

Why Fathers Matter

Report to Family First New Zealand, Father's Day 2018



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NEW ZEALAND

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He and his wife have five children.



The first Report in this series "Why Mothers Matter" – released on Mother's Day 2018 – is available for free download from our website www.familyfirst.nz under 'Research'.

ABOUT FAMILY FIRST NZ

Family First NZ is a charitable organisation formed in 2006, and registered as a charity with the Charities Commission. Its purposes and aims are:

- to promote and advance research and policy regarding family and marriage
- to participate in social analysis and debate surrounding issues relating to and affecting the family
- to educate the public in their understanding of the institutional, legal and moral framework that makes a just and democratic society possible
- to produce and publish relevant and stimulating material in newspapers, magazines, and other media relating to issues affecting families
- to speak up about issues relating to families that are in the public domain

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FOREWORD by Nick Tuitasi



Since the beginning of time, fathers have had a distinctive role in the creation and fashioning of the nuclear family.

Globally, nuclear families have long been recognised as the building blocks which communities use to weave the fabric of their society.

The core business of any father is the Protection, Provision and Guidance (PPG) for his wife and children. Those who have shown consistency in these areas were considered leadership material in their tribe, village, town or city.

Across time and cultures, men have been aware of these expectations and the majority have stepped up and performed admirably.

However, where fathers have failed to provide a solid foundation for their families, history shows the fall-out has a negative effect, not only on that generation but for generations to come.

As a result, many mothers and children feel totally let down or abandoned, while the community that is slowly unravelling feels the need to take up the slack of that small minority of irresponsible fathers.

Governments now legislate for the 'Protection' and 'Provision' of broken families. These duties are carried out in the community by teachers, doctors, social workers, police, lawyers and courts.

When it comes to the matter of Guidance on family matters, the state has been quick to acknowledge that they are a very poor substitute for good parents. Lately, however, I have seen a trend forming, where our Government now wishes to occupy that 'Guidance' space, even against the will of good parents.

The roles of husbands and fathers are not only crucial, but have proved to be the best way to grow happy kids into respectable adults.

Parents usually agree between each other as to how they will cover the 'PPG' responsibilities together. Yet despite the sharing of these responsibilities, when fault is found in the behaviour of a child, the default question of most professionals remains "Where is the father in all this?"

My Samoan father, like many from his era, was happy to fulfil the 'Protection' and 'Provision' roles in our family, leaving the 'Guidance' to my mother, whose English was far superior. He felt a great sense of pride and satisfaction working in the bakery to provide for his wife and kids. When, after 46 years, he hung up his white overalls and paper hat for the very last time, his bosses acknowledged he was the longest-serving member in the history of Allied Foods. An excellent example for my siblings and me.

When I was a child, my father caught an intruder in our garage at about 3 o'clock one morning, and held on to him until the Police arrived. This may have inspired my 25-year Police career!

After my father died, I realised that he had sown some unseen gems in my character. It was not just from having him around, because often he was at work. And it was not just the sit-down lessons about how to respect my mother

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and sisters, or how to control my anger. It was more of the learning through assimilation, as a son watches how his father - dad - plays the hand life has dealt him. Priceless.

There will always be those who disagree with the norm, and insist on changing the ingredients or the colours of the building blocks of society.

They would have us believe that fathers do not really matter, and anyone can fill that spot.

The truth is, despite all the noise and narrative about diversity and inclusiveness, experts around the world agree that if we are really concerned about the best way to raise kids... then fathers - dads - really matter.

If we are really concerned about the best way to raise kids... then fathers – dads – really matter.

NICKTUITASI is on the board of Family First NZ. He left the New Zealand Police in 2007, after 25 years of service, where he specialised in Crime Prevention and working with at-risk families. In 1998 he was awarded the Queen Service Medal. In 2000, the North & South Magazine named him one of the top 100 kiwis of the year. In 2007 he was one of six recipients of the Living Legends Award presented by the Mayor of Auckland. Nick worked for the Ministry of Social Development for two years as the Manager of the Pacific Youth Development Strategy, and then as Pacific Engagement Advisor to Te Wananga o Aotearoa, and as the Acting Regional Projects Manager for Te Tai Tokerau and Tamaki Makaurau. He is currently a presenter for The Parenting Place, and director of a marketing and distribution business. Nick is married to Vasa, and has three (young adult) daughters.

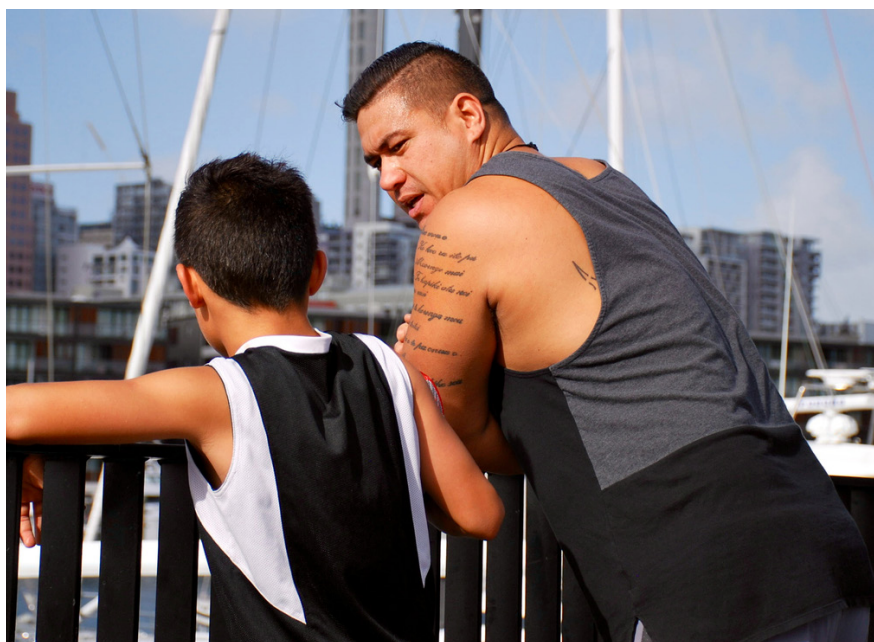


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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

When we celebrate Father's Day, we are celebrating much more than the love and appreciation we have for our dads. We are celebrating one of our most important natural resources. As we will see in this report, and in so many interesting ways, no society can thrive without as many fathers as possible being involved daily in the lives of their children.

A diverse and abundant body of research conducted over the past 50 years proves this – in sometimes unexpected ways. This report is a presentation and explanation of the best findings of this research by the world's leading scholars on the topic. There are so many facts here that most of us would never consider or come to appreciate without this research. It is important that dads themselves, as well as mums, grandparents, teachers, policy makers, clergy, pediatricians, government bodies, and law enforcement know why and how fathers matter, not just in the lives of their families, but in society itself.

The most significant differences explained in this report are:

Dads matter because they're different: Infants can determine the difference between mum and dad caring and playing with them from the first weeks of life, simply because mum and dad do these tasks differently. This is the child's first and perhaps most important lesson about being human: that there are two types of human beings in the world, male and female, each with wonderful and very distinct qualities. Our children can and do seek out one or the other when they have specific needs because of the different ways, beyond the purely practical, that males and females meet those needs.

Dads and the development of empathy: We would generally think that mum, with her greater tenderness, would be the one from whom our children gain a sense of empathy for others around them. However, long-term studies show this is not true. Curiously, it is dads who are dramatically more powerful and influential in helping their children develop a sense of care and concern toward others. This finding astonished even the researchers who conducted the studies.

Fathers are more oriented toward the world: Mothers are more likely to *face* their children, so to speak, in their relation to them. Fathers are different. They take their child *beside* them and point them toward the world. This makes a tremendous difference in terms of how mum and dad prepare their children for life. One is more likely to *protect* the child *from* the challenges and dangers of the world. This is good. One is more likely to *prepare* the child *for* such challenges. This is good as well. This distinction can be a source of contention and disagreement between two parents, but this is actually good because of what each provides. A balance between mum's and dad's ways is vital for healthy child development.

Fathers play rough (and that's very good): Most of us have no trouble noticing that fathers play with their children in ways that are quite different from mum. But we don't realise how this difference is so critical for healthy child development. Fathers tend to be more exciting in their play, more stimulating, more physical and rough. This builds confidence in their children. They also tend to be more creative, making up games and using objects other than toys to have fun. Fathers are more likely to encourage the development of large motor skills in their children and teach the important lessons of physical self-control and emotional self-regulation, which are of course, essential social skills.

Dads enrich communication: Few truly recognise and appreciate how mum and dad speak differently to their children, and the difference this in turn makes

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in the children's verbal and communicative development. Mothers are more likely to speak right down to the level of the child, using words and phrases that are easily understood. Dad not so much. His way tends to give the opportunity for more vocabulary lessons because he is more likely to use more complex words. His sentence structure is also more difficult for the child, thus stretching the child in his or her processing. Dad is also more likely to ask open-ended questions of his children, which encourages the crafting of more complex answers. This not only enriches their communication, but their reading literacy as well.

Discipline: Dads discipline children more objectively, more black-and-white, rather than based on the situation or the feelings of the child. Mums are more sensitive to the latter. The balance of these two approaches is critically important, because children will face both situations in the world throughout their lives. Some misbehaviour can be forgiven because of extenuating circumstances. As an illustration, take the example of a father speeding to get his wife to the hospital as she is about to give birth. It would be unnecessarily harsh to make a couple in this situation wait while the officer writes up a ticket. But other situations definitely call for a ticket to be written, such as speeding to get to a sports game. It would be a dereliction of duty not to issue a ticket for this infringement. Dads teach the difference here.

Dads teach respect for the opposite sex: Good fathers, as distinct male parents, teach their girls what they should expect, and not tolerate, from boys as they grow older. They protect their girls from poor choices in long-term relationships. They also teach their sons, by example, how to treat and how *not* to treat women.

Children uniquely impact their fathers: Finally, it has been shown in the last decade or so that becoming a father creates interesting and consequential changes to the physicality of the dad, even before the child is born. New dads tend to gain more weight, right along with mum, during pregnancy. Fathers' brains actually change in some ways while their children are very young, and their hormones change and adjust as well, in consequential ways. This means that not only do dads have important hidden and consequential effects on their children, but his children, even before birth, have an impact on him, changing his hidden physicality to get him ready for the important and unique task of parenting.

