

Supporting Our Fathers

Analysis of Family Service Agency Representative's Views of Policies, Programs and Resources for Fathers in Edmonton



(Photo courtesy of Terra Centre for Teen Parents)

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Executive Summary

Terra Centre for Teen Parents of Edmonton commissioned the study on which this report is based.¹ The purpose of this exploratory study was to gain a clearer understanding of how representatives from a diverse range of family support agencies (FSAs) view the role of their agency in addressing the changing support needs of parents in their communities and the challenges they face in doing so. The findings of this study indicate that while the staff of FSAs represented in this study report that their agencies are committed to addressing the support needs of all parents in their communities, they all find it challenging to identify and address the support needs of fathers. It is also evident that the persistence of certain stereotypical ways of thinking about parents and their support needs hinders the development of policy and program support for fathers in the city. Respondents in this study stated that their agencies are open to working collaboratively with others to address the support needs of fathers in their communities, although only a few of them are aware of current strategic or well-coordinated initiatives supporting fathers in Edmonton. Lastly, there was consensus among the respondents that building stronger networks of collaboration among FSAs would benefit the families in their communities, and that they would welcome more leadership and resources from the City of Edmonton, FCSS and other major funding and policy organizations to assist them in building, maintaining and growing these networks.

¹ Financial support for this study was provided by Terra Centre for Teen Parents of Edmonton, while advisory support throughout the study was provided by Karen Caine as well as members of the Father Involvement Network Edmonton Region (FINER).

Background to the Study

During the late 1990s, a group of male human service providers and academics in Edmonton began meeting regularly to support one another in their work and to promote positive change in the provision of support services for men in the city. Over the course of 7 years, their group MenInc.² sponsored a variety of initiatives that advocated for increased public dialogue on the human service needs of males in Edmonton. According to the findings of MenInc.'s 2003 enviroscan³, support programs and services for men in Edmonton had failed to keep up with the many changes and challenges in men's lives. Respondents noted that male clients were much more likely to access support programs and resources when it was evident that service providers had taken their experience as males into account in the development and delivery of their services. However, the study also indicated that most human service agencies in Edmonton tended to ignore issues surrounding "male friendly" service provision in favour of developing programs and services with the needs of women, children and the general public in mind. Findings from the enviroscan informed the planning of the inaugural Edmonton Men's Wellness Forum (EMWF) in 2005, a two-day gathering involving policy developers, service providers and community leaders that were committed to improving health and human service provision for men in the city. While presentations and comments by the participants confirmed enviroscan findings, the EMWF also drew attention to the fact that there was a high degree of interest in the city to positively address the lack of "male friendly" programs and services in Edmonton.

It was also during this time that researchers affiliated with the University of Guelph received a major government grant to establish the national Father Involvement Research Alliance (FIRA).⁴ The purpose of FIRA was to cultivate mutually beneficial research relations between university researchers and community service providers throughout the country,⁵ and dissemination of FIRA's research findings did help raise

² The motto of MenInc. was "we're inclusive, not incorporated."

³ Long, David (2003) *Not For Men Only: MENInc. Environmental Scan of Services to Men in Greater MenInc.*: Edmonton

⁴ FIRA was a 5-year research project funded by a \$1,000,000.00 Community/University Research Alliance (CURA) grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

⁵ Retrieved on December 12, 2017 at: <http://www.fira.ca/>

awareness about the benefits of communities providing programs and resources for fathers. Collaborative networks of FSAs gradually emerged throughout the country, including the Father Involvement Support Services Network in Edmonton (FISSN). Interested representatives from the City of Edmonton assisted members of FISSN to plan and host a father involvement forum in early 2009. The forum gave momentum to discussions about the benefits of having a provincial FI coordinator for Alberta. These eventually led to the hiring of Patrick Dillon, who immediately established himself as a deeply committed and widely appreciated coordinator of the Alberta Father Involvement (AFI) initiative. Patrick's work with AFI mirrored that of the Ontario and B.C. initiatives by focusing on raising awareness and disseminating information via the AFI website as well as by offering seminars and workshops to FSAs on how to develop and offer programs and services that support men being positively involved in the lives of their children. After Patrick suddenly passed away in 2014, his replacement Kyle Campiou merged the AFI with the national Dad Central network and began broadening the reach of the initiative in the province by cultivating relations with First Nations.⁶

