

Impact Evaluation of the Saint Francis Ministries' Fatherhood FIRE Program on Father Engagement and Family Outcomes

Society for Social Work and
Research Conference

January 17, 2026



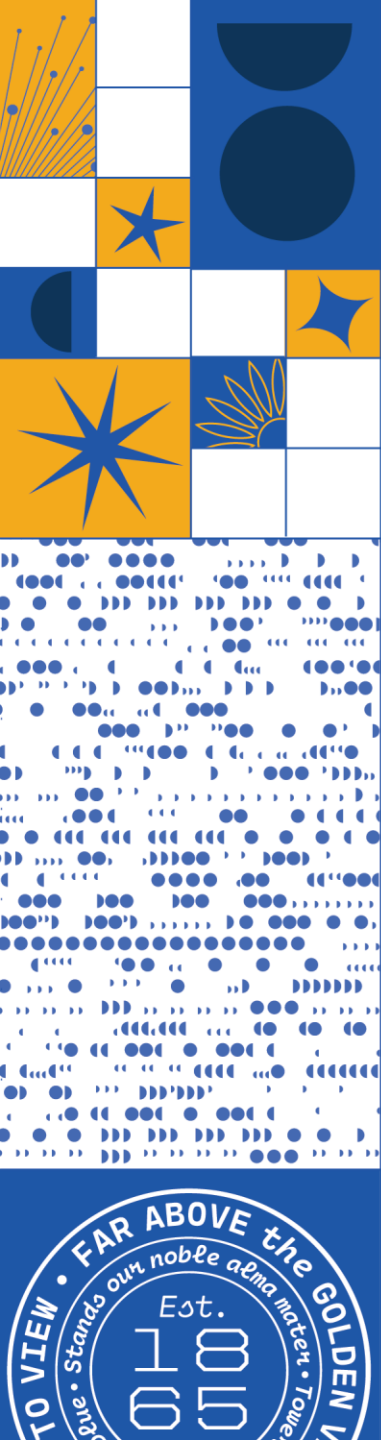
Acknowledgements



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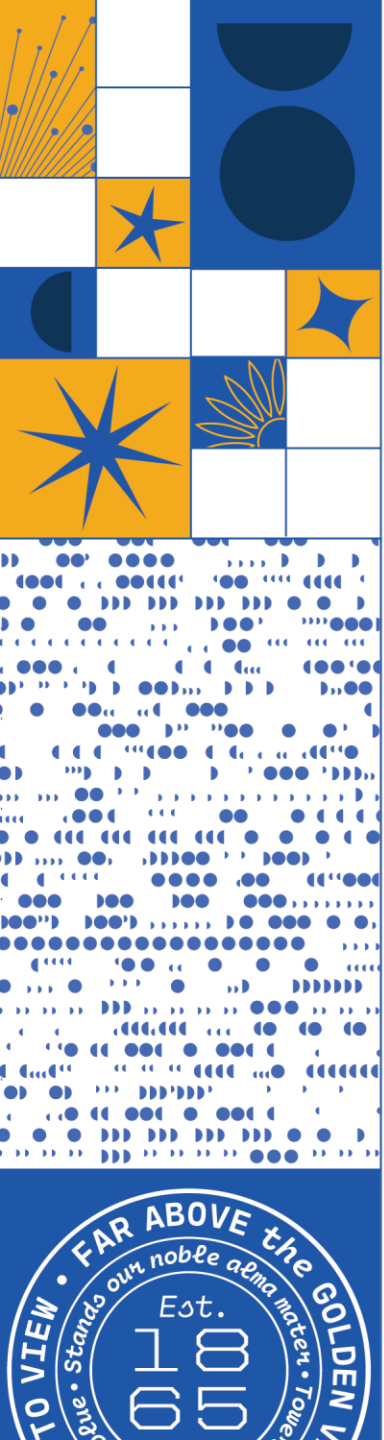
Acknowledgements: The evaluation team acknowledges and thanks the Saint Francis Ministries implementation team for their vision and commitment to supporting fathers with the skills, resources, and supports to promote father engagement in healthy parenting. We also thank the and parents who participated in the Fatherhood FIRE program in Kansas, Nebraska, Texas, and Arkansas. Their insights and contributions made this research possible.

