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Father Factor Portfolio

Executive Synopsis

Josh D. McDowell, May 8, 2018

*This is a summary of Josh McDowell's research titled *The Father Factor Portfolio*. You can access the entire 778-page documented research free at Josh.org/fathers.*

Please forward to every Pastor you know. ~Josh D. McDowell

Here are five 'Be's I think are helpful for preachers preaching on fatherlessness.

1. "Be hopeful. Clarify the issue but focus on the solution and the answer. God our Father is greater than the problem and he is the answer to it, and he will use us to make a difference."
2. "Be aware and sensitive. Fatherlessness is a very sensitive topic for many. Almost every time I address the issue, whether it's in a suburban church, a country church, or in the inner city, people are in the audience who have deep father wounds and issues. There are single mothers who are desperate for a godly father figure to be in their children's life, and dads who have missed the boat, as well as fathers who desperately want to be a part of their children's lives, but extenuating circumstances prevent that from happening. People will respond differently to the message. After addressing the topic, a pastor at one church said to me, 'I had a lady come to me upset after service because she felt I blindsided her. Moments later, a man who is a long-term member in the congregation came and thanked me for the message. He told me God ministered his wounded heart.'"

"Just know that people will be impacted and respond differently, some positively, and some not so positively. Use wisdom as you proceed in your preaching. It is a heavy topic so be balanced and proceed forward boldly and cautiously."

3. "Be courteous. By this I mean after you preach give people time to process the message before the Lord. You can allow a time for silence and prayer, or have the people pray for one another, or have time at the altar for prayer. Give your

hearers a moment to ponder, reflect, and receive God's grace for their need. Allowing a space for contemplation is important.”

4. “Be challenging. Encourage the people to do something in order to make a difference. Encourage them to take a fatherless kid to a ball game. Mentor one of the fatherless youths in the church. Pray for those affected by the issue. Let them know they all can do something to help address the issue.”
5. “Be prayerful and encouraging. Ask God for his help and wisdom, pray for wounded hearts to find wholeness and hope. Encourage the dads that are doing a good job to keep up the good work!”

(Mark Strong, “Preaching to the Fatherless”, Preaching Today, June 2, 2014, <http://www.preachingtoday.com/skills/2014/june/preaching-to-fatherless.html>)

TEN WAYS TO BE A BETTER DAD

1. “Respect Your Children’s Mother”

“One of the best things a father can do for his children is to respect their mother. If you are married, keep your marriage strong and vital. If you are not married, it is still important to respect and support the mother of your children. A father and mother who respect each other and let their children know it provide a secure environment for them. When children see their parents respecting each other, they are more likely to feel that they are also accepted and respected.”

2. “Spend Time with Your Children”

“How a father spends his time tells his children what is important to him. If you always seem too busy for your children, they will feel neglected no matter what you say. Treasuring children often means sacrificing other things, but it is essential to spend time with your children. Kids grow up so quickly. Missed opportunities are lost forever.”

3. “Earn the Right to Be Heard”

“All too often, the only time a father speaks to his children is when they have done something wrong. That is why so many children cringe when their mother says,

‘Your father wants to talk with you.’ Begin talking with your kids when they are very young so that difficult subjects will be easier to handle as they get older. Take time and listen to their ideas and problems.”

4. “Discipline with Love”

“All children need guidance and discipline, not as punishment, but to set reasonable limits. Remind your children of the consequences of their actions and provide meaningful rewards for desirable behavior. Fathers who discipline in a calm and fair manner show love for their children.”

5. “Be a Role Model”

“Fathers are role models to their kids whether they realize it or not. A girl who spends time with a loving father grows up knowing she deserves to be treated with respect by boys, and what to look for in a husband. Fathers can teach sons what is important in life by demonstrating honesty, humility, and responsibility.”

6. “Be a Teacher”

“Too many fathers think teaching is something others do, but a father who teaches his children about right and wrong, and encourages them to do their best, will see his children make good choices. Involved fathers use everyday examples to help their children learn the basic lessons of life.”

7. “Eat Together as a Family”

“Sharing a meal together (breakfast, lunch, or dinner) can be an important part of healthy family life. In addition to providing some structure in a busy day, it gives kids the chance to talk about what they are doing and want to do. It is also a good time for fathers to listen and give advice. Most importantly, it is a time for families to be together each day.”

8. “Read to Your Children”

“In a world where television often dominates the lives of children, it is important that fathers make the effort to read to their children. Children learn best by doing and reading, as well as seeing and hearing. Begin reading to your children when they are very young. When they are older, encourage them to read on their own. Instilling your children with a love for reading is one of the best ways to ensure they will have a lifetime of personal and career growth.”

9. “Show Affection”

“Children need the security that comes from knowing they are wanted, accepted, and loved by their family. Parents, especially fathers, need to feel both comfortable and willing to hug their children. Showing affection every day is the best way to let your children know that you love them.”

10. “Realize That a Father’s Job Is Never Done”

“Even after children are grown and ready to leave home, they still look to their fathers for wisdom and advice. Whether it is continued schooling, a new job, or a wedding, fathers continue to play an essential part in the lives of their children as they grow and, perhaps, marry and build their own families.”

(National Fatherhood Initiative. (n.d.). 10 ways to be a better dad [On-line]. Available: <http://www.fatherhood.org/tenways.htm>.)

(The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children; U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services; Administration for Children and Families; Administration on Children, Youth, and Families; Children’s Bureau; Office on Child Abuse and Neglect; Jeffrey Rosenberg and W. Bradford Wilcox; 2006.)

ADVICE TO NONRESIDENTIAL FATHERS

1. “Respect the mother of your children.”

“Regardless of their feelings for the mother of their children, fathers need to treat her with respect—for the sake of their children. Children are happier and feel more secure when their parents get along. Fathers should ignore negative comments, compliment the mother when they can, and keep the lines of communication open. Fathers should try to seek common ground with mothers around common goals for their children, and they should never criticize their children’s mother in front of their children.”

2. “Keep your promises.”

“Children who have endured divorce or the breakup of a parental relationship often feel abandoned and distrustful of the adults in their lives. Nonresidential fathers need to be careful to nurture or restore their children’s faith in adults and in them, in particular. Hence, they need to keep the promises they make to their

children. If this means promising their children less, fine, but fathers need to earn their children's trust by keeping their word."

3. "Do not be a 'Disneyland Dad.'"

"Nonresidential fathers are often tempted to play 'Disneyland Dad,' that is, to spend virtually all the time they have with their children in fun activities. 'Disneyland Dads' miss opportunities to help their children grow in virtue; they also miss chances to get to know their children in their ordinary lives. Nonresidential fathers need to challenge their children to grow in virtue and they also need to spend time doing ordinary things with them. They need to help their children with homework, to have them do chores around their home, and to tuck them into bed on a school night. Generally, they will discover much more about their children amidst the ordinary struggles of daily life than they will eating popcorn with their children in a darkened movie theater."

4. "Stay in regular contact."

"Nonresidential fathers should stay in regular contact with their children. If they live locally, they should be faithful about seeing their children on a given day. If they do not live close by or are incarcerated, they should be faithful about calling or sending a letter or email to their children on a weekly basis. Children thrive on maintaining regular contact with their fathers. This advice holds even for teenagers, who may have to be asked to make sacrifices in their social or sports schedules to keep up with their fathers. In the end, maintaining the father-child bond is more important than a missed game or movie with friends."

5. "Do not be soft on your kids."

"Nonresidential fathers often feel like they should go easy on their children when it comes to discipline. Given the brevity of father-child visits, many fathers do not want to alienate their children by disciplining them for misbehavior, but this is a big mistake. Children will take advantage of their fathers' laxity by pushing the behavioral envelope even more. Nonresidential fathers should be firm, consistent disciplinarians with their children, even if that means that one or two visits are spent largely on discipline. In the long-term, children who are disciplined well are better behaved and more respectful of their fathers than children who are given a free reign."

6. “Take care of your children financially.”

“Nonresidential fathers need to take at least partial responsibility for the financial welfare of their children. Children who receive regular financial support from their fathers do better educationally and are more confident that their father is there for them and their family. They should pay child support on time and be flexible enough to help their children when unforeseen expenses come up. If possible, they should tell their adolescents that they will help pay for college or vocational training. If employment or child support is a problem, fathers should contact a local fatherhood program to get help with job-skills, job placement, and addressing any outstanding child support they may owe.”

(“Note: This advice draws on educational material from The Children’s Trust Fund of Massachusetts, The National Fatherhood Initiative, the National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families, and the National Center for Fathering.” (P114))

(The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children; U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services; Administration for Children and Families; Administration on Children, Youth, and Families; Children’s Bureau; Office on Child Abuse and Neglect; Jeffrey Rosenberg and W. Bradford Wilcox; 2006.)

Fathers Play Key Role in Healthy Child Development

1. “Reduction in child abuse and neglect.” (Kim Peterson, “Fathers Play Key role in Healthy Child Development”, Auburn Pub, June 3, 2012, http://auburnpub.com/lifestyles/fathers-play-key-role-in-healthy-child-development/article_89ce66bf-9c63-5c90-acc4-b9bd54362a12.html)
2. “Reduction in poverty.”

“...24 million children in America live in homes where the biological father is absent. A child with a nonresident father is 54 percent more likely to be poorer than his or her father.” (Kim Peterson, “Fathers Play Key role in Healthy Child Development”, Auburn Pub, June 3, 2012, http://auburnpub.com/lifestyles/fathers-play-key-role-in-healthy-child-development/article_89ce66bf-9c63-5c90-acc4-b9bd54362a12.html)
3. “Improved prenatal and infant health: Infant mortality rates are 1.8 times higher for infants of unmarried mothers than for married mothers.” (Kim Peterson, “Fathers Play Key role in Healthy Child Development”, Auburn Pub, June 3, 2012, http://auburnpub.com/lifestyles/fathers-play-key-role-in-healthy-child-development/article_89ce66bf-9c63-5c90-acc4-b9bd54362a12.html)
4. “Improved breastfeeding rates: Breastfeeding rates increase when the father is involved!” (Kim Peterson, “Fathers Play Key role in Healthy Child Development”, Auburn Pub, June 3,

2012, http://auburnpub.com/lifestyles/fathers-play-key-role-in-healthy-child-development/article_89ce66bf-9c63-5c90-acc4-b9bd54362a12.html)

5. “Reduction in crime: Children who grow up without a father are more likely to use drugs and alcohol and smoke cigarettes than those who grow up in a two-parent household.” (Kim Peterson, “Fathers Play Key role in Healthy Child Development”, Auburn Pub, June 3, 2012, http://auburnpub.com/lifestyles/fathers-play-key-role-in-healthy-child-development/article_89ce66bf-9c63-5c90-acc4-b9bd54362a12.html)
6. “Improved educational outcomes: Studies show that children with involved fathers do better in school and are more likely to get A’s. Children with ‘absent’ fathers are more likely to repeat a grade and are twice as likely to drop out of school.” (Kim Peterson, “Fathers Play Key role in Healthy Child Development”, Auburn Pub, June 3, 2012, http://auburnpub.com/lifestyles/fathers-play-key-role-in-healthy-child-development/article_89ce66bf-9c63-5c90-acc4-b9bd54362a12.html)

Fathers are Key

1. **“Fathers are vital to healthy child development.”** (Glenn T. Stanton, “Fathers are Vital to Healthy Child Development.” Citizen Link, June 15, 2012. <http://www.citizenlink.com/2010/06/15/fathers-are-vital-to-healthy-child-development/>)

2. “Fathers Parent Differently”

“This difference provides an important diversity of experiences for children. Dr. Pruett explains that fathers have a distinct style of communication and interaction with children. By eight weeks of age, infants can tell the difference between their mother or father interacting with them.” (Glenn T. Stanton, “Fathers are Vital to Healthy Child Development.” Citizen Link, June 15, 2012. <http://www.citizenlink.com/2010/06/15/fathers-are-vital-to-healthy-child-development/>)

3. “Fathers Play Differently”

“Fathers tend to play with, and mothers tend to care for, children. While both mothers and fathers are physical, fathers are physical in different ways.” (Glenn T. Stanton, “Fathers are Vital to Healthy Child Development.” Citizen Link, June 15, 2012. <http://www.citizenlink.com/2010/06/15/fathers-are-vital-to-healthy-child-development/>)

4. “Fathers Build Confidence”

“Go to any playground and listen to the parents there. Who is encouraging kids to swing or climb just a little higher, ride their bike just a little faster, throw just a little harder, etc.? Who is encouraging kids to be careful? Mothers protect and dads encourage kids to push the limits.” (Glenn T. Stanton, “Fathers are Vital to Healthy Child Development.” Citizen Link, June 15, 2012. <http://www.citizenlink.com/2010/06/15/fathers-are-vital-to-healthy-child-development/>)

5. “Fathers Communicate Differently”

- a. “Mothers will simplify their words and speak on the child’s level. Men are not as inclined to modify their language for the child.” (Glenn T. Stanton, “Fathers are Vital to Healthy Child Development.” Citizen Link, June 15, 2012. <http://www.citizenlink.com/2010/06/15/fathers-are-vital-to-healthy-child-development/>)
- b. “Mother’s way facilitates immediate communication. Father’s way challenges the child to expand her vocabulary and linguistic skills – an important building block of academic success.” (Glenn T. Stanton, “Fathers are Vital to Healthy Child Development.” Citizen Link, June 15, 2012. <http://www.citizenlink.com/2010/06/15/fathers-are-vital-to-healthy-child-development/>)
- c. “Father’s talk tends to be more brief, directive and to the point. Mothers tend to be more descriptive, personal and verbally encouraging.” (Glenn T. Stanton, “Fathers are Vital to Healthy Child Development.” Citizen Link, June 15, 2012. <http://www.citizenlink.com/2010/06/15/fathers-are-vital-to-healthy-child-development/>)

6. “Fathers Discipline Differently”

“Educational psychologist Carol Gilligan tells us that fathers stress justice, fairness and duty (based on rules), while mothers stress sympathy, care and help (based on relationships). Either of these by themselves is not good, but together, they create a healthy, proper balance.” (Glenn T. Stanton, “Fathers are Vital to Healthy Child Development.” Citizen Link, June 15, 2012. <http://www.citizenlink.com/2010/06/15/fathers-are-vital-to-healthy-child-development/>)

- a. “Mothers tend toward grace and sympathy in the midst of disobedience, which provide a sense of hopefulness.” (Glenn T. Stanton, “Fathers are Vital to Healthy Child Development.” Citizen Link, June 15, 2012. <http://www.citizenlink.com/2010/06/15/fathers-are-vital-to-healthy-child-development/>)
- b. “Fathers tend to observe and enforce rules systematically and sternly, which teach children the objectivity and consequences of right and wrong.” (Glenn T. Stanton, “Fathers are Vital to Healthy Child Development.” Citizen Link, June 15, 2012. <http://www.citizenlink.com/2010/06/15/fathers-are-vital-to-healthy-child-development/>)

7. **“Fathers Prepare Children for the Real World”** (Glenn T. Stanton, “Fathers are Vital to Healthy Child Development.” Citizen Link, June 15, 2012. www.citizenlink.com/2010/06/15/fathers-are-vital-to-healthy-child-development/)

8. **“Fathers Provide a Look at the World of Men; Mothers, the World of Women”**

“Girls and boys who grow up with a father are more familiar and secure with the curious world of men. Girls with involved, married fathers are more likely to have healthier relationships with boys in adolescence and men in adulthood because they learn from their fathers how proper men act toward women. They know which behaviors are inappropriate.”(Glenn T. Stanton, “Fathers are Vital to Healthy Child Development.” Citizen Link, June 15, 2012. <http://www.citizenlink.com/2010/06/15/fathers-are-vital-to-healthy-child-development/>)

9. **“Fathers and Mothers Teach Respect for the Opposite Sex”**

“Research consistently shows married fathers are substantially less likely to abuse their wives or children than men in any other category. ...with married fathers in the home learn, by observation how men should treat women.” (Linda Waite and Maggie Gallagher, *The Case for Marriage*, (New York: Doubleday, 2000); David Popenoe, *Life Without Father*, (New York: The Free Press, 1996).