No society can have too many dads, but every society can certainly have too few – and suffer irreversible harm because of it. A fatherless family is one that walks with a substantial limp up a difficult incline. Single mums know this all too well. The three Ps of society know this better than anyone: *Police, Principals, and Pediatricians*. Why? Because a father reduces crime rates, helps his kids do and behave better at school, and protects them from physical and emotional problems like no one else. It is immoral to disregard him in the family. When we do, society suffers.

We would do well to make sure we live in a community which honours fathers, encourages them in their parenting tasks, and does all it can to make sure that every boy and girl, as much as possible, grows up with the irreplaceable benefit of being loved and cared for every day by his or her own father. Any public policy or community attitude that moves us away from this must be judged immoral as well as contrary to the best and most reliable science on human development.

Fathers matter in more ways than we can imagine, and for unexpected but important reasons.

Few truly recognise and appreciate how mum and dad speak differently to their children, and the difference this in turn makes.

Dads discipline children more objectively, more black-and-white.



Good fathers teach their girls what they should expect, and not tolerate, from boys as they grow older.

Becoming a father creates interesting and consequential changes to the physicality of the dad.

INTRODUCTION

It's long past time to clean out the attic, get rid of these myths, and take a good look at what researchers are learning about fathers and their children and families. The short answer is that fathers are vastly important in their children's lives, in ways that both scholars and parenting experts have overlooked.

Paul Raeburn, *Do Fathers Matter? What Science is Telling Us About the Parent We've Overlooked*

Do dads, as male parents, matter – or are fathers best when they parent like a second mother? Surprisingly, this is a contested question today. Few people truly understand the remarkable contributions that fathers make, in their distinct parenting role as males, to the healthy social, physical, psychological, and educational growth of their sons and daughters. This is unfortunate, because the research on this topic is robust, surprising, and remarkably interesting.

Research on what fathers do for their children, largely by just being different kinds of parents than mothers, began in earnest in the mid-1970s, when Professor Michael Lamb of Yale University noted in a prestigious research journal that fathers are “*the forgotten contributors to child development*.”¹ He lamented that the devaluing of the father's role in the lives of his children is nothing short of “*disturbing*.”

This observation launched an impressive movement, by a large group of scholars around the world, of exploring all the ways fathers affect healthy child development. That movement continues to this day. Lamb held at the time, and the intervening years of continued research have affirmed, that there are indeed essential qualitative differences in the interactions between mothers and fathers and their children. So much so that, as Professor Lamb reports, “*We can no longer accept the implicit assumption that fathers are simply occasional mother-substitutes: rather, they may have an important role to play in socialisation which are independent of the mother's*.”² We now know, without argument or doubt, that they do indeed.

Nearly 25 years after Lamb's early work, Dr. Kyle Pruett of the Yale Child Study Center and Medical School published his groundbreaking, book-length case on why fathers are just as important to healthy child development as mothers. He sums up why in the title of his first chapter: *Fathers Do Not Mother*.³ By this, Pruett says we should appreciate that dad is not merely a second parent. He is a *male* parent, and his unique contributions to parenting go far beyond his role at conception. Dad is essential because he's a dad, and he interacts with his child in ways that are importantly distinct from mum's interactions. More recently, science journalist Paul Raeburn summarised these expanding insights on fatherhood in *Do Fathers Matter?*, explaining that these research findings are popping up across various fields of study:

*Psychologists, biologists, sociologists, and neuroscientists have begun to generate solid scientific data on why fathers behave the way they do – and why it matters to children. ... This discovery of the father is one of the most important developments in the study of children and families. The findings, appearing in scholarly journals most unfamiliar to the public, have escaped wide attention.*⁴

Fathers are the forgotten contributors to child development.

We can no longer accept the implicit assumption that fathers are simply occasional mother-substitutes.

Fathers do not mother.



1 Michael E. Lamb, “Fathers: Forgotten Contributors to Child Development,” *Human Development*, 18 (1975): 245-266.

2 Lamb, 1975, p. 251.

3 Kyle D. Pruett, *Fatherhood: Why Father Care Is as Essential as Mother Care for Your Child*, (The Free Press, 2000), p. 17.

4 Paul Raeburn, *Do Fathers Matter? What Science is Telling Us About the Parent We've Overlooked*, (Scientific American, 2014), p. 13-14.

A scientific review of more than 100 published studies on the benefits of child-parent relationships found that *"Overall, father love appears to be as heavily implicated as mother love in offsprings' psychological well-being and health."*⁵

Returning to Professor Lamb, we see how strong the research literature on the importance of fatherhood became over the decades in his updated summary of this research for a major publication on the topic. It is entitled *How Do Fathers Influence Children's Development? Let Me Count the Ways*.⁶ He explains that research on the importance of fathering has produced *"remarkably consistent"* results since day one. Lamb explains, *"Children with highly involved fathers are characterised by increased cognitive competence, increased empathy, fewer sex-stereotyped beliefs, and more internal locus of control."*

This simply means, as we shall see, that fathers help children develop high levels of self-control and self-regulation in stressful, competitive, and interpersonal situations. This is essential for a son or daughter's internal and social development.

A crucial survey of 24 different published studies on how fathers influence child well-being – 16 of them multi-year observations – was conducted by a group of scholars collaborating from universities in Australia and Sweden. They found overwhelmingly that both biological and non-biological fathers made essential and irreplaceable contributions to the most important angles of child development. While non-biological fathers brought important benefits, it was biological fathers who brought the most to bear on children's social, behavioural and psychological outcomes.⁷

We know that children who grow up with a close and regularly involved father are twice as likely to complete high school, undertake university or other tertiary studies, and find stable employment in early adulthood. They are also 75% less likely to be involved in a teen birth and 80% less likely to spend any time in jail. Involved fathers reduce a child's experiences of serious depression by half.⁸

Fathers' strong influence in teaching children self-control and self-regulation is a major factor in the finding that youths living apart from their fathers are at least three times more likely to be incarcerated compared to those living with their fathers. Those who never had a father in the home have the highest overall rates of criminal behaviour and incarceration.⁹ This remains true even when controlling for other socio-economic factors. Sadly, overall delinquency behaviours are dramatically higher among fatherless children.

A noted husband/wife team of child-development researchers, Ronald and Jaqueline Angel, add *"that father absence places children at elevated risk of impaired social development, that it hinders their school performance, and, ultimately, it can limit their chances for optimal social mobility."* They conclude, *"We can say with great confidence that father absence is ... a mental health risk for children."*¹⁰

In terms of protecting children from physical and sexual abuse, the safest man

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Children with highly involved fathers are characterised by fewer sex-stereotyped beliefs.



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5 Ronald P. Rohner and Robert A. Veneziano, "The Importance of Father Love: History and Contemporary Evidence," *Review of General Psychology* 5.4 (2001): 382-405.

6 Michael D. Lamb, "How Do Father's Influence Children's Development? Let Me Count the Ways," in Michael D. Lamb (ed.), *The Role of the Father in Child Development*, fifth edition, (John Wiley and Sons, 2010): 1-26.

7 Anna Sarkadi, et al., "Fathers' Involvement and Children's Developmental Outcomes: A Systematic Review of Longitudinal Studies," *Acta Paediatrica*, 97 (2008): 153-158.

8 Kyle D. Pruett, *Fatherhood: Why Father Care Is as Essential as Mother Care for Your Child*, (The Free Press, 2000), p. 38.

9 Cynthia C. Harper and Sarah McLanahan, "Father Absence and Youth Incarceration," *Journal of Research and Adolescence*, 14 (2004): 369-397.

10 Ronald J. Angel and Jacqueline L. Angel, *Painful Inheritance: Health and the New Generation of Fatherless Families*, (University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), p. 119.

for a child to be around is his or her biological father, as it is quite rare that a man will assault or abuse a child who is his own. This biological premium is regularly found in research findings and crime statistics across the globe.¹¹

More dramatic still is research showing that children born to single mothers, with no father reported on the child's birth certificate or in the child's life, are *two and a half times more likely to die* within the first year of life compared to children born to a married mother and father.¹² Significantly, fathers matter just as much for girls as they do for boys, in very important ways.¹³

We continue to learn remarkable new truths about the irreplaceable contributions fathers make to their children every year as this mountain of research grows. As science journalist Paul Raeburn explains, we cannot expect fathers to understand and appreciate their unique and irreplaceable role in their kids' lives if they are regularly being told that their only real contribution to the family is financial support, maintaining the car, and killing bugs.¹⁴

In fact, as our ability to research the smallest parts of the human body gets more sophisticated, we are discovering just how profoundly fathering matters at the most granular levels of human physiology. The findings are nothing short of mind-blowing, far beyond what anyone could have imagined even five years ago.

To put it plainly, fatherhood affects the most basic part of every sub-microscopic cell in the human body.

We learned this just last year, when a major article in the journal *Pediatrics* explained that children who live with their father tend to have longer telomeres.¹⁵ "What in the world is a telomere, and why does it matter?" you may ask.

Telomeres are little tips at the ends of every piece of DNA. There are four of them, one at each end of the two spiraled strands.



These tips are like the plastic ends of your shoelaces, protecting them so they can do what shoelaces do. Telomeres do the same, protecting every bit of DNA that makes up each cell in the body. Something which protects the most important substance in every part of our bodies, which makes each of us unique, is important. Telomeres determine our life-long health and longevity. This new research tells us that children who are deprived of their fathers have telomeres up to 14% shorter than children who have a father in their daily lives.

One of the study's authors said that this knowledge about the deep impact of fatherlessness at a subcellular level "*makes more credible the urgency*" in doing all we can as a society to make sure as many children as possible have the profound and irreplaceable benefit of a father in the home. A father is far more than just a

We can say with great confidence that father absence is a mental health risk for children.

In terms of protecting children from physical and sexual abuse, the safest man for a child to be around is his or her biological father.

Children born to single mothers, with no father reported on the child's birth certificate or in the child's life, are two and a half times more likely to die within the first year of life.

Children who live with their father tend to have longer telomeres.

11 David Popenoe, *Life Without Father: Compelling Evidence that Fatherhood and Marriage Are Indispensable for the Good of Children and Society*, (The Free Press, 1996), p. 65-73.

