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FATHER PARTICIPATION IN FAMILY-BASED PROGRAMMING:
THE SAMPLE CASE OF A PROGRAM TARGETING AT-RISK ADOLESCENTS

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
Angie Marie Schock, B.A.

The Ohio State University
2002

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study was to enhance our understanding of influential factors that are related to fathers’ participation in a family-based diversion program for at-risk adolescents. While an emerging literature exists regarding the impact that father participation in family-based programming has on the treatment of adolescent problem behaviors, research in this area is underdeveloped.

A qualitative methodology was used to explore the reasons contributing to fathers’ decisions regarding their participation in the program. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a total of twenty fathers (ten participating fathers and ten non-participating fathers), and the sample was strategically selected to represent a diverse group of fathers of daughters and sons from various ethnic backgrounds, socio-economic levels, and family structures. During the interviews, fathers were asked to respond to the following two questions: (a) “What specific factors influenced your decision to participate in the program?” and (b) “Why do you think that fathers, in general, do not participate as often as mothers do in our—or most—family-based programs?”

Fathers’ responses to the first question were related to the father’s family structure. Also, findings showed that the factors that influenced the fathers’ decisions to participate could be classified into one of the following four categories: adolescent-specific reasons; father-specific reasons; mother-specific reasons; and program-specific
reasons. Fathers' responses to the second question were very similar among all twenty fathers, despite the fathers' participation status and despite their family structure. In particular, fathers' responses to the second question centered around two distinct themes: traditional mother/father roles in the family; and feelings of inadequacy or discomfort. Future research directions and implications for family-based programming are discussed in relation to four important issues that emerged from the study's findings: (a) strategies for operationalizing father participation, (b) the inclusion of multiple family perspectives, (c) characteristics of the co-parental relationship, and (d) the influence of age and gender difference in the father-offspring dyad.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

One of life’s lessons for finding personal happiness is to surround one’s self with happy people, people who love what they do. I have been so very fortunate in my success at accomplishing that during my graduate work here at OSU, and I would like to express my appreciation to several people who have supported me along the way.

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Finally, I want to thank the twenty fathers who agreed to share their stories with me...I wish them all continued fulfillment in their roles as fathers.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The literature pertaining to familial influence on the development of unhealthy behaviors among youth has grown considerably, yet the father's role has received much less attention in the literature than the role of mothers (Dadds, 1995; Phares, 1997; Phares & Compas, 1992). Similarly, the impact of paternal participation in family-based mental health services has been scarcely addressed, and these studies have been limited to behavioral parent training interventions for families of young children experiencing externalizing problems (Phares, 1997). Furthermore, there is even less knowledge regarding fathers' levels of involvement in family-based programming for problematic youth, largely because of their relatively low participation rates (Klitzner, Bamberger, & Gruenewald, 1990; Lengua, et al., 1992). Although there have been some recent studies of barriers to and predictors of fathers' participation in various types of family-based interventions, such as parent education programs (Hadadian & Merbler, 1995; Meyers, 1993), prevention programs (Sloth, Redmon, Hockaday, & Shin, 1996), and family therapy (Carr, 1998; Hecker, 1991), much of this work has been based on theoretical accounts and/or clinicians' assumptions. However, Meyers (1993) presents two domains
in parent education programs that should be considered when trying to encourage father participation, namely structural issues (e.g., time/location of the program, available childcare) and content-related issues (program curricula, inclusion of male support groups).

The limited empirical work that has been completed on father participation in family-based programming does appear to support and build upon Meyers' classification. First, pragmatic issues, such as the time of the program and childcare/transportation problems, consistently have been shown to be factors that influence fathers' participation (Spoth & Redmon, 1992; 1995). Second, evidence for additional father-specific and familial variables have been identified as likely predictors of fathers' participation in family-based programs (Gavidia-Payne & Stoneman, 1997; Lengua, et al., 1992; Spoth & Redmon, 1995; Spoth, Redmon, Hockaday, & Shin, 1996; Spoth, Redmon, Khan, & Shin, 1997). In general, several (a) family demographic variables (family structure, household income), (b) father characteristics (age, educational level, ethnicity, occupational characteristics, past use of parenting resources), and (c) characteristics of the youth (age, gender, nature/severity of the behavior) have been found to be associated with paternal participation in family programming. However, family structure and household income, the father's educational level and past use of parenting resources, and the severity of the youth's behavior have been much more conclusively linked than findings regarding the father's age, ethnicity, and occupational characteristics, and the youth's age, gender, and nature of the problem behavior (Spoth, Redmon, Khan, & Shin, 1997). More specifically, fathers from two-parent families with middle-to higher level incomes and higher educational levels, and fathers who report past use of parenting programs and who perceive their children to be at greater risk for the behavior(s) being
targeted by the intervention are most likely to participate in parenting interventions (Lengua. et al., 1992; Spoth & Redmon, 1995; Spoth, Redmon, Hockaday, & Shin, 1996; Spoth, Redmon, Khan, & Shin, 1997).

In addition, other perceptions/attitudes of fathers have been assessed with self-report questionnaires to investigate whether specific fathers' perceptions predict program participation (Spoth & Redmon, 1995; Spoth, Redmon, Khan, & Shin, 1997). For example, Spoth and colleagues (1997) measured the father's (a) perceived intervention benefits, (b) perceived barriers to participation, and (c) perceived teen problem severity and found that each of these fathers' perceptions were related to participation in the initial assessment of a family-based prevention program designed to decrease risk for early adolescent drug use and problem behaviors. However, the association between these perceptions and actual participation in the prevention program were not as strongly related, perhaps because the assessment experience minimized fathers' beliefs that their adolescent was in fact susceptible to the problem behaviors. Other explanations offered by the authors include time/scheduling demands, apprehension for the in-home interviews/videotaping, and other conditional changes that may have occurred in the elapsed time between the assessment and the intervention. Spoth and colleagues also note that future research should incorporate a more detailed assessment to be used with both fathers and mothers, as the sample in their study was largely over represented by mothers' reports collected through a brief telephone survey.

Finally, some recent research has begun to explore the link between fathers' perceived self-competency and their participation in programming (Spoth, Redmon, Haggerty, & Ward, 1995). In particular, this study examined the relationship between
parents’ views of their ability to perform specific parenting behaviors being directly targeted by a family intervention for at-risk juveniles and the parents’ attendance in the program. Findings suggest that fathers’ positive assessments of their own level of competence are related to increased program participation.

Focusing now on the literature pertaining to overall father participation in child rearing activities, an examination of salient variables in this research domain may be able to inform the study of fathers’ participation in family-based programming. In other words, it is likely that the two research areas will overlap, such that the factors influencing overall paternal involvement will also have an impact on fathers’ involvement in their adolescent’s treatment for problem behaviors. For instance, other related research has explored the relationship between specific father/marital characteristics, such as fathers’ reported self-competence and the parenting alliance (i.e., shared parenting philosophy), and father involvement in child rearing, the father’s well being, and the child’s well being (Frank et al., 1991; McBride & Rane, 1998; McHale & Huston, 1984). Findings have shown that fathers who report a stronger parental alliance with the mother and greater self-competence in parenting are more likely to be involved in child rearing activities and report better adjustment for themselves and their children. Hence, the father’s view of his own parenting ability and his shared parenting relationship with the mother will likely impact his decision to participate in programming.

In addition, some studies have examined whether family members’ (i.e., mothers’) reports of fathers’ competence and the parenting alliance predict father’s general involvement in child rearing (Palkovitz, 1984; McBride & Rane, 1997; 1998).
Results suggest that wives’ positive views of the father’s role and wives’ reports of a shared parenting alliance are related to increased levels of father involvement. Thus, it can be expected that the mother’s positive appraisal of the adolescent’s father will result in higher rates of paternal program participation. Unfortunately, no research, to date, has examined the relationship between the father’s and mother’s reported level of parenting alliance and the father’s participation in programming. In addition, another highly interesting area of inquiry that has not been explored is how the father’s view of the mother’s and adolescent’s perspectives of his paternal competency may influence his decision to be involved in family-based programs.

Summary

Based on the currently limited literature, several characteristics of the father and the family have been assessed in studies that focus on paternal participation in family-based programs. The literature has also tentatively identified several topics that may be important to consider in this area, such as the father’s perceptions of his fathering ability and how family members view his role, his co-parental relationship with the mother, the severity of his adolescent’s condition, and his expectations of the family program. However, this research area is nascent and must first be explored in order to identify and understand the subjective reasons that fathers contemplate when deciding to be involved in family programming. Hence, it will be valuable to use a qualitative methodology that is grounded in the data to fully capture the father’s individual view of his role in family-based treatments in addition to quantitative indicators of demographic data pertaining to the father and his adolescent.
The Significance of Father Participation in the Delivery of Mental Health Services

Effective recruitment and retention strategies aimed at fathers of at-risk adolescents are especially valuable to providers of community-based mental health services. Consistent with the literature focused on the association between father characteristics and the development of adolescents' problematic mental health issues (Cole & McPherson, 1993; Conger and Conger, 1994; Frick, Lahey, Loeber, Stouthamer-Loeber, Christ, & Hanson, 1992; Henggeler, Edwards, & Bourdin, 1987; Sheeber, Hops, Andrews, Alpert, & Davis, 1998; Weller, et al., 1994), and based on the author's work in two family-based interventions involving fathers of mood-disordered children and delinquent adolescents (Gavazzi, Partridge, & Schock, 2000; Schock, Gavazzi, Fristad, & Goldberg-Arnold, 1999; 2000), growing evidence suggests that fathers do have a substantial impact on the mental health of their offspring. In particular, preliminary analyses of participants in a diversion program for the families of juvenile offenders revealed that fathers with referred female adolescents reported significantly higher mean depression levels than did fathers of male adolescents. And that fathers' self-reported depression levels were highly correlated with daughters' psychological symptoms (i.e., depression, hostility, interpersonal sensitivity, paranoia, and phobia), but not with sons' psychological symptoms (Gavazzi, Partridge, & Schock, 2000). In addition, greater levels of paternal support were significantly related to lower anger levels in both daughters and sons.

Recent research has also shown that fathers who have participated in a family-based treatment for children diagnosed with a mood disorder exhibit significant gains in knowledge of their child's condition, more healthy father-child interactions, and a greater
degree of similarity in parenting attitudes/behaviors with the mother (Schock, Gavazzi, Fristad, & Goldberg-Arnold, 2000). However, in spite of the increased awareness that fathers do significantly contribute to the healthy functioning of their offspring, fathers are still underrepresented in both research initiatives and service delivery involving family-based programs for at-risk adolescents.

It is our contention that the empirical study of factors that influence fathers’ participation in their offspring’s treatment program will be of great value to family researchers and community-based mental health service providers. Specifically, research in this area can aid mental health providers in improving the delivery of services through a better understanding of how fathers view family-based programming. Insight into the following questions will be useful: (a) How have fathers’ previous experiences with mental health service providers shaped their current perceptions? (b) What factors, within and outside of the family, both encourage and discourage fathers’ participation, and how can community service providers facilitate paternal involvement in light of these potential barriers? (c) What particular issues and/or skills do fathers deem as important in being incorporated into the curricula of family-based programs? (d) How can mental health services be delivered in the most attractive way for fathers? Hence, the most effective way to recruit and retain fathers in family-based prevention and intervention programs will be based on an investigation of why fathers do and do not choose to participate. Researchers and practitioners can then design program curricula and implement delivery of services cognizant of these issues.
Limitations

As the literature on factors related to father participation in family-based programming is emerging, current studies suffer from several limitations. These shortcomings can be classified into two areas: limits regarding the samples of families included in the studies and limits regarding the research methodology that has been used in extant research.

Sample Limits

Families that have been included in the study of fathers' participation in programming have been restricted to a narrow group of fathers. First, paternal participation in family programming has largely focused on fathers of preschool and elementary school-aged children, yielding much less information on fathers of adolescents. Second, there is very little knowledge about the father's role in interventions for youth who are exhibiting problematic and/or unhealthy behavior, as most of the literature has focused on the father's participation in prevention programming. Third, samples have been limited to two-parent, married, Caucasian families: there has been no study of non-resident and/or non-traditional fathers, nor has there been any study of fathers from different ethnic backgrounds. This third limitation is especially problematic to the study of families with at-risk adolescents, as many of these youth do not reside in intact households. Therefore, there is a need to focus on fathers' involvement in the treatment of adolescent problem behaviors that includes ethnically diverse fathers from various family structures.
Methodological Limits

Within the limited number of studies that have investigated fathers and family programming, the common methodology that has been used is the collection of questionnaire data. Furthermore, information on factors related to fathers’ participation has consisted mainly of mother’s reports of simple demographic data on the family and/or limited item self-report instruments assessing barriers. For example, Spoth and colleagues (1996) obtained a limited amount of sociodemographic measurements from white, rural families and also asked parents (usually mothers) to rate how important a list of potential participation barriers were on a three-point scale. Fathers were largely underrepresented, and neither mothers nor fathers were asked to generate ideas about how their own unique barriers related to their participation in programming. Thus, existing studies have failed to incorporate the father’s perspective of his role, including his view of individual barriers related to his level of participation in family programming. In addition, research has only begun to identify correlates to fathers’ participation, with no clear understanding of the detailed decision-making process and the reasons/factors that influence the father’s decision to participate in programming. Specifically, there is a need to expand existing research by utilizing methods beyond surveys with a limited number of items/responses to identify why fathers of certain demographic groups chose to participate or fail to participate in family-based programming.

Rationale for a Qualitative Research Approach

To date, there is no in-depth research that examines fathers’ subjective decision-making processes regarding their involvement in family programming. Therefore, a grounded theory methodology (i.e., theory that emerges from the data and is analyzed
throughout the research process: Strauss & Corbin, 1994) was used to inductively identify important concepts and develop theory from interview data to yield a more profound understanding of factors that influence paternal participation. A central characteristic of grounded theory, similar to other qualitative approaches, is the assertion that the participants in the study identify salient issues by prescribing meaning to certain experiences in their lives. It is the researcher’s main task, then, to interpret and build theory based on, or grounded in, these meaningful experiences. Stated another way, Strauss and Corbin (1994) contend that, “interpretations must include the perspectives and voices of the people whom we study... Interpretations are sought for understanding the actions of individual or collective actors being studied.” (1994, p. 274).

Grounded theory also differs from other qualitative methods in several ways, but most notably, that theory is developed throughout the research process and is directly drawn from the data. In other words, unlike other qualitative analytic techniques that impose a certain perspective on the data during analysis (e.g., feminist theory), grounded theorists have no a priori assumptions and let theory emerge from the data.

A grounded theory methodology was used in the present study and was appropriate because: (a) the study is exploratory and represents a new area of inquiry, (b) the study’s objective focuses on discovering the details of fathers’ decision-making processes and, thus, denote a research area that is difficult to assess with quantitative methods, and (c) no preconceived theory was be forced upon the data, but rather the data was used to inform and guide theory development (Stern, 1980; Strauss & Corbin, 1994).
A Conceptual Framework

Although no theory was imposed on the data during analysis, one particular conceptual framework that has been used as a method to organize existing research in the fatherhood literature may prove to be applicable to the present study. Therefore, a brief description of the conceptual model and explanation of the components that are included in the model will be presented.

Responsible Fathering

In a recent article on responsible fathering, Doherty and colleagues (Doherty, Kouneski, & Erickson, 1998) outline a theoretical framework useful for studying fathering and the multiple contextual factors that affect active father involvement. In the article, they first defined responsible fathering, reviewed four areas of research related to responsible fathering, and then presented a conceptual model that could assist in organizing the current literature in this area and shape future research directions and programmatic efforts. According to Doherty et al. (1998), the term “responsible fathering” is be characterized by the physical, emotional, financial, and moral presence that a father should assume in the caring of his offspring. This definition broadly includes fathers of all ethnic backgrounds, social classes, and family structures. In their review, Doherty et al. (1998) focused on four research domains regarding responsible fathering: (a) fathers and legal paternity, (b) father presence versus father absence, (c) fathers’ payment of child support, and (c) resident father involvement with children.

Following their review of relevant literature in these areas, the authors posit that empirical work continues to expand in these domains of fathering research. However, the literature has lacked in any substantial discussion of theoretical models that would join
and organize current findings across the multiple areas of fathering research and also
guide future research and program development. Doherty et al. (1998) do recognize and
cite some theoretical perspectives that have been included in the fathering literature, such
as frameworks for conceptualizing father involvement (e.g., Lamb. et al.. 1985:
Palkovitz. 1997). and theories on the meaning of fatherhood for men (e.g., social identity
theory, generative fathering). However, the authors state that these models could be
enhanced through the consideration of an ecological. systemic framework. In particular,
the authors suggest that:

Fathering also lends itself to a systemic framework, which views fathering not
primarily as a characteristic or behavioral set of individual men or even as a dyadic
characteristic of a father-child relationship, but as a multilateral process involving fathers,
mothers, children, extended family, and the broader community and its cultures and
institutions...fathering is a product of the meanings, beliefs, motivations, attitudes, and
behaviors of all these stakeholders in the lives of children. (Doherty, Kouneski. &

Doherty and colleagues extend their argument by stating that. “fathering may be
more sensitive than mothering to contextual forces. forces that currently create more
obstacles than bridges for fathers but that potentially could be turned in a more supportive
direction” (Doherty. Kouneski. & Erickson. 1998. p. 278). Hence, according to the
authors. to understand the fathering experience, researchers and practitioners need to
consider multiple influencing contexts, including larger social systems, when studying
the father’s relationship with his offspring. Furthermore, some of the contextual factors
(i.e., the co-parental relationship, characteristics of the other parent, and broader social factors) may impart a greater influence on the father-child relationship than on the mother-child relationship.