FISSN developed into the Edmonton Father Involvement Network (EFIN) in 2010, which was soon renamed the Father Involvement Network Edmonton Region (FINER).⁷ The monthly meetings of FISSN and EFIN provided opportunity for representatives from the City of Edmonton and FSAs involved with AFI to share what their organizations were doing and discuss how to improve the offering of programs and resources for fathers in Edmonton. Along with providing opportunity for members to update one another about the work of their agencies, monthly FINER meetings now include presentations from guest speakers and discussions among members about how to collaborate on initiatives that address the support needs of fathers in the city. In January 2017, FCSS provided funds for Terra Centre's Director of Strategic Community Initiatives Karen Caine to assist FCSS-affiliated FSAs to develop more father friendly programs and resources. To gain insight into how representatives of FSAs in communities throughout Edmonton view the role their agencies play in providing

⁶ Retrieved on December 14, 2017 at: <http://www.abdads.ca/about/>

⁷ The list of FINER members and the mission of the network are included in Appendix 1.

support to fathers in their communities, this study was commissioned during the winter of 2017.

Methods and Sources of Data Collection

Interview data discussed in this report were gathered from representatives of 16 family support agencies (FSAs) that serve communities located in north, central, east, west and southwest Edmonton as well as from community development social workers employed by the city.⁸ There were 24 face-to-face and 3 telephone interviews conducted for this study between April and October of 2017. FSA representatives included executive directors as well as front line staff, and their length of service ranged from 3 to 34 years. Length of service for City of Edmonton employees ranged from 6 to 30 years. The website data discussed in the report was drawn from the websites of 40 Edmonton FSAs between October 7 and December 5, 2017.⁹

The responses of the FSA participants express how they view their agency's role in providing family support programs and services in their communities. The contributions from participating City of Edmonton employees provide insight into past and current provision of support for fathers in Edmonton as well as the emerging vision of a more inclusive and coordinated means of supporting families throughout the city. Discussion of the study's findings is presented in the following sections that discuss challenges associated with: (1) addressing changing support needs of parents, and (2) developing a more inclusive and network-based collaborative approach to supporting fathers and families in Edmonton.

⁸ Our thanks to all organizations that participated in this study, including: Candora Society, Creating Hope Society, City of Edmonton, Community Options, Dad Central Alberta, Family Futures Resource Network, Intercultural Child and Family Centre, Jasper Place Child and Family Resource Centre, Jasper Place Health and Wellness Centre, Kara Family Resource Centre, Landsdowne Child Care and Family Centre, Military and Family Resource Centre, Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre, Primrose Place Family Resource Centre and Terra Centre for Teen Parents. The organizations whose representatives were not comfortable publishing the name of their organization have not been included in this list.

⁹ Spencer Klug provided invaluable research assistance by gathering and then summarizing his analysis of the website data.

Discussion of Findings

Challenges to Understanding and Addressing the Changing Support Needs of Parents

The purpose of this study is to understand the current state of FSA support for fathers in Edmonton and to provide recommendations designed to address the lack of program and service support to fathers in the city. Given that programs and resources do not emerge out of a vacuum, FSA representatives were asked to share their views on the support needs of parents and what their agency does to address those needs.

Most respondents acknowledged their appreciation for the commitment in Edmonton to supporting parents and families. They were aware of ongoing community consultations designed to understand the support needs of families in Edmonton, and that the findings from the consultations are used to inform the development of policy and program initiatives that address the diverse needs of families from an array of backgrounds and communities. They were also aware that despite the longstanding interest in Edmonton to improve program support for fathers, there had been very little attention paid to understanding their diverse experiences, circumstances and support needs. As one respondent said:

It's really time for change, and I hope people that can make a difference listen to what people are saying in this report. There's lots of needs that dads have in our communities, and it's important that we do our best to support them since we all know that would be good not just for kids and families, but for our community too.

