



The Positive Impact of Fathers

in the lives of their children.

The Center for Successful Fathering, Inc.
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Children whose fathers were highly involved in their schools were more likely to do well academically, to participate in extracurricular activities, and to enjoy school, and were less likely to have ever repeated a grade or been expelled compared to children whose fathers were less involved in their schools. This effect held for both two-parent and single-parent households; and was distinct and independent from the effect of mother involvement.

Nord, Christine Windquist. *Students Do Better When Their Fathers Are Involved at School* (NCES 98-121). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, 1998.

In a study of 29 fathers of academically successful African-American males, six childrearing practices were observed: child-focused love (consistent concern and showing interest); setting limits and discipline; high expectations; open, consistent, and strong communication (“talking with” rather than lecturing); positive racial and male gender identification; and drawing from community resources (especially the church).

Greif, Geoffrey L., A. Hrabowski, and Kenneth I. Maton. “African American Fathers of High-Achieving Sons: Using Outstanding Members of an At-Risk Population to Guide Intervention.” *Families in Society* 79 (January/February 1998): 45-52.

A study using a national probability sample of 1250 fathers showed that children whose fathers share meals, spend leisure time with them, or help them with reading or homework do significantly better academically than those children whose fathers do not.

Cooksey, Elizabeth C. and Michalle M. Fondell. “Spending Time with His Kids: Effects of Family Structures on Fathers’ and Children’s Lives,” *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 58 (August 1996): 693-707.

“... for girls, studies link a sense of competence in daughters – especially in mathematics and a sense of femininity – to a close, warm relationship between father and daughter.”

Radin, N. and G. Russell. “Increased Father Participation and Child Development Outcomes.” *Fatherhood and Family Policy*. Eds. M.E. Lamb and A. Sagi. Hillsdale Lawrence Erlbaum, 1983: 191-218.

Children who have fathers who regularly engage them in physical play are more likely to be socially popular with their peers than children whose fathers do not engage them in this type of play.

Carson, J., V. Burks, & R.D. Parke. “Parent-child Play: Determinants and Consequences.” In K. MacDonald (ed.), *Parent-child Play: Descriptions and Implications*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993: 197-220. See also Parke, R.D. “Fathers and Families.” In M.H. Bornstein (ed.) *Handbook of Parenting, Vol. 3, Status and Social Conditions of Parenting*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 1995: 27-63.

Using a national probability sample, father involvement correlates with fewer behavior problems exhibited by their children. This finding holds after controlling for the level of maternal involvement.

Amato, Paul R. and Fernando Rivera. “Paternal Involvement and Children’s Behavior Problems.” *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 61 (1999): 375-384.

The higher a child rated acceptance by his or her father, the higher teachers rated the child on social competence and positive conduct.

Forehand, Rex, and S. Nousianen. “Maternal and Paternal Parenting: Critical dimensions in Adolescent Functioning.” *Journal of Family Psychology* 7 (1993): 312-221



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When both boys and girls are reared with engaged fathers they demonstrate “a greater ability to take initiative and evidence self-control.

Pruett, K.D. *The Nurturing Father*. New York: Warner Books, 1987.

For predicting a child’s self esteem, it is sustained contact with the father that matters for sons, but physical affection from fathers that matters for daughters.

Duncan, Greg J., Martha Hill, and W. Jean Young. “*Fathers’ Activities and Children’s Attainments.*” Paper presented at the Conference on Father Involvement, October 10-11, 1996, Washington D.C., pp. 5-6.

In a study of preschoolers, children whose fathers were responsible for at least 40 percent of childcare tasks had higher cognitive development scores and a greater sense of mastery of their environments than those children whose fathers were less involved.

Radin, N. “*Primary Caregiving Fathers in Intact Families.*” In A.E. Gottfried & A.W. Gottfried (eds.) *Redefining Families: Implications for Children’s Development*. New York: Plenum Press, 1994: 55-97.

Fathers who had spent more time with their children without the mothers present during the first year of life (independent of maternal employment status) were found to exhibit greater variety in their interactions when their children were 12 months old, and their children showed more responsivity and exploration.

Pedersen, F.A., et.al. “*Paternal Care of Infants during Maternal Separations: Associations with Father-Infant Interaction at One Year.*” *Psychiatry* 50 (1987) 193-205.

A study on parent-infant attachment found that fathers who were affectionate, spent time with their children, and overall had a positive attitude were more likely to have securely attached infants.

Cox, M.J., et.al. “*Prediction of Infant-Father and Infant-Mother Attachment.*” *Developmental Psychology* 28 (1992): 474-483.

In a study of 75 toddlers it was found that children who were securely attached to their fathers were better problem solvers than children who were not securely attached to their fathers. Children whose fathers spent a lot of time with them and who were sensitive to their needs were found to be better adapted than their peers whose fathers were not as involved and were less sensitive.

Esterbrooks, M. Ann and Wendy Goldberg. “*Toddler Development in the Family: Impact of Father Involvement and Parenting Characteristics.*” *Child Development* 55 (1984): 740-752.

A study assessing the level of adaptation of one-year-olds found that, when left with a stranger, children whose fathers were highly involved were less likely to cry, worry, or disrupt play than other one-year-olds whose fathers were less involved.

Kotelchuk, M. “*The Infant’s Relationship to His Father: Experimental Evidence.*” *The Role of the Father in Child Development*, Ed. Michael E. Lamb. 2nd edition. New York: Wiley, 1981.