**Influences on Responsible Fathering: A Conceptual Model**

Based on Doherty et al.'s theoretical framework on responsible fathering, five domains are described that are thought to influence the fathering experience: "The model attempts to transcend the dyadic focus of much traditional child development theory by emphasizing first the child-father-mother triad and then larger system's influences" (Doherty, Kouneski, & Erickson, 1998, p. 285). The five contexts outlined in the model include: father factors, child factors, mother factors, the co-parental relationship, and contextual factors. *Father factors* consist of the father’s commitment, skills, and role identification, all of which may have been shaped through the father’s relationship with his own father. Father employment characteristics also are included in this domain. *Child factors* include the age/developmental status, gender, and temperament of the child. *Mother factors* include her employment characteristics, as well as her expectations of, attitude toward, and support for the father. *Co-parental factors* consist of the status of the relationship (i.e., married, separated, divorced, cohabitating) and custody arrangements, dual versus single earner households, and characteristics of the mother-father relationship (cooperation, support, commitment, conflict). Finally, *contextual factors* include economic conditions/employment opportunities, ethnic and cultural influences, and social supports available to the father.
Also noteworthy is that the model is considered to be additive, interactive, and systemic. The model is additive in that some factors may build on others (e.g., a competent father with strong parenting skills combined with a mother who has a positive and supportive attitude toward the father would result in a high likelihood for responsible fathering), and the model is interactive in that some domains can influence others (e.g., a father’s strong commitment to his child could lead him to seek increased job flexibility for child care activities at his place of employment). In addition to these two characteristics, the model also is considered to be systemic. Hence, the framework consists of individual, relational, and contextual subsystems in which a change in one factor of a particular domain is likely to cause change to factors in other areas of the model. For instance, the numerous developmental changes associated with a child entering adolescence are likely to cause change in other areas such as the co-parental relationship (e.g., how do the parents re-negotiate their parenting behaviors in response to their child’s increased desire for autonomy?) or with the father (e.g., how might fathering a teenager differ from fathering a young child?). Because transformations within one domain can impact other related areas, the model can also be characterized as a dynamic system that is likely to undergo frequent change.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this exploratory study was to gain an understanding of factors that are related to father involvement in a diversion program targeting the families of juvenile offenders who have been seen by the juvenile courts for delinquent behaviors, truancy, and/or incorrigible/unruly behaviors. In addition, these adolescents typically have exhibited a variety of both internalizing and externalizing symptoms (Gavazzi, Partridge,
A heterogeneous sample of fathers from various (a) family structures, (b) educational and socioeconomic levels, (c) ethnic groups, and (d) ages were studied, and men were also strategically selected to represent fathers of both male and female adolescents who are exhibiting a range of internalizing and externalizing behaviors. This method of purposeful sampling (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Patton, 1990) was utilized to provide a diverse sample of fathers' perspectives.

Research Questions

Fathers consisted of two groups: the group of participating fathers included fathers who had at least completed one program session: the group of non-participating fathers included those fathers who had declined any initial/subsequent program participation. The main research question explored influential factors associated with fathers’ participation in a family-based diversion program that targets adolescent offenders by gathering data from fathers in these two subsamples. Analyses could not directly compare differences between these two groups of fathers because no overall generalizations could be made from the limited sample size: in fact, the aim of qualitative research is not to present generalized conclusions about large populations, but instead intends to generate new insight into the topic of study. Rather, the inclusion of fathers who did and did not choose to participate in the program was purposeful in order to capture the decision-making processes of fathers with different experiences. Although the interviewer did not begin data collection with a set a priori theory, six general topics were drawn upon to help guide the initial interviews. Revised and expanded protocols were developed in subsequent interviews as fathers continued to raise salient issues throughout the study. The preliminary, general areas of inquiry include:
a. Past program experience/use of past services
b. Program applicability to the adolescent’s problem behaviors
c. Barriers and facilitators to participation
d. The father’s role in his adolescent’s life
e. The marital relationship and/or the co-parental relationship
f. Program and family service modifications, including father-only support groups

Although fathers shared many personal experiences related to these topics during the interviews, a discussion of the findings focused on the responses voiced by the fathers pertaining to the following two research questions:

1. What specific factors were identified as contributing to the father’s decision to be involved in the diversion program?

2. What reasons did the fathers voice as to why fathers, in general, may be less likely than mothers to participate in family-based programming?
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Fathers and At-Risk Adolescents

The role of the father in the family increasingly has been the focal point of studies conducted by family researchers in the latter part of the twentieth century, particularly due to several social changes that have occurred over the past two decades, such as the increased (a) number of women employed outside of the home, (b) rate of father absent families, and (c) awareness of new types of fathers, extending beyond traditional biological fathers, to include step-fathers, cohabitating fathers, gay fathers, young fathers, and low-income fathers (Tamis-LeMonda & Cabrera, 1999). In addition, significant legislative initiatives (e.g., paternity establishment, custody laws, parental leave) and national research initiatives (e.g., Early Head Start Evaluation, Fragile Families and Child Well-Being) have been launched to purposefully include fathers and their contribution to the family as a primary focus (Tamis-LeMonda & Cabrera, 1999). However, one area of research that has been neglected is the father’s contribution to his child’s/adolescent’s (hereafter referred to as adolescent) problematic behaviors (Dadds, 1995; Phares, 1999; Phares & Compas, 1992). Specifically, Phares (1997) notes that research on maternal contributions (primarily negative contributions) far outweighs the study of paternal
contributions and that "mother blaming reflects the tendency to consider and investigate maternal contributions to the development of psychopathology in children while not considering or investigating paternal contributions to the same phenomena" (Phares. 1997. p. 262). In addition. Phares and Compas (1992) have identified several possible explanations for the limited focus on fathers, including the notion that children have less frequent contact with their fathers, and that fathers are less willing or able to participate in therapy and research studies.

Recently, though, studies are emerging that concentrate on the father’s impact on their adolescents who exhibit various forms of dysfunction that reflect internalizing behaviors, such as depression (Cole & McPherson. 1993; Sheeber. Hops. Andrews. Alpert. & Davis. 1998; Weller. et al.. 1994) and also externalizing behaviors, such as delinquency and conduct disorder (Conger and Conger. 1994; Frick. Lahey. Loeber. Stouthamer-Loeber. Christ. & Hanson. 1992: Henggeler. Edwards. & Bourdin. 1987). Hence, these studies have begun to identify salient paternal mental health factors and characteristics of the father-adolescent dyad that impact the development and continuance of adolescent dysfunction.

Fathers and Family Programming

At the same time, family scholars and practitioners have noticed the particular promise of family-based prevention and intervention programs to address adolescents’ problematic behaviors (Asarnow. Jaycox. & Tompson. in press: Burns. Hoagwood. & Mrazek. 1999: Fristad. Gavazzi. & Soldano. 1998: Kumpfer & Tait. 2000: Molgaard. Spoth. & Redmond. 2000). Interestingly, and as expected, maternal involvement in family-based programs has been discussed in the literature to a greater extent than
fathers’ participation. This may be largely due to men’s lower rates of participation in programming (Klitzner, Bamberger, & Gruenewald, 1990; Lengua, et al., 1992), which limits existing knowledge of the father’s role in family-based treatments.

Initial work on paternal participation in programming primarily consisted of theoretical arguments and personal commentaries on how to increase paternal involvement in various forms of family-based programs (Carr, 1998; Hecker, 1991). For instance, based entirely on their personal experiences in working with families, family therapists had suggested numerous ways in which to involve fathers in therapy, such as consulting with fathers on what changes they want for the family, as well as considering the unique ways in which many men communicate and cope with family problems (Carr, 1998; Hecker, 1991). Although this information is useful, the systematic and empirical study of how to maximize recruitment and retention that incorporates the fathers’ and other family members’ views of the father’s role in treatment are warranted. In fact, research in this area has gradually evolved to include more recent empirical studies of (a) important pragmatic concerns that serve as barriers to paternal involvement, (b) which types of fathers are more likely to participate in programming, and (c) how fathers’ perceptions of their role in their adolescent’s condition influence their decision to participate in family programs.

**Pragmatic Issues**

Based on the current literature on fathers and child development, Meyers (1993) proposes several changes that must in order to occur to increase male participation in family programs. One area of change encompasses structural, or pragmatic, issues related to programming. For example, the strategic distribution of recruitment materials
and information directly to the father, the offering of programs at convenient times and locations for the father, and the enlistment of male group discussants and members all should be incorporated into the structure of the program to enhance paternal participation. Additional research expands on Meyers' contentions. For example, in a study of fathers of developmentally disabled children, Hadadian and Merbler (1995) gathered data from urban and rural fathers pertaining to needs/information that would aid in assisting them to better care for their child. Responses showed that fathers preferred specific formats and types of services that included receiving specific information about the child’s condition in the forms of films, tapes, and parent newsletters. Another study of barriers to participation in an intervention aiming to prevent mental health problems and substance use among youth gathered focus group data from difficult-to-reach families, of which one group was convened to specifically include fathers only (Lengua, et al., 1992). Group responses cited the provision of childcare and refreshments as ways in which the program would be viewed as more attractive by fathers, who by and large had reported very low levels of interest in their participation in a parent-training program.

Spoth and colleagues (1992; 1996) also conducted research focusing on pragmatic barriers to participation in family-based preventions and interventions targeting adolescents at-risk for engaging in substance abuse. Brief telephone interviews and mail questionnaires were completed by families who did not choose to participate in the project. These non-participants were asked a series of questions related to reasons for participation refusal. Although the majority of the data consisted of maternal reports, analyses of the reasons for non-participation revealed that scheduling conflicts/lack of time, length of project commitment, and general privacy issues all contributed to their
decision of participation refusal. Notably, fathers were significantly more likely than mothers to report concerns with privacy issues as a reason for refusal (Spoth, Redmond, Hockaday, & Shin, 1996).

Predictors of Father Participation

In addition to pragmatic issues regarding program delivery that have been cited in the literature, additional family demographics, father characteristics, and father's perceptions (of their offspring, the program's applicability, and their parenting competence) all have been identified as factors likely to predict paternal participation in family programs.

Family Demographics

Several family demographic variables have been investigated in relation to fathers and their participation in programming. For example, Gavidia-Payne and Stoneman (1997) examined the predictive ability of family income on fathers' involvement in an intervention program for their severely developmentally disabled child, finding that financially secure fathers were most likely to participate in the child's program. Spoth and colleagues (1996) found similar results, such that families with lower socioeconomic status were more likely to cite privacy concerns and research-related concerns (i.e., discussing family issues with others and completing interviews/questionnaires) as reasons for participation refusal. These findings suggest that low SES families may be much more wary of family program initiatives and may require different strategies for recruitment than do more economically advantaged families (Spoth, Redmond, Hockaday, & Shin, 1996). In addition, Lengua and colleagues found that parents from middle-class, two-parent families were more willing
to participate in their focus groups on barriers to program participation of high-risk families than were lower income, single-headed families (Lengua. et al., 1992). It should be noted, though, that this finding was presented for overall family income levels in the study, and that the mean income level of the father-only focus group was average in relation to the other focus group participant’s family incomes. The authors offer several explanations for this disparity, such as lower income families were less knowledgeable regarding their child’s needs, less aware of the important influence of parenting on their child’s development, more likely to cite location/transportation problems, and more likely to have an unfounded suspension that law enforcement agencies may be involved (Lengua. et al., 1992)

Father Characteristics

Certain characteristics of the father have been found to be related to paternal participation in family programs, namely, the father’s level of education and his prior use of parenting resources. For instance, Spoth and colleagues (1992: 1996) have found that fathers’ educational level has been identified to be a predictor of program participation. More specifically, these researchers reported on studies that operationalized participation as agreement to being videotaped as a requirement of their involvement in a family skills intervention to enhance parenting skills and family cohesion (as well as reduce the risk for adolescent problem behaviors) (Spoth & Redmond. 1992: Spoth. Redmond. Hockaday. & Shin. 1996). These study findings show that less educated fathers were more likely to refuse participation because of privacy issues related to the videotaping of interactions with their adolescents. In a related study, Spoth and colleagues examined a model of predictor variables influencing parents’ inclination to participate in (a) the
initial project assessment, and then (b) the subsequent intervention in the same family-based program mentioned previously. Again, findings showed that higher levels of educational attainment and higher levels of family income were related to increased assessment participation; but only higher levels of education were related to actual increased participation in the intervention. Although nearly seventy percent (68.9%) of the 1,192 parents surveyed were mothers, and no comparative analyses were conducted between mothers and fathers, it does appear that educational attainment is an overall parental characteristic that is consistently predictive of program participation, both at the initial assessment and subsequent intervention stages, and as such may be relevant to the participation of fathers as well as mothers.

Additionally, another study by the same research group used structural equation modeling to test a model of family context factors and health beliefs in predicting inclination to enroll in parenting skills programs. Again, results were discussed in terms of “parents” with no indication of father-specific findings. Findings showed that a positive effect of past parenting resource use, such as reading newspaper/magazine articles about parenting and participating in parenting skills programs, was related to perceived program benefits and inclination to enroll in a future intervention program if one were offered (Spoth & Redmond, 1995). Hence, parents who typically take part in activities to improve their parenting skills are more likely to consider participation in a proposed parenting program and cite the program as being a useful source of information and worthy of their time commitment.
Fathers' Perceptions

Fathers' attitudes toward the condition of their adolescent, program characteristics, and their own parenting competence also have been examined in relation to how these perceptions are linked to program participation. For example, the father's perception of the existence/severity of the adolescent's problem behaviors has been identified as a predictor of their program participation. Specifically, fathers who report that their adolescent is not at risk for the negative behaviors that the intervention is focusing on, or that the intervention would not be useful to their family, are not as likely to participate in the program (Lengua, et al. 1992; Spoth & Redmond, 1992; Spoth, Redmond, Kahn, & Shin, 1997). Lengua and colleagues (1992) emphasize that the parent’s view of his or her teen’s susceptibility for developing a drug/alcohol problem was the most salient attitudinal difference found between mothers and fathers in the focus groups, such that fathers, more often than mothers, expressed the belief that teen drug and alcohol abuse was a problem for society (e.g., within the political and legal systems). Consequently, these fathers showed little interest in a parenting skills program curriculum involving this topic.

Extending these findings, paternal reports of perceived intervention benefits and perceived barriers to participation were found to be associated with the actual completion of an initial assessment phase of a family-focused prevention/intervention project (Spoth, Redmond, Kahn, & Shin, 1997). In particular, fathers who believed that (a) eight parenting skills-building topics in the program would not be useful to them, and (b) certain barriers (e.g., needing child care, lengthy traveling distance to the meetings, having to pay twenty dollars for the program manual) did exist for them were less likely
to participate in the project assessment. However, it is noteworthy that these two paternal perceptions did not significantly predict actual participation in the intervention. Thus, the authors contend that these variables should be assessed in greater depth (beyond a limited number of 3-point likert type items) along with other factors that may be related to complete program involvement in all stages of the intervention.

One study, to date, has examined the potential link between the father’s view of his own parenting competency and program participation (Spoth, Redmon, Haggerty, & Ward, 1995). To assess parental self-competence, the authors used an 8-item measure of parents’ beliefs regarding their ability to perform certain types of parenting behaviors being targeted in a parenting-skills intervention to prevent adolescent conduct problems and substance abuse. Results revealed that the parental competence score was positively related to intervention attendance, yet this association was stronger for mothers than for fathers.

Father Involvement in Child Rearing

Clearly there is a need to further examine salient factors that determine participation rates of fathers in family programming. Two important father variables that have been studied in the context of fathers’ overall involvement in child rearing activities and father and child adjustment are the father’s view of his level of competency in fathering and his view of the co-parental relationship with the mother of the child (i.e., the parenting alliance). Extrapolating from these findings pertaining to men’s parenting behaviors, research that focuses on the impact of fathers’ competency and the parenting...
alliance could be valuable for those researchers and practitioners interested in maximizing and examining the role of fathers in the treatment of their adolescent’s problem behaviors.

Self-Competence

The father’s perceived skills and self-confidence in his fathering ability has been studied in relation to his level of involvement in child rearing activities (McBride & Rane. 1997:1998; McHale & Huston. 1984: Palkovitz, 1984). For example, fathers of newborn children (under the age of one year) were interviewed about their perceived skills in performing childcare tasks before and after the birth of the child. Findings suggested that fathers’ positive assessments of their skills, both prior to and subsequent to the birth of the child, predicted their involvement in child-oriented activities (McHale & Huston, 1984). Similarly, in a study of forty couples of 5-month olds. Palkovitz (1984) showed that fathers’ positive views of their own fathering role were related to increased levels of observed paternal activity with their infants. In addition, others have found a positive relationship between parents’ perceptions of their self-competence and reported efforts to improve their parenting skills by reading educational materials on parenting (Spoth & Conroy, 1993). It follows, then, that fathers who view themselves as competent parents would be more inclined to be involved in all domains of their child’s development, including their adolescent’s development of problematic behaviors.

