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UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON



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Prevention Board



Unique Contributions of Fathers to their Children's Development

Tova Walsh

February 20, 2019

Webinar begins at 2pm EST/1pm CST/12pm MST/11am PST



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Strategies for Involving and Engaging Fathers in Programming

March 27, 2019

2pm EDT/1pm CDT/12pm MDT/11am PDT



Origins of my Interest



Outline of Presentation

- Who are fathers?
- Our beliefs and values
- Changing expectations
- Conceptualizing father involvement
- Fathers' contributions to their children's development
- Communicating the importance of fathers



Who are fathers?



Who are fathers?

- Biological
- Social
- Legal
- Step-father



...in families ranging from married to cohabiting, single parent, and re-combined.



What are our beliefs & values about the role of fathers?



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Role of the Father Questionnaire

1. It is essential for the child's well being that fathers spend time interacting and playing with their children.
2. It is difficult for men to express tender and affectionate feelings toward babies.

Rob Palkovitz, 1984

<https://cpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/sites.udel.edu/dist/7/2667/files/2015/01/ROFQ-permissions-and-info-24v7z0x.pdf>



Our beliefs & values

Notions of the role of a father are diverse, and may be influenced by cultural and demographic factors.



Changing expectations



Changing roles and norms

Fathers want to be more involved with their children than their fathers were with them ... and they are

- not only breadwinner, also caregiver
- “co-parents”: sharing parenting responsibilities more equally with mothers

...however, fathers continue to spend significantly less time than mothers caring for children

Hofferth, Pleck, Stueve, Bianchi, & Sayer, 2002; Pleck & Masciadrelli, 2004



Conceptualizing father involvement



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Defining father involvement

- *Positive engagement*: direct interaction with children, including caregiving and shared activities
- *Accessibility*: fathers' availability to their children
- *Responsibility*: participation in decision-making, ensuring that children are cared for

Lamb, Pleck, Charnov, & Levine, 1987; Pleck, 2010



Building on Lamb's model...

- Multidimensional construct, including indirect (e.g. financial providing) and direct (e.g. caregiving and play)
- *Quality* is more meaningful than *quantity* of father involvement



Hawkins & Palkovitz, 1999; Marsiglio et al., 2000; Pleck & Masciadrelli, 2004;
Schoppe-Sullivan, McBride, & Ho, 2004

Defining quality

- Sensitive
- Warm
- Close
- Friendly
- Supportive
- Intimate
- Nurturing
- Affectionate
- Encouraging
- Comforting
- Accepting



Allen & Daly, 2007

Many ways fathers are involved

- Communicating
- Teaching
- Monitoring
- Engaging in thought processes
- Providing
- Showing affection
- Protecting
- Supporting emotionally
- Running errands
- Caregiving
- Engaging in child-related maintenance
- Sharing interests
- Being available
- Planning
- Sharing activities

Father involvement in comparison to mother involvement

On average, fathers tend to...

- Be involved more in play than caregiving
- Play differently
 - More physical and challenging games
 - Encourage independence and risk taking

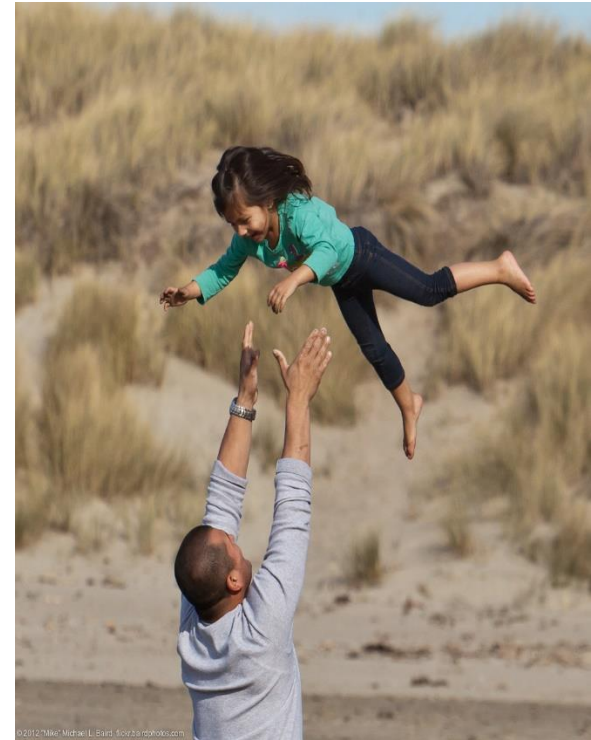


Clarke-Stewart, 1978; Crawley & Sherrod, 1984; Kazura, 2000; Kotelchuck, 1976; Lamb, 1977; Yeung, Sandberg, Davis-Kean, & Hofferth, 2001

