

# What you should know about fatherhood



EARLY CHILDHOOD  
RESOURCE CENTER



## Just the Facts ★ Fathers & Early Childhood Development

**Dads make a major difference!** Researchers agree: fathers play a very important role in early childhood development.

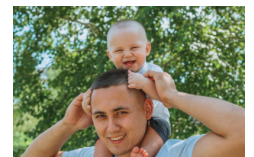
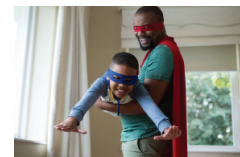
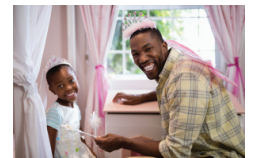
**The positive effects are almost too numerous to list!** Here are just some of the research-backed conclusions about the positive influence of father involvement in (and before) early childhood:

- When fathers were involved during pregnancy, mothers were 1.5 times more likely to receive first-trimester prenatal care, and prematurity and infant mortality were reduced.<sup>1</sup>
- When fathers were more involved in infancy (caring, playing, communicating), children had fewer symptoms of mental illness at nine years of age.<sup>1</sup>
- Infants of highly involved fathers were more cognitively competent at six months, and also more developmentally strong. By one year they had higher levels of cognitive functioning, as toddlers they were better problem solvers, and by age three they had higher IQs.<sup>2</sup>
- Six-month-olds whose fathers were involved in their care scored higher on tests of motor development.<sup>3</sup>
- Toddlers with involved fathers entered kindergarten more ready to succeed.<sup>4</sup>
- Boys with highly engaged fathers had fewer behavioral problems in preschool.<sup>5</sup>
- Children who had engaged fathers were more likely to enjoy school, have positive attitudes toward school, participate in extracurricular activities, and graduate.<sup>2</sup>
- Seven-year-olds with fathers who were engaged in their lives were more protected against economic disadvantage as adults (less likely to be homeless or on state benefits).<sup>5</sup>

**“Fathers are far more than just ‘second adults’ in the home.**

**Involved fathers bring positive benefits to their children that no other person is as likely to bring.”<sup>4</sup>**

*Dr. David Popenoe*



1. *Fathers' Roles in the Care and Development of Their Children: The Role of Pediatricians* [bit.ly/earfhd1](https://bit.ly/earfhd1)

2. *The Effects of Father Involvement: An Updated Research Summary of the Evidence* [bit.ly/earfhd2](https://bit.ly/earfhd2)

3. *The Important Role of Fathers in the Lives of Young Children* [bit.ly/earfhd3](https://bit.ly/earfhd3)

4. *The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children* [bit.ly/earfhd4](https://bit.ly/earfhd4)

5. *Fathers' involvement and children's developmental outcomes: a systematic review of longitudinal studies* [bit.ly/earfhd5](https://bit.ly/earfhd5)

**The conclusion is clear: if you want to make a powerful long-term investment in children and families (and entire communities), focus on helping dads—and positive outcomes will follow.**

# We help fathers.



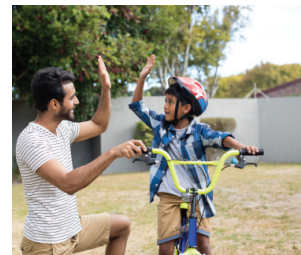
**Children are happier and healthier when both parents are engaged in their lives. Fatherhood is challenging, but we're here to help.**

- **We help fathers strengthen their parenting skills.** Programs like *Father Factor* and *24/7 Dad* equip fathers with the skills they need to guide, discipline, be role models, and co-parent productively and positively.
- **We help fathers spend more time with their children.** In coordination with the family courts and the child support system, we help fathers get and increase parenting time.
- **We help fathers reach their life goals.** By coaching and linking them with community resources, we help fathers set — and meet — big life goals that result in stability and fulfillment, both for them and their families.
- **We help fathers support their families financially.** In collaboration with our community partners and local employers, we help dads (even those who have complicated life circumstances) to get — and keep — jobs that pay a living wage and offer benefits.

**“I opened up that book and it was *full of skills*.**

**I’m not a big fan of classes. But that one? I was all in. Who wouldn’t want to be a great parent?”**

***James Cutler***



## Partner with us!

**We can help you work more effectively with dads  
or invest in fatherhood to strengthen the entire community.  
Learn more at [ecresourcecenter.org](http://ecresourcecenter.org) or call (877) 691-8521.**