FEEL FREE TO DOWNLOAD, PRINT, & SHARE

# Why Do Fathers Matter?



**involved fathers** give children a stronger foundation for holistic well-being

children have a lower risk for a variety of negative childhood outcomes:





- ✓ Infant Mortality
- ✓ Emotional & Behavioral Problems
- ✓ Neglect & Abuse
- ✓ Injury
- ✓ Obesity
- ✓ Poor School Performances
- ✓ Teen Pregnancy
- ✓ Incarceration as Juveniles
- ✓ Alcohol & Substance Abuse
- ✓ Criminal Activity
- ✓ Suicide

Source: National Fatherhood Initiative® 2024. Father Facts: Ninth Edition. Germantown, MD: National Fatherhood Initiative®.

FM
Fathers Matter

compassionoutreachoa.org/fm @fathersmatternola

FEEL FREE TO DOWNLOAD, PRINT, & SHARE

# When Moms Involve Dads...

When mom involves dad in the birthing process and shares an active role in parenting, she benefits in many ways.







- ✓ More likely to receive prenatal care
- ✓ Less likely to vice during pregnancy
- ✓ Healthier births
- ✓ Advocates in the hospital
- ✓ Lower risk of post-partum issues
- ✓ Lower parenting stress
- ✓ More leisure time
- ✓ Higher quality of companionship

Source: National Fatherhood Initiative® 2024. Father Facts: Ninth Edition. Germantown, MD: National Fatherhood Initiative®.

FM
Fathers Matter

www compassionoutreachoa.org/fm @fathersmatternola

FEEL FREE TO DOWNLOAD, PRINT, & SHARE

# Involved Dads are Happier Fathers!

Men are inherently programmed to be active in their child's life. When they are involved without limits, their feelings and actions are of a higher quality.





- ✔ Better Physical & Mental Health
- ✔ Live Longer
- ✔ Less Depression
- ✔ Increased Self Esteem
- ✔ More Active In The Community
- ✔ More Involved Civically & Politically
- ✔ Feel Better About:
  - 👉 Their Masculinity
  - 👉 Lowering Alcohol & Substance Use
  - 👉 Finding Gainful Employment
  - 👉 Managing & Saving Money
  - 👉 Connecting With Family

FM
Fathers Matter

Source: National Fatherhood Initiative® 2024. Father Facts: Ninth Edition. Germantown, MD: National Fatherhood Initiative®.




www compassionoutreachoa.org/fm @fathersmatternola

# Building a Dad Village

## Activity Workbook

*Reflection & Action Planning for Fathers*

Name:_____

Date: _____

***"When Fathers Thrive, Families Thrive"***

*— Fathers Matter NOLA*

# Section 1: Understanding Your Village

A Dad Village is your support network—the people who help you navigate fatherhood, celebrate successes, and work through challenges. This section helps you identify and strengthen your village.

## Activity 1.1: Mapping Your Current Village

List the people who currently support you in your fatherhood journey. Consider:

- Family members (spouse, parents, siblings)
- Close friends
- Other fathers you know
- Mentors or role models
- Community connections

### My Current Village:

| Name | Relationship | How They Support Me |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

## Activity 1.2: Reflection Questions

Take time to reflect on your support system and connections:

**1. What gaps exist in my current village?**

---

**2. Who could I reach out to for different types of support (emotional, practical, social)?**

---

**3. When was the last time I opened up about my fatherhood journey with someone?**

---

# Section 2: Building Support Networks

Building a strong village takes intentional action. This section helps you identify ways to strengthen existing connections and create new ones.

## Activity 2.1: Overcoming Isolation

Many fathers experience isolation. Identify your barriers and solutions:

**What prevents me from connecting with other dads?**

- ☐ Time constraints
- ☐ Don't know where to find other dads
- ☐ Feel awkward or uncomfortable opening up
- ☐ Pride or stigma about asking for help
- ☐ Work schedule conflicts
- ☐ Other: _____

**What small step can I take this week to reduce my isolation?**

## Activity 2.2: Connection Opportunities

Brainstorm ways you can connect with other fathers in your community:

| Connection Opportunity | First Step I Can Take |
|---|---|
| *Example: Join a dad discussion group* | *Example: Look up local dad meetups online* |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

# Section 3: Contributing to Your Village

A strong village is built on mutual support. This section focuses on how you can give back and strengthen your community.

