



Engaging Fathers in Family Drug Court

The Importance of Gender-Specific Programming

Hon. Karen Adam
Chris Swenson-Smith
Pima County Juvenile Court
Tucson, Arizona



Why?

- Relative Placements go up
- Reunification Rates go up
- Reactivation Rates go down

Engaging Fathers Improves All Outcomes

Q: How did we start?

A: We set the stage for engaging fathers system-wide....

2007 Family Law Protocols

Tripled # of paternity establishments and findings

Father access to custody, parenting time and child support

- Rule 8.6 Simultaneous Dependency and Custody Proceedings: When a pending family law proceeding and a pending dependency proceeding concern the same parties, any party may file a motion to consolidate the proceedings. The Court may on its own motion consolidate the proceedings. The motion shall be filed in the juvenile division and a copy shall be provided to the assigned family law division. The assigned juvenile division shall rule on the motion to consolidate. Custody and parenting time issues will be litigated in the juvenile division unless the juvenile division defers jurisdiction to the assigned family law division.

We changed local rule

Child Support Enforcement

What is the role of IV-D?

- Not just limited to establishing paternity
- Assists CPS parent locator in locating fathers
- Will modify current support orders
- Will negotiate settlements on unpaid support
- Will coordinate with another state if there are interstate issues



We changed FDC policy

- 2008 Separate Men's sessions in Family Drug Court



We can accept both parents regardless of domestic violence history



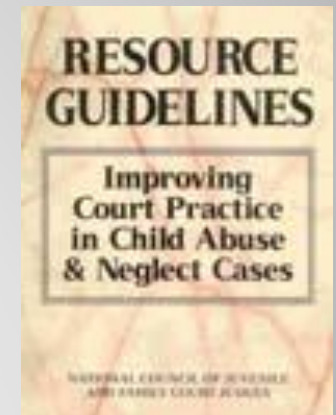
We collaborated with Child Protective Services

- 2010 Engaging Fathers as Child Protective Services Focus

Getting fathers involved in the beginning

- 2010 Engaging Fathers as Model Court Goal

Keeping fathers involved throughout the case



STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM: Fathers are less engaged in dependency and family law processes than mothers with regards to custody and parenting time.

ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE CHANGE STRATEGY: By transforming judicial and child welfare practices through the use of specialized procedures, the court will increase father involvement and reduce the disparity between mother and father outcomes, and increase the benefit to the child.

**Model Court Goal
To Address
Problem**

To engage fathers in all aspects of dependency and family law processes.

ACTIVITIES

1. Hold stakeholder and collaborator meetings to discuss new procedures for engaging fathers.
2. Review data available from Court and Department databases pertaining to fathers.
3. Create and conduct trainings on best practices for engaging fathers.
4. Implement HB2622, which states that parents are obligated to notify relatives and kin when a Dependency case is opened.
5. Implement bench card at Preliminary Protective Hearing. (Fam Law – Dep)
6. Assess buy-in from stakeholders through survey.
7. Create bibliography of resources and information on engaging fathers.

OUTPUT MEASURES

1. Number of judicial officers and stakeholders trained on engagement skills.
2. Number of fathers attending Team Decision Making Meetings.
3. Number of fathers reunified with child/ren either as sole caregiver or in a custody/parenting time arrangement with the mother
4. Results of any focus groups conducted.

OUTCOME MEASURES
Short Term

1. Increase number of fathers attending TDMs (Team Decision Making Meetings)
2. Increase number of fathers acknowledging paternity.
3. Increase number of fathers attending PHC and PPH.
4. Increase number of fathers participating in settlement process.

