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#21stAnnualFamiliesandFathersConference #21stAnnualFamiliesandFathersConferenceInternationalExperience #NextLevel2020 #NextLevelFFCA #NextLevel2020CallForWorkshops

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What made the 21st Annual Families and Fathers Conference special? There is no one response to effectively relay the elements that made this event a unique program to well over 500 individuals. The impacts by the conference sponsors allowed our team to go beyond our past efforts to increase awareness, reduce fees for attendees and scholarships (partial or full) for over 75 individuals, as well as the promotion of necessary workshops and more. The partnerships with FFCA fostered the involvement of professionals and experts as faculty representing Australia, Ireland, and England with faculty from twenty-five states and the District of Columbia. The 21st annual conference hosted 56 workshops that provided eighty-four hours of professional development continuous education and training. The conference introduced four credential programs for an added twenty-six hours of advanced certificate program training.

The Affiliates of Fathers and Families Coalition blended with the breadth of expertise of the faculty members (government, foundations, institutions of higher education, community-based and interfaith organizations, and technology firms) for a comprehensive conference. Fathers and Families Coalition of America partnered with **Barnes & Nobles** to include over thirty authors with several listed by the New York Times as best-selling as an added facet of the 21st annual conference for attendees to increase resources for parents, organizations, and individuals. Some of these included parenting books, relationship and marriage books, self-help, and even a twenty-five-contributing author of "*Chicken Soup for the Soul*" books. The ability to merge partnerships promoted positive outcomes for attendees and speakers. FFCA moved to a new online registration partnership with **CVENT** and a new mobile app with **Crowdpass**. The instant feedback was essential to increase the addressing of the needs of the attendees. A snapshot metrics report just from the mobile app include:

- All Engagement- Total number of actions across all users taken within the app (i.e., sessions, speakers, exhibitors, etc.) - 6.7K
- User Contributors- Total number of attendee messages and social shares 715
- Minutes Open- Total time spent in minutes, users used the app 5.99K
- Navigation Icon Taps Total number of taps for all navigation icons 2.99K

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 The download of Final Program - Total number of unique downloads of the final program - 669 contacts

These are just a few examples of the crucial impacts of collaboration and the importance of partnerships. The <u>Title Sponsor, the Annie E. Casey Foundation</u>, was critical to ensure a forum on the needs of foster-care and Youth Adults Transitioning (aging-out) and fatherhood was at the forefront of this conference. Each year tens of thousands of children in the foster-care system become parents before *"aging-out."* The significant challenges in meeting their needs for health care, education, employment, housing, and emotional support are critical before the transition, as well as, the added realities of being a young parent. The Annie E. Casey Foundation has a consistent

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commitment to examine *"how to better engage fathers' involvement"* with a child in the foster care system and how to engage young men in the myriad of the child welfare programs that are also a dad as young-parent. Over half of young men aging out of foster care have become fathers, compared to 19% of their peers who are not in foster care. It is not surprising that young women in foster care report a 75% at least one pregnancy by age 21, compared to 33% of their peers who are not in foster care for more than one year. On average, children remain in child welfare systems of care for 20 months, with 15% in the responsibility of government-approved custody for three or more years.

The 21st Annual Families and Fathers Conference responsiveness tied into how to engage fathers in child welfare and included the development of a series of roundtable discussions with over 150 attendees participating. FFCA, along with AEFC, created sessions, roundtables, and an exclusive fireside chat for over 500 attendees with a focus on relationships of young families, blended families, co-parents, partners, or even single parents impacted by child neglect and abuse with the expansion of capacity-building assistance for organizations and skill-building for practitioners. The partnership bridged an exclusive premiere from the <u>USA Today and the Arizona Republic</u>, "*They Have Names*." November 2019, "They Have Names," a documentary about navigating Arizona's Child Welfare System as released in Arizona and a <u>national premiere at our 21st annual conference</u>. Journalists from The Arizona Republic spent more than a year filming five people and their families as they make their way through the foster care system. The collaboration with AECF was the key to bring this documentary for attendees during the opening day programming.