## Activity 3.1: How I Can Support Others

Think about the unique strengths and experiences you bring to your dad village:

**1. What parenting lessons have I learned that could help other dads?**

---

**2. What practical skills or resources can I offer to other fathers?**

---

**3. What do I wish someone had told me when I first became a father?**

---

## Activity 3.2: Three Ways to Contribute

Commit to three specific ways you will contribute to building your dad village:

### ☐ Share and Listen

*I will open up about my journey by:*

---

### ☐ Offer Support

*I will provide practical help by:*

---

### ☐ Engage in Activities

*I will participate in community by:*

---

# Section 4: 30-Day Action Plan

Transform your reflections into action with this 30-day commitment to building and strengthening your dad village.

### Week 1: Reach Out

### Goal: Make contact with at least one person in your village

- ☐ Call or text a dad friend I haven't talked to in a while
- ☐ Share one honest thing about my fatherhood journey
- ☐ Ask someone how they're really doing as a father

Who I will reach out to: _____

When I will do it: _____

### Week 2: Learn and Listen

### Goal: Actively listen to another father's story

- ☐ Have a one-on-one conversation focused on listening
- ☐ Attend a dad meetup or community event
- ☐ Ask open-ended questions and resist the urge to give advice

What I learned: _____

---

### Week 3: Offer Practical Support

### Goal: Help another father in a tangible way

- ☐ Offer to watch someone's kids for a few hours
- ☐ Share a resource or tip that helped me
- ☐ Invite a dad to join me in an activity

How I supported someone: _____

---

### Week 4: Commit to Community

### Goal: Make a long-term commitment to staying connected

- ☐ Join a dad group or start one
- ☐ Schedule regular check-ins with dad friends
- ☐ Identify one way I'll stay engaged in the next 30 days

My commitment: _____

---

# Section 5: Group Discussion Guide

Use these questions to facilitate meaningful conversations with other fathers:

### Opening Question (5 minutes)

- What brought you to this discussion today? What are you hoping to get out of it?

### Understanding the Village (10 minutes)

- Who are the people in your dad village right now?
- What kind of support have you received from other fathers that made a difference?
- What makes it hard to ask for help or connect with other dads?

### Real Talk (15 minutes)

- What's one challenge you're facing as a father right now?
- What's something about fatherhood that surprised you?
- When have you felt most isolated or alone in your fatherhood journey?

### Building Together (15 minutes)

- What's one way you'd like to support other dads in this group?
- What would a strong dad village look like in our community?
- What's one commitment you can make to staying connected after today?

### Closing (5 minutes)

- What's one thing you're taking away from this conversation?
- How can we support each other moving forward?

# Additional Resources

Continue your journey with these tools and connections:

## Connect with Fathers Matter NOLA

- Monthly Workshops & Community Events
- All Events Open to All Men
- Resources & Support for Family Court
- Follow FMNOLA on Social Media
- Visit Our Site for More Guides Like This

## Remember

*Building a #DadVillage isn't just about getting support—it's about creating a network where all men and fathers can thrive.*

*Your presence, your story, and your willingness to show up matter.*

---

**"When Fathers Thrive, Families Thrive"**

*You are not alone in this journey.*

FM
Fathers Matter

Scan QR Code to Connect

LOUISIANA FAMILY LAW UPDATE · 2026

**Fathers Matter NOLA**

EFFECTIVE
Aug 1, 2026

HB 1239 / ACT 605

Flyer 1 of 3

SHARE | SAVE | REPOST

# Equal time is now the default.

Louisiana has strengthened its shared custody presumption. Physical custody of a child **shall be shared equally** between parents — unless a court determines equal custody is not feasible or is not in the child's best interest.