Although all respondents stated that they recognized the importance of engaging with all parents that are involved with their agencies, most FSA staff relate much more easily to mothers than they do to fathers. Many respondents mentioned the ease with which their agency staff interact with the children and parents that take part in their programs, although when they were asked who comes to mind when they hear the word “parent”, every respondent without hesitation said “mom”. The following comment illustrates that even though FSA staff say they appreciate the way fathers are with their children, the relationships they develop with parents/clients is more a result of gender familiarity than it is on the support needs of the parents that walk through their doors.

I mean, we see lots of dads in our agency and most of them are pretty great with their kids and they are pretty friendly with our staff. But I don't think most of our staff know very much about them or what's going on in their lives because we don't really talk to them. It's different with the moms, because they are here most of the time and so it's easier to get to know them. And most of our staff understand and I guess connect with moms because they are also moms.

Almost all staff employed by the FSAs included in this study are female, and so it was not surprising to hear respondents talk about how familiar most female staff in their agencies are with the experiences of the mothers they work with and that this helps them to understand and address their support needs. Every respondent also acknowledged that their female staff do not have the same kind of familiarity with the fathers in their communities, and it made sense to them that their lack of connection and understanding affect not only their ability to empathize with the experiences and needs of fathers, but also the ability of their agencies to deliver the kinds of programs that would be beneficial and of interest to fathers. It was quite eye opening for most respondents to see that the deeply held cultural attitude of mom = parent affects the development and delivery of support programs for parents in their agencies. Perhaps the most significant consequence is that this attitude prevents FSA staff from acknowledging that fathers and mothers are equally deserving and in need of parenting support.

Respondents could also see how this attitude hinders others from recognizing that fathers have support needs. Respondents were not critical of the amount of consultation that occurs in the development of family policies and funding initiatives, for they were aware that there is extensive consultation involving community partners and stakeholders. They did note, however, that the policy directions of different levels and departments of government along with the program priorities of funders have hindered their FSAs from responding in creative and flexible ways to the diverse and changing needs of fathers in their communities.¹⁰ Respondents also wondered how funders and other FSAs gain their understanding of the needs of parents, particularly since smaller agencies have few organizational resources to understand their communities in depth

¹⁰ Three respondents stated that the narrow strategic priorities of the 2016 call for applications was the main reason their agencies did not apply for FCSS core funding.

and to share what little they know about the changing needs of families in their communities with larger policy and funding bodies.

Numerous respondents acknowledged that there have been many cultural, political, legal and economic changes in Edmonton over the past 40 to 50 years, and that these changes have altered the family landscape and therefore the support needs of families in the city. Respondents were also aware that FSAs have always been faced with the challenge of how to understand and address the ever-changing needs of parents and families in their communities. One respondent that had been involved in the women's movement during the 1970s noted that even though there was much public discussion about the changing circumstances of families and roles of women, it took time for governments and service providers to understand how the changes were affecting families and to identify what had to be done to effectively address the emerging support needs of women and their families. She recalled along with several other respondents how FSAs that focused on providing childcare for families in Edmonton developed during that same time.¹¹

When asked to identify any significant changes in the lives of the fathers in their communities that might affect their support needs, respondents mentioned: relatively high rates of divorce and (re)marriage, the increasing number of single fathers and families with shared child custody arrangements, growing support for kinship care in Aboriginal child welfare cases, higher immigration rates from countries with larger families and traditional patriarchal cultures, more flexible and precarious employment circumstances, increasing numbers of families depending on the foodbank and other charitable services, and changing attitudes surrounding the roles of men and fathers. Although representatives from a number of FSAs noted that their staff have become more aware of the circumstances and support needs of the fathers in their communities, they acknowledged that it has taken many years and that their agencies have had to dedicate significant resources to get to this point. There was consensus among all respondents, however, that most FSAs simply do not have the time or the resources to

¹¹ Respondents from 11 of the 16 participating agencies in this study stated that a primary concern of their agency from the start was to address the childcare needs of families in their communities.

understand the specific circumstances and needs of the fathers in their communities and what kinds of support programs would help to address those needs.