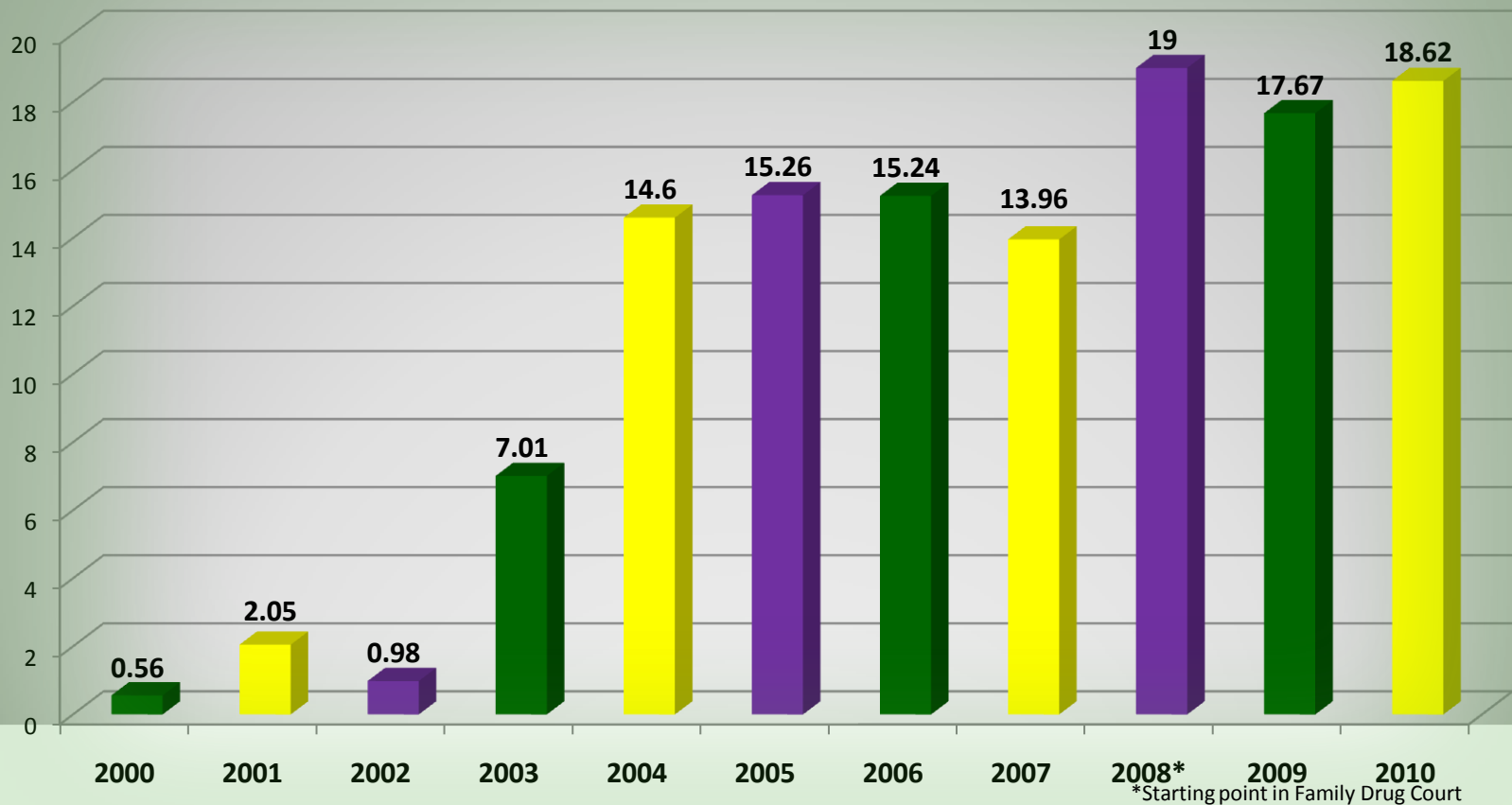
Long Term

1. Increase the number of fathers actively involved in all aspects of their dependency and family law cases.
2. Decrease time in permanency.
3. All parents reunified with a child have a valid custody, parenting time and child support order in place when the case is dismissed.
4. Decrease in rate of termination of parental rights.
5. A resource booklet for fathers.
6. Uniform procedures across the bench and bar.

INPUTS

- Model Court Stakeholders and Collaborators
- Community Agency Partners

Children reunified with fathers Pima County Juvenile Court





Why it's so important to
engage fathers

- Better School Performance
- Attachment to School
- Staying out of Trouble
- Delayed Sexual Activity
- Fewer Teen Pregnancies



**Father presence/father
involvement**

- 63% Youth suicides from fatherless homes
- 85% Children exhibiting behavioral disorders
- 90% Homeless and runaway youth
- 75% of all adolescent patients in chemical abuse centers
- 70% juveniles in state-operated institutions

