

Executive Summary

The Dibble Institute has facilitated the Building Brighter Futures (BBF) pilot study to evaluate the impact of the Love Notes healthy relationships curriculum on non-custodial parents with child support orders. A preliminary analysis was conducted on data obtained from the first cohort participants recruited from three child support district offices.

Participants completed assessments designed to measure self-reported behaviors and attitudes regarding parental engagement, parental contributions, child support payments, and co-parental cooperation. Participants were assessed before beginning the program and immediately after completion with an additional follow-up approximately 60 days later. One-on-one qualitative interviews were also conducted with participants to assess in-depth experiences and perceived progress while participating in the BFF project.

Preliminary results of quantitative analysis suggested that the program was effective at promoting child care contributions and promoting parental engagement when comparing pretest and posttest reports. Participants also showed progress in regards to skills and knowledge associated with sexual planning and decision-making, conflict management, and healthy relationship building. Although pre and posttest comparisons suggested improvements in parental engagement and child support compliance there were declines in overall parental contributions. Qualitative analyses also revealed promising results as participants consistently reported favorable reviews of the program content, quality of instructor facilitation skills, and peer group interactions. Participant also consistently reported improvements in their relationships with their co-parents and children.

Participants shared aspects of the program that they would have liked changed, including expanding the diversity of group members, being allowed to bring their co-parents into sessions, and providing additional time to cover more topics. Results suggests that non-custodial parents, their co-parents and Child Support Services can benefit from an expansion of the BFF pilot given the preliminary results highlighted in this evaluation.