The Father Factor
Portfolio 2019, Vol. 2
25 years of documented research on the impact fathers have on their family – good and bad.

Researched and compiled by Josh D. McDowell
THE FATHER FACTOR
PORTFOLIO 2019

25 years of documented research on the impact fathers have on their family – good and bad.

Dear Pastor,

This was created to serve you. May the content greatly help you in preparation of your Father’s Day message. It can give you many ideas, stories, statistics and thoughtful insights.

Why 25 years? Three reasons:
1) You can see trends. When you see the same results over and over, it creates confidence in using the data.
2) Many studies are very unique and often never repeated. The statistics might change, but the principles almost always remain the same.
3) Older research can trigger ideas in your mind that will help you to teach.

Much time and money has gone into this document. Please feel free to pass it on.

Until the Whole World Hears,

Josh D. McDowell

www.Josh.org/resources
# Father Factor Portfolio 2019

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- New Fatherhood
- The Modern Father

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MARRIAGE (M)


“…according to a new Pew Research study, ‘Millennials have…been keeping their distance from another core institution of society – marriage. Just 26 percent of this generation is married.’ The Pew study also notes that a key reason for a marriage-less generation is financial: ‘Millennials are also the first in the modern era to have higher levels of student loan debt, poverty and unemployment, and lower levels of wealth and personal income than their two immediate predecessor generations.’” (Rob Schwarzwalder, “Boys Growing Up Without Dads Remain Boys for Too Long,” The Christian Post, August 12, 2014, http://www.christianpost.com/news/boys-growing-up-without-dads-remain-boys-for-too-long-124637/)


“…In two-parent families, when Dad is actively involved with the kids, Mom’s stress level goes down, and both parents feel more fulfilled. This has a positive impact on the parents’ marriage and on the children.” (Stephen F. Duncan, PhD., “The Importance of Fathers,” Montguide, www.montana.edu/wwwpb/pubs/pubs.html)

“The risk of partnership dissolution (including break-up of cohabiting unions as well as divorce) for men from disrupted families was 1.9 times higher and for women was 1.5 times higher than for those who had intact family backgrounds.” (Rebecca O’Neill, “Experiments in Living: The Fatherless Family,”
“Men and women from disrupted families were twice as likely to have their first child outside marriage or a cohabiting union than those who grew up in intact two-parent families (12.6% versus 6.6% for women and 7.1% versus 4% for men).” (Rebecca O’Neill, “Experiments in Living: The Fatherless Family,” September 2002, CIVITAS – The Institute for the Study of Civil Society The Mezzanine, Elizabeth House, 39 York Road, London SE1 7NQ)

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“CONCLUSION: MARRIED PARENTS ARE BEST FOR CHILDREN”
“As expected, a wide body of research confirms that warm, consistent, and firm attachments to parents help children defer gratification, set and stick to goals, and resist harmful peer pressures. Additionally, close parent-child bonds protect teens from emotional distress as well as risky behaviors such as early sexual activity, smoking, drinking and drug use.” (David Halbrook, “Special Report: Marriage & Family Under Attack, Part III,” Salem Communications, http://www.crosswalk.com/1214192/)

“In the final analysis, one of the best things society can do for children is to create the conditions for healthy marriages, and to take intentional steps toward creating a culture in which marriage is reconnected to parenthood and where married parents are encouraged, supported and valued for their long-term commitment to marriage. ‘Children have a compelling stake in the parents’ marriage,’ says co-author David Popenoe. ‘We have to continually point out how important marriage is to children. It just cannot be emphasized enough.’” (David Halbrook, “Special Report: Marriage & Family Under Attack, Part III,” Salem Communications, http://www.crosswalk.com/1214192/)

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“The adage that ‘the best gift that a father can give to his child is to love the child’s mother’ is backed by research. There is strong evidence that the quality of the relationship between the father and the mother affects the

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“Like marriage, committed relationships may protect against stress”
“The study found cortisol concentrations increased for all participants, but the results suggest that single people were more susceptible to psychological stress than those who are married or in a relationship, says study co-author Dario Maestripieri, a University of Chicago professor of comparative human development, evolutionary biology, neurobiology, and psychiatry.” (Sharon Jayson, “Like marriage, committed relationships may protect against stress”, USA Today, November 10, 2010, http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/yourlife/sex-relationships/marriage/2010-11-10-stress-committed_N.htm)

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“IT TAKES A MARRIED VILLAGE TO RAISE A CHILD”
“…the best predictor of whether a father is present and involved in the life of his child is whether he’s married to his child’s mother.” (Christopher A. Brown, “It Takes a Married Village to Raise a Child,” The Blog – Huffington Post, April 2, 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/christopher-a-brown/it-takes-a-married-villag_b_4688444.html)

“As a result, I'm always on the lookout for new research that sheds light on the macro-level effects on father absence. A study released just this month from economists at Harvard University and the University of California-Berkeley concluded that family structure is the most important predictor of economic mobility.” (Christopher A. Brown, “It Takes a Married Village to Raise a Child,” The Blog – Huffington Post, April 2, 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/christopher-a-brown/it-takes-a-married-villag_b_4688444.html)

“This wasn't your run-of-the-mill study with a sample size of a few thousand. The researchers examined records on incomes of 40 million children and their parents. This study – the first to look at the impact of family structure at the community level on children who grow up in single-parent and married-parent homes – revealed that the effects of family structure on absolute and relative economic mobility play out not only at the level of the family but at the level of the community. Not only is economic mobility more difficult for children living in single-parent homes, but


“There is no doubt that a child who grows up without his or her two married parents can turn out just fine. It's also clear that a father doesn't have to be married to the mother of his child to be a good father (although it's certainly more difficult). Still, it's undeniable that if we are to address father absence at the macro-level, we must do everything we can to see that more children grow up in married-parent homes and that we encourage our children to choose marriage for themselves. That priority is critical to creating a nation of married villages that will increase the chance that our children will avoid living their lives in poverty.” (Christopher A. Brown, “It Takes a Married Village to Raise a Child,” The Blog – Huffington Post, April 2, 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/christopher-a-brown/it-takes-a-married-villag_b_4688444.html)

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“Massachusetts Marriage and Family Report 2002”
“86% of respondents disagree with the statement that ‘marriage is an old-fashioned, outmoded institution.’” (“Massachusetts Marriage and Family Report 2002, Massachusetts Family Institute, 2002, www.mafamily.org)

“81% of respondents agree that it is better for children to be raised in a household with a married mother and father.” (“Massachusetts Marriage and Family Report 2002, Massachusetts Family Institute, 2002, www.mafamily.org)


“81% of married respondents are confident enough about their marriage that they know with certainty they would marry the same person again.”

“Two out of every ten adults in Massachusetts (21%) come from a home in which their parents divorced.” (“Massachusetts Marriage and Family Report 2002, Massachusetts Family Institute, 2002, www.mafamily.org)

“One out of every four adults has been divorced at least once.” (“Massachusetts Marriage and Family Report 2002, Massachusetts Family Institute, 2002, www.mafamily.org)

“84% of those who are divorced or separated have children.” (“Massachusetts Marriage and Family Report 2002, Massachusetts Family Institute, 2002, www.mafamily.org)

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<td>“Expect to be married for life”</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>91%</td>
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<td>“Agree that marriage is outmoded”</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>18%</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Agree that it is better for children to have a married mother and father”</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>92%</td>
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“…a majority (68%) disagrees, suggesting that it is acceptable for couples to live together outside of marriage.” (“Massachusetts Marriage and Family Report 2002, Massachusetts Family Institute, 2002, www.mafamily.org)

“The relationship between two biological parents determines a lot about how fathers are going to be involved, and that determines a lot how kids are going to be…” (Lois M. Collins and Marjorie Cortez, “The father factor: What happens when dad is nowhere to be found?”, Deseret News, February 23, 2014, http://national.deseretnews.com/article/1057/The-father-factor-What-happens-when-dad-is-nowhere-to-be-found.html)

“…it remains true that parents and other adults exert huge influence in the lives of American adolescents – whether for good or ill, and whether adults
can perceive it or not – when it comes to religious faith and most other areas of teen’s lives.”  (Christian Smith with Melinda Lundquist Denton, Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 265)


“…the early emotional bond formed (or disfigured) between parents and child by parental responsiveness and nurture—can be a better predictor of high-school graduation than IQ or achievement test scores. Parenting affects gene expression and lifelong brain physiology. In Tough's words, ‘The effect of good parenting is not just emotional or psychological, the neuroscientists say; it is biochemical.’” (Paul Tough, How Children Succeed: Grit, Curiosity and the Hidden Power of Character p36 citing “the fullest evaluation to date of the long-lasting effects of early parental relationships on a child’s development,” The Development of the Person by Alan Sroufe and Byron Egeland (Graham Scharf, “Why Early Childhood Parenting Is a Gospel Priority,” Christianity Today.com, September 24, 2012, http://www.christianitytoday.com/thisisourcity/7thcity/why-your-city-needs-healthy-families.html?paging=off#_edn1)

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“Men who aren’t married to their children’s mother are significantly less likely to be consistently and positively involved with their children.” (www.crosswalk.com/news/1213946.html?view=print)

“Marriage is the social glue that bonds fathers to their offspring. When marriage and fatherhood come unglued, father involvement weakens, with many dads disconnecting completely from their children.” (www.crosswalk.com/news/1213946.html?view=print)

“The proportion of children living apart from their biological fathers has increased sharply, from 17 percent in 1960 to 34 percent in 2000.” (www.crosswalk.com/news/1213946.html?view=print)

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

Impact on Men
1. “Men raised in married families have more open, affectionate, and cooperative relationships with the women to whom they are attracted than do those from divorced families.”
2. “As fathers from always intact married families, men are more involved in their children’s homework than are stepfathers.”
3. “Married men have stronger employment status than cohabiting men.”
4. “Married men work more hours than cohabiting men.”
5. “Men’s productivity increases by 27% as a result of marriage.”
6. “Men enjoy a larger ‘wage premium’ (the financial gain men enjoy when they join a female partner) when they marry rather than cohabit.”
7. “For men the marriage premium produces an annual income increase of approximately .9%”
8. “Men who are married are less likely to commit crimes.”
9. “Men who are married are less likely to murder their partner than cohabiting men are.”
10. “Married men are less likely to die of cirrhosis of the liver than never-married, divorced, and widowed men.”
11. “After being diagnosed with prostate cancer, married men live longer.”

Impact on Women
1. “When raised in intact married families have the lowest average number of out of wedlock pregnancies and births.”
2. “When raised in stable married families are less likely to divorce.”
3. “When raised in intact families are less likely to say they do not plan to have children.”
4. “Married mothers report more love and intimacy in their romantic/spousal relationships than cohabiting or single mothers.”
5. “When raised in intact married families are least likely to cohabit with their eventual first husband.”
6. “When raised in intact marriages are least likely to have had a homosexual partner in the past year.”
7. “Married mothers tend to have the most education, and are most likely to have obtained a Bachelor’s degree or higher.”
8. “Women in intact marriages have a higher income-to-needs ratio than women in any other family structure.”
9. “Women who are married are less likely to be killed by their partner.”
10. “Women who are married are less likely to be abused by their husband than cohabiting women are to be abused by their partner.”
11. “Always-single mothers have higher domestic violence against then ever-married mothers.”
12. “Women who are married are (37%) less likely to have been forced to perform a sexual act (9%) than unmarried women (46%)”
13. “Married women who are pregnant and non-Hispanic white or black are less likely to be physically abused than those who are divorced or separated.”
14. “Married women are healthier than never-married, divorced, and separated women.”
15. “Married women are less stressed.”
16. “Married women’s likelihood of becoming ill decreases the longer they are married.”
17. “Married women with breast cancer are diagnosed earlier and have higher survival rates.”
18. “Continuously married women aged 50-60 develop heart disease at a rate 60% lower than divorced women, 58% lower than remarried women, and 34% lower than widows.”
19. “Married mothers practice better prenatal care and more consistently avoid harmful substances than unmarried mothers do.”
20. “Married mothers are less likely to have low birth weight children than stably cohabiting mothers or mothers involved in a romantic relationship with their baby’s father.”
21. “Married African-American women who were themselves born to married mothers are less likely to have low birth weight children.”
22. “Married women have significantly fewer abortions than unmarried women.”
23. “Married mothers enjoy greater psychological well-being than cohabiting or single mothers.”
24. “Married women experience less psychological distress.”
25. “Married mothers feel less ambivalence and experience less conflict with their husbands than do cohabiting and single women with their partners.”
26. “Married mothers report less depression, more support from their partners, and more stable relationships then cohabiting mothers.”
27. “Married mothers of infants have the most positive attitudes and report forming better home environments than single and cohabiting mothers.”
28. “Married women have fewer alcohol problems.”
29. “Married mothers enjoy more social support than cohabiting or single mothers.”

Impact on Children
1. “Those raised in married families have higher expectations of eventually marrying.”
2. “Those raised in married families have more likely to be happily married.”
3. “Those from intact married families are less likely to divorce.”
4. “Children from intact married families are least likely to have intercourse before age 14.”
5. “Children from intact married families are more likely to enter legal marriage as their first union than are those who experienced the disruption of their parent’s marriage.”
6. “Children raised in intact married families are less likely than those who have experienced marital disruption to cohabit before marrying.”
7. “Young adults raised in happily married families are more religious than young adults raised in stepfamilies.”
8. “Those who grew up in an intact married family are more likely than adults from non-intact family structures to attend religious services at least monthly.”
9. “Those from married families are less likely to see religion decline in importance in their lives, less likely to begin attending church less frequently, and less likely to disassociate themselves from their religious affiliation.”
10. “Children in intact marriage homes are more likely to receive help to do their homework than are children from stepfamilies or single-parent families.”
11. “Children in intact marriage homes are receive more involvement from their fathers in their homework than stepfathers.”
12. “Children of married parents are more engaged in school than children from all other family structures.”
13. “Children from married households have higher cognitive scores and more self-control.”
14. “Children in stable married families have higher academic expectations and test scores than those whose parents are in the process of divorcing.”
15. “Children from intact married families are most likely to earn mostly A’s in schools.”
16. “Children in intact married families have the highest combined English and math grade point averages (GPAs).”
17. “Children from intact families exceed their parents’ educational attainment (sons by 2.8 years, daughters by 2.5 years), after controlling for mother’s level of education.”
18. “Children from intact married families have the highest high school graduation rate.”
19. “Those from married families are more likely to gain more education after graduating from high school than those from other family structures.”
20. “Children from intact families have fewer behavioral problems in school.”
21. “First-grade children born to married mothers are less likely to exhibit disruptive behavior, such as disobeying a teacher of behaving aggressively towards peers, than children born to cohabiting or single mothers.”
22. “Adolescents from intact married families are less likely to be suspended, expelled, delinquent, or experience school problems than children from other family structures.”
23. “Marriage between the biological single parents of impoverished children would move 70% of them immediately above the poverty line.”
24. “Marriage decreases a child’s chances of living in a low-income condition.”
25. “Children from married families are less likely to experience poverty than children.”

**Impact on Boys**
1. “Boys from intact families exceed their parents’ educational attainment (sons by 2.8 years).”
2. “Boys raise in married families have higher expectations of eventually marrying.”
3. “Boys from intact married families are least likely to have intercourse before age 14.”
4. “See the MEN section for more reasons why boys in intact married families are happier, healthier, better adjusted, produce families which are law abiding, productive, and intelligent citizens.”
Impact on Girls
1. “When from intact families they are the least likely to have intercourse before age 18.”
2. “Adolescent girls in intact married families have a lower average number of sexual partners than adolescent girls in any other family structure.”

“Currently in the United States we are choosing a course of self-destruction and extension:”

“Eric Metaxas on November 27, 2012 in Breakpoint radio broadcast and later in an article on the internet said ‘As you might suspect, this pro-choice ‘age of possibility’ has room for almost anything – except children.’”

“David Brooks a New York Times columnist wrote recently, ‘At some point over the past generation, people around the world entered what you might call the age of possibility. They became intolerant of any arrangement that might close off their personal options.’ – in other words, their choices. The number of Americans who are living alone has shot up from 9% in 1950 to 28% today. In 1990, 65% of Americans said that children are very important to a successful marriage. Now, only 41% of Americans say they believe that.’ ‘There are now more American houses with dogs than with children.’”

“The name for this is post-familialism. Internationally what does this look like? ‘In Scandinavia 40 to 45% of the people live alone. In Germany 30% of the women say they do not intend to have children.’

“One social researcher boldly says: ‘Under the social and economic systems of developed countries, the cost of a child outweighs the child’s usefulness.’ Brooks recognizes the oxymoron, ‘the age of possibility is based on a misconception. People are not better off when they are given maximum personal freedom to do what they want. They’re better off when they are enshrouded in commitments that transcend personal choice—commitments for family, God, craft and country.’ Metaxas closes with this summation: ‘All the studies show that people who are committed to something beyond themselves—to marriage, children, and, ultimately, to God—are happier, healthier, and better adjusted.’”
“In Fagan, Dougherty and McElvain’s 162 Reasons to Marry with their 162 documented footnotes from 5 major sources there is so much confirm that is embarrassing any commentator on our culture to reason that ‘the cost of a child outweighs the child’s usefulness.’”

“Steve Matthews on 8/21/12 published on the internet an article entitled, Americans Having Fewer Babies Crimping Consumer Spending quotes a reason which Debra Mollen 41, a psychology professor in Denton, TX, said that she and her husband don’t plan to have children as they strive to pay down their mortgage and save for retirement. ‘Children are really expensive, said Mollen, and the 2008 financial crisis shows the importance of building a nest egg. Matthews quotes from the National Center for Health Statistics that the birth of children fell to a 12-year low in 2011.’”

“Staggering stats regarding first births: The percentage of first births to women living with a male partner jumped from 12% in 2002 to 22% in 2006-2010 – an increase of 83%> The percentage of cohabiting new fathers rose from 18% to 25%.”

“The analysis, by the National Center for Health Statistics, is based on data collected from 2006-2010 based on face-to-face interviews with 12,279 women and 10,403 men ages 15-44. The percentage of first births to cohabiting women tripled from 9% in 1985 to 27% for births from 2003-2010.”

“Married or not with children:”
- “Married in 2002 62%; in 2006-2010 55%”
- “Cohabiting 2002 12%; in 2006-2010 22%”
- “Neither in 2002 25; in 2006-10 24%”
- “Black women 80% gave birth outside of marriage”
- “Black women 18% of these were cohabiting”
- “Hispanic 53% of first born were born outside of marriage”
- “Hispanic 30% of these were cohabiting”
- “White women 34% of first born were born outside marriage”
- “White women 20% of first born were cohabiting”
- “Asian women 13% of first born were outside marriage”
- “Asian women 7% were cohabiting”
- “Average age at first birth 23 for women 25 for men”
- “Percentage that had a biological child 56% of women and 45% of men”
• “Average number of children 1.3 births for women and 0.9 for men”
• “Unmarried mothers first births 2006-10 46%”
• “Unmarried mothers first births 2002 38%”

(“More kids born out of wedlock’ by Sharon Jayson USA TODAY 4/12/12 p2A (The article is based on the National Center for Health Statistics, National Survey of Family Growth 2006-2010, “Michael Gottfredson and Travis Hirschi in ‘A General Theory of Crime’ published by Stanford University Press in 1990 wrote: “Such family measures as the percentages of the population divorced, the percentages of households headed by women, and the percentage of unattached individuals in the community are among the powerful predictors of crime rates.”)

“Conclusion of Family Institute: ‘sociologists have found repeatedly that the relationship between family structure and crime is so strong that controlling for family configuration erases the relationship between race and crime and between low income and crime.’”