Parenting Alliance

The parenting alliance (PA), which can be defined as “the part of the marital relationship that is concerned with parenthood and child rearing” (Abidin & Brunner 1995, p. 31) has been the focus of several studies that explore predictors of fathers’ well
being and child adjustment. It should first be emphasized, however, that the PA construct differs from general marital discord. Abidin and Brunner (1995) state that the PA more directly assesses the couples’ shared view and commitment toward child rearing, and that “it is reasonable to assume that parents who are committed to maintaining a positive parenting alliance, despite being in conflicted and unsatisfying marriages, will have children who are better adjusted than children from similar families in which a weak or negative parenting alliance exists” (Abidin & Brunner, 1995, p. 32).

These authors did in fact find evidence to support this claim in their study of parental relationships of 4 to 6 year-old children (Abidin & Brunner, 1995, p. 32). Results from their study showed that PA scores were significantly related to marital satisfaction reports and, interestingly, this correlation was much stronger for fathers than for mothers. The finding that fathering is more closely related to the marital relationship than is mothering is consistent with other recent research (Cummings & O’Reilly, 1997). In particular, it has been argued that the relationship between marital adjustment and parenting is stronger for fathers because: (a) it may be that women are more easily able to compartmentalize their roles as mother and wife than are men; (b) it is possible that because fatherhood is not as salient of a role for most men as motherhood is for women, men may tend to fuse their roles in the family much more than women; or (c) it could be that when men are involved in high levels of marital conflict, they tend to distance themselves from the entire family as a way to cope with the marital problems.

Additionally, findings showed that the PA also uniquely contributed to mothers’ and fathers’ parenting behaviors and to the child’s healthy adjustment (Abidin & Brunner 1995). In other words, fathers who reported having a strong PA with the mother were
more likely to have better adjusted children, as assessed by fathers', mothers', and teachers' reports of the child's adjustment on several dimensions (i.e., measures of overall positive adjustment, competence, and self-esteem). In addition, Frank and colleagues (1991) showed that fathers who reported having a poor parenting alliance with the mother of their 3 to 4 year-old child were more likely to experience higher levels of parenting stress. Thus, the father's view of his co-parental relationship with the mother may substantially impact his parenting behaviors and the adjustment of his offspring. Specifically, fathers who report a poor parenting alliance with the mother of the adolescent may be more likely to experience personal distress, and may also be more likely to be fathering an adolescent with dysfunctional behaviors. Although it is not entirely clear whether fathers with a poor parenting alliance would be more or less likely to participate in programming to ameliorate family problems, these fathers are in the greatest need for services and their recruitment and retention should be of high priority.

**Mothers’ Perspectives of the Father’s Role**

Interestingly, the mother's perspective of the father's competency in parenting and her view of the parental alliance may significantly impact men's levels of involvement with their offspring. McBride and Rane (1998) assessed the parenting alliance, including the parent's view of his or her spouse's confidence in his or her parenting (e.g., the father's perspective of his wife's evaluation of his parenting), in a study of 89 two-parent families of young children. In addition to assessing maternal and paternal reports of the PA, father involvement was measured using Lamb et al.'s (1987) multi-dimensional model of involvement that included data on the father's interaction, accessibility, and responsibility toward the child. Interestingly, findings suggested a
positive relationship between maternal reports, but not paternal reports, of the PA and father involvement. Thus, the mother's belief in a strong PA with the father was associated with increased paternal involvement: the father's view of the PA, however, was not related to his involvement. In addition to these findings, results also revealed that the father's view of his wife's confidence in his parenting ability predicted greater levels of his overall involvement (i.e., interactions, responsibility, and accessibility) with his child (McBride & Rane, 1998).

Findings from Palkovitz's (1984) earlier research also support the positive link between the mother's perspective of the father and his level of involvement. Specifically, mother's positive assessment of the father's role in parenting their infant was related to greater levels of paternal activity during a home-based observation. It is imperative, then, to investigate how the father's perspective of the mother's and adolescent's views of his fathering impact his decision to be involved in family-based treatments. Interestingly, as it is likely that multiple family members' views of the father's role will contribute to his decision to be involved in the treatment of his adolescent's problem behaviors, the mechanism and degree to which fathers are affected by family members' perceptions is unclear and should be more fully explored.

Summary of the Literature

In sum, although there is very little research on paternal involvement in family interventions, the literature suggests several variables that may be related to fathers' participation. These issues include the following:
• **Pragmatic/Structural Program Issues:** scheduling matters; the provision of practical materials and services; and privacy-related concerns have all been related to paternal participation.

• **Family Demographics:** married parents (versus non-married, co-resident couples); and higher levels of household income have been associated with higher participation rates.

• **Father Characteristics:** higher educational levels; and past experiences with any family-based interventions/services have been associated with higher participation rates.

• **Father's Perceptions:** the father's perception of greater severity problem behaviors of his offspring; the father's positive expectations for the program and the belief in the program's applicability to the family's situation; and the father's positive view of his parenting competency have been associated with higher participation rates.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The Growing Up FAST Program

The Growing Up FAST: Families and Adolescents Surviving and Thriving Program (Gavazzi, 1995; Gavazzi, Wasserman, Partridge, & Sheridan, 2000) is a diversion program that has been used with families of at-risk adolescents who have been referred by the Franklin County Juvenile Courts for (a) delinquent behaviors, (b) truancy, and/or (c) incorrigible/unruly behaviors (Gavazzi, Yarcheck, Wasserman, & Partridge, 2000). The main purpose of this family-based program is to strengthen the family's ability to recognize and support the adolescent's developmental needs in negotiating his or her way through the transition to a healthy, successful adult (Gavazzi & Law, 1997; Law & Gavazzi, 1999). The program facilitators implement a brief, solution-focused format (i.e., a framework that focuses on one's capabilities and strengths to achieve change as opposed to focusing on issues surrounding the problem: Gavazzi, 1995) in which families are guided in identifying strengths, within and outside of the family, which can assist the family in facilitating the adolescent's growth. Specific to this at-risk population, the immediate goal is to prevent the adolescent's further involvement in illegal behaviors.

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The Growing Up FAST Program was initiated as a single-session offering, but has since been expanded into a multi-session program that consists of five levels for those families containing an adolescent member coming into contact with the courts. At each level, the adolescent and his or her family are expected to complete a stated goal or output (Gavazzi, Wasserman, Partridge, & Sheridan, 2000). Specifically, at level one, the family is presented with information on existing risk and protective factors, and members are encouraged to show support and share responsibility for the youth's behaviors. At level two, family members collectively create a definition of a successful adult and then also identify those behaviors that the adolescent and family members are doing to promote these behaviors in the adolescent. At level three, the adolescent builds problem-solving skills that can be implemented to reduce illegal behaviors. At level four, family members jointly identify how the family, with the aid of external resources, can devise a plan to help the adolescent move toward becoming a successful adult. Finally, at level five, the family provides a follow-up report on its success in executing their plan.

Thus, the Growing Up FAST Program emphasizes three main objectives: (a) to assist family members in establishing an agreed-upon definition of the responsibilities and roles that define a successful adult; (b) to assist family members in identifying adolescent behaviors that are related to becoming a successful adult; and (c) to assist families in recognizing skills and non-familial resources that can facilitate the adolescent’s transition (Wasserman, Gavazzi, & Randall, 1999).

Families who are referred to the Growing Up FAST Program by court officials are invited to participate with the requirement that the adolescent is between the ages of 12 and 17, and that at least one parental figure is willing to attend the sessions with the
adolescent. During the first session, family members complete an assessment battery that includes demographic information and measurements of family functioning, social supports/community resources, parental mental health symptomology, and the adolescent's risk behaviors. In subsequent sessions, feedback is provided to the family regarding their scores on these measures, families are guided toward identifying risk and protective factors that contribute to the adolescent's problematic behaviors, and skill building is taught that will allow the family to cope with future problems.

Family Referral Process

For the purpose of the present study, it will be useful to provide an overview of the specific family referral and intake processes, including how families are introduced to and initially contacted by the Growing Up FAST Program. The adolescents in these families are first and second time misdemeanant or status offenders, and families either voluntarily bring their adolescent to the court (e.g., as a result of incorrigible or illegal behavior with the parents or other authorities), or the adolescent is brought to the court as a result of an arrest. Once at the court, if the adolescent is determined to be a candidate for diversion, a diversion counselor interviews the family and determines whether or not to make a referral and the type of referral to be made. If the counselor selects the Growing Up FAST Program as the appropriate referral (i.e., the adolescent must be between the ages of 12 and 17 and the family must appear somewhat intact—at least at a minimal level in which one parental figure is likely to attend the program with the adolescent), a referral sheet is sent directly to the Growing Up FAST Program. Next, the family receives a phone call from the program's intake interviewer within one week. After an initial screening, the program facilitator schedules an initial assessment
appointment (Pre-Implementation Evaluation or PIE) with the family. Families who neglect to return more than two phone messages or who neglect to attend more than one scheduled appointment receive letters of inquiry regarding their continued interest. If there is no response to the letter, the family is terminated from the program and the court is informed.

For those families who choose to participate, informed consent and all pretest data are collected at the initial assessment. In addition to giving consent for participation in the research, the family also consents to notification to the courts regarding their number of completed program sessions; no other information is shared with the court. Following the initial PIE assessment appointment, programming immediately begins at the subsequent appointment. In addition, at the initial assessment, the family agrees to participate in two follow-up phone interviews: the first interview is conducted two weeks after the last in-person contact with the family; and the second interview is conducted six months following the first interview. Families are also informed that the Growing Up FAST Program is voluntary; yet if they do not attend this program, their intake counselor at the court will make an alternate assignment.

Sample

The sample consisted of fathers of adolescents who were invited to participate in the GFAST Program. Consistent with recent research that acknowledges numerous types of father figures, such as stepfathers, cohabitating fathers, adopted fathers, and other surrogate fathers (e.g., uncles, grandfathers) (Tamis-LeMonda & Cabrera, 1999), the
present study utilized a very broadly defined classification of "father" within the sample. Specifically, all men who considered themselves to be significant parental figures in the adolescent's life were permitted to participate in the study.

A total of 20 fathers from families who had been referred by the Franklin County Juvenile Courts to participate in the Growing Up Fast (GFAST) Program were included in this study. A total of 20 fathers were selected by using a purposeful sampling procedure (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Purposeful sampling, or theoretical sampling, refers to the intentional selection of participants to maximize the variety of experiences shared regarding the research topic under investigation (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This method was used (a) to ensure representation of descriptive, multiple perspectives from a diverse sample of fathers, (b) to allow for cross-case analyses of the data based on certain descriptive variables, and (c) with consideration of the availability/limited contact with ethnically diverse families referred to the GFAST Program. Thus, because it was expected that the percentage of minority fathers would be relatively low, all non-Caucasian fathers were included in the study. Similarly, an attempt was made to ensure variation in SES level and father's age by pursuing fathers who represented new categories of these demographic groups throughout data collection. These decisions were appropriately modified as ongoing analysis of the data throughout the study suggested themes that would be better addressed with increased sample variation. In other words, the sample was theoretically selected to provide significant variation based on variables discussed in the literature (e.g., residential status, educational level); however, because the sample criteria was only used as an initial framework, theory development during the data analysis guided further sampling and suggested the
inclusion of other fathers (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). For example, efforts were made to recruit single, resident fathers of sons who had participated in the program; however, due to a very limited number of fathers who fit these criteria, attempts proved to be unsuccessful. Also, because the two-parent married fathers included in the study consisted of biological fathers and one stepfather, it would have been valuable to talk with a greater number of stepfathers with varied experiences. For example, considering that the stepfather who participated in the present study had been involved with the biological mother for a significant number of years (7 years), attempts were made to contact stepfathers who had been involved with the adolescent's biological mother for a shorter duration of time. However, again, availability of these types of fathers among the referred families was limited.

Participating Fathers

Data was collected from 10 fathers of adolescents (5 males, 5 females; mean age 15.2 years; age ranges = 2 adolescents aged 11-13 years: 3 adolescents aged 14-15 years: 5 adolescents aged 16-18 years) who had been referred to the Growing Up Fast Program (GFAST) for delinquent and/or unruly behaviors and who had participated in at least one GFAST session. Adolescents' reasons for referral to the Growing Up Fast Program included: incorrigible, n=7; theft, n=2; drug/alcohol possession, n=1.

A total of 14 participating fathers were initially contacted by telephone and were invited to participate in the present study. Of those 14 fathers, 10 of the fathers agreed to participate and did complete the interviews, yielding a participation rate of 71.4%. Reasons for refusal and/or unavailability given by the four fathers who did not complete the interview included: busy work schedule, n=3; talked with mother but the father was

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unable to be contacted. n=1. The mean age of the sample of fathers who did complete the interview was 43.3 years (ages ranged from 32 to 56), and the fathers' ethnic backgrounds were as follows: Caucasian, 6; African-American, 3; Native-American, 1.

The fathers' reports on their family structure at the time of the adolescent's referral were as follows: Single-father headed, 3; Married, biological parents, 3; Stepfamily, resident father, 2; Stepfamily, non-resident father, 1; Single-mother headed, 1. Annual household incomes ranged from $15,000 to $100,000 or more: $15-$25,000, 2; $25-$35,000, 1; $45-$55,000, 1; $55-$100,000, 4; $100,000 or more, 2 (Table 3.1).

Non-Participating Fathers

Data was also collected from 10 fathers of adolescents (1 male, 9 females; mean age, 15.2 years; age ranges = 1 adolescent aged 11-13 years: 5 adolescents aged 14-15 years: 4 adolescents aged 16-18 years) who had been referred to the Growing Up Fast Program (GFAST) for delinquent and/or unruly behaviors and who had not participated in any GFAST sessions. Adolescents' reasons for referral to the Growing Up Fast Program included: incorrigible, n=7; theft, n=1; curfew violation, n=1; runaway, n=1.

A total of 24 non-participating fathers were initially contacted by telephone and were invited to participate in the present study. Of those 24 fathers, 10 of the fathers agreed to participate and did complete the interviews, yielding a participation rate of 41.7%. Reasons for refusal and/or unavailability given by the fourteen fathers who did not complete the interview included: busy work schedule, n=2; talked with mother but the father was unable to be contacted, n=6; talked with father but was ultimately unable to establish an interview appointment, n=2; not interested, n=4. The mean age of the sample of fathers who did complete the interview was 46.4 years (ages ranged from 37 to 72).
and the fathers’ ethnicity backgrounds were as follows: Caucasian, 8; African-American, 2. The fathers’ reports on their family structure at the time of the adolescent’s referral were as follows: Single-father headed, 2; Married, biological parents, 2; Stepfamily, resident father, 1; Stepfamily, non-resident father, 1; Single-mother headed, 2; Other, 2. Annual household incomes ranged from $15,000 to $100,000 or more: $15-$25,000, 1; $25-$35,000, 1; $35-$45,000, 4; $45-$55,000, 1; $55-$100,000, 3 (Table 3.2).

Several additional characteristics of the sample should also be noted. First, these fathers represented reasonably moderate to high SES families. Caution, then, should be given to extending the study’s findings beyond middle-class families to fathers from lower-class families. Second, although no quantitative assessments of the fathers’ or the adolescents’ health statuses were obtained in the present study, many fathers discussed a variety of mental health issues that existed among members of the family (e.g., depression, substance abuse, domestic violence) during the interviews. Third, the fathers’ participation rates were high, although the participation rate of the non-participating fathers was reasonably lower than the rate of the participating fathers. However, a 41.7% participation rate for the sample of fathers who refused to participate in the initial diversion program offering was decent. It is possible that the fathers’ high participation rates may be due to the nature of the interviews, namely, that the interviews were conducted in a one-on-one format, and thus, minimized fathers’ privacy concerns and that the interviews focused specifically on the fathers rather than the adolescent’s problem behaviors.
Procedure

As previously stated, ten of the fathers consisted of *participating fathers*, defined as fathers who participated in and at least one GFAST Program session. The other subsample of 10 fathers consisted of *non-participating fathers*, defined as fathers who did not participate in any GFAST session. After determination of the father’s participation group status, initial contact was made with the fathers of the adolescents by telephone calls to describe the study and answer any immediate questions (Appendix A). Also during the telephone contacts, the primary investigator scheduled a time for the interview with those fathers who expressed a willingness to participate. Follow-up phone calls were made, when necessary, with those fathers who wished to think about their decision and/or needed to verify scheduling availability. Both participating and non-participating fathers who were referred to the program within nine months prior to the onset of data collection were contacted and asked to participate in the present study. The nine-month time period was selected as a reasonable amount of time for fathers to still have the ability to provide detailed information about their experience with the GFAST Program and also to allow for the primary investigator to obtain a varied population of fathers from which to contact.

