

Dads and their kids

The role of positive father-child relationships for early development



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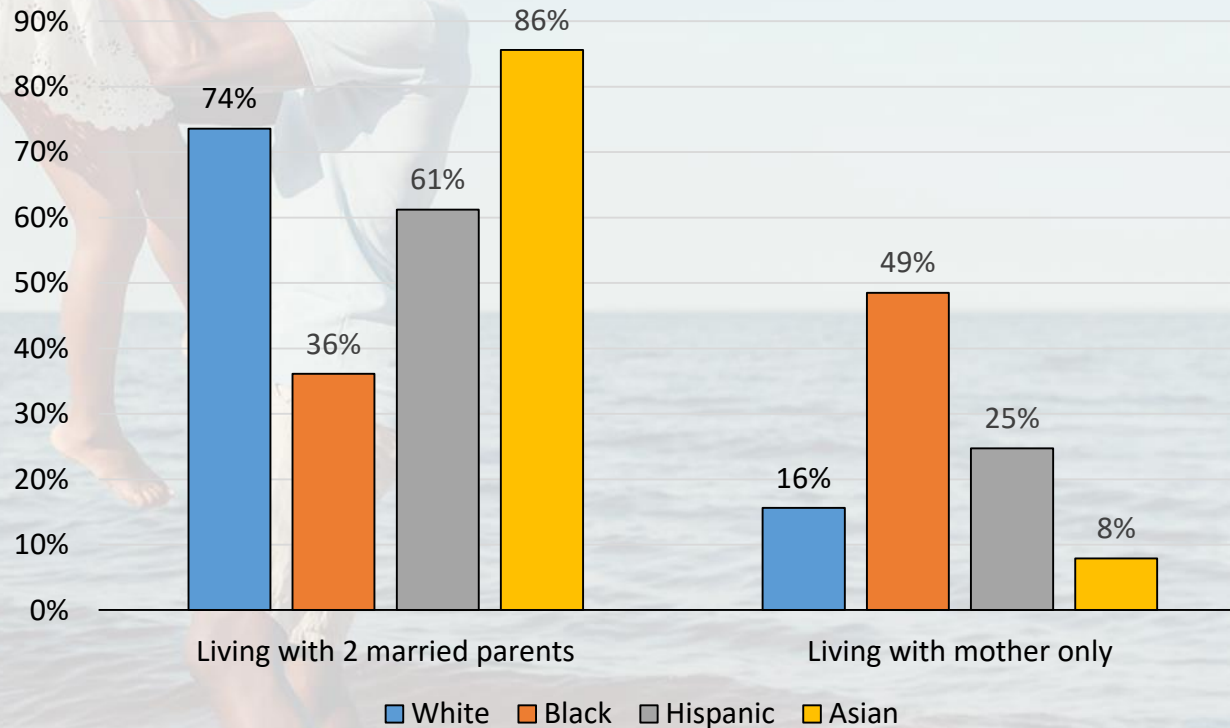
University of Georgia

