

FATHERHOOD ENGAGEMENT

A Smart Investment in
**Kentucky's Children,
Families, and Taxpayers**



Presented to the
**KENTUCKY SENATE
FATHERHOOD ENGAGEMENT
TASK FORCE**



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EQUAL RIGHTS | EQUAL TIME | EQUAL LOVE

STRONG FATHERS. STRONG CHILDREN. STRONG KENTUCKY.

Fatherlessness is One of America's Most Expensive Social Problems

Children without fathers are significantly more likely to:



2.5x

more likely to drop out of school



2.6x

more likely to abuse drugs



2.0x

more likely to experience mental illness



4.6x

more likely to become involved in crime



6.6x

more likely to enter the juvenile justice system



7.4x

more likely to be incarcerated

“

Fatherhood is not simply a family issue.
It is a public policy issue.



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There Is More Than One *Path to Fatherlessness*



FATHERS PUSHED AWAY

Family court conflict, unnecessary barriers, and policies that limit their involvement.



FATHERS WHO WALK AWAY

Some fathers choose to walk away from their responsibilities and their children.



FATHERS WHO NEVER KNEW THEY HAD A CHILD

Lack of communication, outdated systems, and no opportunity to step up.



FATHERS WHO NEVER HAD A FATHER THEMSELVES

The cycle continues when boys grow up without positive fatherhood role models.



Different causes. *One common outcome.*



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Kentucky Pays The Price. Every Taxpayer Pays.

Fatherlessness drives enormous costs across multiple public systems.



PRISONS

Incarceration costs for adults who grew up without consistent father involvement.



MENTAL HEALTH

Increased risk of mental illness, trauma, and behavioral challenges.



SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Treatment, recovery, and ongoing costs related to addiction.



JUVENILE JUSTICE

Detention, court processing, probation, and rehabilitation for youth.



We are paying **billions** treating **symptoms** instead of **preventing** causes.



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THE SOLUTION: FATHERHOOD ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS

We Keep Mopping the Floor...
Instead of Fixing the *Broken Faucet.*

THE ROOT CAUSE



FATHER DISENGAGEMENT

THE SYMPTOMS



CRIME



INCARCERATION



ADDICTION



POVERTY



MENTAL HEALTH



WELFARE



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What Fatherhood Engagement Really Means



Helping fathers become:



Responsible



Involved



Financially supportive



Emotionally present



Positive role models



This is not about taking sides.
It is about helping children.



Strong fathers build strong children.
Strong children build **strong communities**.
Strong communities build a **stronger Kentucky**.



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WHY PREVENTION IS CHEAPER

The Power of Prevention



FATHERHOOD
ENGAGEMENT



BETTER CHILD
OUTCOMES



LESS
CRIME



LESS DRUG
ABUSE



LOWER GOVERNMENT
SPENDING



Prevention costs *pennies*
compared to remediation.



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KENTUCKY PRISON COST SAVINGS

What If We Prevented Just 1%?

OF KENTUCKY'S FUTURE PRISON POPULATION



192

FEWER FUTURE INMATES

\$114 MILLION

IN PRISON COST SAVINGS

Over the course of those
prison sentences



\$42,488

Annual cost per inmate
in Kentucky



14 YEARS

Average sentence
length in Kentucky



192 FEWER INMATES

Prevents just 1% of Kentucky's
future prison population



Imagine the savings from **2%, 5%, or 10%.**

Invest upstream. Save millions. Strengthen families. Build a stronger Kentucky.



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RETURN ON INVESTMENT

A Small Investment Can Produce Enormous Returns

INVEST IN FATHERHOOD PROGRAMS



A fraction of what we
currently spend on
remediation.



SAVINGS IN

- ☒ Prisons
- ☒ Law Enforcement
- ☒ Courts
- ☒ Foster Care
- ☒ Mental Health
- ☒ Substance Abuse
- ☒ Education



Fatherhood engagement is
one of the
highest-return investments
government can make.



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RECOMMENDATIONS *for* KENTUCKY

- 1 Expand Fatherhood Engagement Programs
- 2 Encourage Community Partnerships
- 3 Improve Father Outreach
- 4 Track Measurable Outcomes
- 5 Evaluate Long-Term Taxpayer Savings
- 6 Continue Legislative Leadership in Strengthening Fathers and Families



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EVERY CHILD DESERVES THE OPPORTUNITY TO KNOW AND BE *loved by their father.*



Strong fathers build
stronger children.



Strong children build
stronger communities.



Strong communities build
a stronger Kentucky.



Strong fathers build
a stronger Kentucky.




Thank You
FOR YOUR LEADERSHIP AND
COMMITMENT TO KENTUCKY'S
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.



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FINAL

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND COMMITMENT

LET'S STAY CONNECTED



Mark Ludwig



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**Founder, National Council
for Equal Shared Parenting**



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STRONG CHILDREN.
STRONG KENTUCKY.**



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INVEST IN FATHERS. INVEST IN KENTUCKY'S FUTURE.