The sample of fathers was strategically selected to represent a diverse group of men, as summarized above. Most notably, fathers of male and female adolescents displaying a range of behavioral problems, and fathers from different ethnicities, family structures, and educational levels were recruited to participate in the study. Ideally, all interviews would have immediately taken place at the time of the adolescent’s referral to the program. It is likely that the varied lengths of time that had passed between the
adolescents' actual referrals and the interviews with the fathers may have resulted in less emotionally candid discussions with many of the fathers. For example, a father who was currently having difficulty with his adolescent (e.g., problems resulting in police involvement) at the time of the interview would be more likely to show his agitation than would a father who had not been in the midst of conflict with his adolescent since several months prior to the interview.

Protection of the Participants

In addition to their verbal consent to participate given over the telephone, all fathers were asked to read a letter that described the study and its objectives that reviewed information that was previously explained to the fathers during the telephone contacts (Appendix B). Next, the interviewer read a script that discussed the fathers' consent to participate aloud to each of the fathers (Appendix C), and all fathers signed a consent form immediately prior to the face-to-face interviews (Appendix D). Also, several procedures were undertaken and adhered to in order to ensure the participants' confidentiality. At the very onset of the study, each participant was assigned an initial identifying name (i.e., the father's first name plus an identification number) that represented the participant throughout the entire duration of the study. The identifying name was used on all initial written documents (i.e., the demographic questionnaire) and during the audio taped interviews. In addition, a second form of identification, a pseudonym, was assigned to the fathers, and this pseudonym was used on all formal written reports, including tables and charts, of the study's findings. A single list with the
fathers' initial identification and matched pseudonyms was securely maintained on a computer diskette and was kept in a locked file drawer to which only the primary investigator had access.

There were also no major immediate nor long-term risks to participants in this study. There was a low probability that some questions asked during the face-to-face interview would provoke uneasy feelings and/or agitation. However, the written letter to the fathers that was distributed prior to the study notified participants that they could refuse to answer any question or withdraw from the study at any time. The interviewer verbally reiterated this privilege immediately prior to the face-to-face interviews. In the event that a father would have become noticeably uncomfortable during the interview, questioning would have immediately ceased and the father would have been referred to an appropriate mental health service provider.

_Semi-Structured Interviews_

The face-to-face interviews, which were conducted by the primary investigator at The Ohio State University, lasted approximately 60-90 minutes. The research questions focused on influential factors that were associated with fathers' decisions to participate in the family-based program. The interviewer was adequately trained in qualitative interviewing techniques (Bogdan & Biklan. 1998: Patton. 1990). and she was also well familiarized with the semi-structured interview protocols. In addition, although the interviewer was a young adult female, a high level of rapport was thought to have been achieved with the fathers during the interviews. It was anticipated that the interview protocols would be loosely followed across interviews in order to allow for fathers' responses to transpire and guide the dialogue during the interview process.
Accordingly, the author would choose to revise the interview protocol according to the identification of new areas of inquiry that emerged during ongoing analysis of the collected data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

For the initial interviews, a set of research questions and probes were reserved by the interviewer to guide the dialogue if necessary. However, as expected, the fathers’ experiences transpired during the interview, guiding the dialogue, and salient factors/issues related to participation were further explored in subsequent data collection efforts. Similarly, Strauss and Corbin have offered the following suggestion: “Initial interview questions or areas of observation might be based on concepts derived from literature or experience, or better still, from preliminary fieldwork. Because these early concepts have not evolved from ‘real’ data, if the researcher carries them with him or her into the field, then they must be considered provisional and discarded as data begin to come in. Nevertheless, early concepts often provide a departure point from which to begin data collection…” (1998, p. 205). Thus, the initial semi-structured interview protocol addressed the previously stated research topics/themes:

1. How have previous experiences with prior family-based programming/services influenced the father’s perception of his present role in the adolescent’s treatment?

2. How might the father’s perception of the program’s value and/or applicability to his adolescent’s condition be related to his decision to participate?

3. What potential barriers/facilitators to participation, within and outside of the family. exist for the father?
4. What specific questions/issues might the father like to discuss in-depth with other fathers who have participated in the present program?

5. What unique skills or characteristics does the father feel that he possess as a father that can help the family cope with the adolescent’s problematic behavior?

6. How could a family intervention that targets their family’s special needs be further developed/modified to maximize fathers’ participation? What would this program look like?

Based on subsequent issues raised by fathers throughout the interview process, several additional topics were added to the interview protocol and discussed in later interviews. The revised protocol then also included the following areas of inquiry:

7. What has been the role of the fathers’ existing social supports in his fathering of his adolescent and then also in his decision to be involved with the program?

8. How has the quality of communication between the father and the adolescent’s biological mother had an impact on his decision to participate?

9. Would the father have handled the situation any differently if his son/daughter was of the opposite sex?

A copy of the final version of the interview protocol that was used with the fathers toward the end of the study is included in Appendix E.
Demographic Questionnaire

Demographic data from all fathers who are referred to the Growing Up FAST Program are collected at the initial assessment appointment. Thus, when this information was available, reports of demographic information pertaining to the family, the father, and the adolescent were obtained for the present study. However, to ensure current and correct demographic information, a brief questionnaire was verbally administered to the fathers immediately following the face-to-face interviews (Appendix F). Finally, fathers were asked to sign a reimbursement form in order to receive payment for their participation in the study, and all fathers were given a copy of the signed form to document their completion of the interview (Appendix G).

Data Analysis

All interviews were audio taped and fully transcribed at a later time, post-interview. The verbatim transcripts were entered in a word processing program and served as the major source of data to be analyzed. Initially, the primary investigator used hand coding of the transcripts with paper and pencil methods, and a codebook was constructed, revised, and used throughout the data analysis to record emerging concepts and subcategories (the final codebook is included in Appendix G). In addition, the use of the computer program NVivo (NUDIST Version 5) assisted in data management and subsequent analyses of the interview text. Specifically, node searches (i.e., searches of thematic topics) that combine text across all interviews that had been identified as belonging to a respective node during the hand coding were conducted. Then, the Nvivo
program's collection and retrieval of the fathers' statements pertaining to a particular node facilitated subsequent analyses across interviews and assisted in theory development.

Procedures for investigating this data consisted of ongoing content analyses used to identify and organize themes within the interview text (Glesne & Peshkin, 1999). Specifically, first the transcripts were read thoroughly several (2-3) times, with the initial reading conducted in tandem with close review of the audio taped interview. After several reviews of the interview, preliminary, or open coding occurred. Open coding is "the analytic process through which concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions are discovered in the data." (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Following the open coding, axial coding took place. In axial coding, "categories are systematically developed and linked with subcategories." (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Next, selective coding, or the integration of categories to formulate theories, was used. In short, the analysis evolved from labeling concepts, to grouping concepts into categories and subcategories, and then to integrating categories into theories throughout the research process. These steps occurred in a circular manner, each informing the other, throughout data collection and analyses of all of the transcribed interviews (Glesne & Peshkin, 1999). This constant comparative method (i.e., the ongoing exchange between research and theory development) is an important feature of the grounded theory methodology and was utilized to guide data analysis in the present study (Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Data collection continued to inform the further development of categories and theories until the point of theoretical saturation occurs--until the incorporation of additional data was unlikely to contribute to new properties, dimensions, or relationships.
during the analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Also, data displays, such as tables, graphs, and matrices were used, when appropriate, to visually organize the data (Glesne & Peshkin, 1999).

All analyses were separately conducted by the study’s author. Analyses were also subsequently discussed at periodic meetings in order to continually revise existing coding schemes and to enhance theory development. Because the study’s focus was on the subjective experience of the father’s decision to participate, analysis was first conducted on an individual case level: each of the twenty fathers’ interviews was analyzed for categories and themes. Following this process, patterns across groups of fathers were explored. Hence, the demographic data was used to organize subsamples of fathers to allow for cross-case analyses of the interview data, such that relationships between the sociodemographic variables and emerging themes could be examined.

Trustworthiness

The concept of trustworthiness in qualitative research refers to the notion of credibility. Trustworthiness can be established through several mechanisms that aim to ensure credibility and transferability of the study’s findings, such as extensive contact with the participants, purposeful sampling, member checking, using multiple informants (triangulating) and/or methods within the study, examining disconfirming data, and maintaining written documents during the research process (Glesne & Peshkin, 1999). Member checking can be described as the process of validating the researcher’s interpretation of the participants’ viewpoints in the study by allowing the participants to review and provide feedback on the researcher’s analysis. Triangulation can also add to the credibility of the study by testing for the consistency of the findings. For instance.
methods triangulation incorporates multiple methods of data collection (i.e., interviews, written documents, observation field notes). whereas triangulation of informants includes multiple perspectives on the same topic (i.e., fathers', mothers', and the adolescents' views of paternal involvement).

The present study implemented the latter three ways to achieve trustworthiness, namely purposeful sampling, the examination of disconfirming data, and the maintenance of a written journal throughout the study. First, purposeful sampling of fathers with different demographic characteristics was achieved in order to ensure data representative of diverse perspectives that could be more readily transferred to multiple contexts. Second, the ongoing task of identifying any disconfirming evidence in the data that would then contribute to theory development took place throughout analyses of the data (Erickson, 1986). The consideration of disconfirming data adds to the validity of the analysis by addressing and including discrepant evidence in the assertions generated from the data. Third, a journal was maintained during the study that included (a) notes taken during and immediately following the initial telephone contacts and the interviews, (b) all questions and ideas that emerged during data analysis, (c) reflections that resulted from the writing process, and (d) notes on any input that was received from advisors and colleagues.

Pilot Study

The first 2 interviews were considered as part of a pilot study in order to provide the interviewer with the opportunity to identify unexpected issues/problems that the fathers may have raised during the interview. All procedures followed in the proposed study were adhered to for the pilot study. Experience gleaned through the pilot study
ensured the feasibility of further data collection efforts and assisted in improving the quality of the full study. However, as no unanticipated issues presented themselves in the pilot study, data from these fathers was ultimately collapsed into the overall sample.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Resident</th>
<th>Relation</th>
<th>Fam Structure</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Household Income</th>
<th>Ado Gender</th>
<th>Ado Age</th>
<th>Ado Fam Structure</th>
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Table 3.1: Demographic Data for Participating Fathers (n=10)
### Table 3.2: Demographic Data for Non-Participating Fathers (n=10)

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<th>Father</th>
<th>Resident</th>
<th>Relation</th>
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<th>Age</th>
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<th>Ado Age</th>
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CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

During the interviews, the fathers discussed many issues related to multiple aspects of their family life. For instance, many of the fathers’ conversations involved their views of (a) the adolescent’s problem behaviors; (b) characteristics of their relationship with their adolescent; (c) the adolescent’s involvement in contexts outside of the family, such as their involvement in school and with peer relationships; (d) aspects of their relationship with the biological mother, such as communication, conflict, and agreement regarding parenting strategies; and (e) aspects of the GFAST program, including modifications that would enhance the program’s appeal to fathers. However, in the present chapter, a discussion of the findings will focus on factors that influenced the father’s decision to participate, or to not participate, in the program. Additional themes that surfaced during the interviews that are of particular interest to the author and that may guide future research and suggest program implications will be presented in the final discussion chapter of this dissertation.

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Specific Factors Influencing Fathers' Participation

The primary objective of the present study was to identify specific factors that contributed to the father's decision to participate in the Growing Up FAST (GFAST) family-based diversion program. Hence, among the descriptive accounts that the fathers shared during the interviews involving various topics related to fathering a problematic adolescent, all fathers responded to the following question: "What specific factors influenced your decision to participate in the GFAST Program?" Fathers’ responses to this question—both at the time the question was initially posed in the interview, and also if further factors were discussed at a subsequent time in the interview—were coded and grouped together for later analysis.

Participating Versus Non-Participating Fathers

Responses to the question regarding their decision to participate were analyzed separately between two groups of fathers: Participating Fathers (i.e., fathers who had participated in at least one GFAST session) and Non-Participating Fathers (i.e., fathers who had not participated in any GFAST sessions). Total responses given by the two groups of fathers will be presented separately in order to distinguish between the experiences of participating and non-participating fathers.

Family Structure

In addition to the creation of two groups of fathers based on participation status, within group analyses of the participating and non-participating fathers showed that themes emerged among the participants based on the father’s family structure. In other words, fathers who belonged to a particular family structure (i.e., single resident fathers; two-parent married fathers—biological fathers or stepfathers; and non-resident fathers).
fathers) seemed to share and voice similar factors that influenced their decisions to participate in the program. Family structure was identified at the time of the interview during the father's completion of the demographic questionnaire. However, all fathers were asked to identify their family structure status as it was at the time of their referral to the GFAST program, as many of the living situations had changed between the time of their initial contact with the program and the time of the fathers' interviews. For example, several of the adolescents who had been living with their father at the time of the family's initial contact with the GFAST program had subsequently run away and/or had decided to return to live with their biological mother. Thus, as the present study aimed to better understand the father's and the family's experience at the time of the referral when the father was contemplating whether or not to participate in the diversion program, it was necessary to classify the fathers' family structure based on the living situation at the time of referral.

Participation Barriers Discussed by the Non-Participating Fathers

The numerous responses voiced by the non-participating fathers showed similarities that suggested a further classification into 1 of 4 groups. Specifically, when discussing their main reasons for not being involved in the program, the non-participating fathers made reference to the:

- Adolescent (e.g., I didn't go because she ran away)
- Father's personal concerns (e.g., It wasn't necessary for me to be there)
- Program (e.g., a lack of confidence in the program's effectiveness)
- Biological mother (e.g., the mother never notified me about the program)
Interestingly, the fathers’ family structure classification was related to these response categories, such that (a) single, resident fathers mentioned adolescent-related factors, (b) two-parent resident fathers cited father-related and program-related factors, and (c) non-resident fathers communicated mother-related factors as the primary factors contributing to their lack of participation in the program.

Before discussing the themes, a brief description of each of the individual fathers will be provided that will include demographic data and relevant background information. Then, as the themes are presented, fathers’ verbatim quotes will be lifted from the interview text to be used as examples to substantiate the respective themes. Finally, any exceptions (i.e., any fathers who did not correspond with the respective categories or any fathers who voiced multiple influencing factors, some of which were not within the categories that have been constructed) will be discussed as disconfirming evidence.

Participating Fathers

Single, Resident Fathers (n=3)

**Chip**: Chip was a 41-year-old, Caucasian single father of an 18-year-old daughter who, to Chip’s surprise, was caught shoplifting (her first and only offense). Chip was divorced from the biological mother who lived in another city in the same state and saw her daughter 4-5 times per year.

**Sam**: Sam was a 53-year-old, Caucasian single father of a 16-year-old daughter. He was a widow and was raising his daughter, and her twin brother, on his own. His daughter was caught shoplifting, but she had also experienced some mental health issues...
(depression) in the past and Sam’s contact with the GFAST program represented just one of his numerous attempts to obtain assistance with his daughter.

Ned: Ned was a 32-year-old, Caucasian single father of a 12-year-old son. At the time of his son’s referral to the GFAST program (for assaulting his teacher at school), Ned had been cohabitating with his girlfriend. However, at the time of the interview, Ned was in the process of moving to a new residence with only his two sons. The biological mother lives in another city in the same state but is typically uninvolved due to a fairly severe physically and verbally abusive relationship that she has with her son.

It was court ordered... I didn’t have a choice.

- "The fact that he has to be there."
- "I really felt like it was something that had to be done, and like I said, I mean, it was a more or less court ordered kind of thing so, and I was the only parent around. so I didn’t really know."
- "I’m here because I went to court people and they sent her here."

These three single fathers all expressed a feeling of being obligated to participate because they were the only residential parent. Also, because all three adolescents were given the option to participate in the program as an alternative to being seen by the juvenile courts, these fathers chose to participate in order for their adolescent to avoid any involvement with the juvenile justice system. Thus, the fathers felt that it was their obligation as the sole residential parent to ensure their family’s attendance and circumvent contact with the juvenile courts.
Two-Parent, Resident Fathers (n=5)

Andrew: Andrew was a 45-year-old, Native American biological father of a 15-year-old daughter, and he was still married to the biological mother. During the interview, Andrew expressed obvious dislike for his daughter's older boyfriend and after several incidences of her skipping school with the boyfriend. Andrew and his wife had contacted the GFAST program. Andrew was also experiencing a particularly frustrating situation with his family due to the increasing conflict between his wife and his two daughters. He shared how he had been, and continued to be, unsuccessful in finding a "neutral" position at home among his wife and daughter.

Tim: Tim was a 44-year-old, Caucasian biological father of a 16-year-old son, and he was still married to the biological mother. Tim’s son had been the victim of sexual abuse several years earlier, and Tim believed that his son had recently begun to express problematic behaviors as a result of the abuse. The adolescent and his family were referred to the diversion program by the juvenile courts as a result of a shoplifting incident.

Scott: Scott was a 47-year-old, Caucasian biological father of a 17-year-old son, and he was still married to the biological mother. Scott’s son was caught by the local police with a small amount of marijuana and came into contact with the program as a result of this drug possession. Scott had only been able to attend one session of the program due to his very busy work schedule (more than 60 hours/week).

