



Institute for
Research on
Poverty

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON



CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT
Prevention Board



Recognizing the Diversity of Fathers and Families in Child and Family Services

March 1st, 2023

Webinar begins at 1pm EST/12pm CST/11am MST/10am PST

Tova Walsh

University of Wisconsin-Madison,
School of Social Work



This webinar will address...

- Strategies to effectively serve Black fathers and Latino fathers in services
- Ways to align services with the cultural values and practices of client fathers and families
- Ways to promote a culture of inclusion that recognizes fathers' multiple intersecting identities



Benefits of father involvement

Positive father involvement is associated with positive social, emotional, and cognitive outcomes for children from infancy to adolescence, and into adulthood.



Amato, 1994; Deutsch, Servis, & Payne, 2001; Flouri & Buchanan, 2003; McBride, Schoppe-Sullivan, & Ho, 2005; Mosley & Thomson, 1995; Parke et al., 2002; Sarkadi, Kristiansson, Oberklaid, & Bremberg, 2007; Volling & Belsky, 1992; Yeung, Duncan, & Hill, 2000

Benefits of father involvement in family services

Father involvement in services – including permanency planning and parenting training, Head Start and schools – is associated with improved child outcomes.



Coakley, 2008; Fagan & Iglesias, 1999; Lindahl, Tollefson, Risser, & Lovejoy, 2008; Nord, Brinhall, & West, 1997

Recognizing the diversity of fathers and families in child and family services

- Cultural values and beliefs shape parenting
- Norms and expectations for fathers vary within and across communities
- Stereotypes and biases around fathers, fatherhood, and father engagement exist in and across all communities
- Get to know the fathers you're serving

DIVERSITY-INFORMED TENETS FOR WORK WITH INFANTS, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

1. Self-Awareness Leads to Better Services for Families
2. Champion Children's Rights Globally
3. Work to Acknowledge Privilege and Combat Discrimination
4. Recognize and Respect Non-Dominant Bodies of Knowledge
5. Honor Diverse Family Structures
6. Understand That Language Can Hurt or Heal
7. Support Families in Their Preferred Language
8. Allocate Resources to Systems Change
9. Make Space and Open Pathways
10. Advance Policy That Supports All Families

From: <https://diversityinformedtenets.org/>

Recommendations from the Harris Professional Development Network Fatherhood Engagement Committee

<https://www.irvingharrisfdn.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Father-Engagement-Concept-Paper-FINAL.pdf>

- Advance equity in parenting outreach/engagement... [by using] more inclusive gender-neutral terms (i.e., parent, guardian, caregiver), a broad diversity of caregiver images, ...
- Ensure that father/male caregiver programs are respectful of, and aligned with, cultural values, principles, and practices of the population served. Programs should articulate an explicit commitment to eliminating gender, racial, class bias.
- Advocate for increased investment in evidence-informed, culturally competent co-parenting programs that are designed to support the healthy development of a variety of family structures.

Overcoming barriers

Beliefs that act as barriers

- Father participation is not important, extra / optional
- Father-child relationship is secondary
- Fathers' capacity to be caregivers is limited
- Fathers as risk factors

Provider barriers

- Biases
- Discomfort or uncertainty engaging fathers

Additional barriers

- Competing responsibilities, particularly work related
- Tension with child's mother

Strategies for engaging fathers

- Preparation and training
- Learn about and respond to fathers' needs
- Reinforce fathers' contribution
- Reduce barriers to participation
- Connection with other fathers
- Parenting and co-parenting
- Who does the outreach? Who provides services?
- Support and referrals to quality, culturally-sensitive community resources