The Fathers and Families Coalition of America formed out of an agency in rural Arizona, Pinal Gila Community Child Services, Inc. as a grassroots initiative in 1996 until it incorporated eight-years later. The core role of FFCA was to lead both awareness and training for early childhood, maternal and child and early intervention professionals how to engage fathers as a pillar for the twenty-one years of this event. The <u>Co-Sponsorship from the State of California First 5</u> and later complemented by the sponsorships from the California Endowment and First 5 LA gave a foundation to ensure professionals working with parents of children 0-5 had access to over 20% of the workshops with a focus to improve skills, program models and or curriculum to work with pregnant and parenting mothers and fathers. The 2019 Administration for Children Families' national memorandum shared numerous ties between father-engagement and improved child outcomes. AECF reported, *"Starting in early childhood, fathers can have a deep influence on the development of children's early learning skills and academic achievement. Positive early interactions, such as father-infant play, may help improve a child's social skills and stimulate cognitive competence during this crucial time when children are just learning to interact with the world around them (Roggman, Noyce, Cook, Christiansen, & Jones, 2004)."*

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Paternal involvement starting during pregnancy has been a consistent request for training by past stakeholders. The Next Level 2020 Conference shifted with a new fireside chat to expand beyond awareness with education and experts providing techniques to improve paternal involvement. The sponsorships from our Co-Sponsor and other conference sponsorships supported the ability to host the following parenting training certificate programs from *Win Win Parenting of Australia; Families and Schools Together of Wisconsin;* and the *Nurturing Fathers Program of Florida*.

The broad range of sponsorships is exampled by Data Caliper from North Carolina. Data Caliper presented with <u>the Commonwealth of Virginia's The Stronger Parents Brighter Futures Program</u>. Data Caliper shared how it bridges technology into direct services to increase the efficiency of father engagement. The support from Data Caliper allowed FFCA to include other technology workshops, such as a youth mentoring mobile app, <u>"Go Mentor Youth."</u> 100% of participants received and navigated this mobile app with over 50 navigation points intended to help work with the child, young parents, and providers - *"So excited about using this app"* from Shane Soward, of Portland, Oregon attendee, and Executive Director or a youth mentoring agency. FFCA's steps to bring forth varied sponsors and presenters expands the abilities of attendees returning to provide services with the common goal of improving outcomes for children.

The support from Dad's Rights and behind the scenes, the County of Los Angeles Child Support Department, gave attendees access to fantastic professional experts from a variety of fields, authors, and exceptional exhibitors which, without it, would have been a challenge to include in the overall program. The entire body of sponsors, volunteers, affiliates and featured speakers with workshop presenters gave the diverse attendance from some of the following professions: *Head Start, fatherhood practitioners, child welfare, early childhood educators, child support, social workers, marriage & family therapists, public policy analysts and administrators, criminal justice, interfaith providers/clergy and many others. This was a unique conference focused on improving outcomes for children through father engagement.*

We host an event that bridges new partnerships, conference attendees, speakers, exhibitors, and gala guests and honorees over four-days with support from featured **Co-Sponsors for The Next Level** 2020.

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FFCA highlighted our sponsors to over 6,000 individuals at the host hotel - Hilton Los Angeles Airport. All hotel guests and visitors came through the front foyer and parking area to view an exclusive use of messaging. FFCA had the wrapping of six guest room elevator doors and the three parking elevator doors over six-days with an analysis by the <u>Hilton Los Angeles Airport Hotel</u>, reporting that over 6,000 hotel guests used those doors. Every sponsor was branded on the center display and several sponsord secured individual door wraps, as an added value, as part of the partnership to Fathers and Families Coalition of America. The added benefit for supporting FFCA was evident with many non-conference attendees asking for information about the event and sponsors (see examples of the Next Level branding below). We strive for excellence with our program while building good will with supporters and plenty of room for 2020-2021 supporters as we will continue with a mobile platform that highlights every sponsor. FFCA's use of different technology included a text messaging system with over <u>200 new users</u> who texted Next Level to <u>31-996</u> or two evening programs, <u>Men2Men or Women2Women</u>. The <u>Slicktext platform</u> gives attendees something different from other conferences, and it promotes sustained networking and collaborations. FFCA has the strategic commitment for monthly cafe networking sessions from faculty throughout 2020.

