



Branch Alliance

for Educator Diversity

A Higher Standard

A Fathers Place: The Important Role Fathers and Families Have in their Child's Education

Transcript

0:00:07.8 Kim Igwe: Welcome, welcome, welcome. As we wait for our LinkedIn live streaming to start, please share in the chat your name and where you're joining from. We are thrilled to welcome you to our webinar, A Father's Place, the important role fathers and families have in their child's education. As we wait for our LinkedIn live streaming to start, we would love to know who's joining us today. So, in the chat, please share your name and where you're joining from.

0:00:47.9 Kim Igwe: Welcome. Welcome, Shalonda Ada from Chicago. Welcome, Barb. George in Boston, welcome. It's great to see all of you joining from various places. Melody from North Carolina. I'm in Charlotte. It's great to have you here. Great. Sylvia, Alexandra, we are thrilled to have all of you here today. Please continue to introduce yourselves in the chat and where you're joining from. We are going to get started. My name is Kim Igwe, and I'm the professional development manager here at BranchED. With that, I'm gonna briefly share a little bit about BranchED, BranchED's commitment. Our commitment is to achieve sustainable programmatic transformation, leading to improved outcomes for diverse educators who, by extension, benefit all students by preparing them to thrive in our heterogeneous society.

0:01:50.3 Kim Igwe: We believe that every student deserves access to caring, adaptive, and well-prepared teachers, that every teacher deserves preparation that fuses quality with diversity, and that every person benefits when we create a higher standard of education together. Thank you for joining us. We would love to know a little bit more about you now that we know your name and where you're joining from. We'd also love to know your role. There's gonna be a poll that pops up on your screen. If you can share with us a little bit more information about you using that poll, we would love to know that. We have quite a mix here. We have a lot of higher ed faculty and administrators. We have some community partners. It's great to have you all here today. We are thrilled. If you haven't answered that



Published by Branch Alliance for Educator Diversity, an imprint of M.E.B. Alliance for Educator Diversity, Inc.,
100 World Drive, Suite 101 Peachtree City, GA 30269 (<https://www.educatordiversity.org>).

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poll yet, please do. It helps us to know who's in the room. Thank you so much.

0:02:55.6 Kim Igwe: This is the fifth of BranchED's 2023-2024 Nets and Bolts webinar series. The series focuses on the educational ecosystem. At BranchEd, we believe transforming education happens within an educational ecosystem in which there is a strong connection and collaboration between and among stakeholders to ensure all children have the support they need to thrive. This ecosystem includes, but is not limited to, children, families, caregivers, community, community organizations, health care systems, local education agencies, post-secondary education providers, industry business partners, and government agencies. These stakeholders have unique and complementary roles that converge and diverge to benefit all children by preparing them to thrive in our heterogeneous society. Today's webinar will showcase how participants can effectively engage fathers and families to positively impact student outcomes, increase family engagement, and improve community support. Before we get started, I wanna share a couple of housekeeping items. And please note that you can use the chat. If you have any technical issues and the Q&A, if you have any questions, we will have 10 minutes at the end for some Q&A, so please just submit those throughout the webinar and we'll have time at the end to answer those. We are live streaming this on LinkedIn as well and the recording will be available on our resource portal.

0:04:21.5 Kim Igwe: And now I'd love to introduce our speaker, Michael Hall, who is the father of two sons who are both high school teachers. Mr. Hall has been a special education teacher, a teacher of the gifted and talented, and an intermediate and middle school principal. As an educator, speaker, and founder of Strong Fathers, Strong Families, he's presented to more than 250,000 families, fathers, and parents at local schools, Head Starts, and regional and national conferences. I had the honor of listening to a webinar from Mike not too long ago and enjoyed it so much I had to have a branch head to share his content with us and our community. As Strong Fathers, Strong Families is finishing its 20th school year, his programs are now reaching young dads who were once the children in his programs. Mike is also the co-host of Intentional Partnerships, a collaborative podcast in partnership with Lindsay Shaw and the National Center for Parents and Teachers.

0:05:22.0 Kim Igwe: He's written five different fatherhood curricula and is presently working on his sixth. He is considered one of the country's foremost experts on working with fathers in law, education and social service settings. Mike was honored as a 2012 White House Champion of Change for his pioneering work in fatherhood fields around the nation. Mike, thank you for being with us today. We are thrilled to learn from you.

0:05:50.9 Michael Hall: Well, thank you. The challenge is that's a really good intro and it's all true, but that's a lot of years and so it's not like, man, I got to live up to that. So glad you guys are here. It was good to see some of you that I knew come up on chat and you guys are what I would call gluttons for punishment. You've heard me, you've seen me and you've come back so that I appreciate that and we will talk about some of the stuff you've heard and some of the things that you haven't heard before. Also, for those of you that are new to some of the stuff that I do, we'll kind of talk about that real quick. Make sure I'm pushing all the right buttons. So, who are these guys? Who's Strong Father Strong Families?

0:06:31.2 Michael Hall: So, like she said, Kim said 250,000 dads. I think we're well over that in this year. Been busy running in the fall semester. We've got anywhere from four to

seven programs a week going on right now. That's where part of the gray hair comes from, is the miles. In over 45 states and mainly with public ed also, when we first started outside of Texas was mainly Head Starts and then we started doing public ed programs outside of that. So these are what I call my credentials. Both my sons, I raise very hairy boys. The one on the right is Jake. He is in Dallas. He's my oldest. He's in Dallas as a coordinator of, well the word just went out of my head. But he coordinates, man, he's at WT White High School, advisory. So they have an advisory period. He does that, provides all great information. He's got a cool YouTube channel for the kids and does a great job with that. The tall boy there, I have some questions, but he's too weird not to be mine. But for me to have a son at 6'1" everybody's like, you sure? And I'm like, yeah, he's weird enough to know. He teaches in Huntsville, Arkansas and lives up in the hills in a beautiful place. And so very proud of both of those boys. And I say, that's my credentials as far as being a father and also when we talk about teachers.