Developing an Inclusive and Collaborative Approach to Supporting Fathers and Families in Edmonton

Another basic attitude that informs the development of FSA policies and their offering of programs is that families are best viewed and treated holistically. Every respondent in this study said they believed that FCSS and the FSAs they work for are committed to promoting a holistic view of families and family support. When asked to explain the meaning of a holistic view of families, most respondent's understanding corresponded with the view of an FSA director who commented that:

A holistic view of families sees the family and very complex unit, and that everyone who takes responsibility to care for the children in their families is deserving of respect, appreciation and support.

The lack of support programs for fathers offered by most FSAs indicates that widespread support for a holistic view of families may at this point be little more than an ideal. Several respondents whose agencies have been successfully delivering programs for fathers for some time noted that there are ongoing challenges with offering programs for fathers, and that relations between staff that support the offering of programs for fathers and those that do not is one of the most significant challenges.¹² They mentioned that when it comes to deciding which programs to support, there can be tension between FSA staff that are committed to maintaining programs that address the needs of mothers and families well and staff that would like to initiate support programs for fathers that may or may not succeed. Changing organizational policies and practices is perhaps more difficult than changing our attitudes, so while FSA staff may say that both fathers and mothers would benefit from support programs and services designed with their experiences and support needs in mind, the lack of program support for fathers indicates that most of the FSAs represented in this study are not in fact very committed to supporting a truly holistic view of families.

¹² See appendix 2 for a sample of programs and other resources recently or currently offered for dads in Edmonton.

To be fair, most every respondent mentioned that their agency had struggled to generate enough interest in their community to justify offering more than a few sessions of programs they had designed for fathers. They noted that all but a handful of the staff in their agencies are female, and as noted earlier, that enables them to identify more closely with the parent of their own gender. However, several respondents noted that the lack of program support for fathers reflects more than a lack of interest on the part of fathers. The comments of one respondent express some of the attitudes and confusion that many FSA staff have in their relations with the fathers and mothers connected to their agencies.

Our moms love our programs and we have waiting lists. It's really different for dads. We tried to offer a couple of dad groups after a few dads in the community asked us if we offered anything for them. Both groups didn't run for very long though, because there wasn't enough interest from dads to keep them going. Though come to think of it, a couple of dads were pretty freaked out when they showed up and our staff kind of swarmed them because they were so happy to see them. Even then, our staff find it hard to talk to dads about their lives. Maybe the dads lost interest because we didn't ask them what was going on in their lives and how we could support them. It's funny, but I think our staff would agree that it just feels easier and more natural to do that with the moms in our programs.

It is significant that not one participant in this study, including the male respondents, mentioned "Dad" when they were asked who comes to mind when they hear the word parent.¹³ Moreover, most respondents had not recognized prior to being interviewed that blaming fathers for not seeking support reflects a deficit-based perspective towards males that deflects responsibility from those that design, promote and deliver support programs and services. It became clear to respondents that it was unfair of them to blame fathers when they were able to see that the success of many of their programs with mothers depends on the positive attitudes that staff have towards them.

This is not to say that the FSAs represented in this study purposefully ignore the support needs of fathers when developing and implementing their parent support programs. Many respondents did state that the staff in their agencies are aware that the circumstances, experiences and expectations of fathers in their communities have been undergoing significant changes for some time, although they admitted that they have

¹³ Only 18% (3 out of 16) of FSAs that participated in this study currently employ males whose specific responsibility it is to design and administer support programs and services for fathers.

very little idea how to understand the changes and provide meaningful support to the fathers and other male care providers in the families with which they work. Indeed, many respondents were somewhat embarrassed to say that their most successful programs and services are almost exclusively focused on supporting with mothers and their children.

Respondents agreed that every supportive community is characterized by collaborative efforts in response to change. As one FSA representative stated:

Families receive the support they need not only when there is shared understanding of their needs and the obstacles that prevent their needs from being addressed, but also when people understand how to better utilize whatever resources families and communities have that enable them to address those needs.

While respondents noted the many funding and program delivery challenges faced by non-profit FSAs, they were aware that most every FSA begins with people having a shared vision to address the most pressing needs of the families in their communities. They agreed that the ability of FSAs to provide proper support to the fathers in their communities would be enhanced if funding and policy development organizations provided more leadership and resources for them to do so. They also felt that more leadership and resources in this area would significantly improve their ability to collaborate with other agencies in the development of creative, father-friendly programs.