March 1, 2019

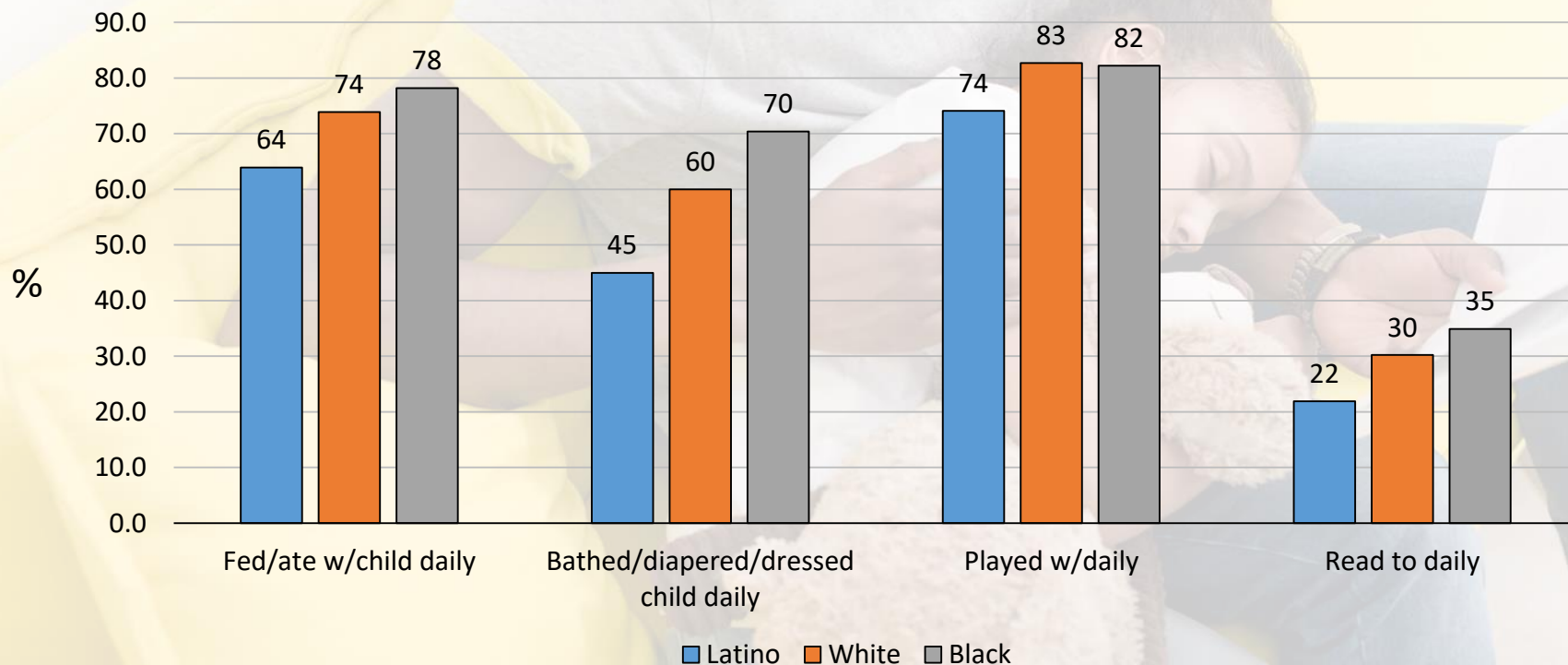
Myth of the Neglectful Black Father

Father-absence blamed for plight of poor black children since the 1960s

Children's Living Arrangements, 2017

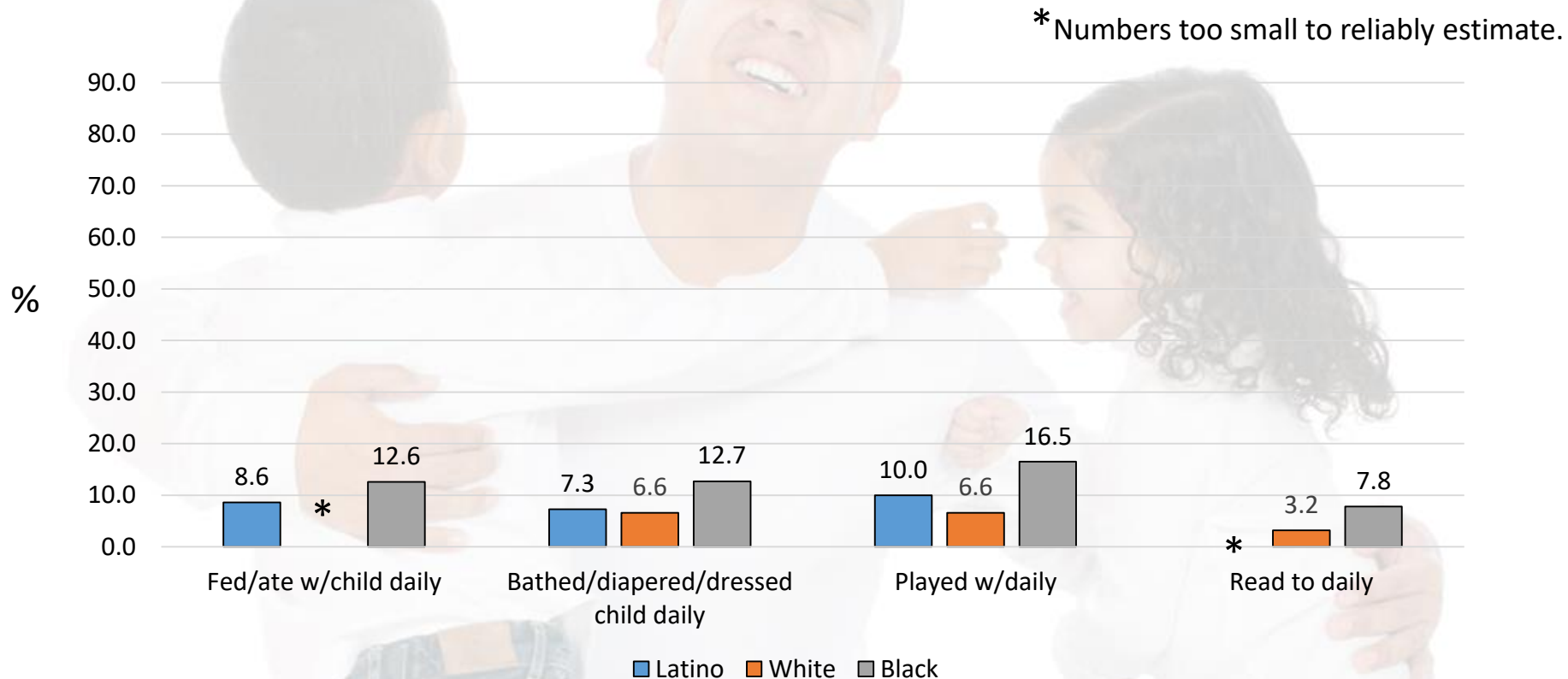


Father Involvement (Resident Fathers)



Jones, J., & Mosher, W. (2013, December 20) Fathers' involvement with their children: United States 2006-2010. National Health Statistics Reports #71. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhsr/nhsr071.pdf> on 2/25/19)

Father Involvement (Non-Resident Fathers)

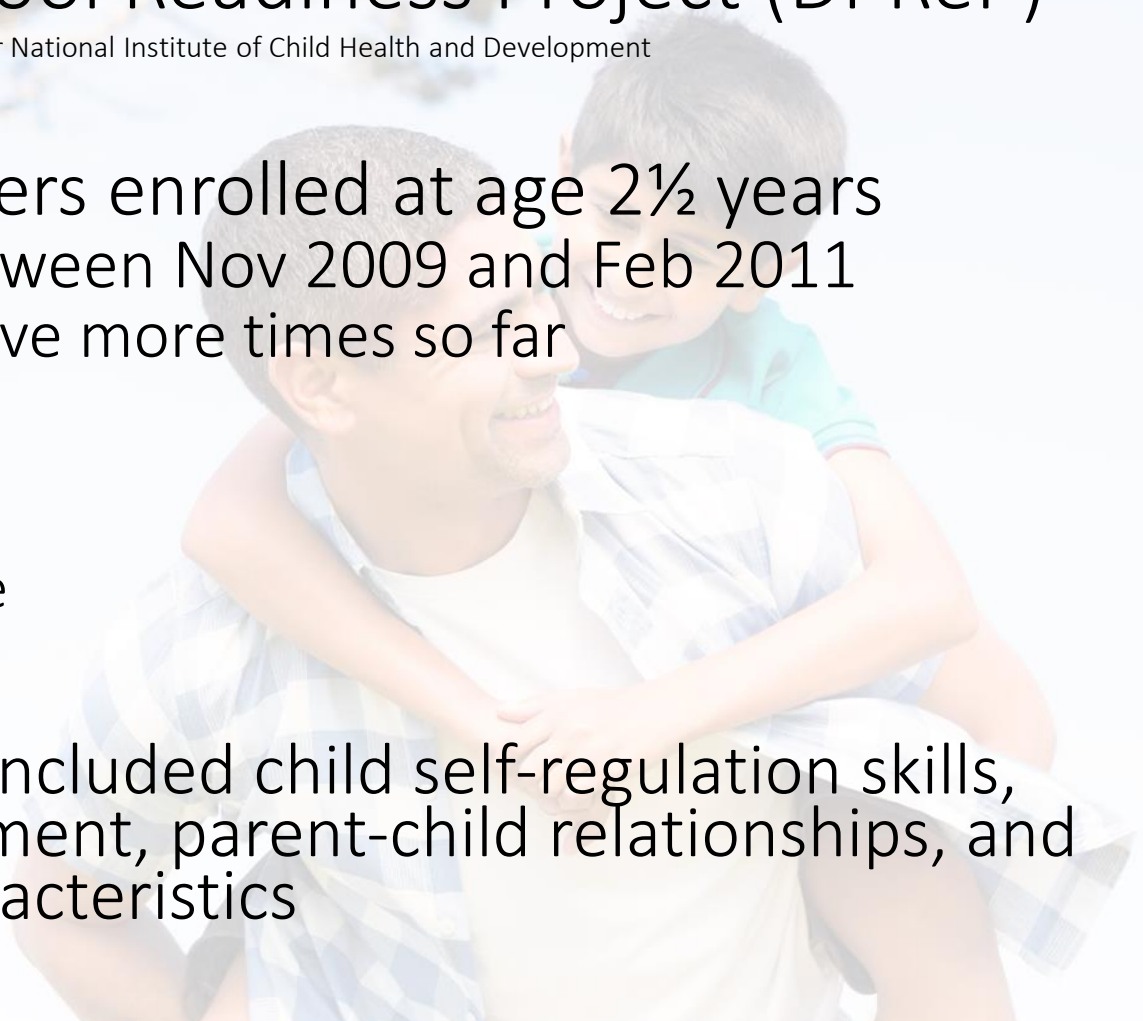


Jones, J., & Mosher, W. (2013, December 20) Fathers' involvement with their children: United States 2006-2010. National Health Statistics Reports #71. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhsr/nhsr071.pdf> on 2/25/19)

Dallas Preschool Readiness Project (DPRReP)

