



Fathers and Continuous Learning in Child Welfare

## Toolkit for Building System Capacity to Engage Fathers and Paternal Relatives in Child Welfare

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Jill Spielfogel, Candice Talkington, Jenifer Agosti, Amelia Forman, Roseana Bess, and Matthew Stagner

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**August 2023**

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## Introduction

Research reveals the protective and valuable influence of fathers and paternal relatives on the lives of children. For families engaged in the child welfare system, however, multisystemic factors can limit staff's ability to engage fathers and paternal relatives authentically and meaningfully. This can limit their success in supporting optimal outcomes for children and families.

This toolkit is designed to help leaders and staff at child welfare agencies and their partners affect change at all levels of the system, ultimately weaving the engagement of fathers and paternal relatives into the fabric of child welfare activities. Its tools and resources are designed to help multilevel improvement teams (teams in charge of quality improvement around father engagement) at child welfare agencies build their capacity to use continuous learning approaches so they can assess and improve their work with fathers and paternal relatives on an ongoing basis.

The tools in this kit were developed as part of the [Fathers and Continuous Learning in Child Welfare Project](#), administered by the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) and sponsored by the Office of Family Assistance in partnership with the Children's Bureau, all within the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Six improvement teams from five child welfare agencies across the country participated in a Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC) to improve their engagement of fathers and paternal relatives and promote racial justice for men of color. BSCs help address complex issues embedded in systems. They engage staff at every level of organizations and communities to test, implement, and spread practice improvements across multiple settings.

After engaging the initial five child welfare agencies in the BSC, the FCL team field-tested the tools from the BSC with four other child welfare agencies. The field test was intended to understand how the resources could be used without the formal supports of a BSC. The toolkit resources can help child welfare agencies that want to structure their work to improve organizational culture and practices as they relate to father engagement. They can use individual tools or all the tools, depending on their capacity to work on improvement.

## Multilevel, inclusive improvement teams to champion the work

To achieve the best results from this toolkit, we encourage using a team-based approach to the work. Ideally, improvement teams are multilevel and will include:

- Agency leadership
- Program directors
- Supervisors
- Frontline staff
- Community partners
- Fathers or paternal relatives with experience with the child welfare system
- Data administrators

Multilevel teams ensure that practice improvements can be tested at each level of the agency. Key qualities of team members include a commitment to improving father and paternal relative engagement at

the local level, interest in being thought leaders and providing information to the larger system, willingness to try new things, and exceptional interpersonal facilitation and listening skill. Teams meet often to review and plan strategies for improvement; discuss spreading to other teams, offices, or agencies; or plan for sustainability. Each improvement team member ultimately takes leadership of father engagement efforts and brings additional staff into the work of engaging fathers. Ideally, the end results of the process are changes to the organizational culture around father and paternal relative engagement.

Box 1 shows components of effective improvement teamwork to advance use of the tools as observed in the FCL project.

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### Box 1. Components of effective improvement teamwork

- **Encourage creative thinking and play to strengths.** Allow space for everyone on your improvement team to contribute and take ownership of the work. Brainstorming, taking risks, and experimentation can lead to innovation and creativity. Team leaders could encourage those who do not normally speak to do so. For those who contribute often, leaders could encourage them to leave room for others to share their ideas. It is important to remember that each improvement team member brings a unique perspective that can bolster the overall work and diverse perspectives can help initiate innovation. Especially when delegating tasks, consider matching to team members' strengths. These strengths can be anything from personal experience, specific skills, or a strong passion for the work. When members believe their ideas and input matter, they are not afraid to express unique thoughts and opinions.
  - **Use frequent and consistent communication.** Communication is the core of good improvement teamwork. Schedule regular meetings (weekly or biweekly) and share meeting notes with action steps. This ensures the work is ongoing, and all improvement team members know what is happening. It is also helpful to give team members a timeline or road map for their participation in the group.
  - **Leave meetings with an action plan.** Keep momentum going with clear action items and plans. At the end of the meeting, save time to wrap-up and to be clear on next steps. This way, your team members understand what their contributions are, and progress can continue between meetings.
  - **Celebrate successes.** Let people know their work is appreciated and that their contributions matter! Celebrating success is a great way to continuously inspire and motivate for success. When there is a big win, analyze what's behind the success and see if your agency can duplicate it in other spaces.
-



## Navigating the toolkit

The tools will be most useful to agencies with a high level of motivation and commitment to improve how they engage fathers and paternal relatives and promote racial justice. Your improvement team's use of the tools is guided by the [Collaborative Change Framework](#), an overall vision of an agency with optimal engagement of fathers and paternal relatives. The framework has five domains (shown on the right). Each domain contains goals for improvement teams to work toward. Box 2 includes key terminology for navigating the systems improvement approach laid forth in this toolkit.

### Domains for Improving Father and Paternal Relative Engagement and Achieving Racial Justice for Men of Color in the Child Welfare System



### Box 2. Key terminology for systems improvement

- The **Collaborative Change Framework** is used to guide the work and creates a common language for teams. For the Fathers and Continuous Learning in Child Welfare (FCL) project, it comprised five domains that collectively depict a child welfare agency that performs optimally to engage fathers and paternal relatives. Each domain is broken down into goals and strategies that improvement teams can test.
- **Improvement teams** are group of about 7-14 people that lead improvement work in an agency. For father engagement work, we recommend that they include a mix of administrators, managers, supervisors, child welfare caseworkers, community partners, and fathers and paternal relatives.
- The **Plan-Do-Study-Act** cycle is a method for testing change on a small scale. In this process, improvement team members develop a plan (Plan), test a strategy (Do), observe and learn from the test (Study), and determine next steps (Act).

These tools can be used as stand-alone resources or in combination with each other. Each tool includes an explanation of its purpose and an example of how to complete it. We suggest following the roadmap in Exhibit 1 to use the tools in combination with each other.

**Exhibit 1. FCL toolkit roadmap**



Assess the system →	Develop and test small strategies →	Organize and align strategies →	Spread strategies and plan for sustainability →	Develop and use a sustainability plan
<p>The <a href="#">Collaborative Change Framework</a> is a guiding document that depicts an optimally functioning child welfare agency. It consists of domains that promote engagement of fathers and paternal relatives and support racial justice for men of color in the child welfare system. The domains are broken down into goals and further defined by change strategies.</p> <p>The <a href="#">self-assessment</a> helps teams assess strengths in engaging fathers and reveals areas for potential practice improvements. It includes the goals from each domain of the Collaborative Change Framework. The assessment informs the next phase of activities, which is selecting improvement strategies to test.</p>	<p>The <a href="#">Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) Worksheet</a> shows how to use the small test of change, one of the foundational tools for supporting continuous quality improvement. The PDSA Worksheet encourages staff to think about one small step they can take toward improving engagement of fathers and paternal relatives. PDSAs are meant to be a process with multiple cycles of testing and improving on the strategy until it is ready to be spread to others or sustained as a regular practice.</p> <p>The <a href="#">PDSA Tracker</a> helps track all PDSA strategies in progress, and details responsibility and specific steps for each PDSA. Once improvement teams get started, they may have multiple PDSAs in place at the same time. Teams can use the PDSA Tracker to sort strategies into meaningful categories (also called bundles). Bundling allows teams to see the work at a higher level and helps them communicate the improvement approach.</p>	<p>The <a href="#">Data Collection Planning Worksheet</a> helps improvement teams select and track metrics about father engagement on a consistent basis. The data collection plan is a detailed document that outlines the steps and resources required to collect and use data for quality improvement efforts.</p> <p>The <a href="#">Racial Justice Action Planning Worksheet</a> leads improvement teams through a process of articulating how staff see racism operate within their agencies. The worksheet encourages teams to voice injustices they see in their agencies that are likely to impact father engagement. This form feeds into their sustainability plan.</p>	<p>The Purposeful interactions, Existing Structures, and Tools <a href="#">(PEST) Worksheet</a> encourages teams to consider the best ways to bring others into their work. It provides examples of how to use positive peer pressure, existing structures, and concrete tools to support the spread of new and innovative practices.</p> <p>The <a href="#">LADDERS Framework Worksheet</a> details plans to sustain the work. The ultimate goal is to create an agency culture where engaging fathers and paternal relatives is fully baked into all aspects of policy and practice. LADDERS considers how leadership, agency fit, documentation, data, expectations, engagement, replacement, and staffing all influence the sustainability of best practices.</p>	<p>The <a href="#">Sustainability Planning Worksheet</a> uses the LADDERS framework to help improvement teams develop a plan that indicates all the steps and processes that will continue to ensure your agency sustains its practice change. This tool helps hold improvement teams accountable for ensuring momentum toward systems change.</p>

