



# A Guide to Implementing

**24:7 DAD**<sup>®</sup>  
FOURTH EDITION

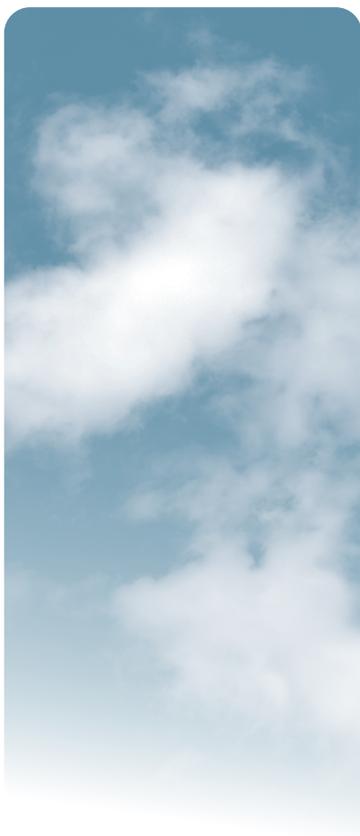
with **Fidelity**

GROUP-BASED DELIVERY

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**National  
Fatherhood  
Initiative**<sup>®</sup>

“The use of effective interventions without implementation strategies is like serum without a syringe; the cure is available but the delivery system is not.”<sup>1</sup>



## Introduction

Implementing parenting programs with fidelity<sup>2</sup> has gained more attention in recent years regardless of the type of program used, the audience that will participate in the program, and in what setting the program will take place. Indeed, many funding sources require implementing parenting programs with fidelity.

This guide helps users of the A.M. and P.M. versions of NFI's 24:7 Dad® program—the most-widely used fatherhood program in the country—understand how to implement it with fidelity in a group-based delivery setting.

<sup>1</sup> Fixsen, D. L., Blase, K. A., Duda, M. A., Naoom, S. F., & Van Dyke, M. K. (2010). Implementation of evidence-based treatments for children and adolescents: Research findings and their implications for the future. In J. Weisz & A. Kazdin (Eds.), *Evidencebased psychotherapies for children and adolescents* (2nd ed., pp. 435-450). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

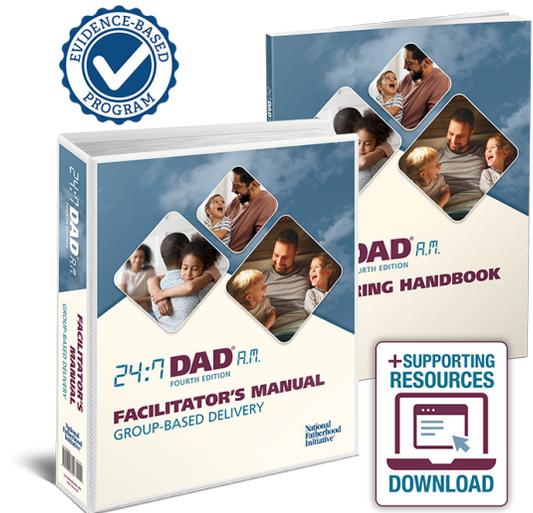
<sup>2</sup> Implementing with fidelity means delivering a program as it was designed to be delivered with, in some cases, minor modifications to fit the audience and setting in which the program will take place.

## The “What”: Acquiring 24:7 Dad®

As you think about implementing with fidelity, it’s helpful to think of the program as “The What” and the implementation of it with fidelity as “The How.” This and the following section provide guidance on how you can use this perspective to create an effective and sustainable 24:7 Dad® program.

Many individuals and organizations nationwide have recognized the importance of providing parenting programs specifically designed for fathers. That’s one of the primary reasons many organizations have turned to NFI’s 24:7 Dad® program (A.M. and P.M. versions) as their parenting program of choice for fathers. Since releasing the program in 2003 and through the end of 2024, NFI has trained more than 6,500 facilitators on how to run it.

Why is it so widely used? In addition to the fact that the program is specifically for fathers (and not parents generally), it focuses on five characteristics research shows are vital to effective fathering: self-awareness, caring for self, parenting skills, fathering skills, and relationship skills. Moreover, independent evaluations show the program works.<sup>3</sup>



<sup>3</sup> To review evaluations of 24:7 Dad®, click [here](#).



## The “How”: Implementing 24:7 Dad®

In acquiring 24:7 Dad®, you have “The What.” Now it’s time to understand “The How”: what you need to do to implement 24:7 Dad® with fidelity. This section lays out a seven-step process. The first four steps form the foundation for implementing the program with fidelity. The last three steps deal directly with ensuring fidelity. If you’ve determined that you must significantly adapt the program<sup>4</sup> (e.g., conduct only some of the sessions or change the order of them), the seven-step process might still be helpful, but you won’t be able to implement it with fidelity. (Don’t worry, there are plenty of organizations that have modified the program and found success with it.)