Funding: This presentation was prepared under Grant Number 90ZJ0047-02-00 from the Office of Family Assistance (OFA) within the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), U. S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS). The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views or policies of HHS, ACF, or OFA.



Active Fathers and Why They Matter

- Children with engaged fathers have shown greater academic success, positive social behaviors, and fewer social-emotional challenges (Amato & Gilbreth, 1999; Cabrera et al., 2017; Yoder et al., 2016)
- Strong co-parenting relationships are associated with improved child well-being (Carlson, McLanahan, & Brooks-Gunn, 2008)
- Fathers are eager to play an active role in their children's lives (Holcomb et al., 2014; Edin & Nelson, 2014).
- Some fathers, *especially those involved in child welfare system*, face social and economic barriers limiting their involvement.



Program Context



- **Partnership:** Public, Private, University partnership in four states (Kansas, Nebraska, Arkansas, Texas).
- **Goal:** Build relationships between fathers and children, support co-parenting, work toward economic stability for families, and educate and support fathers involved in family violence.
- **Program Design:** 9 to 13-week series of adapted group-based evidence-based workshops, paired with individual case management.
 - 24/7 Dad: a general skill building class for fathers;
 - The Parent Project: provides education and support for co-parents;
 - Nurturing Fathers: a program developing attitudes and skills for male nurturance.
- **Enhancement:** Nurturing Fathers Program addressing behavioral health issues (i.e., anger, aggression, and family violence).





Four Guiding Research Questions

Do fathers participating in the enhanced Saint Francis Fatherhood FIRE program demonstrate greater improvement than those receiving fatherhood services as usual in the following areas:

- RQ1: Healthy relationship skills (i.e., compromise and reactivity) as measured using the Romantic Partner Conflict Scale (RPCS).
- RQ2: Parenting skills (i.e., satisfaction, efficacy) as measured using the Parent Sense of Competence scale (PSOC).
- RQ3: Co-parenting skills (i.e., positive, negative co-parenting) as measured using the Daily Co-Parenting Survey (DCOP).
- RQ4: Father-child engagement in 9 domains of involvement as measured using the Inventory of Father Involvement (IFI).



Hypotheses

- Both treatment and control groups would experience significant improvements in four areas measured.
- Enhanced program content of treatment group will build upon evidence-supported benefits of BAU group.
- Fathers receiving enhanced treatment group services would demonstrate greater and more sustained improvements in four areas measured than fathers receiving BAU services.