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# 1. The Collaborative Change Framework (Summary): Domains and Goals<sup>1</sup>

## Purpose

The Collaborative Change Framework (CCF)<sup>2</sup> depicts an agency that engages fathers and paternal relatives in the best possible way. The CCF serves as a foundation for and drives the work of the improvement team and helps create a common language by outlining key domains, with goals to support each domain and change strategies that can support the goals. Teams use the CCF to guide their self-assessment and subsequent work using other tools in the toolkit. The CCF is not a tool that teams need to complete. Rather, it serves as a guiding framework for the tools that follow it in the toolkit.

## Instructions

The CCF in this toolkit was developed in the FCL project using a collaborative workshop process with leaders with expertise in child welfare practice and policy, father engagement, and promoting strength-based and family-centered practice in child welfare. Members of the Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC) revised the framework at the end of the BSC to further emphasize the important role of achieving racial justice for men of color to effectively engage fathers and paternal relatives.

## Collaborative Change Framework

Collaborative Change Framework for Engaging Fathers and Paternal Relatives in Child Welfare and Achieving Racial Justice for Men of Color in the Child Welfare System	
Domain 1. Support community, system, and agency environments that value and respect all fathers and paternal relatives	
Goal	Change strategy
1. Create environments and climates (in agencies, systems, and communities) that place strong emphasis on the value of fathers and paternal relatives in children's lives.	Support physical spaces (such as agency offices, courts, and partners' offices) that feel welcoming to fathers and paternal relatives (including accessibility and scheduling)
	Demonstrate the value of actively engaging fathers and paternal relatives early with the child welfare agency (before placement is needed) by clearly requiring father and paternal relative engagement in the agency's mission, policies, and materials
	Ensure that leaders shape, frame, and model the value of engaging fathers and paternal relatives
	Provide ongoing education to all staff about the value of and skills for engaging fathers and paternal relatives in children's lives
	Provide ongoing supervision to staff to enhance their ability to effectively engage fathers and paternal relatives
	Encourage male staff to share their experiences as fathers. However, do so in ways that feel mutually supportive to male staff and those they are educating. Avoid overburdening male staff with all the work with fathers and paternal relatives.

<sup>1</sup> The FCL Project team developed the CCF in partnership with an inclusive group of participants. At the end of the BSC, the CCF was revised in collaboration with the BSC teams.

<sup>2</sup> For the full CCF, see <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/report/using-change-framework-design-systems-effectively-engage-fathers-and-paternal-relatives>

Collaborative Change Framework for Engaging Fathers and Paternal Relatives in Child Welfare and Achieving Racial Justice for Men of Color in the Child Welfare System	
2. Develop an atmosphere where the voice and active engagement of fathers and paternal relatives helps create an inclusive environment.	Develop, support, and promote peer mentorship and support for fathers and paternal relatives
	Solicit, respect, and affirm the varied perspectives of fathers and paternal relatives
	Build trust and find ways to systematically receive feedback from fathers and paternal relatives to guide system improvement
	Develop and foster leadership and advocacy programs for fathers and paternal relatives
3. Actively promote and integrate inclusive practices and the value of fathers and paternal relatives into the community.	Provide education and coaching to community and system partners so they value and support fathers and paternal relatives in children's lives
	Partner with families' natural supports (including community, faith-based, and other "informal" supports) to promote and support father involvement in children's lives
	Provide ongoing education and skill building to staff so they value, understand, and can identify and authentically partner with natural supports identified by families
	Cultivate cultural brokers and "father figures" in the community as additional supports for staff and for engaging fathers
Domain 2. Achieve racial justice for men of color in the child welfare system	
Goal	Change strategy
1. Acknowledge the impacts of historical, institutional, cultural, and structural racism on policy, practice, and decision making.	Engage staff in regular conversations, education, and coaching about historical, institutional, cultural, and structural racism
	Demonstrate an understanding of the impact of historical, institutional, cultural, and structural racism and trauma on how fathers are engaged through clearly articulating the agency's mission, policies, and materials
	Provide opportunities for staff to discuss issues related to racial equity in group and individual supervision
	Review and reform policies that harm families of color
	Effectively support implementation of new policies to promote justice at all levels
2. Recognize and honor the cultural beliefs, values, and practices of fathers and paternal relatives, communities, and tribes to drive child welfare decision making.	Establish an organizational environment and climate that is humble and responsive to the communities being served
	Use an antiracist lens (specifically antiracist toward Black individuals) to engage partners and communities
	Use culturally appropriate assessments, decision-making practices, and antiracist tools to capitalize on the strengths and needs of fathers and paternal relatives at every decision point in the child welfare continuum
3. Align with related systems to identify, address, and change institutionally racist policies and practices.	Provide conversations, education, and coaching to system and community partners about institutionally racist policies and practices, including how to identify them and the impact they have on fathers and paternal relatives
	Partner with experts working on racial justice in child welfare and related fields to receive guidance on how to address and change racist policies and practices
	Actively include fathers and paternal relatives of color in identifying, addressing, and changing racist policies and practices

**Collaborative Change Framework for Engaging Fathers and Paternal Relatives in Child Welfare and Achieving Racial Justice for Men of Color in the Child Welfare System**

4. Promote personal awareness among staff to acknowledge implicit bias and implement practices that improve father and family outcomes.	Require staff to successfully complete mandatory trainings and have regular conversations, education, and coaching about implicit bias and cultural humility
	Give staff opportunities to discuss issues related to cultural differences during group and individual supervision to address bias in case decision making
	Include work with fathers and paternal relatives in supervision and performance reviews and support frontline staff to effectively engage fathers and paternal relatives

**Domain 3. Identify and locate fathers and paternal relatives from the first point of contact with the family**

Goal	Change strategy
1. Identify fathers and paternal relatives.	Require frontline staff to ask mothers, children, and other caregivers and relatives to help identify fathers and paternal relatives from the first point of contact with the family
	Educate and collaborate with community members and other agencies to identify fathers and paternal relatives on an ongoing basis
	Find and use available technology to help identify fathers and paternal relatives
2. Actively locate fathers and paternal relatives.	Develop information-sharing agreements with community partners and agencies that allow for data sharing and collaboration to locate fathers and paternal relatives, while honoring family confidentiality
	Identify and use available technology to help locate fathers and paternal relatives

**Domain 4. Assess and address the strengths and needs of, and barriers for, fathers and paternal relatives**

Goal	Change strategy
1. Assess fathers' and paternal relatives' unique and individual strengths and needs.	Promote awareness training to ensure staff understand the unique strengths and needs of fathers and paternal relatives
	Ensure staff use assessments to build on strengths
	Explicitly include strengths, needs, and supports in the initial and ongoing assessment of fathers and paternal relatives
	Integrate fathers and paternal relatives' strengths and needs into the overall and continual assessment of the child and family
2. Identify and address barriers to engaging fathers and paternal relatives.	Ensure staff understand and can appropriately respond to the unique situations that fathers and paternal relatives might present or experience
	Ask fathers and paternal relatives to identify potential barriers they perceive to their engagement
	Incorporate mechanisms to mitigate multisystem involvement for fathers and paternal relatives and to reduce barriers to child welfare engagement
	Collaborate with community partners and other agencies to address barriers to engaging fathers and paternal relatives
3. Provide individualized plans that meet the unique needs of families and include fathers and paternal relatives.	Identify, incorporate, and continually revisit the various roles that fathers and paternal relatives might play in the lives of their children
	Ensure that family plans reflect the various strengths, needs, and roles of fathers and paternal relatives
	Include fathers and paternal relatives' own words, points of view, and goals in the individualized plans for their children