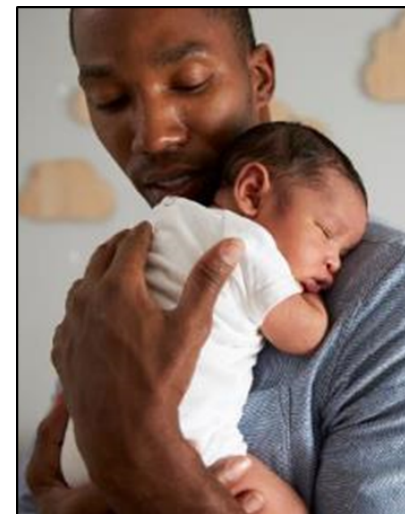
Darryl Davidson

Milwaukee Fatherhood Initiative



Milwaukee Fatherhood Initiative

MFI is a collaborative effort between the City of Milwaukee Mayor, Wisconsin Community Services Inc., and numerous partner organizations assisting fathers in helping their children to thrive.



The core belief is that positive father involvement strengthens children, families and communities.

The MFI is a hub in a collaboration designed to facilitate fathers' seamless access to a wealth of supportive services.

- Child support services
- Offender reentry services
- Workforce development /
employment consultation
- Permanent supportive housing
- Energy assistance
- Behavioral Health Services
- Child Development Screening



Many of these services are delivered at the same facility to allow for close coordination among agencies serving mutual clients

Develop a Diverse Support Network that Empowers Fathers in Every Aspect of their Lives

- Maintain an open door to diverse fathers and varying circumstances.
- Establish referral partners that prioritize where fathers need support (e.g. youth serving, public health, legal, social service, etc.) so providers build a comprehensive network that strengthens fathers in every aspect of their lives
- Promote employment and education opportunities; develop father-focused community events; institute father-friendly workplace policies
- Have maternal and child health programs work to establish connection and build trusting relationships with fathers and show fathers that they are valued, needed, and respected

Fathers need to co-lead these conversations. After all, fathers best understand what difficulties fathers face when navigating systems and can propose informed solutions.



“We [fathers] are part of our family and community structure; we aren’t add-ons.”

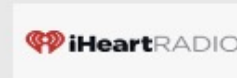
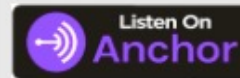
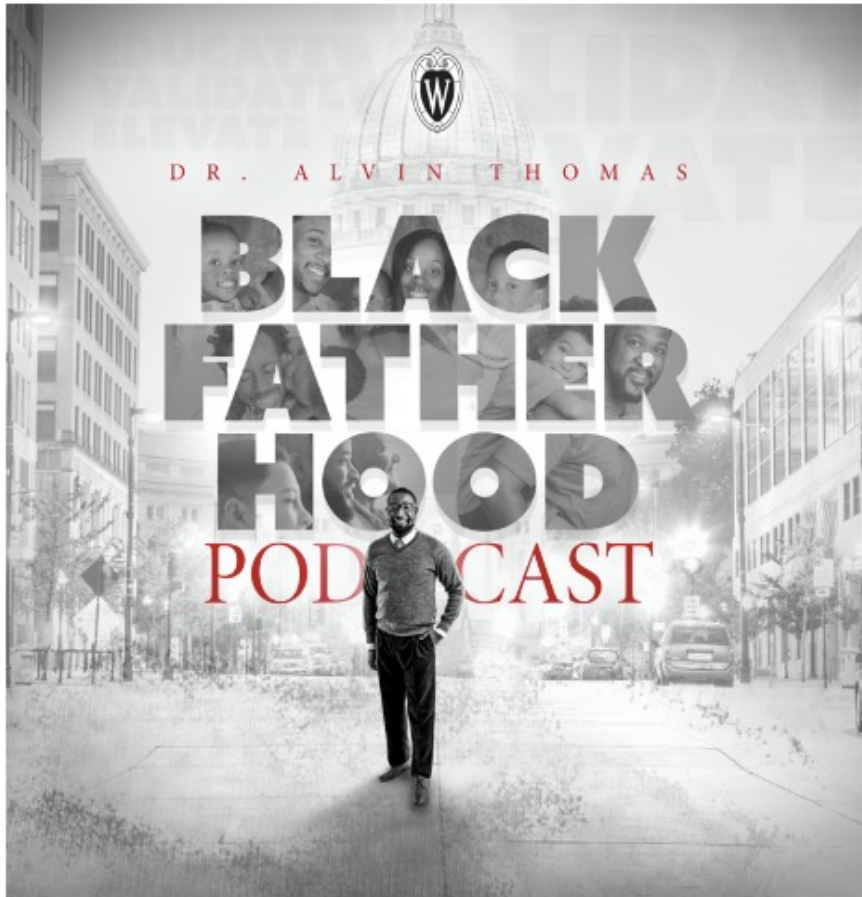
Assess your environment