(Glenn T. Stanton, “Fathers are Vital to Healthy Child Development.” Citizen Link, June 15, 2012. <http://www.citizenlink.com/2010/06/15/fathers-are-vital-to-healthy-child-development/>)

10. **“Fathers Connect Children with Job Markets”** (Glenn T. Stanton, “Fathers are Vital to Healthy Child Development.” Citizen Link, June 15, 2012. <http://www.citizenlink.com/2010/06/15/fathers-are-vital-to-healthy-child-development/>)

11. **“Conclusion”**

“As noted sociologist David Popenoe explains, fathers are far more than just ‘second adults’ in the home. Involved fathers – especially biological fathers – bring positive benefits to their children that no other person is as likely to bring.” (Linda Waite and Maggie Gallagher, *The Case for Marriage*, (New York: Doubleday, 2000); David Popenoe, *Life Without Father*, (New York: The Free Press, 1996).(Glenn T. Stanton, “Fathers are Vital to Healthy Child Development.” Citizen Link, June 15, 2012. <http://www.citizenlink.com/2010/06/15/fathers-are-vital-to-healthy-child-development/>)

Create emotional closeness with your children

1. "Start simple. Send your child texts or write notes to affirm, challenge, or just to say 'I'm thinking about you.'" (Carey Casey, "[Being a Good Dad Helps Your Teen Make Wise Decisions About Sex.](http://fathers.com/?s=sex+talk)" National Center for Fathering, November 1, 2012, <http://fathers.com/?s=sex+talk>)
2. "Get into your child's world. This is an important way to communicate your love, and those moments are also opportunities to learn more about your child and what makes him tick." (Carey Casey, "[Being a Good Dad Helps Your Teen Make Wise Decisions About Sex.](http://fathers.com/?s=sex+talk)" National Center for Fathering, November 1, 2012, <http://fathers.com/?s=sex+talk>)
3. "Find something unique. Since every person and every relationship is different, be intentional about finding activities and pastimes the two of you can enjoy together: bicycling or chess, woodworking or gardening, music or flying or volleyball or working on cars." (Carey Casey, "[Being a Good Dad Helps Your Teen Make Wise Decisions About Sex.](http://fathers.com/?s=sex+talk)" National Center for Fathering, November 1, 2012, <http://fathers.com/?s=sex+talk>)
4. "Share your attitudes about sex. Make sure your children know what you believe about this important area of life. (Carey Casey, "[Being a Good Dad Helps Your Teen Make Wise Decisions About Sex.](http://fathers.com/?s=sex+talk)" National Center for Fathering, November 1, 2012, <http://fathers.com/?s=sex+talk>)
5. "Be proactive. It might be awkward at first, but take the lead when it comes to teaching your kids about sex. (Carey Casey, "[Being a Good Dad Helps Your Teen Make Wise Decisions About Sex.](http://fathers.com/?s=sex+talk)" National Center for Fathering, November 1, 2012, <http://fathers.com/?s=sex+talk>)
6. "Address this topic early and often. Instead of having 'the talk' just once and hoping it does the trick, establish the subject of sexuality as something you feel comfortable talking about. (Carey Casey, "[Being a Good Dad Helps Your Teen Make Wise Decisions About Sex.](http://fathers.com/?s=sex+talk)" National Center for Fathering, November 1, 2012, <http://fathers.com/?s=sex+talk>)
7. "Have some grace. It's important to remember that no one is perfect. (Carey Casey, "[Being a Good Dad Helps Your Teen Make Wise Decisions About Sex.](http://fathers.com/?s=sex+talk)" National Center for Fathering, November 1, 2012, <http://fathers.com/?s=sex+talk>)

PROMOTING RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD

“One recent study researched and analyzed 300 community-based initiatives, and it offers the following strategic objectives as a framework for programs promoting responsible fatherhood:”

- **“Prevent.** Prevent men from having children before they are ready for the financial and emotional responsibilities of fatherhood.”
- **“Prepare.** Prepare men for the legal, financial, and emotional responsibilities of fatherhood.”
- **“Establish.** Promote paternity establishment at childbirth so that every father and child has, at a minimum, a legal connection.”
- **“Involve.** Reach out to men who are fathers, whether married or not, to foster their emotional connection to and financial support of their children.”
- **“Support.** Actively support fathers in the variety of their roles and in their connection with their children, regardless of their legal and financial status (married, unmarried, employed, and unemployed).” (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (1997). An evaluability assessment of responsible fatherhood programs: Final report [Online].

(The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children; U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services; Administration for Children and Families; Administration on Children, Youth, and Families; Children’s Bureau; Office on Child Abuse and Neglect; Jeffrey Rosenberg and W. Bradford Wilcox; 2006.)

TIPS FOR DADS: PRACTICAL TIPS FOR KNOWING YOUR CHILD – NONTRIVIAL QUESTIONS

1. “Who is your child's all-time hero?”
2. “What is your child's most prized possession?”
3. “Who is his or her best friend?”
4. “What causes your child to lose sleep?”
5. “What were your child's greatest achievements and disappointments in the last year?”

6. "What is your child's favorite meal?"
7. "What would your child like to do when he or she grows up?"
8. "If your child had \$20 to spend, what would he or she buy?"
9. "What does your child most like to do with you?"
10. "What is the most important thing you need to discuss with your child in the next 6 months?"

(K. Canfield (n.d.), "Practical tips for knowing your child", 2006, <http://www.fathers.com/articles/articles.asp?id=103&cat=23>.)

(The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children; U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services; Administration for Children and Families; Administration on Children, Youth, and Families; Children's Bureau; Office on Child Abuse and Neglect; Jeffrey Rosenberg and W. Bradford Wilcox; 2006.)

The Impact of Fathers on Psychological Well-Being and Social Behavior

1. "Children who have an involved father are more likely to be emotionally secure, be confident to explore their surroundings, and, as they grow older, have better social connections with peers." (Yeung, W.J., Duncan, G.J., & Hill, M.S. (2000). Putting fathers back in the picture: Parental activities and children's adult outcomes. In H.E. Peters, G.W. Peterson, S.K. Steinmetz, & R.D. Day (Eds.), *Fatherhood. Research, interventions and policies* (pp. 97- 113). New York, NY: Hayworth Press; Harris, K.M., & Marmer, J.K. (1996). Poverty, paternal involvement, and adolescent well-being. *Journal Of Family Issues*, 17(5), 614- 640; Pleck, J.H. (1997). Paternal involvement: levels, sources, and consequences. In M.E. Lamb (Ed.), *The role of fathers in child development* (3rd ed., pp. 66-103). New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.) ("The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children", September, 2006, <http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/>)
2. "Infants who receive high levels of affection from their fathers (e.g.. babies whose fathers respond quickly to their cries and who play together) are more securely attached; that is, they can explore their environment comfortably when a parent is nearby and can readily accept comfort from their parent after a brief separation." (Pruett, K. (2000). *Father-need*. New York, NY: Broadway Books; Sternberg, K. J. (1997) and Lamb, M. E. (2002). Infant-father attachments and their impact on child development. In C.S. Tamis-LeMonda & N. Cabrera (Eds.), *Handbook of father involvement: Multidisciplinary perspectives* (pp. 93-118). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum; Cummings, E.M., & O'Reilly, A.W. (1997). Fathers and family context: Effects of marital quality on child adjustment. In M.E. Lamb (Ed.), *The role of fathers in child development* (3rd ed., pp. 49-65, 318-325). New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons; Lamb, M.E. (1997). Fathers and child development: An introductory overview and guide. In M.E. Lamb (Ed.), *The role of fathers in child development* (3rd ed., pp. 1-18, 309-313). New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.) ("The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children", September, 2006, <http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/>)

3. "The way fathers play with their children also has an important impact on a child's emotional and social development...children learn how to regulate their feelings and behavior." ("The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children", September, 2006, <http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/>)
4. "Rough-housing with dad, for example, can teach children how to deal with aggressive impulses and physical contact without losing control of their emotions." ("The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children", September, 2006, <http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/>)
5. "Children who grow up with involved fathers are more comfortable exploring the world around them and more likely to exhibit self-control and pro-social behavior." Parke, R.D. (1996) ("The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children", September, 2006, <http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/>)
6. "...children with good relationships with their fathers were less likely to experience depression, to exhibit disruptive behavior, or to lie and were more likely to exhibit pro-social behavior." (Mosley, J., & Thompson, E. (1995). *Fathering behavior and child outcomes: The role of race and poverty*. In W. Marsiglio (Ed.), *Fatherhood: Contemporary theory, research, and social policy* (pp. 148-165). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.) ("The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children", September, 2006, <http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/>)
7. "...boys with involved fathers had fewer school behavior problems and that girls had stronger self-esteem." (Mosley, J., & Thompson, E. (1995). *Fathering behavior and child outcomes: The role of race and poverty*. In W. Marsiglio (Ed.), *Fatherhood: Contemporary theory, research, and social policy* (pp. 148-165). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.) ("The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children", September, 2006, <http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/>)
8. "...children who live with their fathers are more likely to have good physical and emotional health, to achieve academically, and to avoid drugs, violence, and delinquent behavior." (Horn, W., & Sylvester, T. (2002); U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). (1996). *The relationship between family structure and adolescent substance abuse*. Rockville, MD: National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information; Harper, C., & McLanahan, S.S. (1998). *Father absence and youth incarceration*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, San Francisco, CA; Brenner, E. (1999). *Fathers in prison: A review of the data*. Philadelphia, PA: National Center on Fathers and Families.) ("The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children", September, 2006, <http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/>)
9. "Fathers have a powerful and positive impact upon the development and health of children...involve fathers...to create a permanent and safe environment for

children.” (“The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children”, September, 2006, <http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/>)

Warren Buffet: “Well I’ve received it [advice] in a variety of forms particularly from my father when I was very young. But basically, I think he taught me how to live, not that I did it perfectly or anything like that. But I mean he was giving me lessons, but he wasn’t doing it by preaching to me, he was doing it by example. But basically, one of the biggest lessons I got was the power of unconditional love. I think there is no power on earth like unconditional love. I think that if offer that to your child, I mean you are 90% of the way home. Now there are days when you don’t feel like it, and it’s not uncritical love, that’s a different animal, but to know you can always come back. I mean that is huge in life. That takes you a long, long way. And I’d say that every parent out there that can extend that to their child at a very young age, that’s going to make for a better human being.” (Interview question on Yahoo news, July 7, 2010)

Statistically Significant Results for Parents Who Participated in Parents Anonymous

“Reduced Child Maltreatment Outcomes”

- “73% of parents decreased their parenting distress”
- “65% of parents decreased their parent rigidity”
- “56% of parents reduced use of psychological aggression toward their children”
- “For parents who reported using physical aggression, 83% stopped physically abusing their children”

“Reduced Risk Factors”

- “86% of the high stressed parents reduced their parental stress”
- “71% of parents reduced their life stressors”
- “40% of parents reduced any form of domestic violence”
- “32% of parents reduced their drug/alcohol use”

“Increased Protective Factors”

- “67% of parents improved their quality of life”
- For parents starting out needing improvement:
 - “90% improved in emotional and instrumental support”
 - “88% improved in parenting sense of competence”
 - “84% improved in general social support”
 - “69% improved in use of non-violent discipline tactics”
 - “67% improved in family functioning”

“Conclusions:”

- “Parents who continued to attend parents Anonymous Groups over time showed improvement in Child Maltreatment Outcomes, Risk and Protective Factors compared to those who dropped out.”
- “Strong evidence suggests that parents benefit and strengthen their families through Parents Anonymous regardless of the participant’s race, gender, education or income.”
- “Participants reported that they shared a sense of purpose, belonging and community and were able to give and get help from other parents.”

(“Parents Anonymous Prevents Child Abuse & Neglect: New Research Demonstrates Evidence-Based Program,” Parents Anonymous, Inc. 2007, www.parentsanonymous.org)

*This is a summary of Josh McDowell’s research titled **The Father Factor Portfolio**.
You can access the entire 778-page documented research free at **Josh.org/fathers**.*

The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children

“The following discussion explores what makes a father effective and offers the caseworker further insight into the importance of fathers.”

- “Fostering a positive relationship with the children’s mother”
- “Spending time with children”
- “Nurturing children”
- “Disciplining children appropriately”
- “Serving as a guide to the outside world”
- “Protecting and providing”
- “Serving as a positive role model.”

(The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children; U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services; Administration for Children and Families; Administration on Children, Youth, and Families; Children’s Bureau; Office on Child Abuse and Neglect; Jeffrey Rosenberg and W. Bradford Wilcox; 2006.)

“Nurturing by a father serves several important purposes:”

- “Helps fathers build close relationships with their children.”
- “Fosters psychological well-being and self-worth in their children.”
- “Provides children with a healthy model of masculinity.”
- “Helps protect girls from prematurely seeking the romantic and sexual attention of men.”

(Jeffrey Rosenberg & W. Bradford Wilcox, “The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children”, U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services; Administration for Children and Families; Administration on Children, Youth, and Families; Children’s Bureau; Office on Child Abuse and Neglect; Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2006, https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/append_e_1.cfm)

Lessons Learned: Core Ideas for Building Successful Father-friendly Programs

- “Have strong male leadership; use men to market, recruit for, and facilitate the program;”

- “Build programs around the stated needs of the men in the program;”
- “Provide the leadership and men with the essentials of group and 1:1 leadership skills, including building group norms, handling differences, listening, and confidentiality;”
- “Respect the ‘culture’ of the men involved: geographic area, age, socio-economics, ethnicity, and race; Provide resources, education, and information (the ‘tangibles’);”
- “Laugh, have fun through social times and activities (both for men only and with their families), but with absolutely no alcohol involved;”
- “If possible, have developmentally appropriate father-child activities;”
- “Never let costs or money get in the way of father involvement (this includes transportation, child care);”
- “Be flexible in scheduling; find places and times where men can attend (i.e., individual education programs);”
- “Have family activities (family is everyone who is important in a child’s life, such as grandparents and neighbors);”
- “Let men learn from other men (i.e., one-on-one and in groups); Have meetings in places that are friendly, easygoing, nonclinical, and relaxed”
- “Know that numbers alone have little to do with program success. Always spend time ‘celebrating’ successes (‘bragging rights’); the men need unlimited opportunities to ‘brag’ about their kids and the value they have in their children’s lives;”
- “Provide food or snacks. ‘Feed them and they will come.’ (Yes, food does make a difference!)”
- “For further suggestions, read Circles of Care and Understanding by James May or visit the Fathers Network Web page at <http://www.fathersnetwork.org>.”

(U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (1997). An evaluability assessment of responsible fatherhood programs: Final report [On-line]. Available: <http://fatherhood.hhs.gov/evaluaby/chapter1.htm#TOP>; Levine, J., & Pitt,

E. (1995). *New expectations: Community strategies for responsible fatherhood*. New York, NY: Family and Work Institute.)

(The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children; U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services; Administration for Children and Families; Administration on Children, Youth, and Families; Children's Bureau; Office on Child Abuse and Neglect; Jeffrey Rosenberg and W. Bradford Wilcox; 2006.)

DEVELOPING FATHER-FRIENDLY AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS

“Establishing fatherhood initiatives in the communities is not enough. It also is important for agencies and programs to assess if they provide a father-friendly environment. Important components include:”

- “The attitudes of staff;”
- “The inclusiveness of language and environment;”
- “The types of activities available for fathers;”
- “The scheduling of activities for nonwork hours;”
- “Media and communications;”
- “The presence of male staff and volunteers.

(U.S. Departments of Agriculture, Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Justice, and Labor. (2001). *Meeting the challenge: What the federal government can do to support responsible fatherhood efforts* [On-line]. Available: <http://fatherhood.hhs.gov/guidance01/ch2.htm#s4>.)

(The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children; U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services; Administration for Children and Families; Administration on Children, Youth, and Families; Children's Bureau; Office on Child Abuse and Neglect; Jeffrey Rosenberg and W. Bradford Wilcox; 2006.)

The ABCs of a Father-friendly Environment

“If your organization aims to promote the importance of father and male involvement, this easy checklist will help to ensure that you have the building blocks of success.”

- “**A**ssets of fathers are emphasized, not their deficits.”
- “**B**udget indicates that fathers are a priority.”

- “**C**urricula and educational materials respect the range of fathers being served.”
- “**D**iverse staff reflects the population using your services.”
- “**E**nvironment clearly states that dads and men in families are welcome here.”
- “**F**ather-child bond is emphasized and encouraged.”
- “**G**ender-neutral forms, policies, and procedures are employed.”
- “**H**ands-on learning experiences are components of many activities.”
- “**I**mportance of fathers is promoted but not at the expense of mothers.”
- “**J**ournals, magazines, and reading materials reflect the interests of dads, too.”
- “**K**nowledgeable men are recruited to address sensitive concerns of fathers.”
- “**L**anguage is respectful and affirming of all parents and children.”
- “**M**arketing plan invites many faces of fathers and promotes their full involvement.”
- “**N**eeds of fathers influence the program’s growth and development.”
- “**O**utreach staff recruit in locations that all types of fathers frequent.”
- “**P**aternal and maternal parenting styles are recognized and respected.”
- “**Q**uality evaluation tools and procedures that respect fathers are in place.”
- “**R**ecognize and reduce barriers that limit father involvement.”
- “**S**taff receives periodic best practices training to better serve fathers.”

- “**T**argeted services are offered specifically for fathers.”
- “**U**nderstand wide range of fathers’ physical and mental health concerns.”
- “**V**alues are emphasized that promote gender reconciliation.”
- “**W**omen’s and men’s rooms each have a diaper changing station.”
- “**eX**cellent advisory council and active speakers bureau are in place.”
- “**Y**oung fathers are offered services.”
- “**Z**ealous attitude prevails that we are all in this together.”

Adapted from: Tift, N. (n.d.). The ABCs of a father-friendly environment for maternal and child health agencies. Washington, DC: National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families.”

(The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children; U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services; Administration for Children and Families; Administration on Children, Youth, and Families; Children’s Bureau; Office on Child Abuse and Neglect; Jeffrey Rosenberg and W. Bradford Wilcox; 2006.)

SIXTEEN THINGS FATHERS CAN DO TO SUPPORT THEIR PREGNANT PARTNERS

1. “Go with your partner to her prenatal visits. The baby’s heart starts beating 22 days after conception, or the fifth week of pregnancy, and you can hear it with an ultrasound anywhere between the seventh and twelfth weeks. 1 During the second trimester, go with your partner if she needs an ultrasound. You can see the baby’s head, arms, hands, legs, and feet. You may even find out the sex of the baby. During the third trimester, ask how you can help during the delivery.”
2. “Watch videotapes, listen to audiotapes, check out the Internet, or read books about prenatal development, birthing, and becoming a parent.”
3. “Help plan for the baby. Talk with your partner about what you both want for your baby. Ask friends and family members if you can borrow a crib, changing table, or baby clothes. Many people are glad to let you use their

things. Save a little money each week. It will make it easier once the baby arrives.”