Activation Theory

Opening children to the outside world

According to Paquette and colleagues, fathers incite children “to explore, take chances, overcome obstacles, be braver in the presence of strangers, and stand up for themselves” (Paquette, 2012).



Paquette, 2004a, 2004b; Paquette, Eugène, Dubeau & Gagnon, 2009.

Benefits of father involvement



During pregnancy...

Partner support associated with positive maternal and child outcomes.

- women with supportive partners have fewer health problems in pregnancy
- the quality of mothering provided to an infant is associated with the support the mother receives from her partner
- the quality of the partner relationship predicts how both mother and father will nurture and respond to the needs of their child

ACOG, 2009; Guterman & Lee, 2005; Marsiglio, 2008



16 Things Fathers Can Do to Support Their Pregnant Partners



1. Go with your partner to her **prenatal visits**.
2. **Watch, listen, read**... about prenatal development, birthing, and becoming a parent.
3. Help **plan** for the baby.
4. Go to **classes** that will teach you and your partner about childbirth.
5. Help your partner stay **healthy** during pregnancy.

...

<https://www.fatherhood.gov/sites/default/files/files-for-pages/Sixteen Things Fathers can do to support their pregnant partners.pdf>

Fathers and attachment

- Paternal prenatal bonding can influence subsequent father-child relationship
- Fathers' supportive or abusive behavior can influence maternal attachment
- Infants develop distinct bonds with their fathers by the end of their first year.



Belsky, Garduque, & Hrncir, 1984; Cowan, Cowan, Cohen, Pruett, & Pruett, 2008; Kassow & Dunst, 2007; Lamb, 1981, 1997; Lamb, Pleck, Charnov, & Levine, 1985; Pruett, 2000

Benefits to children of positive father involvement

Positive father involvement is associated with positive social, emotional, and cognitive outcomes for children from infancy to adolescence.



Amato, 1994; Deutsch, Servis, & Payne, 2001; Flouri & Buchanan, 2003; McBride, Schoppe-Sullivan, & Ho, 2005; Mosley & Thomson, 1995; Parke et al., 2002; Sarkadi, Kristiansson, Oberklaid, & Bremberg, 2007; Volling & Belsky, 1992; Yeung, Duncan, & Hill, 2000

Benefits to children of positive father involvement

- Higher academic achievement
- Greater school readiness
- Math & verbal



Benefits to children of positive father involvement

- Greater emotional security
- Higher self-esteem
- Fewer behavioral problems
- Greater social competence



Long-lasting impacts

Positive father involvement is associated with improved outcomes into adolescence and adulthood, across multiple domains.



Intergenerational transmission of effects

Boys who experience caring relationships with their fathers during childhood are more likely to be positively involved with their own children as adults and are less likely to become violent men.



Furstenberg, 1988; Horn, 1999

The flip side

Negative aspects of fathering related to negative developmental outcomes

- Father depression related to child and adolescent internalizing and externalizing problem behaviors
- Punitive parenting related to externalizing problems in male children

Heaven, Newbury, & Mak, 2004; Kane & Garber, 2004



Direct and Indirect Influence

- Influence on the quality of the mother-child relationship
- Through the accumulation of social capital, access to privilege, income, and social networks