12 Paul Raeburn, *Do Fathers Matter? What Science is Telling Us About the Parent We've Overlooked*, (Scientific American, 2014), p. 221.

13 Marcia J. Carlson, "Family Structure, Father Involvement and Adolescent Behaviour Outcomes," *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 68 (2006): 137-154; Brid Featherstone, "Fathers Matter: A Research Review," *Children & Society*, 18 (2004): 312-319.

14 Paul Raeburn, *Do Fathers Matter? What Science is Telling Us About the Parent We've Overlooked*, (Scientific American, 2014), p. 82.

15 Colter Mitchell, et al., "Father Loss and Child Telomere Length," *Pediatrics*, 140 (2017): 1-10.

'traditional' ideal of a past age.

The early research never could have predicted that fatherhood influences a child's physical health right down to every bit of DNA. Who knows what we might discover about the importance of fatherhood in the coming years. These curious findings on telomere length give us just a sample of how interesting and informative this research can be.

As we explore some of the greatest contributions fathers, as male parents, make in the lives of their children, the first place to start is in appreciating why the distinction between mums and dads makes a difference at all.

It must be noted from the outset that not every father demonstrates these particular habits of parenting in the same ways. Some might even do so less frequently than the mothers, and in some families, the mother/father dynamic can be totally reversed, although this is the exception. A key phrase to keep in mind throughout this booklet is "*tend to*". Fathers *tend to* do the following things more than mothers. Exceptions do not refute these findings. Nor do they necessarily mean your children are missing out on certain benefits. Fathers and mothers typically do a very good job at balancing these things out in their parenting teamwork. But it is true that there are distinct ways fathers tend to parent. Exceptions are exceptions because they prove the rule. You, the reader, whether as a father or mother, will likely recognise the demonstration of many these qualities in your own parenting as we discuss them.

Dads matter because they're different

As was explained in the first report in this two-part series, *Why Mothers Matter*, the biggest difference that mums and dads make in the lives of their children is the difference itself. As Yale's Professor Pruett pointed out, fathers matter because they are not mothers. Just as both play a unique and essential role in the creation of every new life, the mother/father difference continues outside the womb, on up into adulthood.

In fact, it is well known that in the first weeks of life, an infant can detect the differences in mum's and dad's interactions with her, and that she responds differently to each. One kind of parent is soft and sweet smelling. She has a very tender and comforting voice, which has become the centre of the child's life, even in the womb. The other parent is not like her. He tends to have rougher skin, a louder, deeper, more commanding voice, and tends to hold his baby in a very different way.

A major article on the importance of fathering in the journal *Pediatrics* explained forthrightly, "*Father's typically larger size, deeper voice, coarser skin, smell, physical attributes and habits all combine to offer a distinctly different buffet*" of parental experiences for the child. A baby's encounter with these distinctions, and thus his natural process of discerning the differences between mum and dad, can provide him with a "*heightened awareness of different social styles and thereby enhance social competence.*"¹⁶

Just as they will learn in the coming years that they are themselves one or the other, our children are learning from their earliest days about one of the most profound truths of the nature of humanity: there are two main types – male and female. All this and more, just because a dad is different than mum!

Daniel Paquette from the University of Montreal also illustrates how the male/female parent difference itself makes a difference:

Fathers and mothers typically do a very good job at balancing these things out in their parenting teamwork.

Exceptions are exceptions because they prove the rule.

Fathers matter because they are not mothers.

In the first weeks of life, an infant can detect the differences in mum's and dad's interactions with her.

¹⁶ Kyle D. Pruett, "Role of the Father," *Pediatrics*, 102 (1998): 1253-1261, p. 1255.

It should be noted that children necessarily have different experiences with their mothers than with their fathers, for the physical and psychological differences between the two parents are greater than those between two individuals of same sex: mothers and fathers do not have the same odour, voice, face, or muscle tone, and do not give out the same messages.¹⁷

Mother and father both interact with the baby in different ways physically. Mum's way is more comforting and settling while dad tends to be more surprising, louder, and stimulating in his play. This in itself is teaching the baby that there is exciting diversity in these two caretakers. One is preferable when comfort, nourishment, and rest are needed; the other is the one to seek when it's playtime. This marks your child's first lesson in the differences in the two types of humans, male and female. And it is a robust finding in this field of research that father's influence as a distinctly male parent increases tremendously as his children age.¹⁸

Dad and the development of empathy

That fathers affect the length of their children's telomeres, and therefore the length of their lives, is a curious finding indeed. There is another interesting and totally unanticipated research discovery that is positively counter-intuitive. It has to do with the development of empathy in our children. This is extremely important, especially as we grow up in an increasingly competitive culture.

Consider a child who grows to become a famous rugby hero – the best the game has ever seen. Or a child who goes on to build the biggest, most successful company in the world, breaking all records of what anyone thought was possible. Imagine a child that becomes the smartest, most talented scientist, musician, or dancer in the world.

Each of these would be desirable in any child, and it would be fun to be the parent of such an achiever. It would make the parent proud as well as shine a very good light upon their parenting. But having accomplished any of these goals and more, what if these children were missing just one simple quality: *empathy*? That would change everything, would it not? What kind of human beings would they be? Would anyone who knew them think they were good people? Would anyone want to *be* them or even be *like* them? How would that reflect upon the parent?

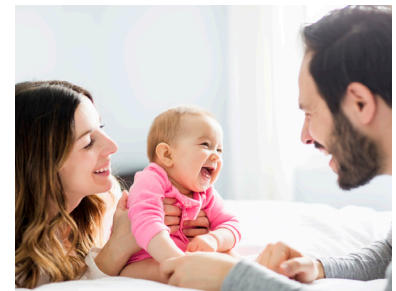
Empathy is only one quality of a healthy human being, but it is perhaps one of the most important. One can have many shortcomings and still be desirable as a friend, neighbour or co-worker. But few will tolerate someone who is not able to consider and identify with the thoughts, feelings, pain, and experiences of another person.

Empathic development, as child-development specialists call it, will greatly determine our children's ability to keep and make friends, do well in school, contribute to teams, gain and hold jobs, and successfully become law-abiding, successful citizens. It is no small thing in the much larger picture of life.

The critical question is: which parent – mum or dad – serves to instill in their children this ability to demonstrate compassion and thoughtfulness for others?

The answer might seem obvious on the surface. Of course, mum is the one who teaches her children to be considerate of others, to connect well with them, and

The physical and psychological differences between the two parents are greater than those between two individuals of same sex.



What if these children were missing just one simple quality: empathy?

17 Daniel Paquette, "Theorizing the Father-Child Relationship: Mechanisms and Developmental Outcomes," *Human Development*, 47 (2004): 193-219, p. 200.

18 Kyle D. Pruett, "Role of the Father," *Pediatrics*, 102 (1998): 1253-1261, p. 1259.

to be mindful of their feelings. She is certainly more the 'people person'. Fathers are just not as attentive to such things. They are more 'get-it-done' types, focusing on tasks and results more than people. It's obvious which parent would be more influential in instilling empathy. Or is it?

A team of researchers examined this very question, wanting to see just how much more influential mothers were than fathers in developing empathic concern in their children. They followed a group of children over decades, starting when each was five years old and finishing when they turned 31, to see who tended to develop greater feelings of sympathy and compassion for others and what parental influences made the largest contributions.

The team found that there is a "*relatively strong association*" between a child's experiences with their parents and the development of strong empathy for others in adulthood. Time spent between parent and child in the growing years was the strongest predictor here. But the study included an unexpected finding.

According to their report, "*The influence of paternal involvement in child care on later empathic concern was quite astonishing*" (emphasis added). But it gets even more surprising.

Paternal involvement in the daily life and care of the child was a stronger influence upon the development of empathy than the three strongest maternal influences combined.¹⁹ These maternal influences are mum's tolerance of her child's dependence upon her, mum's tolerance of and restrictions upon her child's aggressive behaviours and attitudes, and finally, her satisfaction with being a mum. This finding corresponded with other research on the topic. Fathers are extremely powerful players in bringing to their children one of the most essential qualities for any human being. No one gets anywhere for long without empathy.

Why is a father's influence so uniquely strong here? It likely has a great deal to do with the father/child orientation to the world as distinct from that of the mother/child. It's not something that we tend to think about very often, or consider really important, but when it is pointed out we notice it easily. It is a foundational part of the mother/father parenting difference.

Father's orientation toward his child

This may seem like a terribly obvious statement, but each of us lives our lives 'out there' in the world. We are not only social creatures who need relationships with others, but we are also curious creatures who need new experiences in new places, in new ways, and with new people. You likely seek these experiences out daily, and it's a weighty part of what makes you human. Think about the person for whom this is not true. It's likely they are not very fun or interesting to be around. "*Nope, I'm totally fine right here, doing the same things I always do with the same people I always do them with.*" Boring!

Mothers and fathers make different and essential contributions to their children in this regard, and these contributions have wide ranging consequences. Mothers relate directly *toward* the child, and nearly everything else swirls around and is evaluated by that basic relationship. Where would any of us be if that were not the case? Fathers, however think about their child in relationship to the larger world. It is a subtle difference, but its consequences cannot be overstated. The *Mother-to-child* and *Dad-with-child-toward-the-community* parental orientations can be illustrated like this:

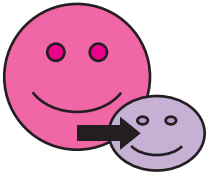
Empathy is only one quality of a healthy human being, but it is perhaps one of the most important.



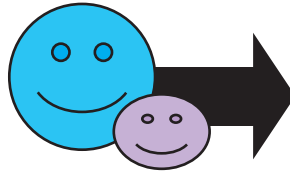
The influence of paternal involvement in child care on later empathic concern was quite astonishing.

19 Richard Koestner, et al., "The Family Origins of Empathic Concern: A 26-Year Longitudinal Study," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 58 (1990): 709-717, p. 713.

Mum/Child Orientation



Dad/Child Orientation



The phrase 'don't mess with mama bear' has a very clear meaning to everyone. It is unwise to get between mama and her cubs. But dads are different. The *Dad-with-child-toward-the-community* orientation is primarily about introducing kids to the world and experiencing all the amazing things it has to offer. This is generally true of fathers in *every age of history* and *everywhere* fathers are found on the earth. It is true of fathers in the deserts of the Middle East, and the rice fields of Taiwan; from the high-rise apartments of San Francisco to the maraes of New Zealand.