BEFORE

### "Should"

Physical custody *should* be shared equally to the extent it was feasible and in the child's best interest.

NOW

### "Shall"

Physical custody *shall* be shared equally unless the court determines equal custody is not feasible or is not in the child's best interest.

## Why the wording matters

Supporters said the change strengthens the state's preference for children keeping substantial relationships with **both** parents after a separation or divorce. A court can still order something other than 50/50 — but equal time is where the conversation starts, not where it has to be argued to.

THE IMPACT

**There should be an increase in shared parenting time under this language.**

## For Dads in New Orleans

Orleans, Jefferson, St. Bernard and St. Tammany courts all apply the same amended statute.

The parent arguing *against* equal time carries the weight of showing why.

Applies to custody matters heard on or after August 1, 2026.

QR

or browse files

## Follow us @fathersmatternola

Educational information only. This flyer is not legal advice — consult a licensed Louisiana attorney about your case.

LOUISIANA FAMILY LAW UPDATE · 2026

**Fathers Matter NOLA**

EFFECTIVE
Aug 1, 2026

SB 76 / ACT 93

Flyer 2 of 3

SHARE | SAVE | REPOST

# Custody orders are harder to change.

The strict **Bergeron** rule for modifying an existing custody arrangement is now written into statute (Civil Code Art. 138). What used to be case law is now the letter of the law.

FIRST, KNOW WHICH ORDER YOU HAVE

**A considered decree** is one where a judge actually heard evidence and then issued a custody ruling.
**A consent decree** is one both parents agreed to. Which one you have decides how hard it is to change.

CONSIDERED DECREE, UNDER 5 YEARS OLD

## Clear and convincing evidence

You must show that the benefits of changing custody **substantially outweigh** the harm the change would cause the child.

OLDER THAN 5 YEARS, OR BY CONSENT

## Material change in circumstances

A lower bar — but you still have to prove something meaningful has actually changed since the order.

THE IMPACT

More consistent rulings when the heightened Bergeron requirements are applied — and a more realistic picture, up front, of what it takes to modify custody.

## What this means for you

Treat your *first* hearing as the one that counts.

Show up prepared, documented and present.

Read Act 605 with this: equal time is the starting point — get it right the first time.

QR
or browse files

**Follow us @fathersmatternola**

Educational information only. This flyer is not legal advice — consult a licensed Louisiana attorney about your case.

LOUISIANA FAMILY LAW UPDATE · 2026

**Fathers Matter NOLA**

Flyer 3 of 3

# Fathers Matter. All Day, Every Day.

SHARE | SAVE | REPOST

Two changes take effect August 1, 2026: equal shared custody becomes the presumption, and existing custody orders become harder to undo. Here is what to do with that.

## Your next steps

1. Find out whether your order is a considered decree or a consent decree.
2. Note its date — the five-year mark changes your burden of proof.
3. If you have no order yet, file before you settle into an informal routine.
4. Talk to a Louisiana family law attorney or legal aid office about timing.

## Before your hearing

Keep a written parenting-time log — dates, pickups, missed exchanges.

Save texts and emails about the children; keep the tone civil.

Bring proof of stable housing, work schedule and childcare plan.

Show up early, dressed for court, every single time.

## Across Louisiana

**One standard, 64 parishes**

Every district court now works from the same "shall be shared equally" language.

**Fewer default outcomes**

Equal time no longer has to be won from behind — it is the starting point.

**Stability for children**

Harder-to-modify orders mean fewer years of repeat litigation.

## Don't do this alone

Fathers Matter NOLA connects fathers with peer support, court-preparation guidance and co-parenting resources across the New Orleans area. Reach out — before the hearing, not after.

QR

or browse files

SCAN & FOLLOW

**@fathersmatternola**

Educational information only. This flyer is not legal advice — consult a licensed Louisiana attorney about your case. HB 1239 / Act 605 and SB 76 / Act 93 both take effect August 1, 2026.