Workshop 3D
Strengthening Families - Connecting Fathers

Moderator/Panelists:  
Barbara Andrews, Lead Program Liaison Specialist, ACF Region II, New York, NY

Presenters:  
Vernon Williams, MA, The Vernon Williams Company, LLC, Author, Columbia, MD

Dr. Charles Lewis discussed a five year study of 2,698 fathers in fragile families. Some of the significant findings were:

1. Church attendance was a significant factor in a father's participation in activities with his child  
2. Whether the father had been incarcerated was not significant except for the amount of time spent reading to his child  
3. Lower income fathers and fathers who have been incarcerated were more likely to feel trapped by their responsibilities and see caring for their child more like work than pleasure  
4. Regular churchgoers were significantly less likely to feel worn out from raising a family  
5. Household income has no significant association with a non-custodial father’s participation in activities with his child  
6. Younger fathers are more likely to play with toys, praise the child, take their child out, and watch TV or videos with the child  
7. Income is not a significant predictor of a father’s participation in activities with his child

One of the most intriguing highlights from this particular study was the fact that lower income fathers spend more time reading to their children than those with the higher incomes.

Mr. Vernon Williams talked about three practical rules dads can follow for providing for their families: 1) set specific written financial goals; 2) spend according to those goals; and 3) cut expenses by keeping goals visible, asking tough questions, separating needs and wants, using cash, paying off credit cards, improving credit scores, and lowering auto insurance premiums.