- Do you offer a “father-friendly” environment? Are there positive messages around your office that are reflective and reinforcing about fathers?
- Have you assessed the “attitude” of inclusion of fathers in your program? Are all staff aware that fathers are valued?
- Do you have training in place to support and empower father engagement?
- Is your program ready to engage fathers as partners in its work? Do you include fathers on advisory committees and in focus groups?
- Do you have policies in place to support father involvement, partnership and engagement?

Alvin Thomas

University of Wisconsin-Madison,
School of Human Ecology



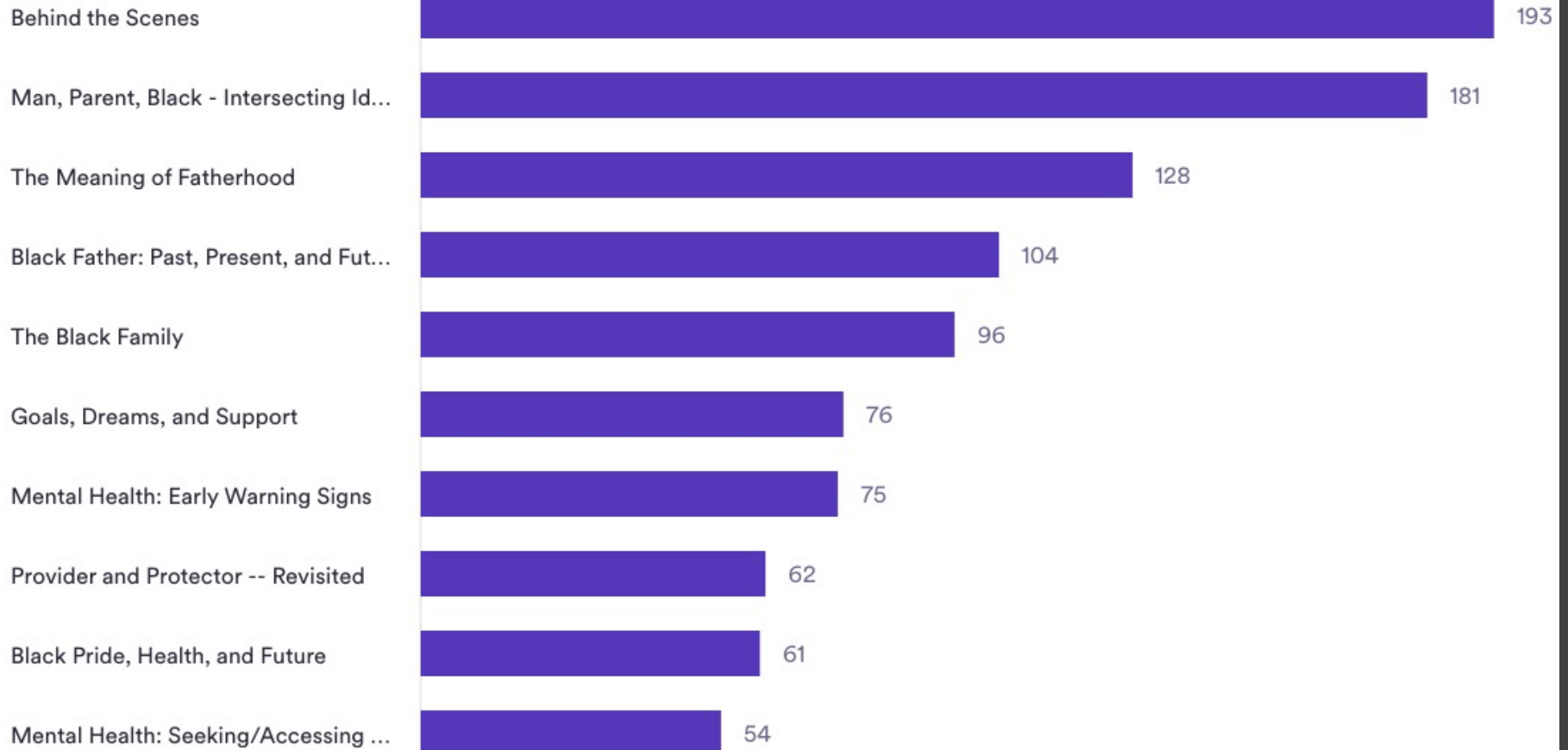


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Plays



Podcast Directory

Black Podcasts

Black (human racial classification)

Fatherhood

20 Best Black Dad Podcasts

Jan 19, 2023 · [Contents](#)

The **best Black Dad podcasts** from thousands of podcasts on the web and ranked by traffic, social media followers, domain authority & freshness.

15. [Black Fatherhood Podcast with Dr. Alvin Thomas](#) ⋮



The Black Fatherhood Podcast explores a range of topics central to Black fatherhood. The conversations bring together scholars and experts to examine the historical context, benefits, and current societal factors influencing Black fatherhood, offering key insights and actions to consider. Dr. Thomas, is the Phyllis Northway Faculty Fellow & Assistant Professor of Human Development & Family Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison's School of Human Ecology. He is the founder and host of the series that wants to educate, validate and elevate the importance of Black fatherhood.

anchor.fm/alvin-th.. [+ Follow](#)

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Cristina Mogro Wilson

University of Connecticut, School of Social Work





RECOGNIZING THE DIVERSITY OF FATHERS AND FAMILIES IN CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

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PROFESSOR, UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT, SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

CRISTINA.WILSON@UCONN.EDU

Wednesday, March 1, 2023

1:00–2:00 Eastern | 12:00–1:00 Central | 11:00–12:00
Mountain | 10:00–11:00 Pacific