0:07:58.1 Michael Hall: Here's something I want you to do. We're going to jump in. We're gonna go hard, right? Here's what I want you to do in the chat. List one negative thing and one positive thing about your father. Yeah, yeah, we went there all of a sudden. So, this is not a Dr. Phil, I'm not gonna try to address what you put in there, except as a whole, how those things come up. So, in the chat, list one negative thing and one positive thing about your own father. He was absent, but educated. Loving but not interested in education. Yeah, that's your mama's job or however that came out, right? Can always call him to fix things, but he's not consistent. This kind of hurts my feelings too, because I'm thinking about what my kids would put. Always in my corner. Trauma transference, alcoholic, but a good listener. Played his emotions close to his vest. That's a dad thing. That's a man thing that we also, I do some work outside of Strong Fathers with men to get in touch with all of that. Great provider, but stern. So let's see. Let's go here for a second. So positive, caring, negative, high expectations when it comes to education. My dad was absent. He's 75 and still here.

0:09:18.4 Michael Hall: And so sometimes we get a second chance at that, or dad would get a second chance at that. I work with lots of dads. We have a 10 week course that I'm no longer teaching. A hard worker, but not emotional. And still great qualities does not connect or show emotions well. That is a man thing for sure. Not consistently, but it's something that we, like I said, we work on and we see. The cool part about this is when we get men around their children, some of this begins to change. So the reason I bring that up is not just to make everybody cry all of a sudden, or like puff, like I said, it even affects me. I do this work all the time. Just showed you my son. Then I'm like, what would my son's put on that? And I have a good idea what the positive would be and the negative would be. Here's why I bring that up. This impacts the work we're talking about. Whether you're instructing teachers, whether you are a teacher, whether you're leading teachers, whether you're the person actually doing the family engagement, this impacts your work. And so let's talk about what that looks like.

0:10:19.6 Michael Hall: So, we know race is an issue, culture is an issue, gender is an issue and all kinds of things around that right now. We have to understand our background is an issue. Where we come, when we talk about family engagement, like you may or may not have been good in science. You may or may not have been good in math. You may or may not have struggled or not struggled with English language arts, right? Or physical activities in PE. So you may not bring some of that stuff to your work. When we talk about family

engagement, we all came from a family. We all have some sort of family now that shades our work. And so, when I first started doing this work, what we found was there was this resistance and we knew there was some stereotypes. We knew there were some numbers out there, but we also have to understand that part of the thing that was out there was our own stuff. I will tell you in a very short form, I had a really good dad and my dad caused big T trauma and little T trauma. I'm still glad I had my dad. Some of that did definitely impact me. I've done work around it, still doing work around it, but it shaded my work as well.

0:11:30.0 Michael Hall: My job as a father shaded my work. And so the one thing you need to know is if you did not like your father, did not have a good relationship with him, that impacts your work. It's either your father or the father of your kids. That also impacts that, particularly as a female, as we're bringing in hairy guys. If you have feelings about hairy guys that are not always positive, there's a negative bias there. Here's what I want you to know. I'm not trying to change that. I'm not trying to tell you not to have those feelings because those are real. That's reality. Those are the things that you've dealt with. I'm not trying to get you to erase that at all. Absolutely not. And actually some people are very driven by the fact of what they didn't have. I'm one of the few guys in the fatherhood field nationally that talks well of my father because I had that. It's almost like, why am I in this work? Because I didn't come from a fatherless home.

0:12:20.7 Michael Hall: I knew my grandfather, my father, my grandfather. I live on a street named after my great-grandfather who I knew for 18 years. I was 18 when my great-grandfather passed. He lived to be 104. But I still have some negative bias because life is real. But also, some of you would need to think about your positive bias. So a man walks in with his child into your school. He's this father. He may not be the same skin color. He may not be the same age. He may not be all those things. But you had a really good dad. So it's like, oh, I had a great dad. Yeah, but now you're looking at these guys going, that's not what a good dad looks like because I know what my dad looks like this. Yeah, your dad was a great guy. Or your dad is a great guy. You're like, my dad's great. Yeah, he's 65. Of course he's great. You've moved out. When you were five and your dad was 25 or 23 or 30 or however, he might not have been a great dad. He might have really struggled, particularly the young fathers or fathers of young kids we see walking in. We're like, that guy's really struggling in his role. Yeah, most of us do at some level. I was very blessed to have a good dad. So some of this, my good part of fathering was very natural because I already had a role model.

0:13:35.1 Michael Hall: And we know guys are struggling with that. But we all kind of note negative bias. This is where I'm coming from. I kind of got to deal with it. But there's also a positive bias. I had a great dad and these guys aren't great dads. Yeah, they are. Watch them. They may be a better father at 26 than your father was for you at 26. But you don't know it because like, oh, my dad was it? Yeah, we have those good and bad memories that we do that. The other thing is assumptions. When I start talking about bringing fathers into school, everybody says, oh, I bet that's hard. It's not. I had a small group yesterday because they didn't get the materials that I sent them or that I didn't send the materials. We're trying to figure that out. But we still had a crowd but not as big a crowd as I would expect. And most days, most evenings, I'm filling up cafeterias with our programs because when dads are invited, they show up. So, the assumptions are no dads are around. But the numbers we've looked at lately is 73% of the kids in our country have a two parent home.

