Breast for Success
Father Program

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Breast for Success focus groups

- Two groups of 5 expectant and/or experienced fathers. 9 participants African-American, one Hispanic African American.
- Focus groups were two hours – participants were provided gift card, pizza, child care and bus pass (if needed)
- First group explored perceived interest in breastfeeding, attitudes and social support, and second group previewed and discussed potential curriculum.
- Comments analyzed and grouped into four domains: risk appraisal, self perceptions, relationship issues and social influence, structural and environmental issues.
What’s a father to do?

• “I started going with my girl to Friendly Inn [community agency with programming for mothers].... I was like I’m the only brother here! ... At first I felt a little uncomfortable and then they took a liking to me and then more guys started coming.”

• “How can fathers support breastfeeding (moderator)?” “There is nothing much to do....be supportive...keep ice cream in the house...”

• “In today’s society a man ain’t a man unless he has paper in his pocket...[There are] no programs for us to help us do what we need to do. They have all these programs for women but nothing to help us. It’s frustrating. It hurts. Where’s the program for us since we’re trying to do our best? It’s like we’re almost deleted.”
Breast for Success focus groups - Conclusions

• Participants were very interested in breastfeeding, but felt left out of the decision-making process, suggesting that fathers are an underutilized breastfeeding resource.

• Men may feel un-empowered because they lack specific breastfeeding knowledge, are unsure of their role in breastfeeding, or because they have difficulty navigating relationship issues, which impacts initiation of these discussions.

• Participants believed there is insufficient programming for them, suggesting a need for father-centered interventions focusing on the father’s role, including education about breastfeeding basics and practical ways fathers can troubleshoot common breastfeeding challenges.

• Participants were concerned about the impact of smoking on breastfeeding, the content of formula and breast milk, and the effect of breastfeeding on intelligence and behavior.

• Critical unresolved relationship, blended family, and communication issues
Breastfeeding Education Groups for Fathers

• 3 week cycle offered quarterly, rotates between centers, not restricted to MomsFirst partners (MomsFirst mothers given invite for father, flier to be posted at center).

• Facilitator/moderator will run the sessions. A “Resource Specialist” will attend sessions and work to engage fathers and help them navigate/connect with community resources related to non-breastfeeding topics (e.g. custody, parenting, employment, child support, men’s health) as a followup/engagement/support effort.
Week 1 – Benefits of Breastfeeding

• What’s so great about breastfeeding?
• True/False about breastfeeding AND Benefits of breastfeeding, and what is “skin-to-skin?”
• Care of me (true/false for “urban myths” about breastfeeding)
• Handouts: Skin to skin card
Week 2 – Breastfeeding FAQs

• FAQ About breastfeeding and Milk supply/Latch
• What about my life? (FAQ for life and work questions)
• All about Latch- say no to pain
• Is my baby getting enough- how to make milk
• Handouts: DADS2U card
Week 3 – Supporting Breastfeeding

• Talking about feeding choice/relationship building/ how to support breastfeeding
• Dads are needed for breastfeeding (how to include dad)
• How can we work this out together?
• Handouts: WIC dads trifold
Father Groups - Results

• 66 fathers and partners attended a total of 8 evening programs for fathers – each program comprised of 3 consecutive weekly evenings
• 30 participants (45%) attended all three sessions
• Median Age – 27.5 years; Race - 74% African-American; Median number of Children =2; Residence of Child – 57% lived with father full or part time
• Breastfeeding – 39% had a child who was breastfed; 64% were comfortable with breastfeeding for their child and 80% thought it was a good idea for mothers to breastfeed
Father Groups - Results

- Of the 52 men who returned for the second or third evening, 58% had talked with their partner about breastfeeding, hoping to obtain her support for the choice.
- 63% said the conversation was good or okay, while others expressed disappointment with the mother’s lack of interest.
- Fathers returned to learn more about breastfeeding and talk to the resource specialist (parenting, men’s health and employment).
- Generally reported improvement in knowledge of breastfeeding and support of breastfeeding.