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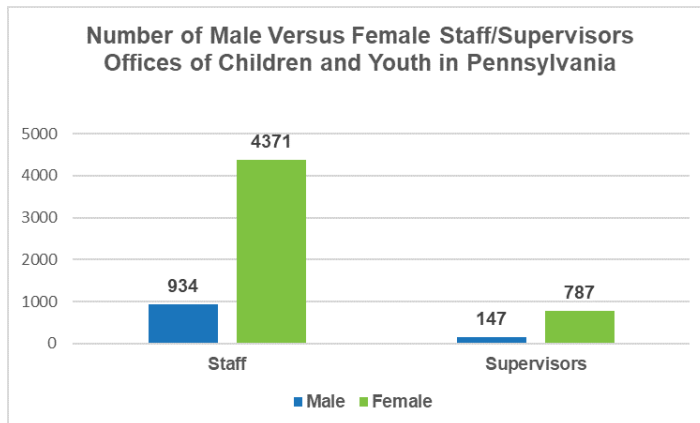
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Dads' Resource Center Releases Study of Commonwealth Office of Children and Youth *Gender of Children and Youth Services Staff and Supervisors Evaluated*

State College, PA—April 4, 2019—[Dad's Resource Center](http://www.dadsrc.org) has concluded its second study researching potential biases toward fathers within Pennsylvania courts, legal system, and county and human services agencies. This study reviewed the ratio of male to female staff and supervisors in the Office of Children and Youth (CYS) for every county in Pennsylvania.

The study shows the ratio of staff to be 82% female to 18% male, and the ratio of supervisors to be 84% female to 16% male.



“The safety and welfare of our children is of paramount importance, says Jeff Steiner, DRC executive director. “Those who work in the Offices of Children and Youth perform a critical function in ensuring the well-being of children, and work long hours dealing with incredibly challenging situations.”

“Courts often defer to the expertise and training of CYS workers and their supporting agencies when making decisions relative to the well-being of children and custody determinations,” he continues. “The extreme disproportion of female to male staffing that our study found reinforces the perception that fathers

can be treated unfavorably when CYS becomes involved with their families and in custody hearings.”

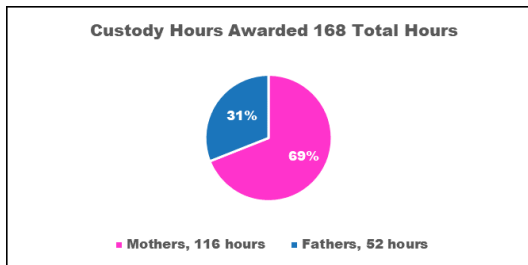
Unfortunately, in the face of increasing divorce rates and single parent homes, millions of children are being deprived of the benefit of both of their parents actively involved in their lives. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 24 million children in America live in homes that are absent of both biological parents, most often the father. When issues of child custody enter into the legal and human service systems, fathers often face obstacles and bias.

“Fathers frequently face pervasive biases and obstacles in the legal and human services system, unfair hurdles that result in their children losing the benefit of their active presence in their lives.” says Steiner.

“There is a tendency for the courts, county and human services agencies to default in favor of mothers. Far too often this results in children’s contact with their fathers being severely limited. Initial custody determinations tend to go more toward the mother, and once custody is set it becomes very difficult to readjust. Even if there are indications that it might be in the best interest of the children to do so,” concludes Steiner.

As part of the study, DRC is putting forth several recommendations:

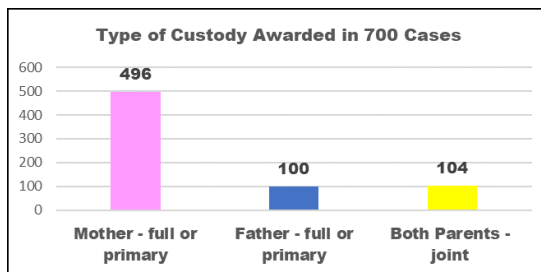
1. A working group of CYS supervisors and staff should be convened to develop measurements to quantify how successful offices are in ensuring that children are getting the opportunity to have both parents actively involved in their lives.
2. The working group could utilize this information to put forward proposals that would enable county offices to develop more father-friendly cultures. This could include highlighting fatherhood during the interviewing and hiring process, developing father-focused policies and local based initiatives that focus on fatherhood.
3. Each office should have staff who are identified as “fatherhood specialists” who are provided with additional training and resources to more effectively work to engage disaffected fathers and assist disenfranchised fathers.



The Dad’s Resource Center also recently concluded a study reviewing the distribution of time that children are assigned to parents in divorce proceedings by Courts of the Commonwealth in 14 Pennsylvania counties and found that fathers are disproportionately impacted by rulings. The study reviewed the first 50 cases starting in 2016 for which the courts made a final determination of custody.

For the 700 cases that were reviewed, the average awarded custody

time per week (total 168 hours) was 116 hours to the mother and 52 hours to the father (69% to 31%). Mothers received either full or primary custody in 496 cases and fathers received full or primary custody in 100 cases. Parents were awarded joint custody in 104 cases.



DRC is also reviewing three other areas where potential biases may most often affect a father’s capacity to have meaningful involvement in children’s lives:

Potential Inequities that Result from Protection From Abuse (PFA) Orders—The vast majority of PFAs are requested for good cause, however, [manipulative uses do exist](#). Some individuals use this tool to gain an advantage in a family law/custody case. The DRC is evaluating the genders of defendants in PFA issuance to identify possible bias and the influence of PFA orders on custody determination.

Potential Inequities that May Exist in the Mediation Process—Results of mediation are not officially recorded, and this study aims to quantify the outcomes from mediation, to gather data and identify trends that might indicate biases toward fathers in the mediation process. Fathers very often are overly deferential in the early stages of the breakup of a family, and susceptible to being dissuaded from seeking shared custody to make the transition easier for their children.

The Unknown Influence of Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) on Custody—Review of the qualifications, standards, requirements and training for Guardian Ad Litem vary from county to county. Considering the influence that Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) may exert on custody decisions, and on courts, on county and human services systems working on behalf of the children, there are few standards or accounting for their activity.

The Dads’ Resource Center aims to support fathers and their children from separated or divorced families. DRC provides resources and encouragement to ensure that fathers can be fully and actively engaged in the lives of their sons and daughters, providing the time, input, emotional and financial support that their children deserve and require.

About Dads’ Resource Center

[The Dads' Resource Center](#) was founded by Dr. Joel N. Myers, AccuWeather founder, chief executive officer and chairman in 2015. Its mission is to provide education, resources and advocacy for single fathers so they are able to fulfill their vital role in the well-being and healthy development of their children. At the heart, Dads’ Resource Center is a children’s advocacy organization that aims to ensure that each child has the appropriate involvement and contributions from both of their parents.