Collaborative Change Framework for Engaging Fathers and Paternal Relatives in Child Welfare and Achieving Racial Justice for Men of Color in the Child Welfare System	
Domain 5. Continually involve fathers and paternal relatives throughout their children's lives	
Goal	Change strategy
1. Partner with fathers and paternal relatives to prepare them for active participation in decision making and other activities for their children.	Use improvement team-meeting practices, such as family group conferences or family group decision making
	Engage fathers and paternal relatives in permanency planning meetings and other decision making
	Prepare fathers and paternal relatives before meetings so they know their role and how the meeting could help them
	Value and respect fathers and paternal relatives as active participants in meetings, activities, and decisions related to their children
2. Continually engage fathers and paternal relatives as equally positive options as mothers and maternal relatives for caring for the child.	Assess whether children can live with their fathers and paternal relatives
	Be transparent with fathers and paternal relatives about why children are or are not living with them
	Assume fathers and paternal relatives play a vital parenting role in their children's lives
3. Support healthy and productive relationships with fathers and other caregivers.	Continually mitigate issues between maternal and paternal sides, regardless of where children are living
	Facilitate ongoing communication between fathers and paternal relatives, foster families, and other alternate caregivers
	Support various roles that fathers and paternal relatives might play in partnership with alternate caregivers (relative and nonrelative resource parents) while the children are in out-of-home care
4. Support relationships between fathers and paternal relatives and their children by maximizing the types of and opportunities for involvement.	Use supportive visitation practices that nurture relationships between fathers, paternal relatives, and children
	Ensure visits occur in settings that are comfortable for fathers and paternal relatives
	Create and nurture opportunities for fathers and paternal relatives to connect with children outside of agency visitation
	Communicate regularly with fathers and paternal relatives about case progress and how their children are doing; give them updates and continually ask for their input about parenting decisions when possible

## 2. Self-Assessment<sup>3</sup>

### Purpose

This self-assessment tool is designed to help your improvement team evaluate the systems and processes you currently have in place to engage fathers and paternal relatives. It is organized around the five key domains in the Collaborative Change Framework.

Your improvement team is a partnership of individuals who are responsible for different kinds of engagement with fathers and paternal relatives. Thus, this self-assessment can help your team:

1. Consider the different components of effectively engaging fathers and paternal relatives

<sup>3</sup> The FCL Project Team created the self-assessment based on the Collaborative Change Framework.



2. Develop a shared understanding about how your organization will measure strength of progress across the five domains of the collaborative change framework, and develop a common language for communicating what improvement activities will be
3. Identify successes, challenges, opportunities for improvement, and how to prioritize your next steps

After completing the self-assessment, discuss priorities based on the areas of need you identified. At later stages of your improvement activities, your team will work on testing and implementing improvement strategies. If improvement team members do have ideas and strategies for change during the self-assessment process, keep track of those ideas and save them for later.

## Instructions

- It is important that the members of your improvement team complete this tool together. This will ensure the assessment reflects different points of view from various departments. It is especially helpful to include a father or paternal relative in the conversation, as they may have a different perspective on how well agencies engage fathers or paternal relatives.
- The self-assessment includes goals within the five domains from the CCF. Use your judgment to assess how well your organization performs in each domain. Be honest about where your organization is right now, recognizing that different agencies and organizations can have different strengths and areas for opportunity.
- Use the comments section to note specific examples or to explain why you chose the score you did for later reference.
- Your improvement team might consider using this tool to reassess your progress on a quarterly, semiannual, or annual basis.

## Self-assessment

To complete the self-assessment, select a point value (1–4) that best describes the current strength of progress overall at your agency or organization in the areas of engaging fathers and paternal relatives. When scoring goals within each domain, base your scoring on the following criteria:

Practice seriously challenged, or no strategies developed 1	Practice somewhat challenged, or strategies untested 2	Practice shows strengths, or strategies being tested 3	Practice very strong; strategies well developed and tested 4
Our practices have <b>numerous barriers and challenges</b> . There are few or no known policies, procedures, or daily practice examples for this area. We have few policies or procedures developed in this area to establish staff capacity and could benefit from a significant amount of technical assistance.	Our practices have <b>some challenges and barriers</b> . This area is of concern for our system and we might need technical assistance, policy development, establishment of protocols, and practice implementation to improve our skills here.  Or We have developed a strategy for this area but have not yet implemented it.	Our practices have <b>some strengths</b> , and we are functioning with some success in this area. We have some policies and procedures in place that most staff follow. We have developed and implemented strategies that are showing promise, and this will continue to be an area of focus.	Our practices have <b>numerous strengths</b> . We currently have practices, policies, and protocols in place that are all staff use daily. Our current practices, policies and protocols yield positive results for the families we serve.

**Self-assessment**

Goals	Score (1–4)	Comments
<b>Domain 1. Support community, system, and agency environments that value and respect all fathers and paternal relatives</b>		
<b>Goal 1.</b> Create environments and climates (in agencies, systems, and communities) that place strong emphasis on the value of fathers and paternal relatives in children's lives.		
<b>Goal 2.</b> Develop an atmosphere where the voice and active engagement of fathers and paternal relatives helps create an inclusive environment.		
<b>Goal 3.</b> Actively promote and integrate inclusive practices and the value of fathers and paternal relatives within the community		
<b>Domain 2. Achieve racial justice for men of color in the child welfare system</b>		
<b>Goal 1.</b> Acknowledge the impacts of historical, institutional, cultural, and structural racism on policy, practice, and decision making.		
<b>Goal 2.</b> Recognize and honor the cultural beliefs, values, and practices of fathers and paternal relatives, communities, and tribes to drive child welfare decision making.		
<b>Goal 3.</b> Align with related systems to identify, address, and change institutionally racist policies and practices.		
<b>Goal 4.</b> Promote personal awareness among staff to acknowledge implicit bias and implement practices that improve father and family outcomes.		
<b>Domain 3. Identify and locate fathers and paternal relatives from the first point of contact with the family</b>		
<b>Goal 1.</b> Identify fathers and paternal relatives		
<b>Goal 2.</b> Actively locate fathers and paternal relatives		
<b>Domain 4. Assess and address the strengths and needs of, and barriers for, fathers and paternal relatives</b>		
<b>Goal 1.</b> Assess fathers' and paternal relatives' unique and individual strengths and needs.		
<b>Goal 2.</b> Identify and address barriers to engaging fathers and paternal relatives		
<b>Goal 3.</b> Provide specialized plans that meet unique needs of families and include fathers and paternal relatives		
<b>Domain 5. Continuously involve fathers and paternal relatives throughout the lives of their children</b>		
<b>Goal 1.</b> Partner with fathers and paternal relatives to prepare them for active participation in decision making and other activities for their children.		
<b>Goal 2.</b> Continually engage fathers and paternal relatives as equally positive options as mothers and maternal relatives for caring for the child.		
<b>Goal 3.</b> Support healthy and productive relationships with fathers and other caregivers.		
<b>Goal 4.</b> Support relationships between fathers and paternal relatives and their children by maximizing the types of and opportunities for involvement.		

### 3. Plan-Do-Study-Act Worksheet<sup>4</sup>

#### Purpose

The Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle is a method for testing change on a small scale. In this process, improvement teams develop a plan (Plan), carry out the test (Do), observe and learn from the test (Study), and determine whether the test was successful, whether they should modify the process for the outcome to be more successful, or whether they should abandon the new process (Act). They can build upon one PDSA and conduct several cycles of tests until they feel confident that the strategy is working well.