Fathers are the ones who open up their children to the outside world and encourage them to go explore it.

Dad is more likely to take his son or daughter and instruct them in how to be mindful of the environment around them: who to watch out for, when to be careful, opportunities to have fun, and dangers to avoid. Fathers help their kids observe the world around them and learn how to react to both its dangers and opportunities. They are more likely to help their children *read* and *react* to a situation, skills that are absolutely essential to their development. Acting without understanding the possible dangers can have negative consequences. Reading the situation but not doing anything can be just as problematic.

Think about merging into traffic on the motorway. Failure to either read or react to the situation can be extremely consequential for you, your passengers, and other drivers. Our days are full of such situations, large and small. It is most likely our *fathers* who taught us how to recognise and get this balance right.

Given this reality, it is a short jump to understand how the *Dad-with-child-toward-the-community* orientation can help children learn to be mindful of the feelings, attitudes, and behaviours of those around them. Fathers are more likely than mum to encourage and teach their children to observe, respond, and react to the world around them and work to act, adjust, and make improvements when needed.

I remember it was my dad who taught me and my brothers to pick up litter around the neighbourhood. He did this quite often, and I always wondered why he felt it was his duty to do so. No other men in the neighbourhood did so, and we thought it was weird. My father used this exercise to teach my brothers and me the importance of cleaning our neighbourhood of other people's carelessly discarded trash. "If we don't do it," he told us, "we are the ones allowing the place we live to become a pig pen." He would then ask us, "Do good men do that?" He explained to us that stepping up like this was called leadership. Even though it was embarrassing, he wanted us boys to be mindful of how we could make our world a better place and undertake the effort to make it that way, regardless if anyone else did.

It's this kind of awareness of the situation around us that serves as the foundation for the development and practice of empathy. If we learn to notice what requires our help and influence in the physical world, we will also learn to notice who needs our help among the people around us. As we will see, this *Dad-with-child-toward-the-community* orientation has consequences in many important areas of healthy human development, and even in surprising and seemingly counterintuitive ways.

Fathers are more likely to help their children read and react to a situation, skills that are absolutely essential to their development.

We could make our world a better place and undertake the effort to make it that way, regardless if anyone else did.

Fathers are more oriented toward the world

Closely related to this is the *protect/prepare* distinction between mum and dad and how it shapes the children. Mum's driving interest is to *protect* her children *from* the threats of the world. Fathers, on the other hand, tend to *prepare* their children *for* the world. There is a meaningful difference here, and it has to do with the father/child orientation. Dad explores, seeking adventure and new experiences with his children. When a child has done something new and thrilling beyond the house, it is most often dad who has given her that experience. And if there is any possible danger, and there usually is, dad makes sure his child is properly prepared. That is part of the fun. Thus, fathers are more likely to consider their child in relation to the larger world and the experiences it has to offer.

As Dr Kyle Pruett from Yale explains in his important book, *Fatherhood*, "There seems to be an invisible tether connecting mothers and fathers to their children." He adds, "The tendency is for that tether to be shorter for mother than it is for father."²⁰

Other scholars refer to this as fathers serving as their child's "bridge to the outside world".²¹ Erich Fromm, one of the founding theorists in human development, observed that, distinct from mum, "Father...represents the other pole of human existence... the world of thought, of man-made things, of law and order, of discipline, of travel and adventure. Father...is the one who shows [the child] the road into the world."²²

If you doubt this, ask yourself whether you've ever heard a father remind mum not to let the kids wander off too far or climb too high, or to watch out for strange people. Not likely!

When this happens in the early life experience of the child, he finds, especially for boys, his relationship changing with his mother and moving more toward his father. Fromm explains:

*But daily [baby] becomes more independent: he learns to walk, to talk, to explore the world on his own; the relationship to mother loses some vital significance, and instead the relationship to father becomes more and more important.*²³

As dads explore the world with their children, they are certainly concerned for their safety. But rather than keeping their child from challenging experiences and situations, they are more likely to carefully prepare them for those experiences.²⁴ A school bully or mean dog in the neighbourhood? Mother's solution, which is perfectly smart, is to avoid the bully or the dog. Just stay out of their way. While father may agree with mum's solution, he will also want to teach his child what to do if a situation becomes unavoidable. Boys, especially, love to learn such things. It builds their confidence, lets them know there are good answers to life's problems, and, as a bonus, helps connect them with their dads in a special 'boys club only' kind of way.

Growing up, my best friend lived on the water. His father allowed us to take their motor boat out, by ourselves, onto a very large river that went out to the ocean.

Fathers tend to prepare their children for the world.

Ask yourself whether you've ever heard a father remind mum not to let the kids wander off too far or climb too high, or to watch out for strange people.

Mothers protect. Fathers prepare. Thriving children need the benefit of both.

²⁰ Kyle D. Pruett, *Fatherhood: Why Father Care Is as Essential as Mother Care for Your Child*, (The Free Press, 2000), p. 30.

²¹ Richard Ely, et al., "Family Talk about Talk: Mothers Lead the Way," *Discourse Processes*, 19 (1995): 201-218.

²² Erich Fromm, *The Art of Loving*, (Harper & Row Publishers, 1956), p. 42.

²³ Fromm, 1956, p. 41.

²⁴ Natasha J. Cabrera, et al., "Fatherhood on the Twenty-First Century," *Child Development*, 71 (2000): 127-136, p. 130; Michael E. Lamb, "Fathers: Forgotten Contributors to Child Development," *Human Development*, 18 (1975): 245-266, 257.

We were probably around 13-years-old the first time we did this. His father went with us but made us do everything ourselves: start the engine, make sure we put our life vests on properly, secure all the gear on the boat, and cast off from the dock. When we got out in the river, with its sweeping current, he would have us close our eyes. Then he would do something to stall the engine. We had to figure what was wrong and fix it ourselves. It was great fun for us and it usually didn't take my mate long to discover and remedy the problem. His dad would then ask us what we should do if we could not fix the engine. What was our Plan B? He wanted us to be prepared for anything, and it made us feel sure about ourselves and grown up because of his trust in us. We transferred what we learned about being prepared for various contingencies to other parts of our lives. He was preparing us for the river, but also for life. Our mums more likely would have kept us confined to the little cove on which my friend's family lived. Safe, but without having learned some important life lessons. This is what dads do.

Father's way is also more likely to help children keep their wits about them when they are in challenging situations.²⁵ This is the root of the essential quality of confidence.

Mothers protect. Fathers prepare. Thriving children need the benefit of both.

Fathers play rough (and that's very good)

For the child, it's simple: play is serious business. It's what kids do and what they *must* do. Play is their way of learning about and relating to the world. It strengthens their brains, hand-eye coordination and social skills, and offers opportunities for friendship.

A diversity of different kinds of play is critical for every child as it provides unique experiences with others and the world. Fathers, as male parents, create play experiences with their sons and daughters that mothers are just not as inclined to provide. Scholars have found that universally, only about 4% of mother-infant play is rough and tumble, geared toward getting the child to laugh boisterously and wiggle around excitedly and use their whole body in play.²⁶ That is dad's arena. In fact, the professionals who study this kind of thing have an acronym for a type of play that they *always* attribute to dad. They've assigned an acronym because it is so common in their research work. It's RTP. That doesn't stand for 'really-terrific-play'. It's rough-and-tumble play. It is a major part of what dads instigate with their sons and daughters, and you can't really study dad/child play without it.

Dads bring stimulation, excitement, creativity and noise. All mums and dads can see it demonstrated around bedtime, for instance. See if you can guess whether the following is the result of mum's or dad's involvement. The child is put to bed, tucked in, and has settled down. One parent comes in to say goodnight and perhaps read a story. Within a minute or so, the child starts giggling and ruffling up the nice, neat, tucked-in covers. The other parent can hear the increasing raucousness from the living room and wonders why the whole situation has changed from sleep-time to play-time. One parent is having fun and the other parent is getting annoyed. The annoyed parent comes in to settle down the excitement. Is one parent more likely to be the dad and the other the mum? Is it just as likely to be one or the other? Any mother or father, or anyone who has been regularly put to bed by a mother or father, knows the answer all too well.

Dads bring stimulation, excitement, creativity and noise.

Children were significantly more responsive to play initiated by father than play initiated by mother.



It is not that dad is better than mum, but merely that he is a different, more curious, and rarer dynamic in the child's daily routine.

25 Cheri A. Vogel, et al., "Relation Between Father Connectedness and Child Outcomes," *Parenting Science and Practice*, 6 (2006): 189-209.

26 Eleanor E. Maccoby, *The Two Sexes: Growing Up Apart; Coming Together*, (Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 266.

In the 1970s, Professor Allison Clarke-Stewart of the University of Chicago was an early investigator of how father play influenced the child and mother. She also did some of the most comprehensive study in this area, laying an enduring foundation for scholars after her. In her work, she found that the most dynamic factor in distinguishing the attachment and interaction of the child with either mother or father was *play*. “*Children were significantly more responsive to play initiated by father than play initiated by mother.*” She explained that children were more cooperative, interested, and involved in their play with dad, and that the overwhelming majority of children showed a consistent preference for play with him over mum, even though mum typically spent more time with the child.

It is not that dad is better than mum, but merely that he is a different, more curious, and rarer dynamic in the child’s daily routine. His presence influences mum as well. Clarke-Stewart observed that when the father was in the room, the mother tended to talk, respond, and play with the child less. The mother wanted the child and father to have greater opportunities for interaction.

Clarke-Stewart explained that father’s play is not only more physical and stimulating, but also tended to be more innovative and unpredictable in its structure and habits. It more often made use of ‘scary’ situations and thrills. Mum’s play was more verbal, predictably structured, and conventional.²⁷

Professor Michael Lamb of Yale University reported that children from seven months to two years tended to look, smile, vocalise, and laugh more with dad in situations of both care and play, because of dad’s more physical and stimulating manner and interaction.²⁸

It is not because they like dad better, but because he tends to draw more excitement and reaction out of them. While mother is the world-class caregiver for the child, dad becomes the child’s first and most fulfilling playmate. Dads consistently report enjoying this kind of interaction with their kids as well. That’s why they do it.

