

A Father's Role in Supporting Their Child's Development

2018 Child Health,
Education, and Care Summit:
California Leading the Way for Children
First 5 California

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Goal of Presentation

Increase the Knowledge and Awareness of participants about the Importance of Father's in a Child's Development.



Outline for Discussion

- **Personal reflection: How do we hold ideas about fathers?**
- **Why focus on Fathers?**
- **What is different about Fathers Play?**
- **The difference a Dad can make in a Child's development**

Describing Fathers

- Write 3 words that are regularly used by social media and society to describe fathers.
- Write 3 words that you personally use to describe fathers.

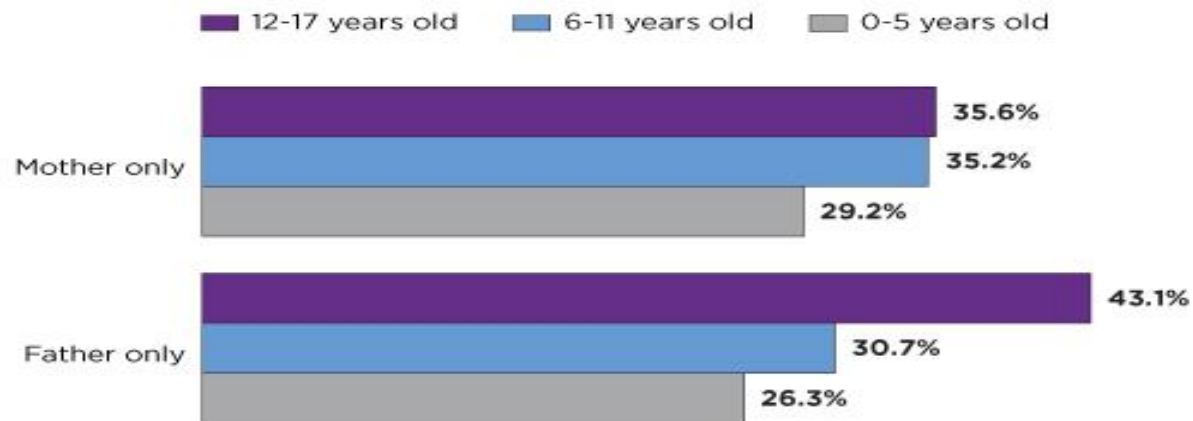
Children Under 18 Living With One Parent

27.1%

Children Under Age 18
Living With One Parent



Children Under 18 Living With One Parent

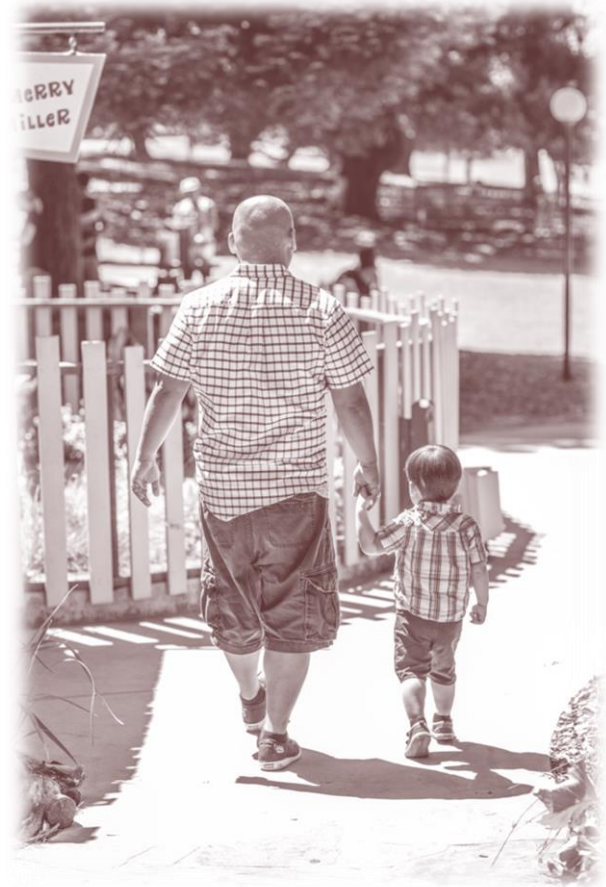


Note: Due to rounding, not all percentages add up to 100 percent.