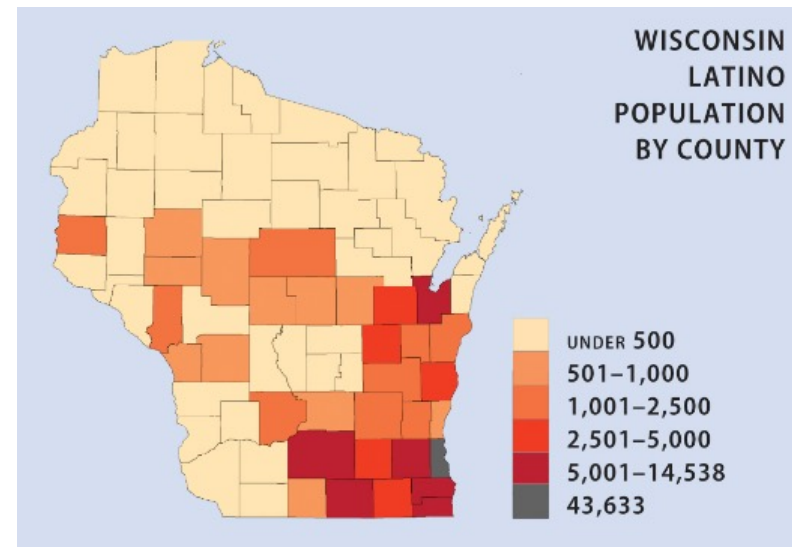
HISPANICS IN THE US

- U.S. Hispanic population reached 62.1 million in 2020, an increase of 23% over the previous decade that outpaced the nation's 7% overall population growth, making them the nation's largest ethnic or racial minority
- Hispanic or Latino children currently make up roughly 1 in 4 of all children in the United States, and by 2050 are projected to make up 1 in 3, similar to the number of white children
- 3 largest Hispanic subgroups: Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, & Cuban Americans
- Hispanics disproportionately experience higher rates of poverty, unemployment, and segregation.
- One third of all Hispanic children in the United States, are in poverty, more than in any other racial/ethnic group
- The majority of Hispanic fathers live with all their children (73%) and their partner (82%) Few have fathered children with more than one woman, and most are employed (89%), yet most are low income (63%)
- Most Hispanic fathers (64 percent) are immigrants, and half are Spanish-dominant speakers



LATINOS IN WISCONSIN

- Hispanics/Latinos are the second largest and fastest growing minority racial and ethnic population in Wisconsin, an increase of 46.8% since the 2000 Census.
- Two-thirds of Wisconsin's Hispanic/Latino population was concentrated in Milwaukee, Dane, Racine, Kenosha, and Brown counties.
- Wisconsin's Hispanic/Latino population is relatively young, with a median age of 24.8 years in 2008, compared to 38.2 years for the total state population.
- Reflected change across northeastern Wisconsin:
 - Oshkosh, the Hispanic population has grown to 3,000 people, or 4.4% of the city's population. About one-third of those residents moved to the city in the past 10 years, according to the 2020 U.S. Census.
- Green Bay, home to the largest Hispanic population north of Milwaukee, Hispanic people make up more than 40% of the population in the neighborhoods that fall within four census tracts on the city's east side. Almost one in five Green Bay residents identified as Hispanic in the 2020 census.
- More than 45,000 Hispanic and Latino people now live in Brown, Outagamie and Winnebago counties, a number that has increased 45% since 2010



HOW ARE LATINO FATHERS INVOLVED IN THEIR CHILDREN'S LIVES?

- Mothers and fathers make unique contributions to their children's development, over and above the influence of the other parent
- Compared to White fathers, Latino fathers are more involved in physical play (e.g., peek-a-boo), and encourage risk-taking than mothers, and use higher quality language in interactions with their children than mothers