Funded by the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Development

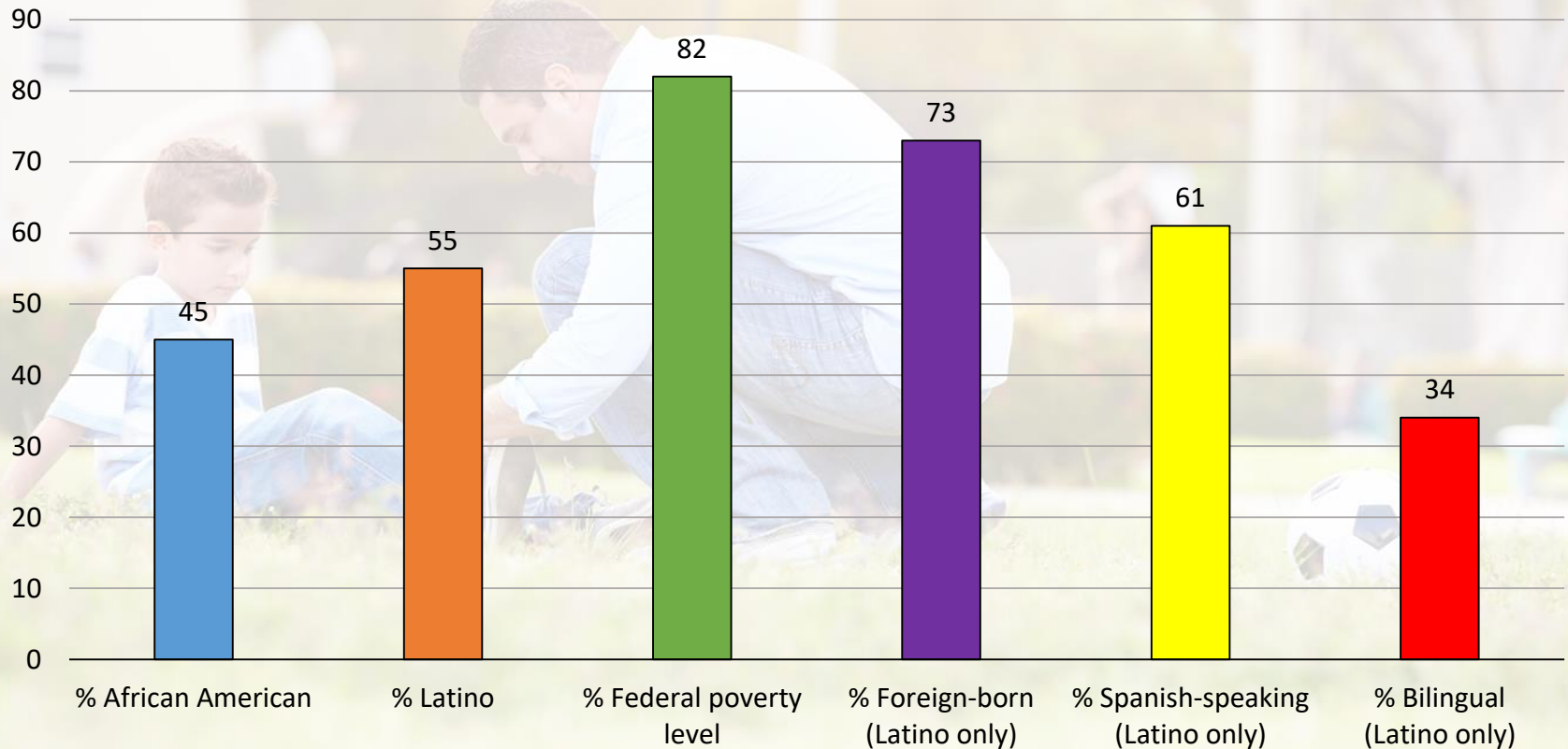
- 407 preschoolers enrolled at age 2½ years
 - Recruited between Nov 2009 and Feb 2011
 - Followed up five more times so far
 - Age 3½ years
 - Kindergarten
 - First Grade
 - Fourth Grade
 - Fifth Grade
- Data collected included child self-regulation skills, school achievement, parent-child relationships, and household characteristics



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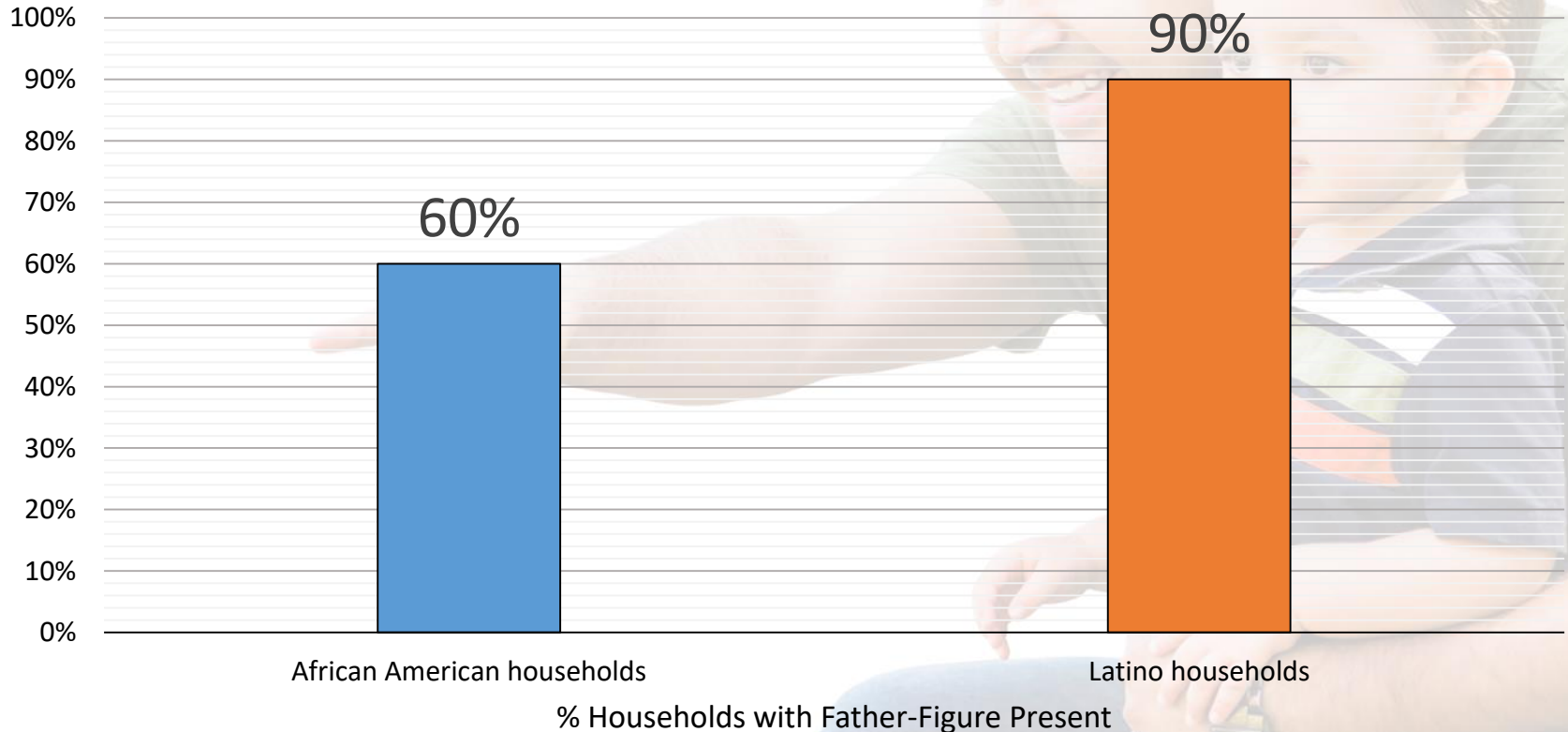
N = 407