4. “Go to classes that will teach you and your partner about childbirth.”
5. “Help your partner stay healthy during pregnancy. Help her eat many different foods. Watch what you eat too. If you eat right, you will make it easier for her. Help your partner stay away from alcohol. Alcohol can cause birth defects. Encourage her to drink juice or milk.”
6. “Help your partner stay away from street drugs. If you use illegal drugs, stop now, and if your partner uses them, get help for her. Also, encourage her to check with the doctor before taking any over-the-counter drugs or prescription drugs.”
7. “Make sure your partner stays away from dangerous household products. Strong cleansers, paint products, and insecticides can all harm your baby. Do not let her empty the cat litter box.”
8. “Exercise during pregnancy. Walk or swim together. Both are safe exercises and provide time together.”
9. “Be sure your partner gets enough rest. Help with the household chores. Encourage her to use relaxation exercises and join in. Stress can be very harmful to both mother and baby. Talk out differences in a supportive way. If you find yourself becoming angry and having difficulty controlling negative feelings, seek out counseling. Never use physical force, intimidation, belittling comments, or other abusive behaviors. These are not productive for any relationship and are especially harmful during pregnancy.”
10. “Understand the different changes both you and your partner are going through as you prepare for parenthood. Pregnancy causes many changes in how a woman feels about how her body is changing. You can still have sex. Talk to each other about what feels good.”
11. “Support your partner’s choice on how to feed the baby. Breast milk is best for the baby. If mom chooses bottle feeding, you can often take over the feeding of the baby and give mom a rest. Even if breast feeding, mom can pump milk into a bottle, which will allow your participation in the feeding of the baby.”

12. “To attach with your baby, take time to learn about the developmental stages and how nutrition, lifestyles, and stress can affect prenatal growth. Listen to your child’s heartbeat, feel the kicks. From the second trimester on, you can play the ‘tapping’ game. Each time the mother feels the unborn baby kick, you can respond by tapping her stomach in the same area. The unborn baby quickly learns this “call and response” game. Talk and sing to your baby. Direct positive thoughts and loving feelings to your unborn child. Visualize yourself holding, touching, rocking, or talking to your child. Think about the kind of father you want to be to your child.”
13. “Find an infant massage class and attend with your partner. Infant massage is a wonderful way to soothe a baby.”
14. “Learn how to bathe, feed, diaper, hold, and comfort a baby. All of these activities will build a father’s confidence and enhance bonding with the child.”
15. “Find a ‘New Fathers’ support group or talk to other men who have had or are going to have new babies. Share feelings, ideas on supporting the pregnant mom, and tips to make sure you are taking care of yourself.”
16. “As soon as the baby is born, hold the baby and look into the baby’s eyes. If you talked to the baby before he or she was born, speak to him or her at birth, then he or she will probably recognize your voice.”

(Jeffrey Rosenberg & W. Bradford Wilcox, “The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children”, U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services; Administration for Children and Families; Administration on Children, Youth, and Families; Children’s Bureau; Office on Child Abuse and Neglect; Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2006, https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/append_e_1.cfm)

The following is standard advice for fathers for the first week at home

- “Quickly learn to change diapers, burp, and calm your crying baby by jumping in from the start. Show mom she can count on you.”
- “Coordinate any help. Obtain what is needed from family, friends, or neighbors, and make sure it is actually helpful.”
- “Keep necessary resources available, including phone numbers of doctors, the hospital, and helpful books, and use them.”

- “Tell her she is doing great and will be a wonderful mom.”
- “Help her get some sleep and try to get some yourself.”
- “Mom also may think she inherently is supposed to know it all but may feel overwhelmed and lost.”
- “Reassure her that you are in it together, and you will get through it together. Be positive, constructive, encouraging, and help build her confidence.”
- “Pitch in as much as possible. In the middle of the night when the baby is crying and both of you are dead tired, reach deep and find the strength to get up and handle the baby. Sleep will do her good.”
- “On occasion, when your baby is calm, remind her of the miracle that she brought into your world. Together, check out your baby’s fingers, toes, and nose, and talk of the future—your child’s first date, first day at school, and of course, the first time he sleeps through the night.”

(Jeffrey Rosenberg & W. Bradford Wilcox, “The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children”, U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services; Administration for Children and Families; Administration on Children, Youth, and Families; Children’s Bureau; Office on Child Abuse and Neglect; Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2006, https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/append_e_2.cfm)

Here are some tips for calming crying babies from veteran dads

- “Do not take the crying personally.”
- “Go for a walk. Babies often love the motion of a stroller or riding in a backpack, pouch, or sling.”
- “A taut tummy or kicking legs may indicate gas pain. Bicycle her legs, gently rub her tummy, or lay him across your lap with one leg under his tummy and pat his back.”
- “Try tag team parenting with mom. Taking turns is much better than both of you up all night together.”
- “Give mom a break and do not have her pop the baby on her breast every time he whimpers. Develop alternate techniques.”

- “Invest in a baby swing.”
- “Once you get her to sleep, use a heating pad to warm her bedding (remove before putting baby in crib) so the shock of cold sheets does not wake her up.”
- “Rhythmic motion and background noise also help lull babies to sleep. Try the vacuum, car rides, music at a low volume, or the washer or dryer.”
- “There may be times when walking your crying baby for hours is the only alternative. Babies can be tough, some much more than others. Even the worst cases of colic will pass, and, while the memories of the tough times may never be fond, a dad will always know that he was there when he was needed. This feeling is the basis for a very strong relationship as one’s child grows. Hang in there.”

(“Boot Camp for New Dads. (2003). Troubleshooting for crying [On-line]. Available: <http://www.newdads.com/troubleshooter.htm>.”)

(The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children; U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services; Administration for Children and Families; Administration on Children, Youth, and Families; Children’s Bureau; Office on Child Abuse and Neglect; Jeffrey Rosenberg and W. Bradford Wilcox; 2006.)

Twenty Long Distance Activities for Dads at a Distance

“The Dads at a Distance Web site has been designed to help fathers who are business travelers, military men, noncustodial fathers, airline pilots, travel guides, traveling salesmen, railroad workers, truckers, professional athletes, musicians/entertainers, actors, corporate executives, and any other fathers who have to be away from their children to maintain and strengthen the relationships they have with their children while they are away.”

1. “Go to the mall and have a photo of yourself put on a pillow case and then send it to your child. If you have a favorite cologne, you might want to put a little bit on the pillowcase to remind your child of you.”
2. “Purchase or make stickers of your child’s name and stick them over the names of a character in one of their favorite books. You also can get a picture of your child’s face and place it over the character’s face.”

3. "Make a video or audiotape of you reading bedtime stories. Send them to your child along with the book."
4. "Arrange for flowers or pizza to be delivered to your child before or after a special event (e.g., a play, recital, or sports game). Include a note telling them how proud you are of their accomplishment."
5. "Send a package containing all the things your child will need if he or she gets sick. For example, you could send a can of chicken noodle soup, a special blanket or pillowcase, a video or audiotape wishing them a speedy recovery, crossword puzzles, or a stuffed animal."
6. "Send home a photo documentary of what you do all day when you are away. Be sure to include things like what you eat and how you travel." "Things that you might think are boring, your kids will be very interested in seeing. Have your child do the same."
7. "Have a star officially named after your child."
8. "Send a postcard attack. (Send a postcard every day for a week straight; try to send postcards from unique places.)"
9. "If both you and your child have access to cell phones, then go fishing with them from a distance."
10. "Include surprises within your letters: fast food wrappers, foreign currency, pencil shavings, coasters, Band-Aids, your own art, flower petals, Sunday comics, sand, fortunes from cookies, newspaper clippings, stamps, or old shoe laces."
11. "If both you and your child have access to the Internet, then go on a virtual field trip together. Be sure to use a chat program so you can communicate with each other while looking at the Web sites. A couple of places to start would be NASA's Web site at <http://www.nasa.gov> or the PBS Web site at <http://www.pbs.org>."
12. "Find unique things to write your letters on, for example, things your child likes—a favorite color of paper, stickers, or pictures of things they like; fun objects—coaster, napkins, paper tray liners at restaurants, air sickness bags, old handkerchiefs, or pictures of you or of favorite spots; paper cut

into special shapes (holiday shapes like shamrocks or hearts); or puzzles (cut your finished letter into pieces; try sending one piece at a time).”

13. “Send home some money so that your child can go to the ice cream parlor. Be sure to send a special letter along that can only be read at the ice cream parlor. If you both have access to cell phones, then you can both be at an ice cream parlor talking over your ice cream.”
14. “Write a newsletter (have a regular issue of your own family newsletter with columns about each child, family events, and exciting news).”
15. “If your child does not already have access to a speakerphone, then buy one. Set the phone in the middle of the room, and you will be able to have dinner with them, be there as they brush their teeth, and get ready for bed.”
16. “Start a letter and take it with you throughout the day. Add a sentence every now and then and be sure to add where you are when you write the different sentences (i.e., an elevator, taxi, or café).”
17. “Play Internet games together like Jeopardy or Wheel of Fortune. Other games that can be found on the Internet include golf, card games, chess, checkers, and strategy games.”
18. “Make a package that contains cookie cutters and the non-perishable ingredients of your child’s favorite cookie so you can ‘help’ them bake while you are away.”
19. “Choose a photo from your photo album that you can send to your child and then write a letter explaining the events surrounding it. Also, if both you and your child have access to the Internet, have a family home page.”
20. “Begin a life’s lessons booklet. Each week write down a few of the lessons you have learned in life and how you learned those lessons. When the booklet is full, send it to your child to use as he or she begins or continues the journey of life.”

“Before you leave home next time, hide some treasure (notes of appreciation, videos of you reading stories, candy, or toys) around the house. Be sure to draw a treasure map of where you have hidden these things, and then mail it home. If your child has a portable phone, then you can talk to them and give hints as they

hunt for the treasure. If you are not living with your child, you can still do this activity by mailing the treasures ahead of time to the person who is taking care of your child.” (P110)

“More activities and resources for long distance dads and their families can be found at Dads at a Distance Web site at <http://www.daads.com>.”

(Jeffrey Rosenberg & W. Bradford Wilcox, “The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children”, U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services; Administration for Children and Families; Administration on Children, Youth, and Families; Children’s Bureau; Office on Child Abuse and Neglect; Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2006, https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/append_e_6.cfm)

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TEN WAYS TO STAY INVOLVED WITH YOUR CHILDREN DURING DEPLOYMENT

“Most of us do not want to think about deployment. After all, it means time away from those we love! The fact is that military families do separate, and deployment can be tough when not prepared for it. Here are 10 great tips that can help you and your family to make it through deployment.”

1. “Be Creative”

“Today’s military offers many ways to stay connected: video and cassette tapes, video conferencing, phone calls, postcards, letters, e-mail and Web sites, just to name a few. Use the ones that work best for you and use them often!”

2. “Put a ‘Message in a Bottle’”

“Before you leave, write as many short messages to your children as possible and put them in a large jar, can, or box. Tell your child to pull out one message a day while you are gone.”

3. “Draw Pictures for Your Children”

“Your kids will love to receive your drawings. Everyone can draw. The best part is that your kids will love your artwork, even if you do not. So, take a pencil, some

paper, and spend 5 minutes drawing a simple picture of you and your child. Then give it to them. You will make their day.”

4. “Record Helpful Phone Numbers”

“The parent who stays home will need to know who to call in a crisis. Even when it is not a crisis, it is easier to have a phone list handy to avoid fumbling for it while the kids are screaming. Make the list before you are deployed. If you are already deployed, encourage the other parent that stays home to do it.”

5. “Get Your House in Order”

“Take care of financial, medical, and legal needs before you leave. Create a deployment spending plan for the family and decide which parent will pay the monthly bills during deployment. It might make sense to have two checking accounts, one for the parent who stays home and one for the deployed parent. Make sure your family knows how to use its medical insurance and to get legal aid from the military. Create a Family Care Plan, offered by the military. It describes how your family will want financial, medical, and legal affairs handled during deployment.”

6. “Prepare for Changes in Your Children”

“The biggest complaint many military fathers have about deployment is the changes that they will miss in their children. They might miss their first steps, first words, or first birthday. One way to accept the changes is to stay connected as much as possible during deployment so the changes will not overwhelm you when you return.”

7. “Learn the Basics of Child Development”

“Even though your children will change while you are away, they will do so in regular and predictable ways. Take the time to learn the basics of child development. If you know what your children will be able to do and not do when you return, you will know what to expect. Suppose you return to a 6-month-old daughter and expect that she can eat with a spoon. You might be disappointed when she grabs a handful of mashed carrots with her fist instead. Armed with knowledge about how children develop, you will know that it will take another 6 months before your princess’ table manners improve.”

8. “Allow Your Children to Ask Questions and Express Fears”

“The world can be a scary place. It is your job to keep your kids safe. Kids these days not only have to deal with the boogey man and monsters in the closet, they worry about things they see on the evening news, in the paper, and in real life. War, crime, and disease seem to be the main topics these days. Deployment also can scare and worry kids. Before and after you leave, talk with your children calmly and reassure them that everything is okay. Allow them to ask questions and express fears about anything. This will comfort your children.”

9. “Get Help if You Need It”

“If you need help during deployment, it is available. There are all kinds of help for all kinds of problems. You are not alone. Do you have the blues or feel depressed? Do you need a baby-sitter because you are up to your neck in kids? Are you in a deep crisis and need spiritual guidance? Regardless of your need, there are people who can help. Check your local phone book for counselors, parenting classes, spiritual leaders, recreational outlets, swimming pools, suicide hotlines, social organizations, gyms, libraries, and more. The military has many activities for families, from outdoor events to basketball leagues to private counseling. It is all at your fingertips. If nothing else, call a relative or an old friend. Reach out for help...for your children’s sake.”

10. “Remember Your Sacrifice for Country and Family”

“It is no surprise: Parents give up a lot for their children. Military parents give up more than most. They give up personal time, family time, and stable home lives. Who benefits from your sacrifice? Your family, your neighbors, and all Americans! Talk with your kids about the meaning of this sacrifice. It will make it easier for them to handle being away from you.”

(“For more on dealing with family issues during deployment, please visit the Health Parenting Initiative: Information for Military Personnel and Their Families Web site at <http://www.mfrcdodqol.org/healthyparenting/deployment.cfm>.”)

“National Fatherhood Initiative. (2002). 10 ways to stay involved with your children during deployment [On-line]. Available: <http://www.fatherhood.org/military-fams.htm>.”)

TIPS FROM A FATHER IN PRISON:

“The following is a list of suggestions that you can use to maintain the attachment to your children from inside a prison.”

1. “Even if your relationship with the mother of your children is over, you need to establish and maintain a positive relationship with her. For the sake of your children, try to find ways to connect with her respectfully.”
2. “Do not expect big changes right away from your family members. Take your time.”
3. “Find out about policies regarding how you can connect with your child—visitation, letters, telephone calls, and audiotapes. Ask your prison chaplain, counselor, or other staff.”
4. “Develop a plan and follow it on how often you will connect with your child.”
5. “When explaining to your children why you are not living with them, be honest but respect their ability to understand it according to their age.”
6. “When telling your children how important they are to you, do not be surprised if they do not respond the way you want them to. Children are often angry that you did something wrong that prevents you from being with them.”
7. “To establish and maintain your family relationships, be ready to make amends and apologize to them.”
8. “Find ways to support your children emotionally, financially, and spiritually as much as possible.”
9. “Your family and children need to be able to rely on you if you say you will call or write regularly, so be consistent in your approach and contact schedule.”
10. “Be realistic about goals and expectations. Do not expect too much, too soon from them.”
11. “Remember family celebrations, special occasions, and cultural events. If you have a hobby or crafts at prison, make gifts or draw pictures and make them into a coloring book.”

12. "If at all possible, purchase small items for your children through the commissary or mail order catalogs."
13. "Use your time constructively. Get your GED, or take parenting classes, anger management, adult continuing education classes, anything that betters yourself."
14. "Some prisons allow you to purchase and make video or audiotapes. Use these to tell stories, share memories, and bedtime stories. Have your children listen to it when they miss you."
15. "Before your release date, clear up any legal problems that may be pending such as your driving record, credit problems, or child support."
16. "Your children might not know how to say exactly what they are feeling and thinking, so be patient with them."
17. "Make a realistic plan and follow through, no matter how bad things get, when re-connecting with your children after you are released from jail."
18. "While you are still in prison, research programs that might help you reach your goals once released. Seek out programs about parenting, housing, jobs, legal problems, or credit problems."
19. "Work with other prison fathers trying to connect with their children from inside prison."
20. "Get some counseling from the appropriate staff (psychologist, chaplain, case manager, correctional counselor)."
21. "Think about how you want to be a parent and your future as a dad and make decisions about that future. Look at your own relationship with your dad to see what was learned, good and bad."
22. "Go to the prison library, take the time to read what you can to try to learn about being a better dad. Try to read as much as you can about father/child relationships."
23. "Check out some of the other resources in the Incarcerated Fathers Library."

(For more help for incarcerated parents and their families, please visit the Family and Corrections Network at <http://www.fcnetwork.org>.”

“Carlin, M. (2002). Tips from a father in prison [On-line]. Available: <http://www.fcnetwork.org/library/p10TipsFromAFather.html>.)

(The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children; U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services; Administration for Children and Families; Administration on Children, Youth, and Families; Children’s Bureau; Office on Child Abuse and Neglect; Jeffrey Rosenberg and W. Bradford Wilcox; 2006.)

HEALTHY MARRIAGE

“There are 10 components instrumental in building a healthy marriage, based on decades of research on marriage and the perspectives of researchers working in the field.”