- Father caregiving can buffer the negative effect of maternal depression on infant distress
- Latino mothers report that their children's fathers are highly engaged (i.e., accessible, engaged, and responsible) with their children, and engaging in more responsibility activities (i.e., care-giving, discipline, decision making)



IMPORTANCE OF FATHERHOOD IDENTITY

- **Fatherhood Identity**

- How strongly a Latino father holds the identity of father as central to his overall identity
- The identity of father takes precedence over other identities (e.g., son, student, employee).

- For many Latino fathers, identifying strongly as a father can serve as an avenue to building productive roles, developing loving relationships, and integrating into social networks that allow for increases in social and cultural capital.

- For others, the experience of entering into fatherhood might be an event in their lives that is life-changing and leads to a break from negative behaviors



CULTURAL VALUES



- Latino parenting has also highlighted the importance of cultural values
- **Familismo**- feelings of loyalty, reciprocity, and solidarity towards members of the family as well as to the an extension of self
 - Mexican American fathers who hold high familism values (i.e., family rituals) report being more involved (monitoring, interacting) with their children than fathers with lower familism values
 - Latino mothers and fathers who highly believe that familism is important have children who exhibit good psychosocial functioning (social problem solving skills, social self-efficacy), have fewer depressive symptoms and are more engaged in school
- **Traditional Machismo**- level of pride in one's "maleness" or masculinity
- **Caballerismo**- chivalry, provider, leadership, trustworthiness, courage, and humility
 - Fathers who hold less traditional gender roles (i.e., men are not more integral to society and the family than women) are more involved in all aspects of parenting (e.g., monitoring, supervising) than fathers who hold more traditional beliefs.
- **Respect** – bidirectional relationship in parenting
 - *"Ni importa la edad. Para esa palabra, respeto, no existe edad. Porque un adulto no puede faltarle el respeto a un niño, ni el niño tampoco al adulto."*
 - Translation: "Age does not matter. Because for that word- respect -age does not exist. Because an adult must not disrespect a child, nor a child to an adult."