“By the end of 10 years, as many as two-thirds of them have drifted out of their children’s lives. According to a 1994 study by the Children’s Defense Fund, men are more likely to default on a child-support payment (49%) than a used-car payment (3%). Even fathers in intact families spend a lot less time focused on their kids than they think: in the U.S. fathers average less than an hour a day (up from 20 minutes a few decades ago), usually squeezed in after the workday.” (Mary Batten, “The Psychology of Fatherhood,” TIME, June 7, 2007, www.time.com/time/printout/0,8816,1630551,00.html)

“…children need 19 years — and consume 13 million calories — before producing more food for their community than they take from it…” (Mary Batten, “The Psychology of Fatherhood,” TIME, June 7, 2007, www.time.com/time/printout/0,8816,1630551,00.html)

“Everyone’s views regarding fatherhood are likely to be colored by their own experience with their fathers…” (Jeffrey Rosenberg & W. Bradford Wilcox, “The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children”, U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services; Administration for Children and Families; Administration on Children, Youth, and Families; Children’s Bureau; Office on Child Abuse and Neglect; Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2006, https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/append_e_1.cfm)

“THE FATHER MISSING FROM MARSHAWN LYNCH’S LIFE”
“Marshawn Lynch is playing himself in a movie about his life, titled ‘Family First the Marshawn Lynch Story,’” and a list of roles to featured in the film has a noticeable omission.”

“There is no father.”
“Lynch's dad, Maurice Sapp, is serving a 24-year sentence for burglary and been convicted six times, twice on felonies — grand theft and burglary — according to records reviewed by USA TODAY Sports. He is absent from the movie that's in post production, just as he was absent from much of Lynch's life.”

“But Sapp's sisters suggested the only way to understand Lynch, the Seattle Seahawks star running back whose refusal to speak with the news media persists as Super Bowl XLIX approaches, is to know about his relationship with Lynch's father, their brother.”

“When I see Marshawn, I see my brother,” Bernice Feaster told USA TODAY Sports. ‘My brother's been in and out of jail, but he's not a bad person. And he loves his kids.’”

“She said Lynch and Sapp last spoke by phone a few months ago. This week Sapp called USA TODAY Sports from Tallahatchie County Correctional Facility in Tutwiler, Miss., used by California because of its overcrowded prisons. He declined to comment and referred questions to Feaster, who said she speaks frequently to her 53-year-old brother.”

“He wants a better relationship with Marshawn, but he doesn't want Marshawn to think he's reaching out to him just because he's a famous football player,” Feaster said. ‘That's a sticky situation.’”

“The situation, according another of Lynch's aunts, Sarah Bridges, has been strained since the separation of Sapp and Lynch's mother, Delisa Lynch, in the early 1990s. They said their brother had begun to steal from Lynch's mother to support his drug habit that led to criminal behavior. Delisa Lynch declined to comment.”

“Over the years, he was arrested on the charges including unlawful transportation, distribution and importation of marijuana; possession of narcotic paraphernalia; grand theft and burglary.”

“Feaster said although her brother was well liked and talented, he was notoriously unreliable — especially when he'd made plans with Lynch. She said she thinks that contributed to Lynch's distrust of people.”
“I think that does have a part in it because Marshawn would be sitting there and he'd be anxious waiting on his dad,” Feaster said. ‘Sometimes his daddy would show up, and sometimes he wouldn't.’”

“I think it affected him. Kids playing football, their daddys there watching them, coaching them, talking to them after the game, telling them what they could've done better or what they did well. And Marshawn didn't have that. He had his Papa (Lynch's grandfather), but it's different.”

“When he was out of prison, Sapp watched some of Lynch's high school football games from outside the fence at Oakland Technical High School stadium, according to the sisters, who said Sapp wanted to avoid conflict with Lynch's mother. The tension between them interfered with Sapp's attempts to reconnect with Lynch and his younger siblings, according to Sapp's sisters.”

“Delton Edwards, Lynch's coach in high school, said Lynch grew so angry about the situation with his father that he eventually dropped Sapp from Marshawn Sapp-Lynch. Edwards said Lynch tapped into that emotion when he was on the field, developing a running style that led to the catchphrase ‘Beast Mode.’”

“You could see it, the frustration,’ Edwards said.”

“Mike Robinson, with whom Lynch lived for his last 2 1/2 years of high school, is a retired parole agent who worked with Lynch's father but stopped after a month because he thought it was a conflict of interest to mentor Lynch at the same time. But he also said he got to know Sapp. ‘I think his drug addiction, he loved even more than himself,’ Robinson said. Bridges said Sapp played an integral role in the children's lives when they were young — and that was one reason she was livid when she learned about the movie about Lynch's life.”

“I think they should know about this side of the family,” Bridges said, adding that they spent time with Lynch and his siblings even when Sapp wasn’t around. ‘We never missed a birthday of his, we never missed a Christmas of his. That’s just really important for people to know. Marshawn has a strong support system.”'
“A year ago, Bridges said, she was livid about something else — Lynch changing his name Sapp as a senior in high school. Bridges said she realized he could not have done it on his own because at the time he was a minor. But she said the issue gnawed at her last year, as Lynch and his teammates were ascending to Super Bowl champs.”

“Bridges said she texted Lynch a photo of Odessa Sapp, Lynch’s paternal grandmother, and baby photos of Marshawn and his cousins.”

“‘You are a Sapp first, before anything,’” she texted.”

“‘Then he texted me back,’” Bridges said, ‘‘and he was like, ‘You know what, I know what my name is.’ And he sent me a picture of his back, and it had a tattoo and it had Sapp on it.’”

“‘It was all colored in and it was real pretty and I was like, ‘Oh, wow.’ I had no idea.’”

“In October 2008, when Lynch was playing for the Buffalo Bills in his second NFL season, Lynch and Sapp attended the funeral of Odessa Sapp.”

“Father and son shared a long embrace.”

“‘Everybody cried,’” Feaster said, ‘‘because they hugged, and they felt that hug for so long and so tight. It was so personal and it was just so heartwarming. Just thinking about it, I tear up.’”

“Later, Bridges said, she talked to her brother about his talk with Lynch that day. Sapp told her that Lynch had said everything was OK.”

“‘I asked him what that meant to him,’” Bridges said. ‘‘And he said, ‘I might be wrong but I take that as he’s forgiven me.’”

“Less than three months after the funeral, the sisters said, Sapp was back in prison. Father and son have not seen each other since.”

“But the two men have talked. A few months ago, Feaster said, she helped facilitate a call between them.”
“Separately, she found out, father and son were in agreement.”

“They both said it was an awkward situation,’ he said.”

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“People’s individualistic drives proceed so far that their social responsibilities and obligations are neglected, the social order weakens.” (Wade F. Horn, et.al, “The Fatherhood Movement – A Call to Action,” Lexington Books, 1999, p18)

“Marriage is the historical basis of family life; as marriage goes, so goes the family.” (Wade F. Horn, et.al, “The Fatherhood Movement – A Call to Action,” Lexington Books, 1999, p19)


“Children became just one more marital asset to be granted to a winner and denied to a loser.” (Wade F. Horn, et.al, “The Fatherhood Movement – A Call to Action,” Lexington Books, 1999, p105)

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Fully 60% of young adults say they want to make a difference. (Ron Alsop, The Trophy Kids Grow Up: How the Millennial Generation Is Shaking Up

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“Every man needs to know that however high his aspirations may be, however lofty a position he may attain, he will never have a greater duty or a more important title than ‘dad.’” - President George W. Bush (Source: National Fatherhood Initiative, www.fatherhood.org)
“Fostering a positive relationship with the children’s mother…one of the most important ways that men can be good fathers is by treating the mother of their children with affection, respect, and consideration. The virtues that a father displays in his relationship with the mother of his children set an important example for the children.” (“The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children”, September, 2006, http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/)

“…as child maltreatment and domestic abuse can be passed on from one generation to the next, so can respect, caring, and kindness.” (“The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children”, September, 2006, http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/)

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“Nurture your marriage first. If you are a married father, an important key to good father-child relationships is to have a strong relationship with your wife. If things aren’t going well there, it’s easier for bad blood between you and your spouse to spill over into the parent-child relationship. Someone once said that the best gift a father could give his children was to love their mother.” (Stephen F. Duncan, PhD., “The Importance of Fathers,” Montguide, www.montana.edu/wwwpb/pubs/pubs.html)

“Sometimes in our drive to be involved fathers, we spend our limited free time with the children but at the expense of time alone with our wives. To guard against this, plan first the time you will spend with your wife. Try planning a weekly “date night” that involves just you and your spouse—NO KIDS or any others. Daily rituals such as reading the mail together, sharing a magazine article, calling each other on the phone, or snuggling close during a favorite TV program are also great ways to stay connected. For more ideas on strengthening your marriage, check out the MontGuide “Strengthening Your Marriage” (MT 199718 HR).” (Stephen F. Duncan, PhD., “The Importance of Fathers,” Montguide, www.montana.edu/wwwpb/pubs/pubs.html)

“If your marriage went sour and you are now a divorced father, focus on maintaining a civil relationship with your ex-wife. Never bad-mouth her in front of the children when they spend time with you. Maintain a cooperative parenting partnership. See the MontGuide “Families Facing Divorce” (MT
“Children who witness affectionate, respectful, and sacrificial behavior on the part of their father are more likely to treat their own, future spouses in a similar fashion.” (Jeffrey Rosenberg & W. Bradford Wilcox, “The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children”, U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services; Administration for Children and Families; Administration on Children, Youth, and Families; Children’s Bureau; Office on Child Abuse and Neglect; Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2006, https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/append_e_1.cfm)

“These children are also more likely to be happy and well-adjusted. By contrast, children who witness their father’s anger toward or contempt for their mother are more at risk for depression, aggression, and poor health. The stress of parental conflict can have a negative effect even on the immune system, which can result in health problems for children.” (Horn, W., & Sylvest, T. (2002) Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). (1996). The relationship between family structure and adolescent substance abuse. Rockville, MD: National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information; Harper, C., & McLanahan, S. S. (1998).)

“Being a role model is not a simple or easy task. In the way that fathers treat other people, spend their time and money, and handle the joys and stresses of life, they provide a template of living for their children that often proves critical in guiding the behavior of their children, for better or worse. As discussed earlier, a father’s treatment of the opposite sex, his ability to control his own emotions and his approach to work all play a formative role in shaping his sons’ and daughters’ approach to romantic relationships and marriage, interpersonal relationships, and school and work.” (Stenson, J. (1996). Lifeline: The religious upbringing of your children. Princeton, NJ: Scepter Publishers; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Child Health and Human Development.(2002). Modeling your own behavior to provide a consistent, positive example for your child [On-line].


“A father who has a good relationship with the mother of their children is more likely to be involved and to spend time with their children and to have children who are psychologically and emotionally healthier. Similarly, a mother who feels affirmed by her children’s father and who enjoys the benefits of a happy relationship is more likely to be a better mother. Indeed, the quality of the relationship affects the parenting behavior of both parents. They are more responsive, affectionate, and confident with their infants; more self-controlled in dealing with defiant toddlers; and better confidants for teenagers seeking advice and emotional support.” (Lamb, M. E. (2002). Infant-father attachments and their impact on child development. In C. S. Tamis-LeMonda & N. Cabrera (Eds.), Handbook of father involvement: Multidisciplinary perspectives (pp. 93–118). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum; Cummings, E. M., & O’Reilly, A. W. (1997). Fathers and family context: Effects of marital quality on child adjustment. In M. E. Lamb (Ed.), The role of fathers in child development (3rd ed., pp. 49–65, 318–325). New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons; Lamb, M. E. (1997). Fathers and child development: An introductory overview and guide. In M. E. Lamb (Ed.), The role of fathers in child development (3rd ed., pp. 1–18, 309–313). New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.) (The Importance of Fathers in the

“One of the most important benefits of a positive relationship between mother and father, and a benefit directly related to the objectives of the CPS caseworker, is the behavior it models for children. Fathers who treat the mothers of their children with respect and deal with conflict within the relationship in an adult and appropriate manner are more likely to have boys who understand how they are to treat women and who are less likely to act in an aggressive fashion toward females. Girls with involved, respectful fathers see how they should expect men to treat them and are less likely to become involved in violent or unhealthy relationships. In contrast, research has shown that husbands who display anger, show contempt for, or who stonewall their wives (i.e., “the silent treatment”) are more likely to have children who are anxious, withdrawn, or antisocial.” (Gable, S., Crnic, K., & Belsky, J. (1994). Co-parenting within the family system: Influences on children’s development. Family Relations, 43(4), 380–386.) (The Importance of Fathers in the

“It is interesting to note that, contrary to stereotypes about low-income, unmarried parents, a significant majority—more than 8 in 10—of urban, low-income fathers and mothers are in a romantic relationship when their children are born.15 Most of these couples expect that they will get married. One study found that more than 80 percent expected they would get married or live together. However, only 11 percent of these couples had actually married a year later.16 Why they do not marry is an interesting question open to conjecture. However, as Dr. Wade Horn, Assistant Secretary for Children and Families at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has pointed out, it may be because these couples receive very little encouragement to marry from the health and social services professionals with whom they come in contact.”

**Sources:**


“As a result, children who grow up with involved fathers are more comfortable exploring the world around them and more likely to exhibit self-control and pro-social behavior.” (Parke, R.D. (1996). (The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children; U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services; Administration for Children and Families; Administration on Children, Youth, and Families; Children’s Bureau; Office on Child Abuse and Neglect; Jeffrey Rosenberg and W. Bradford Wilcox; 2006.)

“First, fathers need to accentuate the positive when interacting with their wives and to show affection for their wives on a daily basis.” (The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children; U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services; Administration for Children and Families; Administration on Children, Youth, and Families; Children’s Bureau; Office on Child Abuse and Neglect; Jeffrey Rosenberg and W. Bradford Wilcox; 2006.)

“While for many men this comes naturally, for others it does not. Many men, especially those who grew up without a father, simply did not have role models for how men can and ought to relate to their spouse or partner in a positive fashion. Further, the way a man treats and interacts with the women in his life is frequently connected to how he views himself as a man. The second implication is that husbands need to be able to deal with conflict with their wives in a constructive manner. Conflict, in and of itself, is not a bad thing in a relationship. Indeed, conflict is often necessary to resolve issues, grievances, or injustices in a relationship. Couples who can raise issues with one another constructively, compromise, and forgive one another for the wrongs done generally have happier marriages and happier children than those who do not handle conflict well or who avoid addressing issues in their relationship.” (Gottman, J. M. (1998); Stanley, S., et al. (1998).) (The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children; U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services; Administration for Children and Families; Administration on Children, Youth, and Families; Children’s Bureau; Office on Child Abuse and Neglect; Jeffrey Rosenberg and W. Bradford Wilcox; 2006.)

“A father’s influence as a role model for his children is affected by the amount of time they spend together. Whether they live in the same home on a full-time basis or not, fathers should make a concerted effort to model behaviors and attitudes that they want to see their children display when they grow up.” (The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children; U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services; Administration for Children and Families; Administration on Children, Youth, and Families; Children’s Bureau; Office on Child Abuse and Neglect; Jeffrey Rosenberg and W. Bradford Wilcox; 2006.)

“In the final analysis, one of the best things society can do for children is to create the conditions for healthy marriages, and to take intentional steps toward creating a culture in which marriage is reconnected to parenthood and where married parents are encouraged, supported and valued for their long-term commitment to marriage. ‘Children have a compelling stake in their parents’ marriage,’’ says co-author David Popenoe. ‘We have to continually point out how important marriage is to children. It just cannot be emphasized enough.’” (www.crosswalk.com/news/1214192.html?view=print)

“University of California-Berkeley’s Philip A. Cowan and his wife, Carolyn Pape Cowan, study parent couples. Their research shows a couple’s relationship is vital to their children, even if they are no longer intimate partners — whether they’re divorced, separated or never married.” (Lois M. Collins and Marjorie Cortez, “The Father Factor: What Happens When Dad is Nowhere to be Found?”, Deseret News National, February 23, 2014, http://national.deseretnews.com/article/1057/The-father-factor-What-happens-when-dad-is-nowhere-to-be-found.html)

“‘The relationship between two biological parents determines a lot about how fathers are going to be involved, and that determines a lot how kids are going to be,’ he said.” (Lois M. Collins and Marjorie Cortez, “The Father Factor: What Happens When Dad is Nowhere to be Found?”, Deseret News National, February 23, 2014, http://national.deseretnews.com/article/1057/The-father-factor-What-happens-when-dad-is-nowhere-to-be-found.html)
“If parents get along, their children tend to be more psychologically and emotionally healthy. Moms who feel their child’s father backs them up are better mothers through all stages of the child’s development, reports the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services — ‘more responsive, affectionate, and confident with their infants; more self-controlled in dealing with defiant toddlers; and better confidants for teenagers seeking advice and emotional support.’” (Lois M. Collins and Marjorie Cortez, “The Father Factor: What Happens When Dad is Nowhere to be Found?”, Deseret News National, February 23, 2014, http://national.deseretnews.com/article/1057/The-father-factor-What-happens-when-dad-is-nowhere-to-be-found.html)

“One of the most important influences a father can have on his child is indirect – fathers influence their children in large part through the quality of their relationship with the mother of their children. A father who has a good relationship with the mother of their children is more likely to be involved and to spend time with their children and to have children who are psychologically and emotionally healthier. Similarly, a mother who feels affirmed by her children’s father and who enjoys the benefits of a happy relationship is more likely to be a better mother. Indeed, the quality of the relationship affects the parenting behavior of both parents. They are more responsive, affectionate, and confident with their infants; more self-controlled in dealing with defiant toddlers; and better confidants for teenagers seeking advice and emotional support.” (Lamb, M. E. (2002). Infant-father attachments and their impact on child development. In C.S. Tamis-LeMonda & N. Cabrera (Eds.), Handbook of father involvement: Multidisciplinary perspectives (pp. 93-118). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum; Cummings, E.M., & O'Reilly, A.W. (1997). Fathers and family context: Effects of marital quality on child adjustment. In M.E. Lamb (Ed.), The role of fathers in child development (3rd ed., pp. 49-65, 318-325). New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons; Lamb, M.E. (1997). Fathers and child development: An introductory overview and guide. In M.E. lamb (Ed.), The role of fathers in child development (3rd ed., pp. 1-18, 309-313). New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.) (Jeffrey Rosenberg and W. Bradford Wilcox, “The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children,” U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children’s Bureau Office on Child Abuse and Neglect)

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“Don’t ever doubt the impact that fathers have on children. Children with strongly committed fathers learn about trust early on. They learn about trust with their hearts. They learn they’re wanted, that they have value, that they can afford to be secure and confident and set their sights high. They get the encouragement they need to keep going through the rough spots in life. Boys learn from their fathers how to be fathers. I learned all those things from my own father, and I count my blessings.” (Former Vice-President Al Gore, Speaking at the National Fatherhood Initiative’s 3rd Annual National Summit on Fatherhood in Washington, D.C., June 2, 2000.) (Wade F. Horn, Ph.D. and Tom Sylvester, “Father Facts – Fourth Edition,” National Fatherhood Initiative, 2002 National Fatherhood Initiative.– p141)


“The survey also showed that six out of 10 adolescents, ages 12 to 19, said that their parents are their role models for healthy, responsible relationships. ‘Parents need to know that when it comes to young people's decisions about sex, their influence has not been lost to peers and popular culture,’ says Bill Albert, campaign spokesperson.” (Cheryl Allen, “Influence On Your Adolescent?” Gannett News Service, The Marion Star, November 29, 2003, www.marionstar.com/news/stories/20031129/localnews/734042.html)
OBESITY(O)

“In a study using a sample of 2,537 boys and 2,446 girls, researchers investigated the relationship between Body Mass Index (BMI) status at ages 4 to 5 years and mothers’ and fathers’ parenting involvement and parenting styles. The results showed that only fathers’ parenting behaviors and styles were associated with increased risks of child overweight and obesity. Mothers’ parenting behaviors and styles were not associated with a higher likelihood of children being in a higher BMI category. In the case of fathers, however, higher father control scores were correlated with lower chances of the child being in a higher BMI category. Moreover, children of fathers with permissive and disengaged parenting styles had higher odds of being in a higher BMI category.” (Wake, M., Nicholson, J.M., Hardy, P., & Smith, K. (2007). Preschooler obesity and parenting styles of mothers and fathers: Australian national population study, Pediatrics, 12, 1520-1527. (Fatherhood Statistics Download, National Fatherhood Initiative, accessed June 23, 2014, http://www.fatherhood.org/statistics-on-father-absence-download)

“Study that looked at family lifestyle and parent’s Body Mass Index (BMI) over a nine year period found: A fathers’ body mass index (a measurement of the relative composition of fat and muscle mass in the human body) is directly related to a child’s activity level. In a study of 259 toddlers, more active children were more likely to have a father with a lower BMI than less active children.”
• “Father’s Body Mass Index (BMI) predicts son’s and daughter’s BMI independent of offspring’s alcohol intake, smoking, physical fitness, and father’s education”
• “Furthermore, BMI in sons and daughters consistently higher when fathers were overweight or obese”
• “Physical fitness of daughters negatively related to their father’s obesity”
• “Obesity of fathers associated with a four-fold increase in the risk of obesity of sons and daughters at age 18”

“A study that looked at dietary intake and physical activity of parents and their daughters over a two year period found: Study that looked at the relationship between parent’s total and percentage body fat and daughter’s total body fat over a two and one-half year period found:”

- “Daughter’s BMI predicted by father’s diets and father’s enjoyment of physical activity”
- “As father’s BMI rose, so did their daughter’s BMI”


“Father’s, not mother’s, total and percentage body fat the best predictor of changes in daughter’s total and percentage body fat.” (Figueroa-Colon R, Arani RB, Goran MI, Weinsier RL. “Paternal body fat is a longitudinal predictor of changes in body fat in premenarcheal girls.” Department of Pediatrics, General Clinical Research Center, Medical Statistics Unit, Comprehensive Cancer Center, University of Alabama at Birmingham.) (Fatherhood Statistics Download, National Fatherhood Initiative, accessed June 23, 2014, http://www.fatherhood.org/statistics-on-father-absence-download)

“Two studies that have looked at the determinants of physical activity in obese and non-obese children found:”

- “Obese children less likely to report that their fathers were physically active than were the children of non-obese children. This determinant not found for mothers.”
- “Father’s inactivity strong predictor of children’s inactivity.”


