

BUILDING HEALTHY FAMILIES

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Dads Make a Difference

Infants and small children are learning every moment. Daily observations and experiences teach them how to behave and how to understand the world. Parents and caregivers are the first teachers a child ever has. The consistent nurturing response provided by a parent is the foundation for all healthy attachments later in life.

Children learn about themselves and the world by the way that adults interact with them. Dads teach children how important they are, how to interact with others and how to manage conflict in a relationship.

Dad's involvement in the life of his baby during the prenatal period has been linked to moms receiving regular prenatal care and improved birth outcomes. Dads experience a wide range of emotions during the prenatal period: happiness, anxiety, excitement, concern, and frustration. This range of emotions is normal and your

home visitor can offer valuable support.

How Are You Using Your Superpower?

"Do you ever wonder what your kids could become if they really believed they could do anything? As a father, you have great power in the words you speak to them.

In everyday life, you can plant an idea in the mind of a family member, then see how that affects his or her actions. The power



of suggestion is strong -- like a **father's super power** -- and we should use it for our children's benefit." — Fathers.com

"With great power, comes great responsibility." — Spiderman

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Building Healthy Families Dads Get Involved!

I help my child learn and grow by...

"..just spending time with him. For example, I will take a rattle and move it side to side and up and down to see if he will follow the rattle with his eyes." — Dad of a 4 month old boy

"I wake up with him every morning and talk and play with him." — Dad of a 4 month old boy

"I play with him a lot and read stories to him. I also enjoy the fact that I can spend time with him while feeding him; that is an important time for us together." — Dad of a 5 month old boy

"We play games and go for walks together." — Dad of a 3 year old boy

Research shows....



Involved fathers provide practical support in raising children and serve as models for their development. Children with involved, loving fathers are significantly more likely to do well in school, have healthy self-esteem, exhibit empathy and pro-social behavior compared to children who have uninvolved fathers. Committed and responsible fathering during infancy and early childhood contributes emotional security, curiosity, and math and verbal skills.

—US Dept. of Health and Human Services

Dad Needs Support Too: Father's Day Tips for New Dads

When a baby is born, much of the focus is on the mother, but dad is just as important. The bond between a father and a newborn is every bit as vital as the mother-baby bond. Fathers are critical to a child's happiness, well-being, and social and academic success. Studies have shown that children with an involved father show up to school better able to learn, are more likely to go to college, and less likely to become parents before they are ready.

Father's Day is the perfect opportunity to recognize the importance of fathers in kid's lives. Here are some ideas for creating special Daddy– Baby bonds:

Hold your baby. Being held teaches your baby the world is a safe place. This is how he learns to trust. He also links your touch with warmth and comfort; holding your baby is the first step to building a solid relationship that will last a lifetime!

Holding a baby every time she needs you cannot spoil her. In fact, giving a young baby the attention she needs actually grows an independent and capable toddler!

Massage your baby. Your baby will link gentle touch to a happy feeling and learn that he has a caring parent. While massaging your baby, look into his eyes and sing or talk to him. Studies have shown that babies who are massaged cry less than babies who are rocked.

Play with your baby. Babies learn through play—it is how they explore their world. Soft knee bouncing is fun for the baby (if she is old enough to hold up her head). Add gentle dancing, nursery rhymes and songs.

Soothe your baby. There are many ways to do this. First, listen to your baby's cries. You may recognize a certain cry for when your baby is mad, sad, uncomfortable, tired, hungry, bored, or in pain. Then, try the basics. Does your baby need to be fed, burped, or need a diaper change? If your baby continues to cry, try moving him to a calm, quiet place. You can also dance with him or sing to him. Just remember to keep your cool. You are not a bad parent if you cannot comfort your baby. Being there for your crying baby teaches him he can count on you!

For more information & support call the **Parent Helpline at 1-800-CHILDREN**

or check out the website: <http://www.preventchildabuseny.org/files/2513/0313/3263/newfathertips.pdf>

Happy Father's Day!

DID YOU KNOW...

Children with a “Dad”...

- Have higher self-esteem
- Stay in school longer
- Are less likely to engage in delinquent/harmful behaviors

“Dads” raising children...

- Have better overall health
- Have better self-esteem
- Are more satisfied at work