1. “Commitment of the couple—taking a long-term perspective toward the relationship, being willing to persevere when difficulties arise, and committing to caring for the other person.”
2. “Satisfaction—being contented and happy with various aspects of and with the marriage overall.”
3. “Communication—involving just not the sheer volume of communication in the marriage, but also the quality and nature of it.”
4. “Conflict resolution—having the ability to address and resolve conflict that can otherwise undermine the relationship.”
5. “Lack of domestic violence—experiencing conflict is a normal part of marriage, but physical assaults and psychological abuse are markers of an unhealthy marriage.”
6. “Fidelity—being faithful to one’s spouse is an important component and many relationships do not survive this betrayal of trust.”
7. “Interaction and time together—having positive interactions and enjoying time together is as important as the amount of time spent together.”
8. “Intimacy and emotional support—experiencing feelings of trust, caring, and love, as well as physical affection, represent important dimensions of a healthy marriage.”

9. “Commitment to children—being committed to the development and well-being of all children born to or adopted by either spouse is an important element for couples with children.”
10. “Duration and legal marital status—remaining married, as long as it is not characterized by violence or high conflict, contributes to the stability of the children and family.”

(Sternberg, K. J. (1997). *Fathers, the missing parents in research on family violence*. In M. E. Lamb (Ed.), *The role of fathers in child development* (3rd ed., pp. 284–308,392–397). New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.)

(The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children; U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services; Administration for Children and Families; Administration on Children, Youth, and Families; Children’s Bureau; Office on Child Abuse and Neglect; Jeffrey Rosenberg and W. Bradford Wilcox; 2006.)

A Wise Investment: Benefits from Families Spending Time Together

- “Spending time in everyday family leisure activities is associated with greater emotional bonding within the family.”
- “Children in families that participate in religious activities together are more likely to report seeing expressions of love and affection between their parents.”
- “Children’s academic success is associated with having mothers who frequently communicated with them.”
- “Children whose fathers spend time with them doing activities tend to have better academic performance.”
- “Adolescents whose parents are involved in their lives tend to exhibit fewer behavioral problems.”
- “Youths who communicate, do activities and have close relationships with their parents are less likely to engage in violence.”

- “Teens who frequently have dinner with their families are at a lower risk for substance abuse.”

Footnotes

¹Ramon B. Zabriskie, and Bryan P. McCormick, “The Influences of Family Leisure Patterns on Perceptions of Family Functioning,” *Family Relations* 50, No. 3 (July 2001): 281-289.”

²Christian Smith and Phillip Kim, “Family Religious Involvement and the Quality of Parental Relationships for Families with Early Adolescents,” *Research Report of the National Study of Youth and Religion* 5 (2003): 1-23.”

³Christian Smith, “Religious Participation and Network Closure Among American Adolescents,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 42, No. 2 (2003): 259-267.”

⁴Tom Luster et al., “Family Advocates’ Perspectives on the Early Academic Success of Children Born to Low-Income Adolescent Mothers,” *Family Relations* 53, No. 1 (January 2004): 68-77.”

⁵Elizabeth C. Cooksey and Michelle M. Fondell, “Spending Time with His Kids: Effects of Family Structure on Fathers’ and Children’s Lives,” *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 58 (August 1996): 693-707.”

⁶Michelle J. Pearce, “The Protective Effects of Religiousness and Parent Involvement on the Development of Conduct Problems Among Youth Exposed to Violence,” *Child Development* 74, No. 6 (November/December 2003): 1682-1696.”

⁷Chris Knoester and Dana L. Haynie, “Community Context, Social Integration Into Family, and Youth Violence,” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 67, No. 3 (August 2005): 767-780.”

⁸The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, “The Importance of Family Dinners II,” (September 2005), <http://www.casacolumbia.org/download.aspx?path=/UploadedFiles/cvq5rn5t.pdf>.”

⁹Michael D. Resnick et al., “Protecting Adolescents from Harm: Findings From the National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health,” *Journal of the American Medical Association* 278, No. 10 (1997): 823-832” (A Wise Investment: Benefits from Families Spending Time Together, The Heritage Foundation Family Facts, Accessed 3.10.2014, <http://www.familyfacts.org/briefs/15/a-wise-investment-benefits-from-families-spending-time-together>)

I Want to Be the Kind of Father Who:

1. “It is the father’s responsibility to make the child know that he is deeply in love with the child’s mother. There is no good reason why all evidence of affection should be hidden or carried on in secret. A child who grows up with the realization that his parents are lovers has a wonderful basis of stability.” (Source: Elton Trueblood, *The Recovery of the Family*, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1953, pg. 94)
2. “You want to be the kind of father whose children feel secure and confident, who feel loved and accepted.” (Josh D. McDowell, “The Father Connection,” Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, p1996. Source: Compiled from figures published by the Children’s Defense Fund and the book, *13th Generation*, by Neil Howe and Bill Strauss, and a *Fortune* Magazine special report, “Children in Crisis: The Struggle to Save America’s Kids,” August 10, 1992.)
3. “You want to be the kind of father whose children save sex for marriage, and remain faithful to their husbands and wives in marriage.” (Josh D. McDowell, “The Father Connection,” Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, p1996. Source: Compiled from figures

published by the Children's Defense Fund and the book, *13th Generation*, by Neil Howe and Bill Strauss, and a *Fortune* Magazine special report, "Children in Crisis: The Struggle to Save America's Kids," August 10, 1992.)

4. "You want to be the kind of father whose sons and daughters develop a reputation as men and women of integrity—honest, ethical, and hardworking." (Josh D. McDowell, "The Father Connection," Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, p1996. Source: Compiled from figures published by the Children's Defense Fund and the book, *13th Generation*, by Neil Howe and Bill Strauss, and a *Fortune* Magazine special report, "Children in Crisis: The Struggle to Save America's Kids," August 10, 1992.)
5. "You want to be the kind of father whose child might say, 'My Dad keeps his promises.'" (Josh D. McDowell, "The Father Connection," Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, p1996. Source: Compiled from figures published by the Children's Defense Fund and the book, *13th Generation*, by Neil Howe and Bill Strauss, and a *Fortune* Magazine special report, "Children in Crisis: The Struggle to Save America's Kids," August 10, 1992.)
6. "You want to be the kind of father whose children stand up to unhealthy peer pressure, children who develop healthy friendships, children who earn the respect and admiration of their peers." (Josh D. McDowell, "The Father Connection," Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, p1996. Source: Compiled from figures published by the Children's Defense Fund and the book, *13th Generation*, by Neil Howe and Bill Strauss, and a *Fortune* Magazine special report, "Children in Crisis: The Struggle to Save America's Kids," August 10, 1992.)
7. "You want to be the kind of father whose kids can say no to drug and alcohol abuse and risky behavior." (Josh D. McDowell, "The Father Connection," Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, p1996. Source: Compiled from figures published by the Children's Defense Fund and the book, *13th Generation*, by Neil Howe and Bill Strauss, and a *Fortune* Magazine special report, "Children in Crisis: The Struggle to Save America's Kids," August 10, 1992.)
8. "You want to be the kind of father whose adult daughter sends a card just to say, 'Dad, thanks for being there when I need you,' the kind of father whose son asks you to be the best man at his wedding." (Josh D. McDowell, "The Father Connection," Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, p1996. Source: Compiled from figures published by the Children's Defense Fund and the book, *13th Generation*, by Neil Howe and Bill Strauss, and a *Fortune* Magazine special report, "Children in Crisis: The Struggle to Save America's Kids," August 10, 1992.)
9. "You want to be the kind of father whose son can come and sit down beside him and say, 'Dad, I'm really struggling with some things right now, and I need your advice.'" (Josh D. McDowell, "The Father Connection," Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, p1996. Source: Compiled from figures published by the Children's Defense Fund and the book, *13th Generation*, by Neil Howe and Bill Strauss, and a *Fortune* Magazine special report, "Children in Crisis: The Struggle to Save America's Kids," August 10, 1992.)
10. "You want to be the kind of father whose children quickly admit their sins or mistakes, who are forgiving and patient with others, and who enjoy a healthy

sense of self-esteem and self-confidence.” (Josh D. McDowell, “The Father Connection,” Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, p1996. Source: Compiled from figures published by the Children’s Defense Fund and the book, *13th Generation*, by Neil Howe and Bill Strauss, and a *Fortune* Magazine special report, “Children in Crisis: The Struggle to Save America’s Kids,” August 10, 1992.)

11. “You want to be the kind of father who might overhear his daughter telling a friend, ‘I want to marry someone who’s sort of like my daddy, someone I can admire and respect.’” (Josh D. McDowell, “The Father Connection,” Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, p1996. Source: Compiled from figures published by the Children’s Defense Fund and the book, *13th Generation*, by Neil Howe and Bill Strauss, and a *Fortune* Magazine special report, “Children in Crisis: The Struggle to Save America’s Kids,” August 10, 1992.)

How absence of a loving father can wreck a child's life: New study shows relationship with both parents is crucial

1. “Finding was part of large-scale analysis of research about the power of parental rejection” (Fiona Macrae, “How absence of a loving father can wreck a child’s life: relationship with both parents is crucial,” MailOnline, June 13, 2012, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2158671/Love-father-contributes-childs-development-mother-study-claims.html?printingPage=true>)
2. “Researchers say it should help reduce the incidence of 'mother blaming' for trouble children” (Fiona Macrae, “How absence of a loving father can wreck a child’s life: relationship with both parents is crucial,” MailOnline, June 13, 2012, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2158671/Love-father-contributes-childs-development-mother-study-claims.html?printingPage=true>)

“Influence: New research has revealed that the love of a father is one of the greatest influences on the personality development of a child”

3. “A father's love is as important to a child’s emotional development as a mother’s, a large-scale study has confirmed.” (Fiona Macrae, “How absence of a loving father can wreck a child’s life: relationship with both parents is crucial,” MailOnline, June 13, 2012, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2158671/Love-father-contributes-childs-development-mother-study-claims.html?printingPage=true>)
4. “Examining the cases of more than 10,000 sons and daughters revealed how a cold or distant father can damage a child’s life, sometimes for decades to come.” (Fiona Macrae, “How absence of a loving father can wreck a child’s life: relationship with both parents is crucial,” MailOnline, June 13, 2012, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2158671/Love-father-contributes-childs-development-mother-study-claims.html?printingPage=true>)

5. “The review of 36 studies from around the world concluded that his love is at least as important to youngsters as that of their mothers.” (Fiona Macrae, “How absence of a loving father can wreck a child’s life: relationship with both parents is crucial,” MailOnline, June 13, 2012, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2158671/Love-father-contributes-childs-development-mother-study-claims.html?printingPage=true>)
6. “Researcher Professor Ronald Rohner said that fatherly love is key to development and hopes his findings will motivate more men to become involved in caring for their offspring.” (Fiona Macrae, “How absence of a loving father can wreck a child’s life: relationship with both parents is crucial,” MailOnline, June 13, 2012, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2158671/Love-father-contributes-childs-development-mother-study-claims.html?printingPage=true>)
7. “‘In the US, Great Britain and Europe, we have assumed for the past 300 years that all children need for normal healthy development is a loving relationship with their mother,’ he said.” (Fiona Macrae, “How absence of a loving father can wreck a child’s life: relationship with both parents is crucial,” MailOnline, June 13, 2012, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2158671/Love-father-contributes-childs-development-mother-study-claims.html?printingPage=true>)
8. “‘And that dads are there as support for the mother and to support the family financially but are not required for the healthy development of the children.’” (Fiona Macrae, “How absence of a loving father can wreck a child’s life: relationship with both parents is crucial,” MailOnline, June 13, 2012, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2158671/Love-father-contributes-childs-development-mother-study-claims.html?printingPage=true>)
9. “‘But that belief is fundamentally wrong. We have to start getting away from that idea and realise the dad’s influence is as great, and sometimes greater, than the mother’s.’” (Fiona Macrae, “How absence of a loving father can wreck a child’s life: relationship with both parents is crucial,” MailOnline, June 13, 2012, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2158671/Love-father-contributes-childs-development-mother-study-claims.html?printingPage=true>)
10. “His conclusions came after he examined data from studies in which children and adults were asked how loving their parents were.” (Fiona Macrae, “How absence of a loving father can wreck a child’s life: relationship with both parents is crucial,” MailOnline, June 13, 2012, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2158671/Love-father-contributes-childs-development-mother-study-claims.html?printingPage=true>)
11. “Questions included if they were made to feel wanted or needed, if their parents went out of their way to hurt their feelings and if they felt loved.” (Fiona Macrae, “How absence of a loving father can wreck a child’s life: relationship with both parents is crucial,” MailOnline, June 13, 2012, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2158671/Love-father-contributes-childs-development-mother-study-claims.html?printingPage=true>)

12. “Those taking part also answered questions about their personality. These ranged from ‘I think about fighting or being mean’ to ‘I think the world is a good, happy place’.” (Fiona Macrae, “How absence of a loving father can wreck a child’s life: relationship with both parents is crucial,” MailOnline, June 13, 2012, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2158671/Love-father-contributes-childs-development-mother-study-claims.html?printingPage=true>)
13. “Tallying the results showed that those rejected in childhood felt more anxious and insecure as well as hostile and aggressive.” (Fiona Macrae, “How absence of a loving father can wreck a child’s life: relationship with both parents is crucial,” MailOnline, June 13, 2012, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2158671/Love-father-contributes-childs-development-mother-study-claims.html?printingPage=true>)
14. “Many of the problems carried over into adulthood, reported the study published in the journal *Personality and Social Psychology Review*.” (Fiona Macrae, “How absence of a loving father can wreck a child’s life: relationship with both parents is crucial,” MailOnline, June 13, 2012, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2158671/Love-father-contributes-childs-development-mother-study-claims.html?printingPage=true>)

At home, fathers can:

- **“Read with their children.** The ability to read well is known to be one of the most critical skills a child needs to be successful. Parents and caregivers often ask how they can get their children interested in reading, interested enough to turn off the TV and to read on their own?”

“Years of research show that the best way is for the parent to serve as a model reader by reading to the child and by reading themselves. If the father can’t read the text, he can stimulate his child’s imagination by telling stories using a picture book. In addition, he can ask other significant adults to read to younger children and ask older children to read to him. He can take frequent trips to the library with the child to check out books and get to know the children’s librarian and children’s library programs.”

- **“Establish a daily routine.** Fathers can set a time for homework, chores and other activities; use TV wisely by limiting viewing to no more than two hours a school day; and work with their child on homework and special projects, guiding them through the steps involved and encouraging them along the way. Parents don’t need to have in-depth knowledge of a subject,

but can be supportive of their child in working through tough spots in her or his school work.”

- **“Make the most of bedtime.** Bedtime is a terrific opportunity for fathers to connect with their children. For one thing, the audience is definitely captive! There are also fewer distractions. But perhaps most importantly, there is no judge standing by with a scorecard rating the dad on his performance.”

“At bedtime, a father can enrich a child’s life merely by recounting what he did during the day. Discussing the day’s events shows interest in the child and builds his or her knowledge. A father may also tell or read a story. Every moment he spends and every word he says builds a relationship with his child.”

(“A Call to Commitment: Fathers’ Involvement in Children’s Learning”, US Dept. of Education and Dept. of Health and Human Services, June 2000, <http://www2.ed.gov/pubs/parents/calltocommit/index.html>)

At school and other childcare and child development programs, fathers can:

- “Participate in efforts to keep their children’s schools or childcare centers safe.”
- “Plan for the future by talking with their children and school counselors about future high school courses and postsecondary career options.”
- “Attend parent-teacher conferences and school or class events.”
- “Volunteer at school. Fathers are welcome at schools as tutors, as leaders of afternoon or evening clubs, as chaperons for field trips, social activities or athletic events, or as classroom speakers who share information about their work and the world of work and how education contributed to their expertise on the job.”
- “Visit their child’s school or center. Father-child breakfasts or lunches are good opportunities to informally share a meal with children and learn about their daily school experiences, successes and concerns.”
- “Meet their child’s teachers and learn about school curriculum, and how to become involved in activities.”

- “Pitch in to help meet school and program needs, such as installing new playground equipment, cooking at a school picnic or painting and repairing school property.”
- “Join the Parent Teacher Association or other parent groups at their child’s school or childcare center. At meetings, they can make their voices heard regarding their concerns and ideas for school

(“A Call to Commitment: Fathers’ Involvement in Children’s Learning”, US Dept. of Education and Dept. of Health and Human Services, June 2000, <http://www2.ed.gov/pubs/parents/calltocommit/index.html>)

In the community, fathers can:

- **“Play or coach a game or sport** they like with their children on a regular basis.”
- **“Become involved in community activities** by joining a community group, place of worship, union or professional group to participate with their children in an ongoing service activity.”
- **“Take time for family outings** to places such as libraries, zoos, museums, concerts and sports events or other recreational events.”
- **“Use their community learning center** to participate in after-school and evening educational and recreational activities such as English as a Second Language, parenting, literacy, arts and music programs and crafts or computer classes. These courses are often designed for parents and their children to learn together.”

(“A Call to Commitment: Fathers’ Involvement in Children’s Learning”, US Dept. of Education and Dept. of Health and Human Services, June 2000, <http://www2.ed.gov/pubs/parents/calltocommit/index.html>)

Create a father friendly environment. Holding specially designed support groups for dads encourages them to focus on common issues of importance to them.”