The inclusion of partnership with a **Spotify podcast** takes the vital information to give to a broader audience internationally starting with the interview by FFCA and Honorable Lynn A. Johnson, Assistant Secretary for the Administration for Children and Families and Mr. Clarence Carter, Director of the Office of Family Assistance for the Administration for Children and Families hosted by

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Mr. Alvin Galloway as our March 2020 podcast. Planned podcasts for April include the National Child Abuse Prevention Month and will feature the Annie E. Casey Foundation and Fathers and Families Coalition of America Roundtables and Fireside Chat. The stories are compelling and continue with the facilitators of the Women2Women evening session for May and others to follow.

Four social media platforms of Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn were used starting in August, during the national/internationally attended Conference, and post-conference messaging with a robust 24k iContact network. FFCA's Social Media Manager created a total of **224 text posts** were written and published on all five social media platforms in the period September 2019 to March 2020. There were two videos and slightly over one hundred image posts as well. The campaign to highlight speakers, presenters, sponsors, and specialty training programs went to a <u>direct social media 26.5k connections and 50 groups</u> that expanded awareness of the workshops, faculty members, and sponsors associated with the 21st Annual Families and Fathers Conference, the Next Level. The metrics conservatively to over 300k for each posting creatively developed with twenty-seven unique hashtags, images, and videos to increase interactions—the organic reach as exampled by 17 February 2020 posting connected with over 8k individuals.

Fathers and Families Coalition of America is a volunteer service agency, and its success based on volunteers, numerous consultants, and a handful of staff can host twenty-one annual conferences with the support of our sponsors and talents of faculty members. The philosophy of striving for excellence allows for continuous improvement of all of FFCA's operations to host one of the most significant fatherhood practitioner professional development and network event. The growing presence of FFCA in America, as well as, a growing international network in the United Kingdom, Caribbean, South America, China, Africa, and Australia who are making the difference in the lives of millions of children and families daily.

This is a snapshot of the impacts through collaboration. The vision has always been, "How can we help others?" There was no one simple impact of the 2020 Next Level Conference. Below is one example from our February, 2020 Honoree and past conference attendees of why you can circle the dates and join us as a Member, Affiliate, future Presenter and/or Sponsor. Join us so we can continue to provide a special platform to help improve the lives of children and families throughout community-based programs, state-wide inititaives in the United States and globally.

"Words cannot explain how your workshops and gala inspired me today. Dr. Rodríguez, you and your team are to be commended and appreciated for an outstanding presentation for all families. It was also encouraging to see a diversity of race and culture at the gala. I thank you for all you all do to encourage, inspire, and empower families, Leaders, and eternal partners. Lastly, thanks for allowing me to bring my boys to the stage. That meant everything to me and said so much about you and your team regarding the special needs community." - Pastor LaVelle Gates -

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2020 Father of the Year Honoree. This is just one of testimonies from a professional who is also a dad of two autistic sons that, with support of others, provided more than training or networking but a more profound sense of inspiration and lasting impact.

We have been humbled to host individuals in positions of influence from Governor of the State of Arizona, the Prime Minister of Health of Jamiaca, several Members of Congress, state and local elected officials. FFCA has hosted professional athletes, even a two-time Super Bowl Champion who spoke from the heart of being a dad. The countless entertainers just three to mention, Gladys Knight, Eddie Levert, Cedric the Entertainer and several others all treated like family just as we strive to treat every attendee. Our event is special for many reasons, as mentioned above, and the Next Level 2020 experience closed with a family affair, our ending gala where the perfomer Ms. Sheila E. came to honor her father and not play in the accompanying band. The Fathers and Families Coalition of America is a place of education, inspiriation, relationship building, solace, and where we each walk away with a personal, professional (or both) gains to make a difference in the lives of others. The Founder of Ancestry.com, Mr. Scott Beck, relayed that within this platform of our annual conference, *"we are champions of champions"* an accurate description of the diverse attendees and faculty as well as the FFCA team with the support of our sponsors.