But first, if you’re just getting started with 24:7 Dad®, please consider using a pilot program to start implementing it.

### Getting started with a 24:7 Dad® Pilot

If you’re using 24:7 Dad® for the first time and have more than one location in which you’d like to eventually run it, a good mantra to remember is “slow, small, and solid.” You don’t want your efforts to be a flash in the pan—a brief, sudden burst of bright light—but a long-term sustainable intervention that will have a significant impact on fathers and families.

To start out slow and small with the objective of building a solid, sustainable program, we recommend piloting the program. If you’ve already conducted a pilot, or just have one location in which to implement the program, you can skip to the next heading to learn about the seven-step process.

As you probably know, a pilot is a small test or trial before bringing a program to scale. An organization might run a trial group or only run several groups in one or two locations, for example, before rolling the program out to other locations. The value in a pilot is that it allows for testing how well a program will go over in a specific setting. A pilot identifies improvements needed to the logistics/process of implementing a program (e.g., which staff or volunteers should implement it) and, in doing so, minimizes/leverages time and funding while learning how to implement it before committing more resources to wider use. Perhaps most importantly, a pilot can reduce the risk of a program’s failure.

<sup>4</sup> For a good list of both acceptable adaptations and risky or unacceptable adaptations, see O’Connor C., Small, S., and S. Cooney (2007). Program fidelity and adaptation: Meeting local needs without compromising program effectiveness. What Works, Wisconsin—Research to Practice series, #4.

## The 7 Steps to Implementing 24:7 Dad® with Fidelity

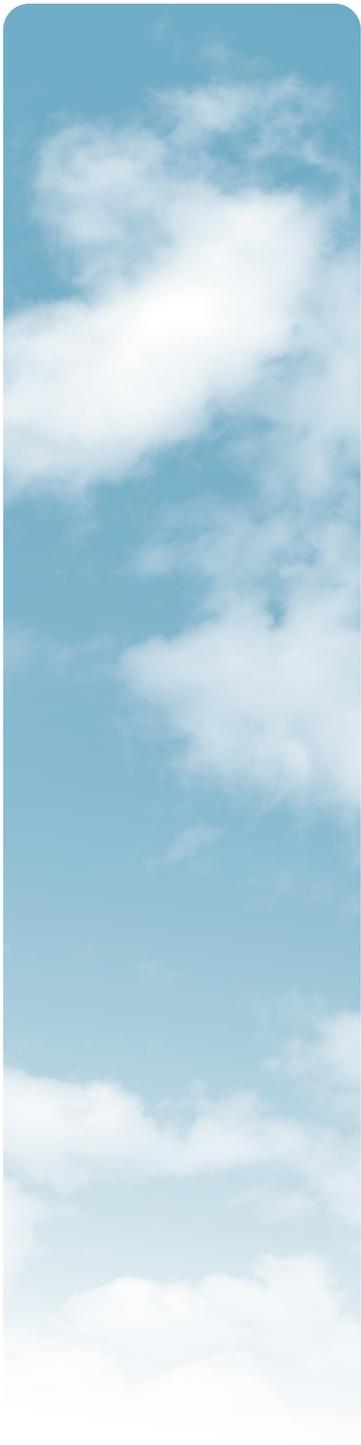
A road map is helpful in implementing any program with fidelity. We assume that in implementing the following process, you've chosen not to significantly change the core components of the program such that its fidelity would be compromised. These components include, but are not limited to:

- Conducting the program sessions in two hour blocks of time (one or more times a week).
- Conducting all 12 sessions and in their order in the curriculum.
- Conducting the activities within each session in their order in the curriculum.
- Including no more than 12 fathers in a group.
- Using the Fathering Handbook.
- Using a co-facilitator, if at all possible, with larger groups.

### STEP 1: Create an implementation team.

This team should be comprised of facilitators who know the goals, objectives, and content of the program and who, ideally, have taken a group of fathers through the program at least once. We also highly recommend they attend an NFI training.<sup>5</sup> At a minimum, it should include facilitators who are passionate about serving fathers and skilled at program implementation and effective facilitation, even if they lack experience in facilitating the program. (These individuals can also act as the coaches discussed in Step 3.) We recommend including at least one researcher or quality assurance staff member on the team and, of course, the person who will have overall responsibility for and authority over the rollout of the program (e.g., a director of programs within an organization).