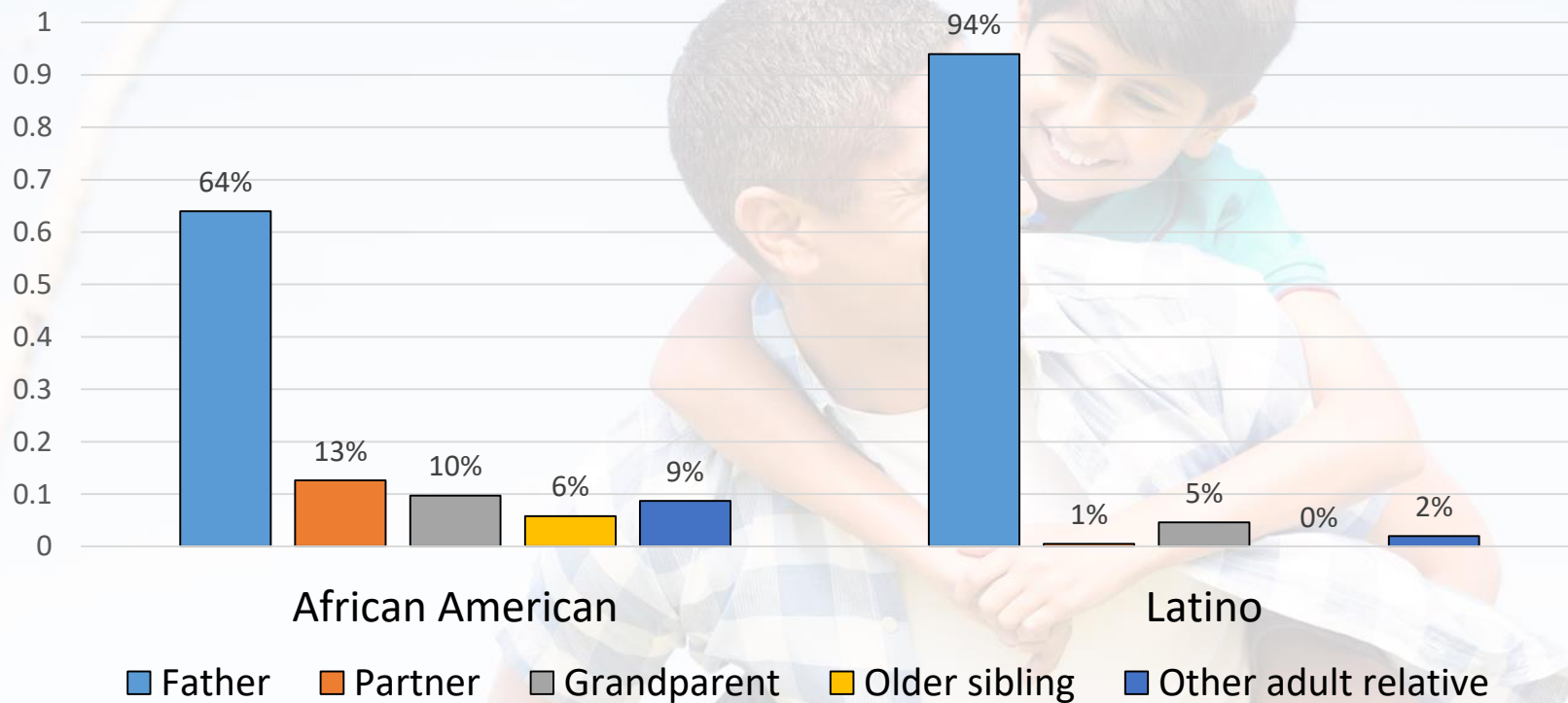
Dallas Preschool Readiness Project (DPRReP)

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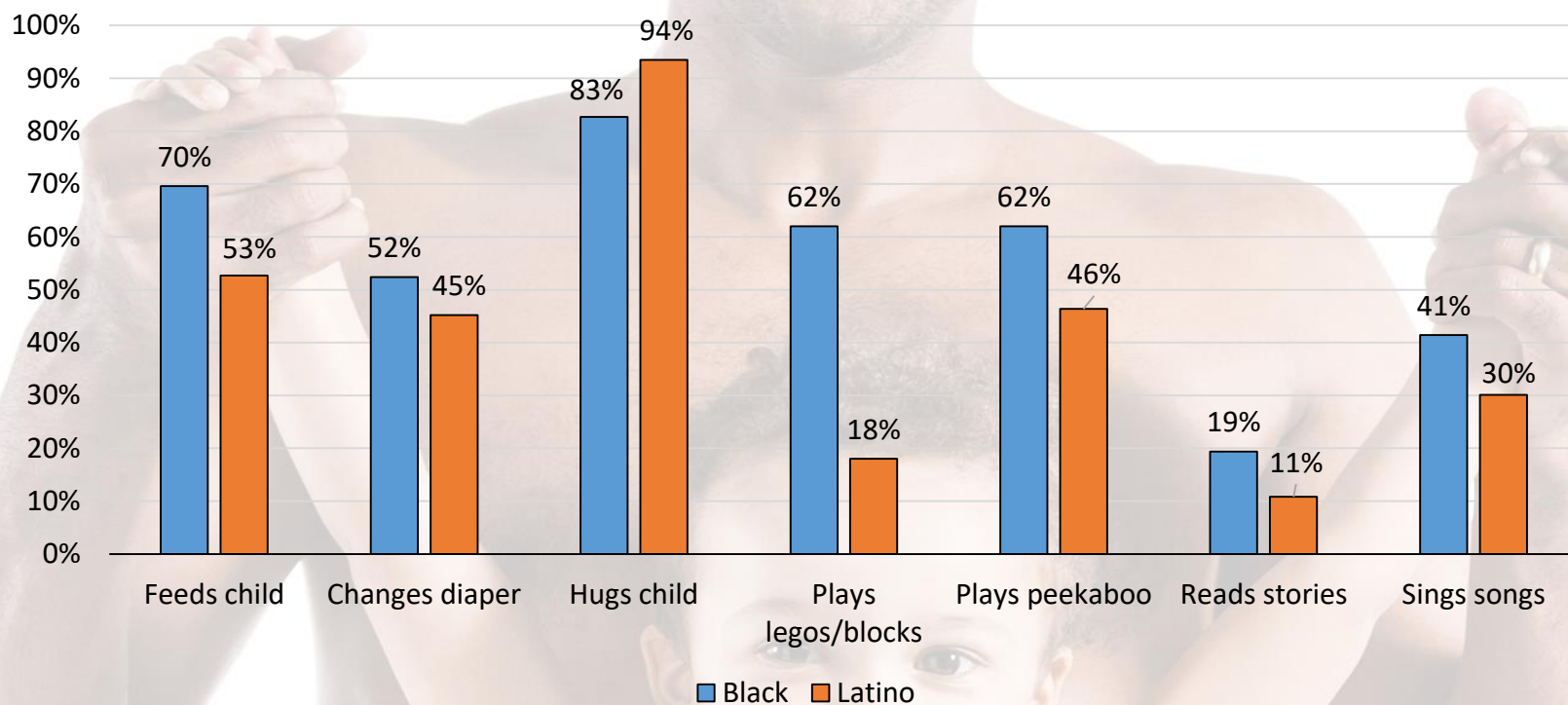
311 (76%) had a father-figure living in the house