#### Instructions

- Use the worksheet that tracks your PDSA process to help your improvement team document, test, and measure performance of your change.
- Encourage members of your improvement team to think about one small change they can make toward improving engagement of fathers and paternal relatives and how to test it over a short time (not usually longer than a few days). Everyone on your team, including fathers, is encouraged to take ownership of at least one PDSA.
- Complete one PDSA worksheet for each strategy you test. In most improvement projects, improvement teams will test several different changes, and each change may go through several PDSA cycles as you continue to learn.
- See the Issue Brief titled, [Using a change framework to design systems that effectively father's and paternal relatives and promote racial justice](#), for examples of how teams used the Collaborative Change Framework (CCF) to guide their tests of change.

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<sup>4</sup> The PDSA Worksheet was adapted from the “Plan Do Study Act Worksheet” available on the Institute for Healthcare Improvement’s website at <https://www.ihi.org/resources/Pages/Tools/PlanDoStudyActWorksheet.aspx>. See Appendix A for an example of how to complete the worksheet.

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### Components of PDSA Worksheet

- **Name of the PDSA.** The name should briefly describe what the PDSA is meant to do.
- **PDSA start date.** The date you start the first PDSA cycle. Remember, you will likely complete several cycles before completing the PDSA.
- **Cycle.** Reflects the number of cycles for this PDSA, including the current cycle (e.g., first, second, third...).
- **PDSA cycle start date.** Start date of the current cycle. Update this for each PDSA cycle.
- **PDSA cycle end date.** Date the current cycle is expected to end. This should only be about two to five days and not longer than two weeks. Update this for each PDSA cycle.
- **CCF domain most closely aligned with this PDSA.** The CCF domain this PDSA is meant to address.
- **Measure(s) you expect to impact with this PDSA.** The measures your team is tracking to achieve the goals outlined in the CCF. See the [Data Collection Planning Worksheet](#) for more details about defining measures.
- **PDSA lead and staff involved.** The person leading the PDSA, and other staff involved.
- **Objective (aim).** Describes what the PDSA is meant to accomplish; this should use elements of SMART goals (sustainable, measurable, achievable, retainable, and timely).

---

Use the [PDSA Tracker](#) to keep a file (either electronic or hard copy) of all PDSA cycles for all the changes your improvement team tests.

## Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) Worksheet

Plan-Do-Study-Act	
<b>PDSA information</b>	
Name of PDSA:	
PDSA cycle start date:	
PDSA cycle end date:	
Current cycle number:	
CCF domain most closely aligned with this PDSA:	
Measure(s) you expect to impact with this PDSA:	
PDSA lead and staff involved:	
Objective (aim)?	
<b>Plan</b>	
Describe what you plan to test.	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What changes will you make?</li> <li>2. What are the steps for the plan (who, what, where, when)?</li> <li>3. What data will you collect? Who will collect them?</li> <li>4. What do you predict will happen?</li> </ol>	
<b>Do</b>	
What actions did you take?	

**Plan-Do-Study-Act**

**Study**

What were the results of your actions? Did the test work the way you thought it would? Why or why not?

**Act**

What actions are you going to take as a result of what you learned in this cycle? Will you adjust the strategy (keeping the test small), adjust the strategy and expand it to capture more data, expand the strategy to capture more data with no changes, or abandon the strategy?

**Current cycle**

Which cycle is this? (for example, first cycle or second cycle).

**Status**

What is the status of your test?

- In progress (still testing)
- Fully implemented (ready for spread to other departments or agencies)
- Sustainable (spread to others and is part of day-to-day work)
- Abandon (discontinue)

**Plan-Do-Study-Act**

**Updates**

Briefly describe what improvements your team has made to this test this strategy since the first cycle and your plans for the next cycle as you move it toward sustainable implementation.

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## 4. PDSA Tracker<sup>5</sup>

### Purpose

Improvement teams will test or implement more than one strategy, either simultaneously or in succession. To pool resources and make processes more efficient, it will help to consider how the strategies fit together in meaningful categories (or bundles). Bundling strategies allows improvement teams to see their work at a higher level and helps them communicate their overall approach to improving engagement of fathers and paternal relatives. As you bundle the strategies you are testing and implementing, you can consider how to focus your effort to spread and sustain successful approaches.

### Instructions

Review your PDSA worksheets and consider which strategies are related. Use this worksheet to help you bundle similar strategies and consider how you might pool resources for efficiency. The worksheet has the following components:

- **PDSA.** Name of the strategy or PDSA to bundle with similar strategies.
- **Description.** Brief description of strategy.
- **Domain(s).** The collaborative change framework domain addressed by each strategy.
- **Measuring success.** Which measures, data, or outcomes will you be watching to see if this change is making things better? How can you combine work to measure success across strategies in the same bundle?
- **Who does it.** Who will have primary responsibility? Who else needs to be involved? How can staff collaborate and combine their work on bundled strategies?
- **When we do it.** What is your target date for completing the strategy test (PDSA cycle)? Does the timing align across bundled strategies?
- **How we follow up.** How will we keep track of the strategy's progress? How will we share it with the rest of the improvement team?

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<sup>5</sup> The PDSA tracker was developed by the FCL Project Team. See Appendix B for an example of how to complete the PDSA tracker.

## PDSA Tracker

PDSA	Description	Domain(s)	Measuring success	Who does it	When we do it	How we follow up
Name of/strategy or PDSA	Brief description of the strategy	CCF domain(s) addressed	What measures, data, or outcomes will we be watching to see if this change is making things better?	Who will have primary responsibility? Who else needs to be involved?	What is our target date for completing the PDSA cycle?	How will we keep track of the strategy's progress? How will we share it with other teams or departments?
<b>Bundle 1 description</b>						
<b>Bundle 2 description</b>						
<b>Bundle 3 description</b>						

## 5. Data Collection Planning Worksheet<sup>6</sup>

### Purpose

Collecting data allows agencies to determine how well new strategies are performing, and whether they need to make additional changes. This document provides ideas for collecting and tracking data to support continuous quality improvement of father and paternal relative engagement. Agencies should select metrics that make sense for their context.

### Instructions

#### Defining measures

The first step in developing a data collection plan is to define measures to use when evaluating tests of change. Measures should align with the agency's purpose, mission, and values. Consider beginning with measures where there are known potential opportunities for improvement. In choosing measures, consider how the data can be used to evaluate equity in practice with fathers and paternal relatives. For example, if race or ethnicity data is collected, teams can better understand if there are differences in service use or outcomes for fathers of color. The below table illustrates sample measures to consider when measuring the success of their fatherhood engagement practices.

#### Sample measures for engaging fathers and paternal relatives

1.	<b>Initial request to identify the father:</b> Percentage of investigations where there was a request to identify the father at the first point of contact.
2.	<b>At least one attempt to reach out to additional agencies or sources:</b> Percentage of completed investigations in which investigators contact additional agencies or sources to locate the father when the father had not already been identified
3.	<b>Notifying the father of placement:</b> Percentage of new placements in which the father was notified the child/sibling group was being placed into foster care
4.	<b>Documented reason for father not being a viable placement option:</b> Percentage of new placements with documented reasons why fathers are not a viable placement or permanency option for children placed in foster care
5.	<b>Invitation to the family improvement team meeting:</b> Percentage of family improvement team meetings where an invitation was extended to fathers and/or paternal relatives
6.	<b>Needs documented in case plans:</b> Percentage of case plans created that include documentation of a father's or paternal relative's unique needs
7.	<b>Perception of needs met:</b> Percentage of fathers or paternal relatives who thought the services they received met their unique needs (as documented in case plans)

<sup>6</sup> The data collection planning worksheet was developed by the FCL Project Team. See Appendix C for an example of how to complete the worksheet.

Once your improvement team identifies the measures of interest, the next step is to define which data to collect. Each measure will include a denominator (who is being sampled), a numerator (a subset of the sample to measure), an outcome (for example, number or percentage of families), and the measure period (how often the measure is reported). The following list is a sample of measure elements that describe how to define one measure for identifying a father.