“Children who lived with single mothers were significantly more likely to become obese by a 6-year follow-up, as were black children, children with nonworking parents, children with nonprofessional parents, and children whose mothers did not complete high school.” (Strauss RS, Knight J. “Influence of the home environment on the development of obesity in children.” Division of Pediatric Gastroenterology and Nutrition, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, Robert Wood Johnson School of Medicine, New Brunswick, New Jersey.) (Fatherhood Statistics Download, National Fatherhood Initiative, accessed June 23, 2014, http://www.fatherhood.org/statistics-on-father-absence-download)

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(Burke V, Beilin LJ, Dunbar D. “Family lifestyle and parental body mass index as predictors of body mass index in Australian children: a longitudinal study.” Department of Medicine, Royal Perth Hospital, University of Western Australia, and the Western Australian Heart Research Institute; Perth, Australia.) (“Father Facts,” National Fatherhood Initiative, accessed November 21, 2011, http://www.fatherhood.org/father-absence-statistics)

“A fathers’ body mass index (a measurement of the relative composition of fat and muscle mass in the human body) is directly related to a child’s activity level. In a study of 259 toddlers, more active children were more likely to have a father with a lower BMI than less active children.” (Finn, Kevin, Neil Johannsen, and Bonny Specker. “Factors associated with physical activity in preschool children.” The Journal of Pediatrics 140 (January 2002): 81-85.) (“Father Facts,” National Fatherhood Initiative, accessed November 21, 2011, http://www.fatherhood.org/father-absence-statistics)

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OBSTACLES TO BEING A GOOD FATHER (Ob)

“The respondents to the survey were presented with 14 conditions that might be obstacles to being a good father and were asked to rate each according to how much it was an obstacle, the response alternatives being ‘a great deal,’ ‘somewhat,’ ‘not very much,’ and ‘not at all.’ For each condition we constructed a Fathering Obstacle Index by scoring ‘not at all’ zero, ‘not very much’ one, ‘somewhat’ two, and ‘a great deal’ three and then multiplying by ten.” (“Pop’s Culture: A National Survey of Dads’ Attitudes on Fathering,” National Fatherhood Initiative, 2006, http://cdn2.hubspot.net/hub/135704/file-17577449-pdf/docs/pops-culture-survey.pdf?t=1425996312373)

“The most commonly perceived obstacle by a wide margin was work responsibilities, followed by the media/popular culture, and financial problems. ‘A lack of knowledge about how to be a good father’ and ‘resistance/lack of encouragement from the child’s mother’ rank next, choice of the latter obstacle being largely by fathers not married to the mother of the focal child selected for this study. The other mean index values are quite low, even though a few fathers considered each condition to be an important obstacle.” (“Pop’s Culture: A National Survey of Dads’ Attitudes on Fathering,” National Fatherhood Initiative, 2006, http://cdn2.hubspot.net/hub/135704/file-17577449-pdf/docs/pops-culture-survey.pdf?t=1425996312373)

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“FATHERS ARE CRITICAL TO CHILD WELL-BEING”

“There are numerous cultural barriers to active father involvement, particularly with young children. Some of these include:”

• “Economic and societal barriers. There is a historical attitude that father’s primary role is of breadwinner, providing economic support for the family. There is much less societal precedent for expecting fathers to play the critical role of providing daily care, nurturing, and emotional support for children. When fathers are unable to provide economically or see little economic potential, they may choose not to invest emotionally in a family they cannot support. There is increasing evidence, however, that fathers who can be successfully engaged in their baby’s life early and supported in their role as fathers may find new motivation to seek educational and financial achievement.” (Linda C. Passmark and Edd D. Rhoades, “Fathers are Critical to Child Well-Being,” Maternal and Child Health Service,
Oklahoma State Department of Health,
www.health.state.ok.us/program/hpromo/medj/fjournal.htm.)

• “The decline of enduring marriages. There is considerable debate about how to restore vitality to the institution of marriage without demoralizing single parents. With the mounting evidence of the impact of disrupted families on children, it is a challenge to find ways to support intact, continuous relationships between a child and both parents in the context of broken marriages.” (Linda C. Passmark and Edd D. Rhoades, “Fathers are Critical to Child Well-Being,” Maternal and Child Health Service, Oklahoma State Department of Health, www.health.state.ok.us/program/hpromo/medj/fjournal.htm.)

• “Men are often not socialized to parent. Many men report that signs of tenderness were discouraged in their youth, and they were taught to ‘be tough.’ A lack of role models for males as nurturers, educators or providers of daily child care has resulted in a lack of skill and knowledge about how to be nurturing and engaged in relationships with their children. For men who were fatherless themselves, or men who have unresolved problems in relationship with their own fathers, this is even more difficult.” (Linda C. Passmark and Edd D. Rhoades, “Fathers are Critical to Child Well-Being,” Maternal and Child Health Service, Oklahoma State Department of Health, www.health.state.ok.us/program/hpromo/medj/fjournal.htm.)

• “Women can be barriers. In general, women are the gatekeepers for their children’s relationships. Unfortunately, sometimes it is necessary for mothers to deny access to fathers in order to protect their children from abuse. At other times, women may discourage their husband’s attempts at childcare through criticism, such as complaining he doesn’t change the diaper ‘right.’ And sometimes, at great cost to a child’s well-being, mothers, as well as fathers, use their children as pawns in their adult battles, particularly after divorce.” (Linda C. Passmark and Edd D. Rhoades, “Fathers are Critical to Child Well-Being,” Maternal and Child Health Service, Oklahoma State Department of Health, www.health.state.ok.us/program/hpromo/medj/fjournal.htm.)

• “Professionals act as if ‘parent’ is synonymous with mother. Fathers report feeling ‘left out’ from the minute their child is born as health care providers and others actively engage mothers, but not fathers. This professional disregard of the father’s vital role, as well as his feelings, often begins even in the stages of prenatal care. In the workplace, fathers often feel stigmatized if they stay home with a sick child or a new
baby. It appears to be much more acceptable for their female counterparts to take that responsibility.” (Linda C. Passmark and Edd D. Rhoades, “Fathers are Critical to Child Well-Being,” Maternal and Child Health Service, Oklahoma State Department of Health, www.health.state.ok.us/program/hpromo/medj/fjournal.htm.)

- “Expecting fathers to participate. In a study of the emotional experiences of 75 new fathers from intact families with babies 3 to 12 months of age, results show that being intimately involved in the birthing process, as well as being involved in pre- and post-natal care, reinforces the father’s attachment to the newborn, enables him to give the infant excessive love, and enhances the father’s self esteem and sense of familial worth.” (Source: J.P. Hyman, 1995, “Shifting patterns of fathering in the first year of life: On intimacy between fathers and their babies.” In J.L. Shapiro, M.J. Diamond, M. Greenberg (Eds.), Becoming a father: Contemporary, social, developmental, and clinical perspectives,” New York: Springer, pp256-267). (Linda C. Passmark and Edd D. Rhoades, “Fathers are Critical to Child Well-Being,” Maternal and Child Health Service, Oklahoma State Department of Health, www.health.state.ok.us/program/hpromo/medj/fjournal.htm.)

- “Do extra outreach. Ask fathers to come to appointments, participate in educational activities or health programs. Discuss their importance to the growth, development, and health of their child.” (Linda C. Passmark and Edd D. Rhoades, “Fathers are Critical to Child Well-Being,” Maternal and Child Health Service, Oklahoma State Department of Health, www.health.state.ok.us/program/hpromo/medj/fjournal.htm.)

- “Create a father-friendly environment. Make sure that furnishings, photographs on the walls or in brochures and other available reading materials are inclusive of fathers. Men are unlikely to feel comfortable, let alone welcome in an environment that is designed especially for women and children.” (Linda C. Passmark and Edd D. Rhoades, “Fathers are Critical to Child Well-Being,” Maternal and Child Health Service, Oklahoma State Department of Health, www.health.state.ok.us/program/hpromo/medj/fjournal.htm.)

- “Make fathers feel as necessary as they are. Recognize and educate fathers to the unique and critical role they have in the healthy development of their children. Sponsor father-child activities or support groups for fathers that are designed to meet their needs.” (Linda C. Passmark and Edd D. Rhoades, “Fathers are Critical to Child Well-Being,” Maternal and Child Health Service, Oklahoma State Department of Health, www.health.state.ok.us/program/hpromo/medj/fjournal.htm.)
POSITIVE BEHAVIOR (PB)


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“In the United States, about 25 million children are fatherless. These children become two-thirds of prison inmates and nine out of 10 of runaway children. They are 30 percent more likely to use drugs and alcohol. They are twice as likely to drop out of school.” (Angela Lu, “Boys to men”, World, June 16, 2012)

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“Children of highly involved fathers show increased cognitive competence, increased empathy, enhanced school performance, greater motivation to succeed, enhanced social development and self-esteem, less sex-stereotyped beliefs, stronger sexual identity and character, and more intrinsic motivation.” (Stephen F. Duncan, PhD., “The Importance of Fathers,” Montguide, www.montana.edu/wwwpb/pubs/pubs.html)

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“A father’s love is just as, if not more, important to a child’s emotional development as its mother’s, a new study has revealed.” (“Study shows loving father is vital for kids’ development,” The Christian Institute, June 28, 2012, http://www.christian.org.uk/news/study-shows-loving-father-is-vital-for-kids-development/?e290612)

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“The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (N= 2,733) was used to examine the benefits of biological father involvement in adolescent lives.”

- “Nonresident biological fathers that provided continuous emotional support and social interaction greatly reduced their children’s behavioral problems.”
- The benefit of each unit of biological father involvement was two to three times greater when the father lived with his children compared to elsewhere.
- “There is no substantial difference in how father involvement affects sons versus daughters.”


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“…psychologist Anna Sarkadi and her colleagues at Uppsala University in Sweden reviewed 24 of the best studies designed to measure the outcomes for children whose fathers were engaged with their children. The findings were impressive.”

1. “Kids with involved fathers were better behaved. The studies suggested that children of involved fathers were less likely to smoke and had fewer behavioral problems as adolescents.”
2. “Kids with involved fathers were less likely to be involved in crime. Less-advantaged boys with involved fathers demonstrated less aggressive behavior. The sons and daughters of engaged fathers were less likely to be involved in delinquency or crime.”
3. “Kids with involved fathers were smarter. Premature infants in disadvantaged African-American families had higher IQs at age 3 if their fathers played with them and cared for them.”

4. “Kids with involved fathers fared better as adults. They had better educational outcomes and social relations as adults. Daughters whose fathers read to them and paid attention to their education were less likely to suffer from depression as adults.”

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


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

Sources:

“Children whose fathers are highly involved across diverse activities – such as joint activities, eating meals together, helping with homework and going on family outings – exhibit fewer child behavior problems and higher levels of sociability, and achieve higher levels of academic performance.” (Mosley, J., & Thompson, E. (1995). Fathering behavior and child outcomes: The role of race and poverty. In W. Marsiglio (ed.), Fatherhood: Contemporary theory, research, and social policy

“The 24 selected papers have drawn data from 16 different longitudinal studies involving approximately 223000 individual datasets from newborn babies to young adults.” (Excerpt from Anna Sarkadi, Robert Kristiansson, Frank Oberklaid, Sven Bremberg, “Father’s Involvement and children’s developmental outcomes: a systematic review of longitudinal studies”, The Author(s)/Journal Compilation Foundation Acta Paediatrica, 2008 97, pp. 153-158)

“Outcomes in studies showing general effects were decreased behavioural problems in adolescence\textsuperscript{15,18} better social/relational functioning both in childhood\textsuperscript{16} and adulthood\textsuperscript{20} and better educational outcomes.\textsuperscript{17} The analyses in these studies were based on approximately 140000 datasets from three national longitudinal surveys and a small study on premature infants.”

Footnotes
\textsuperscript{15}Carlson M. Family structure, father involvement, and adolescent behavioral outcomes. J Marriage Family2006; 68:137-54.,
\textsuperscript{17}Flouri E, Buchanan A. Early father’s and mothers involvement and child’s later educational outcomes. Br J Educ Psychol 2002; 74: 141-53.
\textsuperscript{20}Flouri E, Buchanan A. What predicts good relationships with parents in adolescence and partners in adult life: Findings from the 1958 British Cohort Study. J. Fam Psychol 2002; 16: 186-98
(Excerpt from Anna Sarkadi, Robert Kristiansson, Frank Oberklaid, Sven Bremberg, “Father’s Involvement and children’s developmental outcomes: a systematic review of longitudinal studies”, The Author(s)/Journal Compilation Foundation Acta Paediatrica, 2008 97, pp. 153-158)
“In a socially much more advantaged population of 600 children with intact families, boys with a highly engaged father had less behavioural problems during the early school years than boys with less engaged fathers during the preschool years.” (Aldous J. Mulligan G. Father’s child care and children’s behavioral problems. J. Family issues 2002. Excerpt from Anna Sarkadi, Robert Kristiansson, Frank Oberklaid, Sven Bremberg, “Father’s Involvement and children’s developmental outcomes: a systematic review of longitudinal studies”, The Author(s)/Journal Compilation Foundation Acta Paediatrica, 2008 97, pp. 153-158)

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“The subsample for which father engagement at age seven had a selective social effect in the National Child Development Study was men from a manual socio-economic family background. These men were more protected against economic disadvantage, such as homelessness or state benefits, in their adult lives compared to their counterparts without an engaged father.” (Flouri E, Buchanan A. Childhood families of homeless and poor adults in Britain: a prospective study. J. Econ Psychol 2004; 25: 1-14. Excerpt from Anna Sarkadi, Robert Kristiansson, Frank Oberklaid, Sven Bremberg, “Father’s Involvement and children’s developmental outcomes: a systematic review of longitudinal studies”, The Author(s)/Journal Compilation Foundation Acta Paediatrica, 2008 97, pp. 153-158)

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“Nonetheless, children who spend a substantial amount of time with their fathers benefit greatly. Research finds that children whose fathers assumed 40 percent or more of the family's care tasks had greater positive outcomes (e.g., better performance on tests and cognitive achievement), than those children whose fathers were less involved.” (Source: Le Menestrel, S. (2000). What do fathers contribute to children’s well-being? Washington, DC: Child Trends.) (“Charting Parenthood: A Statistical Portrait of Fathers and Mothers in America,” Produced by Child Trends, http://fatherhood.hhs.gov/charting02.)

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“As expected, a wide body of research confirms that warm, consistent, and firm attachments to parents help children defer gratification, set and stick to goals, and resist harmful peer pressures. Additionally, close parent-child bonds protect teens from emotional distress as well as risky behaviors such as early sexual activity, smoking, drinking and drug use.”
“Studies have suggested that new fathers have increased levels of oxytocin, aka the ‘love hormone,’ during a newborn's first weeks. Oxytocin allows new dads to bond with their babies, making it more likely that they'll engage in that all-important playtime. In fact, the surge of lovey-dovey hormones in fathers is thought to be sparked by parenting itself -- ‘tossing the baby in the air, pulling the little one up to sit, or encouraging exploration and laughter,’ according to a Live Science report of a 2010 study conducted by psychologist Ruth Feldman at Bar-Ilan University.” (Rebecca Adams, “8 Science-Backed Reasons Why Dads Deserve More Credit”, Huffington Post, July 11, 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/07/11/father-child-relationship_n_5558408.html)


“Fathers exhibit about a 30 percent dip in testosterone during their infant's first three weeks, allowing the dads to unleash their inner nurturer and squash any aggressive behavior. Additionally, while waiting for their babies to be born, fathers experience a spike in cortisol, the ‘stress hormone’ that also prompts attachment, and prolactin, the same hormone that causes mothers to produce milk.” (Rebecca Adams, “8 Science-Backed Reasons Why Dads Deserve More Credit”, Huffington Post, July 11, 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/07/11/father-child-relationship_n_5558408.html)

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“THE EFFECT OF FATHERFULNESS”
“A study on parent-infant attachment found that fathers who were affectionate, spent time with their children, and overall had a positive attitude were more likely to have securely attached infants.” (Source: Cox, M.J. et al. ‘Prediction of Infant-Father and Infant-Mother Attachment.’ Developmental Psychology 28, 1992: 474-483.) (“The Effects of Fatherfulness,” http://www.fathers.com/research/effects.html)
“In a 26 year longitudinal study on 379 individuals, researchers found that the single most important childhood factor in developing empathy is paternal involvement. Fathers who spent time alone with their kids performing routine childcare at least two times a week, raised children who were the most compassionate adults.” (Source: Koestner, Richard, Carol Franz, and Joel Weinberger. The Family Origins of Empathic Concern: A Twenty-Six Year Longitudinal study. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 58, 1990: 709-717.) (“The Effects of Fatherfulness,” http://www.fathers.com/research/effects.html)


“Research has shown that fathers, no matter what their income or cultural background, can play a critical role in their children’s education. When fathers are involved, their children learn more, perform better in school, and exhibit healthier behavior. Even when fathers do not share a home with their children, their active involvement can have a lasting and positive impact.” (Jessica Lahey, “The Case for Dedicated Dads”, The Atlantic, June 11, 2014, http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-dedicated-dads/372516/)

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“The benefit of each unit of biological father involvement was two to three times greater when the father lived with his children compared to elsewhere.” ("Statistics and Data on the Consequences of Father Absence and the Benefits of Father Involvement," National Fatherhood Initiative, accessed June 23, 2014, http://www.fatherhood.org/statistics-on-father-absence-download#top)


“A study of low-income minority adolescents aged 10-14 years found that higher social encounters and frequent communication with nonresident biological fathers decreased adolescent delinquency.”

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“A study using data from the National Longitudinal Study of Youth looked at father-child relationship and father’s parenting style as predictors of first delinquency and substance use among adolescents in intact families. The results indicate that more positive father-child relationships are associated with reduced risk of engagement in multiple risky behaviors. Even though having a father with an authoritarian parenting style is associated with an increased risk of engaging in delinquent activity and substance abuse, the negative effect of authoritarian parenting is reduced when there is a positive father-adolescent relationship. Permissive parenting style also predicts less risky behavior when the father-child relationship is positive. The positive influence of the father-child relationship on risk behaviors appears to be stronger for male than for female adolescents.” (Source: Bronte-Tinkew, J., Moore, K.A., & Carrano, J. (2006), The father-child relationship, parenting styles, and adolescent risk behaviors in intact families. Journal of Family Issues, 27, 850-881.)