Most respondents had been unaware of FINER prior to being interviewed, and they were pleased to hear about the work of the network and that it has grown significantly since its beginnings. They were also very supportive of FINER's vision, which is to cultivate a network of organizations and agencies that promotes the collaborative development of "father-friendly" programs and services in Edmonton and surrounding regions. Every respondent said they would be interested in learning more about FINER and the work of AFI, and that they would be interested in being part of smaller, collaborative networks of FSAs in their communities as well as the larger network of organizations involved with FINER and AFI. Several respondents also suggested that it would be beneficial for FINER to have a paid coordinator to assist FSAs in the development of collaborative initiatives that focus on addressing the diverse support needs of fathers in Edmonton.

While respondents were pleased to hear about the work of the AFI coordinator, they were surprised given AFI's provincial mandate that it operates with only one staff member. They certainly understood the challenges associated with convincing government and other funders to support "non-traditional" initiatives, though they also felt that the cost of funding a second AFI position would be far outweighed by the fact that splitting the responsibilities of the current AFI coordinator would enhance the ability of FSAs to understand and address the changing support needs of the fathers and families in their communities. They also felt that it would improve the ability of FSAs in Edmonton and throughout Alberta to collaborate and share their insights and resources with one another. Every respondent also acknowledged that it would be very helpful for smaller agencies such as theirs to be more connected to AFI since they would benefit from its program and resource information as well as the expertise of the coordinator in delivering workshops and information sessions for agency staff and parents.

All respondents talked about how their limited resources make it difficult to be aware of supports that would help the staff in their agencies understand and address the changing needs of families in their communities. Several of them also commented on the difficulty accessing information from Parent Link centers, and one respondent suggested that it would be helpful if there was more uniformity across Parent Link websites, particularly their use of social media. This was supported by a recent study which found that FSAs in Edmonton differ significantly in their use of Facebook.¹⁴ All respondents acknowledged that their agencies would benefit from learning how to more effectively use social media to: understand what's going on in their community, engage more easily and more often with a broader range of community members, and help community members connect with one another and with FSA staff in mutually supportive ways. Several respondents also stated that more uniform and regular use of social media would facilitate the growth of FSA networks by improving the sharing of community and program information and other resources.

Another respondent mentioned that a community animator plays a valuable role in their FSA by providing their agency with a grass roots understanding of the diverse

¹⁴ Klug, Spencer, (2017). *Online Engagement: Are Edmonton's Family Service Organizations Inviting Participation on Facebook?*

needs of families in their community. They noted that community animators play an important role in their country of origin, and they could see how FSAs and even policy developers in Edmonton would benefit from the kind of information that community animators gain through their grass roots work with a wide variety of people in their communities. Specifically, they would help cultivate a truly inclusive and collaborative culture of support for families in Edmonton by drawing on the experiences, insights and resources of the individuals living in the very communities that FSAs seek to serve. Community animators could also support the work of FINER and AFI, which would enable them to assist FSAs in developing more collaborative networks of support in communities throughout Edmonton.

Summary and Recommendations

Research reports such as this can contribute to positive social change to the extent that all community partners engage the findings and recommendations critically and collaboratively. It is our hope that this report will assist decision makers, policy developers and program providers as well as community leaders throughout Edmonton to develop collaborative networks of support that enable them to raise awareness and promote positive change throughout the city on the benefits that providing support to fathers bring to the lives of their children, families and communities. Although the recommendations apply to fathers with diverse needs and in a wide variety of personal, familiar, and social circumstances, for purposes of organization they are divided into 3 different sections that invite community partners and stakeholders to work together in support of all fathers in Edmonton.