### Sample measure elements

- **Measure:** Initial request to identify the father
- **Measure description:** Percentage of investigations in which there was a request to identify the father at the first point of contact
- **Numerator:** Number of investigations initiated during the month in which the investigator asked about father's identity at the first point of contact
- **Denominator:** Total number of investigations initiated during the month
- **Measure period:** Monthly
- **Measure notes:** Define “new investigations” and “first point of contact”

Improvement teams will use measure elements like these to help set goals that support the project's aims. For instance, your team's goal might be to improve the percentage of fathers identified at the first point of contact by 10 percent over the next three months.

### Data collection plan

The data collection plan outlines the steps, sequence, and resources required to collect data to support continuous quality improvement. As you develop the data collection plan, include representatives from the appropriate departments (including partner organizations, when applicable). Consider the following when developing the data collection plan:

- **What data will you need to help you know whether change is resulting in improvement?** Define measures that support the specific needs and priorities of the agency as they relate to engaging fathers and paternal relatives.
- **How will you collect the data?** Define the approach to take when collecting data (such as a standard report, survey, interview or focus group) and what tools you will need. Evaluate which data your site is already collecting. In some cases, the data collection process will need to be created; in other cases, you will be able to use data that already exist. When collecting data, it is also important to consider family structure—for example, how to account for families with more than one father.
- **Who will collect the data?** Decide who is responsible for collecting each data element needed for the measure. In some cases, more than one person will collect data for the same measure. Consider how collaboration will occur to obtain complete data.
- **What is the source of the data?** Consider which data sources your improvement team will need to access to collect data. Some data sources may be available outside the agency. Select data sources that make the collection process minimally burdensome. For example, whenever possible, try to select a process that uses an existing system instead of tracking data outside of an existing system.
- **How often will you review the data?** Each measure should have a defined measure period. Consider how often the improvement team will collect and review data to meet these measure periods. Some

measures might be collected and reviewed monthly (such as the number of visits with a father or paternal relative, or how many fathers were identified for new cases). Other measures might be collected quarterly or annually (such as in surveys or focus groups asking about a father's or paternal relative's experience).

- **Who will see the data?** Identify who is interested in seeing the agency's progress over time. Consider how to share outcomes with key collaborators and community partners, and how to ensure privacy of data.
- **Why include race and ethnicity in data collection?** One way to promote racial equity is to consider how outcomes vary with youth and families' race and ethnicity. Track race and ethnicity for measures, whenever possible, to evaluate whether practice changes appear to have different impacts on families of different races or ethnic backgrounds and identify opportunities for improving processes. Use the categories aligned with standard child welfare data collection practices to ensure consistency in reporting when comparing data with other sites.

The issue brief, *Promising Strategies for Collecting, Analyzing, and Reporting Data on Father and Paternal Relative Engagement in Child Welfare* (which can be found on the [FCL webpage](#)) also highlights examples of how other child welfare agencies defined and tracked measures to support their father and paternal relative engagement programs.

### Data Collection Planning Worksheet

Measure	Data type (numeric; open-ended; etc.)	How will we collect the data?	Who will collect the data?	New or existing	Where the data will come from?	What resources do we need?

## 6. Racial Justice Action Planning Worksheet<sup>7</sup>

### Purpose

To complete the Racial Justice Action Planning Worksheet, your improvement team will have several discussions to consider how staff see racism operate in their local context. You will consider strategies to implement to change racist practices that negatively impact fathers of color. Work toward racial justice will be ongoing, and will always need continuous improvement, so your team should ask these questions on an ongoing basis. We share resources in the box below that could help support discussions about racial inequities.

**Table 1. Resources to support racial justice work**

Resource	Author
White Supremacy Culture	Tema Okun
White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack	Peggy McIntosh
Being anti-racist is central to trauma-informed care: Principles of an anti-racist, trauma-informed organization	National Traumatic Stress Network
How white people got made	Quinn Norton
The subtle linguistics of polite white supremacy	Yawo Brown
People including cops- view black kids as less innocent and less young than white kids	Phillip Bump

### Instructions

Discuss the questions as a team and document responses. Consider engaging a father of color in your discussions. After you select and test a strategy, you can incorporate it into the sustainability action plan.

<sup>7</sup> The Racial Justice Action Planning Worksheet was developed by the FCL Racial Justice Workgroup and the FCL Project Team. See Appendix D for an example of how to complete the template.

## Racial Justice Action Planning Worksheet

Background	
	<i>Understanding opportunities to promote racial justice</i>
How does racism operate at our agency? How can it be seen in policy, practice, and agency culture? How does it impact fathers and paternal relatives?	
How does our agency perpetuate White supremacy through policy, practice, and culture? How does it impact fathers and paternal relatives?	
The plan	
<i>Concrete and specific actions</i>	<i>For each concrete and specific action step, indicate how you will hold yourselves accountable for taking the action.</i>
What concrete action steps will we take to eliminate racist structures and practices as they relate to fathers and paternal relatives? (Be specific.)	
What concrete action steps will we take to address power differentials that uphold White supremacist practices with fathers and paternal relatives? (Be specific.)	



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## 7. PEST Worksheet<sup>8</sup>

### Purpose

As teams begin to feel confident about some strategies, they will likely want to share their successes with others. They may want to share information with teams in their office, other offices, across the region, or across the state. The purpose of this worksheet is to help you think about opportunities to spread and share information about effective strategies. The PEST (**P**ositive peer pressure, **E**xisting Structures, and **T**ools) approach (as described below) can help guide teams as they communicate with other departments, divisions, or community partners).

Some indicators that a strategy is ready to be spread include:

1. Initial tests have shown promise or strategies have been improved based on early results
2. It is part of your team's values and priorities.
3. The practices are documented and will be easy to share. There are champions to support their spread.
4. There is a process in place on who, what, where, when, and how. It could be standardized in trainings, policies, job descriptions, etc.

### Instructions

Use the worksheet below to guide your improvement team's plan for spreading strategies to others. It is important to make time to explain to others how the strategy has been working for you (instead of simply passing it along). Walk them through what they will need to know to implement the strategy in detail, and offer to follow up with them to see if they have questions.

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#### **PEST communication approach**

**Positive peer pressure:** Sharing your successes with others and encouraging them to try them out.

**Existing Structures:** Professional development, staff meetings, supervision, observation, hiring, orientation are opportunities to support practice spread and sustainability.

**Concrete Tools:** Policies, checklists, prompts/scripts, brochures, performance evaluations, visuals, job descriptions, and awards are tools to spread successful strategies.

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#### **Positive peer pressure**

You are all innovators. Others may be slow to adapt, but over time, more people will come on board. Your excitement about the new practices can be contagious. Creating positive peer pressure is about sharing your excitement instead of pushing an agenda on others. Start with the people who seem most open to trying something different and ask them to try the strategy out! Celebrate others when they try something new, and share stories about successes you see.

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<sup>8</sup> The PEST Worksheet was developed by JRA Consulting, Ltd. See Appendix E for an example of how to complete the worksheet.

### **Existing Structures**

Others will want to understand how work to engage fathers and paternal relatives fits with the work they are currently doing. It is helpful to work within existing structures (such as committees, group supervision, and data collection practices) to integrate the work with existing efforts and practices. Allow time and space for reflection and draw staff in to share resources and provide coaching as needed.

### **Concrete Tools**

As you spread your strategy, it is important to have tools that make it easier for others to use the strategy. For example, if you are working on forms to locate fathers early in the process, it is important to help staff using the form to understand *how* to use the forms. Or, if you are inviting fathers to family-team meetings, consider developing a script that caseworkers can use to get them started in having more open conversations with fathers. As part of coaching, role-play can also help warm people up to new roles and opportunities. Consider whether they will need a checklist that outlines the steps needed to do a new practice.