0:14:31.4 Michael Hall: It's not always their biological father, may not be their biological mother. But 73% of the kids coming to your school right now on a national level. All races come 73% of them are in a two parent home. We know how many of our families are blended families. I work with my anecdotal information is about 80% of the families I deal with because I work in Title I school. Head Starts tend to be in more low income neighborhoods. Those family and it's the same in high income neighborhoods, too. But a lot of about 80%. This is my own experience, not numbers are blended families, his, hers, his and hers or his, hers and ours. Right. But there are more kids out there that are into parent homes. And people will say, Well, what about, so there are people in my field that they talk about how many kids go to bed without their father in the home. That's definitely true. But they have access to their father on a regular basis.

0:15:27.6 Michael Hall: So, we can take the numbers and we use those however we want. But many of our kids have two parents in the home. They have access to their father if it's not their father that's in the home. And so one of the studies we've looked at it 65% of kids in inner city Head Start have regular access to their father. That's not the narrative that goes on. And what I found is some of the people that I work with, they're not in the business for solutions, they get paid because they talk about the problem. We wanna talk about solutions. And we also want to talk about how does that fit within our teacher training. And so I'm not just trying to make you an advocate for father engagement, wanna talk about how we go. So real quick in the chat, look at this picture and tell me what you see. Let me see if I can. I don't think I can make that bigger right now. I was gonna make that. But talk to me in chat about what you see. Work trucks and some of you have seen this picture because I show this picture and almost everything out there. And I've got other ones. I need to stretch it out a little bit.

0:16:30.4 Michael Hall: So, this is Plano ISD Head Start. This is several years ago now. We had 140 kids in the program. We had 108 dads show up. They're all going to work. Yes, in Spanish it says, now if you know Spanish, we don't have accent marks on marquees. And so that instead of saying breakfast with dad, because there's no accent mark, it actually says breakfast with potato. But luckily la gente sabe. And so they all knew what we meant. Like, I don't think they're just advertising breakfast with potatoes. So yeah, breakfast with dad, bring your dad to Head Start was the official title. Way too big. But yeah, Spanish on one side, English on the other. That's a very important point. But people say, oh, our dads work, they can't come. These dads are going to work, but they came by school first. And so yeah, you see the Spanish, but okay. So you say the sign accommodates Spanish speakers. Yeah, all the time. Spanish on one side, English on the other all the time. But this one actually accommodates fathers. Right?

0:17:32.7 Michael Hall: And so I want you to begin to think about, wait, why is that important? Okay. So no matter what race, no matter what ethnicity, half your parents are fathers. Say, well, not all of them around. 100% of your kids in your school or program have a father somewhere. My dad taught biology for 17 years. I can explain that if you want, but it's very awkward even on a webinar. Now, we know that many kids don't have their dad around. That's one of the reasons we do this. The fathers will come and we'll talk about that. So let's talk about why do we wanna see this? What's going on? Why is this important in education? And so real quick, dads are less likely to rescue. Why is that good? Well, they let them handle more frustration than mom. Many of us dads get in trouble for that. Help him. Help him. He's fine. Help him. When he gets strong enough, he'll get that couch off his

chest. He'll be fine. We get in trouble for it. And sometimes we should get in trouble. Sometimes we're stretching a little bit too much.

0:18:32.3 Michael Hall: But what we know is fathers do support their children in less... Oh, I got to go backwards. Let me change that real quick. Now you're seeing behind the curtain. I hate that part. Let's show you real quick. All right. So children who have involved fathers didn't have a greater tolerance for stress and frustration. They're able to be one of many in the classroom, deal with not being the center of the universe. Wouldn't we love to have those kids in our school? And so they maintain focus on their classwork and they have confidence to work on their own. Why is that important? Because dads rescue less than moms. Why is that important? Because frustration is inherent to learning. Kids that only have mom around or only have mom engaged tend to get rescued more. If dads engage, they tend to get rescued less. Because they're rescued less, they have more tolerance for stress, frustration, and stress. Why is it important? Frustration is inherent to learning. If you don't have frustration, you don't have learning. You just have practice. And so we see kids that really struggle with that. And I can, from my experience, be in a room and tell you, sometimes it's mom and dad that are rescuing too much. Many times it's only mom that's rescuing and dad's not engaged or not there. But when we see kids that have dads that say, you can do it, you're fine...

0:19:51.0 Michael Hall: And, sometimes we get in trouble for that. Those kids do better in our classroom. So, look at what's going on in this picture. So, all the pictures you're gonna see are actual pictures from all of our work for the last 21 years. This is a math night at Basswood Element, not Basswood, but, Caprock Elementary in Keller, Texas, I'll be at one of those schools tonight. And it's math night and PTA sold dollar pizza and dollar drinks or something like that. So, they sit down and dad's letting this kid, try to open the coke. You see the frustration. Now I took the picture. And so what the dad finally did was reach around the kid, use the kid's hand and say, look, you push it up real hard and then you pull it back and then you can drink out of it. Moms, got a lot of moms on here today. If you sit your kids down anywhere, particularly at a school event with pizza and coke, what is the first thing you do as soon as you sit down? Now we know what dads do. We sit down, take a bite 'cause we're hungry. That's probably what this dad did. But what it, you open all the cokes, I've had my life, open mind, right? It's like, I think I got it. Thanks. It's all good. And so, they let them handle frustration more.

0:21:01.0 Michael Hall: Now, the other part I want you to notice about this picture. This is not a Western theme math night. This kid knew he was going to math night. Dad said, go get ready. He comes out in his cowboy hat, his vest, his shorts, and his boots. I was a little jealous that he got to wear his shorts and boots. And what did the dad say when he came out? He goes, all right, let's go get in the car. Mom's, the kid comes to the door and his cowboy hat, vest and boots and his shorts, and it's not a Western themed math night. Everybody I talked to said we sending him back. Dad's like, I don't care. You're dressed. Let's go. That's another issue with the dads, right? And so, fathers who support their children in less conventional ways have daughters who are more successful in school, work, and career, and sons who eventually achieve more academically, eventually achieve more, is really, and it's just very interesting to me, because we know the challenge we have in school with boys, and I believe we do a better job of that now, but we still have some room to grow. But dads who used to be young boys are actually really great advocates for our boys in school.