First time attendee, "I would like to commend you on a job well done. When we spoke on the phone you described the conference in a certain way and it turned out to be just as great as you described it. I learned a lot from the conference and I am looking forward to coming back next year." Curtis Miller, MSW LSW. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. We look forward to seeing you at the 22nd Annual Families and Fathers Conference, Tuesday, February 23 through Friday, February 26, 2021. *Step Into New Beginnings* will be hosted at the Hilton Los Angeles Airport, Los Angeles, California.

Again, we are looking forward to your participation.

In Service,

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Dr. James C. Rodríguez, MSW Chief Executive Officer & President

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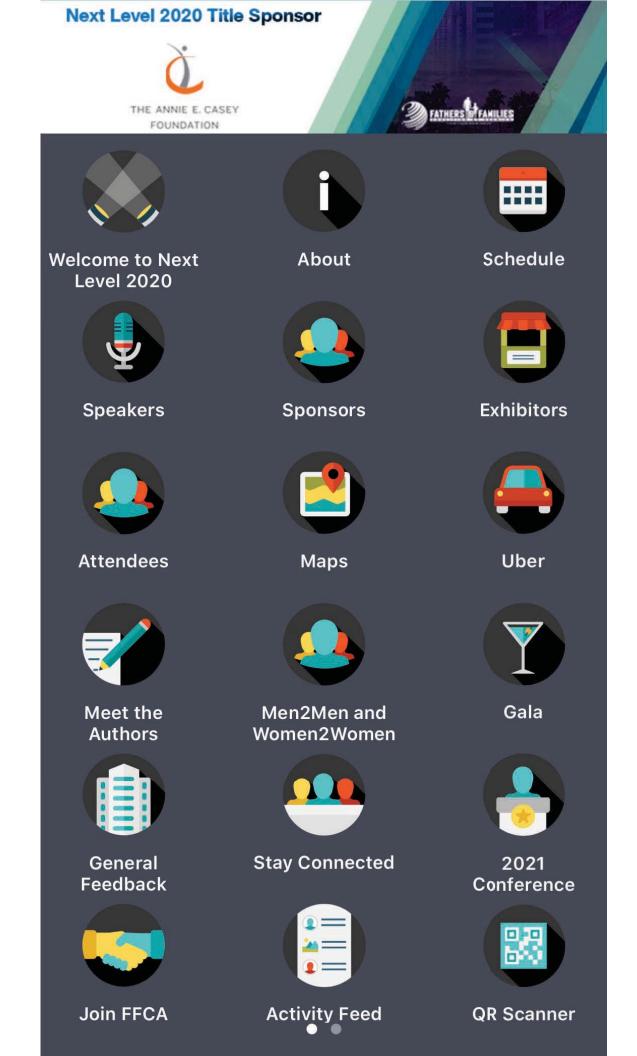