## PEST Worksheet

Strategies to Spread:	
	<i>What might you do in each area to share, teach, spread, and support this strategy?</i>
<b>POSITIVE PEER PRESSURE</b> Positive peer pressure and purposeful interactions	
<b>EXISTING STRUCTURES</b> Using existing structures in the agency, organization, and program	
<b>CONCRETE TOOLS</b> Using concrete tools to support, spread, and sustain the work	

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## 8. LADDERS Framework Worksheet<sup>9</sup>

### Purpose

The LADDERS Framework prompts teams to review and discuss questions about spreading and sustaining changes your improvement team has tested using the Plan-Do-Study-Act process. It lays out considerations for sustainability to ensure successful changes will continue.

### Instructions

Review the questions as a team and document them in the worksheet. Figure 1 shows questions to ask for each component of LADDERS. After answering the questions, these questions feed into the [Sustainability Planning Worksheet](#).

**Figure 1. The LADDERS Framework for Spread and Sustainability**

<b>Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who has the top-level commitment for this change?</li> <li>What is their role on (or connection to) our team?</li> </ul>
<b>Agency Fit and Capacity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How is this aligned with other priorities and plans for our team? Agency? Community?</li> <li>What is the timing for implementing and spreading this work?</li> <li>What resources and infrastructure do we need?</li> </ul>
<b>Documentation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How will this practice be documented, managed, and monitored to ensure it is used consistently and with the desired intent?</li> </ul>
<b>Data</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What do our metrics show in terms of improvements?</li> <li>What other quantitative or qualitative data do we have?</li> <li>How can we use stories to make the case for spreading this?</li> </ul>
<b>Expectations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who will have primary ownership and responsibility for managing the implementation and spread of this practice or process?</li> </ul>
<b>Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who are the key champions and messengers in implementing and spreading this work?</li> <li>Who are the audiences we will need to reach?</li> <li>What messages will we use to reach them? How will we reach</li> </ul>
<b>Replacement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How is this new way of doing work (the process) better or easier than the old or usual way?</li> <li>What will be eliminated to avoid duplication?</li> </ul>
<b>Staffing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What staff do we need to do this work?</li> <li>How will we prepare them to do this work? Training? Coaching? Supervising? Supporting?</li> </ul>

<sup>9</sup> The LADDERS Framework Worksheet was developed by JRA Consulting, Ltd. See Appendix F for an example of how to complete the worksheet.

## LADDERS Framework Worksheet

Applying LADDERS to father engagement and racial justice planning	
Sustainability strategies	For each strategy, please indicate how you will hold yourselves accountable for executing the strategies.
<p>Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who are the leaders that need to support this work?</li> <li>What do we need them to do?</li> <li>How can we help them do it?</li> </ul>	
<p>Agency fit and capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How is this work consistent with the overall direction of the agency?</li> <li>How does the agency's overall strategic plan support this work?</li> <li>What resources (for example, technology, documentation, and internal infrastructure) are needed to do this work?</li> <li>How will these resources be developed, provided, and supported?</li> </ul>	
<p>Documentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How will this work (and the associated practices) be documented to ensure it occurs consistently across the agency and conforms with the desired intent?</li> <li>How will leadership and others in the agency know that this work is being sustained over time?</li> <li>How will progress be monitored and reported?</li> </ul>	
<p>Data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What data will be collected to monitor the fidelity of this work? How do we know it is being done as planned?</li> <li>How will these data be used? By whom?</li> </ul>	
<p>Expectations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How will new challenges or barriers be anticipated and addressed?</li> </ul> <p>What will happen as leadership changes, staff turns over, technology changes, or funding is reallocated?</p>	



Applying LADDERS to father engagement and racial justice planning	
<p>Replacement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What existing practices or processes are these practices or processes replacing?</li> <li>• How is this new work being integrated with existing agency practice to ensure it is not just layering something new on top of what is already being done?</li> <li>• In what way is this new way of doing work better or easier than the old or usual way?</li> </ul>	
<p>Staffing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What staff, including caseworkers, parent partners, supervisors, managers, executive staff, etc. are needed to do this work?</li> <li>• What changes are being made to job descriptions to ensure staff can continue to do this work?</li> <li>• How will new staff be trained and supported to do work in this way?</li> <li>• How will ongoing needs for training and professional development be assessed and met?</li> <li>• How will supervision and coaching be done?</li> </ul>	

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## 9. Sustainability Planning Worksheet<sup>10</sup>

### Purpose

A sustainability plan can be a road map for achieving or sustaining long-term goals. It outlines specific plans for practices, processes, and partnerships to ensure sustainability. Improvement teams can use the Sustainability Planning worksheet to communicate their plans to other offices or departments.

### Instructions

Using the details from the [LADDERS Worksheet](#) and the [Racial Justice Action Planning Form](#), you are encouraged to develop a plan to sustain the important work you have started. Begin by documenting an overall vision and timeline for sustainability activities, and then document the action steps necessary to achieve sustainable improvements.

Consider the following when developing your plan:

- **Leadership:** What internal and external support do you need to sustain your program?
- **Agency fit and capacity:** How does this work align with the overall mission of the agency and other initiatives? How do new practices complement existing practices?
- **Documentation:** What internal resources does the improvement team need to effectively sustain new activities? How will you document activities in an ongoing way? How will you communicate the plan to internal and external partners?
- **Data:** How will you assess and monitor performance of the plan to evaluate effectiveness and to inform future planning?
- **Expectations and engagement:** How will you communicate expectations about new practices, and what changes are needed to ensure ongoing effectiveness of new programs?
- **Replacement:** How will your agency know that new practices are better than the old way of doing things?
- **Staffing:** How will staff be trained to learn and sustain the work?

Improvement teams are encouraged to be specific. Anyone, including new hires, should be able to read the plan and understand what needs to happen to reach your objective. If your improvement team finds this template limited in space, you are encouraged to use another format that makes sense to you.

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<sup>10</sup> The Sustainability Planning Worksheet was developed by the FCL Project Team. See Appendix G for an example of how to complete this form.

Sustainability Planning Worksheet

Sustainability plan: Action steps to promote the sustainability of practices that engage fathers and paternal relatives

Program vision statement: Describe the long-term goal or vision for improving your engagement of fathers and paternal relatives and achieving racial justice for men of color in child welfare.

Time frame: Enter the date by which you aim to achieve implementation of the plan.

Sustainability action steps

(Add or delete rows to meet your needs)

Strategy to sustain	Person/s responsible	Metrics used to track progress	Resources needed and where they will come from	Plans and processes needed to sustain strategy (include dates)