Dr Kyle Pruett of the Yale Study Center and Medical School explains that fathers “*have a penchant for making even the mundane routines more intensely physical endeavours, pushing the stroller, taking a bath, and so forth.*”²⁹ This fun-factor serves to lubricate the father/child relationship in important ways and to provide excitement and unpredictability for the child. It gets the child used to ever-changing situations, not just becoming comfortable with them, but anticipating and learning to enjoy them as well. It also teaches self-regulation. When dad gets his child riled up at bedtime by tickling and making jokes, the child must learn to settle himself down before mum comes in and breaks up the fun.

In addition, when father and child are rough-housing on the floor or out on the back lawn, dad must at some point teach his child certain boundaries. This is what Cheri Vogel, a research specialist at Mathematica Policy Research, is referencing when she says, “*Fathers may be particularly important for helping... children gain control over intense emotions.*”³⁰

This comes up in very practical and direct ways. For example, kids learn quickly that it’s just not cool to jump on dad in certain spots. In the same way, they can’t

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27 K. Allison Clarke-Stewart, “And Daddy Makes Three: The Father’s Impact on Mother and Young Child,” *Child Development*, 49 (1978): 466-478, p. 472.

28 Michael E. Lamb, “Interactions Between Two-Year-Olds and The Mothers and Fathers,” *Psychological Reports*, 38 (1976): 447-450; M. Lamb, “Twelve-Month-Olds and Their Parents: Interaction in a Laboratory Playroom,” *Developmental Psychology*, 12 (1976): 237-244; M. Lamb, “Father-Infant and Mother-Infant Interaction in the First Year of Life,” *Child Development*, 48 (1977): 167-181.

29 Kyle D. Pruett, “Role of the Father,” *Pediatrics*, 102 (1998): 1253-1261, p. 1255.

30 Cheri A. Vogel, et al., “Relation Between Father Connectedness and Child Outcomes,” *Parenting Science and Practice*, 6 (2006): 189-209.

be as rough with their siblings or friends as they are with dad. He teaches them that when jumping into the swimming pool, they must be mindful of others who might be below them. They must *regulate* themselves. His kids are learning how to use their bodies responsibly and how to be mindful and aware of others. This adds to that indirect development of empathy, in which dad is a key player. Our kids have the need to be stimulated, excited, and riled-up just as much as they have the need to be comforted and cared for. Mum and dad provide both.

Professor Paquette from the University of Montreal, whom we heard from earlier, introduces a curious and perhaps concerning word into the discussion of play between fathers and children: *destabilising*. He explains, "*Men seem to have a tendency to surprise children, to destabilise them momentarily, and to encourage to them to take 'risks,' thus enabling children to learn to be brave in unfamiliar situations...*"³¹

This is what we recognise as rough-and-tumble play, and it is primarily and exclusively dad's domain. It puts kids off-balance, both physically and emotionally. This destabilisation provides both fun and opportunities to grow and develop confidence. Dr Kyle Pruett agrees. Infants up to a year old will tend to seek out the father as a playmate over mum because that experience is typically "*more disruptive and unpredictable*" than mother's play.³² Fathers are more likely to provide an adventure.

A dramatic but common example of this is when babies and toddlers are tossed up into the air. It happens in cultures all over the world. When you see a baby fly up into the air, it will most likely be a father or grandfather doing the launching. Mothers, not so much. This demonstrates the curious nature of destabilisation. When the baby first goes up into the air, what is his reaction? His eyes get big, he gasps for breath, and he looks scared to death. This tends to delight dad and freak out mum. But just as quickly as fear grips the child, gravity does its thing, and he comes back down to earth into daddy's safe and secure hands. In that moment the child's reaction is immediate. We all know what it is, and it's not, "*Don't you ever do that again!*" Quite the opposite. There is wild giggling and excitement. And if the child is verbal, she shouts, "*Again!*" There is an entire industry based on this wonderful human experience: amusement parks.

It's great fun to be destabilised, and dad's way of doing this with his children provides diversity of experiences that mums are not as likely to give. These experiences are not only fun and thrilling; they also build confidence. They tell the child that yes, the world can be a scary place, but reasonable chance-taking can be very rewarding. Dad helps his kids gain the confidence to take measured risks. Every healthy, thriving person needs this ability.

Paquette also explains how fathers are likely to be more experimental with their children, creating innovative situations and incorporating various objects to base their play around, while mum will make more use of toys, predictable play, and verbal interactions.³³ Dad's way shows kids that they can be creative with everyday objects around the house, turning them into fun toys. It was most likely a father who invented the tyre swing, make-believe pony rides on the kitchen broom, the secret clubhouse made out of chairs and sheets in the living room, or the fort constructed from the box that the new refrigerator or washing machine came in.

Dad helps his kids gain the confidence to take measured risks.

Fathers are likely to be more experimental with their children.



Fathers are the preferred playmates, particularly by boys.

31 Daniel Paquette, "Theorizing the Father-Child Relationship: Mechanisms and Developmental Outcomes," *Human Development*, 47 (2004): 193-219, p. 205.

32 Kyle D. Pruett, "Role of the Father," *Pediatrics*, 102 (1998): 1253-1261, p. 1255.

33 Daniel Paquette, "Theorizing the Father-Child Relationship: Mechanisms and Developmental Outcomes," *Human Development*, 47 (2004): 193-219, p. 199.

Pruett highlights another toy employed by dad: “*The toy father uses most in his play with his young child is, in fact, always with him and rarely gets broken; it is his own body.*”³⁴

And much of this play with father differs between his sons or daughters. Paquette explains:

*Fathers engage in more physical play with their sons than with their daughters, whereas mothers encourage the pretend play of daughters more than that of sons. Mothers are primarily perceived by children as sources of well-being and security, while fathers are the preferred playmates, particularly by boys.*³⁵

This unpredictable excitement is not all found in play, either. Fathers are also more rousing and physically stimulating when they are doing care-taking activities such as nappy changes, feeding, and bathing. Fathers are also more likely to encourage group play, getting several children together to compete as a team. Of course, this instills the skills and disciplines needed to work together and to be accepted in collective play.³⁶

A major research journal article entitled *Fatherhood in the Twenty-First Century* explains that, “*Fathers’ biological and socially reinforced masculine qualities predispose them to treat their children differently than do mothers.*” They are more likely to “*encourage their children to be competitive, independent, and to take risks.*”³⁷ One father of an 11-year-old boy reported this about their father/son play:

While playing with Allen, I try to teach him to compete hard but fair and will not tolerate cheating. I try to teach him how to deal with frustration and losing; we stop playing for a while if he starts to whine and complain. I teach him how to handle power and aggression in the proper ways.

Allen, the son, then adds, “*He doesn’t use all of his strength all the time, but I do!*”³⁸

Fathers are very powerful and influential teachers, and their classroom is most often play. Kids are getting far more here than most of us realise, and it is important for mum to understand this. It might not seem like there’s a method to dad’s madness with your kids, but there are countless essential benefits.

Large and fine motor skills

Child development specialists divide play types into two groups: those that make use of *fine motor skills*, and those that make use of *large motor skills*. This generally has to do with what parts of the body are being used. Playing netball, bike-riding, or climbing monkey bars requires large motor skills. These types of activities involve the participant’s *entire* body.

On the other hand, building Lego, colouring, painting, cutting with scissors, or playing a musical instrument usually employ fine motor skills. They make more use of the hands, eyes, and mind. A healthy child must learn to develop both sets of skills. Of course, many types of play involve both at the same time. That’s one reason why too much screen time is not good for our children: it makes use of their fingers, eyes, and minds, but not the rest of their bodies. It doesn’t get them ‘out there’ in the world, making good use of their legs, lungs, and arms.

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Too much screen time is not good for our children: it makes use of their fingers, eyes, and minds, but not the rest of their bodies.

³⁴ Pruett, 2000, p. 28.

³⁵ Paquette, 2004, p. 198, 199.

³⁶ David Popenoe, *Life Without Father: Compelling Evidence that Fatherhood and Marriage Are Indispensable for the Good of Children and Society*, (The Free Press, 1996), p. 143.

³⁷ Natasha J. Cabrera, et al., “Fatherhood in the Twenty-First Century,” *Child Development*, 71 (2000):127-136, p. 130.

³⁸ Kyle D. Pruett, “Role of the Father,” *Pediatrics*, 102 (1998): 1253-1261, p. 1258.

Father's play is more likely to stimulate *large or gross motor skill growth*, such as sitting up, tumbling, balancing, rolling, throwing, jumping, catching or running. Mother encourages *fine motor skill growth* – eating, dressing, doing finger-play, colouring, cutting and tying.³⁹

Think about the encouragement from a parent for a child to play tag or dodge-ball. Or to sit at the kitchen table to colour, paint, or cut out and glue papers. Is one type more associated with dad and the other with mum? And what is most important for the child? Both are important, but dad's way provides more exercise and exertion. It is more likely to involve others. It exercises the whole body, provides quicker action and creates a greater physical workout. It is also likely to be more exciting. All of our kids need these experiences, and they are more likely to get them from dad.

Dad enriches communication

Just as dads have very different styles of play that bring rich developmental treasures to their children in terms of confidence, self-control and safe risk-taking, dads also make important contributions to language development. Good vocabulary and communicative skills are important in both academic and social settings.

A leading group of child-development experts tells us that, "*Fathers' engagement directly affects children's linguistic, literacy, and cognitive abilities.*"⁴⁰

The reason for this is that mothers are likely to moderate their speech more precisely to the developmental level of the child. Fathers don't do this. Eleanor Maccoby, a ground-breaking scholar in the field of gender difference and child development from Stanford University, explains, "*The mother's mean length of utterance is more closely related to that of the child she is addressing than is the father's, and ... fathers used more unfamiliar, difficult or specialised words*" with their children.⁴¹

Father's way tends to be less attuned to development of the child, but there is important benefit in this. He tends to be less sensitive or aware of the complexity of the words, sentence structure and inflections he is using with his child. Professor Lamb from Yale University adds, "*Fathers use more directives, requests for clarification, wh-questions [what, why, when, where, etc.], references to past events, imperatives and countless non-direct utterances than mothers do.*"⁴²

Children are observed to use more sophistication and more words and explanation in responding to dad's questions, requests, and overall conversation. So while the child needs to work harder with dad, he or she is also demonstrating and practising more complex language skills. This will reap untold benefits in sociability and in later academic and employment success.