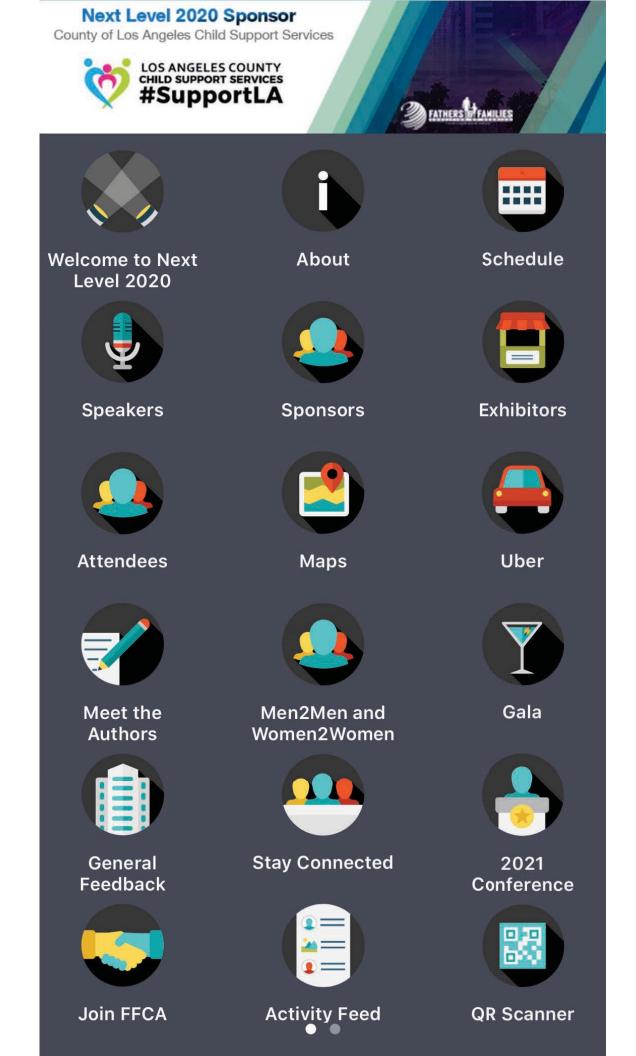


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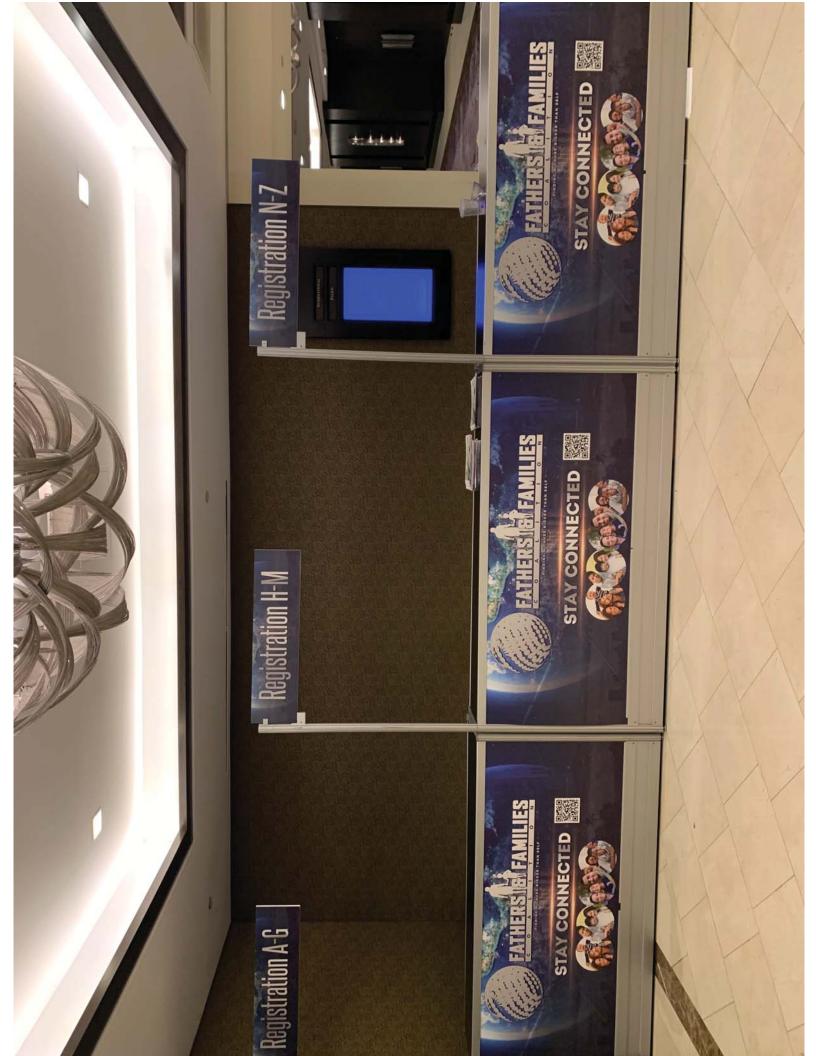
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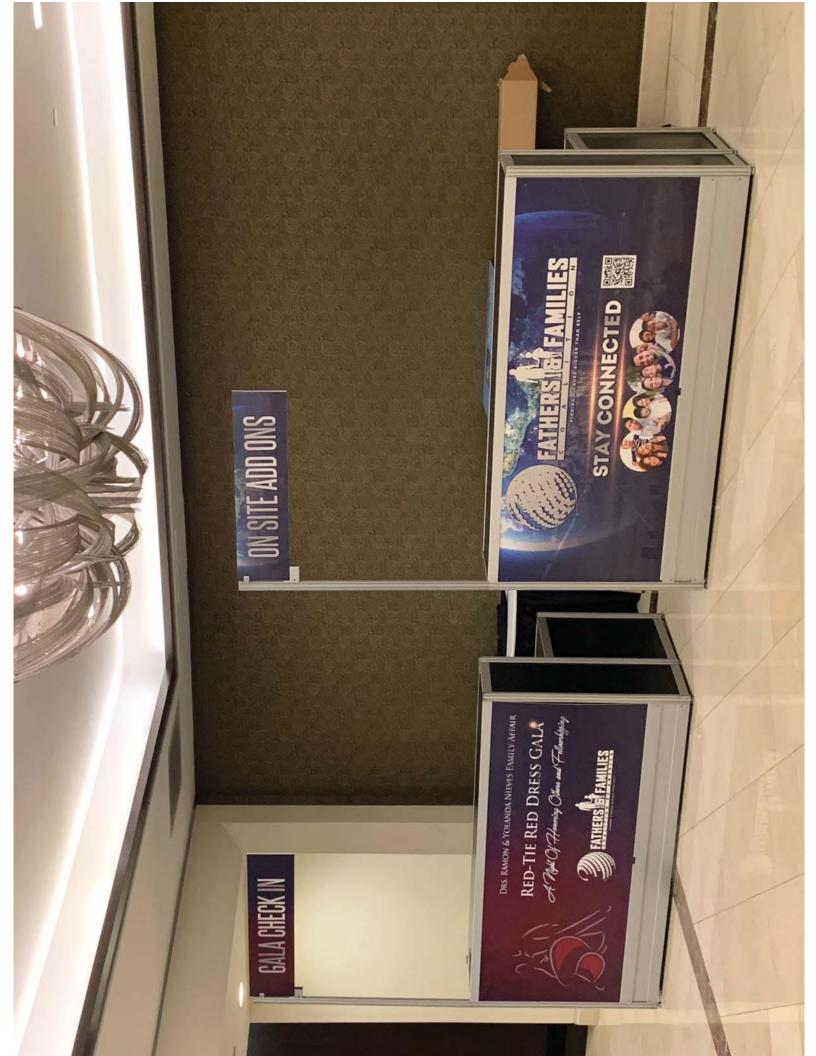
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Thank you Fathers and Families Coalition of America (FFCA) for helping to strengthen families and communities so that all children in L.A. County enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school and life.