## Appendix A

### 3. Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) Worksheet (Example)

Plan Do Study Act Worksheet
<b>PDSA information</b>
<b>PDSA name:</b> Identify reason for dads not attending meetings
<b>Cycle start date:</b> February 1
<b>Cycle end date:</b> February 7
<b>Current cycle number:</b> 1
<b>CCF domain most closely aligned with this PDSA:</b> Continuously involve fathers and paternal relatives throughout the lives of their children (5)
<b>Measure(s) you expect to impact with this PDSA:</b> Number of fathers who attend family meetings
<b>PDSA lead and staff involved:</b> Jaylen (lead), Anthony, Corey, Jacklyn, and Tomas
<b>Objective (Aim):</b> By July 31, increase the percentage of fathers who attend family meetings by 20%.
<b>Plan</b>
<p><b>Describe what you plan to test.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What changes will you make?</li> <li>What are the steps for the plan (who, what, where, when)?</li> <li>What data will you collect? Who will collect them?</li> <li>What do you predict will happen?</li> </ol> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As a way to understand why dads are not attending family meetings, the improvement team will identify which dads did not attend meetings and follow up with them to understand why.</li> <li>Steps:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On February 1, Corey will generate a report showing names of dads that were invited to a family meeting but did not attend in the last 7 days.</li> <li>Between February 2 and February 7, Anthony and Jacklyn will call the dads that did not attend family meetings and ask why they didn't attend.</li> </ol> </li> <li>Anthony and Jacklyn will document the reasons dads did not attend meetings in a spreadsheet.</li> <li>We predict asking dads about the reasons they did not attend will help our improvement team understand ways we can help support them and let dads know they are supported.</li> </ol>
<b>Do</b>
<p>What actions did you take?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Corey generated a report that showed 12 dads did not attend family meetings in the last 7 days.</li> <li>Anthony and Jacklyn called all 12 dads on the list.</li> <li>Anthony and Jacklyn found that contact information for some dads was not accurate or updated.</li> </ul>
<b>Study</b>
<p>What were the results of your actions? Did the test work as expected? Why or why not?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Of the 12 dads on the report, Anthony and Jacklyn spoke with 9 dads. Information for 3 dads was inaccurate or not updated.</li> <li>Of the 9 dads Anthony and Jacklyn contacted:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6 dads said the meeting was held while they were at work, and they therefore were unable to attend</li> <li>2 dads said they were unable to attend because they did not have transportation</li> <li>1 dad said he forgot about the meeting</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Plan Do Study Act Worksheet
<b>Act</b> What actions are you going to take as a result of what you learned in this cycle? Will you adjust the strategy (keeping the test small), adjust the strategy and expand it to capture more data, expand the strategy to capture more data with no changes, or abandon the strategy? <hr/> Adjust strategy and expand it <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Corey will expand the report to include dads that did not attend family meetings over the last 30 days to get a larger sample size.</li> <li>Corey will send the report to Tomas, who will research correct contact information for dads before sending to Anthony and Jacklyn.</li> <li>Anthony and Jacklyn will call dads who do not attend family meetings and continue documenting reasons for not attending.</li> <li>Anthony and Jacklyn will bring data back to the improvement team to identify themes so the improvement team can discuss a strategy for addressing barriers.</li> </ul>
<b>Current cycle</b> Which cycle is this (e.g., first cycle, second cycle)? <hr/> First cycle
<b>Status</b> What is the status of your test? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In progress (still testing)</li> <li>Fully implemented (ready for spread to others departments or agencies)</li> <li>Sustainable (spread to others and is part of day-to-day work)</li> <li>Abandon (discontinue)</li> </ul> <hr/> In progress
<b>Updates</b> Briefly describe what improvements your team has made to this test this strategy since the first cycle and your plans for the next cycle as you move it toward sustainable implementation. <hr/> None yet

## Appendix B

### 4. PDSA Tracker (Example)

PDSA	Description	Domain(s)	Measuring success	Who does it	When we do it	How we follow up
Name of PDSA or strategy	Brief description of the strategy	CCF domain(s) addressed	What measures, data, or outcomes will we be watching to see if this change is making things better?	Who will have primary responsibility? Who else needs to be involved?	What is your target date for completing the strategy testing (PDSA cycle)?	How will we keep track of the strategy's progress? How will we share it with the rest of the improvement team?
<b>Bundle 1 Description:</b> Supporting dads to attend family meetings						
Identify reason for dads not attending family meetings	Collect and use data to understand reason for dads not attending family meetings	1, 4, and 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of dads who were invited but did not attend family meetings</li> <li>Reason dads are not attending family meetings' data collected through interviews with dads</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jaylen will oversee all strategy testing.</li> <li>Corey will collect and share data.</li> <li>Anthony and Jacklyn will help track data and report to the team.</li> </ul>	February 7	Susan is responsible for communicating with other departments and collaborating with leadership to scale and spread successful strategies.
Assign father advocate for family-team meeting	Connect father advocates with dads to reduce barriers to attending family meetings	1, 4, and 5	Number of dads assigned to an advocate	Jacklyn will coordinate with father advocacy group to connect dads to a mentor.	February 28	Jacklyn will share the new process with other team leads during an all-staff meeting, in individual department meetings, and in the organization's newsletter.
Coordinate with a father-focused community partner	Connect dads to community resources to reduce barriers to attending family meetings	1, 4, and 5	Number of dads who received services from community partner	Anthony will coordinate with father-focused community partner to connect dads to needed resources.	March 15	Anthony will share the new process with other team leads during an all-staff meeting, in individual department meetings, and in the organization's newsletter

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## Appendix C

### 5. Data Collection Planning Worksheet (Example)

Measure	Data type (numeric, open-ended, etc.)	How will we collect the data	Who will collect the data?	New or existing	Where will the data come from?	What resources do we need?
Initial request to identify the father	Discrete	Add information from the agency Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) during intake and any time throughout the process if the dad's name is missing	Screener, intake worker, manager	Existing	Report from CCWIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report from CCWIS</li> <li>• Time and staff to run reports</li> <li>• Time and staff to evaluate reports</li> </ul>
At least one attempt to outreach to additional agencies or sources to identify dads	Open-ended	Manual case reviews monthly	Quality improvement team	Existing	Case reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time, space, and staff to conduct case reviews</li> <li>• Tracking tool to document findings</li> </ul>

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## Appendix D

### 6. Racial Justice Action Planning Worksheet (Example)

Background	
	<i>Understanding opportunities to promote racial justice</i>
How does racism operate at our agency? How can it be seen through policy, practice, and agency culture? How does it impact fathers and paternal relatives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Families are often evaluated by an individual caseworker, who may be more biased than a group review process. Committees could help mitigate bias.</li> <li>- Lack of understanding of how poverty impacts parenting.</li> <li>- Agencies don't disaggregate data to see trends by subgroups, disparities, or disproportionality.</li> <li>- When we do look at data by race, we see that Black children stay in care longer than White children.</li> <li>- Not enough emphasis on addressing racism.</li> <li>- Court reports may not accurately represent fathers' efforts.</li> </ul>
How does our agency perpetuate White supremacy through policy, practice, and culture? How does it impact fathers and paternal relatives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Leadership is not diverse.</li> <li>- Some of the fathers served by the agency may not have access to resources like money, education, and information, yet it is assumed they have access to opportunities and chose not to use them.</li> <li>- The standards for appropriate parental behavior reflect White privilege norms and values that represent the dominant culture.</li> <li>- The capacity to make and enforce decisions is unfairly distributed along racial lines. The power to make decisions does not rest in the hands of those who are most affected by the decision.</li> <li>- The "problem" is defined through the perspective of White-dominant culture. The people who get to name the problem determine the framework for solutions.</li> </ul>
The Plan	
<i>Concrete and specific actions</i>	<i>For each concrete and specific action, please also indicate how you will hold yourselves accountable for taking the actions.</i>
What concrete action steps will we take to eliminate racist structures and practices as they relate to fathers and paternal relatives? (Be specific.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Have regular roundtables with fathers to understand their perspectives. Ask fathers how practice can be improved.</li> <li>- Emphasize community collaborations to support prevention activities that would reduce the need for families to come into care in the first place.</li> <li>- Support training and ongoing conversation about racial bias.</li> <li>- Consider how collaborating with other agencies can assist with providing concrete supports to fathers (for example, education, job training, housing assistance, income support, and health and behavioral health services).</li> </ul>
What concrete action steps will we take to address power differentials that uphold White supremacist practices with fathers and paternal relatives? (Be specific.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create action steps after meetings with fathers and hold staff accountable for follow-through.</li> <li>- Ask fathers to review case plans and court reports before submitting them.</li> <li>- Hire fathers with lived experience; diversify the workforce, include more dads of color.</li> <li>- Require a culture plan for every child.</li> <li>- Review practice and policy through the eyes of a father of color.</li> </ul>

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## Appendix E

### 7. PEST Worksheet (Example)

Strategy to Spread: Use of a mentor at family-team meetings	
	<i>What might you do in each area to share, teach, spread, and support this strategy?</i>
<b>POSITIVE PEER PRESSURE</b> Positive peer pressure and purposeful interactions	At the next office meeting, we will share with other teams in our office how responsive fathers have been when they know there is a father mentor at family-team meetings. We will encourage them to have father mentors who are paid staff attend family-team meetings to support father voice and advocate for their needs. We will ask one person to report back to us at the next meeting about their process using father mentors with one family.
<b>EXISTING STRUCTURES</b> Using existing structures in the agency, organization, or program"	The father mentor group will be notified of all upcoming family-team meetings. They will then coordinate with the caseworker and father to ensure attendance. We will email staff information about the process, and share the names of staff to contact with questions.
<b>CONCRETE TOOLS</b> Using concrete tools to support, spread, and sustain the work	The father mentors have clearly documented procedures for contacting fathers before and after a team meeting. The documents will be shared with all staff. Father mentors also debrief the meeting with the caseworker to understand how the father's voice will be incorporating into case notes or court reports. They document considerations from the debrief using a template that includes follow-up steps.