Evaluation Design

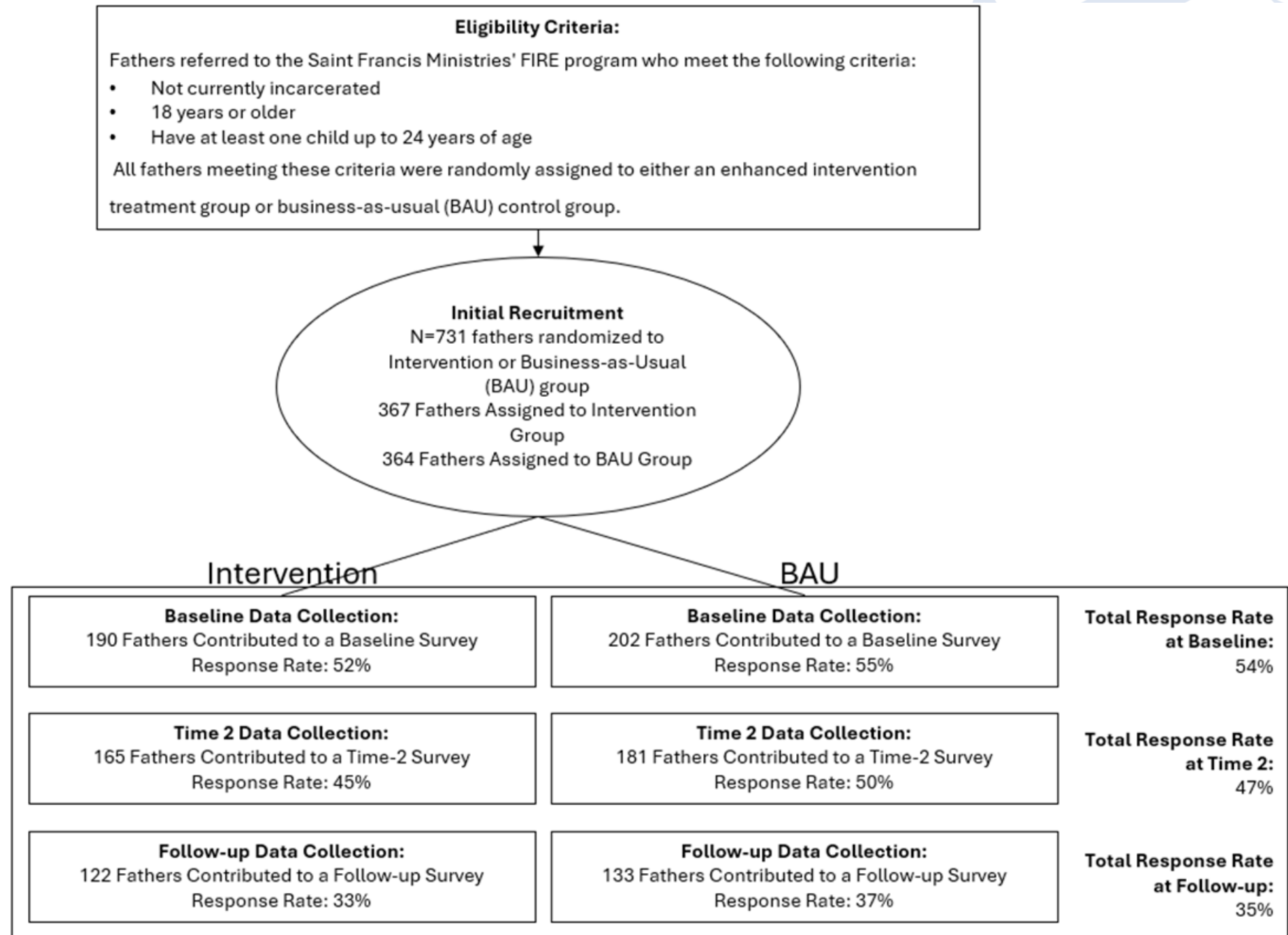
- **RCT:** Eligible fathers (18 years or older, not incarcerated, 1+ child >24 years old) randomized to BAU or Enhanced Treatment Group
- **Data Collection:** Online REDCap survey including battery of four surveys across three timepoints
 - T1 baseline survey prior to receiving the program
 - T2 survey upon completion of the program
 - T3 follow up survey three-months following program completion
- **Analytic Method:** Stepwise intent-to-treat hypothesis testing using mixed, multi-level modeling (MLM) with a full information maximum likelihood estimator (FIML)

Sample

N=731

BAU n=364
Enhanced n=367

More than 60%
Non-residential
fathers



RQ 1 Healthy Relationship Findings

*Romantic Partner Conflict Scale (RPCS; Zacchilli et al., 2009)

Partially confirmed hypothesis

- All fathers regardless of random assignment improved over time in one Health Relationship area
 - Compromise
- Within-group analyses
 - BAU group fathers experienced improvements in Compromise
 - Enhanced group experienced improvements in Compromise
 - Small effect sizes
- Between-group analyses found no statistically significant improvements

Within-group analyses

	BAU Δ T3–T1 (SE)	TX Δ T3–T1 (SE)
Compromise	0.32 (0.11)**	0.37 (0.11)**
Reactivity	0.15 (0.15)	0.15 (0.16)

RQ 2 Parenting Skill Findings

***Parent Sense of Competence Scale (PSOC; Johnston & Mash, 1989)**

Partially confirmed hypothesis

- All fathers regardless of random assignment improved over time in two Parenting construct areas
 - Parenting Efficacy
 - Overall Parent Sense of Competence
- Within-group analyses
 - BAU group fathers experienced improvements in Parenting Efficacy
 - Enhanced group experienced change in Parenting Efficacy and Overall Parent Sense of Competence
 - Small effect sizes
- Between-group analyses found no statistically significant improvements