“A sample of 2,494 new fathers was drawn from the Fragile Families Study and revealed that paternal commitments positively affected men in terms of health and religious participation. However, increasing interaction with their new child negatively affected fathers in terms of changed in paid labor hours.” (Source: Knoester, C., Petts, R.J., & Eggbeen, D.J. (2007), Commitments to fathering

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“Children with an involved father are exposed to more varied social experiences and are more intellectually advanced than those who only have regular contact with their mother. Infants with two involved parents can cope better with being alone with strangers and also seem to attend more effectively to novel and complex stimuli. Well-fathered children have a greater breadth of positive social experiences than those exclusively reared by their mothers.” (Henry B. Biller, Fathers and Families: Paternal Factors in Child Development, Auburn House, Westport, Connecticut, 1993.) (Wade F. Horn, Ph.D. and Tom Sylvester, “Father Facts – Fourth Edition,” National Fatherhood Initiative, 2002 National Fatherhood Initiative.– p141)

“A study using a nationally representative sample of 1,600 10-13 year olds found that children who shared important ideas with their fathers and who perceived the amount of time they spent with their fathers as excellent had fewer behavior problems and lived in more cognitively stimulating homes than their peers who did not share important ideas or view the amount of time they spent with their fathers as excellent.” (Source: Williams, Malcolm V., “Reconceptualizing Father Involvement.” Masters Thesis, Georgetown University, 1997.) (Wade F. Horn, Ph.D. and Tom Sylvester, “Father Facts – Fourth Edition,” National Fatherhood Initiative, 2002 National Fatherhood Initiative.– p143)

“In a study of 584 children who lived with both biological parents during three waves (1976, 1981, and 1987) of the National Survey of Children, it was found that adolescents who experienced increasing closeness with their fathers experienced less delinquency and psychological distress, whereas deteriorating father-adolescent relations resulted in more delinquency and depression.” (Source: Harris, Kathlee Mullan, Frank F. Furstenberg, Jr., and Jeremy K. Marmer. “Paternal Involvement with Adolescents in Intact Families: The
“Every major sociological study during the last fifteen years that cross-tabulates human relationships—or the lack of them—with human behavior reveals that the more disconnected a person is relationally, the more prone he or she is to engage in antisocial behavior. Two major studies of churched youth commissioned, first in 1987 and again in 1994, revealed that the closer youth are to their parents relationally, the less at risk they are to unacceptable behavior. And yet the sobering statistics underscore the mounting disconnection and loneliness in this generation:” (Josh D. McDowell, “The Disconnected Generation,” W Publishing Group, 2000. – p10)

“Many studies confirm the positive impact of fathers who spend time with their children. Children with involved fathers are:”
- “More confident and less anxious in unfamiliar settings”
- “Better able to deal with frustration”
- “Better able to gain a sense of independence and an identity outside the mother-child relationship”
- “More likely to mature into compassionate adults”
- “More likely to have higher self-esteem and grade point averages”
- “More sociable”
(www.fathers.com/1999gallup/fathertime, “The positive impact of father-time”)

“Fathers who treat the mothers of their children with respect and deal with conflict within the relationship in an adult and appropriate manner are more likely to have boys who understand how they are to treat women and who are less likely to act in an aggressive fashion toward females. Girls with involved, respectful fathers see how they should expect men to treat them and are less likely to become involved in violent or unhealthy relationships. In contrast, research has shown that husbands who display anger, show contempt for, or who stonewall their wives (i.e., ‘the silent treatment’) are more likely to have children who are anxious, withdrawn, or antisocial.”
“Children with involved, caring fathers have better educational outcomes. A number of studies suggest that fathers who are involved, nurturing, and playful with their infants have children with higher IQs, as well as better linguistic and cognitive capacities.” (Pruett, K. (2000). *Father-need*. New York, NY: Broadway Books; Sternberg, K. J. (1997).)

“Toddlers with involved fathers go on to start school with higher levels of academic readiness. They are more patient and can handle the stresses and frustrations associated with schooling more readily than children with less involved fathers.” (Pruett, K. (2000).) (Jeffrey Rosenberg and W. Bradford Wilcox, “The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children”, Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2006, https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/)


“Fathers who treat the mothers of their children with respect and deal with conflict within the relationship in an adult and appropriate manner are more likely to have boys who understand how they are to treat women and who are less likely to act in an aggressive fashion toward females. Girls with involved, respectful fathers see how they should expect men to treat them and are less likely to become involved in violent or unhealthy relationships. In contrast, research has shown that husbands who display anger, show
contempt for, or who stonewall their wives (i.e., “the silent treatment”) are more likely to have children who are anxious, withdrawn, or antisocial.”


“...one of the most important ways that men can be good fathers is by treating the mother of their children with affection, respect, and consideration. The virtues that a father displays in his relationship with the mother of his children set an important example for the children. Children who witness affectionate, respectful, and sacrificial behavior on the part of their father are more likely to treat their own, future spouses in a similar fashion.” (Jeffrey Rosenberg and W. Bradford Wilcox, “The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children”, Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2006, https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/)

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

“Fathers should promote the mission of their families. It may sound odd to talk about a mission statement for a family but all healthy families have them, whether they are articulated or not. For instance, families that believe their children should be brought up with a sound spiritual foundation have, as part of their mission, raising children of faith. And families that believe that children must learn the benefits of hard work raise children who recognize and can embrace the virtues of working hard and applying one’s self to a goal.” (Jeffrey Rosenberg and W. Bradford Wilcox, “The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children”, Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2006, https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/)

“Fathers should abide by the spirit and (where appropriate) the letter of the rules that govern family life. For example, a father who asks his teenager to obey his curfew should also make an effort to be home at a decent hour.” (Jeffrey Rosenberg and W. Bradford Wilcox, “The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children”, Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2006, https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/)


“A father who loses his temper while disciplining a child should apologize to the child. Many men view apologizing to their child as a sign of weakness that will cause the child to lose respect for the father. The opposite is true. Apologizing shows a man is capable of acknowledging and facing up to a mistake, fixing the mistake to the extent possible, and committing to moving forward—hardly a sign of weakness, much more so a sign of strength.” (Stenson, J. (1996). Lifeline: The religious upbringing of your children. Princeton, NJ: Scepter Publishers) (Jeffrey Rosenberg and W. Bradford Wilcox, “The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children”, Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2006, https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/)

“A father’s influence as a role model for his children is affected by the amount of time they spend together. Whether they live in the same home on a full-time basis or not, fathers should make a concerted effort to model behaviors and attitudes that they want to see their children display when they grow up.” (Jeffrey Rosenberg and W. Bradford Wilcox, “The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children”, Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2006, https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/)
“According to a widely cited report from the U.S. Department of Justice, children from fatherless home are:”
- “5 times more likely to commit suicide,”
- “32 times more likely to run away,”
- “20 times more likely to have behavioral disorders,”
- “14 times more likely to commit rape,”
- “9 times more likely to drop out of high school,”
- “10 times more likely to abuse chemical substances,”
- “9 times more likely to end up in a state-operated institution,”
- “20 times more likely to end up in prison than children from homes with a mother and father present.”


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“Children from lone-parent families are twice as likely to run away from home as those from two-birth-parent families (14% compared (Rees, G. and Rutherford, C. (2001), Home Run: Families and Young Runaways, London: The Children’s Society.)


“In a sample of teenagers living in the West of Scotland, 15-year-olds from lone-parent households were twice as likely to be smokers as those from two-birth-parent homes (29% compared to 15%). After controlling for poverty, they were still 50% more likely to smoke.” (Sweeting, H., West, P., and Richards, M. (1998), ‘Teenage family life, lifestyles and life chances: Associations with family structure, conflict with parents and joint family activity’, International Journal of Law, Policy and the Family 12, pp. 15–46.)


“American studies have shown that boys from one-parent homes were twice as likely as those from two-birth-parent families to be incarcerated by the time they reached their early 30s.” (Harper, C. and McLanahan, S. (August 1998), ‘Father absence and youth incarceration’, San Francisco: paper presented at the annual meetings of the American Sociological Association.)


“Children face greater risks growing up without a father in the home. According to researchers Sara McLanahan and Gary Sandefur, who have collected the most extensive and thorough data on this topic, ‘Children who grow up in a household with only one biological parent are worse off, on average, than children who grow up in a household with both of their biological parents, regardless of the parents’ race or educational background, regardless of whether the parents are married when the child is born, and regardless of whether the resident parent remarries.’” (Stephen F. Duncan, PhD., “The Importance of Fathers,” Montguide, www.montana.edu/wwwpb/pubs/pubs.html)

“Children reared in single-parent families may suffer from greater depression and emotional distress, may exhibit greater behavioral and learning difficulties in school, and may be forced to take on adult responsibilities at an early age. In adulthood, children from single-parent families are more likely to have lower educational and economic achievements, have an increased likelihood of forming single parent families themselves, and may have difficulties forming lasting relationships with partners.” (Stephen F. Duncan, PhD., “The Importance of Fathers,” Montguide, www.montana.edu/wwwpb/pubs/pubs.html)

“Adolescents who live sometime of their childhood in a single-parent household, which most often are mother-only families, are twice as likely to drop out of school, twice as likely to have a child before age 20 and one and a half times as likely to be idle—out of school and out of work—in their late teens and early young adult years.” (Stephen F. Duncan, PhD., “The Importance of Fathers,” Montguide, www.montana.edu/wwwpb/pubs/pubs.html)
“Children raised by single parents are at a greater risk for drug and alcohol abuse. Boys are more than twice as likely to be arrested, more likely to drop out of high school, at least twice as likely to commit suicide.”

**Sources:**

2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
3. Census Bureau.
4. Dept. of Health and Human Services.
6. Dept. of Justice.


“Children whose fathers are stable and involved are better off on almost every cognitive, social, and emotional measure developed by researchers. For example, high levels of father involvement are correlated with sociability, confidence, and high levels of self-control in children. Moreover, children with involved fathers are less likely to act out in school or engage in risky behaviors in adolescents.” (Anthes, E. (2010, May/June). Family guy. Scientific American Mind.) (Fatherhood Statistics Download, National Fatherhood Initiative, accessed June 23, 2014, http://www.fatherhood.org/statistics-on-father-absence-download)

“A sample of 4,027 resident fathers and children from the Fragile Families and Child Well-Being Survey was used to investigate the effects of a biological father’s multipartner fertility (having at least one child with more than one mother) on adolescent health. Resident fathers engaging in multipartner fertility were older, more likely to be White, and had lower education levels and income, compared to fathers with one partner. Results indicated children’s externalizing behaviors were negatively affected directly and indirectly when their biological father had children with multiple partners.” (Bronte-Tinkew, J., Horowitz, A., & Scott, M. E. (2009). Fathering with multiple partners: Links to children’s well-being in early childhood. Journal of Marriage and Family, 71, 608–631) (Fatherhood Statistics Download, National Fatherhood Initiative, accessed June 23, 2014, http://www.fatherhood.org/statistics-on-father-absence-download)


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“THE PROOF IS IN: FATHER ABSENCE HARMS CHILD WELL-BEING”

“Late last year, researchers Sara McLanahan, Laura Tach, and Daniel Schneider stepped into the fray with their review of nearly 50 studies that employed innovative, rigorous designs to examine the causal effects of father absence. Published in the Annual Review of Sociology, ‘The Causal Effects of Father Absence’ examined studies that focused on the relationship between father absence and four outcomes for children: educational attainment, mental health, relationship formation and stability, and labor force success. Although these studies varied in the use of
analytical approaches and found different effect sizes, they prove beyond reproach that father absence causes poor outcomes for children in each of these areas.” (Christopher A. Brown, “The Proof is in: Father Absence Harms Child Well-Being”, Huffington Post, March 14, 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/christopher-a-brown/the-proof-is-infather-abs_b_4941353.html)

“This is a critical distinction. The old adage, ‘correlation does not imply causation,’ does not apply to the effects of father absence on children. In other words, for many of our most intractable social ills affecting children, father absence is to blame.” (Christopher A. Brown, “The Proof is in: Father Absence Harms Child Well-Being”, Huffington Post, March 14, 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/christopher-a-brown/the-proof-is-infather-abs_b_4941353.html)

“Furthermore, as an anthropologist, what impressed me about the review is not only its inclusion of studies that employed a variety of analytical approaches methods; it also included studies from nine countries, mostly developed countries (including the U.S.) but also developing countries. Consequently, this cross-cultural analysis of research lends strength and credibility to the conclusion about the devastating effects of father absence. It also supports other recent research on the importance of family structure to child well being, which I wrote about in a recent post on this blog. Father absence isn't just a U.S. problem -- it's a human problem.” (Christopher A. Brown, “The Proof is in: Father Absence Harms Child Well-Being”, Huffington Post, March 14, 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/christopher-a-brown/the-proof-is-infather-abs_b_4941353.html)

“As president of NFI and a father who has dedicated his career to seeing as many children as possible grow up with both of their parents, I find one particular conclusion of these scholars very sobering given that the U.S. has reached an all-time high in the number of children born to single parents: the earlier in their lives that children experience father absence the more pronounced are its effects.” (Christopher A. Brown, “The Proof is in: Father Absence Harms Child Well-Being”, Huffington Post, March 14, 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/christopher-a-brown/the-proof-is-infather-abs_b_4941353.html)

“Despite all of this evidence staring Americans in the face, too many of us just don't get it, or worse choose to ignore the evidence. Our primary and recognized ignorance has to change if we are to make a real difference in the quality of life for millions of our nation’s children living in father-absent homes, and the millions who will follow if we don't reverse this destructive trend.” (Christopher A. Brown, “The Proof is in: Father Absence Harms Child Well-Being”,

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“The group...compiled research showing infants with dads living at home were months ahead in personal and social development. Children who lack contact with fathers are more likely to be treated for emotional or behavioral problems. Girls with absent or indifferent fathers are more prone to hyperactivity. If dad is around, girls are less likely to become pregnant as teens.” (Lois M. Collins & Marjorie Cortez, “Why Dads Matter,” The Atlantic, February 23, 2014, http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2014/02/why-dads-matter/283956/)

“...dads also influenced whether their sons became teenage fathers. A Temple University study found no boys born to teen mothers became teen fathers if they had close relationships with their biological fathers, compared to 15 percent of those who didn’t have that closeness.” (Lois M. Collins & Marjorie Cortez, “Why Dads Matter,” The Atlantic, February 23, 2014, http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2014/02/why-dads-matter/283956/)

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“Nearly 40 percent of unwed parents with low education levels share child-rearing responsibilities with a co-residential boyfriend or girlfriend, according to a 2013 report from the United States Census Bureau. Oftentimes these couples share at least one biological child, but in 27 percent of relationships, moms or dads are stepping in to raise children they didn’t conceive.” (Elizabeth Stuart, “Should welfare programs pay more attention to dads?”, Deseret News, February 25, 2014,

“U.S. government programs designed to help such families, however, haven’t evolved with the population. Based on decades-old stereotypes that single mothers are raising children alone and single dads are ‘deadbeats,’ the majority of U.S. anti-poverty programs almost exclusively serve women and children, said Jacquelyn Boggess, co-director of the Center for Family Policy and Practice, a Wisconsin-based think tank that focuses on supporting low-income parents.” (Elizabeth Stuart, “Should Welfare Programs Pay More Attention to Dads?” Desert News National, February 25, 2014, http://national.deseretnews.com/article/1061/should-welfare-programs-pay-more-attention-to-dads.html)

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“‘I think there’s consensus that cultural and family factors are causing children’s family lives to be more unstable than in the past,’ said Andrew J. Cherlin, author of ‘The Marriage-Go-Round’ and director of the Hopkins Population Center at Johns Hopkins University. Experts debate whether recent cultural shifts or economic changes most undermine family stability, but, said Cherlin, ‘most who I respect believe both are at play.’” (Lois M. Collins and Marjorie Cortez, “The father factor: What happens when dad is nowhere to be found?”, Deseret News, February 23, 2014, http://national.deseretnews.com/article/1057/The-father-factor-What-happens-when-dad-is-nowhere-to-be-found.html)
“Most children weather family turmoil and wind up OK, said Cherlin, who coined the term ‘family churn’ to describe what happens to families as couples split, often moving dad out of the home and a new man in. A study in the Journal of Marriage and Family said children in such homes experience an average of more than 5.25 partnership transitions. That’s tough for kids who are used to having their own fathers within reach.” (Lois M. Collins and Marjorie Cortez, “The father factor: What happens when dad is nowhere to be found?”, Deseret News, February 23, 2014, http://national.deseretnews.com/article/1057/The-father-factor-What-happens-when-dad-is-nowhere-to-be-found.html)

“‘Dad also helps with impulse control and memory and enhances a child’s ability to respond effectively to new or ambiguous situations, for boys and girls,’ said Warren Farrell, author of ‘Father and Child Reunion.’ Children who are close to their fathers tend to achieve more academically, while kids with absent fathers are more likely to drop out. Fathers are the biggest factor in preventing drug use, Farrell said.” (Lois M. Collins and Marjorie Cortez, “The father factor: What happens when dad is nowhere to be found?”, Deseret News, February 23, 2014, http://national.deseretnews.com/article/1057/The-father-factor-What-happens-when-dad-is-nowhere-to-be-found.html)

“…someone not biologically related is less likely to invest in a child for various hypothetical reasons, including unclear parental roles. Sometimes, father figures compete or are stretched thin by obligations to children fathered with other women.” (Lois M. Collins and Marjorie Cortez, “The father factor: What happens when dad is nowhere to be found?”, Deseret News, February 23, 2014, http://national.deseretnews.com/article/1057/The-father-factor-What-happens-when-dad-is-nowhere-to-be-found.html)

“The more transitions a child endures, the worse off he or she typically is…” (Lois M. Collins and Marjorie Cortez, “The father factor: What happens when dad is nowhere to be found?”, Deseret News, February 23, 2014, http://national.deseretnews.com/article/1057/The-father-factor-What-happens-when-dad-is-nowhere-to-be-found.html)


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“According to the Pew study, people can attribute a large part of this to the U.S. judicial system and its shifting standards for child custody cases. Until recently, U.S. courts would almost always rule ‘in the best interest of the child’ (slang for ‘in favor of the mother’). But since the early 2000s, many states have been adopting legislation that moves away from the ‘best interest policy.’” (Caroline Kitchener, “Why the Number of Single Dads is on the Rise,” Desert News National, February 23, 2014, http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865597044/Father-figures-the-rising-number-of-dads-who-do-it-all.html)

“Most new legislation provides for ‘joint parenting’ or joint physical custody, policies that encourage both parents to spend equal time with the child (Oregon, Minnesota, Arizona, Iowa, and Maine have particularly strong joint parenting laws). Rather than prompting divorced parents to split their child’s time 50-50, these policies seem to have prompted a dramatic increase in the number of single fathers.” (Caroline Kitchener, “Why the Number of Single Dads is on the Rise,” Desert News National, February 23, 2014, http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865597044/Father-figures-the-rising-number-of-dads-who-do-it-all.html)

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“71% of all high school dropouts come from fatherless homes.” (National Principals Association Report on the State of High Schools) (The Foster Letter Religious Market Update, September 25, 2011)

“75% of all adolescent patients in chemical abuse centers come from fatherless homes.” (The Foster Letter Religious Market Update, September 25, 2011)

“63% of teen suicides come from fatherless homes. That’s 5 times the national average.” (The Foster Letter Religious Market Update, September 25, 2011)

“A 2009 national telephone survey of 1,000 adults asked a series of questions about the role of fathers in America, which yielded the following key finding:”
Seven out of ten people surveyed believe physical absence of fathers is the most significant family or social problem currently facing America.”