DPreP Fathers



DPreP Father Involvement



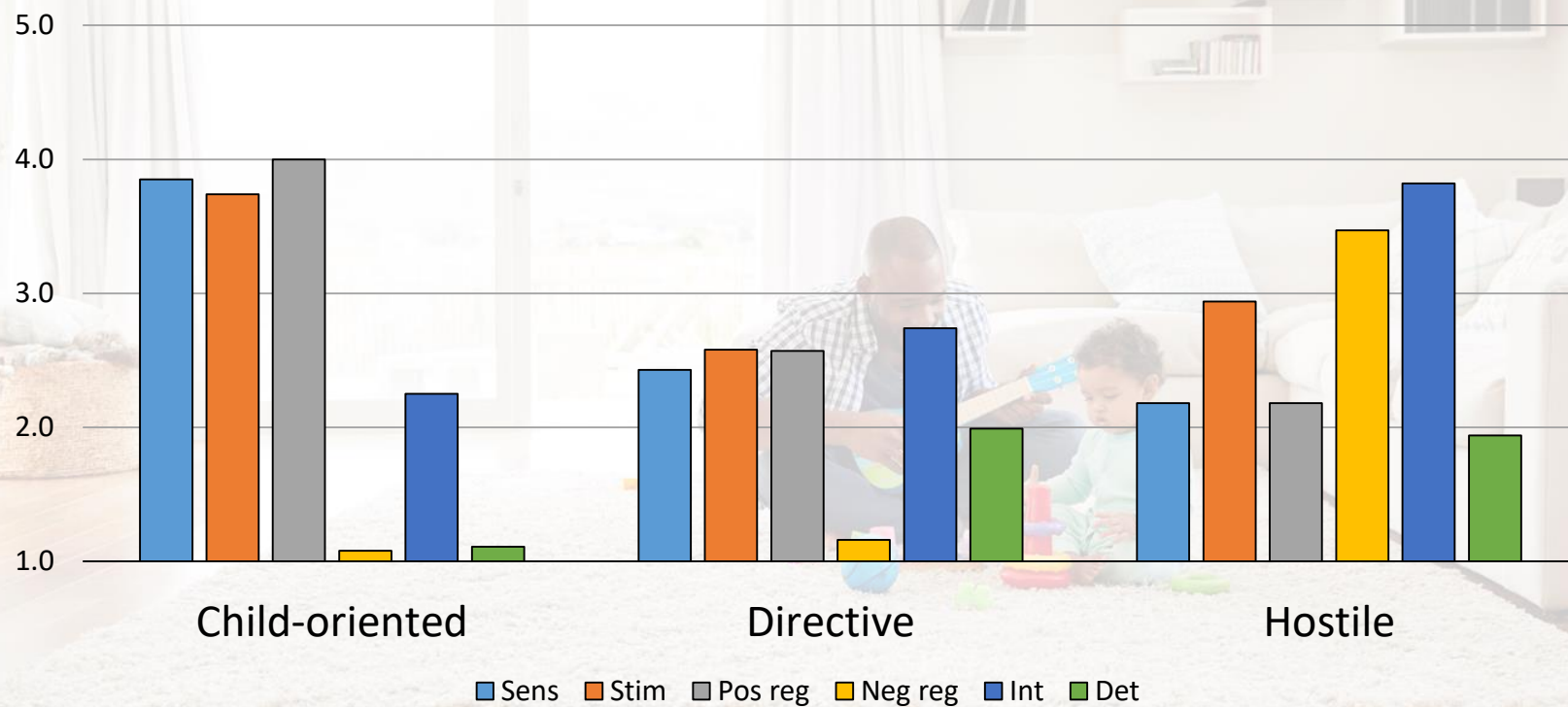
% Fathers Who Engaged in These With Their Child 5+x/week (mother report)

Father-Child Interaction

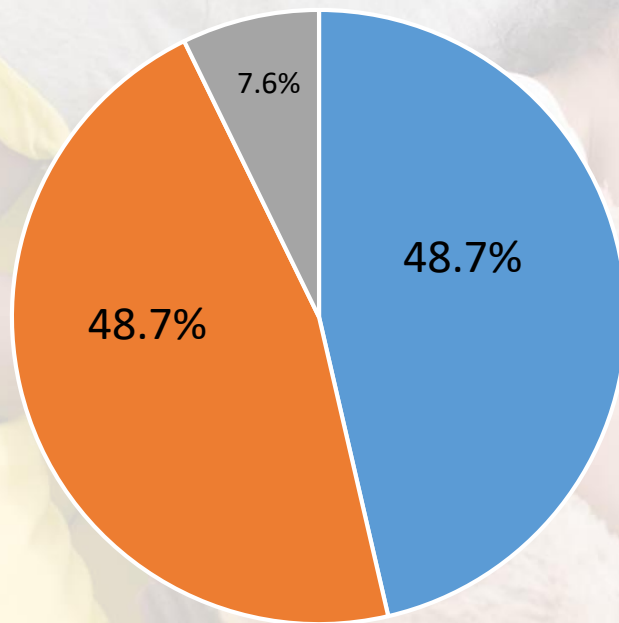
- 258 fathers participated
- Structured 15-minute interaction with a set of books/toys
- Father behavior rated for:
 - Sensitivity
 - Cognitive stimulation
 - Positive regard
 - Negative regard
 - Intrusiveness
 - Detachment