It is really the sheer difference and the child's diversity of experiences in these two parental ways of communicating that contribute to strengthening a child's communicative ability. Mum's way facilitates immediate understanding and connection. Dad's way often initiates a vocabulary lesson and introduces some challenge that his children must learn to work through and overcome.

Father's play is more likely to stimulate large or gross motor skill growth. Mother encourages fine motor skill growth.

Fathers' engagement directly affects children's linguistic, literacy, and cognitive abilities.



Mothers are likely to moderate their speech more precisely to the developmental level of the child. Fathers don't do this.

39 Eleanor E. Maccoby, *The Two Sexes: Growing Up Apart; Coming Together*, (Harvard University Press, 1999).

40 Catherine S. Tamis-LeMonda, et al., "Fathers and Mothers at Play With Their 2- and 3-Year-Olds: Contributions to Language and Cognitive Development," *Child Development*, 75 (2004): 1806-1820, p. 1808.

41 Eleanor E. Maccoby, *The Two Sexes: Growing Up Apart, Coming Together*, (Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 269.

42 Michael D. Lamb, "How Do Father's Influence Children's Development? Let Me Count the Ways," in Michael D. Lamb (ed.), *The Role of the Father in Child Development*, fifth edition, (John Wiley and Sons, 2010): 1-26, p. 8.

It stretches them. Fathers also have a tendency to ask for more clarification of statements or requests made by the child. This helps the child realise the necessity of clarifying what they say, while providing the opportunity to practise doing so – along with the patience to not get frustrated in the process. Dads are also far more likely to make problem-solving demands of their children than mothers, quizzing them on various things they experience during the day.⁴³ This often includes maths problems such as, “If we bought three doughnuts with sprinkles, two with coconut, four cream-filled and then gave four doughnuts away, how many would we have?” This challenges children to listen carefully to the question, think through and formulate the answer, and explain it clearly.

Dad’s more complex way also gives the child the courage and confidence to ask for clarity when he or she doesn’t understand something. This stretches the child in terms of both their vocabulary and their understanding of more complex sentence structure. It doesn’t mean fathers are smarter or more sophisticated in their speech than mothers. It simply means that mum is more attuned to how to quickly and easily communicate with her child. Mum and dad must understand that there are benefits to both styles of communication, even as some research indicates that father’s style of communication can be more powerful in speech, literacy, and many other areas of intellectual and academic development.⁴⁴

Discipline

How parents discipline their children is very important. It impacts the kind of person the child will grow to be. Do mum and dad discipline at all? Are they merely reactive discipliners, or are they overly strict and rigid in their correction and punishment? Perhaps they are inconsistent or merely threaten, “If you do what one more time, you’ll be sorry!” When we meet other children, it is often quite obvious what kind of discipline their parents use. We want to make sure our children are the kinds of kids others – young and old – like to be around.

Dad is a unique kind of disciplinarian. As in all these other areas of child development, the diversity he provides compared to mum is not only different, but extremely important.

An innovative scholar in this field of study, looking at the important differences between men and women and how they determine and establish moral standards, is Harvard educational psychologist Carol Gilligan. She tells us:⁴⁵

Fathers tend to stress	Mothers tend to stress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • justice • fairness • duty (based on rules) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sympathy • grace • care • help (based on relationship)

Fathers tend to enforce rules more sternly and objectively. This teaches children the essential objectivity and consequences of right and wrong. Mothers tend to enforce rules relative to the situation with grace and sympathy. This provides a sense of hopefulness in the child. Either of these approaches is not good in isolation, but together, they create a healthy and proper balance for children. Each approach represents one way the world works or should work.

Mum and dad must understand that there are benefits to both styles of communication.

Fathers tend to enforce rules more sternly and objectively. Mothers tend to enforce rules relative to the situation with grace and sympathy.

⁴³ Daniel Paquette, “Theorizing the Father-Child Relationship: Mechanisms and Developmental Outcomes,” *Human Development*, 47 (2004): 193-219, p. 199.

⁴⁴ Paul Raeburn, *Do Fathers Matter? What Science is Telling Us About the Parent We’ve Overlooked*, (Scientific American, 2014), p. 145.

⁴⁵ As reported by D. Popenoe, *Life Without Father: Compelling Evidence that Fatherhood and Marriage Are Indispensable for the Good of Children and Society*, (The Free Press, 1996), p. 146.

If a child takes away another's toys while she is playing with them, it really doesn't matter about the details of the situation. Snatching another's toys is selfish and unkind. It should be addressed promptly and in a black-and-white way. If a child is angry and yelling at another, it is important to determine the situation. If the child is being harassed in some way, anger can be a proper response. But if the child is simply not getting his way, angry outbursts are inappropriate. Mothers and fathers must work together to bring the proper balance of truth and grace, right and wrong, to the varying situations in which their children find themselves. Sometimes it's not so easy, but mum and dad working together, giving and taking in an effort to reach the proper balance, is key to proper parenting.

Mum and dad working together, giving and taking in an effort to reach the proper balance, is key to proper parenting.

An additional angle that Dr. Kyle Pruett observes is that mothers are more likely to use mild guilt and personal disappointment motivators in discipline, such as, "How do you think it makes me feel when you throw your food on the floor like that?" or, "I've just cleaned that bathroom. Do you think it makes me happy when I find it all messy five minutes later?"

Dads are more likely to name the behavioural offense, explain the problem and give a consequence if the behaviour continues. Short and sweet.⁴⁶ Remembering the *Dad-with-child-toward-the-community* reality, dads are also more likely to explain to the child the larger-world consequences of naughty or selfish behaviour, such as, "No one is going to want to be your friend if you keep acting like that!" or, "How do you expect to get a good job if you can't learn to settle down and focus on your school work?" Many studies show that fathers are more likely to get quicker correction in behaviour and attitude from their children than mum. They are more inclined to get right to the point.

Fathers are more likely to get quicker correction in behaviour and attitude from their children than mum.

Fathers teach respect for the opposite sex

It is an indisputable fact that a married father is substantially less likely to abuse his wife or children than men in any other category.⁴⁷ This means that boys and girls with a father who is committed to the mother will learn by observation how men should treat women. Good mothers also teach them what they should and should not tolerate from a man.

When (not *if*) dad messes up in his relationships with his children and their mother, mum is likely to challenge him on such behaviour. The children will observe and learn from this. They also learn, for good or for bad, how a good father responds to such correction and encouragement. Does he dismiss it, get angry, or respond to it graciously, even if he doesn't believe he is totally in the wrong? Humility shown on dad's part in front of his sons and daughters in such situations is important.

Girls with good dads develop healthy standards for what they will and will not tolerate from boys. This keeps them safe from manipulation and exploitation. Boys with good dads learn how to be respectful to girls and women and how to treat them well.

Good fathers end up protecting girls - their daughters as well as their children's friends - by simply being a good example. Dad's influence here is profound, and

A married father is substantially less likely to abuse his wife or children than men in any other category.

⁴⁶ Kyle D. Pruett, *Fatherhood: Why Father Care Is as Essential as Mother Care for Your Child*, (The Free Press, 2000), p. 8-9.

⁴⁷ Jan Stets and Murray A. Strauss, "The Marriage License as a Hitting License: A Comparison of Assaults in Dating, Cohabiting, and Married Couples," *Journal of Family Violence* 4 (1989): 161-180; Jan Stets, "Cohabiting and Marital Aggression: the Role of Social Isolation," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 53 (1991): 669-680; Michael Gordon, "The Family Environment of Sexual Abuse: A Comparison of Natal and Stepfather Abuse," *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 13 (1985): 121-130.

it has broad and essential consequences for the community.

But there is another angle of dad's presence upon his daughters which is curious. When we look at the mysterious micro-level impact fathers have on their children, such as the telomere length we examined earlier in this report, we find another interesting truth.

Girls who live with a non-biological father or other adult male, such as mum's live-in boyfriend, tend to get their first period markedly earlier than those living with their biological fathers. It seems to be the actual presence of the biological father that slows the onset of puberty in girls.

Professor Bruce Ellis, working from the University of Canterbury in Christchurch in an eight-year longitudinal study, reports that prepubescent girls' regular, long-term "*pheromonal exposure to biological fathers inhibits sexual maturation.*" What is at work here is absolutely fascinating.

This delay is important from a number of very practical perspectives, because early ovulation and menses is associated with increased risk of breast cancer, unhealthy weight gain, higher teen pregnancy rates and low birth-rate babies. Such girls tend to struggle more with body image, emotional issues like depression and anxiety, and health risk factors such as alcohol and drug abuse and sexual promiscuity.⁴⁸ Early menstruation starts the girl's development into womanhood sooner, perhaps before her body is really ready.

Not surprisingly, Ellis found that, "*Father absence was an overriding risk factor for early sexual activity and adolescent pregnancy. Conversely, father presence was a major protective factor against early sexual outcomes, even if other factors were present.*"⁴⁹

It is as if a girl's natural father, through an invisible communication and influence upon the most intimate internal workings of his daughter's body, delays her sexual development and thus keeps her hormonally safer from opportunistic boys and men. He is protecting her, as good fathers do, without either of them really realising it.

An additional follow-up study by another research psychologist, Jacqueline Tither, also from the University of Canterbury, sought to determine if factors beyond biological father presence were at work here by employing a bit more sophistication with her research methods. She found that while a younger sister will enter menarche one to two months earlier than her older sister, this study added an interesting angle. Her team examined sisters where there was a family disruption causing the biological father to leave the house for good before a younger sister had reached her first period. They found that the younger daughter, after dad left to live elsewhere, tended to get her first period 11 months on average sooner than her older sister. Serious dysfunctional behaviour on the part of the father while at home, such as substance abuse, violence, or criminal activity, also increased each daughter's likelihood of early menses.⁵⁰ Healthy biological fathers protect their children in important and unexpected ways. Such is the powerful mystery of fatherhood.

The long-term study conducted by Bruce Ellis, referenced on the previous page, found that a father's influence on his adolescent son or daughter's avoidance

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Good fathers end up protecting girls.