“Father Factor in Incarceration”


“Father Factor in Crime”


“A study of 13,986 women in prison showed that more than half grew up without their father. Forty-two percent grew up in a single-mother household and sixteen percent lived with neither parent. (Fathers and

“In a study of INTERPOL crime statistics of 39 countries, it was found that single parenthood ratios were strongly correlated with violent crimes. This was not true 18 years ago.” (Barber, Nigel. “Single Parenthood As a Predictor of Cross-National Variation in Violent Crime.” Cross-Cultural Research 38 (November 2004): 343-358.) (“Father Facts,” National Fatherhood Initiative, accessed November 21, 2011, http://www.fatherhood.org/father-absence-statistics)


“Teenage boys whose fathers were more engaged before age seven are less likely to get into trouble with the police.” (Flouri, E. & Buchanan, A. (2003). What predicts fathers’ involvement with their children? A prospective study of intact families. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 21, 81-97). (“The Difference a Dad Makes – What Does International Research Say?” Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports, Singapore, November 2009)


“SECURITY”


“Lead author Sophie Moullin said that when her team looked at large scale representative studies in a number of countries they all found, from their observations, that between 38% and 42% of children suffered from poor attachment in all the different study locations.” (Hannah Richardson, ‘Poor parent-child bonding ‘hampers learning,’” BBC News, March 20, 2014, http://www.bbc.com/news/education-26667036)

“She added: ‘Secure attachment really helps children with emotional and social development and at school it really helps them to manage their behaviour. These are the things that teachers will tell you that are stopping children from learning.’ (Hannah Richardson, ‘Poor parent-child bonding ‘hampers learning,’” BBC News, March 20, 2014, http://www.bbc.com/news/education-26667036)


“63 percent of teen suicides are from fatherless homes; 90 percent of homeless children and runaways are from fatherless homes; and 71 percent of all high school dropouts are from fatherless homes.” (Eric Metaxas, “God Intended Fathers to be Moral and Spiritual Example”, Christian Headlines, Breakpoint, June 3,
“FATHERLESSNESS”

“Forty-three percent of US children live without their father. You would expect that percentage in all areas of life — that 43% of any sub-set of the population comes from fatherless homes — unless there is either a specific benefit or problem with it.” (Source: March 26, 1999 wheredaddy.com/fathers/fatherlessness.htm)

- “90% of homeless and runaway children are from fatherless homes.” [US D.H.H.S., Bureau of the Census.] (Source: March 26, 1999 wheredaddy.com/fathers/fatherlessness.htm)

- “80% of rapists motivated with displaced anger come from fatherless homes.” [Criminal Justice & Behaviour, Vol 14, pp. 403-26, 1978.] (Source: March 26, 1999 wheredaddy.com/fathers/fatherlessness.htm)


- “71% of pregnant teenagers lack a father.” [U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services press release, Friday, March 26, 1999.] (Source: March 26, 1999 wheredaddy.com/fathers/fatherlessness.htm)

- “63% of youth suicides are from fatherless homes.” [U.S. D.H.H.S., Bureau of the Census.] (Source: March 26, 1999 wheredaddy.com/fathers/fatherlessness.htm)

- “90% of all homeless and runaway children are from fatherless homes.” (Courtesy of Mark Hall, Fathers Manifesto, “Fatherless homes Breed Violence,” http://www.fathermag.com/news/2778-stats.shtml)

- “85% of children who exhibit behavioral disorders come from fatherless homes.” [Center for Disease Control.] (Source: March 26, 1999 wheredaddy.com/fathers/fatherlessness.htm)
• “90% of adolescent repeat arsonists live with only their mother.” [Wray Herbert, 'Dousing the Kindlers,' Psychology Today, January, 1985, p.28.] (Source: March 26, 1999 where-daddy.com/fathers/fatherlessness.htm)

• “71% of high school dropouts come from fatherless homes.” [National Principals Association Report on the State of High Schools.] (Source: March 26, 1999 where-daddy.com/fathers/fatherlessness.htm)

• “75% of adolescent patients in chemical abuse centers come from fatherless homes.” [Rainbows for all God’s Children.] (Source: March 26, 1999 where-daddy.com/fathers/fatherlessness.htm)

• “70% of juveniles in state operated institutions have no father.” [U.S. Dept. of Justice, Special Report, Sept. 1988.] (Source: March 26, 1999 where-daddy.com/fathers/fatherlessness.htm)


• “85% of youths in prisons grew up in a fatherless home.” [Fulton Co. Georgia jail populations, Texas Dept. of Corrections, 1992.] (Source: March 26, 1999 where-daddy.com/fathers/fatherlessness.htm)

• “Fatherless boys and girls are: twice as likely to drop out of high school; twice as likely to end up in jail; four times more likely to need help for emotional or behavioural problems.” (Source: U.S. DHHS news release, March 26, 1999) (Source: where-daddy.com/fathers/fatherlessness.htm)

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“In a study using a national probability sample of 1,636 young men and women, it was found that older boys and girls from female headed households are more likely to commit criminal acts than their peers who lived with two parents.” (Source: Heimer, Karen.`Gender, Interaction, and Delinquency: Testing a Theory of Differential Social Control.' Social Psychology Quarterly 59, 1996: 39-61.) ("The Consequences of Fatherlessness," http://www.fathers.com/research/consequences.html.)
“THE MYTH OF THE SUPERFLUOUS FATHER.” Once androgyny advocates established that most fathers were ‘doing it wrong,’ it became relatively easy to argue fathers were not really necessary to the ‘modern’ family. Social scientists began to assert that there was a ‘nuclear family bias’ in past research, and exhorted fellow researchers and practitioners to stop extolling the importance of a father—even a New Nurturing Father—to the well-being of children. By 1982, psychologist Charlotte Patterson of the University of Virginia felt assured enough to state flatly, ‘Children don't need a father to develop normally.’” (Wade F. Horn, “You’ve Come a Long Way, Daddy,” The Heritage Foundation, www.policyreview.org/jul97/thhorn.html)

“But when fathers are disenfranchised by misguided government programs, here’s the result:”

- “Their children have a higher rate of asthma, headaches, anxiety, depression, and behavioral problems.” (Carey Roberts, “Yes, Fathers are Essential,” copyright ©2004 Father.Mag.com http://www.renewamerica.us/columns/roberts/040615)


- “Adolescent girls are 3 times more likely to engage in sexual relations by the time they turn 15, and 5 times more likely to become a teen mother.” (Carey Roberts, “Yes, Fathers are Essential,” copyright ©2004 Father.Mag.com http://www.renewamerica.us/columns/roberts/040615)


“CHILDREN FROM FATHERLESS HOMES ARE:”

- “4.6 times more likely to commit suicide,”
- “6.6 times more likely to become teenaged mothers (if they are girls, of course),”
- “24.3 times more likely to run away,”
• “15.3 times more likely to have behavioral disorders,”
• “6.3 times more likely to be in a state-operated institutions,”
• “40.8 times more likely to commit rape,”
• “6.6 times more likely to drop out of school,”
• “15.3 times more likely to end up in prison while a teenager.”


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

• “33 times more likely to be seriously abused (so that they will require medical attention), and”

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“According to one study, 80 percent of imprisoned criminals come from fatherless homes as do 82 percent of pregnant teens. Fatherless children are also at a significantly increased risk for drug abuse as teenagers. For example, girls without fathers are 40 percent more likely to abuse drugs.” (Source: The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information. “Fathers Play an Important Role in Prevention,” www.health.org/newsroom/rep/131.htm, last referenced May 30, 2001.) (“The Importance of Father in a Teen’s Life, http://www.prevlink.org/therightstuff/parents/sectiona/fathers.html)

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“Crime:  Even after controlling for family background variables such as mother’s education level, race, family income, and number of siblings, as well as neighborhood variables such as unemployment rates and median income, boys who grew up outside of intact marriages were, on average, more than twice as likely as other boys to end up in jail.”  (Source: Harper, Cynthia C., and Sara S. McLanahan. “Father Absence and Youth Incarceration.” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, San Francisco, CA, August 1998.) (“Father Facts.” National Fatherhood Initiative. www.fatherhood.org/fatherfacts/sample.htm.)

“Boys raised in single-parent homes are twice as likely to commit crimes as boys raised in two-parent homes regardless of race or income. Boys in step families are three times as likely to commit crimes as boys raised by their own two parents.” (“Marriage Movement Helps Halt Trend of Family Decline Marriage Leaders Announce Next Steps to Strengthen Marriage”, January 6, 2005, http://www.marriagemovement.org/what_next_press.php)

“Girls raised in single parent homes are three times more likely to end up as young, unwed mothers than are children whose parents married and stayed married.” (“Marriage Movement Helps Halt Trend of Family Decline Marriage Leaders Announce Next Steps to Strengthen Marriage”, January 6, 2005, http://www.marriagemovement.org/what_next_press.php)


“I love them because I didn't have a childhood…I feel their pain.... ‘Heal the World’, ‘We are the World’, ‘Will You be There,’ ‘The Lost Children.’ These are the songs I’ve written because I hurt...”  (Ryan Smith, “Michaels Last Words,”

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“Dr. Loren Moshen, of the National Institute of Mental Health, analyzed U.S. census figures and found the absence of a father to be a stronger factor than poverty in contributing to juvenile delinquency.” (Josh D. McDowell, “The Father Connection,” Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, p1996. – p4)

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“Dr. Armand Nicholi’s research found that an emotionally or physically absent father contributes to a child’s (1) low motivation for achievement; (2) inability to defer immediate gratification for later rewards; (3) low self-esteem; and (4) susceptibility to group influence and to juvenile delinquency.” (Source: Armand Nicholi Jr., “Changes in the American Family,” White House Paper, October 25, 1984: 7-8.) (Josh D. McDowell, “The Father Connection,” Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, p1996. – p5)

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“FATHERLESS BOYS GROW UP INTO DANGEROUS MEN” (F)
“Using the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth database, the records of more than 6,400 boys were studied over a period of approximately 20 years of their development. According to the Wall Street Journal story, the study…” (“Fatherless Boys Grow Up Dangerous Men”, Copyright FatherMag.com. http://www.fathermag.com/news/2770-SJ81201.shtml)

“...controlled for family background variables such as mother's educational level, race, family income and number of siblings, as well as neighborhood variables like the proportion of female-headed families in the neighborhood, unemployment rates, median income and even cognitive ability.... Boys raised outside of intact marriages are, on average, more than twice as likely as other boys to end up jailed, even after controlling for other demographic factors. Each year spent without a dad in the home increases the odds of future incarceration by about five percent.” (“Fatherless Boys Grow Up Dangerous Men”, Copyright FatherMag.com. http://www.fathermag.com/news/2770-SJ81201.shtml)

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“More than half of the juveniles executed around the world were executed in the US, which has less than 5% of the world’s population.” (Source: http://fathers.ourfamily.com/damages.htm) (Courtesy of Mark Hall, Fathers Manifesto, “Fatherless homes Breed Violence,” http://www.fathermag.com/news/2778-stats.shtml)

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“Boys with absentee fathers are twice as likely as boys in two-parent families to be incarcerated, regardless of variations in their parents’ educational level, race/ethnicity, and income.” (“What Does the Latest Research About Fathers Tell Us?” Latest findings presented by Child Trends researchers in “What Policymakers Need to Know About Fathers’ in the December 1998 issue of Policy & Practice, the journal of the American Public Human Services Associations (APHSA). www.childtrends.org/n_aboutfathers.asp)

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“Henry and colleagues (1996) found that having a single-parent family when boys were age 13 predicted their convictions for violence by age 18.” (United States Department of Justice, “Predictors of Youth Violence,” John J. Wilson – Acting Administrator, April 2000. – p4)

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“Statistical analysis revealed that ‘compared with matched control students, children who exhibited violent misbehavior in school were eleven times as likely not to live with their fathers and six times as likely to have parents who were not married.’” (Patricia Cohen and Judith Brook, “Family Factors Related to the Persistence of Psychopathology in Childhood and Adolescence,” Psychiatry (Nov. 1987) (H. Chris Slane III, M.A. – Director of Research, “Why Are Kids So Angry?” Family First, Tampa, Florida, 1999. – p11) (JOSH NOTE: OLD STUDY, BUT STILL RELEVANT)

“The Congressional Record reported that a young male is twice as likely to engage in criminal behavior if he is raised without a father.” (June O'Neill, director of the Congressional Budget Office, Congressional Record, Aug. 8, 1995.) (H. Chris Slane III, M.A. – Director of Research, “Why Are Kids So Angry?” Family First, Tampa, Florida, 1999. – p12)
“The likelihood that a young male will engage in criminal activity doubles if he is reared without a father, and triples if he lives in a neighborhood comprised largely of single parent families.” (Source: Morehouse Research Institute and Institute for American Values (1999), “Turning the Corner on Father Absence in Black America, www.morehouse.edu/html) (The Medical Institute for Sexual Health Update, Fall 1999, Vol.7, Number 3).

“The recent study, which is part of a long-term federal project on American adolescence, ends with a warning and a promise: When parents ‘are not personally and psychologically available for their teenage children, teenagers pay a high price.’” (Source: www.bergen.com, “Teens need parents new research on avoiding bad behavior”, Editorial, Dec. 4, 2000)

“SPECIAL REPORT: MARRIAGE & FAMILY UNDER ATTACK, PART II”
“Changes in the traditional family unit over the past four decades, in which more and more children have been reared in non-intact families, has resulted in children suffering roughly twice the risk of social and behavioral problems compared with those reared in married parent families.”


“When controlling for all other variables including mother closeness and family structure, father closeness has statistically significant, independent effects on adolescent drug use. Specifically for smoking, drinking, and the use of inhalants, fathers closeness is a statistically significant and robust predictor.” (Source: Robert Lerner, A Report from National Fatherhood Initiative, “Family Structure, Father Closeness, & Drug Abuse”, March 11, 2004)

“Fatherlessness, either through physical or emotional absence, has had the following effects:”

- “Fatherless children are more likely to commit crimes and engage in substance abuse. A 1994 report from the Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services found just 12 percent of the delinquents in state custody were from a two-parent family. A 1980 study of female delinquents in the California Youth Authority found just 7 percent came

- “On average, fatherless children score lower on tests and have lower grade point averages. Family scholar Barbara Dafoe Whitehead says, “Even after controlling for race, income and religion, scholars find significant differences in educational attainment between children who grow up in intact families and children who do not.” (Source: Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, "Dan Quayle was Right," Atlantic Monthly, April 1993, 66.) (“Importance of Fathers,” www.fathers.com/help/importance.html.

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“In addition, research compiled by the National Fatherhood Initiative indicates nationally, 60 percent of rapists, 72 percent of adolescent murderers, and 70 percent of long-term prison inmates come from fatherless homes.” (Linda C. Passmark and Edd D. Rhoades, “Fathers are Critical to Child Well-Being,” Maternal and Child Health Service, Oklahoma State Department of Health, www.health.state.ok.us/program/hpromo/medj/fjournal.htm.)

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Nationally, more than 70 percent of all juveniles in state reform institutions come from fatherless homes. A number of scholarly studies find that even after the groups of subjects are controlled for income, boys from single-mother homes are significantly more likely than others to commit crimes and to wind up in the juvenile justice, court, and penitentiary systems. One such study summarizes the relationship between crime and one-parent families in this way: "The relationship is so strong that controlling for family configuration erases the relationship between race and crime and between low income and crime. This conclusion shows up time and again in the literature." The nation's mayors, as well as police officers, social workers, probation officers, and court officials, consistently point to family breakup as the most important source of rising rates of crime. (Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, The Atlantic, April 1, 1993, http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1993/04/dan-quayle-was-right/307015/)

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“Children from divorced families are more likely to be divorced themselves.” (Christopher J. Einolf, “The One Hundred Billion Dollar Man”, National Fatherhood Initiative, 2008, http://www.fatherhood.org/one-hundred-billion-dollar-man)

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SEXUAL ABUSE (SA)

“If you rationally point out girls are more likely to be sexually abused – as many as 20 times – by a stepfather than a biological father this is not a slur.” (Melissa Davey, “Breakdown of the family to blame for 90% of poverty, families congress told, The Guardian, August 30, 2014, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/31/breakdown-family-blame-90-percent-poverty-world-families-congress)

“Generally speaking, the same characteristics that make a man a good father make him less likely to abuse or neglect his children. Fathers who nurture and take significant responsibility for basic childcare for their children (e.g., feeding, changing diapers) from an early age are significantly less likely to sexually abuse their children. These fathers typically develop such a strong connection with their children that it decreases the likelihood of any maltreatment.” (Pruett, K. (2000). Father-need. New York, NY: Broadway Books; Sternberg, K. J. (1997). (“The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children”, September, 2006, http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/)

“The affects of fatherlessness permeate every aspect of our society and culture. In our city, I work together with our Mayor’s Office, the Police Bureau, the Judicial System, the District Attorneys Office, and other city agencies, to try to help our youth change their lives and engage in pro-social behaviors. The majority of these youths come from fatherless homes.” (Mark Strong, “Preaching to the Fatherless”, Preaching Today, June 2, 2014, http://www.preachingtoday.com/skills/2014/june/preaching-to-fatherless.html)

“In Oregon and Washington, sex trafficking is a monumental problem. We’ve held several symposiums in our church and the studies show that many of the men who sell these girls are fatherless. Not only that, but the profile of the girls they seek to recruit are girls who have no father. What they do is disguise themselves in sheep’s clothing as father figures, the girls go for it, and the tragedy begins. The scheme works because these young girls are hungering for a loving father.” (Mark Strong, “Preaching to the Fatherless”, Preaching Today, June 2, 2014, http://www.preachingtoday.com/skills/2014/june/preaching-to-fatherless.html)
“All studies of child-abuse victims which look at family type identify the
step-family as representing the highest risk to children…” (For example, see
Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology.) (Rebecca O'Neill, “Experiments in Living: The
Fatherless Family,” September 2002, CIVITAS – The Institute for the Study of Civil Society The
Mezzanine, Elizabeth House, 39 York Road, London SE1 7NQ)

“…with the risk of fatal abuse being 100 times higher than in two biological-
parent families according to international experts Daly and Wilson…”
The Institute for the Study of Civil Society The Mezzanine, Elizabeth House, 39 York Road,
London SE1 7NQ)

“Stepfathers. While research varies, some studies show that stepfathers
are more likely to abuse their children physically and sexually.” (Popenoe, D.
(The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children; U.S. Dept. of Health and
Human Services; Administration for Children and Families; Administration on Children, Youth,
and Families; Children’s Bureau; Office on Child Abuse and Neglect; Jeffrey Rosenberg and W.
Bradford Wilcox; 2006.)

“A 1997 study of more than 600 families in upstate New York found that
children living with stepfathers were more than three times more likely to be
sexually abused than children living in intact families.” (Brown, J., Cohen, P.,
maltreatment: Findings of a 17-year prospective study of officially recorded and self-reported
child abuse and neglect. Child Abuse and Neglect, 22(11), 1065–1078.)
(The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children; U.S. Dept. of Health and
Human Services; Administration for Children and Families; Administration on Children, Youth,
and Families; Children’s Bureau; Office on Child Abuse and Neglect; Jeffrey Rosenberg and W.
Bradford Wilcox; 2006.)

“Another study found that the presence of a stepfather doubles the risk of
sexual abuse for girls—either from the stepfather or another male figure.”
(Putman, F. W. (2003).) (The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children;
U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services; Administration for Children and Families;
Administration on Children, Youth, and Families; Children’s Bureau; Office on Child Abuse and
Neglect; Jeffrey Rosenberg and W. Bradford Wilcox; 2006.)
“Analyzing reports of fatal child abuse in the United States, one study found that stepfathers were approximately 60 times more likely than biological fathers to kill their preschool children.” (Daly, M., & Wilson, M. I. (1994). Some differential attributes of lethal assaults on small children by stepfathers versus genetic fathers. Ethology & Sociobiology, 15, 207–217.) (The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children; U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services; Administration for Children and Families; Administration on Children, Youth, and Families; Children's Bureau; Office on Child Abuse and Neglect; Jeffrey Rosenberg and W. Bradford Wilcox; 2006.)