(1) In order to promote positive messages about fathers in Edmonton, we recommend that community partners and stakeholders work together to:

- acknowledge the stigma and stereotypes often placed on fathers from socially disadvantaged populations
- express zero tolerance for negative stereotyping of males in media, school curricula, program advertising, etc.
- promote public education initiatives in media, schools, media, churches and businesses that emphasize the positive contributions that fathers and other male care givers make to their families and communities
- encourage post-secondary educational institutions in Edmonton to actively promote working with males as a legitimate and valuable career direction for males

2) To cultivate the development of “father friendly” FSA programs and increase the likelihood that fathers will utilize them, we recommend that FSAs in Edmonton:

- work with FINER to help clarify and promote the benefits of stable, core funding for programs that support fathers
- invite community members from diverse populations to be more involved in the planning and implementation of programs and other support services for fathers
- provide more education of staff, managers and community members on issues related to the lives of fathers and other male care providers from diverse populations and living in different areas of the city
- develop positive messages about men and fathers on FSA websites and various social media platforms
- provide more visible access to information about their father support services and resources in public places such as health care facilities, schools, community bulletin boards, FSA websites, at their places of employment, etc.
- provide more visible access to information about their father support services in informal places that men frequent such as washrooms, lunchrooms, sports bars, coatrooms, locker rooms, workout facilities, etc.
- offer flexible scheduling of times for services and programs
- offer recreational activities as a component of programs and services
- offer activity-based programs that invite fathers to interact playfully and constructively with their children
- provide support programs that are specific to the ages of children, the stages of the family life cycle, and the marital status of fathers

(3) In order to provide coordinated support for FSAs to work more collaboratively and effectively in developing father-friendly programs and sharing their resources, we recommend that:

- FINER pursue funding for a full-time coordinator that would be responsible to coordinate the development of father-friendly programs in FSAs throughout the city and to report on the activities as well as the program/funding priorities of FSAs to the appropriate persons and deliberative bodies
- The FINER coordinator work with policy development and funding agencies to develop public documents in ways that highlight policy and program support for fathers in FSAs throughout Edmonton
- The FINER coordinator work with Parent Link Centres and other FSAs to promote more collaboration and sharing of ideas and resources between FSAs in communities throughout Edmonton
- Funders of the FINER coordinator work with members of FINER as well as the FINER coordinator to specify further areas of responsibility and tasks associated with the coordinator role
- FINER and Dad Central Alberta pursue funding that will enable them to work with Parent Link centers on the development of more uniform and easy to navigate Parent Link websites with links to programs and services for dads
- FINER pursue funding that will support more uniform development and maintenance of FSA Facebook pages
- AFI collaborate with FSAs and Parent Link Centres to develop more uniform messages on their websites that communicate the benefits of fathers being positively involved in the lives of their children
- FCSS and other funders acknowledge the support needs of fathers when developing their strategic funding initiatives

Implementation of the above recommendations requires creative vision and shared commitment to honouring the diverse backgrounds, experiences, gifts and capacities of fathers as well as the families and communities in which they live, work and play. Doing so will build on the shared view of the participants in this study that families and

communities in Edmonton will benefit from the development of a more inclusive and collaborative vision of policy and program support for fathers and other males that care for children in the city.

Appendix 1

Membership List - Father Involvement Network Edmonton Region (FINER)

Alberta Home Visitation Network
Alberta Parenting for the Future Association
Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society
Centre for Family Literacy
Chimo Youth Retreat Centre
City of Edmonton
Creating Hope Society
Compass Centre
Candora Society
Dad Central Alberta (formerly Alberta Father Involvement Initiative)
Domestic Abuse High Risk Team (City of Edmonton and Edmonton Police Service)
E4C
Early Childhood Development Initiative - Sturgeon Region
Edmonton Family Violence Centre
Edmonton Garrison Family Resource Centre
Edmonton Northwest Daycare
Edmonton Public Library
Edmonton Region Child and Family Services - Family Violence Prevention Unit
Edmonton Young Offenders Centre
Families First Society/ Fort Saskatchewan
Family Futures Resource Network
Jasper Place Child and Family Resource Centre-West Edmonton Parent Link
KARA Family Resource Centre
Men Edmonton
Military Family Resource Centre
Millwoods Child and Family Resource Centre
Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre
Parent Links in Edmonton
Saffron – Strathcona Sexual Assault Centre
St Albert Family Resource Centre
Terra Centre for Teen Parents
The King's University
Youth Empowerment Services (YESS)

FINER Mission

Father Involvement Network Edmonton Region (FINER) is a network of organizations and agencies committed to strengthening the capacities of individuals, families, organizations and communities in Edmonton and surrounding regions to support fathers in ways that contribute to their health and well-being as well as to the health and well-being of their children, families and communities.