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48 Bruce J. Ellis, "Of Fathers and Pheromones: Implications of Cohabitation for Daughters' Pubertal Timing," in Alan Booth and Ann C. Crouther, (eds.) *Just Living Together: Implications of Cohabitation on Families, Children, and Social Policy*, (Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2002), p. 161-172.

49 Bruce J. Ellis, et al., "Does Father Absence Place Daughters at Special Risk for Early Sexual Activity and Teenage Pregnancy," *Child Development*, 74 (2003): 801-821, p. 818.

50 Jacqueline M. Tither, "Impact of Fathers on Daughters' Age at Menarche: A Genetically and Environmentally Controlled Study," *Developmental Psychology*, 44 (2008): 1409 – 1420.

of early sexual activity and pregnancy was “*particularly robust*,” as strong as it is upon mental and physical health, academic achievement and proper social behaviour.⁵¹

Fathers seemed to be slightly more consequential for New Zealand youth in this regard than for US fathers. Fatherless New Zealand girls were eight times more likely to be pregnant in adolescence. American girls were seven times more likely, compared to those with biological fathers present in the home.

One of the most widely respected scholars in the world on the impact of fathers upon children is David Popenoe from Rutgers University. Drawing from his life’s work on this question, he tells us that multiple and diverse large-scale studies “*lend strong support*” to the reality that, “*Fathers play a key role in the development of their daughters’ sexual behaviour*.”⁵²

Girls with involved fathers are more likely to select for themselves good friendships and husbands because they have a proper, healthy standard by which to judge all candidates. To be sure, fathers themselves also help weed out bad candidates.

Girls who grow up without their fathers present are simply more likely to follow the predatory enticements of twenty-something men because they have learned from their own absent dad that men don’t stick around, so they should do all they can to catch the first interesting opportunity to come along.

Unfortunately, she is more inclined to keep trying to catch the next one and the next after him, being easily discarded each time. It creates a terrible and increasingly troubling cycle. Not infrequently, she believes that having his baby will keep him from leaving. As we know all too well, it often does not.⁵³

A father’s impact upon his son’s or daughter’s view of men and women has much bigger social consequences than just his children’s sexual relationships. The *American Journal of Sociology* has long reported that, “*Societies with father-present patterns of child socialisation produce men who are less inclined to exclude women from public activities [and community leadership] than their counterparts in father-absent societies*.”⁵⁴

Fathers empower women by empowering their daughters and teaching their sons to be mindful and considerate of the wisdom women can bring to life’s situations. Rutgers David Popenoe found that boys who grow up in communities with a high percentage of involved biological fathers and strong male role models have no “*need to reject and dominate women and create exclusionary all-male activities*.” He adds, “*Children raised by involved fathers grow up to become adults who are more respectful of women and more willing to share with women broad social power and authority*.”⁵⁵

This is also true because girls and boys with married mothers learn from their mums what a healthy, respectful female relationship with a good man looks like. Girls who observe their mothers confidently and lovingly interacting with their fathers learn how to interact confidently with men.

Boys raised with fathers are more likely to be good husbands because they can emulate their fathers’ successes and learn from their failures.

Fatherless New Zealand girls were eight times more likely to be pregnant in adolescence.



Fathers play a key role in the development of their daughters’ sexual behaviour.

Societies with father-present patterns of child socialisation produce men who are less inclined to exclude women from public activities.

51 Bruce J. Ellis et al., “Does Father Absence Place Daughters at Special Risk for Early Sexual Activity and Teenage Pregnancy,” *Child Development*, 74 (2003): 801-821.

52 David Popenoe, *Life Without Father: Compelling Evidence that Fatherhood and Marriage Are Indispensable for the Good of Children and Society*, (The Free Press, 1996), p. 64.

53 Paul Raeburn, *Do Fathers Matter? What Science is Telling Us About the Parent We’ve Overlooked*, (Scientific American, 2014), p. 160.

54 Scott Coltrane, “Father-Child Relationships and the Status of Women: A Cross-Cultural Study,” *American Journal of Sociology*, (1988) 93:1060-1095, p. 1088.

55 David Popenoe, *Life Without Father: Compelling Evidence that Fatherhood and Marriage Are Indispensable for the Good of Children and Society*, (The Free Press, 1996), p. 162, 163.

These lessons from mum and dad, often taught without their even being aware, will pay large dividends later in life as son and daughter go off to establish their own love relationships and families.

The child's impact on the father

Finally, we must note that even while the father has remarkable influence on his sons and daughters, his children also have a tremendous influence on him - even before they are born! Much of this influence is undetectable within dad's body because it happens at the subcellular level.

Yale's Kyle Pruett, whom we have quoted previously in this report, has done some recent research on this issue with his wife, Marsha Kline Pruett, a chaired professor in social work. The research revealed that as mum's pregnancy neared its completion, the dad's estrogen levels tended to rise and stayed elevated for about three months after his child's birth. His testosterone declined by a third and his prolactin levels jumped by 20% after birth and remained at that level for the first three or four weeks of his new baby's life.⁵⁶

Prolactin is the hormone that helps initiate mum's ability to nurse her babies. But men have prolactin too, and while its purpose for him is not fully understood, it is known to decrease his sex drive.

This is especially important for most mums in the weeks following childbirth, as they need time to recover. They tend to be extremely tired and consumed with the challenges of new motherhood. Thus the increase in prolactin puts the dad more in tune with the mum. But prolactin is also a bonding hormone, which helps the father bond more tightly with his new baby. These hormonal changes set up a father's body and brain to be more closely attuned to the role of a nurturer, and to fulfill his new job as a dad.

Another study, conducted by Canadian scholars, tested men's response to infant cries. It found that new fathers showed an increase in both testosterone *and* prolactin at hearing such cries. Experienced fathers who had additional children demonstrated a greater prolactin increase. Men with no children exhibited no increase or decrease. They were unaffected hormonally by a child's cry.⁵⁷ A man's babies impact him in very intricate ways.

The Pruett's also found that dad's overall weight increased during the mother's pregnancy, and tended to peak equal to the child's birth weight, making his gain similar to mum's. We might call it 'sympathy weight'. It has been well demonstrated in a great deal of research that dad's body is more likely to be in tune with mother's body during this unique, exciting, and trying time of pregnancy and the first few weeks after birth.

Just as their bodies worked together to produce this new life, they continue to work together after the baby is born. This very intimate and ongoing cooperation between the male and female parents' bodies is nothing short of remarkable.

Fatherhood even changes the very brains of men during the early lives of their children. In an important longitudinal study, scientists scanned the brains of new fathers in various ways over time to observe what changes, if any, take place in the 'dad brain'.

They reported that brains, particularly in the "*striatum, amygdala and hypothalamus*, show increases in gray matter volume from 2-4 weeks to 12-16

Fathers empower women by empowering their daughters.

His children also have a tremendous influence on him – even before they are born.



The dad's estrogen levels tended to rise and stayed elevated for about three months after his child's birth.

Prolactin is also a bonding hormone, which helps the father bond more tightly with his new baby.

56 Kyle Pruett and Marsha Kline Pruett, *Partnership Parenting: How Men and Women Parent Differently – Why It Helps Your Kids and Can Strengthen Your Marriage*, (DaCapo Press), p. 17.

57 Alison S. Fleming, et al., "Testosterone and Prolactin Are Associated with Emotional Responses to Infant Cries in New Fathers," *Hormones and Behaviour*, 42 (2002): 399-413.

weeks postpartum in fathers." These are the parts of the brain which increase dad's intimacy and connection with his child and which help him adapt to the new responsibilities of being a dad. The scholars concluded:

*The findings may shed light on the brain regions that adopt structural changes in concert with the human father's transition to parenthood and regulate each father's ability to develop appropriate parental behaviours and regulate postpartum mood.*⁵⁸

Another very interesting and more recent study found that the 'dad brain' - specifically the *medial and lateral orbitofrontal cortex* - responds differently to boys than it does to girls. Not better or worse, just differently.

Fathers responded more strongly in these regions to their daughters' happy expressions and more strongly to their sons' more neutral facial expressions, especially when engaged in rough-and-tumble play. They did not differ at all in their response to the sad faces of their daughters and sons.⁵⁹

Additional research, conducted jointly by the University of Michigan and Columbia University in the United States, and the University of Manchester in the UK, revealed that when new mothers' and fathers' brains were presented with different images and sounds of their babies, different parts of their brains showed differing activity depending on gender. At no time were these brain activities more distinct between mum and dad than in these early months of their child's life.⁶⁰

If the parents' relationship deteriorates during these early weeks, it's not just the anxiety of caring for a new baby and all the unfamiliar tasks that must be done. Their brains are firing in different places and in new ways, not just different from one another, but different than what they are accustomed to in themselves.

The new parent changes are happening deeply and dramatically in the couple, and this will impact their relationship with each other as well as the task of parenting. This time calls for greater patience and forgiveness between mum and dad.

Finally, a recent study examining fathers in New Zealand enhanced this prior research, finding that fathers could experience pre- and post-birth changes just like mothers. But they did so in their own unique 'dad' way.

These scholars reported that, "*Pregnancy and childbirth may be high-risk periods for male depression.*" This was especially true, not surprisingly, for fathers who felt stressed during pregnancy and in the first months of life.⁶¹

Dad's physiological changes and developments are certainly not as life-changing as mum's, but are dramatic and challenging for him still.

There is reason to give dad some grace as he enters fatherhood and struggles with its new emotions, changes, and trials. He also experiences its joys in a different way. He is not a passive player by any measure.

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At no time were these brain activities more distinct between mum and dad than in these early months of their child's life.

Pregnancy and childbirth may be high-risk periods for male depression.

58 Pilyoung Kim, et al., "Neural Plasticity in Fathers of Human Infants," *Social Neuroscience*, 9 (2014): 522-535.

59 Jennifer S. Mascaro, et al., "Child Gender Influences Paternal Behaviour, Language and, Brain Function," *Behavioural Neuroscience*, 131 (2017): 262-273.

60 James E. Swain, et al., "Approaching the Biology of Human Parental Attachment: Brain Imaging, Oxytocin and Coordinated Assessments of Mothers and Fathers," *Brain Research*, 1580 (2014): 78-101.

61 Lisa Underwood, et al., "Paternal Depression Symptoms During Pregnancy and After Childbirth Among Participants in the Growing Up in New Zealand Study," *JAMA Psychiatry*, 74 (2017): 360-369.