- **“Warm greetings.** Nothing breaks the ice like a warm welcome. Greet fathers by name when they attend school events, and tell them how glad you are to see them.”
- **“Recognize children’s progress.** All parents love to hear good news about their children. Whether fathers are visiting school or a center for regularly scheduled meetings, or because their child is having some particular problem, find something positive to say about their child’s progress.”
- **“Reinforce fathers’ contributions.** All parents want to know — and rarely hear — that they are contributing to their children’s education. If you recognize the contribution a father is making to his child’s learning, he will be more likely to want to return.”
- **“Father-to-father strategies.** Develop strategies and programs that encourage older fathers to mentor young fathers and young fathers to mentor first-time fathers.”
- **“Parent-teacher meetings.** When fathers attend parent-teacher meetings, make sure to include them in the discussion. Too often dads feel as if they were the invisible figure at what was, in effect, a ‘mother-teacher’ meeting. Teacher body language is a good sign of whether or not dad is being included. Is your chair swiveled towards mom? Is your eye contact mostly with mom? Are you inviting questions from the father as well as the mother?”
- **“Images on display.** Posters, photos and drawings on the walls of classrooms and hallways can send a powerful message to parents about who is welcome in the school. Check the images you have on display to verify whether fathers are welcome in your school.”
- **“Find out what fathers want.** One of the most effective but least used ways to involve fathers is to find out what interests them about their child’s school or childcare program and what they would like to contribute to the school.”

(“A Call to Commitment: Fathers’ Involvement in Children’s Learning”, US Dept. of Education and Dept. of Health and Human Services, June 2000, <http://www2.ed.gov/pubs/parents/calltocommit/index.html>)

Action Points to Help You Invest in Your Children

- “Involve yourself in an activity that your child enjoys, even if it isn’t your favorite. Really invest yourself in figuring out what your child likes about it.”
- “What activity serves as a bonding activity for you and your child—maybe something unique that just seems to work for you? It might be summer evenings at the lake, trips for ice cream, or time together doing a hobby. Please share it below or at our Facebook page, and make sure you make time for it regularly.”
- “Make it a priority for your family to eat dinner together at least 3-4 times each week. Those can be great conversation and value-sharing times.”
- “Remember that many kids out there are making poor decisions, for any number of reasons, and often it takes someone outside their families to really get through to them. Take a chance and encourage another child who needs a positive father figure.”
- “Take our Championship Fathering Profile to assess how you’re doing as a dad and find out more about each fundamental.”

(Carey Casey, “[Be a Good Father by “Going Deep” with Your Kids](http://fathers.com/?s=sex+talk)” National Center for Fathering, May 3, 2012, <http://fathers.com/?s=sex+talk>)

Strategies That Have Worked for The Experts

1. **“Change things up.** Some of Mr. Wirth's favorite mealtime suggestions include shocking the kids by serving dessert first, having the family change into pajamas and then eat breakfast food for dinner, or even eating ‘on the run’ together at a fast-food restaurant if someone has a piano lesson or football practice.” (“Families who eat together are better in a number of ways”, Post-Gazette.com, November 1, 2012, <http://www.post-gazette.com/stories/life/food/families-who-eat-together-are-better-in-a-number-of-different-ways-660097/>)
2. **“Use technology as friend, not foe.** Mr. Wirth frequently points parents to the emeals.com website, which includes meal plans for different dietary needs matched to sale items at your local grocery store, plus quick-prep recipes and shopping lists. There are lots of free iPhone apps with recipes and shopping lists, too.”

“But when it's time for dinner, chuck the phone.”

“‘We suggest families let the phones go to voicemail, turn off the TV and enjoy each other's company,’ Ms. Feinstein said.”

“Dr. Rofey agrees: ‘We talk a lot about mindful eating’ with patients at the Weight Management and Wellness Center. ‘When you're sitting in front of the computer, you don't pay attention to how much you're eating and satiety levels and things like that. You're more likely to consume higher-fat foods when you're watching TV. We encourage families to sit around the same table without any TV or electronics on.’” (“Families who eat together are better in a number of ways”, Post-Gazette.com, November 1, 2012, <http://www.post-gazette.com/stories/life/food/families-who-eat-together-are-better-in-a-number-of-different-ways-660097/>)

3. “**Prep ahead.** Katie Workman, author of ‘The Mom 100 Cookbook,’ doesn't like to give people guilt trips about family meals. As she writes in the introduction to her cookbook, ‘I don't think you need to hear another diatribe about how we're not making enough time to be a family at the dinner table, and how packaged foods and take-out are ruining our health, and how hard you have to fight to keep your kids from turning into French fry-munching, video game-loving, sugar-addicted zombies.’”

“But she and her husband and children do manage to gather around the dinner table together about four nights a week, and she's honed a few techniques that help make that possible.”

“Her favorite tip is to spend a few spare minutes on a weeknight or a Sunday afternoon chopping shallots, garlic, parsley or carrots, juicing lemons, grating ginger, cubing chicken breasts or otherwise prepping ingredients and placing them in containers in the refrigerator.”

“‘When you get home, if you have those ingredients prepped, you're halfway to a stir-fry,’ she said. ‘That's the thing that saves me more often than not.’” (“Families who eat together are better in a number of ways”, Post-Gazette.com, November 1, 2012, <http://www.post-gazette.com/stories/life/food/families-who-eat-together-are-better-in-a-number-of-different-ways-660097/>)

4. “**Make the process kid-friendly.** To keep the dinner atmosphere positive and minimize complaining, Ms. Workman likes to involve her kids in meal prep, too, on the theory that if they help cook it, they're more likely to eat it enthusiastically. She even asks for their suggestions when she's planning

menus, 'although if someone yells, 'Tacos!' at me one more time...' she said with a chuckle."

"Her cookbook is unique in that many of the recipes include what she calls 'Forks in the Road' -- variations that can make the dishes plain for the kids and spicy or frou-frou for the adults. Thus, she includes a recipe for 'Chicken Piccata-ed or Plain,' risotto can go all the way from plain to a shrimp-Parmesan-parsley combo, and Sesame Noodles get a variety of mix-ins. This way, you're still cooking the same food for everyone, but maybe the kids' just isn't as spicy."

"Then the kids can try Mommy and Daddy's, and if they like it, maybe next time you make it the same way for everybody,' she said."

"Ms. Anderson added that when her kids were small, 'we had fun in the kitchen. Someone could stir for me or set the table. It was a prelude to sitting down together. It wasn't a rule [to help in the kitchen] but something we could all look forward to.'" ("Families who eat together are better in a number of ways", Post-Gazette.com, November 1, 2012, <http://www.post-gazette.com/stories/life/food/families-who-eat-together-are-better-in-a-number-of-different-ways-660097/>)

5. **"Don't sweat the food -- because it's really not about the food anyhow.**

In the statement accompanying CASA Columbia's research report, founder and chairman emeritus Joseph A. Califano Jr. wrote, 'The magic that happens at family dinners isn't the food on the table, but the conversations and family engagement around the table.'"

"Ms. Feinstein suggests, 'Let everyone share about their day, or have fun planning family activities together.'"

"It's just the fact that parents and kids are dependably, regularly connecting' around the table that's important, Mr. Wirth said -- not the food."

"If you're busy, you can concentrate on making one item for dinner, such as a good soup, and buy prepared foods for the rest of the meal, Ms. Anderson suggested. Or pick up some fresh corn and tomatoes at the farmer's market when they're in season, and you have a good meal without much prep at all."

"Chances are, if you eat dinner together as a family, you'll get better nutrition by default. Dr. Rofey cited one study indicating that when parents eat dinner with their children, the children are at less risk for poor consumption of fruits, vegetables and dairy foods, and another study indicating that the parents end up

eating more fruits and veggies around the family table, too.” (“Families who eat together are better in a number of ways”, Post-Gazette.com, November 1, 2012, <http://www.post-gazette.com/stories/life/food/families-who-eat-together-are-better-in-a-number-of-different-ways-660097/>)

6. **“Don't give up.** ‘No matter how you try to set up your commitment to family meals, there will be interruptions,’ Mr. Wirth said. He urges families to take advantage of weekend time together, or perhaps eat breakfast together instead of dinner if that's when everyone's in the house at the same time.”

“Don't give up if you face a couple obstacles,’ he said.”

“Ms. Workman concurred: ‘Don't have an all-or-nothing attitude. Every week is its own separate reality. If one kid has play rehearsal, maybe you sit down with the other kid for dinner. It's a real blend of what works.’”

“I subscribe by 'anything is better than nothing' with my patients,’ Dr. Rofey agreed. So, if families tell her they never eat meals together, she'll suggest they start with one per week – maybe Saturday dinner, or even Saturday lunch if dinnertime doesn't work.”

“Be flexible,’ Ms. Anderson added. ‘It doesn't need to be all the time. But when you can do it, it will feel good to be around the table together.’” (“Families who eat together are better in a number of ways”, Post-Gazette.com, November 1, 2012, <http://www.post-gazette.com/stories/life/food/families-who-eat-together-are-better-in-a-number-of-different-ways-660097/>)

“Even after controlling for closeness to the mother, the closer the relationship between an adolescent and the father, the less likely the adolescent was to report substance use.” (Source: Coombs, R.H., and J. Landsverk. *“Parenting Styles and Substance Use During Childhood and Adolescence.”* Journal of Marriage and the Family 50 (1988): 473-482.) (Wade F. Horn, Ph.D. and Tom Sylvester, “Father Facts – Fourth Edition,” National Fatherhood Initiative, 2002 National Fatherhood Initiative.– p149)

A Parent’s Guide to Cyberbullying

1. “If Your Child is Being Bullied...”
2. “Make Yourself a Safe Person to Talk To.”

3. "Set Security and Privacy Standards With Your Kids."
4. "Monitor Their Internet Use."
5. "Teach Your Kids How to Respond to Bullies."
6. "Work with Your Child to Determine the Course of Action."
7. Block and Report the Bully."
8. "Contact the Parents of the Bully."
9. "Notify the School Administrators."
10. "Save the Evidence."
11. "Consider Getting Counseling for Your Child."

(“A Parent’s Guide to Cyberbullying, CovenantEyes, downloaded from www.CovenantEyes.com, accessed October 30,2014)

“Children from Single-Parent Families Are More Likely to Be Victims Of:”

- “a 77% greater risk of being physically abused”
- “an 87% greater risk of being harmed by physical neglect”
- “a 165% greater risk of experiencing notable physical neglect”
- “a 74% greater risk of suffering from emotional neglect”
- “an 80% greater risk of suffering serious injury as a result of abuse”
- “overall, a 120% greater risk of being endangered by some type of child abuse.”

(Sedlak, Andrea J. and Diane D. Broadhurst. The Third National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect: Final Report. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect. Washington, D.C., September 1996.) (“Father Facts,” National Fatherhood Initiative, accessed November 21, 2011, <http://www.fatherhood.org/father-absence-statistics>)

The Keys to Good Discipline are:

- “Set clear rules and enforce them.”
- “Be consistent.”
- “Never give in to a tantrum. This will only teach children that tantrums work, and will encourage more and louder tantrums in the future.”
- “Keep anger out of discipline. This also helps the parent refrain from either inappropriate or excessive discipline.”
- “Do not confuse bad behavior with a bad child. Parents need to verbalize to children that it's the bad behavior they don't like, not the child.”
- “Use time-outs and other appropriate consequences.”
- “Praise good behavior.”
- “Combine rules and limit setting with explanations. Telling children why rules are what they are, and why they are being punished helps them learn what is and is not acceptable behavior.”

(Horn, W., & Rosenberg, J. (1998). The Better Homes and Gardens new father book (pp. 73-75). Des Moines, IA: Meredith Books)

(“The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children”, September, 2006, <http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/>)

Family, Religious Practice & Adolescent Well-Being

“Based on data from the National Longitudinal Study of Youth – a nationally representative study of over 14,000 adolescents – researchers found that teens from intact families with frequent religious attendance...”

- “Were least likely to have ever gotten into a fight.”
- “Were least likely to have ever used hard drugs.”
- “Were least likely to have ever committed a theft of \$50 or more.”
- “Were least likely to have ever shoplifted.”
- “Were least likely to have ever run away.”

- “Averaged the fewest sexual partners (girls).”
- “Averages the fewest sexual partners (boys).”
- “Were least likely to have ever been drunk.”
- “Were the least likely to have been expelled or suspended from school.”
- “Earned the highest average GPA.”
- “First-graders and kindergartners whose parents attend religious services exhibit higher levels of self-control.”
- “First-graders and kindergartners whose parents attend religious services are less likely to experience anxiety, loneliness, low self-esteem and sadness.”

(John P. Bartkowski, Xiaohu Xu, and Martin L. Levin, ‘Religion and Child Development: Evidence from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study,’ *Social Science Research* 37, No. 1 (March 2007): 18-36.) (“Early Childhood Outcomes”, Family Facts, Accessed November 7, 2012, <http://www.familyfacts.org/briefs/14/early-childhood-outcomes>)

Family and Adolescent Well-Being

1. “**Emotional Health.** Compared with peers from intact families, children who experienced parental divorce tend to experience more psychological and socio-emotional challenges.(Paul R. Amato and Bruce Keith, ‘Parental Divorce and the Well- Being of Children: A Meta-Analysis,’ *Psychological Bulletin* 110, No. 1 (1991): 26-46.) (“Family and Adolescent Well-being”, Family Facts, Accessed November 7, 2012, <http://www.familyfacts.org/briefs/34/family-and-adolescent-well-being>)
2. “**Antisocial Behavior.** Adolescent living in intact families are less likely to engage in antisocial behavior.” (Robert Apel and Catherine Kaukinen, ‘On the Relationship between Family Structure and Antisocial Behavior: Parental Cohabitation and Blended Households,’ *Criminology* 46, No. 1 (2008): 35-70.) (“Family and Adolescent Well-being”, Family Facts, Accessed November 7, 2012, <http://www.familyfacts.org/briefs/34/family-and-adolescent-well-being>)

3. **“Paternal Relationship.** Family structure is related to youths’ relationships with their fathers.”(Christina Falci, ‘Family Structure, Closeness to Residential and Nonresidential Parents, and Psychological Distress in Early and Middle Adolescence,’ *The Sociological Quarterly* 47, (2006): 123-146.) (“Family and Adolescent Well-being”, Family Facts, Accessed November 7, 2012, <http://www.familyfacts.org/briefs/34/family-and-adolescent-well-being>)
4. **“Emotional Distress.** Adolescents who live in intact families are less likely to experience emotional or psychological problems.”(Christina Falci, ‘Family Structure, Closeness to Residential and Nonresidential Parents, and Psychological Distress in Early and Middle Adolescence,’ *The Sociological Quarterly* 47, (2006): 123-146.) (“Family and Adolescent Well-being”, Family Facts, Accessed November 7, 2012, <http://www.familyfacts.org/briefs/34/family-and-adolescent-well-being>)
5. **“Juvenile Delinquency.** Family structure is linked to the likelihood of youths’ delinquent behavior.”(Stephen Demuth and Susan L. Brown, ‘Family Structure, Family Processes, and Adolescent Delinquency: The Significance of Parental Absence versus Parental Gender,’ *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 41, No.1 (February 2004): 58-81.) (“Family and Adolescent Well-being”, Family Facts, Accessed November 7, 2012, <http://www.familyfacts.org/briefs/34/family-and-adolescent-well-being>)
6. **“Substance Abuse.** Youths whose parents divorced are more likely to use illicit drugs than peers from intact families.”(Shanta R. Dube, ‘Childhood Abuse, Neglect, and Household Dysfunction and the Risk of Illicit Drug Use: The Adverse Experiences Study,’ *Pediatrics* 111, (2003): 564-572.) (“Family and Adolescent Well-being”, Family Facts, Accessed November 7, 2012, <http://www.familyfacts.org/briefs/34/family-and-adolescent-well-being>)
7. **“School Performance.** On average, compared with peers from intact families, adolescents living with a single mother or with mothers who were remarried or cohabiting experience more behavioral problems and lower levels of academic performance.” (Wendy Manning and Kathleen Lamb, ‘Adolescent Well-Being in Cohabiting, Married, and Single-Parent Families,’ *Journal of Marriage and Family* 65, (November 2003): 876-893.) (“Family and Adolescent Well-being”, Family Facts, Accessed November 7, 2012, <http://www.familyfacts.org/briefs/34/family-and-adolescent-well-being>)

8. **“High-Risk Behavior.** Parental divorce is associated with a greater likelihood of adolescents engaging in high-risk behavior.” (Kathleen B. Rodgers and Hillary A. Rose, ‘Risk and Resiliency Factors Among Adolescents Who Experience Marital Transitions,’ *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 64, No. 4 (2002): 1024-1037.) (“Family and Adolescent Well-being”, Family Facts, Accessed November 7, 2012, <http://www.familyfacts.org/briefs/34/family-and-adolescent-well-being>)
9. **“Psychological Disorders.** Family structure is related to the incidence of psychological disorders among adolescents.” (Steven P. Cuffe, Robert E. McKeown, Cheryl L. Addy, and Carol Z. Garrison, ‘Family and Psychosocial Risk Factors in a Longitudinal Epidemiological Study of Adolescents,’ *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry* 44, No. 2 (February 2005): 121-129.) (“Family and Adolescent Well-being”, Family Facts, Accessed November 7, 2012, <http://www.familyfacts.org/briefs/34/family-and-adolescent-well-being>)
10. **“Depression.** Family structure is associated with the incidence of depression among youths.” (K. Breivik and D. Olweus, ‘Adolescent’s Adjustment in Four Post-Divorce Family Structures: Single Mother, Stepfather, Joint Physical Custody and Single Father Families,’ *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage* 44, No. 3-4 (2006): 99-124.) (“Family and Adolescent Well-being”, Family Facts, Accessed November 7, 2012, <http://www.familyfacts.org/briefs/34/family-and-adolescent-well-being>)

Youth Who Are ‘Very Close’ To Their Parents Are:

- “more likely to feel ‘very satisfied’ with their life”
- “more likely to abstain from sexual intercourse”
- “more likely to espouse biblical standards of truth and morality”
- “more likely to attend church”
- “more likely to read their Bible consistently”
- “more likely to pray daily”

(Josh D. McDowell, “**The Father Connection,**” Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, p1996. – p6)

*This is a summary of Josh McDowell’s research titled **The Father Factor Portfolio.** You can access the entire 778-page documented research free at **Josh.org/fathers.***

Father factor portfolio vol 2 list

162 Reasons to Marry and Stay Married

(“Less than 50% of our children now reach the end of childhood in an intact married family according to the ‘The Second Annual Index of Family Belonging and Rejection’ 2011 study by Patrick F. Fagan and Nicholas Zill of the Marriage and Religion Research Institute.”)