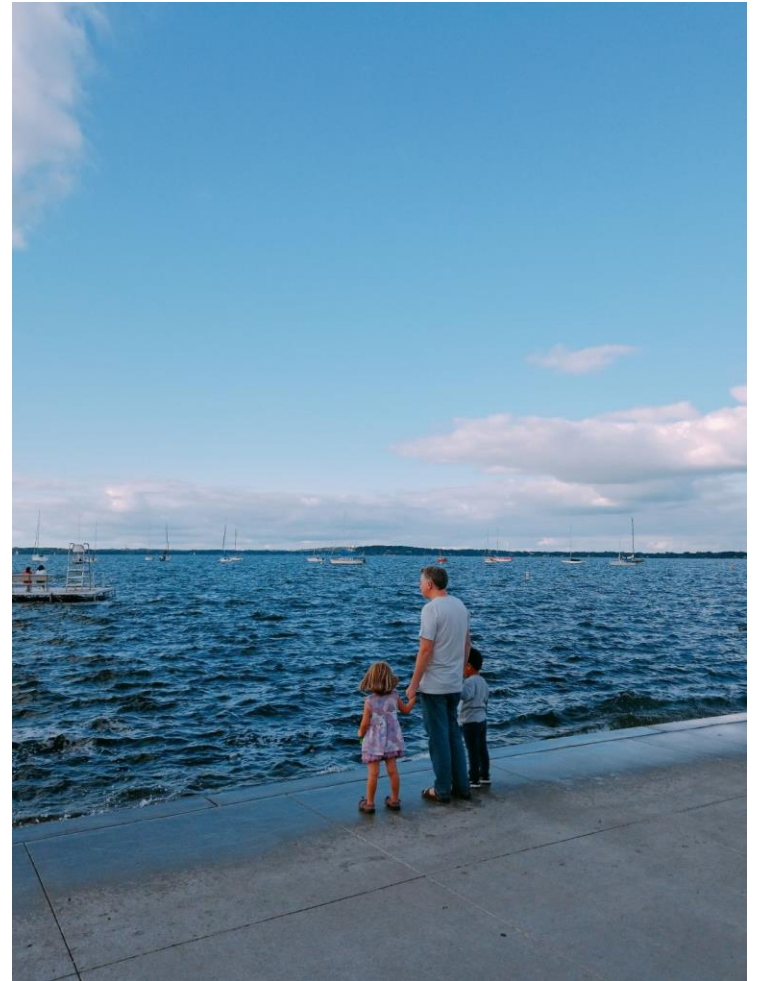
Lamb, 2000

Benefits of father involvement in family interventions

Father inclusion in permanency planning and parenting training is associated with improved child outcomes.

Coakley, 2008;

Lindah, Tollefson, Risser, & Lovejoy, 2008



Father involvement...

is also associated with benefits to men themselves:

- heightened sense of parental competence
- greater satisfaction with parenthood



Baruch & Barnett, 1986; Sagi, 1982; Snarey, 1993

Adolescent fathers and child development

- Most adolescent fathers want to be involved with their children
- Limited research shows adolescent father involvement is beneficial to child, but may depend more on quality of relationship between parents



Hollman & Alderman, 2008

Incarcerated fathers and child development

- Paternal incarceration is associated with negative effects on children's behavioral, socio-emotional and cognitive outcomes
- Effects of separation due to incarceration are more pronounced than other types of separation
- Effects of incarceration are also significant for children of non-resident fathers
- With support, relationships can be sustained or reestablished

Braman, 2004; Murray & Farrington, 2008; Swisher & Waller, 2008



Communicating the importance of fathers in children's development



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Beliefs that act as barriers

- Father participation is not important
- Father participation is extra / optional
- Fathers are important but not essential
- Fathers as risk factors



5 Things You Should Know About the Importance of Fathers

- 1. Involved dads have a direct impact on their children's future.**
- 2. Families are strengthened by supporting fathers.**
- 3. Policies and programs specifically for dads are on the rise.**
- 4. Dads find immense value from their participation in programs.**
- 5. The evidence base on the impact of dads and the effectiveness of specialized programs is growing.**

<https://childandfamilyresearch.utexas.edu/5-things-you-should-know-about-importance-fa>





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Strategies for Involving and Engaging Fathers in Programming

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1-2pm CST



Questions?



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For more information...

Fatherhood Research & Practice Network

<http://www.frpn.org>

Father Involvement Research Alliance

<http://fira.ca>

National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse

<https://www.fatherhood.gov>

National Fatherhood Initiative

www.fatherhood.org



Thank You



www.preventionboard.wi.gov

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Upcoming webinars

March 6, 2019:

Well-Being of Families after Experiencing Homelessness

Amanda Benton and Carli Wulff, U.S. DHHS

March 27, 2019:

Strategies for Involving and Engaging Fathers in Programming

Tova Walsh, Earnest Goggins, and Lauren Zach