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## Appendix F

### 8. LADDERS Framework Worksheet (Example)

Applying LADDERS to father engagement and racial justice planning	
Sustainability strategies	For each strategy, please indicate how you will hold yourselves accountable for executing the strategies.
<p>Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who are the leaders that need to support this work?</li> <li>What do we need them to do?</li> <li>How can we help them do it?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involve leadership, regional partner improvement teams, father engagement action improvement teams, members of the racial justice action committee, and the department data work group.</li> <li>We need their help ensuring the new practices are sustained and visible in practice, policy, and training. For example, all offices should have family-improvement team coordinators that plan and support fathers during family-team meetings.</li> <li>We can help them do this by joining their leadership meetings and creating action steps as a group. We could develop a father engagement committee that leadership can attend.</li> <li>Our Action Planning Form details who will do what, and by when.</li> </ul>
<p>Agency fit and capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How is this work consistent with the overall direction of the agency?</li> <li>How does the agency's overall strategic plan support this work?</li> <li>What resources (for example, technology, documentation, and internal infrastructure) are needed to do this work?</li> <li>How will these resources be developed, provided, and supported?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The agency overall has started a racial justice action committee. We would like to support this work and help delineate the connection with father engagement work. Ideally, everyone will see the overlap in father engagement work and our efforts to promote racial justice. Both groups should have an action plan that speaks to the others, and they should discuss the possibility of combining the action plans.</li> <li>The agency overall has stated a commitment to improving racial equity.</li> <li>Our team has ideas for how to achieve racial justice for men of color who interact with child welfare, including metrics to collect to better understand how to support fathers of color.</li> <li>We will draft a racial justice action plan as part of our father engagement sustainability plan. We will share it with other committees and ask for help with specific pieces to move the work forward. For example, we will ask for their help providing support to fathers so they can attend family-team meetings.</li> <li>Our Action Planning Form details who will do what, and by when.</li> </ul>
<p>Documentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How will this work (and the associated practices) be documented to ensure it occurs consistently across the agency and conforms with the desired intent?</li> <li>How will leadership and others in the agency know that this work is being sustained over time?</li> <li>How will progress be monitored and reported?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our agency has a practice guidance document. We have several father engagement practices (see PDSA tracker) we would like to add to the next version of the practice guidance document.</li> <li>We will add data fields for caseworkers to enter information about father engagement.</li> <li>Leadership and others in the agency will look at the metrics for father engagement in an ongoing way to help improve numbers related to father engagement.</li> <li>Progress will be reported at quarterly leadership meetings. Data will support practice improvements.</li> <li>We will review and revise policy that is not clear about father engagement and supporting better outcomes for fathers of color.</li> <li>Our Action Planning Form details who will do what, and by when.</li> </ul>

Applying LADDERS to father engagement and racial justice planning	
<p>Data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What data will be collected to monitor the fidelity of this work? How do we know it is being done as planned?</li> <li>• How will these data be used? By whom?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– We will disaggregate the following metrics to understand differences by race: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Number of fathers contacted when children enter the child welfare system</li> <li>○ Number of children placed with paternal relatives as their foster caregivers</li> <li>○ Caseworker contact with fathers and paternal relatives</li> <li>○ Invitations and attendance for fathers at family-team meetings</li> <li>○ Number of children who achieve permanency with a father or paternal relative</li> </ul> </li> <li>– Our Action Planning Form details who will do what, and by when.</li> </ul>
<p>Expectations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will new challenges or barriers be anticipated and addressed? What will happen as leadership changes, staff turns over, technology changes, or funding is reallocated?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– As an agenda item at regular meetings with the groups named above, we will ask about anticipated challenges and plans to mitigate risk.</li> <li>– Our Action Planning Form details who will do what, and by when.</li> </ul>
<p>Replacement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What existing practices or processes are these practices or processes replacing?</li> <li>• How is this new work being integrated with existing agency practice to ensure it is not just layering something new on top of what is already being done?</li> <li>• In what way is this new way of doing work better or easier than the old or usual way?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– We will meet monthly as a team to understand how to streamline father engagement processes.</li> <li>– We will test PDSAs of new practices and assess whether they duplicate work or create undue burden on staff.</li> <li>– We will continue practices that staff find beneficial for engaging fathers and paternal relatives, and reduce burden when staff notify us if new practices are an inefficient use of resources.</li> <li>– Our Action Planning Form details who will do what, and by when.</li> </ul>
<p>Staffing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What staff, including caseworkers, parent partners, supervisors, managers, executive staff, etc. are needed to do this work?</li> <li>• What changes are being made to job descriptions to ensure staff can continue to do this work?</li> <li>• How will new staff be trained and supported to do work in this way?</li> <li>• How will ongoing needs for training and professional development be assessed and met?</li> <li>• How will supervision and coaching be done?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– We will continue to engage community partners who have been instrumental in providing additional support to fathers. They have also helped with staff training.</li> <li>– We will intentionally hire men of color. We will ask for their help leading father engagement work.</li> <li>– Supervisors will be supported as coaches after their staff attend trainings on racial justice and father engagement. We will work with the training division to incorporate this into regular training.</li> <li>– We will work with the training division to hold quarterly trainings for staff and plan for training based on input from staff on what they would like to know about support racial justice and father engagement.</li> <li>– Our Action Planning Form details who will do what, and by when.</li> </ul>



## Appendix G

### 9. Sustainability Planning Worksheet (Example)

Example sustainability plan: Action steps to promote the sustainability of practices that engage fathers and paternal relatives				
<b>Program vision statement:</b> Describe the long-term goal or vision for improving your engagement of fathers and paternal relatives and achieving racial justice for men of color in child welfare. Our department will take a comprehensive approach to promote engagement of fathers and paternal relatives in child welfare. We will examine practices to support better outcomes for fathers of color who are disproportionately disadvantaged through involvement with the child welfare system. We will assess and address the preferences of fathers and paternal relatives, and create a system that engages fathers and paternal relatives through every step of policy and practice.				
Time frame: Enter the date by which you aim to achieve implementation of the plan.				
Sustainability action steps (Add or delete rows to meet your needs)				
Practice improvement to sustain	Person/s responsible	Metrics used to track progress	Resources needed and where they will come from	Plans and processes needed to sustain improvement (include dates)
Family-team meeting enhancements	Joanne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of fathers attending family-team meetings</li> <li>Father experience of family-team meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff to support team meetings</li> <li>Documentation of father participation before and after meeting</li> <li>Staff to review father responses to surveys</li> </ul>	Teams are guided to detail this information on another form that they can create
Ongoing training and support for staff and supervisors to discuss father engagement during supervision	Mark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of conversations where supervisors support staff use of father engagement strategies</li> <li>Staff self-assessment of their ability to support fathers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training team will continuously develop curriculum on working with fathers and coach supervisors to apply the skills</li> </ul>	Teams are guided to detail this information on another form that they can create
Father advisory council	Tina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of fathers engaged in father advisory council</li> <li>Frequency of advisory council meetings</li> <li>Fathers' report of whether the council recommendations are incorporated in policy and practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff to support meetings</li> <li>Time for father leader to attend leadership meetings to report back on council recommendations</li> </ul>	Teams are guided to detail this information on another form that they can create
Quarterly review of father engagement data	Sam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Occurrence of quarterly review meeting</li> <li>Follow-up actions from meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data reports from data lead</li> <li>Quarterly meeting date</li> <li>Action steps and follow up plan</li> </ul>	Teams are guided to detail this information on another form that they can create

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# Toolkit for Building System Capacity to Engage Fathers and Paternal Relatives in Child Welfare

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