“While these studies find that stepfathers often invest less in caring for their stepchildren, others cite many examples of caring behaviors by and close relationships with stepparents, suggesting that paternal investment is not restricted only to biological offspring.” (Hofferth, S. L., Stueve, J. L., Pleck, J., Bianchi, S., & Sayer, L. (2002). The demography of fathers: What fathers do. In C. S. Tamis-LeMonda & N. Cabrera (Eds.), Handbook of father involvement: Multidisciplinary perspectives (pp. 63–90). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum; Hofferth,S., & Anderson, K. (2003); Clarke, L., Cooksey, E. C., & Verropoulou, G. (1998).) (The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children; U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services; Administration for Children and Families; Administration on Children, Youth, and Families; Children's Bureau; Office on Child Abuse and Neglect; Jeffrey Rosenberg and W. Bradford Wilcox; 2006.)

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SEXUAL BEHAVIOR (SB)

“According to the National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles, children from lone-parent households were more likely to have had intercourse before the age of 16 when compared with children from two-natural-parent households. Boys were 1.8 times as likely (42.3% versus 23%) and girls were 1.5 times as likely (36.5% versus 23.6%).”

“Analysis of data from the National Child Development Study (NCDS) indicated that women whose parents had divorced were twice as likely to become teenage mothers as those from intact families (25% versus 14%).”

“Analysis of data from the National Child Development Study (NCDS) indicated that women whose parents had divorced were twice as likely to become teenage mothers as those from intact families (25% versus 14%).

“Children aged 11 to 16 years were 25% more likely to have offended in the last year if they lived in lone-parent families.”

“Being raised by a single mother raises the risk of teen pregnancy, marrying with less than a high school degree, and forming a marriage where both partners have less than a high school degree.”

“A study using a sample of 1,409 rural southern adolescents (851 females and 558 males) aged 11 to 18 years, investigated the correlation between father absence and self-reported sexual activity. The results revealed that adolescents in father-absent homes were more likely to report being sexually active compared to adolescents living with their fathers. The analysis indicates that father absence can have a detrimental effect on adolescents’ lifestyle choices. This study also revealed a statistical significance between father absence and adolescent self-esteem.” (Hendricks, C. S., Cesario, S. K., Murdaugh, C., Gibbons, M. E., Servonsky, E. J., Bobadilla, R. V., Hendricks, D. L., Spencer-Morgan, B., & Tavakoli, A. (2005). The influence of father absence on the self-esteem and self-reported sexual activity of rural southern adolescents. ABNF Journal, 16, 124-131.) (Fatherhood Statistics Download, National Fatherhood Initiative, accessed June 23, 2014, http://www.fatherhood.org/statistics-on-father-absence-download)

“A study assessing the risk and protective factors associated with early sexual intercourse among low-income adolescents revealed that variables such as, age, gender, race, two-parent households, separated households, households where the mother formed a union, transitioning onto welfare, and delinquency increased the odds that adolescents were sexually active. The researchers found that maternal education and father involvement were the only protective factors for early sexual activity. In addition, the risk factors for early sexual contact were age, gender, race, two-parent households, separated households, and delinquency. Among all of the family processes, father involvement was the only factor that decreased the odds of engaging in sexual activity and none of the other family processes was found to be statistically significant.” (Jordahl, T., & Lohman, B.J. (2009). A bioecological analysis of risk and protective factors associated with early sexual intercourse of young adolescents. Children and Youth Services Review 31, 1272–1282.)
In a study exploring the perspectives of daughters who experienced father absence during their childhood and/or adolescent years, the researchers interviewed nine women aged 22-46. During the interviews, participants expressed difficulties forming healthy relationships with men and they associated these difficulties with their experiences of father absence. The interviewees also revealed a strong need for attention and affection from men which was also associated by the participants with the lack of affection received from their fathers. The desire for affection made these females more vulnerable to male attention which put them at higher risk of being exploited by any male who expressed any positive interest in them. Some of their poor relationship decisions were attributed to this vulnerability. One of the participants, when describing her first sexual relationship, stated that the sexual encounter with a friend’s father occurred because of her desire for affection and attention from a father figure:”

“My first sexual encounter... I felt that I had seduced a friend’s father ... And I thought, no I’m not punishing my father by sleeping with someone else’s father. Dad will never know this. Why did I do this?”


“In a phenomenological study of adolescent mothers’ experiences of having become sexually active, it was revealed that teen mothers’ experiences of living without a strong father figure were an important factor for having become sexually active. Based on the study findings, the inability to bond in satisfactory ways with a father or father figure may result in earlier onset of sexual activity and the higher risk of teen pregnancy.” (Burn, V. E. (2008). Living without a strong father figure: A context for teen mothers’ experience of having become sexually active. Issues in Mental Health Nursing, 29, 279–297.)

(Adolescent girls who reported higher levels of relationship quality with their fathers were less likely to have sex before age 16, compared with adolescent girls who reported lower levels of father-daughter relationship quality.” (Ikramullah, E., Manlove, J., Cui, C., & Moore, K. A. (2009). Parents matter: The

“Adolescent boys who had dinner with their family every day were less likely to have had sex before age 16, compared with those who report they eat dinner with their family less than five nights a week. 31 percent of teen boys who reported having dinner with their family every day were estimated to have had sex before age 16, compared with 37 percent of teen boys who reported that they had dinner with their family fewer than five days a week.” (Ikramullah, E., Manlove, J., Cui, C., & Moore, K. A. (2009). Parents matter: The role of parents in teens’ decisions about sex. Washington, D.C.: Child Trends.) (Fatherhood Statistics Download, National Fatherhood Initiative, accessed June 23, 2014, http://www.fatherhood.org/statistics-on-father-absence-download)


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“Separation or frequent changes increase a woman’s risk of early menarche, sexual activity and pregnancy. Women whose parents separated between birth and six years old experienced twice the risk of early menstruation, more than four times the risk of early sexual intercourse, and two and a half times higher risk of early pregnancy when compared to women in intact families. The longer a woman lived with both parents, the lower her risk of early reproductive development. Women who
experienced three or more changes in her family environment exhibited similar risks but were five times more likely to have an early pregnancy.” (Quinlan, Robert J. “Father absence, parental care, and female reproductive development.” Evolution and Human Behavior 24 (November 2003): 376-390.) (Fatherhood Statistics Download, National Fatherhood Initiative, accessed June 23, 2014, http://www.fatherhood.org/statistics-on-father-absence-download)


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“In the United States, the number of children fathered out of wedlock each year (approximately 1.3 million annually) now surpasses the number of children whose parents divorce (approximately 1 million annually.)”  (Wade F. Horn, et.al, “The Fatherhood Movement – A Call to Action,” Lexington Books, 1999)

In fact, 76 percent of all births to teenagers nationwide are now out of wedlock. In 15 of our nation’s largest cities, the teenage out-of-wedlock birth rate exceeded 90 percent.” (Wade F. Horn, et.al, “The Fatherhood Movement – A Call to Action,” Lexington Books, 1999)

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“GIRLS WANT TO TALK ABOUT SEX – WITH DAD?”
“Yes, I know, eeeew. Previous studies have concluded that girls who have open communication with their fathers – about everything – tend to have intercourse later in life and also have fewer sexual partners, both of which can be very good for sexual and mental health. But do they actually have to talk about sex to have this effect?” (Belinda Luscombe, “Girls Want to Talk About Sex – With Dad?” TIME, October 25, 2010, http://www.time.com/time/health/article/0,8599,2027377,00.html)

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“Just a few weeks ago, a new research review from the journal Pediatrics reaffirmed one area where father power shows up: their children’s decisions about sex.” (Carey Casey, “Being a Good Dad Helps Your Teen Make Wise Decisions About Sex.” National Center for Fathering, November 1, 2012, http://fathers.com/?s=sex+talk)

“The study noted two factors in fathers that increase the chances that teens will put off sexual activity: emotional closeness between the father and teenager, and the father’s disapproving attitudes toward teen sex.” (Carey Casey, “Being a Good Dad Helps Your Teen Make Wise Decisions About Sex.” National Center for Fathering, November 1, 2012, http://fathers.com/?s=sex+talk)

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“There was stronger and more consistent evidence of effects of father absence on early sexual activity and teenage pregnancy than on other behavioral or mental health problems or academic achievement.” (Ellis, Bruce J.; Bates, John E.; Dodge, Kenneth A.; Fergusson, David M., Horwood, L. John, Pettit, Gregory S., Woodward, Lianne, “Does Father Absence Place Daughters at Special Risk for Early Sexual Activity and Teenage Pregnancy?” Child Development, May/June 2003, Volume 74, Number 3, pages 801-821.)

“In conclusion, 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 risk factors were present. These findings may support social policies that encourage fathers to form and remain in families with their children, unless the marriage is highly conflictual or violent. (Armoto & Booth, 1997).” (Ellis, Bruce J.; Bates, John E.; Dodge, Kenneth A.; Fergusson, David M., Horwood, L. John, Pettit, Gregory S., Woodward, Lianne, “Does Father Absence Place Daughters at Special Risk for Early Sexual Activity and Teenage Pregnancy?” Child Development, May/June 2003, Volume 74, Number 3, pages 801-821.)

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“…fathers play a significant role in the development of their kids’ approach to sex…Studies in the review suggest that adolescents have less sex if their fathers talk to them more about sexual matters.” (Randy Dotinga, “Dad’s Advice Could Be Key to Teens’ Sexual Activity, Health Day – News for Healthier Living, October 18, 2012, http://consumer.healthday.com/Article.asp?AID=669647)

“Closeness with fathers at the beginning of a study was significantly associated with daughters delaying starting sex…A single study on father-son HIV prevention found that more communication about sex was linked to increased abstinence.” (Randy Dotinga, “Dad’s Advice Could Be Key to Teens’ Sexual Activity, Health Day – News for Healthier Living, October 18, 2012, http://consumer.healthday.com/Article.asp?AID=669647)

“Kids are more likely to have sex earlier if they have very strict or very lenient parents.” [Cheryl Somers, director of the school and community psychology program at Wayne State University] (Randy Dotinga, “Dad’s Advice Could Be Key to Teens’ Sexual Activity, Health Day – News for Healthier Living, October 18, 2012, http://consumer.healthday.com/Article.asp?AID=669647)

“What about the possibility that giving kids more information about sexuality will encourage them to have sex? ‘This is simply not supported by research…’ [Cheryl Somers, director of the school and community psychology program at Wayne State University] (Source: Vincent Guilamo-Ramos, Ph.D., M.P.H., professor, and co-director, Center for Latino Adolescent and Family Health, New York University, New York City; Cheryl L. Somers, Ph.D., associate professor, director, school and community psychology program, Wayne State University, Detroit; November 2012, Pediatrics.) (Randy Dotinga, “Dad’s Advice Could Be Key to Teens’ Sexual Activity, Health Day – News for Healthier Living, October 18, 2012, http://consumer.healthday.com/Article.asp?AID=669647)

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“‘Fathers who are moderately strict are those that have clear rules, and agreed-upon rational consequences that have been discussed with their teen children,’ Guilamo-Ramos said. Teens should understand their fathers’ expectations, and know the consequences of not following the rules. But fathers should also discuss with their teens the decisions teens can manage on their own and the areas fathers want input from their teens in making a rule or decision, he said.” (Karen Rowan, “Relationship with Dad Affects Teens’ Sexual Behavior”, My Health News Daily, October 18, 2012, http://news.yahoo.com/relationship-dad-affects-teens-sexual-behavior-184615819.html )

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“STUDY: FATHERS GREATLY AFFECT TEENS’ SEXUAL BEHAVIOR”
“… fathers' attitudes toward teen sex and the emotional closeness of their relationships with their teens have a sizeable influence on their teens' sexual behaviors, separate from the influence of moms, … dads' attitudes toward teen sexual behavior were linked to the age at which teens first had sex. Teens whose dads approved of adolescent sexual activity tended to start having sex earlier than teens whose dads did not approve … teens who were close to their fathers tended to start having sex later. According to study researcher Vincent Guilamo-Ramos, a professor of social work at New York University, the findings 'suggest that fathers may distinctly influence the sexual behavior of their adolescent children. Fathers may parent in ways that differ from mothers, and therefore represent an additional opportunity to support adolescent health and well-being.’”

“STUDY: PEOPLE WHO WAIT TO HAVE SEX ARE ‘LESS DISSATISFIED’ IN MARRIAGE”
“Psycho-socio-economically speaking, what’s the best age to start boning down?”

“PROBLEM: A lot of ‘marriage promotion’ and youth health movements are predicated on notions of how adolescent sexual gallivanting influences romantic/marital relationships as adults. The dominant notion is that starting earlier means problems later. But there’s more to it. Some of what we've heard from previous research: Having sex at younger ages is associated with earlier marriage and cohabitation, more divorce, and more extra-marital pregnancy.” (“Study: People Who Wait to Have Sex are ‘Less Dissatisfied’ in Marriage”, The Atlantic, October 18, 2012, http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2012/10/study-people-who-wait-to-have-sex-are-less-dissatisfied-in-marriage/263766/)

“METHODOLOGY: Dr. Paige Harden in the psychology department at the University of Texas at Austin used longitudinal data to compare the age when people first had sex with how their romantic relationships, and satisfaction with them (and, secondarily, other aspects of life), played out later in life.” (“Study: People Who Wait to Have Sex are ‘Less Dissatisfied’ in Marriage”, The

“RESULTS (Among many, a highlight): As adults, the people who didn’t have sex until they were at least 20:”
- “Earned more money;”
- “Got more formal education;”
- “Had fewer romantic partners;”
- “Were less likely to be married.”

“If they were married, though, they were less likely to be dissatisfied with their relationship.”


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“71% of pregnant teenagers lack a father.” [U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services press release, Friday, March 26, 1999.] (Source: March 26, 1999 where-daddy.com/fathers/fatherlessness.htm)

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“Girls raised in single mother homes are more likely to give birth while single and are more likely to divorce and remarry. Girls whose fathers depart before their fifth birthday are especially likely to have permissive

“Black married fathers behave as well as any others, Mincy said, but only about 11 percent of black fathers are married to their children’s mother one year after the children’s birth. With 70 percent of black babies now out born out of wedlock, Mincy said, the likelihood is low that their fathers will be involved in their education.” (“The Importance of Father”, Reprinted from Newsmax.com Wires, Tuesday, May 1, 2001, Copyright 2001 United Press International.)

“In a sample of young women who had had intercourse before age 18, those from lone-parent households were 1.4 times as likely to have had a sexually transmitted infection by age 24 (14.3% versus 10.2%). Controlling for other factors slightly increased the comparative odds to 1.53.” (Source: Wellings, K., Nanchanahal, K., MacDowall, W., et al. (2001), ‘Sexual behaviour in Britain: Early heterosexual experience’, pp. 1843–50.) (Rebecca O’Neill, “Experiments in Living: the Fatherless Family,” The Institute for the Study of Civil Society (CIVITAS), September 2002. www.civitas.org.uk.)


“Having loving parents you can talk to can help reduce teen pregnancy. Fathers [especially] are very influential in the decision to have sex.” (Survey of Teenage girls conducted by Mark Clements Research, as cited in Parade, February 2, 1997). (Wade F. Horn, Ph.D. and Tom Sylvester, “Father Facts – Fourth Edition,” National Fatherhood Initiative, 2002 National Fatherhood Initiative.— p138)
“Johns Hopkins University researchers found that ‘young, white teenage girls living in fatherless families ... were 60 percent more likely to have premarital intercourse than those living in two-parent homes.’” (Source: Kathleen Fury, “Sex and the American Teenager,” Ladies’ Home Journal, March 1986: 60.) (Josh D. McDowell, “The Father Connection,” Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, p1996. – p5)

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“Most teens say that it would be easier for them to postpone sexual activity and avoid teen pregnancy if they felt they could have more open and honest discussions about such topics. That’s according to a recent survey by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy in Washington, D.C.” (Cheryl Allen, “Influence On Your Adolescent?” Gannett News Service, The Marion Star, November 29, 2003, www.marionstar.com/news/stories/20031129/localnews/734042.html)

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“A study published in Family Planning Perspectives last summer found that parents do have a powerful influence over their teens’ sexual behavior.” “Speaking of Sex,” www.abstinence.net/library/index.php?entryid=363.

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“PROFILE: NEW STUDY SHOWS A FATHER’S ABSENCE DURING HIS DAUGHTER’S CHILDHOOD CAN AFFECT HER TEEN-AGE SEXUAL BEHAVIOR”

“Research on teen-age pregnancy has often concluded that behaviors like early sex or pregnancy among girls whose fathers aren’t in the home occurred because the single mother was poor, the family lived in an unsafe neighborhood or the daughter wasn't being properly supervised.” (“Profile: New study shows a father’s absence during his daughter’s childhood can affect her teen-age sexual behavior,” All Things Considered from NPR News, © 1990-2003 National Public Radio®. May 19, 2003. www.nl.newsbank.com/nl-search/we)

“Bruce Ellis is a psychologist at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch, New Zealand. Ellis isn't saying poverty didn't matter, but his study has suggested a father's absence has an impact on girls' sexual behavior regardless of their economic background.” (“Profile: New study shows a father’s absence during his daughter’s childhood can affect her teen-age sexual behavior,” All Things Considered from NPR News, © 1990-2003 National Public Radio®. May 19, 2003. www.nl.newsbank.com/nl-search/we)
“It turned out that when fathers left home before their daughters were six, their daughters were more likely to become pregnant as teen-agers. Researcher Bonnie Barber says that’s another reason this study’s results are so important.” (“Profile: New study shows a father’s absence during his daughter’s childhood can affect her teen-age sexual behavior,” All Things Considered from NPR News, © 1990-2003 National Public Radio®. May 19, 2003. www.nl.newsbank.com/nl-search/we)

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“FATHER’S ABSENCE INCREASES DAUGHTER’S RISK OF TEEN PREGNANCY”
“The researchers found that father absence places daughters at special risk for early sexual activity and teenage pregnancy. While the researchers said these findings need to be replicated in non-Western, ‘the striking similarity in results across the United States and New Zealand samples underscores the robustness and generalizability of the findings,’ Ellis says.” (“Father’s Absence Increases Daughter’s Risk of Teen Pregnancy,” www.newswise.com/articles/2003/5/DAUGHTER.HBN.html.)

“Ellis and colleagues noted that girls whose fathers left the family earlier in their lives had the highest rates of both early sexual activity and adolescent pregnancy, followed by those whose fathers left at a later age, followed by girls whose fathers were present.” (“Father’s Absence Increases Daughter’s Risk of Teen Pregnancy,” www.newswise.com/articles/2003/5/DAUGHTER.HBN.html.)

“Even when the researchers took into account other factors that could have contributed to early sexual activity and pregnancy, such as behavioral problems and life adversity, early father-absent girls were still about five times more likely in the United States and three times more likely in New Zealand to experience an adolescent pregnancy than were father-present girls.” (“Father’s Absence Increases Daughter’s Risk of Teen Pregnancy,” www.newswise.com/articles/2003/5/DAUGHTER.HBN.html.)

“Girls who grew up in otherwise socially and economically privileged homes were not protected. ‘Father absence was so fundamentally linked to teenage pregnancy that its effects were largely undiminished by such factors as whether girls were rich or poor, black or white, New Zealand Maori or European, cooperative or defiant in temperament, born to adult or teenage mothers, raised in safe or violent neighborhoods, subjected to few or many stressful life events, reared by supportive or rejecting parents,
exposed to functional or dysfunctional marriages, or closely or loosely monitored by parents,' Ellis says.” (“Father’s Absence Increases Daughter’s Risk of Teen Pregnancy,” www.newswise.com/articles/2003/5/DAUGHTER.HBN.html.)

“Parental Involvement: The survey found that teens who felt ‘highly connected’ to their parents were more likely to put off having sex. In particular, teens who reported having a good relationship with their mothers were more likely to delay sexual activity.” (Source: Research from the “National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health,” “Add Health’ Survey Finds Better Parental Communication Can Lower Teens’ Chances of Having Sex, Becoming Pregnant,” Kaiser Daily Reproductive Health Report, Wednesday, September 12, 2001 www.kaisernetwork.org/daily_reports/print_report.cfm?DR_ID=6904&dr_cat=2.)

