



THE HISTORY OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE HEAD START ASSOCIATION FATHERHOOD & MALE INVOLVEMENT /COALITION

The South Carolina State Head Start Association has operated as a non-profit organization for 34 years, focusing on issues and advocacy to ensure high quality comprehensive service delivery for every eligible child and family in South Carolina. Over the past nine years, the SCSHSA has provided support and resources to increase the involvement of males/fathers in early childhood education as well as to increase family relationships. Prior to the South Carolina State Head Start

Association Fatherhood Coalition organizing across the state, fourteen SC Head Start programs had an active male involvement project in their communities and were participating in statewide initiatives on male/fatherhood involvement.

In November 2009, a committee consisting of members from the South Carolina State Head Start Association and the Male Initiative, applied for the National Fatherhood Initiative (NFI) "Responsible Fatherhood Capacity Building Initiative" Grant to help strengthen the Association's Male/Fatherhood Initiative by enhancing their ability to sustain Fatherhood/Male Involvement Programs. The grant would also provide trainings, marketing, on-going resources and materials for dissemination across the state to the Head Start Male Involvement programs. There were over 100 non-profit organizations from across the country that applied for this grant. Only 25 programs were awarded the "Responsible Fatherhood Capacity Building Initiative" Grants. In January of 2010 the South Carolina State Head Start Association received the "Responsible Fatherhood Capacity Building Initiative" Grant. One of the requirements of the grant was for the individuals that were appointed to chair the SCSHSA Male Involvement Initiative to participate in two week-long training sessions sponsored by NFI. These trainings consisted of "Budgeting Your Grant", "Strategic Planning" and "Organization Structure".

After the completion of the training, a strategic plan was developed by the association president and the Male Involvement chairman to bring together the fourteen active Community Action Agencies Male Involvement Programs. This strategic plan for the SCSHSA Male Involvement Initiative was submitted and approved by NFI. To start this process, all Fatherhood/Male Involvement Coordinators were identified to discuss the idea of forming an alliance to operate under the same goal, purpose and curriculum. The first Fatherhood/Male Involvement planning session occurred May 19, 2010.

At this meeting the strategic plan for the state Fatherhood/Male Involvement Initiative was presented to the representatives in attendance. This strategic plan consisted of the following:

- To form and develop a statewide coalition to consist of all 25 Head Start Fatherhood/Male Involvement Coordinators in SC.
- Enhance the ability to sustain the Fatherhood/Male Involvement Program across the state.
- Provide specified training to coordinators which would ensure an effective process for recruiting fathers and significant male to become active in the lives of their children in Head Start and in the home.
- Assist programs to develop strategies when faced with obstacles and challenges.
- Develop a statewide network of all partners associated with the different Head Start Programs which could provide resources and information available in SC.
- Set up Fatherhood/Male Involvement Coalition website.

Following the May 19th meeting, the Fatherhood/Male Involvement coordinators from the Head Start Programs met again on June 10, 2010 to review and implement the statewide strategic plan. At this meeting the South Carolina State Head Start Association Fatherhood/Male Involvement Coalition was formed. Following the June 10th meeting, the strategic plan for the Fatherhood/Male Involvement Coalition was implemented.

As part of the plan, community partners were identified and the process for setting up a network of resources that could be used by the fathers and families served by the different Head Start Programs across the state. All organizations that received the NFI Grant would have a scheduled site visit to review the approved strategic plan by NFI officials. The South Carolina State Head Start Association Fatherhood/Male Involvement Coalition's official site visit was conducted July 12, 2010. All outcomes that were outlined were approved by NFI officials. With the Technical and Training Team in place, the South Carolina State Head Start Association Fatherhood Coalition began to provide Fatherhood/Male involvement training across the state, at state conferences, regional conferences, and at the NHSA Parent Conference in 2012.

Currently, 23 of the 25 Head Start programs in SC have active Male Involvement/Fatherhood Programs.