<sup>5</sup> For details on NFI training options, click [here](#).



## **STEP 2: The team should identify a champion for the program.**

Identify someone who will lead the charge, if not formally at least in spirit. (This person might not be the one officially in charge of the program, although they could be.) This person should have several of the following qualities:

- Well respected within the team and organization.
- Experienced in program implementation or facilitation.
- Passionate (especially when it comes to serving fathers).
- Committed.
- Reliable.
- Accessible.
- Not afraid of ruffling a few feathers, in a constructive way of course.

It's not necessary that the team identifies a champion right away—one might naturally emerge as the team takes shape—but it should identify one before program implementation begins.

This team will need to:

- a. Identify appropriate implementation sites.
- b. Budget based on desired impact and reach.<sup>6</sup> If possible, create a line item for the program in your annual operating budget.
- c. Secure physical space for program participants to meet.
- d. Develop a fidelity plan. The time to start implementing a program with fidelity starts before implementation begins. Choose or develop your tools and measures now. (Additional information on tools and measures appears in Step 6.)
- e. Develop an evaluation plan with user-friendly tools and data systems to collect and measure the program's impact. NFI recommends using the 24:7 Dad® Fathering Survey that comes with the curriculum as part of the evaluation plan. It measures changes in knowledge, attitudes, and self-efficacy (i.e., confidence in applying skills fathers learn). NFI also provides scoring instructions and a worksheet for use with the survey. Consult high-level administrators and decision makers who will be critical to the support of the program and, if you conduct a pilot, eventual expansion of it. Ask them what outcomes will be most critical in determining program success and include ways to measure those outcomes.
- f. Make sure you have acquired any needed equipment (audio-visual equipment, flip charts, markers, etc.) and that they work properly.

<sup>6</sup> As a general guideline, estimate \$899 per facilitator so that each one can have his or her own 24:7 Dad® program Facilitator's Kit and \$13.99 per participant so that each father can have his own 24:7 Dad® Fathering Handbook. Add any additional training or personnel costs to the cost of the resources.

“The only person who likes change is a wet baby!”

~Mark Twain

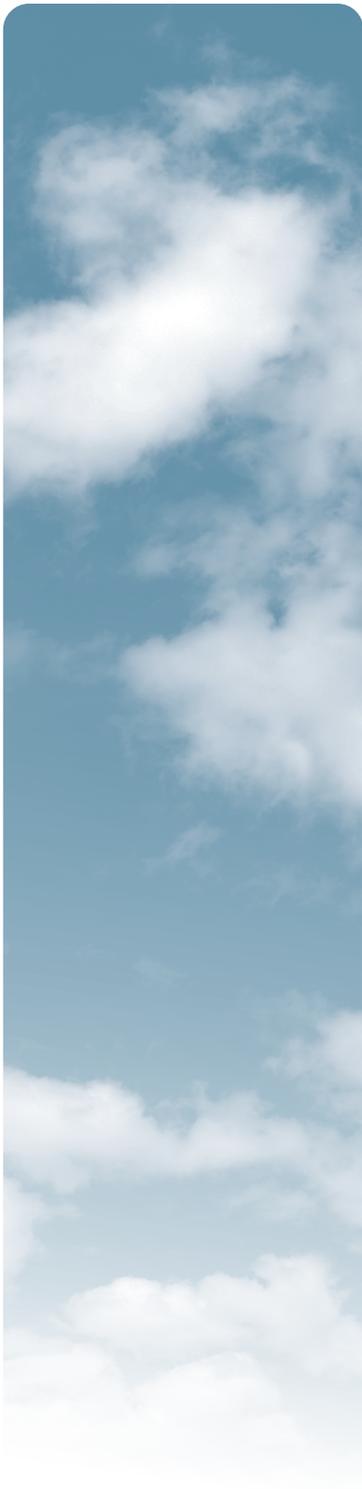


### STEP 3: Prepare for resistance.

Mark Twain once said, “The only person who likes change is a wet baby!” On the other hand, Catherine Booth, co-founder of the Salvation Army, once said, “In order to better the future, we must disturb the present.”

