



# Restoring Fatherhood, Rebuilding Families: The Transformative Power of the FOCUS+ Program

**For over 20 years, NewDay Services FOCUS+ Program (Families Offering Children Unfailing Support + Mentoring) has adopted a highly relational, holistic wraparound approach to empower fathers involved with child protective services (CPS) to create a positive change in children's lives.**

Through 10 facilitated group sessions, fathers engage in a guided structured curriculum designed to strengthen their confidence and parenting skills in order to preserve and reunify their families. Facilitators reach out to fathers before classes start and between weekly sessions to build connections and demonstrate authentic care. Facilitators coach fathers in resolving their CPS case and address fathers' unique challenges. Fathers also build connections with other fathers, creating a "brotherhood" that often continues well after graduation.

FOCUS+ offers optional mentor navigation to provide additional tailored assistance to fathers with more complex needs. Fathers meet with their mentors one-on-one during the 10-week class and up to 6 months after graduation.

## FOCUS+ Participants

- 24% identified as Black or African American, 59% as White, and 15% as combined other categories.
- 27% were Hispanic.
- 51% had 1-2 children, 20% had 3 children, and 29% had 4 or more.
- 44% reported annual household income below \$30,000.
- 66% had a high school-level education; 8% had a middle or elementary school-level education, and 26% had a vocational or college degree.
- 45% had some incarceration history.
- 61% of graduating fathers took the class online, and 8% of graduating fathers took the class in Spanish.

**James Bell Associates completed an external evaluation to understand changes in outcomes for FOCUS+ graduates. We collected program and survey data from 600+ fathers who enrolled in FOCUS+ from January 2023 through June 2024.**



## Fathers who graduated from FOCUS+ reported...

### New perspectives, practical skills, and deeper confidence in their parenting.

FOCUS+ helps fathers....	% of fathers who improved	% growth in self-ratings
Understand the impact of childhood trauma on themselves and their children	82%	75%
Respectfully and cooperatively co-parent for the children's benefit	76%	48%
Communicate and connect with children at different developmental stages	81%	48%
Discipline appropriately for the child's age by coaching and instructing	75%	44%
Teach and model behaviors that will help children develop into healthy and self-sufficient adults	77%	41%

**Over 75% of fathers reported improvements in these areas.**

*Based on results from a retrospective pre-post survey completed by 639 FOCUS+ graduates at the end of the 10 weeks.*

### Increased willingness and capability to navigate their CPS cases.

FOCUS+ strengthens fathers'...	% of fathers who improved	% growth in self-ratings
Ability to navigate the CPS system	72%	58%
Willingness to cooperate with their caseworker and the CPS system	51%	31%
Willingness to work the services on their service/safety plan	52%	29%

**Fathers' greatest growth was in their ability to navigate the CPS system.**

*Based on results from a retrospective pre-post survey completed by 639 FOCUS+ graduates at the end of the 10 weeks.*

### Improvements to other life challenges.

Challenges include...	% of fathers experiencing	% of fathers who improved
Not having health insurance for you or your child(ren)	20%	69%
Not knowing how to deal with family or civil court	35%	63%
Unemployment	25%	62%
Not having enough money for food	17%	62%
Not having a steady place to live	27%	58%
Having car problems or lack of transportation	28%	55%

**Through individual coaching and connecting to other partner services, FOCUS+ supports fathers in strengthening resilience and stability—critical for resolving CPS cases.**

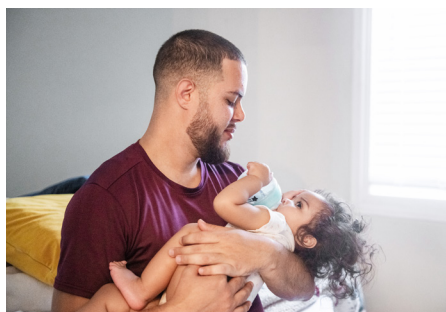
*Based on results from a survey of 29 common challenges, completed by 630 fathers early in FOCUS+ and at the end of the 10 weeks. Improvement calculations are limited to fathers who indicated they had a challenge in the particular area.*

## Fathers who engaged in mentor navigation services (16% of graduates)...

- Increased their ability to navigate the CPS system (86% of fathers).
- Increased their willingness to cooperate with their caseworkers and service/safety plans (75% of fathers).
- Reported these gains despite also reporting lower income, larger number of children, and in some cases, 10 or more other life challenges when starting FOCUS+.

Challenges include...	% of fathers experiencing	% of fathers who improved
Not having health insurance for you or your child(ren)	30%	85%
Not having enough money for food	27%	83%
Not having a steady place to live	52%	74%
Unemployment	39%	71%
Having car problems or lack of transportation	27%	67%
Physical health problems	27%	67%
Not knowing how to deal with family or civil court	48%	62%
Being unable to pay other bills	52%	61%
Drug/alcohol use	11%	60%

Based on results from a survey of 29 common challenges, completed by 44 fathers early in FOCUS+ and at the end of the mentor navigation. Improvement calculations are limited to fathers who indicated they had a challenge in the particular area.



***“As the weeks progressed I learned more than I thought I would. How to discipline my children without negativity, the circle of control, how to react to the mother of my children and have a healthy relationship.”***

**More about FOCUS+ and this evaluation:** FOCUS+ serves close to 1,000 fathers each year, receiving CPS referrals from 64 Dallas-Fort Worth and other Texas Counties. They have a 70% graduation rate.

With the generous support of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, JBA has partnered with NewDay Services since 2020 to build capacity for data collection and to design an evaluation of their fatherhood services. This evaluation includes 18 months of program data on CPS referrals (about 49% for conservatorship and 40% for family-based support services referrals from CPS), class enrollment, and mentor navigation services. Participants self-reported demographics at enrollment, and they completed surveys at session 3, session 10 (approximately an 80% response rate for each survey), and at the end of mentor navigation services (about a 55% response rate).

The next phase of the evaluation will compare prevention of foster care placements (for family-based support services) and reunification outcomes (for conservatorship cases) for children whose fathers graduate from FOCUS+ to a comparison group using CPS data.

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