Father Profiles

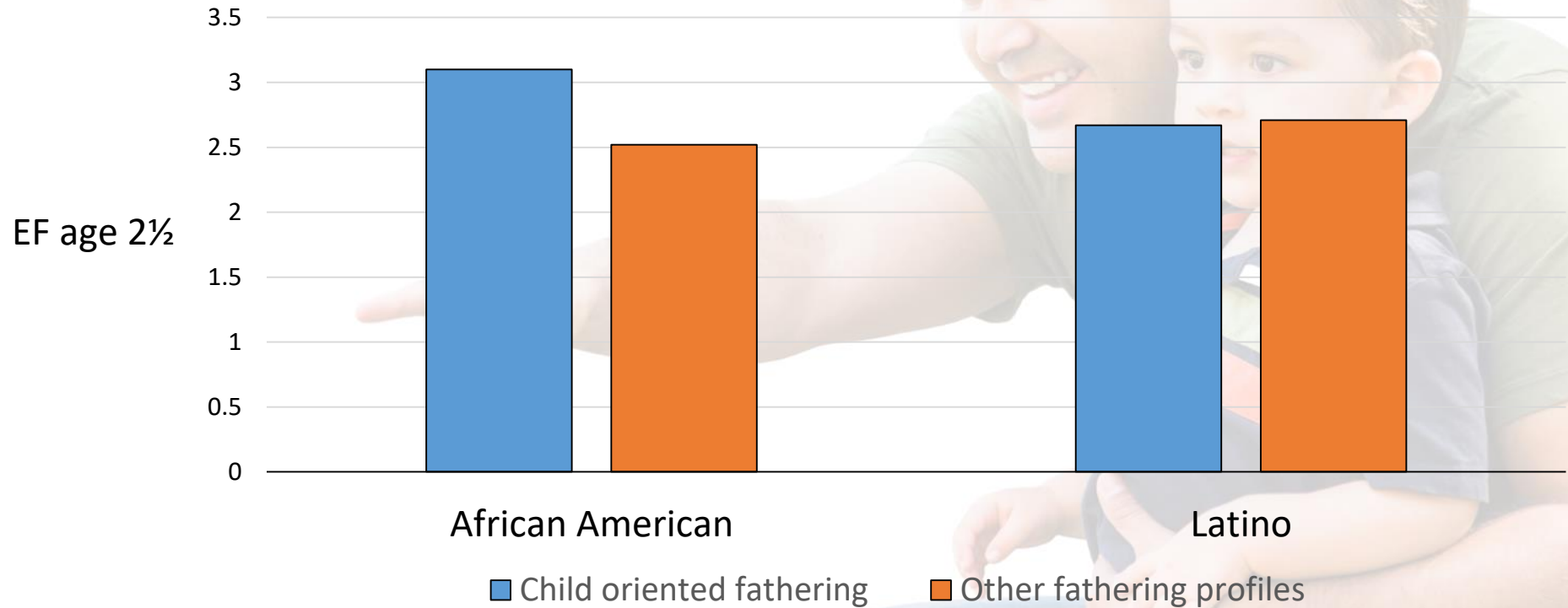


DPreP Father Profiles



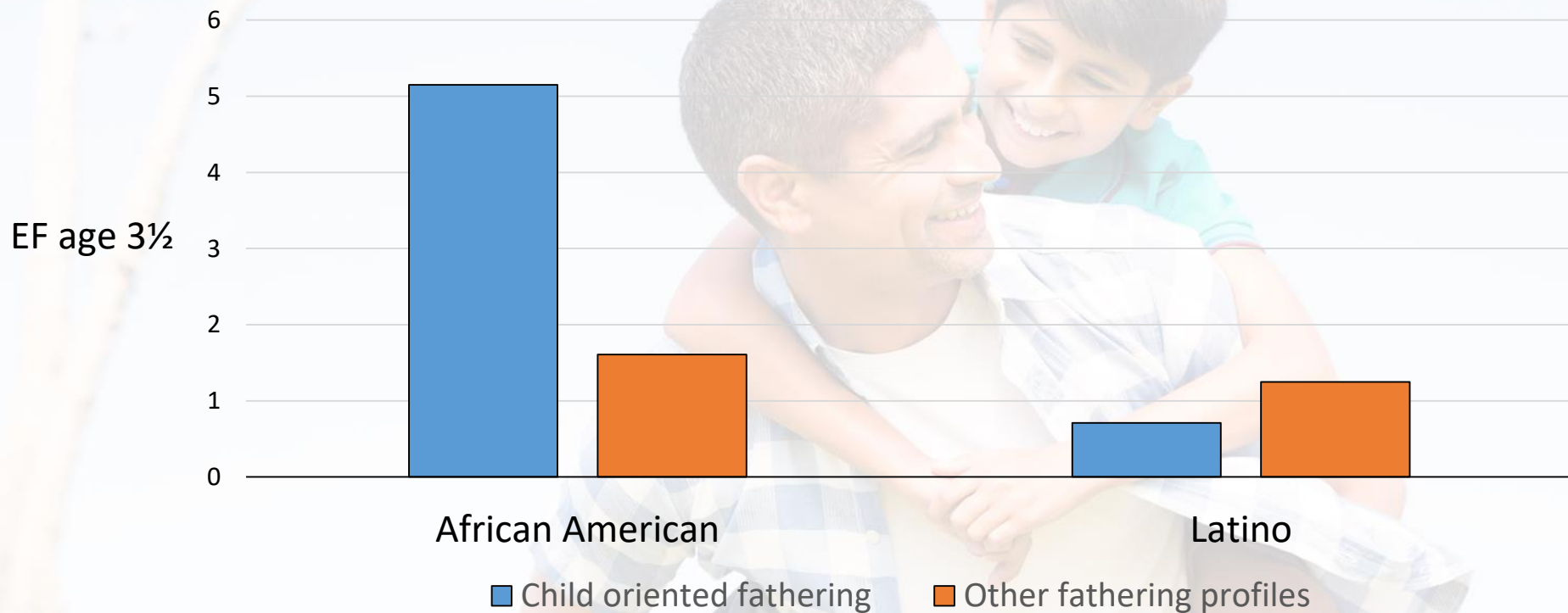
■ Child-oriented ■ Directive ■ Hostile

Child-Oriented Fathering and Executive Function Development



Owen, Caughy, Hurst, Amos, & Hasanizadeh. (2013). Unique contributions of fathering to emerging self-regulation in low-income ethnic minority preschoolers. *Early Child Development & Care*, 183, 464-482.

Child-Oriented Fathering and Executive Function Development



Are Fathers and Mothers the Same?

- No differences in sensitivity between mothers and fathers
- Different relations to child outcomes



Caughy, Brinkley, Smith & Owen. (2019). *Influence of fathering on children's school readiness in low-income ethnic minority families.* (in revision)



How Fathers Differ from Mothers

- Physical and “rough and tumble” play
- Teasing
- Encourage risk-taking
- Challenging language (“wh”-questions, less attuned to child’s language skills and less likely to continue child’s topic in conversation)

Cabrera, Volling, & Barr, 2018;. Paquette, 2004; Rowe, Coker, & Pan, 2004; Rowe, Leech, & Cabrera, 2016; Tamis-LeMonda, Baumwell, & Cabrera, 2013.

The Father-Child “Activation” Relationship

“Fathers play a particularly important role in the development of children’s openness to the world. Men seem to have a tendency to excite, surprise, and momentarily destabilize children; they also tend to encourage children to take risks, while at the same time ensuring the latter’s safety and security, thus permitting children to learn to be braver in unfamiliar situations, as well as to stand up for themselves.”

Paquette, D. (2004). Theorizing the father-child relationship: Mechanisms and developmental outcomes. *Human Development*, 47, 193-219. doi: 10.1159/000078723

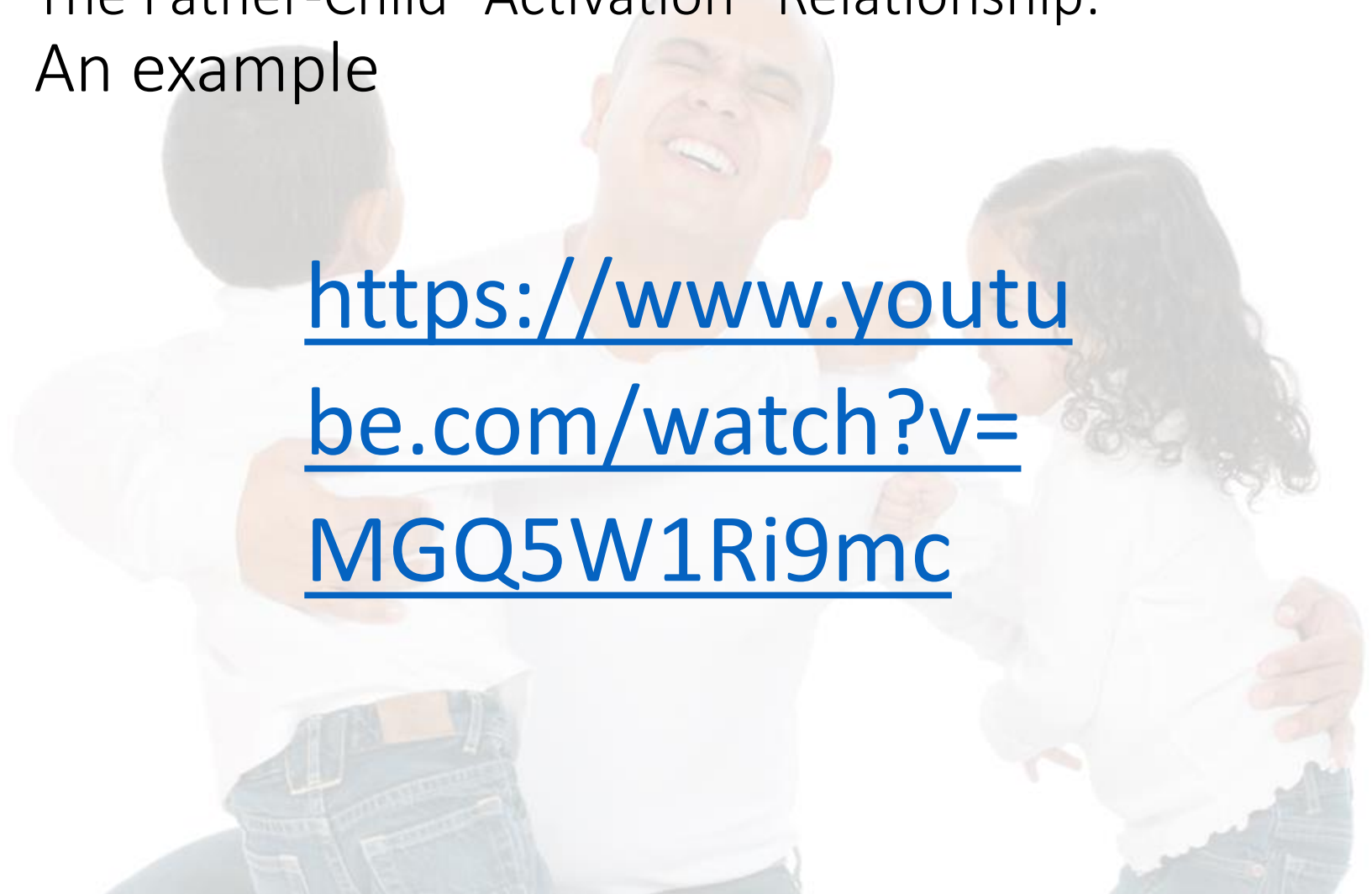
The Father-Child “Activation” Relationship: An example