-Juan, 25-years-old, 3 children, born in Puerto Rico, left PR at age 19

“

- Engagement in their child's lives was very important
- Fathers were highly involved and were responsive to their children
 - Engaged in play
 - Learning about child's interests and abilities.



When I'm going to like the school or I've gone to some community agencies or whatever, I'm with mom so everything is pointed to mom, to mom. And I'm like I'm here. I know everything about my son and I know how to answer any questions. I take my kids to the doctors, I do everything with my kids, just like mom does...but everything is, society is towards mom, mom, mom.”

-Pedro, a 33 year old father of 2 children who was born in the U.S.

“I think that's the key in everything. Talk to me, I listen. I talk to you, you listen.”

RECRUITMENT IDEAS

- Maximize word-of-mouth marketing (e.g. “bring a friend”)
- Get referrals from community partners (e.g. Head Start and Early Head Start, government social service agencies, faith groups, and schools).
- Gain access to fathers by going to where they are (e.g. barber shops, sports arenas, and community centers). Target them through businesses frequented by men (e.g. car repair shops and sporting goods stores). Promote the program with fathers at workplaces.
- Staff the program with men (e.g. as facilitators).
- Provide assistance or referrals for issues important to specific groups of fathers (e.g. legal assistance for fathers involved in custody issues).
- Provide incentives of interest to fathers (e.g. gift certificates for landscaping or hardware and fix-up projects). Serve food at your program sessions and provide child care.

RETENTION & ENGAGEMENT OF LATINO FATHERS

- Tailor interventions to include fathers
- Find out what MOTIVATES and ENGAGES fathers in your community – ASK!
- Focus on building fatherhood as central to their identity
- Create culturally appropriate care
 - Stress cultural values that are protective: the importance of the family (**familismo**), the importance of being the provider, having courage, humility (**Caballerismo**), *having respect from and for their children* (**Respeto**)
- Focus on the importance of:
 - close family relationships
 - interpersonal responsiveness
 - interdependence
 - personal dignity
 - respect



SOME ARTICLES

**FAMILIES
in SOCIETY**
*The Journal of
Contemporary Social Services*



The following collection “Fathers in Child and Family Services” highlights the importance of fathers in family life, and how to integrate fathers in services provided. [Fathers in Child and Family Services : Families in Society: SAGE Journals \(sagepub.com\)](https://journals.sagepub.com/topic/collections-fis/fis-1-fathers_in_child_and_family_services/fis)
https://journals.sagepub.com/topic/collections-fis/fis-1-fathers_in_child_and_family_services/fis

We have opened these articles so that they are free-to-read for the month of March

Robbers, M. L. P. (2011). Father Involvement among Young Hispanics. *Families in Society*, 92(2), 169–175.

Capello, D. C. (2006). Recruiting Hispanic Foster Parents: Issues of Culture, Language, and Social Policy. *Families in Society*, 87(4), 529–535.

Pearson, J., & Fagan, J. (2019). State Efforts to Support the Engagement of Nonresident Fathers in the Lives of Their Children. *Families in Society*, 100(4), 392–408.

Stolz, H. E., LaGraff, M. R., Mullican, K. N., Connor, L. A., Green, M. J., & Clouthier, S. (2020). Exploring Fathers’ Engagement With Home Visiting: The Tennessee Dad Project. *Families in Society*, 101(4), 498–513.

Pearson, J., Henson, A., & Fagan, J. (2020). What Nonresident Mothers and Fathers Have to Say About a Mother-Only Coparenting Intervention: A Qualitative Assessment of Understanding Dads™. *Families in Society*, 101(2), 167–179.

Questions and Discussion



Thank You!



www.preventionboard.wi.gov

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<https://www.diversityoffatherhood.com/>