Hal: Hal was a 34-year-old, African American biological father of a 12-year-old son. Hal’s son had always lived with him and the son rarely saw his biological mother. Hal had been remarried for five years. After an incident in which the adolescent had
been caught shoplifting on a school field trip. Hal and his wife contacted the GFAST program to prevent further problem behaviors.

Lee: Lee was a 43-year-old. African American biological father of a 15-year-old son. Lee’s son had resided with him since birth and the son seldom had contact with his biological mother. Lee had been remarried for 11 years. Lee and his wife had contacted the GFAST program to obtain assistance regarding their son’s persistent lying and theft in the home.

It is my responsibility to do something to fix the problem.

- “I knew something had to be done.”
- “Whatever it takes.”
- “Well. I feel I’ve got a responsibility to raise my kids...If there’s a problem and I can’t fix it. I will have to ask for help.”
- “And I felt all of us should be in the program...If there’s somebody out there that can help me help them or help them with me. or help them by themselves without me.”
- “It was a given.”
- “Usually. we’re always there for him. Both of us together.”

Although these fathers were all involved in a committed relationship with the biological mother. or stepmother. at the time of the GFAST referral. these men also described an obligation or inherent responsibility as the father to participate in the diversion program. They matter-of-factly stated that as one of the two residential parents. it was a part of their role as the father to take appropriate action in attempt to “fix the
problem.” For these fathers, little thought was given to whether or nor to be involved, as they believed that their participation in the family-based program was simply an unspoken duty.

*Non-Resident Fathers (n=2)*

**Dan:** Dan was a 38-year-old, Caucasian biological father of a 15-year-old daughter. Immediately prior to her referral, the daughter had been living with Dan and his new wife. However, at the time of the GFAST referral and the interview, Dan’s daughter was residing with her biological mother and stepfather. After a recent evening when the adolescent snuck out and stayed overnight with a new boyfriend, Dan and the biological mother contacted the program to prevent further problematic behaviors. According to Dan, although he was concerned about his daughter, he did not feel that her behaviors were too severe.

**Matt:** Matt was a 56-year-old, African American biological father of a 16-year-old daughter who had been referred to the program as a result of multiple school suspensions due to fighting and incorrigibility at school. At the time of the GFAST referral and during the family’s participation in the program, the daughter was living with her biological mother. However, at the time of the interview, the daughter had just recently moved from her mother’s home and was now living with Matt and his girlfriend. Matt had fathered several other children who were now much older, and he was very outspoken during the interview when describing his firm and punitive parenting style.
I wanted to be there for my child to show that I care.

- "We care about you and this is why we're going."

- "When it was mentioned, going to the meeting, if the father wanted to go, he could go. And I wanted to go.

These two non-resident fathers clearly stated that they had definitely planned to participate in the program, and really had given little thought to their decision. In addition, it seemed to be important for these two fathers to show that they cared for their adolescent and they wanted to demonstrate their support for their daughters by being present at the GFAST sessions. Both of the fathers also reported having relatively amicable relationships with their daughters' biological mothers and they were able to easily communicate with their ex-wives regarding their adolescent's well being.

Non-Participating Fathers

Single, Resident Fathers (n=2)

Mike: Mike was a 52-year-old, Caucasian biological father of a 17-year-old daughter. He was divorced from the biological mother and has been raising his daughter on his own since his divorce for nearly two years. Because his daughter had frequently been skipping school and traveling out of state with friends, Mike decided to file a missing persons report. The adolescent was found and detained by police in another state, yet after Mike retrieved her and she returned home, her incorrigible behaviors continued and she ran away soon after referral to the program. Thus, although his daughter was residing with Mike at the time of the GFAST referral, at the time of the interview, his daughter had run away and Mike thought that she was currently living with her mother in Jamaica.
Bart: Bart was a 41-year-old, Caucasian biological father of a 17-year-old daughter who was also “sneaking out” and running away from home. Bart also suspected that she was being sexually active with an older boyfriend and he eventually filed an unruly police report, which led to his contact with the program. Bart had been divorced from the biological mother for 15 years, but had just recently received custody of his daughter and her sister three years prior to the referral due to their mother’s substance abuse problem. Although his daughter was residing with Bart at the time of the GFAST referral, at the time of the interview, his daughter had run away and Bart was currently unaware of her whereabouts.

Adolescent-Related Factors

She ran away / Moved in with her mother.

- “She never shows up... I can’t find her and that was the same way with all the programs.”
- “They set up somebody to talk to me. I think it was about two weeks later they called me. well within the very next week, my daughter run away again. So I couldn’t very well get her into any of the meetings.”

When asked about the factors that influenced their “decision” to not participate in the program, these single, resident fathers responded that they would have been involved, but because their daughter had ran away or returned to live with their biological mother immediately after referral to the GFAST program, they were unable to participate with their adolescent. These fathers also described numerous previous efforts to receive help for their adolescent (i.e., Children’s Services, community mentorship programs), but
these attempts had been unsuccessful due to their daughters’ repeated refusal to stay committed to the services. It was clear that these fathers were frustrated with the current situation involving their adolescent.

Two-Parent, Resident Fathers (n=4)

**Samuel:** Samuel was a 49-year-old, African American stepfather of a 15-year-old daughter. Samuel had been cohabitating with the daughter’s biological mother for the past seven years, and they had been married for one year. During the interview, it was clear that the adolescent’s biological mother was the primary disciplinarian in the household, and that Samuel’s role was to enforce his wife’s rules when she was unable to be present. According to Samuel, his stepdaughter’s school had notified Children’s Services about visible bruises that she had, and Children’s Services suggested that the family attend the GFAST program.

**Randy:** Randy was a 45-year-old, Caucasian biological father of a 15-year-old daughter, and he was still married to the biological mother. The adolescent was referred to the program because she had stolen another student’s purse at school. Although Randy, a law enforcement officer, initially appeared suspicious about the interview, he gradually opened up and later described how his recent anger and disappointment with his daughter made it difficult for him to want to participate in the program and to have the close relationship that he had shared with his daughter in the past.

**Tom:** Tom was a 41-year-old, Caucasian biological father of a 15-year-old daughter, and he was still married to the biological mother. Tom and his wife had discovered that their daughter had begun drinking alcohol, and to prevent further problem behaviors from developing. Tom’s wife had contacted the GFAST program.
Monty: Monty was a 37-year-old, African American uncle of a 16-year-old daughter. Monty and his wife had been raising their niece for two years and had decided to contact the GFAST program in order to "scare" their niece and discourage further unruly behaviors that she had recently been exhibiting. The adolescent's father (Monty's brother) had passed away when she was five years old, and since then, the girl had been living with her mother. However, the biological mother had become chemically dependent and was currently unable to provide a home for her daughter. Monty was extremely verbose and eager to share his frustrating experiences involving his niece during the interview.

Father-Related Factors

I am not a part of this problem...Why should I be involved?

- "I myself, personally. I felt like, hey, I didn't do any of this. so why should I get involved in it?"

She will open up more without me there.

- "I think part of me felt it might be better for her, because I'm so hard and opinionated. that it was better for her and her mother to be in the sessions and not me there with them."

I need to feel in control of my own life.

- "My biggest thing with all of it is that I want to feel in control of my world and I know I'm not. Even though I feel I'm at that point where I know I'm not, I'm still not as likely to share that with somebody else."
Program-Related Factors

I have a lack of confidence in the program, and in therapy in general

• "The lack of confidence that it was going to result in any changes in her."

It is difficult for me to seek help outside of the family.

• "My thing would be is that I don't know if they would consider it a sign of weakness or what if you have to go to someone else for help...I know I'm reluctant to talk with someone else."

• "I'm the type of person, if I have to look outside the family for help within the family. then that would be hard for me to do."

Privacy...I wanted to keep the problem within the family.

• "It's a family problem. we're going to keep it within the family...why am I going to go talk to somebody that don't know me?..Or don't know her or don't know the situation? ”

• "We didn't do because we were trying to keep the privacy within her because the gossip is so rampant in our community because of her prior issues."

These fathers were still married to the adolescent's biological mother or had been involved with same woman (stepmother or step aunt) for several years. and therefore. were currently residing in a fairly stable two-parent household. However. unlike the participating fathers in two-parent homes. these fathers chose to not participate due to either father-related factors or program-related factors.
Based on the father-related factors that were voiced, it was clear that these fathers did not characterize their role as the father as one in which their participation in the program was necessary and/or beneficial to the family’s problematic situation. In other words, these fathers believed that if they did not personally have the behavioral problem, nor would they be able to positively influence their adolescent’s situation, why was it imperative that they attend the GFAST program? One father also expressed his personal concern with needing to have a sense of command over his life, and that his involvement with this family-based service might weaken that feeling of control.

These fathers also voiced several program-related factors that influenced their decision to not participate, such as a lack of confidence in the effectiveness of the program, and therapy in general, and a reluctance to seek assistance from non-family members who would not be familiar with the family’s situation and who may compromise their rights of privacy. Interestingly, most of these fathers did not strongly object to the mother’s and the adolescent’s participation in the program, but they did not believe that their attendance was an obligatory part of their role as the father.

*Non-Resident Fathers (n=3)*

**Bud:** Bud was a 43-year-old, Caucasian biological father of a 14-year-old daughter. Bud had been separated from the biological mother for eight years and the daughter was, and had been, living with her biological mother since their separation. Due to a legal matter, Bud had been without a driver’s license for several years and he stated that because of this obstacle, his communication with his daughter was limited to
occasional telephone conversations. Bud suspected that the mother and daughter were asked to attend the GFAST program as a result of police involvement in a physical fight that had occurred between the adolescent and her mother.

Rett: Rett was a 40-year-old Caucasian biological father of a 16-year-old daughter. According to Rett, his daughter was referred to the program after her school had received an anonymous phone call notifying the school about incidents of physical abuse between the biological mother and Rett’s daughter. At the time of the GFAST referral, the daughter was living with her biological mother and stepfather. However, shortly thereafter and at the time of the interview, the daughter had moved in with Rett and was currently residing with him.

Kent: Kent was a 44-year-old Caucasian biological father of a 14-year-old son. Kent was divorced from the biological mother and the son was living with his biological mother and stepfather. Kent knew very little about his son’s initial involvement with the diversion program, but he thought that it may have been related to an incident in which his son had been caught by the local police for trespassing on school ground late one night. Kent was initially wary of the interview and he remained extremely guarded and hesitant throughout the conversation—especially regarding any discussion of his ex-wife and their ongoing conflict about parenting their son.

Mother-Related Factors

I didn’t know about it.

• “No. I didn’t know that he was involved in the program.”

• “I didn’t know about this growing up fast and I never heard of it before.”

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• “I've never had contact with it. When you called me, it was a complete shock.”

**I was never asked to go.**

• “I wasn't never asked.”

**Conflict with ex-wife would have been a problem.**

• “No, I did not ask because we're at the stage and time in life where if we don't have to be around each other, we're better off and so is the kids. We do not see eye to eye on a lot of things.”

In their responses to why they did not participate in the diversion program, these fathers all made references to the biological mother of the adolescent and her neglect to notify them about the program. In fact, two of the three fathers stated that they had been completely unaware of their adolescent's involvement in the program until they were contacted and invited to take part in the present study's interviews. It was clear that these fathers had limited contact with the biological mother, and often times, interactions with their ex-wives were characterized by conflict and disagreement.

**Exceptions**

**Flint:** Flint was a 72-year-old, Caucasian step grandfather of a 13-year-old adolescent who was been unruly in school and was continually running away from their home. Flint was married to the adolescent's grandmother and, at the time of the referral, they had been raising the girl. The adolescent had lived with Flint, his wife, and his wife's son (the biological father) since the girl was 1 year old. However, the biological father had moved out of the home 2 years prior, and Flint and his wife had gained custody. At the time of the interview, though, the adolescent had moved and was
currently living with her biological mother and her mother’s boyfriend. Flint cited the adolescent’s recent move as the reason in which they did not participate in the diversion program:

- “We would have went into that program, we would have tried anything actually, but of course, we just dropped everything because when her mom tried to take her.”

Thus, although Flint stated that he would have wanted to try the GFAST program, their family did not participate because the adolescent had moved out of their residence to live with her biological mother. Because of his relation to the adolescent, and due to the family’s constantly fluctuating living arrangements, Flint’s experience does not exactly correspond with the other fathers’ situations and with the classifications that have been presented.

**Bud:** In addition to the mother-related factors (not being “asked” to participate in the program and acknowledgment of a discordant relationship with the biological mother), Bud, one of the non-resident fathers, also spoke about a third reason for why he did not participate in the program toward the end of his interview:

- “Not for me because I don’t even think I’m the problem in this anyhow. any shape. Because I do anything and everything to the best of my ability that I can do. What I basically want to do is see if this program is working for them or not. The way I see it, they’re the one’s who’ve got the problem.”

According to Bud, he did not have a significant role in any aspect of his adolescent’s current situation, as he assumed no part in contributing to the existence of
the problematic behaviors, or in the treatment of his daughter's problematic behaviors. It is likely that because Bud was a non-resident father who had limited contact with his daughter and the biological mother, he did not feel that it was his responsibility to make an effort to attend the program. In any event, Bud talked about multiple reasons for why he did not participate in the program throughout the duration of the interview.

Factors Influencing Fathers' Participation—In General

A second related goal of the study was to better understand why fathers, in general, are less likely than mothers to participate in family-based programs. Thus all of the fathers were asked the following question: "Why do you think that fathers, in general, do not participate as often as mothers do in our—or most—family-based programs?"

Conversation regarding this topic typically followed the previously discussed question concerning specific factors that influenced the father's decision to participate, unless it was appropriate to inquire about this issue at an alternate time in the interview. All fathers' responses to this question—at the time the question was initially posed in the interview and also if further thoughts were raised at a subsequent time in the interview—were coded and grouped together for later analysis.

Interestingly, despite the fathers' participation status and despite the fathers' family structure, the responses were very similar among all twenty fathers. In particular, fathers' responses to this question could be classified into one of two thematic groups, and fathers often voiced multiple examples supporting one or both of the themes: (a) traditional mother/father roles in the family, and (b) feelings of inadequacy. In the following presentation of these two themes, fathers' verbatim quotes from the interviews
will be used to illustrate the thematic groups. Finally, any additional factors that were voiced by an individual father during the interview in response to the above question will be discussed.

Traditional Mother/Father Roles in the Family and Feelings of Inadequacy

In their responses, many fathers clearly identified and described the existence of traditional male and female roles within the household as a main reason why fathers participate in family programming less often than mothers. Specifically, these fathers described the man’s role in the family as primarily one of breadwinner and provider. In addition, they expressed the opinion that most men are mere onlookers to family life, and that fathers rarely discipline or communicate with their adolescents. Hence, according to these fathers, they believed that most men believe that it is the mother’s job to raise their offspring and manage any issues related to the family. These twenty fathers also talked about feelings of inadequacy as a reason for why fathers are not as likely as mother to be involved in family-based programming. For example, many of the fathers described specific feelings of being a failure, being weak, being uncomfortable, and being embarrassed as barriers to their involvement in family-based programs and services.

Traditional Father-Mother Roles in the Family

Fathers as providers

- “The one males, there’s a few of them I know wouldn’t go ‘cause they just live in the old world where the woman of the house does this. The man of the house does this. I take care of work and bringing home the money, doing whatever I want to do. You take care of the home and the family.”
"I'm sure there are cases where the father is saying it's the wife's job to raise the kids. I provide the money, the wife takes care of the family."

"In general, I think they feel probably that they are busy, that their primary obligation of their family is monetary, money, providing."

"Um. they're busy. They're busting their butt to work, they think they must. I gotta work. It's the societal pressure that says the man must be the provider."

**Fathers are outsiders to home/family life**

"Usually the father is basically the outsider to the house. He is just basically on the outside looking in. Watching his kids grow up but not making them grow up."

"Fathers in general. I don't think participate in the family all that much. I mean, regardless of the work roles, mom still deals with the family issues and that sort of thing. I don't think fathers get down to the nitty gritty family level as much as moms do."

**Mothers have the job to raise and discipline the children**

"It's just like I said before, they leave all the disciplinary stuff to the mother."

"They just handle it better because they tend to be more focused on taking care of the child. Fathers don't get to take care of children very much."

"Bringing up the kids, that's mom's job."
Mothers are closer to and more emotionally involved with their children

- "You know, moms seem to be more involved in the emotional well being of their kids. I think moms care more maybe or they just seem to get more involved. They are more hands on emotionally with kids than dads are. At least that's the way it was when I was growing up."

- "I don't think fathers know how to communicate as well with their children as well as what a mother might. I'm sure that goes for each individual is different. I'm not saying that's always the rule, but I would say eight out of 10 times or nine out of 10 times. a mother is going to have a better or closer relationship with their child. whether it be a male or a female."

- "I think moms are always there for their kids. I think all kids are just closer to their moms than they would be their fathers. Not that they don't love them any less. but it's their mother. I think that's why moms 'cause they're just closer to their children than the father would be."

