

ADAPTING PRACTICES

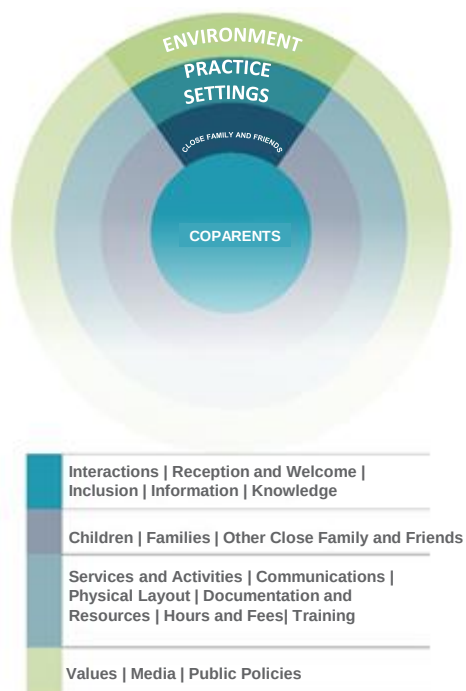
PROMOTING THE COPARENTING APPROACH

Main objective: To provide families with a coparenting-friendly environment and be more inclusive of all parents!



COPARENTS: Adults recognized as a child's parents who act and communicate for the child's well-being, regardless of their parenting situation.

Organizations can support coparenting in many ways and at different levels, from their approach, communications, services, and activities to the physical layout of the premises and equipment! Here are some strategies for each of the four proposed targets.



SOURCES:
Dubeau, D. (2018) *Intégrer la coparentalité dans ma pratique... de beaux défis à relever!* [Presentation – Workshop given at CISSS Laurentides on October 24, 2018]; Regroupement pour la Valorisation de la Paternité (2020). *Guide d'adaptation des pratiques aux réalités paternelles.*

Strategies

COPARENTS

- ➔ Communicate directly with coparents and call them by name.
- ➔ Make coparents present even if they are not physically there, to encourage later discussions between coparents (e.g., event for mothers on the role of coparents in the first months of the baby's life, a support group for separated fathers to discuss their coparenting experiences).
- ➔ Keep case files that are inclusive of both coparents. For example:
 - When the case file is opened, enter each coparent, and, if possible, meet with them (together or separately).
 - Have contact information for each coparent.
 - Include the coparents in the initial assessments so that intervention plans reflect their respective needs.
 - Collect information about/from each coparent in the case file.
- ➔ Share tools on the topic of coparenting (e.g., The Coparenting Charter, The Facets of Parental Engagement, and the four dimensions of coparenting: communication, task sharing, consistent parenting, and recognition between parents).
- ➔ Establish ways to collect information about the needs and interests of the fathers and coparents whom your organization wishes to reach (e.g., surveys, calls, and gathering information at a family event).
- ➔ Try different strategies to invite coparents and... keep trying!

FRIENDS AND FAMILY

- ➔ Offer inviting family activities for everyone.
- ➔ Hold activities that promote healthy coparenting.
- ➔ Consider other friends and family members who play a major role in the child's life (e.g., extended family members, blended family members, others who are important to the child, etc.).

PRACTICE SETTINGS

- ➔ Make the premises welcoming and suitable for working with coparents. The physical layout should reflect the fact that their presence is desired and expected. For example:
 - Make sure you have a chair for each parent in the office.
 - Make sure the décor is inviting to all (have diverse parenting teams and fathers on posters, pamphlets, photos, etc.).
 - Have resources and written information geared towards coparents (e.g., magazines and educational materials and tools).
- ➔ Review the images presented in the organization's communications (website, social media, promotional materials, etc.).
- ➔ Ensure that the language used on the organization's various communication media (particularly titles and descriptions of activities) is inclusive for coparents.
- ➔ Take into account the coparents' availability (e.g., flexible schedules, extended hours, and family activities on weekends or in the evenings).
- ➔ For paid activities, charge the same fee for one or two parents.
- ➔ Offer childcare options during activities (e.g., on-site volunteers, drop-in daycare).
- ➔ Offer specific activities on coparenting (e.g., parent discussions, coparenting workshops).
- ➔ Think about how to make current activities more inclusive of coparents or create new ones geared specifically to coparents.
- ➔ Get training or written materials on fathers and sexually- and gender-diverse parents.

ENVIRONMENT

- ➔ Promote to the public and the media the importance of coparenting and father involvement for children, families, and society.
- ➔ Make coparenting one of the organization's values.
- ➔ Support public policies that promote greater gender equality (work/family balance measures and parental leave, etc.).

Additional resources

The 2021–2022 Coparenting Project, carried out with the financial support of Secrétariat à la condition féminine, has led to the creation of many other tools for parents and practice settings.

For more information, visit: rvpaternite.org



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