

Importance of Male Figures in Children's Lives!



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70.1 Million Estimated Number of Fathers across the Nation. – This number reflects the number of male individuals who identify on their census records of having 1 or more children.

24.7 Million Number of Fathers who are part of a married couple Family Household.

21% are raising three or more children (among married couple families only)

3% lived in a different home.

2.0 Million Single Fathers (2016) - 17% of custodial single parents are men. 9% were raising three or more children.

44% were divorced, 33% were never married, 19% were separated, 4.2% were widowed, and 39% had an income of \$50,000 or more.

214,000 Stay at Home Dads

18% of Preschool or Younger Children being regularly cared for by Fathers during Mothers working hours.

57.6% of black children, 31.2% of Hispanic children, and 20.7% of white children are living absent their biological fathers.

72.2 % of the U.S. population, fatherlessness is the most significant family or social problem facing America.

Father's and Development- Academic, Social, Emotional (Fathers.com, 2018)

When fathers are actively engaged in the lives of their children education becomes a stronger quality among their children. Children can achieve a healthier behavior in school, better grades, and academic performance increases.

Girls with strong male influence do better in mathematics, science and technology.

Girls with strong male influence are less likely to become pregnant at an early age.

Boys with strong male influence get better grades and perform better on achievement tests.

Young children with highly involved male figure show an increase in curiosity, problem solving, exploration and confidence.

Children raised with a strong male role model are able to sustain in longer lasting relationships.

Children of all ages benefit with an increase in empathy, mental dexterity, self-control, and less stereo typed sex role beliefs.

59% of fathers report a 'disconnect' between school districts and engagement opportunities for them with their children. The percentage was greater with fathers not in the home reporting that they knew 30% of school engagement opportunities. (There is some disconnect on these numbers as there is no report if the fathers sought out the information and did not find it or if the schools lacked the opportunities) (National Responsible Fatherhood Clearing House , 2018)

Scripture and the Father

In Scripture the word "father" is found more than 1,100 times.

Psalm 103:13 As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him.

Luke 15:20-24 So he got up and went to his father. "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.

Proverbs 4:1-4 Listen, my sons, to a father's instruction; pay attention and gain understanding. I give you sound learning, so do not forsake my teaching. For I too was a son to my father, still tender, and cherished by my mother. Then he taught me, and he said to me, "Take hold of my words with all your heart; keep my commands, and you will live.

There is nothing easy about being a father, especially nowadays; honest look at history reveals a comforting familiarity to the foundational premise. The fact is dads have been throwing their hands up in the air for literally thousands of years. Mercifully for us, this means we don't have to reinvent the wheel. Be your child's "First Teacher" (Proverbs 22:6)

It's our responsibility as human society to "teach a child in the way he/she should go." Not just the school, the government, but you – and that means dads as well. Dads need to exemplify a good life (2 Cor. 3:2-3) Scripture teaches that who we are and how we live is like a "letter from God." Our kids read that letter, every day. Provide for your family (I Tim. 5:8) For those of you struggling to find work, don't get down on yourself. This idea is more about your heart and desire. Being a father who provides covers more

than rent and food. As dads it can be a responsibility to make sure our family's needs are addressed across the board. Be encouraged and look for ways to give to your family even when it is hard to financially. Good dads discipline their children (Proverbs 13: 24) The one who loves their children, Scripture says, "is careful to discipline them." This is also about proactive leadership in our homes. Dads spend time with their children, and it's not empty time (Deut. 6: 6-9)

The Scriptures show that dads who engage with their children in the kind of deep, heart-to-heart conversations that declare more than facts, but teach wisdom have a greater opportunity to lead their children on an honorable and courageous journey.

When thinking about this journey consider scheduling some regular "intimate spoken walks" with your children, one on one. This time should be a part of your "family time" a valued time to express and learn from one another.

Compassion can be and is a "father" characteristic - A father has compassion for his children. Psalm 103:13 points out, "so the LORD has compassion." Compassion by definition is the act of "sympathetic pity and concern for the sufferings or misfortunes of others." Most find this definition to be a "women's trait" or one that invokes more feelings than what is typically attributed to a father figure but in a father showing compassion or concern for their child is nothing more than what the Lord can continue to show you.