<https://youtu.be/G81YQ2fUYsg>



The Father-Child “Activation” Relationship: An example

[https://www.youtu
be.com/watch?v=
MGQ5W1Ri9mc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MGQ5W1Ri9mc)



Father-Child “Activation” in Day-to-Day Interactions

Sensitive, low activation

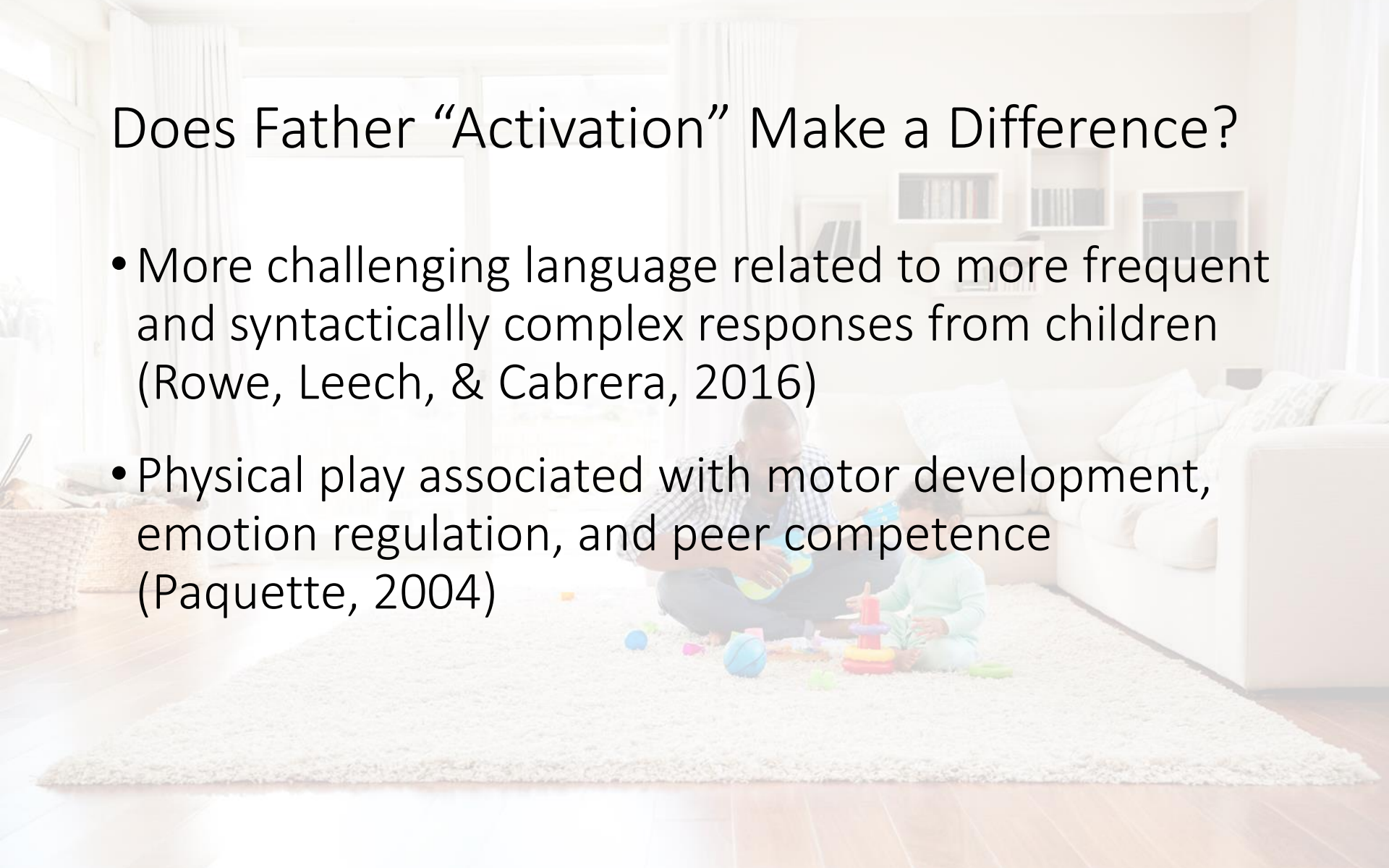


Sensitive, high activation



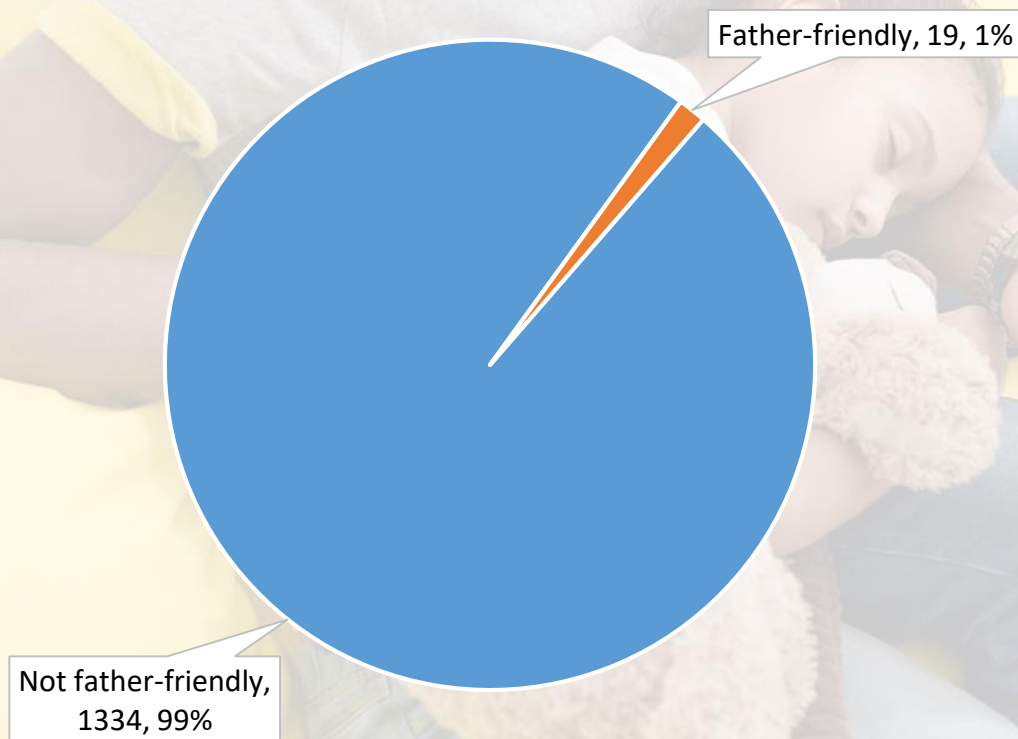
Does Father “Activation” Make a Difference?

