BACKGROUND

- Non-Custodial Father-Child Engagement is becoming increasingly common
- 16 million children, 1 in 5 are living in poverty
- 46.6% of those children are living in mother-headed households
- Father Involvement:
  - Improves child & adolescent outcomes
  - Increases academic readiness
  - Improves social & emotional bonds
  - Promotes healthy relationships
- The needs of fathers are NOT uniformly addressed in intervention programs
- Fathers play a key role in the developmental well-being of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults.

OBJECTIVES

- Review peer reviewed literature on non-custodial fathers in relation to what fathers need from intervention programs
- Identify program components and goals and identify gaps in the literature

METHODS

Conducted a systematic review of the literature following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) guidelines.

In consultation with a research librarian, PsycINFO Social Sciences Premium Collection Search terms included: Non-custodial, Father-Child Relationship, Engagement Intervention

RESULTS

Ten papers were reviewed and summarized (Table 1). Four key elements emerged (Figure 1). Paternal Family of Origin was found to be associated with impacting paternal involvement. Paternal Perception promotes father responsibility. Quality of Interactions increases the self-esteem of the father. Program Intervention Design needs to focus on the unique needs of low-income non-custodial fathers.

Table 1

| Gamboa et al. | A Mixed-Methods Assessment of a Parenting Program for Incarcerated Fathers | Qualitative-descriptive case study | 2019 |
| Geller et al. | A Longitudinal Examination of Housing Hardships Among Urban Fathers | Retrospective cohort study | 2018 |
| Dyer et al. | Fathers' Perceptions of Their Role in the Family: A Qualitative Study | Exploratory study | 2018 |
| Costas et al. | Paternal Perceptions of Parenting Role | Observational study | 2014 |
| Caldwell et al. | Coparenting Interventions for Fragile Families: What Do We Know and Where Do We Need To Go? | Retrospective cohort study | 2012 |
| Julion et al. | FatherHer Intervention Development In Collaboration with African American Non-Resident | Retrospective cohort study | 2012 |
| Gordon et al. | Increasing Outreach, Connection, and Services to Low-Income Non-Custodial Fathers: How Did We Get Here and What Do We Know | Observational study | 2012 |
| Ferguson et al. | Improving Engagement in the Role of Father for Homeless, Noncustodial Fathers: A Program Evaluation | Retrospective cohort study | 2011 |

Paternal Family of Origin

- Addressing effects from family of origin
  - Provides social & cultural context (e.g. social injustice & race)
  - Identifies any known fathering role models
  - Increases knowledge about any exposure to traumatic experiences (domestic violence, neglect, & sexual abuse)
  - Helps create a history of the families housing & economic stability

Paternal Perceptions of Parenting Role

- Lower levels of self-sufficiency
  - Lack of employment & housing
  - Failure to meet basic needs of children
  - Higher levels of negative fathering attitudes and behaviors
  - Lacks awareness of the importance of father role
  - Decreases establishing legal paternity & child support responsibilities

Quality of Interactions

- Increased Dosage
  - Increases sense of attachment
  - Homework, doctor's visits, specific topic discussions, parent-teacher conferences, increases how much dads think of children
  - Consistent use of parenting skills to manage behavioral issues, monitor activities, consistent discipline
  - Co-parenting alliance
    - Increases availability & accessibility

Program Intervention

- Program interventions should be informed by both public health AND social work practices to remove barriers to better engagement
  - Understand barriers and facilitators of engagement
  - Trauma informed approach
  - Meet fathers "where they are"
  - Inclusive Social Network
  - Target more than one outcome (e.g. health, jobs, transportation, & co-parenting mediation)

DISCUSSION

- More collaboration is needed between the fields of public health and social work to meet the needs of fathers with children living in poverty
- Non-custodial fathers need community-based “father-friendly” interventions to parent, openly communicate about their needs effectively and to ask for help
- There is a need for more interventions for the whole family, father-mother-child, including extended family and social supports
- Important to address the gaps in the disproportionate social and cultural barriers within low-income minority neighborhoods
- Improve ways to measure the validity and reliability of non-custodial father interventions