"Put your money where your mouth is" - Well, not in those precise words, but James 1:22 instructs us to not only be "hearers" of God's word but "doers" also. This can apply to not only the financial aspect of child raising but also the spiritual and the education of a child.

Don't provoke your children (Ephesians 6:4) - This scripture gives us a avenue in which to explore our actions towards our children in a mannerism that will not upset them or cause undo harm but rather focus on the scripture that brings about raising them to be young people of faith.

Fathers never give up on their children - The story of "The Prodigal Son" (Luke 15:20-24) is the story of a father who never gives up hope and is ready to receive his child back with open arms. We can discipline, we can hold accountable, but we must never give up.

Fathers pray for their children (1 Chronicles 29:19) King David prayed for his son, Solomon. Children who know without any doubt that their fathers pray for them every day own a deep sense of love and security.

What is being done to help bring awareness?

1983 Ford Foundation (Cleveland, Ohio) was the first and leading organization to start outreach programs for Fathers. It began as a teen program but, grew to encompass all ages of fathers.

1990 a pilot project for Fatherhood Development was federally and privately sponsored to follow, father's and the obstacles presented by: Complicated personal history, Organizational policies and attitudes that do not embrace father engagement. Failures of public policy and services to engage with fathers.

1994 saw the development of the NPNFF (National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families) lead by Al Gore. This development focused on "encouraging father involvement in fragile/poverty families and support communication among all local and federal father focused programs.

2010 the Administration for Children and families contracted for further research and development of new and interactive programs for fathers, with a strong focus on the early childhood relationship.

A vast amount of earlier programs like Boys and Girls Club as well as YMCA programs have a strong background and major influence in the developing of not only children but, pioneering programs that influence and encourage positive father/male role modeling.

On February 8, 2006, President Bush signed the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 into law. Due to the time delay between the writing of and the printing of the publication of the child welfare father manual, the legislation was listed as pending. The new law can provide \$150 million for each of Federal fiscal years 2006 through 2020 to promote and support healthy marriages and responsible fatherhood. The funds will be awarded as competitive grants to government entities, faith-based organizations or community organization. See link below for complete manual.

The manual was developed into a 127 "pamphlet" to bring awareness and help in understanding the value and sheer importance that male/father figures bring into a

child's life. While it does acknowledge the ugly truths previously discussed its main focus is on shedding light into the desperate need to understand and promote the true value that fathers/male influence has on our children.

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/fatherhood.pdf#page=1&view=The%20Importance%20of%20Fathers%20in%20the%20Healthy%20Development%20of%20Children>

“Be the best father you can be to your children. Because nothing is more important.” - Barack Obama Commencement Address May 19, 2013

How can Father Initiative Programs Succeed?

Follow effective program models. Following effective program plans can be in short supply especially with so few programs existing, but the one's that do have shown through years of follow up observations and continuous care brings about great change that could be modeled in other programs.

Have supportive, trained and selective staff. Placing staff that are compassionate, caring, and knowledgeable in redesigning and helping families in understanding the roll they are helping achieve within their community can truly make the difference in creating a successful program.

Allow participants adequate time to complete activities. Activities complete in adequate time is a reference to the programs that offer fathers at home, personal, and financial activities. Such as game night with the family, seeking an outreach that allows them to have reprieve, and learning activities about financial stability.

Use incentives to engage and recruit father involvement. Incentives can be and not limited to the free meals, movies for all to enjoy, and direct recruitment.

Ensure programs are time and father-friendly. Many early programs started early in the day and almost always ended by 5pm. This is an unrealistic idealism for fathers who struggle with wanting to be a better father and learn more but cannot take off of work to attend these initiative programs. Creating a program that is ran later in the evenings or on the weekends can really provide a better avenue to reach those who really need them.

Implement methods appropriate for the populations served.

Form strong partnerships and recruit at various establishments, that are predominate/appropriate male establishments. Seeking out establishments

Become an advocate for fathers' rights through local Department of Health and Human Services.

Offer your time and/or money to Boys and Girls Club, YMCA and/or Reconnecting Homeless Veterans with Their Children.

Research the various organizations like, Fatherhood Buzz, Building Assets for Fathers & Families, and WIC (women infant children).

WIC offers a variety of different programs to engage and collaborate with fathers.

Continue to make a consciences effort to know the value of fatherhood as much as you would motherhood. Fathers are fundamentally, spiritually, and lovingly needed just as much.

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