- More challenging language related to more frequent and syntactically complex responses from children (Rowe, Leech, & Cabrera, 2016)
- Physical play associated with motor development, emotion regulation, and peer competence (Paquette, 2004)



Parenting Programs for Fathers

Systematic Review of Perinatal Parenting Programs (n = 1353)



Lee, Knauer, Lee, MacEachern, & Garfield. (2018). Father-inclusive perinatal parent education programs: A systematic review. *Pediatrics*, 142 (1) e20180437; doi: 10.1542/peds.2018-0437

“Father-Friendly” Parent Education Programs

- Defined as:
 - Targeted fathers for program involvement
 - Evaluated father-related outcomes (involvement, behavior, knowledge)
- Only three studies rated “high quality”
- Few demonstrated impact on fathers

What Do Dads Need From Programs?

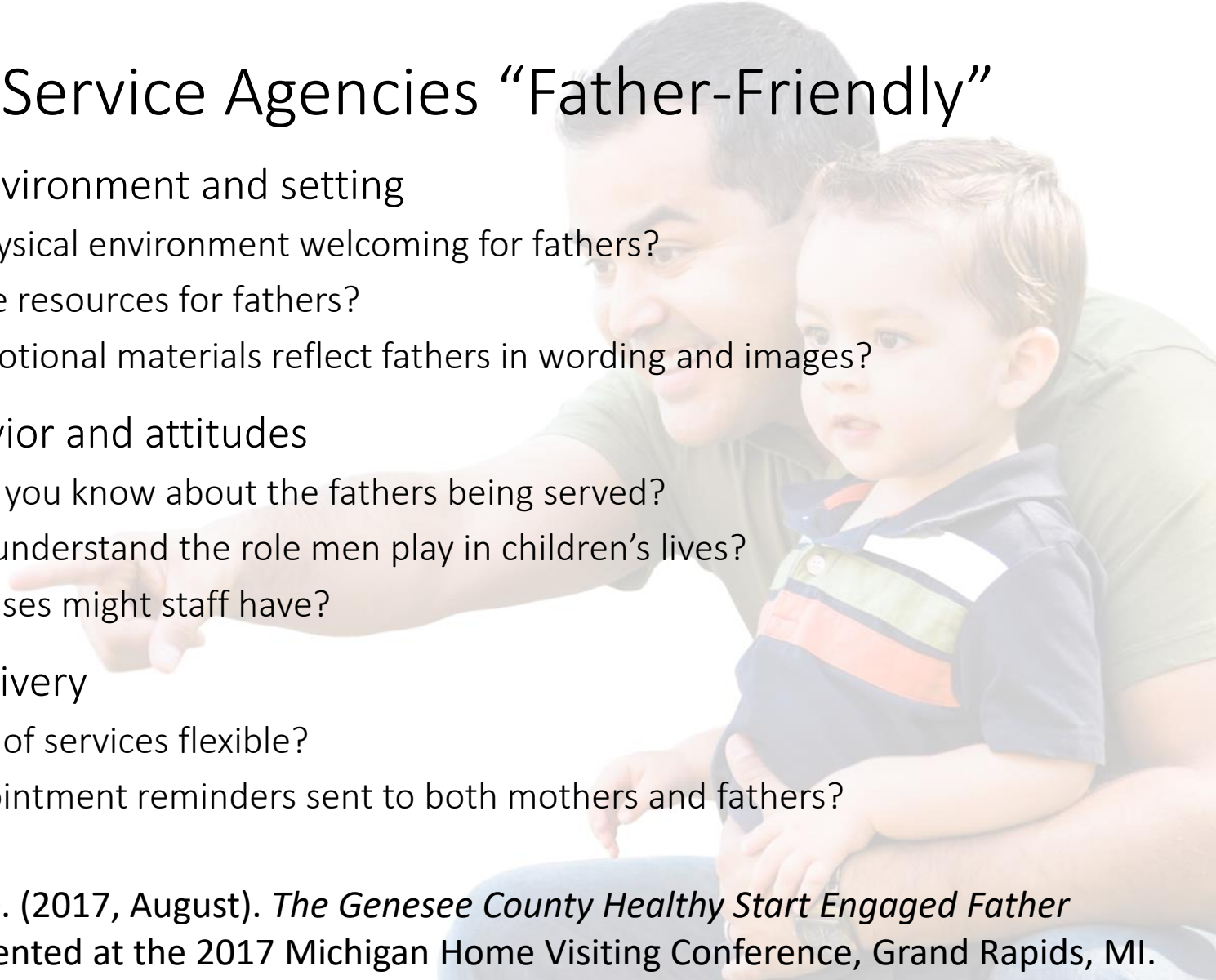
- Employment support
- Navigating the child support system
- Needs of fathers returning from the criminal justice system
- Positive fatherhood mentorship
- Co-parenting relationship support

Strategies for Engaging Dads

- Meeting dads where they are
 - Fathers perceive “anti-dad” bias in many service programs
 - Engage fathers where they are in the community (schools, sporting events, barbershops, etc.)
- Show empathy
 - Male providers sharing personal struggles as fathers
 - Engage fathers more as peers than service professionals to build trust
- Designing events that get dads excited
 - Opportunities for father and child to demonstrate the pride they have in their relationship
- Helping fathers reflect on their role

Making Service Agencies “Father-Friendly”

- Physical environment and setting
 - Is the physical environment welcoming for fathers?
 - Are there resources for fathers?
 - Do promotional materials reflect fathers in wording and images?
- Staff behavior and attitudes
 - What do you know about the fathers being served?
 - Do staff understand the role men play in children’s lives?
 - What biases might staff have?
- Service delivery
 - Is timing of services flexible?
 - Are appointment reminders sent to both mothers and fathers?



Lee, S. J. & Scharer, D. (2017, August). *The Genesee County Healthy Start Engaged Father Program*. Paper presented at the 2017 Michigan Home Visiting Conference, Grand Rapids, MI.

A background image of a smiling man with a beard, shirtless, holding a young child's hands up in the air. The child is also smiling and looking towards the camera. The image is slightly faded to allow text to be overlaid.

Supporting Dads and Their Kids: Opportunities and Responsibilities

- More research
 - Unique ways that fathers impact their children's lives
 - Need new lens, not one based on research with mothers
- Normalize fathers in family programs
 - The rule not the exception

Dallas Preschool Readiness Project:

Acknowledgements

Principal Investigators

Margaret O'Brien Caughy, Sc.D.

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Dallas Project on Education Pathways:

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