0:22:03.3 Michael Hall: That was my job with my two sons to understand what they needed to do and also what they were gonna do, right? And so, we see that with what's going on. So, when dads are engaged, boys score higher on intelligence test. And again, they advocate for their sons. Girls who have a close warm relationship with their father have a stronger competency in math. And Norma Radden who did this study, also did one on science. And so what we know when dads are physically engaged, like hugs, high fives, wrestle with their daughters, like they wrestle with their sons, these girls are more likely to do better in math and science. Let's talk about why. So dad's number one job is to say, tell his daughter you're beautiful. Now, before you blow up the chat and tell me, women are more than that, absolutely agree, but a girl's, number one question is, do you have or do you delight in me? You don't believe me. Put a three-year-old girl in her ballerina outfit. Oh, that just ran through, put a baby girl in her ballerina outfit and said, go show your parents, who she's showing, right? She's showing her mom. No, she's running to dad.

0:23:11.9 Michael Hall: So, I did a training with, parents as teachers. I'm waiting for that to come up. I didn't know it was still running another technical glitch. I asked 240 women in this conference session, if your mother told you you were beautiful, would you believe it? And I guarantee it, 220 simultaneously said, no. I said, why wouldn't you believe that? Well, that's my mom. She's gonna, she has to tell me that. Well, what if your dad tell me, yeah, dad, don't have to tell me nothing. And so his first job is to say, you're beautiful, right? And that's what he's supposed to do. But his other job, which is very important as well, you're smart and you can do anything you want. And when that happens, then girls don't believe the negative cultural norms about themselves, about their bodies, about what they see in videos, what they see on magazines, because that's a voice, not their mom that's saying, you are beautiful and you are smart and you can do anything.

0:24:01.5 Michael Hall: Here's how to shoot the ball. Here's how to hit the ball. Here's how to whoop every butt on the block. And that's dad's very important job, okay? So as we see that, we have to understand, dad's role in that really changes what girls experience in school. That's not just a, she won't find the wrong boyfriend thing that we talk about, or she may not become a teen pregnancy. It is, she will do better academically in school because she has somebody believing in her differently, right? It empowers our young ladies. When fathers are involved in the early life of children, 18 months to three years, children are less likely to have separation anxiety from their mother or father. I see this in schools all the time, right? Preschoolers with involved fathers have stronger verbal skills with those in less involved fathers. So ladies, many of you do not, particularly in early childhood, you don't use baby talk to talk to your kids, but you use a different tone in a different vocabulary.

0:24:56.4 Michael Hall: Even sometimes with your older children. Dads do not change their tone. Sometimes we get in trouble for that and we don't change our vocabulary sometimes when we should. But because dads don't change their tone and vocabulary when dads are around with these kids, these kids have a higher vocabulary and they have, they're more comfortable being spoken to or speaking to adults, which is also important in the academic realm. And so those dads, that's very important for dads to do. Now, when moms read to kids, we know this is important. Kids learn to read, they learn to love to read, they learn to love books, right? We know it's important for moms to read to kids. Norma Radden, the one that did the earlier study that I talked about, also did one of these. This is where I've used this study for years. We were actually studying, does it make a difference if parents read to

their kids at home?

0:25:41.9 Michael Hall: We had so much belief in our public school system in the late '60s and '70s. We're like, does it really matter? Yeah, it absolutely matters. And so what Norma studied was, kids that didn't have anybody reading to them, kids that had parents reading to them at home, those two groups, of course, the kids that had parents reading to their home, their scores were much higher. But in that group, there was another group that was even higher than that. And when they looked at it, it wasn't that they, just had somebody reading to them. They had both mom and dad reading to them. So controlling for mom's contribution to that, those kids that had dads read to them had higher scores. So when dads read the kids, they learn to read, they learn to love to read, they learn to love books.

0:26:23.2 Michael Hall: But when dads read the kids, their kid's verbal skills can go up, by up to 15%, which doesn't happen when moms read to them. You want to talk about some controversy, when I do that, mom's like, I can't read? I know you can read, but it's not better. But it's different. When moms read, many of our teachers that read in class are moms are read like a mom. And the Big bad wolf said, little pig, little pig, let me in. Kids are asleep, kids are enamored. Kids love it when moms read to them, when dads read the kids, we tend to read differently. And when we read, we'll say...

[foreign language]

0:27:01.6 Michael Hall: And the kids are screaming and mom's going, what's going on? And dad says, I'm reading. And mom says, it's not like that. And they're like, no, exactly like that. Now, what moms want me to tell dads is I'm with the research, yeah, I want them to read like a dad. I just don't want 'em to get them all jacked up right before bed, and then send them to me to put down, which I talk to my dads about all the time. So when dads read to kids, it is different. It's not better, not worse. They have stronger verbal skills. They become strong readers. So this one is one we hung our hat on when we first started. Strong Fathers Children's whose fathers are highly involved in their school, are more likely to do well academically, enjoy school, less likely to have ever repeated a grade or been expelled. And children whose fathers are not involved. The whole reason I started Strong Fathers was because of this. So when dads are involved in school, they know who the teacher is. They talk to children about school regularly. They attend two to three school events a year. Not volunteer, not attend 10 events.