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“CHILDREN WITHOUT FATHERS ARE:”


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PARENTS ARE MOST INFLUENTIAL


“When it comes to their decisions about sex, parents have not lost their children to the influence of peers and popular culture. Teens say that parents influence their decisions about sex more than anyone else. Nearly half (45%) say parents are most influential - less than a third (31%) say friends are most influential. For young teens (aged 12-14), parental influence is even greater. Over half of young adolescents (53%) say parents most influence their decisions about sex, while 24% cite friends as most influential.”

“Moreover, while the overwhelming majority of young people (88%) say it would be much easier for teens to postpone sexual activity and avoid teen pregnancy if they were able to have more open, honest conversations about these topics with their parents, nearly one in four (23%) say they have never discussed sex, contraception, or pregnancy with their parents. Parents might also be interested in noting that the percentage of teens who believe it would be much easier for teens to postpone sex and avoid teen pregnancy if they could have more open, honest conversations about these topics with their parents is nearly one in four (23%).”

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pregnancy if they were able to have open, honest conversations about these topics with their parents increased nearly 20% between 2002 and 2003 (from 69% in 2002 to 88% in 2003).”

“About one in five (19%) young adolescents say that in the past six months alone they have been at a party with boys and girls where there were no adults in the house.”

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<th>Question #1</th>
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<td>“When it comes to teens’ your decisions about sex, who is most influential?”</td>
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<th>Percentage of teens and adults who answered</th>
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<td>Parents</td>
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<td>Adults</td>
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<th>Question #1, continued</th>
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<td><strong>Percentage of teens who answered, by gender and age</strong></td>
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<th>Parents</th>
<th>Friends</th>
<th>Teachers and Sex Educators</th>
<th>Religious Leaders</th>
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<th>Myself</th>
<th>Siblings</th>
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<th>Don’t Know/Refused</th>
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Question #2

“Do you agree or disagree with this statement: ‘It would be much easier for teens to postpone sexual activity and avoid teen pregnancy if they were able to have more open, honest conversations about these topics with their parents.’?”

Percentage of teens who answered

2003

- Agree: 12%
- Disagree: 88%

2002*

- Agree: 2%
- Disagree: 29%
- Don’t Know/Refused: 69%

*Data for 2002 includes additional categories.
Question #3

“The last time you discussed sex, birth control, or pregnancy with your parents, who started the conversation?”

Percentage of teens who answered, by age.

Question #4

“Among the following, when it comes to healthy, responsible relationships, who is your role model?”

Percentage of teens who answered

- Your Parents: 59
- Your Friend’s Parents: 4
- Your Friends: 12
- Celebrities: 2
- Other Family Members: 5
- Sibling: 3
- Religious Leader: 1
- Myself: 1
- Someone Else: 1
- You Don’t Have Any: 11
- Don’t Know/Refused: 1

Question #5

"In the past six months, have you been at a party with boys and girls where there are no adults in the house?

Percentage of teens who answered yes, by age.

57%
42%
19%

SELF-ESTEEM (SE)

“After controlling for other demographic factors, children in lone-parent households are 2.5 times as likely to be sometimes or often unhappy. They are 3.3 times as likely to score poorly on measures of self-esteem.” (Cockett and Tripp (1994), The Exeter Family Study: Family Breakdown and Its Impact on Children, p. 19.)

“Even from birth, children who have an involved father are more likely to be emotionally secure, be confident to explore their surroundings, and, as they grow older, have better social connections with peers. These children also are less likely to get in trouble at home, school, or in the neighborhood. Infants who receive high levels of affection from their fathers (e.g., babies whose fathers respond quickly to their cries and who play together) are more securely attached; that is, they can explore their environment comfortably when a parent is nearby and can readily accept comfort from their parent after a brief separation. A number of studies suggest they also are more sociable and popular with other children throughout early childhood.” (Pruett, K. (2000). Father-need. New York, NY: Broadway Books; Sternberg, K. J. (1997). Lamb, M. E. (2002). Infant-father attachments and their impact on child development. In C. S. Tamis-LeMonda & N. Cabrera (Eds.), Handbook of father involvement: Multidisciplinary perspectives (pp. 93–118).)
(The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children; U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services; Administration for Children and Families; Administration on Children, Youth, and Families; Children’s Bureau; Office on Child Abuse and Neglect; Jeffrey Rosenberg and W. Bradford Wilcox; 2006.)

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

“In addition, numerous studies have found that children who live with their fathers are more likely to have good physical and emotional health, to

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“Adults who had higher levels of support from their fathers experience lower levels of psychological distress. Supportive, nurturing and loving behavior from a father is believed to help develop a child’s self-worth and ability to cope with difficult situations, thereby buffering against later anxiety or depression.” (“Flouri, E. & Buchanan, A. (2003). What predicts fathers’ involvement with their children? A prospective study of intact families. British Journal of Developmental Psychology, 21, 81-97). (“The Difference a Dad Makes – What Does International Research Say?” Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports, Singapore, November 2009)


“Fathers experiencing psychological distress or who have low self-esteem are more likely to abuse their children. This may be due to the attempt to seek diversion from their problems or to dominate with the intention to derive a perverse sense of personal power.” (Figueroed, A.J., & McCloskey, L.A. (1993). Sex, money, and paternity: The evolutionary psychology of domestic violence. Ethology and Sociobiology,14(6), 353-379). (“The Difference a Dad Makes – What Does International Research Say?” Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports, Singapore, November 2009)

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“Parents were asked what they think their teenager would say is the most important problem he or she faces. Forty-five percent of parents cite social pressures as their teens’ biggest concern. Half as many parents as teens
(11 percent of parents compared with 24 percent of teens) cite drugs, including alcohol and tobacco, as their teens’ most important problem.”

("CASA National Survey of American Attitudes on Substance Abuse XII: Teens and Parents", The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, August, 2007)

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“Only one in five young adults ages 12-22 has a sense of purpose in life.”

“25% of young adults are at risk of not achieving productive adulthood.

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“In general, girls who have a warm relationship with their father and feel accepted by them are more likely to feel comfortable and confident when relating to the opposite sex. . . . During the teen years and later, a girl who has not had a rewarding relationship with her father is apt to feel insecure around males. She may feel unattractive as a woman, doubt that any man could love her for herself, and distrust men in general.” (Source: Richard Warshack, The Custody Revolution, p. 44 - 45.) (From “Male Nurturing Is There Such a Thing? What, and Does It Matter?” book, wheres-daddy.com/books/malenurturing.htm.)

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“A study of 90 Oklahoma college students found that a strong attachment to fathers had a larger impact on young adult self-esteem than attachment


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“Many studies confirm the positive impact of fathers who spend time with their children. Children with involved fathers are: More likely to have higher self-esteem and grade point averages”
(www.fathers.com/1999gallup/fathertime, “The positive impact of father-time”)

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“Longitudinal studies have found that children who have a strong attachment and are consistently involved with their fathers have better self esteem, a greater sense of competence, and better intellectual development and academic success.” (Linda C. Passmark and Edd D. Rhoades, “Fathers are Critical to Child Well-Being,” Maternal and Child Health Service, Oklahoma State Department of Health, www.health.state.ok.us/program/hpromo/medj/fjournal.htm.)

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“The time a father spends with his children is important for at least three reasons.”
1. “…enables a father to get to know and to be known by his child.”

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“And third, as the quotation above illustrates, children often do see time as an indicator of a parent’s love for them.”  (Jeffrey Rosenberg & W. Bradford Wilcox, “The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children”, U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services; Administration for Children and Families; Administration on Children, Youth, and Families; Children’s Bureau; Office on Child Abuse and Neglect; Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2006, https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/append_e_1.cfm)

“In other words, when it comes to father-child fun, active pursuits like tossing the football, playing basketball, hiking, or going to the library are more valuable than spending time in passive activities such as watching television—for their relationship and for their child’s emotional wellbeing, social development, and physical fitness.”  (Jeffrey Rosenberg & W. Bradford Wilcox, “The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children”, U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services; Administration for Children and Families; Administration on Children, Youth, and Families; Children’s Bureau; Office on Child Abuse and Neglect; Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2006, https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/append_e_1.cfm)

“Fathers should engage in productive activities with their children such as household chores, washing dishes after dinner, or cleaning up the backyard. Research consistently shows that such shared activities promote a sense of responsibility and significance in children that is, in turn, linked to greater self-esteem, academic and occupational achievement, psychological well-being, and civic engagement later in life. (Jeffrey Rosenberg & W. Bradford Wilcox, “The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children”, U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services; Administration for Children and Families; Administration on Children, Youth, and Families; Children’s Bureau; Office on Child Abuse and Neglect; Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2006, https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/append_e_1.cfm)

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“WHAT DO WE MEAN BY FATHER INVOLVEMENT?”
“Most researchers study father involvement by focusing on three key components:
• “Engagement, including a father’s direct interaction with his child through caregiving and shared activities”
• “Accessibility, concerning the father’s availability for interaction whether or not direct interaction is occurring; and”
• **Responsibility**, which is the role the father plays in meeting the child’s needs for guardianship and care.


“In the late 1990s, mothers were available to their children about 1.3 times more than fathers, interacting on weekdays about 1.5 more, but over 1.25 times more on weekends.” (Yeung, W.J., Sandberg, J.F., Davis-Kean, P., & Hofferth, S.L. (2001). Children’s time with fathers in intact families. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 63, 136-154) ("The Difference a Dad Makes – What Does International Research Say?" Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports, Singapore, November 2009)

“A comparison of mothers’ time with children between 1965 and 1998 found that it has remained fairly constant, suggesting that an increase in fathers’ involvement appears to be the main reason for narrowing gaps between mothers’ and fathers’ involvement.” (Bianchi, Suzanne M. (2000). “Maternal employment and time with children: Dramatic change or surprising continuity?” *Demography* 37 (November): 139-154). ("The Difference a Dad Makes – What Does International Research Say?" Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports, Singapore, November 2009)

“Yet, traditional male roles appear to persist in households and in the type of relationship most children have with their fathers. Another U.S. study of intact families found that the largest portion of direct engagement time between fathers and children is on play and leisure, activities, including

“The absolute amount of time that a father spends with his child decreases as the child’s age increases, while the type of activities engaged in also changes. For example, the time spent on active play such as outdoor activities and sports declines as the child grows older, while the time spent on passive leisure activities such as watching television or videos increase.” (“The Difference a Dad Makes – What Does International Research Say?” Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports, Singapore, November 2009)

“**Amount of time spent with Dad is important**”


“**Factors influencing fathers’ involvement**”


“The following factors are found to influence a father’s involvement:”

- **“A biological tie to the child”**
  “Compared with resident biological fathers, stepfathers report higher levels of conduct problems and hyperactivity in their stepchildren, even if levels of involvement are similar.” (Flouri, E. & Buchanan, A. (2003). What predicts fathers’ involvement with their children? A prospective study of intact families. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 21, 81-97). (“The Difference a Dad Makes –
“Living under one roof”

“Definition of an ‘active father’”
“Research points to two distinct models of fatherhood: one views good fathers as ‘good providers’, while the other emphasizes engagement in nurturing children. Men who adopt the first model spend more time at work with the birth of each additional child, while men who adopt the second model show the opposite pattern – additional children correlate with reduced hours of work.” (Kaufman, G. & Uhlenberg, P. (2000). The Influence of parenthood on the work effort of married men and women. *Social Forces*, 78 (3), 931-949). (“The Difference a Dad Makes – What Does International Research Say?” Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports, Singapore, November 2009)

“When he first gets involved”

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“The number of fathers who are at home with their children for any reason has nearly doubled since 1989, when 1.1 million were in this category. (1989 is the first year for which reliable data on stay-at-home fathers is available) It reached its highest point—2.2 million—in 2010…” (Gretchen Livingston, “Growing Number of Dads Home with the Kids”, Pew Research, June 5, 2014, http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2014/06/05/growing-number-of-dads-home-with-the-kids/)
“…fathers represent a growing share of all at-home parents – 16% in 2012, up from 10% in 1989. Roughly a quarter of these stay-at-home fathers (23%) report that they are home mainly because they cannot find a job. Nearly as many (21%) say the main reason they are home is to care for their home or family. This represents a fourfold increase from 1989, when only 5% of stay-at-home fathers said they were home primarily to care for family.” (Gretchen Livingston, “Growing Number of Dads Home with the Kids”, Pew Research, June 5, 2014, http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2014/06/05/growing-number-of-dads-home-with-the-kids/)

“Still, the largest share of stay-at-home fathers (35%) is at home due to illness or disability. This is in sharp contrast to stay-at-home mothers, most of whom (73%) report that they are home specifically to care for their home or family (The number of fathers at home specifically to care for home and family is 425,000, while the number of mothers at home specifically to care for home and family—7.6 million—is higher by a factor of about 18.) just 11% are home due to their own illness or disability.” (Gretchen Livingston, “Growing Number of Dads Home with the Kids”, Pew Research, June 5, 2014, http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2014/06/05/growing-number-of-dads-home-with-the-kids/)

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“Every year we conduct essay contests in different areas of the country, where thousands of children write about ‘What my father means to me.’ We always get priceless stories and comments, expressed as only kids can. The entire experience is truly heartwarming.” (Carey Casey, “Kids Say THIS is the Best Way to Be a Better Dad”, National Center for Fathering, http://www.fathers.com/s12-championship-fathering/c52-coaching/kids-say-this-is-the-best-way-to-be-a-better-dad/)

“Typically, the kids describe some of the fun things they do with their dad, or how he demonstrates his love and dedication. Then, toward the end, they’ll add something like this: ‘If there’s one thing I wish was different with my dad, it would be that we spend more time together.’ Or they’ll say, ‘I wish I could do more things with him.”’ (Carey Casey, “Kids Say THIS is the Best Way to Be a Better Dad”, National Center for Fathering, http://www.fathers.com/s12-championship-fathering/c52-coaching/kids-say-this-is-the-best-way-to-be-a-better-dad/)

“Clark Smith, one of our bloggers and a good friend of the Center, provided this word picture: ‘Fathering is a pasture fenced with time. The size of the fence determines the size of the relationship. Increase your parenting time even a little and the relationship grows greatly. Nip a foot or two out of the fence and watch the pasture shrink.’” (Carey Casey, “Kids Say THIS is the Best Way...

“That’s another way of saying that time is a basic need for any good relationship. The amount of great activities and conversations and memories you share is directly related to how much time you spend together. Time with your children may or may not have immediate rewards for you, but you’re building a legacy that will likely last for generations, minute-by-minute and hour-by-hour.” (Carey Casey, “Kids Say THIS is the Best Way to Be a Better Dad”, National Center for Fathering, http://www.fathers.com/s12-championship-fathering/c52-coaching/kids-say-this-is-the-best-way-to-be-a-better-dad/)

“Build time with your kids into your schedule, so it doesn’t get squeezed out when other things come along. Plan those daddy-daughter dates and outings with your son. Get into routines that naturally bring you together over and over. They need your undivided attention.” (Carey Casey, “Kids Say THIS is the Best Way to Be a Better Dad”, National Center for Fathering, http://www.fathers.com/s12-championship-fathering/c52-coaching/kids-say-this-is-the-best-way-to-be-a-better-dad/)

“Also, be intentional about one-on-one time with your kids. Schedule regular time alone with each one. Treat him to frozen yogurt, practice volleyball with her, or just go for a walk. Mix in a daddy-daughter date or an overnight trip every now and then. Carve out blocks of time regularly, and then make sure you’re focused on your child and nothing else.” (Carey Casey, “Kids Say THIS is the Best Way to Be a Better Dad”, National Center for Fathering, http://www.fathers.com/s12-championship-fathering/c52-coaching/kids-say-this-is-the-best-way-to-be-a-better-dad/)

“Dad, make sure that if your child ever writes something about you, his or her essay doesn’t include the words, ‘I wish my dad could have spent more time with me.’” (Carey Casey, “Kids Say THIS is the Best Way to Be a Better Dad”, National Center for Fathering, http://www.fathers.com/s12-championship-fathering/c52-coaching/kids-say-this-is-the-best-way-to-be-a-better-dad/)

“Action Points for Dads on the Journey”

• “Do your children ever ask, ‘Daddy, can we …?’ Or, ‘Dad, do you want to …?’ Savor those opportunities, and make the most of them.”
• “Make the most of mealtimes, bedtimes, doing dishes, raking leaves or those minutes riding in the car with your kids. Have some stories, jokes or other interesting things to contribute to the time together.”
• “Invest some time to *watch* your child during a practice or rehearsal. (Your presence really does make a difference.) Afterward, ask questions about some things you noticed.”

• “If you can’t be with your child every day, send short texts or emails with words of encouragement or updates on what’s happening, or what you’re looking forward to doing with him soon.”

• “Sit with your child and let her talk about her day, without any interruptions, for five or ten minutes. Just listen. Then be ready to share if she asks about your day.” (Carey Casey, “Kids Say THIS is the Best Way to Be a Better Dad”, National Center for Fathering, http://www.fathers.com/s12-championship-fathering/c52-coaching/kids-say-this-is-the-best-way-to-be-a-better-dad/)

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“I once held a one-week conference at one of the largest and wealthiest evangelical churches in the U.S. I had counseling appointments with forty-two junior and senior high school students. Their number one question was, ‘Josh, what can I do about my dad?’ When I asked what they meant, they made statements like, ‘He never has time for me,’ ‘He never takes me anywhere,’ ‘He never talks to me,’ and ‘He never does anything with me.’ I asked all forty-two kids, ‘Can you talk with your father?’ Only one said yes.” (Josh D. McDowell, “The Father Connection,” Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, p1996. Source: Compiled from figures published by the Children’s Defense Fund and the book, 13th Generation, by Neil Howe and Bill Strauss, and a Fortune Magazine special report, “Children in Crisis: The Struggle to Save America’s Kids,” August 10, 1992. – pg.46)

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“More than 40% of American adults have no weekly contact with their children.” (Source: The Heart of a Father)

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“Nonetheless, children who spend a substantial amount of time with their fathers benefit greatly. Research finds that children whose fathers assumed 40 percent or more of the family’s care tasks had greater positive outcomes (e.g., better performance on tests and cognitive achievement), than those children whose fathers were less involved.” (Source: Le Menestrel, S. (2000). *What do fathers contribute to children’s well-being?* Washington, DC: Child Trends.) (“Charting Parenthood: A Statistical Portrait of Fathers and Mothers in America,” Produced by Child Trends, http://fatherhood.hhs.gov/charting02)
“TOP TEN FATHER FACTS ON TIME WITH DAD”


4. “43 percent of first marriages dissolve within fifteen years; about 60 percent of divorcing couples have children; and approximately one million children each year experience the divorce of their parents.” (Wade F. Horn, Ph.D. and Tom Sylvester, “Father Facts – Fourth Edition,” National Fatherhood Initiative, 2002 National Fatherhood Initiative. – p15)


6. “Fathers who live with their children are more likely to have a close, enduring relationships with their children than those who do not. The best predictor of father presence is marital status. Compared to children born within marriage, children born to cohabiting parents are three times as likely to experience father absence, and children born to unmarried, non-cohabiting parents are four times as likely to live in a father-absent home.” (Wade F. Horn, Ph.D. and Tom Sylvester, “Father Facts – Fourth Edition,” National Fatherhood Initiative, 2002 National Fatherhood Initiative. – p15)

7. “About 40 percent of children in father-absent homes have not seen their father at all during the past year; 26 percent of absent fathers live in a different state than their children; and 50 percent of children living absent their father have never set foot in their father’s home.” (Wade F. Horn, Ph.D. and Tom Sylvester, “Father Facts – Fourth Edition,” National Fatherhood Initiative, 2002 National Fatherhood Initiative. – p15)
8. “Children who live absent their biological fathers are, on average, at least two to three times more likely to be poor, to use drugs, to experience educational, health, emotional and behavioral problems, to be victims of child abuse, and to engage in criminal behavior than those who live with their married, biological (or adoptive) parents.” (Wade F. Horn, Ph.D. and Tom Sylvester, “Father Facts – Fourth Edition,” National Fatherhood Initiative, 2002 National Fatherhood Initiative. – p15)


