



# Gateway CAP Fatherhood Times

## Your Paternal Information Resource

*"Belonging isn't about having it all together; it's about showing up anyway." – Gateway CAP Male Initiative*

### DEAR DAD: YOU DON'T HAVE TO EARN YOUR PLACE HERE

A new year often comes with pressure, to do more, fix more, or prove something.

Before anything else, we want you to hear this clearly:

#### **You belong here.**

Not because you have all the answers.  
Not because you never miss a day.  
Not because you fit a certain image of what a father is "supposed" to look like.

You belong because **you matter in your child's life.**

At Gateway Head Start and Early Head Start, fatherhood isn't something you earn after doing everything right; it's something you grow into through presence, effort, and connection.

If you're expecting a baby, your involvement matters **before the first cry.**  
If your child is an infant or toddler, your consistency builds safety and trust.  
If your child is a preschooler, your presence supports confidence, curiosity, and self-control.

Some fathers start the year feeling hopeful. Others start tired, overwhelmed, or unsure. Wherever you are, you don't have to arrive perfect, you just have to arrive.

This year, we're not asking fathers to perform.  
We're inviting fathers to **participate.**

To be seen.  
To ask questions.  
To learn alongside your child.  
To be part of a community that understands fatherhood as a journey, not a test.

You don't have to fix everything to belong.

#### **You belong now.**

Welcome to 2026.  
We're glad you're here.

Gateway CAP Male Initiative Team



January 2026  
Volume 9 Issue 1

## January Theme:

### **Belonging:**

You Belong Before You  
Perform

### Fatherhood Reflection: Starting Where You Are

Many dads feel like they need to "get everything together" before stepping in.

But fatherhood doesn't work that way.

Babies don't need perfect parents; they need **calm, caring presence.**  
Toddlers don't need all the answers; they need **patience and reassurance.**  
Preschoolers don't need superheroes; they need **steady guidance and love.**

Growth doesn't happen all at once. It happens in small, repeated moments.

If you're starting this year feeling behind, let this be your reminder:

**There is no deadline on becoming the father you want to be.**

Start where you are.  
Take one small step.  
Stay connected.

That's how belonging turns into growth, for you and your child.

# Try This This Month: One Moment of Presence

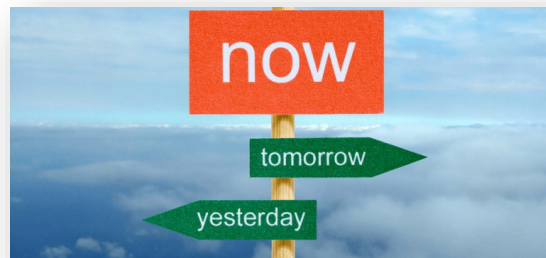
Choose **one small moment each day or week** to be fully present with your child.

## For Expectant & Early Head Start Fathers (Prenatal–3):

- Talk, read, or sing to your baby, even before birth
- Hold your child during feeding or bedtime
- Sit on the floor and follow your toddler's lead in play
- Put your phone down and simply be nearby

## For Head Start Fathers (Ages 3–5):

- Ask one open question: *"What was your favorite part of today?"*
- Read a short book together (even if it's the same one again)
- Let your child help with a simple task



- Play together for 10 minutes with no distractions

You don't have to teach a lesson.  
You don't have to fix anything.

## Just **show up**.

Because belonging begins with presence, and presence is something every father can give.

## This Month at Gateway: In Person & Online Support

Fatherhood support doesn't only happen in one place. This January, Gateway CAP is offering **both in-person and virtual opportunities** for fathers and male caregivers to connect, reflect, and support one another.

Whether you prefer to meet face-to-face or join from home, **you are welcome**.

## STRESSED. OVERLOADED. RUNNING ON EMPTY?

*Real talk for men who carry a lot.*

Topics include:

- Stress and emotional overload
- Mindfulness and balance
- Practical tools for everyday life



## JANUARY FATHERHOOD COUNCIL – IN PERSON (PHILADELPHIA)

- **Friday, January 2, 2026** – 7:00 PM
- **Monday, January 5, 2026** – 7:00 PM  
4221 Aspen St., Philadelphia, PA 19104

**More info:** Quahsim Gredric – 215-934-1057

- **Wednesday, January 28, 2026**  
**6:00 PM (ET)**  
**Zoom Meeting Link:**  
<https://gatewaycap-org.zoom.us/j/85972438226>  
**Meeting ID:** 859 7243 8226  
**Passcode:** 921594

These sessions are open to **expectant fathers, Early Head Start fathers, Head Start fathers, and male caregivers of the community**.

## WHY THIS MATTERS

Taking care of yourself is not separate from being a good father, it's part of it.

When fathers have space to talk, reflect, and connect, families benefit. Children feel it. Partners feel it. And fathers are reminded they don't have to do this alone.

Because this isn't just Head Start for your child.

**It's Head Start for you, too.**

[gatewaycap.org/maleinitiative](https://gatewaycap.org/maleinitiative)

## JANUARY DADS GATEWAY FATHERHOOD COUNCIL – VIRTUAL (ZOOM)

*Facilitated by Michael Cupeles*

These virtual sessions offer fathers a space to connect, share, and grow, no travel required.

- **Wednesday, January 14, 2026**  
**6:00 PM (ET)**  
**Zoom Meeting Link:**  
<https://gatewaycap-org.zoom.us/j/82626261623>  
**Meeting ID:** 826 2626 1623  
**Passcode:** 928316