Change is hard. Expect some staff to resist change because it will affect the status quo and could cause discomfort and disruption. Be patient and support them. A good implementation team can minimize negative reactions by:

- a. Setting realistic goals and expectations regarding the implementation and evaluation process (e.g., timelines) and how it will affect team and non-team members’ other responsibilities. It’s vital that staff understands up front how implementation might affect their workload and they have the time and freedom to adjust their work accordingly. If they see it as just another responsibility heaped on top of current responsibilities without corresponding adjustments to their workload, it will create a negative perception.
- b. Providing facilitators with access to coaching (by more seasoned facilitators) and non-team members with an overview of the program, its benefits, and expected outcomes (e.g., via a presentation for non-team members at the start of implementation). Coaching for facilitators and getting non-team members to support and be excited about the program will:
  - Increase positive perceptions of the program and its implementation. Team members will see the positive energy and commitment surrounding their efforts. Non-team members will see the team members’ and the organization’s dedication to the program.
  - Provide immediate feedback on issues that could disrupt or derail the program (e.g., low morale on the part of team members).
  - Minimize passive-aggressive efforts among team and non-team members to disrupt or derail the program.
  - Provide unexpected sources of support from non-team members who might want to become involved.
  - Enhance effective facilitation.
- c. Provide facilitators with phone or email access to coaches and encourage staff to share concerns and ask questions related to implementation. If you have an internal communications system (e.g., intranet), consider providing a list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) on the program and its implementation. (Alternatively, you could include FAQs in a printed newsletter or separate document for staff.) Keep the list updated and include stories of impact (e.g., captured on video) or inspirational quotes from program participants and facilitators.



## **STEP 4: Determine whether your team will go it alone or get assistance from National Fatherhood Initiative®.**

You have “The What” and you’ve started on “The How.” Before you go any further, determine whether your team has the expertise to implement the program—and with fidelity—or whether it could use help from NFI. After all, we designed the program to be implemented straight out of the box for seasoned program implementers and facilitators. Nevertheless, many organizations take advantage of NFI’s unique expertise to help them get off on the right foot. Refer to the section at the end of this guide entitled “Assistance from National Fatherhood Initiative®” to learn more about how NFI can help.

## **STEP 5: Implement 24:7® Dad as designed.**

Refer to the Program Guide in the Facilitator’s Manual (Group-Based Delivery) for broad guidance on how to succeed in running the program. Refer to the Session Guide in the Facilitator’s Manual (Group-Based Delivery) for guidance on how to run each session. You don’t need to use the Optional Introductory Session to maintain fidelity, although we highly recommend you do. You only need to use the required content and flow/process of the program.

## **STEP 6: Implement the evaluation and fidelity plans.**

As you implement the program, implement the evaluation plan and the fidelity tools and measures you identified or developed in Step 1. A good fidelity plan includes the involvement of high-level administrators in a continuous feedback loop with the implementation team, facilitators, and fathers. In this step, the team will:

- a. Implement plans for quality improvement. Your organization might have researchers, internal standards, and a quality-improvement infrastructure that can inform and be leveraged in carrying out a fidelity plan.
- b. Clearly communicate to the team that monitoring requires a lot of effort. Consider direct observation (either scheduled or unannounced) of facilitators to ensure they’re facilitating the sessions as designed. If direct observation isn’t possible, consider filming sessions.
- c. Share positive results with staff, especially high-level administrators and decision makers. Don’t be afraid to share negative results. Positive results and transparency, regardless of outcomes, will increase buy-in.

“The bridge from science to service must be built, repaired, maintained, and improved.”

~NIRN Brief,  
January 2009



## STEP 7: Avoid Drift.

Be intentional and proactive about implementation. Stick to the evaluation and fidelity plan to avoid intervention drift. The team must regularly monitor, maintain, and repair/improve the program as it moves along. Because it's a best practice to use fidelity and evaluation tools provided by the program developer, NFI is here to assist you in implementing the program's tools.

## Assistance from National Fatherhood Initiative®

There are several ways NFI can help, but the following ways will be most helpful to you with program implementation and fidelity.

- a. NFI can conduct a one or two-day in-person (on-site) or webinar-delivered 24:7 Dad® Training Institute for facilitators. Day One includes getting comfortable with the content of the program. It also includes getting ready to practice facilitate the program. Day Two focuses entirely on getting comfortable facilitating the program. With the two-day option, attendees get a chance to facilitate a portion of the program and receive encouraging and helpful feedback from the trainer(s) and fellow attendees.
- b. NFI can conduct a webinar-delivered 24:7 Dad® Training Institute for Master Facilitators and Trainers. This training is ideal for organizations that want to have select internal facilitators certified by NFI to train others on the program. It allows an organization to handle ongoing training and coaching of facilitators rather than needing NFI to provide ongoing training and coaching. The Master Facilitator and Trainer training focuses on how to onboard and mentor new facilitators. It includes advanced coaching and materials (presentation and all training materials to do a. above) for select, seasoned facilitators chosen by your organization.

For more on training options, please visit [www.fatherhood.org/trainings](http://www.fatherhood.org/trainings). Or contact us at 301-948-0599 to discuss custom training options.