Feelings of Inadequacy

Failure

- "I guess just from. I'd use the word fear. Being afraid to face other people who may seem to be questioning your parenting skills."

- "They don't want to go in and be a failure--a father that failed because their child is not performing up to their standards."

- "Could be a father who is thinking he may be considered a failure...a failure as a father."
Embarrassment / Pride

- "Um, pride and embarrassment."
- "Maybe for a male, it's an embarrassment type thing or ego type thing that someone in their family may have a problem."
- "Could be a father who is thinking he may be considered a failure, could be embarrassed."
- "One, they're embarrassed."
- "Some are probably ashamed. I'm sure."
- "I think it's a sense of embarrassment."

Sign of Weakness

- "My thing would be is that I don't know if they would consider it a sign of weakness or what if you have to go to someone else for help."
- "They don't want to admit that they have a problem that they can't handle with their own kids."
- "That's tough for a man to do, to say...Hey, I need help."

General Discomfort

- "Maybe because they think it's going to be that kind of a thing where they're going to get put on the spot."
- "I would say maybe they would just feel uncomfortable. They just wouldn't be, some people out of their elements aren't very comfortable."
In conclusion, fathers' responses to the general inquiry about why paternal participation rates in family programs are lower than mothers' rates of participation, all twenty fathers voiced detailed and strikingly similar responses that evidenced one of two themes: traditional mother/father roles in the family and feelings of inadequacy. In addition, their replies were independent of the father's participation status in the GFAST program and their family structure status at the time of referral to the program.

Additional Influencing Factors Voiced by an Individual Father

Although most fathers talked in great detail about one or both of the previously discussed themes, some fathers also mentioned additional reasons to explain fathers' low participation rates in family programming, such as (a) men believing that they do not need improvement, (b) men's aversion to commitment, (c) men being self-centered, and (d) men's overall apathy toward family issues.

Men Believing that They Do Not Need Improvement

Scott: Scott, the 47-year-old, biological father of a 17-year-old son who was still married to the biological mother and who did attend the GFAST program, spoke about the following reason:

- "See that's the problem with men. I don't think that you could tell them that you're going to make them better at any particular thing...cause they're going to think they already know it all."

Scott suspected that many fathers would be unconvinced that family programming would provide them with services and/or information that could help them to become better fathers. Due to this reason, fathers might be indifferent to the notion of attending a family-based program.
Men's Aversion to Commitment

Dan: Dan, the 38-year-old, biological, non-resident father of a 15-year-old daughter who did participate in the GFAST program, raised the following idea:

- "I think a lot of males in general don't like to make commitments to things."

According to Dan, many men are not comfortable with the idea of having to commit to things, including making a commitment to consecutively attend program sessions for an extended length of time. In fact, Dan discussed this idea directly after he stated that one of the influential factors that contributed to his participation in the program was the flexibility that was offered. Specifically, Dan stated that one of the "very big pluses" of the GFAST program was that one could "stop at any time if you didn't feel like talking anymore." For Dan, the lack of pressure to finish a particular session and/or the entire program played a role in his decision to participate. Thus, if men feel that they are required to commit a certain amount of time to participate in a program, they will be less likely to initially become involved.

Men Being Self-Centered

Flint: Flint, the 72-year-old, step grandfather of a 13-year-old adolescent who was unable to participate in the GFAST program due to the adolescent's relocating with her mother, talked about the following issue:

- "Well, I guess a lot of men are very self centered and selfish. I think about Chuck and his two boys and daughter. He likes to play softball. It was more important for him to go play a softball game than it was to
see his son play little league. I never liked that. I just never thought that was right.”

Clearly, Flint based his reason for men’s overall low rates of participation on his own experience with and opinion of his stepson’s fathering of his children. Flint did not feel that the stepson had been an involved father with his children, including the daughter who was acting out. Hence, during the conversation, Flint suggested that other men may also not be fulfilling their fatherhood obligations, and instead of doing what was “right,” they were choosing to fulfill their personal desires.

**Men’s Overall Apathy Toward Family Issues**

Randy: Randy, the 45-year-old, biological father of a 15-year-old daughter, who was still married to the biological mother but who did not attend the GFAST program, speculated on the following reason:

- “There seems to be a lot of apathy in the world right now when it comes to families in general. You see a lot of people that don’t have fathers in the home. so if they don’t care enough to stay there, make it right and take care of their family. I can’t imagine they’d want to come to any kind of program.”

In Randy’s opinion, many present-day fathers are failing to perform numerous obligations to their families, including a fundamental duty of remaining present in the household. Consequently, he contends that it should be of no surprise that fathers are less likely than mothers to participate in family-based programs.
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to achieve a greater understanding of factors that influenced fathers’ decisions to participate in family-based programming. A qualitative approach was used with a diverse sample of participating and non-participating fathers to allow fathers with different experiences to voice any reasons that contributed to their decision to participate. The present chapter has several objectives. First, the findings that emerged from the interviews with the ten fathers who did participate in the program and ten fathers who did not participate in the family program will be reviewed. Second, the conceptual model that has been proposed as a method to organize the literature on responsible fathering (Doherty, Kouneski, & Erickson, 1998) will be revisited in order to illustrate how the framework can be applied to the present study’s findings. Third, four important issues will be discussed that are relevant to the father’s role in family-based programming:

- Operationalizing father participation
- The inclusion of multiple family perspectives
- The co-parental relationship
- The father-offspring dyad: Differences based on age and gender

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In particular, the discussion of each of these issues will include: (a) an evaluation of the present study’s examination of the topic (i.e., limitations and achievements), (b) methods in which future research could better address each issue, and (c) programmatic implications relevant to these issues.

**Brief Summary of the Study’s Findings**

All twenty fathers were asked to identify specific factors that influenced their decision of whether or not to participate in the family-based program. The ten fathers who did participate voiced three main reasons that were related to the father’s family structure. The three single, resident fathers stated that because their daughters were referred to the program as an alternative to involvement with the juvenile justice system, it was their responsibility as the sole residential parent to attend the program with their daughters. The five two-parent resident fathers believed that their participation in the program was an inherent obligation and their attempts to “fix the problem” were a part of their roles as the fathers. Each of the two non-resident fathers shared a desire to show his support and caring for his daughter by being present at the program sessions as a main reason influencing his decision to participate.

Similarly, the ten non-participating fathers identified reasons that were related to the fathers’ family structure and their reasons could also be classified as (a) adolescent-related factors, (b) father-related factors, (c) program-related factors, and (d) mother-related factors. The two single, resident fathers noted the role of their adolescent in their decision, such that although the fathers would have been willing to attend the program, they were unable to do so because their daughters had run away immediately after the family’s referral to the program. The four two-parent resident fathers discussed reasons...
that were related to the program and to the father’s view of his role in the family: program-related factors included the father’s lack of confidence in the program (and in any form of therapy/counseling) and the program’s effectiveness, as well as a general reluctance to seek help outside of the family; father-related factors reflected the belief that these fathers did not feel as though their attendance in the program was necessary or would have aided in ameliorating the problem. The three non-resident fathers made reference to the biological mother and her neglect in notifying and/or inviting the father to attend the program sessions as a main reason for their lack of attendance.

The fathers were also asked to share their opinion as to why fathers, in general, are less likely to attend family-based programs than are mothers. Interestingly, all twenty fathers talked about reasons pertaining to two main issues: traditional father/mother roles in the family and father’s feelings of inadequacy. Specifically, the fathers in this study believed that many fathers define their role in the family primarily as one of breadwinner and that most fathers do not take an active part in child rearing. Also, the fathers in the study stated that fathers are less likely to participate in family programming due to feelings of inadequacy and discomfort (e.g., fear of being seen as a failure as a father, being viewed as weak, and feeling uncomfortable or embarrassed by attending the program).

Interestingly, fathers’ responses were much more consistent with the theory of traditional gender role socialization in their responses to the second question of why fathers, in general, do not participate in family-based programs as often as do mothers. In contrast, fathers’ personal reasons that they identified were less reflective of the traditional view of men’s and women’s roles in the family. This dissimilarity could be
due to the fact that when fathers were asked to talk about the choices made by other fathers, in general, they borrowed from a traditional picture of what families have looked like in their past experiences. Hence, a future examination of how fathers formulated their responses to this query, and from what images/examples they reflected upon, would elucidate this difference that emerged in their statements regarding perspectives reflective of traditional gender role socialization.

Application of the Model to Father Participation in the GFAST Program

The conceptual model that was introduced in chapter one of this dissertation clearly is applicable to the study’s findings. The model has been presented in the fatherhood literature as a framework that can be used to organize existing research findings pertaining to fathering topics, and it can also be used to guide future research and programmatic efforts. The model posits that the fathering experience is influenced by factors related to the father, the child/adolescent, the mother, the co-parental relationship, and contextual factors. Thus, according to this theoretical model, fathers are affected by their own experiences, through their relationships with other family members, and by larger environmental factors, and many of the factors in these contexts exert a more significant influence on fathers than they do on mothers (e.g., factors pertaining to the co-parental relationship). Finally, the factors included in the model are interactive, such that changes that occur in the various domains are likely to have an impact on factors in other areas.

How can this model be applied to the findings from the present study? The primary contribution that the conceptual model makes to the study of fatherhood in general is that the experience of fathering is influenced by many different aspects of the
father's life that include the father's individual characteristics, the characteristics of his relationships with other family members, and certain contextual factors that exist outside of the family environment. The model, then, clearly corresponds with the findings from the present study, in that fathers' decisions to participate in the family program were influenced by adolescent-specific, father-specific, context-specific, and mother-specific factors. Thus, responses given by the fathers will be used to illustrate how the framework for responsible fathering can be applied to fathers' involvement in the context of fathers' participation in family-based programming. Findings will also be used to extend the model by highlighting programmatic implications.

Child/Adolescent Factors

Some of the fathers discussed the fact that their adolescent ran away or returned to live with their mother immediately following the family's referral to the program. The fathers stated that they would have participated in the program if their adolescent would have continued to reside with them after their referral to the program, but that their "decision" was largely out of their control and was determined by their adolescents' behaviors.

Efforts to increase fathers' participation rates in family-based programs should include recruitment strategies that also focus on the adolescent to encourage and ensure his or her participation. Practitioners may want to extend efforts in introductory interviews with the adolescent by engaging in conversation concerning ways to overcome potential barriers that would impede the adolescent's participation throughout the program. In addition, follow-up telephone calls could be conducted between program sessions with the father and the adolescent individually to discuss any concerns that each
may have with the program and to also remind the family member of his or her next scheduled session. If possible, a selection of different types of reimbursements could be offered to both the father and adolescent (e.g., financial incentives, gift certificates, progress reports on the family member's accomplishments/improvements as a result of his or her participation in the program) that would be of particular interest to the individual family member.

Father Factors

Several of the fathers in the study shared their belief that they were not a part of the problem, that their participation was not necessary, or that their attendance during the program sessions would not have been helpful. In contrast, other fathers talked about their involvement in the program as an expected responsibility as the father of the adolescent, and some said that they opted to participate in order to express their concern and support for their adolescent. Thus, the decision as to whether or not many of the fathers participated involved factors related to the father and his view of his role in the family.

The father-related factors that were voiced reflect the issues of the father's level of commitment and his role identification that are presented in the model. In order to encourage a standard that presumes the father's participation in family-based programs to be a proper duty, it may be helpful to "advertise" the program in a manner that "normalizes" the father's attendance as an essential contribution the family's improvement. For instance, it may be important to highlight the fact that other fathers have consistently attended program sessions, or if possible, programs could present fathers with data that showcase the improvements made by other fathers and their
families as a result of their program involvement. It would also be useful to share anecdotes of past participating fathers’ accolades about the program or to recruit several past participating fathers who would be willing to talk about their positive experiences with interested fathers during initial telephone contacts.

It is possible that some of the fathers who felt that their involvement was unnecessary may have believed that they were lacking in skills that would be helpful to the adolescent or they may have been unclear about how they would have specifically contributed to improving the family’s situation. Practitioners should provide a thorough description of the program, including what will take place during each session, and how the father will specifically be involved. In doing this, fathers will be clearly informed about what to expect throughout the program and how they will actively contribute to the family’s progress.

Finally, in some cases, it may not be helpful for the father to attend the program sessions. For instance, the attendance of fathers with serious mental health issues or substance abuse problems, fathers who are physically or verbally abusive, or fathers who are belligerent or unwilling to cooperate during program sessions may not be in the best interest of the family. Programs should incorporate some method of assessment or screening strategy that would identify fathers who may not be good candidates for the program and then also be prepared to make referrals to other community-based services when appropriate. Clearly, such a screening standard should similarly be applied to mothers who appear to be poor candidates for the program as well.
Contextual Factors

Fathers in this study also identified several contextual factors that influenced their decision to participate: namely, the program and the juvenile justice system. Several of the non-participating fathers discussed their belief that the program would not be successful in addressing their adolescent’s problem behaviors or they expressed the attitude that most therapeutic services, in general, are largely ineffective. For some of the other fathers, the juvenile justice system indirectly influenced their decision to participate, in that the fathers chose to attend the program in order to avoid involvement with the juvenile courts.

Practitioners should be cognizant of many fathers’ attitudes toward family-based services and must create ways in which fathers will be receptive to being involved with program offerings. One very practical way to achieve this might be to advertise the program in a way that would be most attractive to fathers (e.g., family education, parenting skills development) and to avoid terms that could potentially have a negative connotation for some fathers (e.g., therapy, counseling). For example, the program in the present study was a solution-based program and the emphasis on “solving the problem” and focusing on the family’s strengths was used rather than focusing on the cause of the family’s potentially negative influence on the adolescent’s problematic behaviors and/or on “fixing” problems being experienced by family members. It could be speculated that the program’s emphasis on family strengths may have resulted in higher participation rates than a family therapy or counseling offering would have yielded. It could also be useful to offer fathers the option of selecting the gender of the program facilitator/instructor that will be leading the sessions and the program content should
include examples that reference both fathers and mothers (i.e., asking about different strategies that the mother and father use to alleviate family conflict involving the adolescent). It will also be important for practitioners to encourage questions and address father’s concerns about the program, and also then integrate these issues into the further development and delivery of the program.

For those programs/services that involve community relationships, such as with the juvenile justice system, it would be important for practitioners to maintain good relationships with their partners. For instance, programs can provide a supply of informational packets that describe the program to community partners and, when possible, programs can offer summaries of available outcome data that highlight the program’s effectiveness in assisting families. In addition, the enlistment of a knowledgeable and friendly liaison would be a valuable addition to the program’s staff who would assist in facilitating the referral process between the community partners and in expanding the availability of the program into new areas of the community.

Community partners should also be aware of and be verbally explicit about the notion that fathers are critical to the family’s success, and it is important that this belief be communicated to families upon initial contact.

Mother Factors and the Co-parental Relationship

Some of the fathers stated that they did not participate in the program based on mother-related issues, such as not being made aware of and/or not being invited to attend the program sessions by the mother of their adolescent. Also, according to a few of the
fathers, their decision to not attend the program was due to the fathers’ efforts to avoid conflict with the mother of their adolescent that would have surfaced with both parents present during the program sessions.

Based on the mother-related issues that were mentioned by the fathers, several modifications could be made to family-based programs that would increase the likelihood of fathers’ participation. First, practitioners should make significant efforts to initially establish contact directly with the father in addition to the mother. It may be necessary to obtain the fathers’ work and cellular phone numbers when he is unable to be reached at home. When initial contact is made with the mother, practitioners should discuss the mother’s important role in encouraging and supporting the father’s attendance and it should be clearly stated that both parent’s attendance is expected and is instrumental in improving the family’s situation. For instance, it may be helpful to talk about the co-parental relationship and the benefits of the joined efforts of two parents who are working together.

In families in which there is significant conflict between the mother and father, regardless of the parent’s marital status, it may be especially vital to discuss the importance of the co-parental relationship, in order for the parents to recognize that they can both assist their adolescent despite any animosity that exists between the mother and father. However, when it is clear that the severity of the parental discord will impede the program’s aim, alternative options should be offered to the parents. For example, the parents can agree to alternate their attendance at program sessions with their adolescent and/or informational materials can either be sent home with the parent who is attending the particular session or mailed to the non-attending parent.

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Summary

Researchers and practitioners focusing with fathers and family programming must recognize that the father’s decision regarding his participation can be influenced by many different factors that may exist in different contexts of the father’s life. It is also possible that the factors are related in a way such that change in one domain is likely to cause change in other areas. Findings from the present study also suggest that fathers identify similar influential contexts based on their family structure (e.g., non-resident fathers cited mother-related factors, resident fathers cited factors related to their roles as fathers and to characteristics of the program). Thus, although many different avenues are available in which modifications can be made to maximize fathers’ participation rates, the most relevant changes that can be made for individual fathers may be related to the father’s family structure.