0:27:52.9 Michael Hall: But the research on 25,000 successful students was, when the dad knows who the teacher is, ask questions on the regular and attends two to three school events a year. These kids do better. And like I said, the reason I started Strong Fathers was I had kids coming in my office as a middle school principal. And what would happen is, they either had no father in the home, that we understood, academic or behavior problems. We understood if they had no dad in the home, that was a problem. That was a deficit. But we had a ton of kids that had dads at home that we would never see. They weren't engaged in their education. And my assumption at the time was, these guys don't care. Now, what we found out was, nobody was inviting them or letting them know how important they were. And so this research came out about that time and that's what got us started on all of this.

0:28:36.7 Michael Hall: So when dads are involved, kids are more likely to get As and Bs, less likely to repeat a grade, more likely to be involved in extracurricular activities, less likely

to get in trouble in the office, which was our goal as a middle school [chuckle] And so when we look at that, when dads are involved, when they share meals, when they spend leisure time, when they help with homework and reading, we have higher academic success. And this is not pie in the sky. That would be sweet stuff. This is empirical data that we have a pretty good setup, right? We don't have as much new research coming in as I would like. But we see this over and over. The research continues to bear, truth, we see it over and over on the field and every time we see that, we get all kind of great stories, from our schools about this kid started doing better.

0:29:22.3 Michael Hall: 'cause dad was, this was a long time ago. Spelling test, dad's the project guy. Dad's the one that makes sure they get here on time when he found out they weren't getting there on time. Just different things like that. So dads can be your go-to person. And so dads need to be involved in a very specific way and it's imperative that we do that. Now, we don't have time here for us to train on all of that, but we definitely wanna talk. Kim did ask you while we're going to finish up with some questions, 'cause I know when I've spouted all this stuff, some of you're like, come on now. So continue to put questions in the chat and we will, deal with that. I'm gonna transition here a little bit and change up. Like I said, I didn't like having you see all the behind the, curtain issues that we got going on.

0:30:09.3 Michael Hall: But let's talk about, dads need to be involved in a specific way and we talk about it being imperative. So what are we trying to do with fathers and families? Now, I do this all over the country. I'm in a couple of groups that a lot of what we would call fathers in education groups, everything we do at Strong Fathers is academic. Bring your dad to school day, getting dads into the classroom, letting them see what a modern classroom actually looks like with iPads and Chromebooks and Smart TVs and independent study and all these different things that are going on that didn't go on when we were in school. And the other part is, some programs are doing volunteer, some dudes are doing breakfast. But my bottom line is, how are we impacting kids academically? And some of that works and some of that doesn't work. It's all good stuff. But what are we trying to do as strong fathers? And it goes back to what you guys are talking about.

0:31:09.0 Michael Hall: So the differences in pre-service teacher attitude change about family across, family involvement across four universities. A really good study. Some really cool stuff. But what I wanted to pull from that, and this is something that most of that are doing this work, let me kind of get way out of the way here. Early childhood, preschool and kindergarten programs that train parents to work with their children at home, produce significant positive effects on grades and ratings from teachers. The longer the children were in the program, which by the way, every kid should be in this program, for older children, weekly homework assignments that required work with parents, were associated with improved grades for elementary and middle school students.

0:31:44.0 Michael Hall: That's a challenge, but it's a challenge because we haven't asked the parents in to come do this. Now let's talk about what that means. When I talk to schools, they're like, what are you doing for family engagement? Well, we have a carnival and we have a spaghetti supper. And, no. What are you doing to help parents help your kids? Well, we do these things. Well, it's something we've done forever, but how are you helping parents help their kids? And what I find is, we either do nothing or nothing of consequence, spaghetti suppers and carnivals, or we're trying to get our parents to become like fifth

grade testing masters. And we don't need, we have experts in the classroom. That is our hope. That's who we're trying to raise up here. We don't need parents to be experts on their first grade or third grade or fifth grader.

0:32:29.6 Michael Hall: We need parents to be able to support the kids while they're doing the stuff that we're doing in the classroom. So one of my things is, nobody ever improved their reading because of a spaghetti supper. Spaghetti supper is a great community builder. Maybe a great fundraiser may be a great climate, increase improvement. But this is not what we should be doing with family engagement. Title I family engagement after school, family engagement. All the things that we're funding in family engagement, should be for better outcomes for kids. And I see a ton of programs that there's no way that's impacting that at all. All right, so what I wanna make sure we're talking about, when we talk about family engagement, yes. And the research that I just showed you talked about how people maybe, maybe pre-service teachers were trained about parent conferences, some about cultural diversity, which is also not always true.

0:33:21.5 Michael Hall: 'cause there's some stereotypes there. But also not like when we work with dads. We work with dads across the board. I got black dads, brown dads, white dads. I got dads that speak English. I've got one school that's got 12 African nations represented. Well, those are all Africans. I'm telling you, east and west, northeast, Southern Africa, not the same dude. That's a huge continent, right? So we'd also don't impact those guys, which are very different than African Americans, right? Which are very different than Hispanics depending on where they're coming from. Latinos with 27 Spanish's. But what we're focused on is the culture of parents and the culture of dads. And we've got enough work to do right now that we don't have to split that out into 27 different dad programs because we're focusing dads on their kids. And nobody doesn't come to that, right?

0:34:13.4 Michael Hall: And so we wanna make sure that what we're talking about is improving child outcomes. So how do we do this? Everything we do is interactive. So we do everything is dad and kids interacting together. Dads just don't wanna sit and get, it's gotta be relational. Dad is learning to relate better to his child. Dads and kids are learning to relate better to other dads and kids in school. And so they're getting to know people. They're getting to work together. They're sitting by each other, not just looking up front, but they're all working on things at the table. Particularly when dads come to the classroom and, they're all in their first graders classroom. The fun part is on a night program. Dads of daughters, particularly, they don't get to pick where they sit. Baby girls finds her friends and she drags her dad to her friend's table who dragged her dad to that table.

