



ILLINOIS COUNCIL ON RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD

www.ResponsibleFatherhood.Illinois.gov

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HISTORY & BACKGROUND

The Illinois Council on Responsible Fatherhood is a state commission established by the Illinois State Legislature to promote the positive involvement of both parents in the lives of their children. The responsible Fatherhood Act was signed into law on August 2003. The council is composed of community leaders, experts and professionals from across the state and appointed by the Governor.

KEY FOCUS AREAS

- Health & Wellness
- Funds and Resources
- Employment
- Public Policies
- Legal Obstacles
- Parenting/Parent

MISSION

The mission of the Illinois Council on Responsible Fatherhood is to significantly increase the number of children in Illinois that grow up with a responsible father in their lives. We seek to accomplish this through:

+ Assisting state agencies and other service providers in securing the resources they need to promote responsible fatherhood.

+ Raising public awareness of the impact of father absence on children.

+ Reforming perceptions within state agencies and other service providers regarding the role of fathers as parents.

+ Advocating programs, policies and legislation that will encourage the positive involvement of fathers.

+ Assisting fathers by providing resources for parenting and parent education to help in developing and maintaining healthy relationships.

WHAT IS RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD?

Fathers should be encouraged in their efforts to be involved in their children's healthy development. "Responsible Fathers" do not pose a threat to their families.

Responsible fathers are men who:

- + Wait until they are emotionally and financially prepared to father children.
- + Establish legal paternity when they biologically father a child.
- + Actively share with the child's mother in emotional and psychological care of the child.
- + Provide moral and philosophical guidance for their child.
- + Teach responsible behavior.
- + Instill character values.
- + Teach citizenship.
- + Teach by positive example.
- + Ensure their children have health insurance.
- + Model responsible behavior (including paying bills on time, following through on responsibilities and commitments.)
- + Conduct themselves with basic dignity and self-respect.
- + Recognize that a father's health and vitality are interconnected with that of their child.
- + Love, care for, and protect their child.
- + Determine with the mother reasonable limits of tolerance and discipline.
- + Prioritize quantity and quality time with their children.
- + Maintain responsible relationships and separate problems in other relationships from the relationship with their child.
- + Take responsibility for knowing basic life and child development skills, et al changing diapers, fostering early child development & providing for a child's basic health needs.
- + Recognize that fatherhood is a life-long commitment.
- + Build their child's self-esteem, self-worth and self-confidence.
- + Ensure their child is financially supported.

GOALS

+ To promote father-friendly policies statewide in state and community agencies, faith-based organizations and institutions.

+ To provide assistance and resources to local fatherhood groups.

+ To build partnerships with state agencies' fatherhood program staff and with community and faith based organizations.

+ To enhance public awareness of the important role of fathers in their children's development and learning.

+ To assist fathers and fatherhood groups find supports and resources for employment, health issues, literacy, child development and building family relationships.

+ To assist in building resources for professional development for men and women who provide services and assistance to fathers and families.

For more information on the Council and full text of the Responsible Fatherhood Act are available at:

www.ResponsibleFatherhood.Illinois.gov