Thinking About Fathers and Paternal Care

- Historical Context
- Cultural Context
- Socio-Political Context



Babies are Pre-wired for Relationships

- By six weeks, a baby can differentiate the voice of different care providers.
- By six weeks, a baby can respond better to different providers' based on their basic needs.
- By eight weeks an infant expectations about maternal and paternal handling styles are different.



Nurturing Transcends Gender and Race

- “Nurturing is the ability to be selfless and patient, loving yet consistent, tolerant but expectant, and above all, the capacity to share and make sacrifices of one’s emotional, spiritual, material, intellectual assets.”

Pruett, 2000

Father-Child Relationships

- Father have substantial impact on child development, wellbeing, and family functioning, yet parenting interventions rarely target men, or make a dedicated effort to include them.
- Each father has his own way of parenting and this is something which needs to be acknowledge and develop within the relationship with his child.
- Fathers have the internal capacity to be the hands in the relationship with their kids
(To be bigger, Wiser, Stronger and Kind).

Father Do Not Mother

- A father has his own way of parenting and this is something which needs to be acknowledged and developed in the relationship with his child.



Role of Fathers In a Child's Development

- “Fathers' play sensitivity is a better predictor of the child's long-term attachment representation than the early infant—father security of attachment.”

(Grossmann et al. 2002).



Key Factors About Fathers' Play

- Fathers play more playfully with more humor and spontaneity
- The quality of their play tends to be more physical and boisterous.

Cabrera, N., Roggman, L. (2017) Fathers Play it is Special? .
Infant Mental Health Journal, 38(6), 706-708



Key Factors About Fathers' Play

- The play tends to be active, to encouraged risk taking/push limits Activation/Exploration.
- Between 7 and 13 months of age, infants respond better to a father picking them up
 - (possibly because it is done at their request, or because the child wants to play).

Key Factors About Fathers' Play

- Physical play and Rough and Tumble play is a regular component of the father-child play repertoire.
- This play shows promise as an enhancer of positive father-child relationships and catalyst for child development.

Paquette, Carbonneau, Dubeau, Bigras & Tremblay, 2003;
StGeorge and Freeman, 2017



Physical Play and RTP

- There is **little link** of Physical Play and **Aggression**.
- Aggression might increase when RTP is **low in control or directiveness**.
- Strong positive association with **Social Competence**
- Association with boarder **Emotional Skills**
- Physical Play and RTP frequency and quality has shown a positive association with **Self-Regulation**.

Physical Play and RTP

- RTP with reciprocity of dominance was associated with fewer toddler aggressive behavior.
- Mothers' democratic parenting attitudes was associated with higher quality Father—Child RTP



StGeorge and Freeman, 2017

Fathers' Play and Frustration

- Fathers tend to help their children to develop/tolerate frustration amidst new challenges.
- They tend to allow more time, and higher levels of frustration, in the process of their children exploring a new task.
- Many kids relate more to fathers than mothers in their expectation of achievement

Fathers' Play and Novelty

- Men tend to encourage and support novelty-seeking behavior in their children.
- Fathers are likely to encourage children to explore the world in a more vigorous way.



Fathers' Importance in a Child's Development

1. They are important because they are a different point of reference. They are a different object of love.
2. The presence of another caregiver enhances a child's maturation and autonomy by balancing the powerful pull towards one caregiver alone.
3. Normalize the difference. Makes it okay to be different, to love and desire a different object.

The Difference a Dad Can Make in a Child's Development

- Adaptive and problem solving abilities
- Strengthening cognitive capacities
- Challenges to social gender role stereotyping
- Capacity for attachment
- Social competencies
- Self-control
- Empathy
- Physical development



The Difference a Dad Can Make in A Child's Development

- It is not the presence of the father or if he lives at home that is a predictor of a child's positive life outcomes.
- Rather, it is the closeness felt by the child in the relationship with the father.