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Join us for our fireside chats where we discuss topics such as the needs of young parents in the foster-care and juvenile systems, and share in the experience of our Men2Men and Women2Women Real Talk sessions. We appreciate your support of the Fathers and Families Coalition of America.



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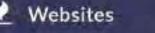
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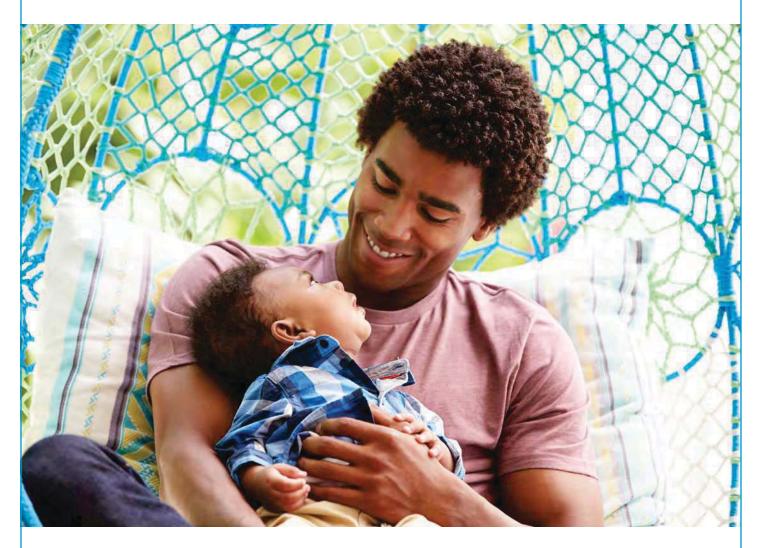
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