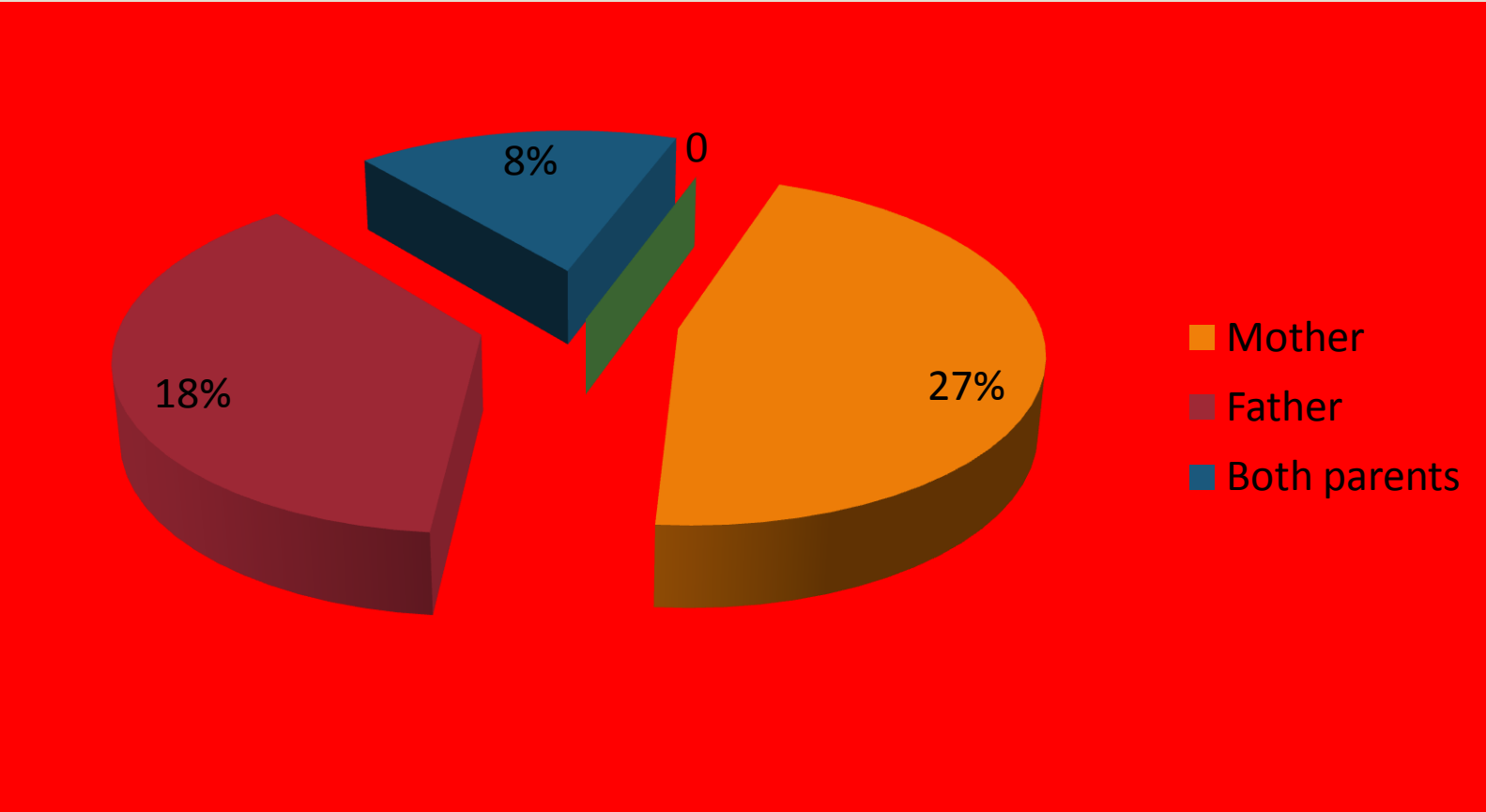
Father absence/father not involved

- 50% of our Family Drug Court children are boys.