Within-group analyses

	BAU Δ T3–T1 (SE)	TX Δ T3–T1 (SE)
Satisfaction	-1.37 (0.95)	1.00 (0.94)
Efficacy	2.30 (0.57)***	2.13 (0.56)***
Overall	0.93 (1.25)	3.03 (1.23)*

RQ 3 Co-Parenting Skills Findings

*Daily Co-Parenting (DCOP; McDaniel et al., 2017)

Partially confirmed hypothesis

- All fathers regardless of random assignment improved over time in two Co-Parenting skill areas
 - Positive co-parenting
 - Overall co-parenting
- Within-group analyses
 - BAU group fathers experienced improvements in all three areas Positive, Negative, and Overall Co-Parenting
 - Enhanced group experienced changes Positive and Overall Co-Parenting no change
 - Small effect sizes except for Negative Co-Parenting which was moderate
- Between-group analyses found Enhanced Group experienced greater and more sustained improvement in reducing Negative Co-Parenting
 - Lacked baseline equivalence between groups

Within-group analyses

	BAU Δ T3-T1 (SE)	TX Δ T3-T1 (SE)
Positive Behavior	0.40 (0.14)**	0.59 (0.15)***
Negative Behavior	0.41 (0.15)**	-0.03 (0.15)
Overall Co-Parenting	0.39 (0.13)**	0.38 (0.13)**

RQ 4 Father-Child Engagement Findings

*Inventory of Father Involvement (IFI; Hawkins et al., 2002)

Partially confirmed hypothesis

- All fathers regardless of random assignment improved over time in all ten Father-Child Engagement areas
- Within-group analyses
 - BAU group fathers experienced improvements in seven areas
 - Enhanced group experienced improvements in nine areas
 - Small effect sizes except Time which was moderate
- Between-group analyses found no statistically significant improvements
- Consideration of involvement concepts for non-residential fathers

Within-group analyses

	BAU Δ T3-T1 (SE)	TX Δ T3-T1 (SE)
Discipline	0.47 (0.10) ***	0.56 (0.11) ***
School	0.24 (0.09) ***	0.25 (0.09) ***
Mother Support	0.40 (0.14) **	0.39 (0.14) **
Providing	0.05 (0.09)	0.24 (0.09) **
Time	0.23 (0.10) *	0.44 (0.10) ***
Praise	0.11 (0.07)	0.09 (0.08)
Talent	0.31 (0.09) ***	0.34 (0.09) ***
Reading	0.42 (0.11) ***	0.54 (0.11) ***
Attentiveness	0.15 (0.11)	0.27 (0.11) *
Mean	0.24 (0.07) **	0.38 (0.07) ***



Discussion of Program Effects

- **Built Stronger Families and Relationships**
 - FIRE program helped fathers create healthier relationships, strengthen parenting skills, improve co-parenting, and deepen connections with their children.
- **Increased Parenting Confidence**
 - Fathers reported greater confidence in parenting abilities and a stronger overall sense of competence as parents.
- **Deepened Father-Child Engagement**
 - Measurable improvement across all ten key areas of father-child engagement.



Limitations

- Sample generalizability
 - Distinctive sample primarily regional, child welfare involved, and not living full-time with their children
 - Attrition & response rates limit power for between-group detection.
- Use and adaptation of existing measures and resulting validity
- Baseline non-equivalence on Negative Co-Parenting results may have influenced significant finding.

Implications

Practice

- SFM established two viable and feasible program models.
- Either could be provided based on clinical judgement or preferences (e.g., use enhanced track where co-parenting conflict/violence is salient).
- Prioritize co-parenting skill-building with DV screening & partnerships.

Research

- Measure outcomes in future studies should examine maltreatment and family violence prevention (harsh parenting, stress, warmth).
- Longer follow-up; stratified randomization/blocked designs; subgroup analyses.
- Refine father engagement measures for non-residential/child-welfare involved contexts.

Contact



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