Study Limitations, Future Research Directions, and Program Implications

Several additional themes emerged in the conversations with the fathers that are of particular interest to the author. Thus, four important issues relevant to future work in the area of fathers and family-based programming are highlighted by the present study and will be discussed in further detail: (a) methods for operationalizing father participation, (b) the inclusion of multiple family perspectives, (c) characteristics of the co-parental relationship, and (d) the influence of age and gender difference in the father-offspring dyad. In addition, future research directions and programmatic implications related to these four issues can be identified and will be discussed.
Operationalizing Father Participation

The present study has extended the literature on paternal participation in family programming by capturing the experiences of fathers who did and did not choose to participate in our family-based program. The use of a qualitative methodology allowed fathers to openly discuss any personal factors that influenced their decision to be involved in the program, at length, without having to restrict their responses to items listed on a questionnaire-type measure. Thus, those fathers who may have identified a single pragmatic item (e.g., scheduling problems) on a questionnaire as the main reason for their failure to participate were given the opportunity to expand on their response and were asked to consider other possible influential factors during the interviews.

Furthermore, the present study contributed to existing research by including a sample of non-participating fathers. Hence, fathers who did not attend any of the program sessions were able to voice the actual reasons that influenced their decision to not be involved with the GFAST program.

In addition to these contributions of the study, a notable limitation involves the manner in which paternal participation was operationalized. Fathers' participation status was defined as (a) fathers who had participated in at least one GFAST session (participating fathers), or (b) fathers who had not participated in any GFAST sessions (non-participating fathers). Unfortunately, any discussion of these two groups assumed that all fathers belonging to their respective group were identical in their participation status. For example, a father who attended a single GFAST session was considered to be the same as a father who consecutively attended all 6 levels of the program. Similarly, a father who attempted to rearrange his work schedule without success yet talked
extensively to the mother and adolescent about the events and conversations that occurred in the sessions was treated the same as a father who showed absolutely no interest in, or perhaps awareness of, his adolescent’s involvement in the program.

**Future Research**

Clearly fathers’ participation status should not be operationalized in such a restricted manner, but should instead be assessed on a continuum of participation based on the father’s amount or level of involvement. Thus, a more detailed assessment of the father’s level of participation during the entire duration of the program would enhance the study’s contribution to the literature. One alternate method of operationalizing paternal participation in the program could be created by borrowing from existing conceptualizations of father involvement. Specifically, Lamb’s (1985) three-tier model of father involvement or Palkovitz’s (1997) expanded conceptualization of father involvement could be used to assist in measuring paternal participation in family-based programming. Lamb’s (1985) three-part model of father involvement has perhaps been the most influential framework over the past 2-3 decades in the father literature. Lamb and colleagues (1985: 1987) suggested that the father involvement construct consists of engagement (direct interaction with the child), accessibility/availability, and responsibility of care. Hence, a father’s participation could be reflected in his use of better communication with his adolescent (engagement), in his efforts to alter his work schedule in order to attend the program sessions (accessibility/availability), and in his increased monitoring of his adolescent’s problematic behaviors between program sessions (responsibility of care).
A more recent approach to studying father involvement has been discussed by Palkovitz (1997). Palkovitz notes that the father involvement construct must be "reconceptualized" because past and current conceptualizations of involvement suffer from several problems. Specifically, Palkovitz argues that (a) more involvement is viewed as something positive and that proximity is a requisite for father involvement, (b) involvement is considered to be static and comprehensive, a variable that is either on or off and undergoes little change, and (c) involvement is seen to be consistent across fathers from various ethnic and socio-economic variations.

Palkovitz critiques these misconceptions and contends that involvement can be expressed in several different ways and that father involvement should be based on three different notions: domain specificity, ranges on a continua, and variations. For instance, involvement can occur within affective (expressing care and love for the child), cognitive (planning for the child's educational future), and behavioral (running errands, providing assistance) domains that are likely to interact. Also, involvement can be assessed on a continuum of variables, such as degree of involvement, appropriateness of the involvement, proximal/distal involvement, and indirect/direct involvement. Third, father involvement is likely to vary according to (a) changes over time, (b) developmental stages of both the father and his offspring, (c) the child's temperament, (d) the father's strengths/weaknesses, and (e) different contexts.

Hence, the future study of fathers' involvement in family-based programming should assess the various ways in which fathers can exhibit their "involvement." For example, measurements of father involvement may include: the father's level of engagement and verbal contributions during program sessions: the degree in which the
father implements aspects of the program curriculum between sessions (e.g., praising his adolescent for good behavior); or the number of times the father is successful in rearranging work-related matters in order to be available to attend scheduled program sessions.

Program Implications

Based on existing conceptualizations of father involvement in the literature (e.g., Lamb, 1985; Palkovitz, 1997), the consideration of father participation in programming should capture much more than paternal program attendance rates. In essence, fathers can be involved in family-based services in ways other than their physical presence during program sessions. Hence, program design and delivery efforts should recognize the varied ways in which fathers can be involved and incorporate strategies that would encourage different types of father involvement. For example, for those fathers who are unable to attend program sessions, informational packets, review sheets, and take-home activities can be provided for the mothers and adolescents to share with the fathers between program sessions. Such an addition to program curricula would allow fathers to participate in and gain from family-based programming even though the fathers were unable to be present at the scheduled sessions.

Fathers may also be indirectly involved in the family's participation in the program by caring for siblings in order for the mother to be able to attend with the adolescent when the program is not supplemented with on-site childcare. Fathers may also indirectly influence the family's involvement in the program by providing financial support to pay for the services. It should also be noted that, in some circumstances, a father's involvement in the program by his attendance would be detrimental to the
situation and may impede the family's treatment. For example, if the father is in a belligerent relationship with his adolescent or with the adolescent's mother, or the father refuses to be receptive to the services being offered by the program, it may be best to minimize the father's attendance at program sessions.

The Inclusion of Multiple Family Perspectives

The present study did not obtain information from multiple family perspectives, primarily due to the time and financial restraints related to including mothers and adolescents in the study. However, during the course of the interviews, questions were posed that asked the fathers to speak on the behalf of other family members, such as asking the fathers to talk about the mother's and adolescent's views of the father's involvement in the program and the father's view of the mother's opinion concerning the cause and seriousness of the adolescent's problematic behaviors.

Clearly, information obtained about other family members' views from the father should be interpreted with caution, as using the fathers' responses as the sole voice for the family raises concerns with the validity of the findings. In order to address this limitation, the incorporation of the mother's and the adolescent's views would allow for the triangulation of perspectives in the study (Glesne & Peshkin. 1999). Specifically, the method of triangulating informants' responses, or assessing multiple family perspectives on the same topic (i.e., fathers', mothers', and the adolescents' views of paternal involvement in the family program), establishes trustworthiness and would add to the credibility of the information provided within and across the multiple interviews. Thus, it would have increased the validity of the study's findings by including both the
mother's and the adolescent's voices in order to more fully understand the father's level of participation in the family program based on multiple family members' perspectives.

**Future Research**

The present study could be enhanced by future work that includes interviews with multiple family members. In particular, incorporating the mother's view of the father's decision process surrounding his participation in the family-based program (e.g., discussions prior to the family's decision of whether or not to participate, conversations during the family's program involvement) would yield a more comprehensive understanding of the father's role in his adolescent's problematic situation. For instance, the mother could describe conversations with the father regarding approaches to managing their adolescent's problem behaviors, including the father's initial and ongoing reactions toward the family-based program. The need for further research efforts to obtain and evaluate the mother's view is also consistent with the current literature that suggests that father involvement in child rearing is influenced by the mother's view of his level of involvement and fathering competency (McBride & Rane, 1998; Palkovitz, 1984). Hence, it would also be valuable to ask the mother to speak about her view of the father's parenting in relation to their adolescent, such as the extent to which he becomes involved in discipline matters and the effectiveness of his parenting behaviors in the context of the adolescent's problem behaviors.

At the same time, adolescents' responses to similar questions could enhance our understanding of the father's involvement in family programming. For example, conversations with the adolescent could address topics such as what role might the
adolescent have played in encouraging or discouraging his or her father to be involved in the program and how the quality of their relationship might be related to the father's decision to participate in the program.

Consistent with the significant concern of researchers focusing on quantitative data from multiple family members' perspectives (Bartle-Haring & Gavazzi. 1996; Bartle-Haring, Kenny, & Gavazzi. 1999), researchers working with qualitative data from more than one family member face the challenge of data analysis: what is the best method of analyzing and making meaning of information provided through multiple family members' perspectives? In other words, researchers analyzing quantitative and qualitative family data struggle with the issue of how to obtain the most accurate "family reality." or how can researchers interpret the data in a way that reflects the actual characteristics (functioning, behaviors, attitudes) of the family members in the family system?

Another obstacle involved with using information from multiple family members involves the pragmatic difficulty with collecting data from all of the family members. Future research initiatives in the family field will need to establish innovative ways to recruit family members and to sustain their participation throughout the duration of the study. For example, the inclusion of telephone interviews (especially with the increased availability and flexibility associated with cellular phone usage) and interviews conducted via the computer (e.g., email responses, chat room discussions) could serve as attractive and more convenient ways for family members to provide information and participate in research studies.

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Program Implications

The consideration of multiple family perspectives also has implications for programming. Most notably, practitioners working with families must recognize the different views that may exist among family members in the context of incorporating variety and flexibility into the design and implementation of family-based programs. In particular, each family member is likely to approach the program with his or her own views regarding the necessity of, the purpose of, and expectations for the family program and community-based services in general. Similarly, family members may disagree in how each evaluates the effectiveness of the different activities that could be planned for the program sessions (e.g., instructional/educational materials, support groups, family activities/homework assignments). Therefore, family practitioners should develop a method to assess and incorporate each family member's unique attitudes and preferences into the sessions in order to maximize the participation of all family members in the program.

The Co-Parental Relationship

During the interviews, fathers were asked to talk about their relationships with the biological mothers, including topics such as the quality of their relationship, their extent and ease of communication, and their level of agreement on parenting issues (e.g., disciplinarian approaches) pertaining to their adolescent. However, the present study neglected to obtain information regarding these topics directly from the mothers of the adolescents. Certainly, family information concerning issues that focus on the parental
relationship, in particular, should be obtained through interviews with both the mothers and the fathers of the adolescent to yield a more in-depth and balanced assessment of the co-parental relationship.

**Future Research**

Future research on fathers' participation in family programs could be enhanced by inquiring about the co-parental relationship and the parent's levels of agreement in their parenting approaches—especially regarding agreement in their views of the adolescent's problem behaviors and in their opinions of the most appropriate methods to address the problem. Also, information focusing on the co-parental relationship should be sought from both the mother's and the father's perspectives regardless of the parents' marital status. Questions pertaining to the co-parental relationship might investigate the amount of agreement that is shared between the mother and father regarding (a) the severity of the adolescent's problem behaviors, (b) past and present parenting approaches that have proven to be ineffective in dealing with the problem, and (c) their opinions of available family-based services that could assist the family's situation. It would also be important to inquire about instances in which the mother and father were not in agreement involving these issues and how the parents have typically decided on a method to resolve their disagreement. Other topics related to the co-parental relationship could include how each parent perceives the other's parenting competency and the other parent's involvement in family problems surrounding the adolescent.
Program Implications

In most family situations, regardless of the mother's and father's marital status, program curricula should emphasize the importance of minimizing parental conflict and strengthening the parental unit when addressing the adolescent's problematic behaviors. One strategy for achieving greater levels of parental agreement would be to educate the parents about the adolescent's problem behaviors, such as the factors that may be contributing to the existence and continuance of the problem for their particular family. In order for the parents to achieve a shared understanding of what they can do to improve their situation. Program curricula could also focus on strategies that the parents could use to strengthen the co-parental relationship (e.g., improved communication skills) and how the mother and father could work together to strengthen the family's way of coping with the adolescent's problematic behaviors.

In certain family conditions where the parents are completely unable to maintain an amicable relationship, it may be unwise for both parents to simultaneously attend the program with their adolescent. Thus, program facilitators should devise a way to evaluate the parent's relationship, and then offer alternate options to families in which the parents are unable to cooperatively attend program sessions. For example, one option could allow the mother and father to alternate their attendance at program sessions with the adolescent.

The Father-Offspring Dyad: Differences Based on Age and Gender

The present study was successful in recruiting a diverse sample of fathers that included fathers of sons and daughters with ages ranging from 12 to 18 years of age. However, the group of participating fathers consisted of a greater number of fathers of
female adolescents. and all three of the single, resident fathers who participated in the program were fathers of daughters. In addition, the present family-based intervention excluded fathers of young children (under the age of 12 years of age), and thus, no interviews were conducted with fathers of problematic children. Interestingly, many of the fathers in the present study seemed to express a real lack of skills in how to relate to their maturing adolescents compared to when their offspring were children. Consequently, these changing circumstances resulted in a significantly new experience for the fathers in which fathers were uncertain about their parenting behaviors in these father-adolescent dyads. Extrapolating from this finding, it is possible that fathers of children who are exhibiting problematic behaviors may identify a different set of reasons that influence their decision to participate in family-based programming that is related to the child's age. Thus, future research should examine influential factors that contribute to paternal participation in the families with disruptive children.

Future Research

Based on the study's limited sample of fathers, research that examines and compares the different experiences of fathers of daughters versus fathers of sons who are exhibiting problematic behaviors is needed. It would be interesting to obtain a greater understanding of the father's perception of the events/factors that contributed to his or her adolescent's problematic behaviors and whether or not fathers report differences based on the adolescent's gender. Also, how had the father addressed the problems, including his pursuit of assistance within and outside of the family, prior to his decision to attend the present program and were the father's decisions associated with the adolescent's gender? Although no conclusive explanation can be reached from the study, it could be that

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fathers of adolescent daughters who are exhibiting delinquent behaviors have less knowledge about how to handle their daughter’s problematic behaviors than they would if they had sons who were displaying similar behaviors. Consequently, being in a situation in which the father feels especially unprepared and uncertain of how to handle the situation with his daughter, he may be more likely to seek assistance. In fact, this conclusion is consistent with previous research that has identified poor family problem-solving skills as a predictor of the length of fathers’ participation in the present family-based program (Schock & Gavazzi, in press). Specifically, fathers who reported poorer family problem-solving abilities were more likely to complete a greater number of program sessions. Hence, fathers who perceive their family to be lacking in the ability to improve their condition may be more likely to attend the program than would be fathers who do not report that their family is deficient in the skills necessary to ameliorate their problematic situation.

It would also be interesting to explore fathers’ responses to these questions in different family structures, as the only three participating single resident fathers were fathers of daughters. In particular, further research should focus on single, resident fathers who to investigate the notion that fathers of daughters, more so than fathers of sons, would be more likely to attend community-based services due to a lack of knowledge, skills, and/or access to assistance in dealing with a female teenager. Ideally, future studies could recruit and interview fathers in families with a problematic male and female adolescent so that fathers could voice any differences in their parenting approach toward their offspring based on gender and how these differences may be related to the
father's decision to participate in community-based family services. Therefore, further work should explore the possible effect that the adolescent's gender has on the father's decision to participate in family-based programming.

The present study also neglected to obtain the perspective of fathers of problematic children and more research is needed to investigate reasons that would influence paternal participation in family-based programming based on the offspring's age. For instance, to what causes might the fathers of children versus adolescents attribute their offspring's delinquent behaviors and how might differences in these beliefs impact the father's approach toward addressing the problem (e.g., Do fathers of children believe that the delinquent behaviors are less likely to be controlled by the child versus an adolescent, and thus, would fathers of young children be more likely to take an active parental role in working to ameliorate the situation? Is it possible that fathers of children are more likely to report that the child's behaviors were due to factors within the family context than the factors that would contribute to an older adolescent's delinquent activities, and how might these different perceptions impact the fathers' decision to participate in family-based programming?)?

Previous research focusing on the relationship between the family environments of families with a mentally ill family member and the patients' recovery rates may be helpful in addressing the above questions. In particular, findings have shown that mentally-ill children (Asarnow, Goldstein, Thompson, & Guthrie, 1993) and adults (Butzlaff & Hooley, 1998) returning to families with high levels of critical and hostile attitudes have poorer recovery rates. One explanation for these findings that has been proposed in the literature suggests that those parents who attribute the symptomatic
behavior to the child, and thus within the child's control, are more likely to exhibit negative reactions (e.g., critical and hostile attitudes) toward the child (Hooley, 1998). This attributional model also suggests that individuals who report having an internal locus of control regarding their own behaviors are most likely to expect that within others (Hooley, 1998). Consequently, a parent with an internal locus of control may be more likely to expect his or her mentally ill child to be able to control the negative behaviors and will act in a hostile or critical manner when the child fails to successfully manage his or her symptoms.

Implications of this research for fathers' involvement in family programming may suggest that a father would be more willing to exhibit helpful behaviors, such as seeking assistance through program participation, when he believes that his offspring is not entirely responsible and/or not intentionally choosing to behave in a problematic manner. Additionally, it may be that fathers of adolescents are more likely to assume that the teen is more capable of managing his or her problem behaviors than would fathers of young children due to developmental differences. For example, fathers who perceive their young child to be expressing disruptive symptoms as a result of family conditions that would be out of the child's control (e.g., marital conflict) versus an adolescent's reasons for behaving disruptively (e.g., choosing to be involved with a rebellious peer group) may be more willing to take responsibility in seeking help. Thus, the further study of fathers and family-based programming might be enhanced by investigating fathers' perceptions of the factors that contributed to their offspring's problematic behaviors and, in particular, (a) whether or not the father perceives the behaviors to be under total control of the offspring, (b) to what degree the father believes that factors within the family context...
contributed to the offspring's problematic behaviors, and (c) how the father’s beliefs pertaining to these issues influenced his attempts to improve the situation. Future research could also extend the present study by talking with fathers of younger children who are displaying problematic behaviors. Additionally, a longitudinal study that would include periodic interviews with fathers of problematic children who were continuing to display delinquent behaviors might examine fathers’ changing views of their role in addressing the offspring’s problem as the child matures into adolescence.