0:34:56.4 Michael Hall: And all of a sudden you've got three to five second grade girls that are best friends. [laughter] and their dads are there. But those dads are getting to know each other, and they should, because they're gonna be raising these girls together for many years, maybe forever, right? Maybe what I tell them, I say, the girl that you sit by tonight, they was friends to your daughter, may be in the wedding of your daughter. Do you understand how important this relationship is? And it scares the dads to death, so that's okay too. And then relevant, how's this actually helping me? If you have me come and just watch something, I don't know how this helps. So, interactive relational relevant is why, how we're doing that. This is a math night. This is actually at Caprock Elementary.

0:35:41.6 Michael Hall: This is a science night in Duncanville, which is just south of Dallas.

Or no, actually this is a math night. And you see that moms come. Now everything we do is dad and kid math. But in the RSVP, it lets anybody that wants, we don't exclude anybody. Mom wants to come, many times our Latino families, mom and dad are there.

[foreign language]

0:36:04.2 Michael Hall: So they're coming. All right. So, this is what we do on a regular. So we're helping parents help their kids do math. So here's a dad with two kids in different grades playing math games. Yeah, it's not, people say, how does this comply with our testing standards? It doesn't, it's math. I don't need this guy to know everything about testing standards. But when dads help kids with their math fluency, our results are better. When dads help their kids play games in math, they get more comfortable helping kids with homework. And we get to explain why we do what we do with homework at this campus when they're here for this fun math night. So this is not fluff. This is giving them tools and they actually take these cards home with instructions. They've played them, they've had a good time. And then we tell them, take these home and play with them more. And so, this is several pictures, dads, and I want you to see the diversity here. I don't go anywhere where we don't have dads. If it's a 40, 40, 20 school, 40% African American, 40% Hispanic, 20% Anglo, 40% Anglo, 40% Hispanic, 20% African American, I have schools that are so diverse. It's 10, 10, 10, 10, 10. That's how my dads show up. I don't have a group of dads that doesn't show up based on like, if it's 98% African American, we still get a large crowd.

0:37:22.7 Michael Hall: And even that 2% or 3%, whether it be Hispanic or Asian or whoever may be in that community, those guys show up too. When we invite dads, they show up. So let's talk real quick about why we're doing what we're doing and what we're looking for. So I gotta, yeah, okay. I'm not a very good weather man with my green screens. I'm like, I think I'm pointing the right direction. The very first thing we wanna do, and I would tell you, I think the most important thing we do in family engagement, is connect the father and/or the mom, to their child. I always ask professionals when I'm doing professional training, how many of you have parents that think their kids are smarter than they are? Now raise their hand. He's, really smart. He's only two and a half, but he knows all his letters.

0:38:03.6 Michael Hall: No, he doesn't. Oh yeah, he knows his letters. He couldn't pick an A out of a lineup of A's, but he knows the song, which is still great for a two and a half year old, but he don't know all his letters. Elemental is not a letter, right? But he knows the song, which is great because many of you still alphabetize things like I do by, singing in the songs. Mm-Hmm Mm-Hmm Mm-Hmm... There it is, right? But we want them to see how their child is number one, at that level. Number two, among their peers. Like, what do about your kid? Watch your kid perform something that we're trying to teach them. Watch them in class, watch them do math, watch them do science in amongst their peers or kids in their school.

0:38:45.2 Michael Hall: And then we do bring your dad to school where dad's See what the classroom looks like. And then we talk about what we're teaching. But here's what the problem, we'll have a testing night to talk about what's being tested in your child's grade, but they don't know their kid and their capabilities, or lack of capabilities, lack of capacity, and they don't know how we do this in the classroom, so they do one of two things, "This is easy, my kid can do all this." Not all the time, they can't. Or, "There's no way my kid can do this higher level stuff." Yeah, they are, because your kid's capable, and the way we're teaching in the classroom makes this content very manageable, operable. And then here's

what we do on the campus, this is what we need out of families, this is what we want out of families. And then we have... Oh, there goes my finger. Then we have parent community.

0:39:29.4 Michael Hall: And then when we talk about volunteer and leadership, we wanna get those folks, but if they haven't gone through this pyramid, they're not gonna be good leaders. Like many of the people in Head Start that I work with, our former Head Start parents, are really good on staff or as a policy council member, 'cause they made this journey. I know we've got some folks on here, that are advocates for Special Ed families. Our best families are the ones that know their kids, know the classroom, what we're providing and not providing, they know where it is on the IP and the content, they know the campus, how their campus treats his kid, and then they become really good leaders either because they're fired up about what's not going on, or they're fired up because they do see what's going on, are they getting that to happen?

0:40:13.2 Michael Hall: So when we talk about family engagement, this is one of the things we wanna see for all of our families, but even more so for our dads, 'cause that's what I do, is if a dad knows how this kid acts and reacts, if they know how the things are in the classroom, if they realize that what we're teaching is not just math to make parents mad at night, but there's a reason we teach what we teach the way we teach, and this is how we run our campus and our expectations, we get better kids out of the fact that we've got parents that are on all of these jobs. Alright?