Impact on Men

1. “Men raised in married families have more open, affectionate, and cooperative relationships with the women to whom they are attracted than do those from divorced families.”
2. “As fathers from always intact married families, men are more involved in their children’s homework than are stepfathers.”
3. “Married men have stronger employment status than cohabiting men.”
4. “Married men work more hours than cohabiting men.”
5. “Men’s productivity increases by 27% as a result of marriage.”
6. “Men enjoy a larger ‘wage premium’ (the financial gain men enjoy when they join a female partner) when they marry rather than cohabit.”
7. “For men the marriage premium produces an annual income increase of approximately .9%”
8. “Men who are married are less likely to commit crimes.”

9. "Men who are married are less likely to murder their partner than cohabiting men are."
10. "Married men are less likely to die of cirrhosis of the liver than never-married, divorced, and widowed men."
11. "After being diagnosed with prostate cancer, married men live longer."

Impact on Women

1. "When raised in intact married families have the lowest average number of out of wedlock pregnancies and births."
2. "When raised in stable married families are less likely to divorce."
3. "When raised in intact families are less likely to say they do not plan to have children."
4. "Married mothers report more love and intimacy in their romantic/spousal relationships than cohabiting or single mothers."
5. "When raised in intact married families are least likely to cohabit with their eventual first husband."
6. "When raised in intact marriages are least likely to have had a homosexual partner in the past year."
7. "Married mothers tend to have the most education, and are most likely to have obtained a Bachelor's degree or higher."
8. "Women in intact marriages have a higher income-to-needs ratio than women in any other family structure."
9. "Women who are married are less likely to be killed by their partner."
10. "Women who are married are less likely to be abused by their husband than cohabiting women are to be abused by their partner."
11. "Always-single mothers have higher domestic violence against then ever-married mothers."
12. "Women who are married are (37%) less likely to have been forced to perform a sexual act (9%) than unmarried women (46%)"

13. "Married women who are pregnant and non-Hispanic white or black are less likely to be physically abused than those who are divorced or separated."
14. "Married women are healthier than never-married, divorced, and separated women."
15. "Married women are less stressed."
16. "Married women's likelihood of becoming ill decreases the longer they are married."
17. "Married women with breast cancer are diagnosed earlier and have higher survival rates."
18. "Continuously married women aged 50-60 develop heart disease at a rate 60% lower than divorced women, 58% lower than remarried women, and 34% lower than widows."
19. "Married mothers practice better prenatal care and more consistently avoid harmful substances than unmarried mothers do."
20. "Married mothers are less likely to have low birth weight children than stably cohabiting mothers or mothers involved in a romantic relationship with their baby's father."
21. "Married African-American women who were themselves born to married mothers are less likely to have low birth weight children."
22. "Married women have significantly fewer abortions than unmarried women."
23. "Married mothers enjoy greater psychological well-being than cohabiting or single mothers."
24. "Married women experience less psychological distress."
25. "Married mothers feel less ambivalence and experience less conflict with their husbands than do cohabiting and single women with their partners."
26. "Married mothers report less depression, more support from their partners, and more stable relationships than cohabiting mothers."

27. "Married mothers of infants have the most positive attitudes and report forming better home environments than single and cohabiting mothers."
28. "Married women have fewer alcohol problems."
29. "Married mothers enjoy more social support than cohabiting or single mothers."

Impact on Children

1. "Those raised in married families have higher expectations of eventually marrying."
2. "Those raised in married families have more likely to be happily married."
3. "Those from intact married families are less likely to divorce."
4. "Children from intact married families are least likely to have intercourse before age 14."
5. "Children from intact married families are more likely to enter legal marriage as their first union than are those who experienced the disruption of their parent's marriage."
6. "Children raised in intact married families are less likely than those who have experienced marital disruption to cohabit before marrying."
7. "Young adults raised in happily married families are more religious than young adults raised in stepfamilies."
8. "Those who grew up in an intact married family are more likely than adults from non-intact family structures to attend religious services at least monthly."
9. "Those from married families are less likely to see religion decline in importance in their lives, less likely to begin attending church less frequently, and less likely to disassociate themselves from their religious affiliation."
10. "Children in intact marriage homes are more likely to receive help to do their homework than are children from stepfamilies or single-parent families."
11. "Children in intact marriage homes are receive more involvement from their fathers in their homework than stepfathers."

12. "Children of married parents are more engaged in school than children from all other family structures."
13. "Children from married households have higher cognitive scores and more self-control."
14. "Children in stable married families have higher academic expectations and test scores than those whose parents are in the process of divorcing."
15. "Children from intact married families are most likely to earn mostly A's in schools."
16. "Children in intact married families have the highest combined English and math grade point averages (GPAs)."
17. "Children from intact families exceed their parents' educational attainment (sons by 2.8 years, daughters by 2.5 years), after controlling for mother's level of education."
18. "Children from intact married families have the highest high school graduation rate."
19. "Those from married families are more likely to gain more education after graduating from high school than those from other family structures."
20. "Children from intact families have fewer behavioral problems in school."
21. "First-grade children born to married mothers are less likely to exhibit disruptive behavior, such as disobeying a teacher or behaving aggressively towards peers, than children born to cohabiting or single mothers."
22. "Adolescents from intact married families are less likely to be suspended, expelled, delinquent, or experience school problems than children from other family structures."
23. "Marriage between the biological single parents of impoverished children would move 70% of them immediately above the poverty line."
24. "Marriage decreases a child's chances of living in a low-income condition."
25. "Children from married families are less likely to experience poverty than children."

Impact on Boys

1. “Boys from intact families exceed their parents’ educational attainment (sons by 2.8 years.)”
2. “Boys raise in married families have higher expectations of eventually marrying.”
3. “Boys from intact married families are least likely to have intercourse before age 14.”
4. “See the MEN section for more reasons why boys in intact married families are happier, healthier, better adjusted, produce families which are law abiding, productive, and intelligent citizens.”

Impact on Girls

1. “When from intact families they are the least likely to have intercourse before age 18.”
2. “Adolescent girls in intact married families have a lower average number of sexual partners than adolescent girls in any other family structure.”

Developing Positive Relationships with Their Children Encourages:

1. “And motivates fathers to lead more constructive lives, even in the most difficult of circumstances.” (“Fatherhood in Crisis,” National Fatherhood Initiative, accessed August 21, 2014, <http://www.fatherhood.org/social-problems-in-america>)
2. “In the United States, about 25 million children are fatherless. These children become two-thirds of prison inmates and nine out of 10 of runaway children. They are 30 percent more likely to use drugs and alcohol. They are twice as likely to drop out of school.” (Angela Lu, “Boys to men”, World, June 16, 2012)
3. “Children of highly involved fathers show increased cognitive competence, increased empathy, enhanced school performance, greater motivation to succeed, enhanced social development and self-esteem, less sex-stereotyped beliefs, stronger sexual identity and character, and more intrinsic motivation.” (Stephen F. Duncan, PhD., “The Importance of Fathers,” Montguide, www.montana.edu/wwwpb/pubs/pubs.html)

4. "President Obama said: 'Nothing keeps a young man out of trouble like a father who takes an active role in his son's life.'" (Stephen Marche, "Manifesto of the New Fatherhood", Esquire, June 13, 2014, <http://www.esquire.com/blogs/news/manifesto-of-the-new-fatherhood-0614>)
5. "A father's love is just as, if not more, important to a child's emotional development as its mother's, a new study has revealed." ("Study shows loving father is vital for kids' development," The Christian Institute, June 28, 2012, <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/study-shows-loving-father-is-vital-for-kids-development/?e290612>)

The Outcomes for Children Whose Fathers Were Engaged

1. "Kids with involved fathers were better behaved. The studies suggested that children of involved fathers were less likely to smoke and had fewer behavioral problems as adolescents."
2. "Kids with involved fathers were less likely to be involved in crime. Less-advantaged boys with involved fathers demonstrated less aggressive behavior. The sons and daughters of engaged fathers were less likely to be involved in delinquency or crime."
3. "Kids with involved fathers were smarter. Premature infants in disadvantaged African-American families had higher IQs at age 3 if their fathers played with them and cared for them."
4. "Kids with involved fathers fared better as adults. They had better educational outcomes and social relations as adults. Daughters whose fathers read to them and paid attention to their education were less likely to suffer from depression as adults."

"This does not mean that children in families in which fathers are absent are destined to have a poor outlook. In some of the studies, a highly engaged father figure seemed to provide many of the same benefits to children. These father figures could include stepfathers and other men who live in the home."

(Paul Raeburn, "The Science Behind Why Involved Dads Rock", Parents, June 2014, <http://www.parents.com/parenting/dads/why-involved-dads-are-important/>)

“Kids with nurturing, involved fathers develop stronger social skills, are better at sharing, and make friends more easily.” (David Sparrow, “Yes, Margaret, Fathers Do Matter”, Parents, June 11, 2014, <http://www.parents.com/blogs/parents-perspective/2014/06/11/news/yes-margaret-fathers-do-matter/>)

Infants with highly involved fathers are more likely to be securely attached to them, to be curious, eager, and trusting in exploring the environment, and to react more competently to complex and new stimuli.

Sources:

Cox, M.J., Owen, M.T., Henderson, V.K., & Margand, N. (1992) The prediction of infant-father and infant-mother attachment. *Developmental Psychology*, 28, 474-483.

Biller, H.B. (1993). *Fathers and families: Paternal factors in child development*. Westport, Ct: Auburn House; Parke, R., & Swain, D. (1975). *Infant characteristics and behavior as elicitors or maternal and paternal responsiveness in the newborn period*. Paper presented at the meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Denver, CO. (“The Difference a Dad Makes – What Does International Research Say?” Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports, Singapore, November 2009)

“Children whose fathers are highly involved across diverse activities – such as joint activities, eating meals together, helping with homework and going on family outings – exhibit fewer child behavior problems and higher levels of sociability, and achieve higher levels of academic performance.” (Mosley, J., & Thompson, E. (1995). Fathering behavior and child outcomes: The role of race and poverty. In W. Marsiglio (ed.), *Fatherhood: Contemporary theory, research, and social policy* (pp148-165). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage) (“The Difference a Dad Makes – What Does International Research Say?” Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports, Singapore, November 2009)

“Both boys and girls with warm and nurturing fathers are more likely to have pro-social and positive moral behavior.” (Mosley, J., & Thompson, E. (1995). Fathering behavior and child outcomes: The role of race and poverty. In W. Marsiglio (Ed.), *Fatherhood: Contemporary theory, research, and social policy* (pp148-165). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage). (“The Difference a Dad Makes – What Does International Research Say?” Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports, Singapore, November 2009)

Children with Involved Fathers Are:

- “More confident and less anxious in unfamiliar settings”
- “Better able to deal with frustration”

- “Better able to gain a sense of independence and an identity outside the mother-child relationship”
- “More likely to mature into compassionate adults”
- “More likely to have higher self-esteem and grade point averages”
- “More sociable”

(www.fathers.com/1999gallup/fathertime, “The positive impact of father-time”)

Nurturing by A Father:

- “Helps fathers build close relationships with their children.”
- “Fosters psychological well-being and self-worth in their children.”
- “Provides children with a healthy model of masculinity.”
- “Helps protect girls from prematurely seeking the romantic and sexual attention of men.”

(Jeffrey Rosenberg and W. Bradford Wilcox, “The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children”, Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2006, <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/>)

Children from Fatherless Home Are:

- “5 times more likely to commit suicide,”
- “32 times more likely to run away,”
- “20 times more likely to have behavioral disorders,”
- “14 times more likely to commit rape,”
- “9 times more likely to drop out of high school,”
- “10 times more likely to abuse chemical substances,”

- “9 times more likely to end up in a state-operated institution,”
- “20 times more likely to end up in prison than children from homes with a mother and father present.”

(Halee Gray Scott, “When Dads Don’t Stay”, Christianity Today, June 2014, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/women/2014/june/when-dads-dont-stay.html?paging=off>)

Fatherlessness

1. “Forty-three percent of US children live without their father. You would expect that percentage in all areas of life — that 43% of any sub-set of the population comes from fatherless homes — unless there is either a specific benefit or problem with it.” (Source: March 26, 1999 where-daddy.com/fathers/fatherlessness.htm)
2. “90% of homeless and runaway children are from fatherless homes.” [US D.H.H.S., Bureau of the Census.] (Source: March 26, 1999 where-daddy.com/fathers/fatherlessness.htm)
3. “80% of rapists motivated with displaced anger come from fatherless homes.” [Criminal Justice & Behaviour, Vol 14, pp. 403-26, 1978.] (Source: March 26, 1999 where-daddy.com/fathers/fatherlessness.htm)
4. “60% of repeat rapists grew up without fathers.” (Source: “Raymond A. Knight and Robert A. Prentky, “The Developmental Antecedents of Adult Adaptations of Rapist Sub-Types,” Criminal Justice and Behavior, Vol 14, Dec., 1987, p 403-426.”) (Source: March 26, 1999 where-daddy.com/fathers/fatherlessness.htm)
5. “71% of pregnant teenagers lack a father.” [U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services press release, Friday, March 26, 1999.] (Source: March 26, 1999 where-daddy.com/fathers/fatherlessness.htm)
6. “63% of youth suicides are from fatherless homes.” [U.S. D.H.H.S., Bureau of the Census.] (Source: March 26, 1999 where-daddy.com/fathers/fatherlessness.htm)
7. “90% of all homeless and runaway children are from fatherless homes.” (Courtesy of Mark Hall, Fathers Manifesto, “Fatherless homes Breed Violence,” <http://www.fathermag.com/news/2778-stats.shtml>)

8. "85% of children who exhibit behavioral disorders come from fatherless homes." [Center for Disease Control.] (Source: March 26, 1999 where-daddy.com/fathers/fatherlessness.htm)
9. "90% of adolescent repeat arsonists live with only their mother." [Wray Herbert, 'Dousing the Kindlers,' Psychology Today, January, 1985, p.28.] (Source: March 26, 1999 where-daddy.com/fathers/fatherlessness.htm)
10. "71% of high school dropouts come from fatherless homes." [National Principals Association Report on the State of High Schools.] (Source: March 26, 1999 where-daddy.com/fathers/fatherlessness.htm)
11. "75% of adolescent patients in chemical abuse centers come from fatherless homes." [Rainbows for all God's Children.] (Source: March 26, 1999 where-daddy.com/fathers/fatherlessness.htm)
12. "70% of juveniles in state operated institutions have no father." [U.S. Dept. of Justice, Special Report, Sept. 1988.] (Source: March 26, 1999 where-daddy.com/fathers/fatherlessness.htm)
13. "75% of prisoners grew up without a father." (Source: Daniel Amneus, *The Garbage Generation*, Alhambra, CA: Primrose Press, 1990.) (Source: March 26, 1999 where-daddy.com/fathers/fatherlessness.htm)
14. "85% of youths in prisons grew up in a fatherless home." [Fulton Co. Georgia jail populations, Texas Dept. of Corrections, 1992.] (Source: March 26, 1999 where-daddy.com/fathers/fatherlessness.htm)
15. "Fatherless boys and girls are: twice as likely to drop out of high school; twice as likely to end up in jail; four times more likely to need help for emotional or behavioral problems." (Source: U.S. DHHS news release, March 26, 1999) (Source: where-daddy.com/fathers/fatherlessness.htm)

Children from fatherless homes are:

- "4.6 times more likely to commit suicide,"
- "6.6 times more likely to become teenaged mothers (if they are girls, of course),"
- "24.3 times more likely to run away,"

- “15.3 times more likely to have behavioral disorders,”
- “6.3 times more likely to be in a state-operated institutions,”
- “10.8 times more likely to commit rape,”
- “6.6 times more likely to drop out of school,”
- “15.3 times more likely to end up in prison while a teenager.”

(“The calculation of the relative risks shown in the preceding list is based on 27% of children being in the care of single mothers.”) (“Children of Divorce and Separation – Statistics,” www.fathersforlife.org/divoce/chldrndiv.htm. “Common Sense & Domestic Violence,” 1998 01 30.)

“...compared to children who are in the care of two biological, married parents — children who are in the care of single mothers are:”

- “33 times more likely to be seriously abused (so that they will require medical attention), and”
- “73 times more likely to be killed.” (“Children of Divorce and Separation – Statistics,” www.fathersforlife.org/divoce/chldrndiv.htm. “Common Sense & Domestic Violence,” 1998 01 30.)

The Time A Father Spends with His Children Is Important For At Least Three Reasons.

1. “...enables a father to get to know and to be known by his child.”
2. “...makes a father more sensitive to his child 's needs for love, attention, direction, and discipline.” (Almeida, D.M., Wethington, E., & McDonald, D.A. (2001). Daily variation in paternal engagement and negative mood: Implications for emotionally supportive and conflictual interactions. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 63, 417-429; Coltrane, S. (1996). *Family man: Fatherhood, housework, and gender equity*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press; Snarey, J. (1993). *How fathers care for the next generation: A four-decade study*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press)

3. "...children often do see time as an indicator of a parent's love for them."