Compensating for absent dads: a note to single mums

Just as we have made a compelling case from a large and diverse body of research, showing how essential dads are to healthy development, we must add a very important note here. There are many families, unfortunately too many, who are hobbling along without a good father in the home. Some of these are due to various life-choices made by mothers and fathers themselves, such as lack of commitment to the relationship, substance abuse, infidelity and unwillingness to support the family financially and emotionally. Some are the result of life events that just came upon the family, such as the death of a father, a psychological illness that leaves him unfit to live in the home, or issues of physical, sexual and emotional abuse which requires a mother to live without him for her own sake and that of her children. What about these homes? Are these children doomed to a life of failure and stunted physical, educational and emotional development? This is an important question, both for mum and her children.

Firstly, we must avoid the unhelpful happy-talk that 'All families are the same' and that 'Single parent families are just as successful' and 'It only takes love to make a family'. While our hearts may desire such an answer, the research doesn't support this. Nor does the experience of single-parent families.

Mums raising kids without the help, support, encouragement and backing of the children's father know all too well it is tough-going in many ways. Most would happily welcome the benefit of having a healthy, loving and supportive co-parent at their side. But that is not their situation. While single-parenting can be very difficult, presenting its own challenges and obstacles, it by no means dictates that a child will not be successful in life. There are too many examples to the contrary: children raised without a father who have gone on to accomplish great things and to live happy, productive lives.

The research examined in this report speaks to the odds. If you examine 100 children coming from married mother/father homes and 100 children coming from fatherless homes, you are likely to have a greater number of children with more life deficits in one group than the other. This certainly does not mean that *all* the children in one group will all be doing great while *all* the children in the other will do poorly. That is not how research data works.

You will find some children in the fatherless family group doing markedly better than some children in the mum/dad group. But overall, children growing up without a father are more likely to face some difficulties and short-comings in life compared to their peers living with their mother and father. But these difficulties, from child to child, are certainly not guaranteed. Far from it.

Single mothers can help overcome many of these challenges with help from their extended families – particularly good grandfathers, uncles and older male cousins – as well as loving and wise guidance of her own. As well as sports coaches, and Scout, community and church youth group leaders, another example of support is the New Zealand charity *Big Buddy* which recruits positive male role models to mentor fatherless boys aged between 7 and 14 years.⁶²

These options should give hope to single mums and their children.

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⁶² <https://www.bigbuddy.org.nz/about/>

CONCLUSION

If dad were merely a 'second mum', he would be referred to as mum's helper. If dad were only a regular wage or salary, he would be known as just the provider. If dad were around the house only to fix things and kill bugs, he would simply be the on-call handyman and exterminator. To reduce dad to any of these roles is to fail to appreciate just how sophisticated and critical a creature the male parent is to human development. To reduce him to these stereotypes is to ignore 50 years of powerful and definitive scientific research. Perhaps many of dad's contributions tend to go unnoticed because they are more subtle. They may not be as obvious as mum's, but they are just as powerful.

Sometimes dad's contributions - his rough and risk-taking play, his inability to speak down to the level of the child, or his strict manner of discipline - can even be seen as troubling. But as we have seen throughout this report, the best research from the international world of child development reveals an absolute mountain of benefits which dads provide for both girls and boys.

The data shows, in countless layers, how richly dad enhances the life, experience, and development of his sons and daughters from birth to adulthood. He does things mum is unlikely or simply unable to do.

To assume that a father's contribution is not essential, or is easily replaced by someone else regardless of gender, is to demonstrate a woeful lack of understanding of the nature of humanity itself. Just as sure as it takes the intimate cooperation of both male and female to create every new human life, it also requires their cooperation day after day, week after week, and year after year, to bring that life to full and healthy adulthood.

We are clearly setting the odds against mum, and against our nation's children, when we intentionally take dad out of the mix, assuming life can proceed just as well without him. There is no society anywhere that is not determined in its overall safety, material provision, productivity, academic progress and equality by its collective encouragement and valuing of fatherhood. Nowhere.

No society can have too many dads, but every society can certainly have too few - suffering irreversible harm because of it. A fatherless family is one which walks with a substantial limp up a difficult incline. Single mums know this all too well. The three Ps of society know this better than anyone: *Police, Principals, and Pediatricians*. Why? Because a father reduces crime rates, helps his kids do and behave better at school, and protects them from physical and emotional problems like no one else. It is immoral to disregard him in the family. When we do, society suffers.

We would do well to make sure we live in a community which honours fathers, encourages them in their parenting tasks, and does all it can to make sure that every boy and girl, as much as possible, grows up with the irreplaceable benefit of being loved and cared for every day by his or her own father. Any public policy or community attitude that moves us away from this must be judged immoral as well as contrary to the best and most reliable science on human development. We should even make it a habit to thank and encourage dads as we see them involved with their children in the park, at the shopping centre, coaching the sports team, volunteering at school, and elsewhere. Let them know how vital they are to their children and to society.

Sometimes dad's contributions can even be seen as troubling. But the best research reveals an absolute mountain of benefits which dads provide for both girls and boys.

No society can have too many dads, but every society can certainly have too few – suffering irreversible harm because of it.

A fatherless family is one which walks with a substantial limp up a difficult incline.

A father reduces crime rates, helps his kids do and behave better at school, and protects them from physical and emotional problems like no one else.

As Professor David Popenoe instructs us:

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 likely to bring. They have a parenting style that is significantly different than that of mothers, and the difference is important in healthy child development.

He adds:

*We should disavow the notion that 'mummies can make good daddies', just as we should disavow the popular notion of radical feminists that 'daddies can make good mummies.' ... The two sexes are different to the core, and each is necessary – culturally and biologically – for the optimal development of a human being.*⁶³

Professor of Human Development at Pennsylvania State University David Eggebeen agrees, concluding:

*The evidence is in and it is clear that fathers do matter for the lives of children. Hundreds of studies over the past ... decades have consistently demonstrated that fathers have a measurable impact on children.*⁶⁴

Father's Day is more than a sentimental ceremony of cards and gifts.

It is a celebration of one our world's most important, renewable resources.

Let them know how vital they are to their children and to society.

We should disavow the notion that 'mummies can make good daddies'.

The two sexes are different to the core, and each is necessary – culturally and biologically – for the optimal development of a human being.

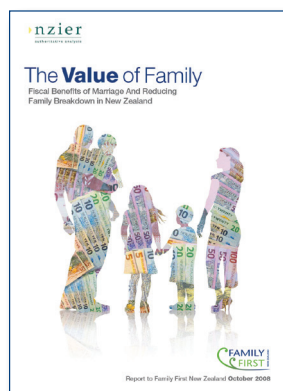
Father's Day is a celebration of one our world's most important, renewable resources.



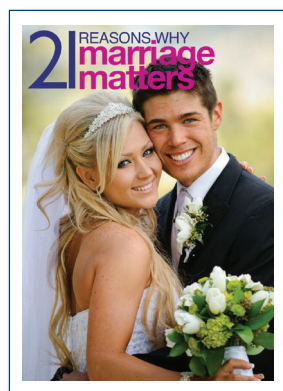
63 David Popenoe, *Life Without Father: Compelling New Evidence That Fatherhood and Marriage are Indispensable for the Good of Children and Society*, (The Free Press, 1996), p. 163, 197.

64 David Eggebeen, "Do Fathers Matter Uniquely for Adolescent Well-Being?," Center for Marriage and Family, Institute for American Values, Research Brief No. 14, October 2008.

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Family Breakdown
2008



Marriage
2009



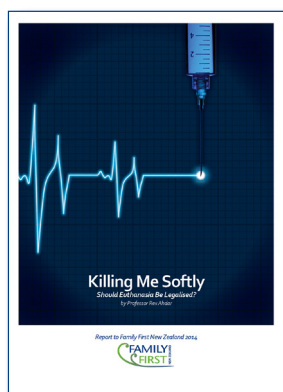
Drinking Age
2011



Daycare
2012



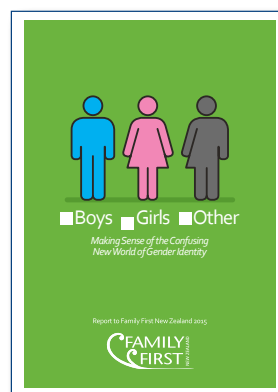
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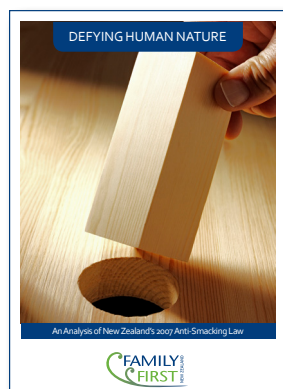
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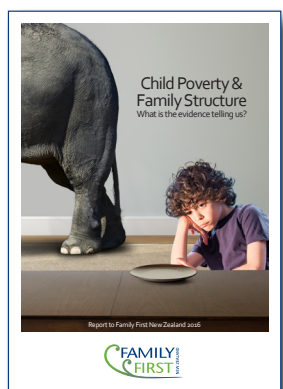
Screentime
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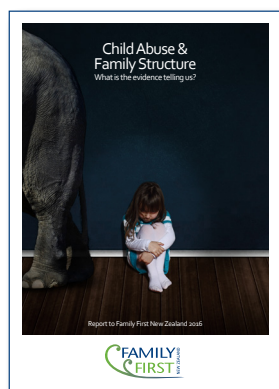
Gender Identity
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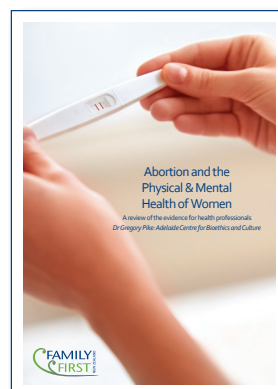
Anti-Smacking Law
2016



Child Poverty
2016



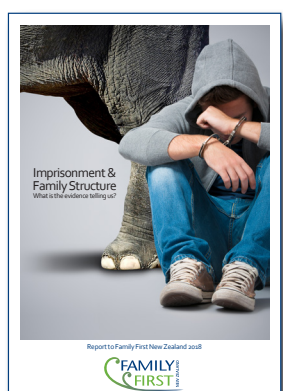
Child Abuse
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