0:40:44.3 Michael Hall: So I wanted to show you that, real quick, just a couple of things. This is Rene. Rene lives in San Antonio. His son lives in Van, his son is actually, I think, a senior this year. This is an old picture. Rene drove five and a half hours from San Antonio to Van to be at his kids program, he did that four times this year that we took this picture. Drove up for five and a half, drove back five and a half to be at his kids program. In El Paso, I was in elementary, I said, who traveled from somewhere else to be here for Bring Your Dad To School day? Guy raises his hand, he says, "Minneapolis, Minnesota." that's a long way from El Paso, by the way, everything is a long way from El Paso. Texas is a long way from El Paso and it's in Texas. But this guy raises a hand, he said, "Vlognacoff." And I'm like, "What part of Texas is that in?" He had come from basically Russia. He was a military contractor, jumped a C-130, to Germany, jumped another military plane to Jersey, jumped a Delta flight from Jersey to be in El Paso on a Friday morning, was gonna be home for the weekend and go back to work on Monday.

0:41:45.7 Michael Hall: This young man right here was at Camp Lemonnier, Camp Lemonnier, depending on how you say it, people say that different. And he took a seven-day pass. He took a seven-day pass so he could be at his pre-school kid's Bring Your Dad To School day. He didn't say, "I'll be there next year, I'll come when I can," he took a seven-day pass, that's two days from Africa to the States, the beating of a trip. He has three days at home, the middle day is Bring Your Dad To School day, and he came from Djibouti. Now, when we found that out, we were like, Yeah, we gotta take a picture. Now, Winona ISD is just east of Dallas. They love for me to tell this story, they're not real fun to the fact that I go. Man, Winona had dads coming out of Djibouti, but I'm 12, and I think that's hilarious.

0:42:26.7 Michael Hall: Real quick, we've got some resources we're gonna share with you. We have early childhood activity calendars, we have questions to ask your kid instead of, what did you do at school today? We provide those in English and Spanish each month.

Every month there's a numeracy, literacy, math, social studies, questions around movement, art, all those things, leadership in our questions for our elementary and middle school kids, and we're gonna make those available to you. Also would love to talk to you about some other resources for those of you that are teaching teachers. We've got some resources from the research that we've done, we'd like to provide. You can go to strongfathers.live/branch or you can hit that QR code, if that's handy to you.

0:43:08.2 Michael Hall: So I've seen some questions up, Kim, I'll let you pick the ones that maybe we need to look at.

0:43:16.1 Kim Igwe: First, Mike thank you. As always, you made me smile, you made me think. And you stretched our... We have some good questions around father involvement and family involvement. The first one is around funding, and if you don't have funding for programs like this, what do you suggest are your next steps or recommendations for engaging fathers?

0:43:39.3 Michael Hall: So if you have money for family engagement, believe it or not, fathers are part of your families. So when we first started with Head Start, they poured a ton of money, really kind of, it was not well done, but it was a lot of us have doing this work now 'cause what we learned from there, but they poured a ton of money in it, hired people that didn't know what they were doing, but they had to have somebody, and so this spent his money. We were buying TVs and turkeys 'cause they didn't think dads would come if we didn't do that, which was false. And then when that money dried up they said, "Oh, we can't do fathers anymore," and I'm like, "You have family involvement money," parent involvement, is what we called it at the time, right? In Title 1, Title 3, because we do everything in English in Spanish, Title V for rural schools. All of your after school money, what we call ASE, after-school money has a family engagement component that can fund these programs. I've done most of my work, paid most of my rent from Title 1 and/or Head Start PFCE requirements.

0:44:37.1 Michael Hall: And this meets those goals. So there's family engagement money, also, we've made this, unless you're calling me out or I got a fly or drive, or whatever, and bring the supplies, we made this very affordable for people to learn from our manuals and stuff. But see, everybody thinks fathers are different than families, and you have family engagement money, and so you can use that. And here's the thing, when you engage fathers, you will begin to see more moms, I can do another hour on that, but when you get more families by bringing dads in, then the family comes along, and there's several reasons for that. But the money is there, but it's what you're... And it's honestly not just 'cause we're doing it, it's a better use of money because of the impact you get.

0:45:20.3 Kim Igwe: Thank you for that insight there around funding. The next question we have is around, we have a lot of higher Ed faculty, higher Ed administrators, that's a lot of our core community here at BranchEd, and we were talking before we started recording, for those folks who don't have programs, courses within their studies around family engagement and father engagement particularly, what do you suggest are some places they can go, resources they can use? What's the first step there in adding some of this content?

0:45:53.9 Michael Hall: Yeah, so what's interesting is that when people find out, and it's

some of this is through schools and stuff, like teachers and/or people doing grad work are always hitting me up about what's the research about fathers. And so one of the things I do if you sign up on the list, I'm gonna just cite and cite and cite, and if you gather like me, I go to those citations and look at what they cited, and there's actually more research out there that we... And I use all the time, it's what you saw in my presentation. I wrote a book chapter for a book called Why Fathers Count. It was very lucrative. I got a free book out of the deal, some of you that get published know how much money you haven't made from writing a book or a chapter, but I can provide that chapter with all the citations and that.

0:46:32.5 Michael Hall: One of the things I'd love to see folks in higher Ed do is, man, to have a whole class on this would be great, I know we don't have that kind of structure in time, but those of you that are teaching family engagement, we'd love to give you resources to slide this into that, but all kind of things about just programming and diversity. Dads are part of that diversity, and dads in each one of these cultures that you study is also a part of that diversity. And there's some challenges and barriers, but there's also some opportunities there.

0:47:03.1 Michael Hall: So the other thing I'd like to do, Kim, is this conversation, particularly with higher Ed people, of let me get you some stuff, let's look at it and let's talk about what are the best ways to resource your pre-service teachers. I've got some videos, I've got a TED Talk, stuff like that, but that's the other thing we can begin to provide, is even this video could speak to those folks of, this is why we wanna get fathers involved, so I'm really excited about those things. But yeah, there's more research out there. Michael Lamb wrote a huge book on father engagement, not just on father engagement, some of my friends out of Minnesota wrote a great book about father engagement in early childhood. Those are very academic, but they're very good, and then you can already tell I'm not very academic, so we're gonna give you some on the street, in the field stuff to provide to your teachers, which also I think would be important as well.