("The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children", September, 2006, <http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/>)

Top Ten Father Facts on Time With Dad

1. "24 million children (34 percent) live absent their biological father." (Wade F. Horn, Ph.D. and Tom Sylvester, "Father Facts – Fourth Edition," National Fatherhood Initiative, 2002 National Fatherhood Initiative. – p15)
2. "Nearly 20 million children (27 percent) live in single-parent homes." (Wade F. Horn, Ph.D. and Tom Sylvester, "Father Facts – Fourth Edition," National Fatherhood Initiative, 2002 National Fatherhood Initiative. – p15)
3. "1.35 million births (33 percent of all births) in 2000 occurred out of wedlock." (Wade F. Horn, Ph.D. and Tom Sylvester, "Father Facts – Fourth Edition," National Fatherhood Initiative, 2002 National Fatherhood Initiative. – p15)
4. "43 percent of first marriages dissolve within fifteen years; about 60 percent of divorcing couples have children; and approximately one million children each year experience the divorce of their parents." (Wade F. Horn, Ph.D. and Tom Sylvester, "Father Facts – Fourth Edition," National Fatherhood Initiative, 2002 National Fatherhood Initiative. – p15)
5. "Over 3.3 million children live with an unmarried parent and the parent's cohabiting partner. The number of cohabiting couples with children has nearly doubled since 1990, from 891,000 to 1.7 million today." (Wade F. Horn, Ph.D. and Tom Sylvester, "Father Facts – Fourth Edition," National Fatherhood Initiative, 2002 National Fatherhood Initiative. – p15)
6. "Fathers who live with their children are more likely to have a close, enduring relationships with their children than those who do not. The best predictor of father presence is marital status. Compared to children born within marriage, children born to cohabiting parents are three times as likely to experience father absence, and children born to unmarried, non-cohabiting parents are four times as likely to live in a father-absent home." (Wade F. Horn, Ph.D. and

Tom Sylvester, "Father Facts – Fourth Edition," National Fatherhood Initiative, 2002 National Fatherhood Initiative. – p15)

7. "About 40 percent of children in father-absent homes have not seen their father at all during the past year; 26 percent of absent fathers live in a different state than their children; and 50 percent of children living absent their father have never set foot in their father's home." (Wade F. Horn, Ph.D. and Tom Sylvester, "Father Facts – Fourth Edition," National Fatherhood Initiative, 2002 National Fatherhood Initiative. – p15)
8. "Children who live absent their biological fathers are, on average, at least two to three times more likely to be poor, to use drugs, to experience educational, health, emotional and behavioral problems, to be victims of child abuse, and to engage in criminal behavior than those who live with their married, biological (or adoptive) parents." (Wade F. Horn, Ph.D. and Tom Sylvester, "Father Facts – Fourth Edition," National Fatherhood Initiative, 2002 National Fatherhood Initiative. – p15)
9. "From 1960 to 1995, the proportion of children living in single-parent homes tripled, from 9 percent to 27 percent, and the proportion of children living with married parents declined. However, from 195 to 2000, the proportion of children living in single-parent homes slightly declined, while the proportion of children living with two married parents remained stable." (Wade F. Horn, Ph.D. and Tom Sylvester, "Father Facts – Fourth Edition," National Fatherhood Initiative, 2002 National Fatherhood Initiative. – p15)
10. "Children with involved, loving fathers are significantly more likely to do well in school, have healthy self-esteem, exhibit empathy and pro-social behavior, and avoid high-risk behaviors such as drug use, truancy, and criminal activity compared to children who have uninvolved fathers." (Wade F. Horn, Ph.D. and Tom Sylvester, "Father Facts – Fourth Edition," National Fatherhood Initiative, 2002 National Fatherhood Initiative. – p15)

Children with Involved Fathers Are:

1. "More confident and less anxious in unfamiliar settings;"
2. "Better able to gain a sense of interdependence;"

3. "More likely to mature into compassionate adults;"
4. "More likely to have higher self-esteem;"
5. "Higher grade point averages;"
6. "More sociable."

(National Center for Fathering survey data of 2,066 fathers, Father, Fathering in America.)

"Benefits for Children of Involved Fathers:"

- "They are more likely to mature into compassionate adults."
- "They are more likely to have higher self-esteems and grade point averages."
- "They are more sociable."

(Source: Marilyn Elias, "Dad's Role Crucial to Caring Kids," USA Today, 30 May 1990, 1A.) ("Importance of Fathers," www.fathers.com/help/importance.html.)

*This is a summary of Josh McDowell's research titled **The Father Factor Portfolio**. You can access the entire 778-page documented research free at **Josh.org/fathers**.*

Effects of Father Absence

1. "Millions of father-absent or father-neglect families carry on successfully. But few would say that they would not be stronger by having two caring and cooperative parents. The importance of fathers to the well-being of children is clearly shown by the variety of negative effects experienced by children of father-absent families, as reported by research." (Source: McLanahan, S. & K. Booth, (1989, 1994) Mother-only Families: Problems, Prospects, and Politics. Journal of Marriage and the Family 51, 557-580.) ("Importance of Fathers," www.fathers.com/help/importance.html.)
2. "Half of the mother-only families live below the poverty line." ("Importance of Fathers," www.fathers.com/help/importance.html.)

3. "The income of mothers in single-parent families one year after divorce is 67% of what it was prior to divorce, while income of divorced men falls to around 90% of pre-divorce income." ("Importance of Fathers," www.fathers.com/help/importance.html.)
4. "Mother-only families move more frequently than two-parent families, subjecting the family to more adjustment stress and less stability in neighborhood relationships." ("Importance of Fathers," www.fathers.com/help/importance.html.)
5. "Adolescents from mother-only families are more likely to be sexually active, and daughters are more likely to become single-parent mothers." ("Importance of Fathers," www.fathers.com/help/importance.html.)
6. "Adolescents report receiving less help with homework and make decisions under less parental supervision in general than do adolescents from two-parent families." ("Importance of Fathers," www.fathers.com/help/importance.html.)
7. "Adolescents in mother-only families report being more susceptible to peer pressure than adolescents in two-parent families." ("Importance of Fathers," www.fathers.com/help/importance.html.)
8. "Adolescents in mother-only families are more likely to commit delinquent acts." ("Importance of Fathers," www.fathers.com/help/importance.html.)
9. "Children from mother-only families did less well on standardized tests of cognitive development. Their difference in comparison to children from two-parent families was even greater on teacher evaluations such as grade-point averages and reports of behavioral problems in schools and with peers." ("Importance of Fathers," www.fathers.com/help/importance.html.)
10. "Absence from school was higher for children from mother-only families." ("Importance of Fathers," www.fathers.com/help/importance.html.)
11. "Girls from mother-only families are more likely to become depressed during adolescence and also express more aggression than other girls." ("Importance of Fathers," www.fathers.com/help/importance.html.)

12. “Young adults who grew up in mother-only families were more likely to drop out of high school.” (“Importance of Fathers,” www.fathers.com/help/importance.html.)
13. “Young adults who grew up in mother-only families have lower earnings; girls are more likely to receive welfare.” (“Importance of Fathers,” www.fathers.com/help/importance.html.)
14. “Young adults from mother-only families are more likely to divorce.” (“Importance of Fathers,” www.fathers.com/help/importance.html.)
15. “Young adults from mother-only families are more likely to commit delinquent acts and to engage in drug and alcohol use than offspring from two-parent families.” (“Importance of Fathers,” www.fathers.com/help/importance.html.)
16. “A major population-based study from Sweden – that is, a focusing on all Swedish children – concludes that children living in one-parent homes have more than double the risk of psychiatric disease, suicide or attempted suicide, and alcohol-related disease, and more than three times the risk of drug-related disease, compared to Swedish children living in two-parent homes. These findings remained after the scholars controlled for a wide range of demographic and socioeconomic variables.” (Gunilla Ringback Weitoft et al., “Mortality, severe morbidity, and injury in children living with single parents in Sweden: a population-based study,” *The Lancet* 361 (January 2003): 289-295.)

Twenty Long-Distance Activities for Dads at A Distance

“The Dads at a Distance Web site has been designed to help fathers who are business travelers, military men, noncustodial fathers, airline pilots, travel guides, traveling salesmen, railroad workers, truckers, professional athletes, musicians/entertainers, actors, corporate executives, and any other fathers who have to be away from their children to maintain and strengthen the relationships they have with their children while they are away.”

1. "Go to the mall and have a photo of yourself put on a pillow case and then send it to your child. If you have a favorite cologne, you might want to put a little bit on the pillowcase to remind your child of you."
2. "Purchase or make stickers of your child's name and stick them over the names of a character in one of their favorite books. You also can get a picture of your child's face and place it over the character's face."
3. "Make a video or audiotape of you reading bedtime stories. Send them to your child along with the book."
4. "Arrange for flowers or pizza to be delivered to your child before or after a special event (e.g., a play, recital, or sports game). Include a note telling them how proud you are of their accomplishment."
5. "Send a package containing all the things your child will need if he or she gets sick. For example, you could send a can of chicken noodle soup, a special blanket or pillowcase, a video or audiotape wishing them a speedy recovery, crossword puzzles, or a stuffed animal."
6. "Send home a photo documentary of what you do all day when you are away. Be sure to include things like what you eat and how you travel." "Things that you might think are boring, your kids will be very interested in seeing. Have your child do the same."
7. Have a star officially named after your child."
8. "Send a postcard attack. (Send a postcard every day for a week straight; try to send postcards from unique places.)"
9. "If both you and your child have access to cell phones, then go fishing with them from a distance."
10. "Include surprises within your letters: fast food wrappers, foreign currency, pencil shavings, coasters, Band-Aids, your own art, flower petals, Sunday comics, sand, fortunes from cookies, newspaper clippings, stamps, or old shoe laces."
11. "If both you and your child have access to the Internet, then go on a virtual field trip together. Be sure to use a chat program so you can communicate with each other while looking at the Web sites. A couple of places to start would be

NASA's Web site at <http://www.nasa.gov> or the PBS Web site at <http://www.pbs.org>."

12. "Find unique things to write your letters on, for example, things your child likes—a favorite color of paper, stickers, or pictures of things they like; fun objects—coaster, napkins, paper tray liners at restaurants, air sickness bags, old handkerchiefs, or pictures of you or of favorite spots; paper cut into special shapes (holiday shapes like shamrocks or hearts); or puzzles (cut your finished letter into pieces; try sending one piece at a time)."
13. "Send home some money so that your child can go to the ice cream parlor. Be sure to send a special letter along that can only be read at the ice cream parlor. If you both have access to cell phones, then you can both be at an ice cream parlor talking over your ice cream."
14. "Write a newsletter (have a regular issue of your own family newsletter with columns about each child, family events, and exciting news)."
15. "If your child does not already have access to a speakerphone, then buy one. Set the phone in the middle of the room, and you will be able to have dinner with them, be there as they brush their teeth, and get ready for bed."
16. "Start a letter and take it with you throughout the day. Add a sentence every now and then and be sure to add where you are when you write the different sentences (i.e., an elevator, taxi, or café)."
17. "Play Internet games together like Jeopardy or Wheel of Fortune. Other games that can be found on the Internet include golf, card games, chess, checkers, and strategy games."
18. "Make a package that contains cookie cutters and the non-perishable ingredients of your child's favorite cookie so you can 'help' them bake while you are away."
19. "Choose a photo from your photo album that you can send to your child and then write a letter explaining the events surrounding it. Also, if both you and your child have access to the Internet, have a family home page."
20. "Begin a life's lessons booklet. Each week write down a few of the lessons you have learned in life and how you learned those lessons. When the booklet is

full, send it to your child to use as he or she begins or continues the journey of life.”

“Before you leave home next time, hide some treasure (notes of appreciation, videos of you reading stories, candy, or toys) around the house. Be sure to draw a treasure map of where you have hidden these things, and then mail it home. If your child has a portable phone, then you can talk to them and give hints as they hunt for the treasure. If you are not living with your child, you can still do this activity by mailing the treasures ahead of time to the person who is taking care of your child.” (P110)

“More activities and resources for long distance dads and their families can be found at Dads at a Distance Web site at <http://www.daads.com>.”

(Jeffrey Rosenberg & W. Bradford Wilcox, “The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children”, U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services; Administration for Children and Families; Administration on Children, Youth, and Families; Children’s Bureau; Office on Child Abuse and Neglect; Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2006, https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/append_e_6.cfm)

THE PRODIGAL SON – FACT: PARENTS, YOUNG AND OLD, ARE ENABLERS...TO GOOD OR TO EVIL

“Take a few minutes to look over what might be a new perspective of a familiar parable of Christ, the story of the Prodigal son. Read Luke 15:11-24 in your favorite Bible. Consider as you read that parents enable their children to good or to evil. The Bible is chock-full of tremendous stories, examples, and teachings on touching the lives of those coming after us.”

“Notice 7 things about the father and his house.”

1. “The youngest of two sons desired his inheritance, and the father divided his living among both of his sons (v.12). He enabled them both to make choices.”
2. “The youngest son had contemplated leaving to make a name for himself; yet, he did not leave immediately. The entire house was aware of the moment. The father would express the freedom of choice, the consequence of poor choices, and the openness of the house without compromise of the boundaries of the home (v.13). The father enabled the sons for choices in the immediate and in the future.”

3. “Riotous living always leads to famine. The son had spent all about him and now had spent all that was in him (v.14-16).”
4. ““He came to himself” (v.16)...he awakened to the value of a father with uncompromising rules and boundaries; yet, a home doused in grace, love, and strength. The son knew His father’s love and house would enable his recovery.”
5. “The son repented unto heaven and then to his father. He was not just a son returning for another fix or in search of a father who would soothe unrepentive wounds. No, he was not coming for repetitious prayers, religiousness, or sympathy...he was coming home to submit. There is a lot of pig slop between ‘Father, give me’ and ‘Father, make me’ (v.19). Boundaries and grace enabled the rebirth.”
6. “The father had been minding the road for sometime. I have a hunch he had servants checking on the wayward son but these servants would have been told not to rescue the son until repentance had full sway. God’s grace and strength enabled the father!”
7. ““My son who was dead is alive again’ (v.24, 32) The father had never disowned the son; but, the unrepentive actions of the son had severed the son to a state of death. The father’s grace, love, and boundaries enabled the son to find a rebirth. (see Jer. 3:14)”

“What your children and lineage may do or partake in outside of your home as adults is really beyond your dominion; however, what they do in your home is where you carry the brunt of responsibility for enabling. As long as you draw breath, you carry enabling powers for those after you. You never stop parenting till the Father calls you home, and parenting is enabling.”

(Timothy M. Schroeder, “Fact: Parents, Young and Old, are Enablers...to Good or to Evil,” CASA Network, accessed January 14, 2015, <http://gocasa.org/2013/01/08/choosing-to-be-a-child-of-issachar/>)

4 Keys to College Success

1. “Involved fathers may provide children with homework help, counsel, or knowledge that helps them excel in school.”

2. “Involved fathers may help children steer clear of risky behaviors—from delinquency to teenage pregnancy—that might prevent them from completing college.”
3. “Involved fathers may help foster an authoritative family environment (characterized by an appropriate mix of engagement, affection, and supervision) that is generally conducive to learning
4. “Involved fathers may be more likely to provide financial support to children seeking a college education. However, some other unmeasured factor such as a high-quality marriage or a child’s personality traits may account for the association documented here between high levels of paternal involvement and the odds that a young adult graduates from college.”

(W. Bradford Wilcox, “A Key to College Success: Involved Dads”, The Atlantic, April 22, 2014, <http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2014/04/the-key-to-college-success-involved-dads/361009/>)

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7A’s



7A's - Steps to a Loving Family

7 A's – Steps to a Loving Family Relationship

by Josh D. & Dottie McDowell

There are no guarantees. None! You can be the greatest parent in the world and do everything right, but there's absolutely no guarantee that your child won't grow up and walk away from you or walk away from his or her faith.

However, if we build a relationship with that child, the chance of that ultimate rebellion happening is very small. What usually brings children back is not all the truth you've taught but what kind of relationship you have built with them.

Although you may be experiencing a rocky relationship with your child right now, it's never too late to start where you are. We must connect with our kids **relationally** to overcome their resistance to our guidance and instruction.

We can apply biblical principles that provide relational connecting points to meet real needs in our kids' lives. These points, represented by the following seven "A's," help shape our young people mentally, emotionally, and spiritually to be receptive to right thinking and behavior, thus avoiding the traps of the culture around them.

1. Affirmation



One of the most effective ways of identifying with your children, even when you don't fully understand them, is to affirm their feelings. To **affirm** means to “validate or confirm.”

When we affirm the feelings of our young people, we give them a sense of authenticity.

“When others are happy, be happy with them. If they are sad, share their sorrow.” (Romans 12:15 NLT)

Affirming their feelings tells them that they are real individuals with valid feelings. When we identify with their feelings of excitement or disappointment, we let them know that we care and that they are understood for who they really are – authentic human beings.

Dottie had an encounter with another mom which reinforces just how important affirmation is to our kids and especially how critical it is when it comes from the father.

“Yesterday I talked to a very discouraged California mother of a teenage boy. She shared that he had just gotten his driver's permit and was beginning to drive. She and her husband had taken him out to practice driving, and he did beautifully. This conscientious mom wanted to capture the moment to encourage her son, so she said something like, "Great job! I'm proud of how carefully you're driving!" Then she nudged her husband to encourage him to say something positive, but he got angry at her, conveying that it is silly to say something that he felt was simply so obvious.