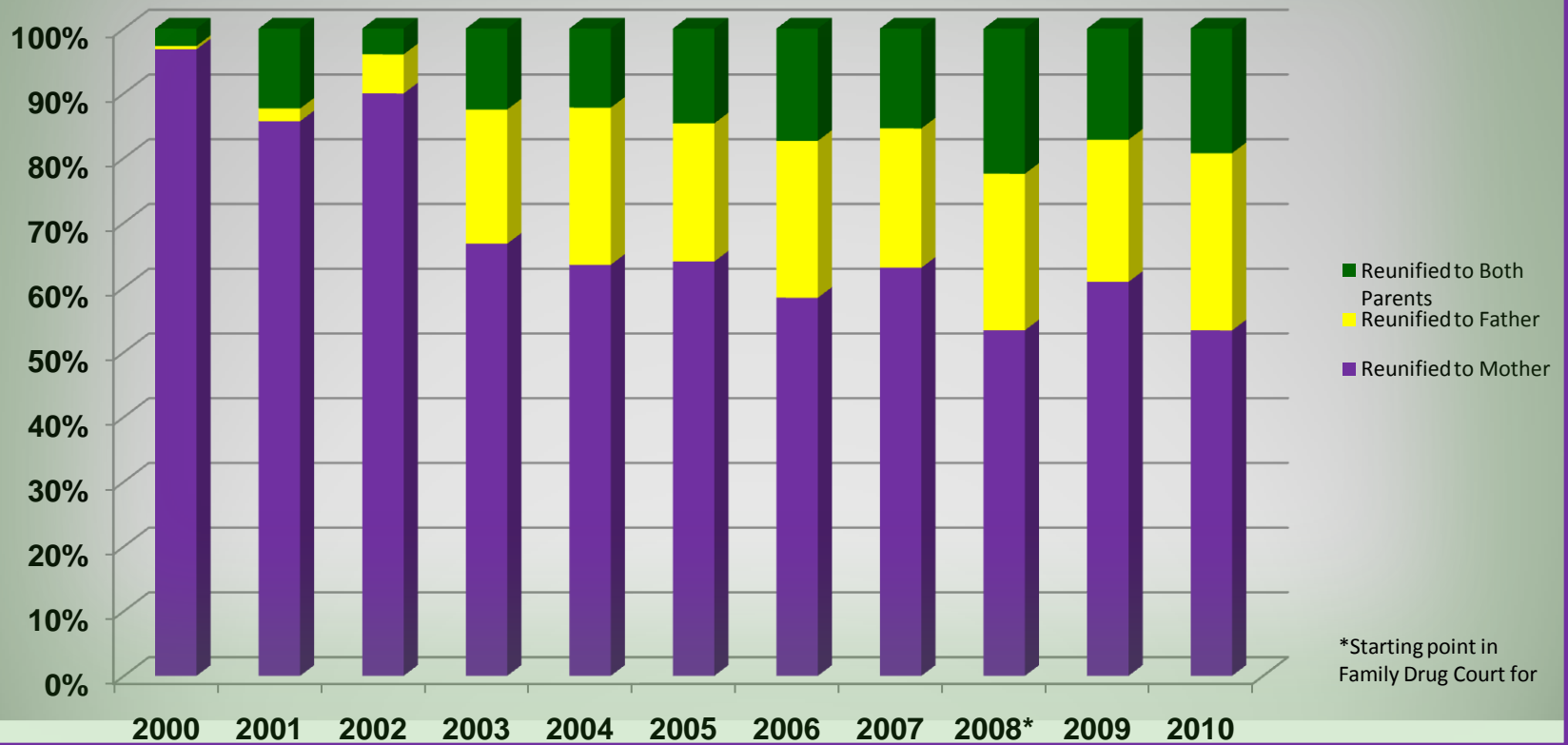


Don't forget generational issues....

All cases Reunification Rates 2010



Reunification by Type 2000 - 2010



- Male case specialist
- Male case aide from CPS
- Trauma therapy for men
- Separate sessions for men and women
- Referrals to gender specific support groups and programs (resource booklet)
- Wish list: Male support specialist and treatment

Gender specific programming in FDC

- Father-friendly resource brochure



PATERNITY/CHILD SUPPORT

[Southern Arizona Legal Aid](#)

(520) 623-9465

[Arizona Department of Economic Security](#)

<https://www.azdes.gov/appforms.aspx?Type=5&Category=95>

Forms and information regarding child support and parent rights

[Family Law Home Page Pima County Superior Court Website](#)

<http://www.sc.pima.gov/?tabid=208>

SUPPORT GROUP

[Peer Support Group for Fathers](#)

(520) 861-9092

Tuesday evenings 6:30 to 7:30 at Aviva, 153 South Plumer Ave.



Equal Opportunity Employer/Program • Under Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI & VII), and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA) of 2008, the Department prohibits discrimination in admissions, programs, services, activities, or employment based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetics and retaliation. The Department must make a reasonable accommodation to allow a person with a disability to take part in a program, service or activity. For example, this means if necessary, the Department must provide sign language interpreters for people who are deaf, a wheelchair accessible location, or enlarged print materials. It also means that the Department will take any other reasonable action that allows you to take part in and understand a program or activity, including making reasonable changes to an activity. If you believe that you will not be able to understand or take part in a program or activity because of your disability, please let us know of your disability needs in advance if at all possible. To request this document in alternative format or for further information about this policy, contact your local office; TTY/TDD Services: 7-1-1. • Free language assistance for DES services is available upon request. • Ayuda gratuita con traducciones relacionadas a los servicios de DES está disponible a solicitud del cliente.


DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY
Your Partner For A Stronger Arizona
in conjunction with Pima County Juvenile Court
Father Engagement Model Court Committee



Father Friendly
Resources in Pima County

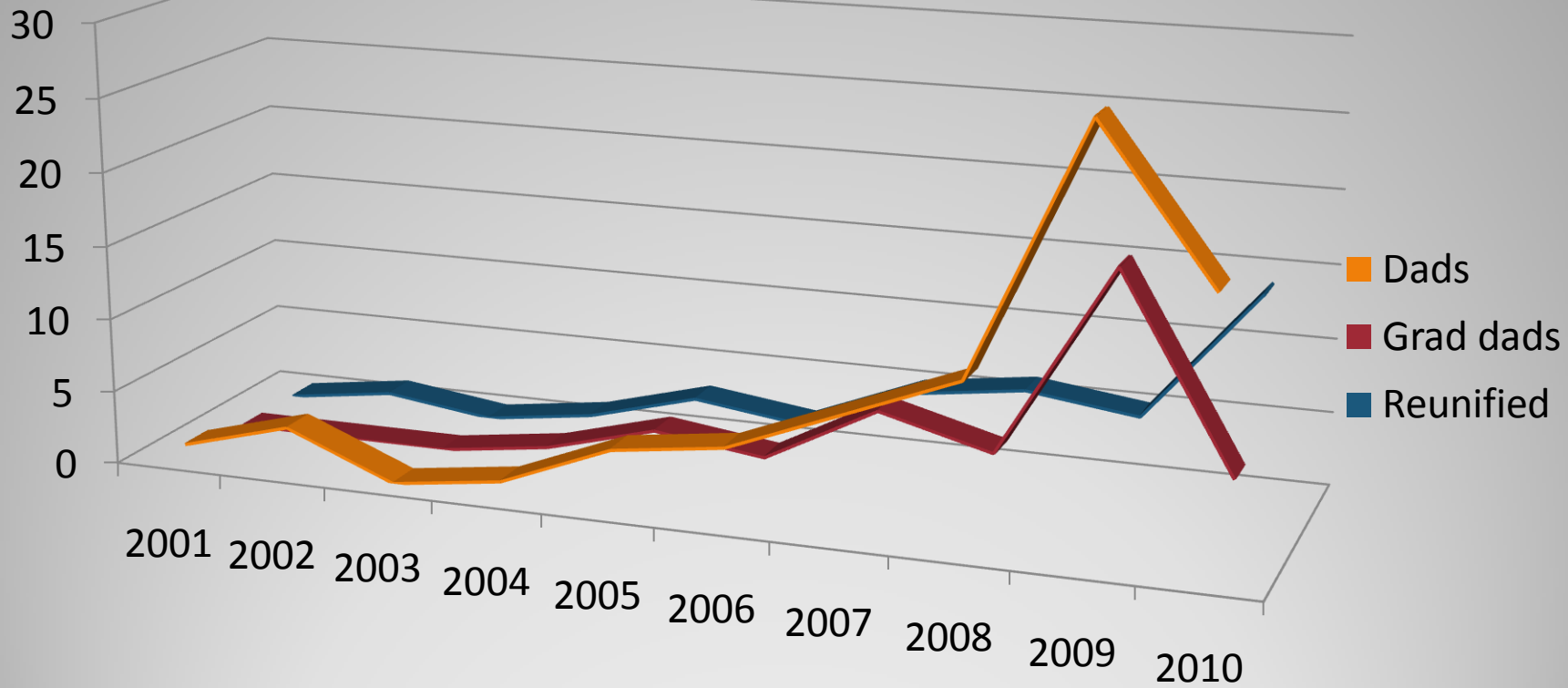
Fathers

- 82 % compliant
- 5% absent excused
- 23% absent unexcused
- 29% relapse non-compliance
- 52% graduation
- 10% voluntary termination
- 38% unsuccessful termination
- 45 reunified, 92 children, 16 single dads

Mothers

- 78% compliant
- 6% absent excused
- 27% absent unexcused
- 18% relapse non-compliance
- 42% graduation
- 19% voluntary termination
- 39% unsuccessful termination

Gender data





2001-2011

475 children
of Family Drug Court
parents
went home.