0:47:52.9 Kim Igwe: We have one last question, and this really does deal with more of the research and it's Barbra who wants to know, I think she's coming from a community organization. What do we tell moms about rough play and teasing kids, some of my clients hate that in the depth...

0:48:11.7 Michael Hall: Yes. Barbra thanks for the question. So when I first started, this was the thing. We talked about this all the time, and just exactly what I told you about what dads do for daughters through rough and tumble play, they help kids handle frustration, they help kids regulate their emotions. You wanna talk about some of the bigger challenges we have in the classroom right now, is kids cannot regulate their aggression, they cannot regulate their emotions. When dads wrestle and play with kids in that microcosm of the house, and do that on a regular basis, these kids are more regulated in their emotions, they're less aggressive. When you see kids, I call it the playground frenzy, right. When they get to play in and kids don't know how to handle that, the [0:48:55.3] _____ I call it Tasmanian death hole.

0:49:00.4 Michael Hall: A lot of that and particularly kids that we would even think would be, and possibly are, with emotional disturbance, a lot of it is they haven't learned how to regulate that. So first off, kids aren't gonna die, kids probably not gonna, probably not gonna go to the emergency room, but when the dads get engaged, they get better at that

and their kids get better, and so we really promote that, particularly in early childhood programs. Yes, get on the floor with your kid, wrestle with your kid. When you throw them in the air, that's okay, even though mom's gonna have a fit, mom's job is to protect, I have a whole training on this. Mom's job is to protect, dad's job is to get that kid ready for life outside the home and outside of that protection.

0:49:39.2 Michael Hall: And so there's tons of research about the value of that, that's something we can provide, but our learners, our best learners are coming from an environment where they have that rough and tumble play because of being able to handle frustration, being able to manage our own aggression and their own emotions. So I can get you... You don't need a full report to give to the mom, but we have some stuff that you can say, "This is what the research says." And when mom's hear it, I train a ton of women, and I had one lady, she goes, "Okay, okay, okay, I'll let dad wrestle with the kids." And I'm like, "Your kids are like 12 and 14." And she goes, "No, no. They still do it, I just don't allow it." But I said, "Your kids are great." She goes, "Yeah, and now you're telling me they're great, not just 'cause I'm a good mom, absolutely, but also dad who didn't listen to me wrestled with my kids," and so yeah, it's definitely one of those things that happens.

0:50:32.1 Kim Igwe: Thank you so much. Mike, I see your email here, folks can reach out to you, I imagine if they have questions.

0:50:40.9 Michael Hall: Absolutely. Anything we can do, emails and calls are free, we'll set up anything to help you guys work with fathers and families as well.

0:50:48.4 Kim Igwe: Thank you so much for sharing this. There are already questions around the resources, we will be posting them in our follow-up email to all registrants, so we'll share those out there as well, and you can sign up for Mike's newsletter to get some of his goodies on a monthly basis. Thank you all so much. Before we sign off and Mike, thank you so much for sharing all of this content with us and these ideas. Before you sign off, if you'd like to further engage with this topic, you can do that on Twitter with BranchEd, we would love to meet you there, we've captured some highlights from this webinar and we would love to connect with you, you can find us at Branch Alliance. In addition to learn more about events like this one, please connect with us on social media, our website and our resource portal. I had some folks reach out already, where can I find this recording? It will be on our resource portal, and you can also see it on LinkedIn right now, it's live streaming there.

0:51:50.1 Kim Igwe: Our next upcoming event is on February 21st, it's a virtual workshop from 1:00 -3:00 EST where we will host... We'll focus on strategies, tools and resources to cultivate community and build meaningful relationships. You can register using the QR code on the screen or visit our website and you can go to our events page there to register. Our next webinar is in March, it is on the educational ecosystem from all directions, and it will be a conversation with Dr. Eduardo Perdomo. And you can register using the QR code on the screen or again, visit our events page.

0:52:33.4 Kim Igwe: Lastly, we would love to hear about your experience today. Here with us, there's a brief poll that's gonna pop up on your screen, if you can quickly fill that out for us, we would love to have some feedback. Thank you so much. We have enjoyed this time with you today, we can't wait to see you again, again, Mike, thanks so much for sharing this

content with us, and we'll see you all next month for our next...

[music]

0:53:06.6 Teacher Video Library: The Branch Alliance for Educator diversity is a network of high-impact high-performing institutions that are seeking to change the way that we prepare teachers for a changing America. We know that having diverse teachers helps all students, and we know that the demographics of the students in this country are changing at a quick rate. There's a level of expertise and knowledge that MSI faculty and institutions have, and we can use that knowledge and experience to better teacher preparation for not just minority students, but for all teacher candidates. We know studies suggest that when children see themselves in their classrooms, when they see themselves in text, that they value who they are even more.

0:54:04.6 Teacher Video Library: I've been working with Minority Serving Institutions for a long time now, and they're places where students really are part of the fabric of the institution, they don't just go there and pay for an education, they are community, they are a family. Now, is the time that we must come together and come up with a foundational understanding of what we intend to do. BranchEd is helping MSIs develop these unique aspects of their programs. We wanna make sure that we are creating a community for all teachers who come from very diverse backgrounds. The Branch Alliance for Educator diversity was formed to strengthen and grow educator preparation at Minority Serving Institutions. It's so critical that these institutions are part of the solution of diversifying our nation's teaching force as they currently prepare a disproportionate number of teachers of color in our classrooms. It's not just about their production of teachers, it's also about their expertise and experience in training educators who can bring about student outcomes for all children.