Frank Furstenberg and Kathleen Harris



The Mission of Father Corps

The mission of the Fathers Corps is to **promote and support fathers and father figures to be meaningfully engaged with their children and families**, and to **advocate** for family services providers to offer **father friendly services** and to **assist fathers in strengthening their parenting skills.**

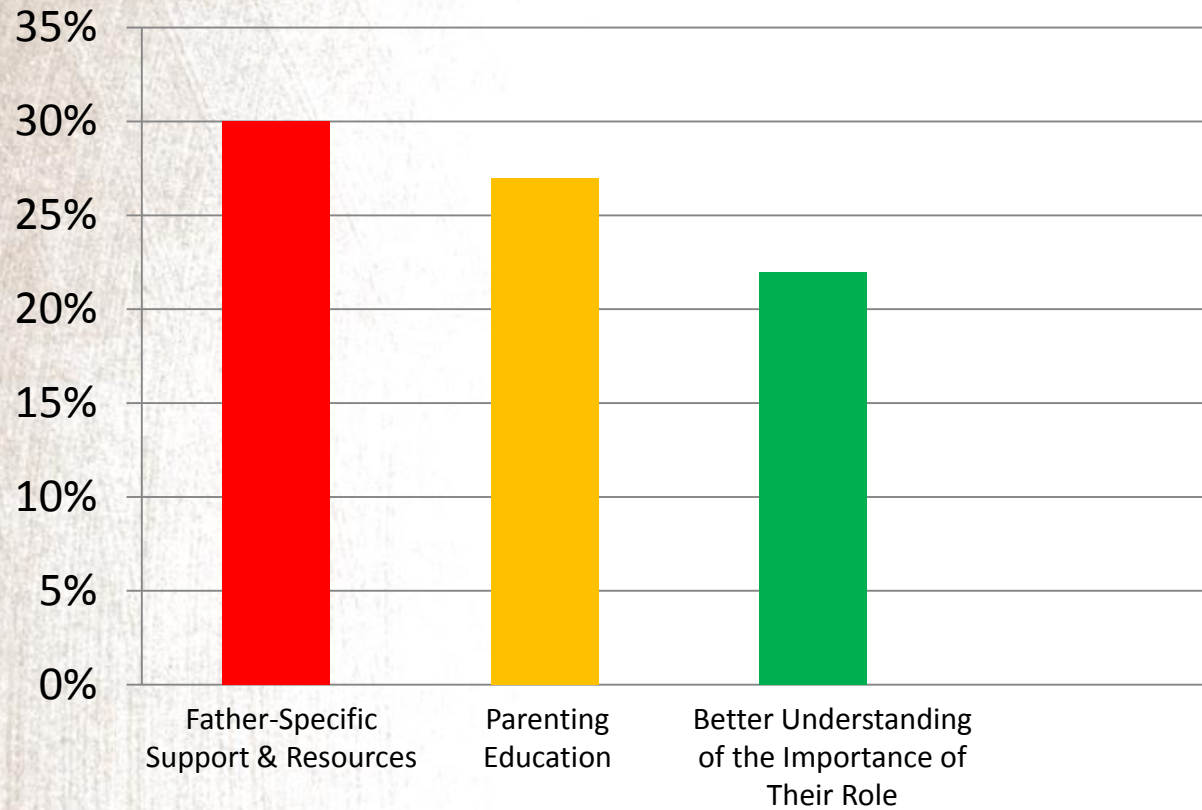


Addressing the Need to Target Fathers: Personal Reflection

How do you believe being part of a female dominant work force informs your expectations and efforts to engage fathers in the work you do?

Video

What Fathers Need Most



Voices of Fathers and the Providers who serve them. **Supporting Father Engagement in Alameda County.** www.first5alameda.org/alameda-county-fathers-corps

Barriers to their involvement identified by Fathers

- **Co-Parenting Difficulties**
 - Contentious relationship with the mother of their kids and Maternal “Gatekeeping” behaviors (58%)
- **Complex Circumstances**
 - Complex custodial, financial, emotional, and logistical arrangements.
 - Expanded group of parents, step-parents, grand parents and children, often in multiple geographic areas.
 - Geographic separation, (45%) in the majority of the case not by fathers choice.
- **Financial Issues**
 - Difficulties providing financially for their child affected the amount of contact they sought. (45%)
 - Past Felonies convictions limited their job opportunities (61%)

Barriers to their involvement identified by Fathers

- **Mental Health and Substance Abuse Issues**
 - Emotional and mental health issues (58%)
 - Alcohol and Substance abuse (48%)
- **Legal Issues**
 - Past and ongoing interaction with the legal system (48%)
 - Restraining orders and other actions related to domestic violence (35%).
 - Other caregiver failing to abide by legal custody agreements (32%)
- **Lack of Role Model/Support from Own Father**
 - Father Absence (39%)
 - Experience of having an Unsupportive father (16%)