This mom was very discouraged. She said he almost never affirms their son and spends a great amount of time in conflict with him, griping and emphasizing his faults and any mistakes, rather than praising him. She described her son as an excellent student, a leader in his youth group, and excellent in sports. She said he appears confident and outgoing to everyone else, but underneath she knows he is suffering, because he is getting no affirmation from the most important man in his life — his dad.

After mulling over this conversation, Dottie has some pertinent questions for dads along with some important words of advice.

Dads, do you see that this dad is missing the boat? Do you see that he is missing opportunities to encourage his son? I urge you not to make this same mistake. Choose to be a dad who looks for opportunities to affirm your children. It is a decision that will pay off for the rest of your life and the lives of your children. I'm so glad my dad and my husband made this choice. I hope you will, too."

2. Acceptance



Your acceptance helps your kids believe that you will still love them no matter what happens. Acceptance is embracing people for **who** they are rather than for **what** they do.

When we accept young people for who they are, we give them a sense of security.

“So, accept each other just as Christ has accepted you; then God will be glorified.” (Romans 15:7 NLT)

When your young people feel accepted by you, they are more likely to be vulnerable and transparent, opening up greater trust between you and your child.

Acceptance becomes real to us when we can point to a situation where someone demonstrated unconditional acceptance to us. It is then we know how important it is to show other that same acceptance, especially to our children. Dottie experience this in another situation involving teens behind the wheel; in this situation, she was the teen.

“I have so many memories of my folks telling me, “Dorothy, don't ever forget this: There is nothing that you could ever do – NOTHING! – that could cause us to stop loving you.” They told me this over and over when I was growing up, and it was simply “normal” for me to hear those words.

OK...Fast forward to one day when I was 16 and had just gotten my driver’s license. I was driving home from my best friend's house and clearly recall approaching a busy intersection and telling myself, “Be careful. This is a really busy intersection so be careful turning left”.

The next thing I knew, my car and a little Volkswagen bug collided and I was sitting, unhurt, in a destroyed car stuck in the middle of an intersection. To this day, I honestly don't have the slightest idea How it happened! But to say that I was shook up – and extremely embarrassed HOW it – was an enormous understatement.

Somehow, I managed to climb out of the car and was rescued by a really nice lady from the drug store right there on the corner. She had seen the whole thing and offered to take me in to the store so that I could call my folks.

Well, that wasn't the easiest phone call to make. I had just totaled the car! I reached my mom and told her what happened and where I was. She called my dad, who immediately dropped everything and raced right over there to meet me. When he arrived, I was NEVER so happy to see anyone in my life! He gave the police all the information that they needed and took me home.

I want you to know that my Dad kept telling me that the ONLY thing that mattered was that I was OK and not hurt. He NEVER ONCE asked me what in the world I was thinking, if I had been "watching" the road, if the radio was on – or was too loud, HOW I could have done this, or ANY other "logical" question that a dad might ask a 16-year-old who had just wrecked the car. Never once did he mention how expensive the car was or that this would cause our insurance rates to go up! To this very day (and my dad is now 88 years old) he has only expressed how happy he was that I wasn't hurt.

This was a concrete and compassionate demonstration of unconditional acceptance. If I ever felt like I needed acceptance, (and not a lecture or a million questions!) it was on that day! Do your kids know that you accept them unconditionally? They need to know.”

3. **A**ppreciation



While acceptance is the foundation for a secure relationship, appreciation can be considered a cornerstone. Appreciation conveys to young people that they are valued and their accomplishments make a difference.

When we express appreciation to young people, we give them a sense of significance – the feeling or thought that they’ve done or said something worthwhile.

“And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my beloved Son, and I am fully pleased with him.’” (Matthew 3:17 NLT)

While acceptance of young people tells them that their **being** matters, expressing our appreciation to them says that their **doing** matters, too.

Catch your children doing something right and show appreciation. I’m convinced that the more I caught my three daughters and son doing things right and expressed appreciation, the less there was to catch them doing things wrong.

The practice Dottie and I had as parents showing appreciation for right behaviors with our children is now being carried out with the next generation as Dottie expresses appreciation to our grandson.

“When I think of communicating appreciation to children, I think of our 3- year-old grandson, Scottie James. He’s a wonderful big brother to his 4- month-old little sister, Shauna! But, like most preschoolers, he’s a bit rough and tough with his baby sister when he’s trying to

express affection to her. He'll hug her – and I'll wonder if she'll make it out alive! He'll kiss her and I hold my breath! I sometimes feel like a referee when they are together – with my primary objective just to keep the baby safe! But this is where we, as adults, have ideal opportunities! When an older sibling does express sincere tenderness toward the new baby, it's our big chance to communicate appreciation and pride. You know how much we as adults enjoy heartfelt appreciation? Imagine how motivating it is to a three-year-old! So, when I see Scottie James being tender to his sister, I say something like, "Wow Scottie! Grammy is SO-0-0-0 proud of how gentle you are with your baby! You are such a big boy and such a remarkable brother. I sure am proud of you!" Experience has taught me that, even though it may take time, this expression of appreciation should help to motivate Scottie and encourage continued gentle behavior."

4. Affection



Expressing affection to our kids through loving words and appropriate touch communicates that they are worth loving.

When we show affection to young people, we give them a sense of lovability.

“Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is born of God and knows God.” (I John 4:7 NLT)

Every expression of care and closeness provides emotional reinforcement, helping kids realize that they are loved.

Affection can be expressed verbally and through appropriate physical expression. We can say “I love you,” to our children through a variety of verbal expressions which I made my goal to do with each of my children, either in person or over the phone, ten times a day. Appropriate physical expression is conveyed through a hug, kiss, peck on the cheek, arm around the shoulder, embrace, or holding their hand.

Affection speaks volumes to our children. Dottie’s mother had a way of verbally expressing affection to her that made such an impact. It modeled the way Dottie shows affection to our children today. I thank God it has made an indelible impression on our kids, as well. Each one of our children know they are deeply loved.

“My mom was a genius at communicating affection to her children. She had so many creative ways to let us know how much she delighted in each one of us. ONE very powerful thing that she ALWAYS did was

to warmly greet us EVERY time we'd walk into her presence. It didn't matter if we had been gone 5 hours or 5 minutes. The moment we'd walk in from being away from her, she'd grab that opportunity to communicate her delight in seeing us. She's greet us with an enthusiastic hello, A BIG HUG, and always express eagerness to listen to anything we had to say.

What did this communicate to me? It was a very clear message that my mom was happy to just BE with me, AND that she was eager to know what was important to me. Did this help me understand that I was lovable and treasured?

Absolutely!

So, Because of my mom's example, when we had our children, I did the same thing that she had done. It made perfect sense to me – I had seen it modeled myself.

I didn't think too much about it until 3 or 4 years ago when one of our daughters was asked to introduce me at a speaking engagement that I had. In the course of that introduction, she mentioned that every time she'd come into a room where I was, I'd greet her enthusiastically and affectionately. She then shared how much it always meant to her. I was grateful for my mother's affectionate example to consistently communicate to her children how important we were to her - with words and hugs. Let me encourage you to do the same. Be yourself. Do it your own way. But, look at each time your children appear as an opportunity to remind them how much they are cherished and adored by you. I don't believe that you can overdo it if it is done sincerely. Hey! Life is too short NOT to do this!"

5. Availability



Expressing affirmation, acceptance, appreciation, and affection to our kids is critical, but we can only do that if we make ourselves available to them.

When we make ourselves available to young people, we give them a sense of importance in our lives.

“The Lord is close to all who call on Him, yes, to all who call on Him sincerely.” (Psalm 145:18 NLT)

When we’re not available, we are in essence saying, “Yes, I love you, but other things still come ahead of you.” You see, kids spell love **T-I-M-E**.

My wife, Dottie, is one of the wisest women I know. Once when my children were young, she lovingly confronted me and said, “Honey, you’re not available to our children. You don’t spend time with them, and you will deeply regret it later in life.”

She went on to share what I think is some of the greatest wisdom a person has ever shared with me. She said, “If you spend time with your children now, they’ll spend time with you later. If you love them now, they’ll love you later. If you talk to them now, they’ll listen to you later. If you listen to your children now, they will talk to you later. If you hug them now, they will hug you later.”

Being there when your young people need you will not only tell them that they are important to you, it will keep you relationally connected to them.

We have our own agenda as to how we plan to spend our time, and then there is God's agenda for how He wants us to spend our time. When we look back, it is at those times when we chose God's agenda over our own that we are most blessed. Dottie has a particularly fond memory of making time for Heather at an important time in her life.

"You know, our kids want and need us to be available to them no matter what ages they are! They NEVER stop hoping that we will reach out to involve and include them in our ideas, our plans, our affection,....OR, that we will be available to welcome their ideas, their plans and their affection

It is a two way street, but must first be initiated by us ... the adults, the parents.

This summer has been really busy. Last month I was home for a total of three days, in between several trips I took with Josh. Those three days were in a row, in the middle of one week. I had big plans for that short time. I needed to unpack, do laundry, iron, repack, visit the post office, the bank, the drug store, Target, the doctor, etc. etc. etc. ...

As soon as I got home, our daughter Heather called excited about moving into her first house as a college senior. She asked if I would take a day to help her move in, get some furniture for her room and get her settled. In a flash, my mind raced to what I had to accomplish during that 72-hour period before I could leave on the next trip. I wondered if I could pull off what I needed to do in two days instead of three! But, after a quick tug-of-war in my mind, I knew that being with Heather was far more important.

She came home, picked me up, and we set off to find a mattress for a bed someone had given her. Then we searched at the Salvation Army, Good Will store and second-hand shops to find some furniture. (Remember, she had the budget of a college kid!). To our delight, we found an old dresser for \$46 and some matching end tables for \$10 each! We then

headed to Home Depot for paint, paint brushes, sandpaper, a drop cloth and those fashionable Home Depot caps so that we could transform this furniture into pieces of art. We sanded, scraped, and prepared the items to be painted. And! Wow! If I do say so myself, they turned out amazing! She has an adorable room in her first house (which she shares with 5 other girls), and I got to be a part of it!

It makes me sad to think of what I would have missed if I had chosen to do the "pressing" things I thought I had to do during those three days home.

Maybe I didn't have my clothes as well organized as I had hoped I would for the next trip, and maybe I wasn't able to get everything I felt like I needed at the drug store. But, in light of eternity, which was more important? I now have the precious memory of sharing the excitement my daughter had of moving into her first house and the memory of her saying to me, "Thanks, Mom! There is no one else in the world I would have rather done this with than you!" The memory of that day will last a lifetime. Racing to the drug store, organizing my suitcases and running to the post office to go through piles and piles of mail would have been forgotten the next day. Make a choice to be available to your kids, no matter what ages they are! The benefits last forever."

6. Approach



We need to find out what is significant to our kids, no matter how old they are (it changes with age, of course), and then step into that world...or...approach their world. God, through Jesus, approached our world, and we need to apply that same principle with our young people.

When we approach our children's world, we say to them, "I care about you and what you are interested in."

"Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. Love does not demand its own way. Love is not irritable, and it keeps no record of when it has been wronged. It is never glad about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance." (I Corinthians 13:4-7) When we step into their world, it shows them we care about what they care about. That is the beginning of family and relationships.

Dottie knows how important it has always been for me to be the kind of dad my kids need, even when I didn't know exactly what that meant since it had never been modeled for me by my own father. I thank God for healthy role models who taught me how to enter my kids' worlds.

"My mother always said (and I quote), "A person will raise his or her children the way that he or she was raised, unless that person is reprogrammed." Let me repeat that: "A person will raise his or her children the way that he or she was raised unless that person is reprogrammed".

My husband is an amazing example of someone who CHOSE to be reprogrammed and CHOSE to end the pattern of dysfunction in which

he was raised. He was definitely NOT raised in an encouraging environment where there were positive role models. When he became a dad, he had to start from scratch in learning ways to relate to and encourage his children.

Josh wanted to be an effective dad.... and he was determined. So, he understood that the best way to do that would be to jump into his children's worlds. Because he didn't have models growing up, he became a student of healthy families, watching the way that dads – whom he respected – would interact with their children, watching my own dad, and reading book after book. He made a decision to listen to his kids, to observe what was important to them, and to jump into their worlds. I saw him go anywhere our kids were! For a dad who was on the road a great deal, he was the dad who came to their events more than ANY of the other dads who never even traveled at all. He pursued the things that captivated their hearts, whether it was basketball or ANY school sport, raising goats, youth group activities, collecting Star Wars figures, tea parties, shopping, coloring, snowmobiling or jumping on beds, etc. He was there for his kids and let them know, in many creative ways, that he was interested in their worlds.

One time our son Sean was playing an important high school basketball game. Josh was in Russia, but flew 17 hours home for the game, and the moment it was over, raced back to LAX to travel the 17 hours back.

Another time he flew in from Europe and literally, the moment he got home, took Katie and several of her junior high friends to Disneyland. If you've ever flown overseas, you can appreciate how exhausting that would be! Another time, at their request, Josh let Kelly and her best friend design his hair any way they wanted and then took them out to dinner, showing off his wild hairdo. That took real courage, but he became a hero to the girls! Another time, the very day that Heather lost her dog, he took her right out to get a new puppy.

I'm so proud of Josh and the decisions he made, in spite of the fact that he never saw these things modeled. He chose to put his kids before his work and before his own interests. It paid off in the lives of our children. Fathers, have you made that decision with your children? It won't be long before they're gone and you can't go back. You'll always have work. You won't always have little people whom you can impact in a way that only you, as their dad, can."

7. Accountability



To connect relationally with our children, we need to show them affirmation, acceptance, appreciation, affection, availability and a sincere enthusiasm to approach their world. Still, if we do not balance these relational connecting points with loving limits and boundaries, young people will not learn responsibility.

When we provide loving accountability to our young people, we give them a sense of responsibility.

“Yes, each of us will have to give a personal account to God.” (Romans 14:12 NLT)

Accountability provides the parameters within which a young person can operate safely and securely. Young people need the loving authority of parents and caring adults so they can learn to make responsible, right choices. Sadly, without parameters, there is only confusion and chaos.

Our young people live in a world that offers innumerable opportunities for making choices that affect their future, whether positively or negatively. It is our responsibility as loving parents to help them make wise choices. Dottie discovered as a teen that she knew she needed to provide a system of accountability when she had teens of her own.

“The thing that comes to mind when I think about accountability is how we handled dating curfews with our youngest child. The way that we would decide when to have her come in after a date was based on a system of accountability. Let me give you a little background.

When I was a teenager and was dating, my parents wanted to communicate to me that they trusted me explicitly. The way that they

did this was by giving me the privilege to come in from a date when I felt it was a reasonable time. The only problem with this approach was that there were times, because of my immaturity and inexperience, that I clearly remember feeling like I didn't know how to handle certain situations. I remember wishing that I had a curfew so that I could conveniently blame my parents if I wanted to go home. I also remember thinking: "Hmmm....when I have teenagers, I'm going to give them a curfew, so they could hopefully avoid the kinds of delicate situations that I remembered facing.

So! Keeping that in mind, when it came to Heather's curfew, we involved her in the process. We'd first ask when the event would be over. Then we'd ask if they planned to go out to eat or anywhere else after the event. We'd ask her when she thought would be a fair curfew and then we'd set the time together. We also had the understanding that if she knew ahead of time that she couldn't make the curfew, she only had to call BEFORE that time to let us know that she would be late, so that we could readjust the expected arrival time. We felt like this was a fair "give and take", a situation where she had input, yet the final time was decided upon as a team. We felt that it was an effective way to communicate our trust in her while also encouraging accountability."

Learn the Fatherhood Craft

by Dr. Stephen F. Duncan, Ph.D.

- **Have regular one-on-one time with each child.** Sometimes it's fun to talk while you're doing errands or making home repairs, but be sure that there are times that you turn off the TV, put down the newspaper, and give your kids your undivided attention. Schedule a daddy-daughter or daddy-son date occasionally. Go out to eat a favorite meal or to do an activity the child enjoys. Sit with them occasionally just before bed and talk about how the day went.
- **Show affection often.** Even if older kids seem squeamish, kids enjoy a hug and encouraging words now and then from their dad. With the older kids you may want to do this in private, though, rather than in range of their friends.
- **Take kids to work.** This is a great way to teach them about the world of work that you are a part of. Take kids with you on business trips when possible.
- **Stay connected when you have to be away.** Sometimes work takes dads out of town. Set up a routine to stay connected. Some family's schedule a specific time Dad will call that is convenient for all members of the family. When you return, bring home something special for the kids. It need not be extravagant. My younger children have been thrilled to receive wing pins from an airline.
- **Teach them.** No dad has every gift or skill. Kids may learn certain things from other males in their lives. Use opportunities to share *your* talents. In my family, I lack mechanical ability, but I have passed on the gift of music through providing piano and drum lessons to my children.
- **Connect with your child at all levels.** Make sure you have some contact with every aspect of your child's life. Visit the school, meet the teacher and kids and have at least fleeting contact with an after-school activity. If you have seen where your children are and met their friends, you will have more to talk about and more interesting conversations.

Parent involvement during children's schooling is critical to their school success. Work with your employer to see that your work schedule doesn't preclude your involvement in your child's schooling.

(Stephen F. Duncan, Ph.D., "The Importance of Fathers," Montana State University Extension Service, Human Development B-6 (Family Life) June, 2000 Mont Guide Fact Sheet #20008/Human Resource Development,

*This is a summary of Josh McDowell's research titled **The Father Factor Portfolio**. You can access the entire 778-page documented research free at **Josh.org/fathers**.*