethnic differences in family structures and constellations may have varying effects on father involvement
- Historical and contemporary changes in paid labor force engagement also have varying effects on father involvement
- Public policies reflected in increased incarceration rates affect father involvement



Contemporary Challenges

- Dramatic and persistent changes in nuclear family structure resulting in marital disruption characterized by
 - Separation
 - Divorce
 - Forming new families



Contemporary Challenges

- Dramatic and persistent changes in non-nuclear family structures resulting in disruptions in family structures characterized by:
 - Nonmarital births
 - Nonresident fatherhood
 - Noncustodial fatherhood



Contemporary Challenges

- Assessing the role and impact of non-paternal family members and fictive kin on paternal involvement activities for enhancing child wellbeing outcomes
- Grandparents
- Paternal and Maternal Uncles
- Mentors