Appendix 2

Sample of father support programs and initiatives in and around Edmonton

- (1) Terra Centre for Teen Parents – **Services for Young Dads** assists young dads 24 years of age and younger to transition successfully into fatherhood through individual and group parenting support, outreach services, group activities and connections to community resources to meet their child’s needs and to assist with employment, education, funding, legal concerns or in meeting the basic needs of their family.
- (2) City of Edmonton – **Men Without Hats** is a weekly drop-in support group offered throughout the year for men who are dealing with relationship challenges, communication issues, parenting concerns, separation, divorce, job loss, etc.
- (3) Military Family Resource Centre (and the Centre for Family Literacy) – **Daddy and Me** provides opportunity for military and civilian dads to meet other dads with babies, learn about the benefits of reading to babies, and to discover that even young babies can have a favorite book. Free books and snacks are provided.
- (4) Creating Hope Society – A series of facilitated community conversations that follow the viewing of the CHS “**Aboriginal Fathers Love Their Children Too!**” documentary.
- (5) Alberta Father Involvement/Dad Central Alberta – Provides a variety of resources and training for fathers and service providers throughout Alberta.
- (6) Jasper Place Child and Family Resource Society in partnership with the Centre for Family Literacy – **Books for Babies for Dads** is a free “bonding and literacy training” program for dads with newborns from 0 – 12 months.
- (7) Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre - **Be a Great Dad** is a 4-week program created by dads, for dads and provides tips and strategies for dads to develop closer relationships with their kids. **Father’s Club** is for men who are father, father figures, or soon to be fathers. Father Club meets once a month, every month. Healthy supper is provided. Limited child minding available
- (8) Kara Family Resource Centre – **Me and My Buddy** is a program for all dads, step-dads, granddads, uncles or other significant males to joins others in a morning of songs, circle time and free play.
- (9) Mommy Connections (St. Alberta) - **Dad & Baby** is a 6-week Program that provides opportunities for new dads to connect with other new dads in their community while getting some one-on-one time with their babies

(10) Rad Dads Edmonton Chapter – a group of fathers that promote and model positive parenting and the empowerment of dads. They host events, donate time, and coordinate outings for dads and their kids as well as for the whole family.

Appendix 3

Interview Questions

1. How do you see the role & focus of FCSS in Edmonton? How would you describe the relationship between your organization and FCSS?
2. Can you tell me a bit about the history of your organization? (esp. original mandate/focus; how and why the mandate/focus may have changed over time)
3. Can you talk a bit about the culture of your organization in relation to serving families? How would you say staff in your organization view different members of the families you serve?
4. What kinds of perspectives and skills do you think your staff need to support/work effectively with different family members? (explain similarities and differences; importance of working with fathers, etc.)
5. How do your staff gain these perspectives/skills? (new staff orientation? ongoing training?)
6. Is the provision of programs/services for fathers part of your agency's original and/or current mandate? Explain if yes (including characteristics such as: cultural background, social class, area of city/community, age, etc.).
7. Has your agency offered any programs for fathers in the past that are no longer running? Can you explain?
8. What are some of the challenges/barriers your organization has experienced in relation to working with fathers? (if you don't serve fathers, do you have thoughts about challenges in working with fathers?)
9. Can you talk a bit about how your agency reaches out to your clients? (do you use similar approaches with mothers and fathers, youth, different populations, etc.?)
10. In what ways do you think your approach to reaching out to fathers is (or is not) welcoming to fathers?
11. Roughly how many fathers are connected to your agency over the course of a year? What do you think are the primary needs of the fathers connected to your agency?
12. How many male staff and volunteers are connected to your agency and in what capacity/roles are they involved?
13. In what respects do you think the physical space of your agency is welcoming (or not) to fathers? Discuss
14. In what respects do you think your agency's website is welcoming (or not) to fathers? Discuss
15. What is the long-term vision of your agency and how does engaging fathers fit into that vision?
16. In what ways do you think the needs of families in Edmonton have changed in the past 20 years? How about the needs of fathers?
17. In what ways do you think your agency and our community could provide more support for fathers? What would be the benefits of doing so, and can you think of any negative consequences?