Program Implications

As fathers’ experiences and needs may vary according to the offspring’s age and gender, the development of content-specific programming would be important. For instance, gender-specific programs could provide instruction about ways in which fathers could improve the father-adolescent relationship based on possible differences that exist regarding communication styles and methods of interacting with sons versus daughters. Similarly, programs seeking to provide educational materials to fathers of adolescents might be improved through content that highlights gender-specific issues, such as the unique problems and concerns that female versus male teens might experience during adolescence and how these issues could be contributing to the teen’s problematic behaviors.

In addition, program content designed with the consideration of the offspring’s age/developmental status would also be helpful in aiding fathers to better understand the unique perspectives of their offspring. For instance, how might the effects of marital conflict or parental abuse differentially impact children versus adolescents, and how might the youth’s reactions to such negative influences differ between children and
adolescents? Thus, it may be especially important for family-based programs to specify the content of the material and services that is provided to families with problematic offspring based on gender-related and age-related considerations.

Conclusion

The fathers in the present study identified and candidly talked about issues that surrounded their decision to participate in the family-based diversion program during the interviews. Interestingly, fathers' responses were related to the fathers' family structure, and their responses could also be categorized using Doherty et al.'s (1998) conceptual model of contextual factors that influence responsible fathering. The study contributes to the existing literature on fathers and family programming by incorporating the voices of a diverse group of fathers who did and did not participate in an intervention program for at-risk adolescents. Also, an in-depth qualitative approach was used to better understand the specific reasons that influenced the fathers' decision-making processes pertaining to their involvement in the program. Finally, several research directions and program/service implications were highlighted by the present study. In particular, four important issues relevant to future work in this area include: strategies for operationalizing father participation, the inclusion of multiple family perspectives, characteristics of the coparental relationship, and the influence of age and gender difference in the father-offspring dyad.

To conclude on a personal level, with the exception of one or two fathers, all fathers who were contacted were very eager to participate in the study (after we were able to schedule around existing responsibilities), and they were quick to open up and share their unique stories during the interviews. Many of the fathers made comments about
how infrequently they had been asked to express their views on the numerous family-related topics that were discussed, and through our conversations, many of the men seemed to gain a better understanding (including positive and negative aspects) of how their own behaviors, attitudes, strengths, and weaknesses had shaped their current roles as fathers. It is my hope that professionals who work with and study families will continue to extend efforts toward integrating fathers' voices into family research and family-based services. In doing so, we will be able to enhance our appreciation of the varied characteristics that define the changing role of the father in present-day families.
APPENDIX A

INITIAL PHONE SCRIPT
My name is Angie Schock and I work with the Growing Up Fast Program that your [son/daughter] has been [involved with/was referred to by the juvenile courts]. With the help of Dr. Steve Gavazzi, the Director of the Growing Up FAST program, I am leading a project that is related to fathers and the GFAST Program. When programs work with families, often times little attention is given to what fathers think and experience. We want to change that. We believe that fathers’ influence on families has been overlooked and that understanding fathers’ perspectives will greatly improve how we serve families and improve our work with you and your adolescent. I am aware that you [did/did not] participate in the initial level of the Growing Up FAST Program with your [son/daughter] and I would like to talk with you about any considerations that influenced your decision.

If you would be willing to talk with us about your own experience, we can offer you a gift of 50 dollars for an interview that would last about 1 hour. All of the information that you share with us will be completely confidential. Would you be interested in helping us to improve our program for fathers?

(If yes, will explain audio taping, reimbursement procedure, set up an appointment and provide direction to OSU).

Thank you for agreeing to participate. At this time, I would also like to get your permission to audiotape the interview. We do this so that I can provide you with my full attention during the interview and also have the opportunity to fully review your responses at a later time. Do you have any questions regarding the audio taping procedure?

Also, as I mentioned, we will offer you a 50-dollar gift for your participation. Immediately following the interview, I will ask you to fill out a form, providing us with your home address, daytime phone number, and social security number. This form will be processed by the Department of Human Development and Family Science at OSU and a $50 check will be mailed to your home address in 2-3 weeks. Do you have any questions regarding the reimbursement procedure?

You will receive a letter in the next few days that summarizes what we have discussed during our phone call. I will include my phone number and email address if you should have any further questions between now and the time of our scheduled interview. I will also enclose directions to our meeting place here on The Ohio State University campus. I look forward to talking with you.
APPENDIX B

LETTER TO THE FATHERS
Dear Mr. NAME:

Thank you very much for your time on the telephone the other day. As I explained, my name is Angie Schock and I am a researcher from The Ohio State University working under the supervision of Dr. Stephen M. Gavazzi, an Associate Professor in the Department of Human Development and Family Science and the Director of the Growing Up FAST program. Through our work with families, we have become interested in why some fathers participate in programs while others don’t. We want to serve you in the best way possible because fathers are very important members of the family and can help us greatly in working with your adolescent’s problem behaviors. We are aware that you did/did not participate in the initial level of the Growing Up FAST Program with your son/daughter and we would like to talk with you about any considerations that influenced your decision.

We would like to set up an appointment for an interview here at the OSU campus that should last about 1 hour. During this time, you will have the opportunity to respond to a number of questions about yourself, your family, and your view of your involvement in the Growing Up FAST Program. It is possible that some of these questions may be somewhat personal; you will have the option to refuse to answer any questions, and you can also end the interview at any time. We would also like your permission to audiotape the interview so that we can provide you with our complete attention during the interview. Please be assured that all of your responses will remain completely confidential, and your name will in no way be associated with the interview data or any information that you provide during our meeting. Also, the findings from this study will be summarized for the entire group of fathers that we talk with; no specific information about you will be reported. Prior to the interview, you will need to sign a consent form indicating that you understand the terms of the interview and that you have agreed to participate.

I will personally be calling you within the next few days to answer any additional questions that you may have regarding the study and to schedule an interview. The information that you can provide us regarding the needs that you have will be valuable in assisting us to modify our program by making it more attractive to fathers, such as yourself. We understand how important your time is so you will be paid $50 for your participation in the interview.
Thanks for your consideration of this request. I look forward to speaking with you in the next few days.

Sincerely.

Angie Schock  
Research Associate  
Department of Human Development & Family Science  
The Ohio State University

Phone: (614) 292-0241  
Email: schock.4@osu.edu
The following consent form will be read verbatim to the participant prior to the onset of the interview. If the participant gives consent and all additional questions have been answered, he will be required to sign a consent form.

During our interview, you will have the opportunity to respond to a number of questions about yourself, your family, and your view of your involvement in the Growing Up FAST Program. It is possible that some of these questions may be somewhat personal; you will have the option to refuse to answer any questions, and you can also end the interview at any time. I would also like your permission to audiotape the interview so that I can provide you with my complete attention during the interview. Please be assured that all of your responses will remain completely confidential, and your name will in no way be associated with the interview data or any information that you provide during our meeting. Also, the findings from this study will be summarized for the entire group of fathers that we talk with: no specific information about you will be reported. Prior to the interview, I will ask you to sign a consent form indicating that you understand the terms of the interview and that you have agreed to participate.

We understand how important your time is so you will be given $50 for your participation in the interview. You will need to provide me with your name, address, and social security number in order for your payment to be processed. You should expect a $50 check from The Ohio State University to be mailed to your home address in the next 2-3 weeks.

Do you have any questions at this time?
FATHER'S CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION FORM

I consent to my participating in a research project entitled:

FATHER INVOLVEMENT IN A FAMILY INTERVENTION PROGRAM FOR AT-RISK ADOLESCENTS

Dr. Steve Gavazzi and Angie Schock (Co-Principal Investigators) have explained the purpose of the study, the procedures to be followed, the expected duration of my participation, and possible benefits of the study.

I acknowledge that I have had the opportunity to obtain additional information regarding the study and that any questions I have raised have been answered to my full satisfaction. Further, I understand that I am free to withdraw consent at any time and to discontinue participation in the study without prejudice to me.

I also understand that the interview will be audio taped. In addition, I understand that all of my responses will remain completely confidential, and my name will in no way be associated with the interview data or any information that I provide during my participation in the project.

Finally, I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me.

Date: ____________________  Signed: ________________________________

Witness: ________________________________

Signed: ________________________________
(Principal Investigator or Authorized Representative)

Adapted from HS-027 (Revised 3/87) --To be used only in connection with social and behavioral research.
PARTICIPATING AND NON-PARTICIPATING FATHERS
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

I. Adolescent’s Behaviors

1. Can you please describe your son’s/daughter’s behaviors (or outstanding incident) that led up to your contact with the juvenile court and the Growing Up Fast Program.

   a. What do you believe was (what are your thoughts about) the cause of these behaviors?

   b. Does the mother agree with you on the cause of these behaviors?

II. Past Program Experiences/Use of Past Services

1. In what ways did you think that this program would be useful/not useful to your family?

   (A-D FOR PARTICIPATING FATHERS ONLY:)

   a. What did you hope to gain?

   b. What changes did you hope to see?

   c. In your opinion, what changes did the MOTHER hope to see?

   d. In your opinion, what changes did your SON/DAUGHTER hope to see?

2. Describe any programs that have addressed father or family related issues that you have ever participated in. You may also include any family services (e.g., educational materials, counseling) that you have received in the past.
a. What was YOUR overall opinion of family programs/services such as the GFAST Program?

b. What was the MOTHER'S overall opinion of family programs/services such as the GFAST Program?

c. IF YOU DID NOT PARTICIPATE, how did the mother and/or your son/daughter share any of their experiences in the program with you?

III. Barriers and Facilitators to Participation

1. Tell me how you came about your decision to be involved/not be involved in the program.

   a. Any additional facilitating factors (i.e., factors that made your participation possible and/or easier)?

   b. Any additional barriers (i.e., factors that made your participation difficult and/or impossible)?

   c. How would you classify these factors to fall within and outside of the family context (i.e., are the factors directly related to other family members)?

   d. How did any of these factors, or others, contribute to the MOTHER'S decision to participate?

   e. How could any of these factors been changed to increase your involvement in the GFAST Program?

IV. Father-Only Support Groups

1. What would you like to ask/discuss with other fathers in a similar situation as yours?

   a. In general?
b. About the program?

c. *IF YOU DID PARTICIPATE,* what would you tell another father who is in similar situation as yours but who does not want to participate in the program?

d. *IF YOU DID NOT PARTICIPATE,* how would talking with another father who did participate in the program have influenced your decision to participate?

V. The Father's Role in the Family

1. Please describe what things about YOU as a father are helpful, or not helpful, to your son/daughter.

   a. Helpful characteristics?

   b. Non-helpful characteristics?

2. Please describe what things about the MOTHER are helpful, or not helpful, to your son/daughter.

   a. Helpful characteristics?

   b. Non-helpful characteristics?

3. How would your son/daughter respond to these questions? In what way does she/he feel that (1) YOU and (2) the MOTHER influenced his/her behaviors?

4. (*IF THE FATHER DID PARTICIPATE:* ) How have YOU changed in the way that you interact with your teen as a result of the GFAST program?

5. (*IF THE MOTHER DID PARTICIPATE:* ) How has the MOTHER changed in the way that she interacts with your teen as a result of the GFAST program?
6. What changes have you seen in your TEEN as a result of the program?

VI. Program and Family Service Modifications

1. Describe a program for families that would be of interest to you.

2. Describe any changes in the GFAST program that would be of interest to you.

3. In your opinion, describe any differences in how fathers, versus mothers, may view programs for families?

4. In your opinion, describe any differences in how fathers, versus mothers, may view any type of community supports (i.e., agencies, groups, people in the community that can offer some form of help to you as a father)?
APPENDIX F

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE
### Father of the Adolescent

**Residential:** Y  N

**Relationship to adolescent:**
- (1) Father
- (2) Foster Father
- (3) Stepfather
- (4) Other Relative
- (5) Friend/Mentor
- (6) Social Service Worker
- (7) Adopted Father

**Relationship status:**
- (1) Divorced
- (2) Separated
- (3) Single
- (4) Married
- (5) Widowed
- (6) Cohabitating

**Age:** ________

**Ethnic background:**
- (1) White, Non-Hispanic
- (2) Black, Non-Hispanic
- (3) Hispanic
- (4) Asian or Pacific Islander
- (5) American Indian/Native American
- (6) Other
Last level of education completed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1)  Less than 9th Grade</td>
<td>1-3 Years of College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2)  9th-12th Grade</td>
<td>3-6 Years of College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3)  Post High School Vocational or</td>
<td>College Degree (B.A.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Training</td>
<td>(7)  Graduate Degree (M.A./Ph.D.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Occupation: ____________________

Average time spent at work weekly: __________

Level of flexibility at your place of employment (e.g., scheduling, time off):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Not at all flexible</td>
<td>(5) Extremely flexible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) A little flexible</td>
<td>(4) Very flexible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Moderately flexible</td>
<td>(3) Moderately flexible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Very flexible</td>
<td>(2) A little flexible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Extremely flexible</td>
<td>(1) Not at all flexible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you perceive that your son/daughter has problem behaviors that are primarily:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Internalizing (internal, within him/her)</td>
<td>(4) Neither</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Externalizing (acting out)</td>
<td>(3) Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Both</td>
<td>(2) Externalizing (acting out)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Neither</td>
<td>(1) Internalizing (internal, within him/her)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is your view of how serious your son’s/daughter’s problem behaviors are?
(1) Not at all serious
(2) A little serious
(3) Moderately serious
(4) Very serious
(5) Extremely serious

Have you ever participated in any type of family-based program in the past?
(1) Yes
(2) No

If yes, describe:
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Household

Household Income:
(1) $0 - $4,999
(2) $5,000 - $14,999
(3) $15,000 - $24,999
(4) $25,000 - $34,999
(5) $35,000 - $44,999
(6) $45,000 - $54,999
(7) $55,000 - $99,999
(8) $100,000 or more
Adolescent

Gender: M F

Age: ______

Last grade completed: ______

Ethnic background:
(1) White, Non-Hispanic
(2) Black, Non-Hispanic
(3) Hispanic
(4) Asian or Pacific Islander
(5) American Indian/Native American
(6) Other

Number of siblings: ____________

Family Structure (the ADOLESCENT):
(1) Single-Parent Headed (Mother)  (6) Foster Family
(2) Single-Parent Headed (Father)   (7) Other
(3) Married, Biological Parents    
(4) Joint Custody
(5) Stepfamily

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APPENDIX G

FATHERS’ REIMBURSEMENT FORM
PROTOCOL #: 91BO179

Request for Payment

NAME: ________________________________________________________

ADDRESS: ____________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

PHONE: ________-___________

SSI: _____-____-______

This signature verifies that I have requested the $50.00 cash payment for my participation in the Father Involvement Interview. I understand that the Ohio State University typically processes and mails checks of this nature in 2-3 weeks.

______________________________________________________________

name (please print)

______________________________________________________________

signature date

This signature verifies that this individual did participate in the Father Involvement Interview and that I have processed the $50.00 cash payment to the above-named person.

______________________________________________________________

name (please print)

______________________________________________________________

signature date
APPENDIX H

CODEBOOK
CODEBOOK

(PROB BEHVS) Problem Behaviors-Prior

Incident leading to GFAST (I)

(CAUSE) Cause

(I FCTRS) Influencing Factors

Father’s
General Fathers’

(PAST PRO) Past Program Participation

(GFAST) Growing Up Fast Program

Description (descript)
Expectations (expects)
Gains hoped for (gains)
Father’s
Adolescent’s
Changes (long/short term)

Sharing Info--parents (shar)

(OTHER PRO) Other Program Changes

(F ROLE) Father's Role

Daughters

Sons

Modeling—impacts on how to father (mdling)

Activities (activs) / Involvement (involv)

Mom/Adolescent Conflict

(CHARS) Characteristics: (do NOW & change for FUTURE)

Positive (+)

Father's

Adolescent's

Mother's

Negative (-)

Father's

Adolescent's

Mother's

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(FUT PROGRM) Future Programming/Services

Focus group use (grp)

(SS) Social Supports

(DISCLN) Disciplining

Father's
Mother's

(D/S DIFFS) Daughter/Son Parenting Differences

(JOB) Job

(PEERS) Peers

(SCHOOLS) Schools

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(MOM) Mother

Description (descript)

Agreement in parenting with father (agremnt)

Mother's role—mother/father differences

(DAD'S DAD) Father's Father

(SIBS) Siblings

(MAR RELAT) Marital Relation

Communication (comm)

(MEN HLTH) Mental Health

Father's

Adolescent's

(OTHER) Other Additional Comments
LIST OF REFERENCES


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