10. “Children with involved, loving fathers are significantly more likely to do well in school, have healthy self-esteem, exhibit empathy and pro-social behavior, and avoid high-risk behaviors such as drug use, truancy, and criminal activity compared to children who have uninvolved fathers.” (Wade F. Horn, Ph.D. and Tom Sylvester, “Father Facts – Fourth Edition,” National Fatherhood Initiative, 2002 National Fatherhood Initiative. – p15)

“Late-Breaking Father Facts”
“Importance of Father Love for Child Well-Being”


President George W. Bush: “Over the past four decades, fatherlessness has emerged as one of our greatest social problems. We know that children who grow up with absent fathers can suffer lasting damage. They are more likely to end up in poverty or dropout of school, become addicted to drugs, have a child out of wedlock or end up in prison. Fatherlessness is not the only cause of these things, but our nation must recognize it is an important fact.” (President George W. Bush, speaking at National Fatherhood Initiative’s 4th Annual National Summit on Fatherhood in Washington, D.C., June 7, 2001.) (Wade F. Horn, Ph.D. and Tom Sylvester, “Father Facts – Fourth Edition,” National Fatherhood Initiative, 2002 National Fatherhood Initiative.) (Rohner, Ronald P., and Robert A. Veneziano. “The Importance of Father Love: History and Contemporary Evidence.” Review of General Psychology 5.4 (December 2001): 382-405. – p17)

President Bill Clinton: “The single biggest social problem in our society may be the growing absence of father’s from their children’s homes because it contributes to so many other social problems…Without a father to help guide, without a father to care, without a father to teach boys to be
men, and to teach girls to expect respect from men, it’s harder.” (Former President Bill Clinton, from speech at the University of Texas, Austin, October 16, 1995.) (Wade F. Horn, Ph.D. and Tom Sylvester, “Father Facts – Fourth Edition,” National Fatherhood Initiative, 2002 National Fatherhood Initiative.– p17)


“In a telephone survey of 200 12- to 15-year-olds and 200 parents, 21% of the children reported their top concern was not having enough time with their parents, whereas only 8% of parents said their top concern was not having enough time with their children.” (Source: YMCA-2000 'Strong Families’ Survey. Telephone survey conducted December 7-9, 1999 by Global Strategy Group of New York City for the YMCA of the USA.) (Wade F. Horn, Ph.D. and Tom Sylvester, “Father Facts – Fourth Edition,” National Fatherhood Initiative, 2002 National Fatherhood Initiative.– p95)

“68% of young people ages 12-17 report that they get a hug or kiss from a parent ‘every day’ or ‘almost every day.’ 51% say they get help or advice from parents with homework or school projects ‘every day’ or ‘almost every day’.” (Source: Farkas, Steve et.al. Kids These Days: What Americans Really Think About the Next Generation. Survey. Public Agenda. Ronald McDonald House Charities and the Advertising Council. June 1997.) (Wade F. Horn, Ph.D. and Tom Sylvester, “Father Facts – Fourth Edition,” National Fatherhood Initiative, 2002 National Fatherhood Initiative.– p97)

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“You want to be the kind of father whose children feel secure and confident, who feel loved and accepted.” (Josh D. McDowell, “The Father Connection,” Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, p1996. – p14)

“You want to be the kind of father whose children save sex for marriage, and remain faithful to their husbands and wives in marriage.” (Josh D. McDowell, “The Father Connection,” Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, p1996. – p14)

“You want to be the kind of father whose sons and daughters develop a reputation as men and women of integrity—honest, ethical, and hardworking.” (Josh D. McDowell, “The Father Connection,” Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, p1996. – p14)


“You want to be the kind of father whose kids can say no to drug and alcohol abuse and risky behavior.” (Josh D. McDowell, “The Father Connection,” Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, p1996. – p15)

“You want to be the kind of father whose adult daughter sends a card just to say, ‘Dad, thanks for being there when I need you,’ the kind of father whose son asks you to be the best man at his wedding.” (Josh D. McDowell, “The Father Connection,” Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, p1996. – p15)

“You want to be the kind of father whose son can come and sit down beside him and say, ‘Dad, I’m really struggling with some things right now, and I need your advice.’” (Josh D. McDowell, “The Father Connection,” Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, p1996. – p15)

“You want to be the kind of father whose children quickly admit their sins or mistakes, who are forgiving and patient with others, and who enjoy a healthy sense of self-esteem and self-confidence.” (Josh D. McDowell, “The Father Connection,” Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, p1996. – p15)

“You want to be the kind of father who might overhear his daughter telling a friend, ‘I want to marry someone who’s sort of like my daddy, someone I can admire and respect.’” (Josh D. McDowell, “The Father Connection,” Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, p1996. – p15)

“I once held a one-week conference at one of the largest and wealthiest evangelical churches in the U.S. I had counseling appointments with forty-two junior and senior high school students. Their number one question was, ‘Josh, what can I do about my dad?’ When I asked what they meant, they made statements like, ‘He never has time for me,’ ‘He never takes me anywhere,’ ‘He never talks to me,’ and ‘He never does anything with me.’ I asked all forty-two kids, ‘Can you talk with your father?’ Only one said yes.”
“The communication process between you and your son or daughter is essential if your children are to profit from you in their pilgrimage toward healthy sexual attitudes and behavior.” (Josh D. McDowell, “The Father Connection,” Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, p1996. – p46)

“In the past several decades, the United States has achieved the dubious distinction of becoming the world leader in fatherless families. Currently, 34% of American children live without their biological father. When did this trend start, and what does it bode for our kids?” (Carey Roberts, “Yes, Fathers are Essential,” copyright ©2004 Father.Mag.com http://www.renewamerica.us/columns/roberts/040615)

“Many studies confirm the positive impact of fathers who spend time with their children. Children with involved fathers are:”
1. “More confident and less anxious in unfamiliar settings;”
2. “Better able to gain a sense of interdependence;”
3. “More likely to mature into compassionate adults;”
4. “More likely to have higher self-esteem;”
5. “Higher grade point averages;”
6. “More sociable.”
(National Center for Fathering survey data of 2,066 fathers, Father, Fathering in America.)

“AT&T was in the throes of dividing its corporation into smaller entities and they took a survey with all their management to find out what was causing them the most stress. AT&T knew for sure it would come from all the pressures and stress from the job and corporate breakup. They were wrong. The overwhelming response from the corporate executives was that their children and family caused them more stress and worry than their job.” (“Why Grade ‘A’ Execs Get an ‘F’ As Parents” by Brian O’Reilly, Fortune, January 1, 1990. – p36)
“Six years ago when AT&T was in the throes of divesting its operating companies, Ma Bell conducted a survey of its managers and top executives and discovered that their kids caused these employees more stress and worry than anything else, including their careers.” ("Why Grade ‘A’ Execs Get an ‘F’ As Parents" by Brian O’Reilly, Fortune, January 1, 1990. – p36)

“Medsat Systems, an Ann Arbor, Michigan, healthcare information firm, discovered than some 36% of the children of executives undergo outpatient treatment for psychiatric or drug abuse problems every year, vs. 15% of the children of nonexecutives in the same companies. ‘They are so accustomed to functioning at a high level of control at the office that when they get home, they try to exert the same kind of control,’ says Susan Davies-Bloom, a Connecticut family therapist who treats senior managers.” ("Why Grade ‘A’ Execs Get an ‘F’ As Parents" by Brian O’Reilly, Fortune, January 1, 1990. – p37)

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“The president of Tightrope Communications was having lunch with the president and CEO of a billion dollar corporation. The question was asked, “What causes you the most stress in your life?” The Chief Executive Officer explained that it has nothing to do with work but has all to do with my children. I find myself asking the same questions day after day, “Do I have what it takes to be a good parent?” (Personal conversation with Josh. D. McDowell)

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“DADS HELP TEENS AVOID DRUGS, SURVEY SAYS”
“Washington: Okay dads, listen up. The key to winning the war on drugs rests not with police or laws, but with you.” (Source: Akron Beacon Journal, Aug. 31, 1999, pg. A1)

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“Studies have conclusively shown that children who receive higher levels of attention and interaction with their fathers are healthier and better adjusted than children without fathers or with dads who are uninvolved. According to a 1990 study, children with highly involved fathers are:
• “more confident and less anxious when placed in unfamiliar settings,
• “better able to deal with frustration,”
• “better able to adapt to changing circumstances and breaks from their routine, and”

• better able to gain a sense of independence and an identity outside the mother/child relationship.”

(Source: Carla Cantor, "The Father Factor," Working Mother (June 1991), 39-43. This article summarizes numerous studies on father involvement.) (“Importance of Fathers,” www.fathers.com/help/importance.html.)

“A Harvard university study spanning twenty-six years adds several more benefits for children of involved fathers:”
• “They are more likely to mature into compassionate adults.”
• “They are more likely to have higher self-esteem and grade point averages.”
• “They are more sociable.”


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

• “Half of the mother-only families live below the poverty line.” (“Importance of Fathers,” www.fathers.com/help/importance.html.)

• “The income of mothers in single-parent families one year after divorce is 67% of what it was prior to divorce, while income of divorced men falls to around 90% of pre-divorce income.” (“Importance of Fathers,” www.fathers.com/help/importance.html.)

• “Mother-only families move more frequently than two-parent families, subjecting the family to more adjustment stress and less stability in neighborhood relationships.” (“Importance of Fathers,” www.fathers.com/help/importance.html.)
• “Adolescents from mother-only families are more likely to be sexually active, and daughters are more likely to become single-parent mothers.” (“Importance of Fathers,” www.fathers.com/help/importance.html.)

• “Adolescents report receiving less help with homework and make decisions under less parental supervision in general than do adolescents from two-parent families.” (“Importance of Fathers,” www.fathers.com/help/importance.html.)

• “Adolescents in mother-only families report being more susceptible to peer pressure than adolescents in two-parent families.” (“Importance of Fathers,” www.fathers.com/help/importance.html.)

• “Adolescents in mother-only families are more likely to commit delinquent acts.” (“Importance of Fathers,” www.fathers.com/help/importance.html.)

• “Children from mother-only families did less well on standardized tests of cognitive development. Their difference in comparison to children from two-parent families was even greater on teacher evaluations such as grade-point averages and reports of behavioral problems in schools and with peers.” (“Importance of Fathers,” www.fathers.com/help/importance.html.)

• “Absence from school was higher for children from mother-only families.” (“Importance of Fathers,” www.fathers.com/help/importance.html.)

• “Girls from mother-only families are more likely to become depressed during adolescence and also express more aggression than other girls.” (“Importance of Fathers,” www.fathers.com/help/importance.html.)

• “Young adults who grew up in mother-only families were more likely to drop out of high school.” (“Importance of Fathers,” www.fathers.com/help/importance.html.)

• “Young adults who grew up in mother-only families have lower earnings; girls are more likely to receive welfare.” (“Importance of Fathers,” www.fathers.com/help/importance.html.)

• “Young adults from mother-only families are more likely to divorce.” (“Importance of Fathers,” www.fathers.com/help/importance.html.)

• “Young adults from mother-only families are more likely to commit delinquent acts and to engage in drug and alcohol use than offspring from two-parent families.” (“Importance of Fathers,” www.fathers.com/help/importance.html.)
“From letters, literature and other accounts, a picture emerges about the role fathers have played throughout American history. In pre-industrial revolution times, fathers played a central role in the family. Researcher Alan Hawkins explains, ‘Prior to the late 18th and early 19th centuries, fathers were intimately involved in the daily lives of their children. Fathers taught their children how to work and worked along side of them, especially sons. Fathers were also responsible for teaching their children spiritual values and to read and write, if they were literate themselves.’” (Stephen F. Duncan, Ph.D., “The Importance of Fathers,” Montana State University Extension Service, File Under: Human Development B-6 (Family Life) June, 2000 MontGuide fact sheet #20008/Human Resource Development, www.montana.edu/wwwpb/pubs/mt2000-08.html.)

“With industrialization and urbanization came the separation of the work sphere from the family residence for most families. Fathers typically left home to work in factories and were separated from their families not just for eight hours, but often for 14-16 hours. Fathers often worked in wretched conditions. This work away from home hindered their role in domestic affairs. Fathers more often were ‘absentee managers’ and became more emotionally distant.” (Stephen F. Duncan, Ph.D., “The Importance of Fathers,” Montana State University Extension Service, File Under: Human Development B-6 (Family Life) June, 2000 MontGuide fact sheet #20008/Human Resource Development, www.montana.edu/wwwpb/pubs/mt2000-08.html.)

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“The Pew Study showed that 46 percent of fathers said they spent too little time with their children, compared with 23 percent of mothers who said the same; half of dads said they spent the right amount of time.” (David Clark Scott, “How a 10-year-old got her father to quit his $100 million a year job,” The Christian Science Monitor, September 27, 2014, http://www.csmonitor.com/The-Culture/Family/Modern-Parenthood/2014/0927/How-a-10-year-old-got-her-father-to-quit-his-100-million-a-year-job-video)

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“Fathers should spend considerable time with their children playing and having fun. As discussed earlier, fathers’ play has a unique role in the child’s development, teaching, for example, how to explore the world and how to keep aggressive impulses in check.” (Jeffrey Rosenberg and W. Bradford Wilcox, “The Importance of Fathers in the Healthy Development of Children”, Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2006, https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/)

“Fathers should engage in productive activities with their children such as household chores, washing dishes after dinner, or cleaning up the backyard. Research consistently shows that such shared activities promote a sense of responsibility and significance in children that is, in turn, linked to greater self-esteem, academic and occupational achievement,

APPENDICES

A. HARDWIRED TO CONNECT

“The New Scientific Case for Authoritative Communities”
(Executive Summary by Josh D. McDowell)

“What’s Causing the Crisis?”

“What’s causing this crisis of American childhood is a lack of connectedness – close connections to other people and deep connections to moral and spiritual meaning.”

“The Two-Part Crisis”

“In the midst of unprecedented material affluence, large and growing numbers of U.S. children and adolescents are failing to flourish…more and more young people are suffering from mental illness, emotional distress, and behavioral problems.”

(1) “Our waiting lists are too long.”

“Scholars at the National Research Council in 2002 estimated that at least one of every four adolescents in the U.S. is currently at serious risk of not achieving productive adulthood.” (Jacquelynne Eccles and Jennifer Appleton Gootman, National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (eds.), Community Programs to Promote Youth Development (Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 2002).

“According to a recent study, about 21 percent of U.S. children ages nine to 17 have a diagnosable mental or addictive disorder associated with at least minimum impairment.” (Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General (Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Mental Health Services, National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Mental Health, 1999): 123.)

“Despite increased ability to treat depression, the current generation of young people is more likely to be depressed and anxious than was its parent’s generation.” (Practice Parameters for the Assessment and Treatment of Children and Adolescents with Depressive Disorders (Washington, DC: American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 1998): 2.)

“By the 1980s, U.S. children as a group were reporting more anxiety than did children who were psychiatric patients in the 1950s. (Jean M. Twenge, “The Age of Anxiety? Birth Cohort Change in Anxiety and Neuroticism, 1952-1993,” Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 79, no. 6 (2000): 1007-10021.)

“Several studies have found that an estimated eight percent of U.S. high school students suffer from clinical depression.”


“A recent study of mental health problems among college students at a large Midwestern university finds that, over the past 13 years, the number of students being seen for depression doubled; the number of suicidal students tripled; and the number of students seen after a sexual assault quadrupled.” (Sherry A. Benton et al., “Changes in Counseling Center Client Problems Across 13 Years,” Professional Psychology: Research and Practice 34, no. 1 (2003): 66-72.)

“Almost half of U.S. teenagers report having used marijuana. The use of other illegal drugs by teenagers appears to be increasing. As many as one in three teenagers report having engaged in binge drinking.”


“More than one of three U.S. adolescents report having been involved in a physical fight at school in the past year, and about nine percent report having been threatened or injured with a weapon while on school property.” (“Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance: United States, 2001,” Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report 51, no. SS-4 (Washington, DC: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, June 2002).
“Since the 1950s, death rates among U.S. young people due to unintentional injuries, cancer, and heart disease have all fallen by about 50 percent. Death rates overall have dropped by about 53 percent.”

“But during this same period, homicide death rates among U.S. youth rose by more than 130 percent. Suicide rates – the third leading cause of death among U.S. young people, and famously recognized more than a century ago by Emile Durkheim, one of the fathers of modern sociology, as a key indicator of social connectedness – rose by nearly 140 percent.” (“Death Rates for Leading Causes of Death among Persons 1-24 Years of Age: United States, 1950-1999” (Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, August 2002). See also Emile Durkheim, Suicide: A Study in Sociology (New York: The Free Press, 1951).

“More and more, what is harming and killing our children today is mental illness, emotional distress, and behavioral problems.”

(2) “Our intellectual models are inadequate.”
“Consider this analogy. What if environmental experts today focused almost exclusively on remediating some of the worst consequences of pollution – perhaps by encouraging people to wear masks, or to stay inside on certain days – while acting as if nothing can or should be done about the pollution in the environment?”

“The New Scientific Case”

“Essentially science is increasingly demonstrating that the human person is hardwired to connect.” (The word “hardwired,” which we use throughout this report and include in the report’s title, is more a metaphor than a technical term. We use it in this report to mean biologically primed and discernible in the basic structure and systems of the brain.)

“The weakening of authoritative communities in the U.S. is a principal reason – arguably the principal reason – why large and growing numbers of U.S. children are failing to flourish.”

“The Ten Main Planks”
“Primary nurturing of relationships influence early spiritual development – call it the spiritualization of attachment – and spiritual development can influence us biologically in the same ways that primary nurturing relationships do.”
“The mechanisms by which we become and stay attached to others are biologically primed and increasingly discernible in the basic structure of the brain.”

“Let’s start with the human infant. Here is how Allan N. Shore of the UCLA School of Medicine puts it: “The idea is that we are born to form attachments, that our brains are physically wired to develop in tandem with another’s through emotional communication, beginning before words are spoken.” (Schore continues: “If these things go awry, you’re going to have seeds of psychological problems, of difficulty coping, stress in human relations, substance abuse, those problems later on.” Quoted in Benedict Carey, “Sharing the connection: studies renew interest in effects of the parent-child bond.” Los Angeles Times, March 31, 2003. See also Joshua Kendall, “Fierce attachments,” Boston Globe, June 29, 2003.)

“The old ‘nature versus nurture’ debate – focusing on whether heredity or environment is the main determinant of human conduct – is no longer relevant to serious discussions of child well-being and youth programming.”

“A social environment can change the relationship between a specific gene and the behavior associated with that gene. Changes in social environment can thus change the transcription of our genetic material at the most basic cellular level.”

“Hard facts tell us that the environments we create influence our children’s genetic expression.”


“Social environments matter. They can impact us at the cellular level to reduce genetically based risks and even help to transform such risks into behavioral assets. They can also help substantially to raise intelligence and measures of intelligence.”

“Adolescent risk-taking and novelty-seeking are connected to changes in brain structure and function.”

“One study finds that between childhood and early adolescence – from about the 5th to the 7th grade – the proportion of young people who say

“Social context can alter genetic expression and impact neurocircuitry itself.”

“The beginning of morality is the biologically primed moralization of attachment.”

“In this sense, if the fundamental idea of morality is love of neighbor, therefore we can say, speaking scientifically that the human child is talked into talking and loved into loving.” (Robert Karen, Becoming Attached: Unfolding the Mystery of the Infant-Mother Bond and its Impact on Later Life (New York: Warner Book, 1994). Allan N. Schore, Affect Dysregulation and Disorders of the Self (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2003).


“In sum, our sense of right and wrong originates largely from our biologically primed need to connect with others. In this sense, moral behavior – good actions – stem at least as much from relationships as from rules.”

“The ongoing development of morality in later childhood and adolescence involves the human capacity to idealize both individuals and ideas.”

“What really holds potential for making a moral impact on a mid-adolescent is a powerful connection with individual adults whom he can admire or idealize. It is that individual teacher, coach, counselor, religious youth worker, Big Brother, neighbor, stepparents, grandparent, police officer, or other individuals in the community who can inspire him to make moral sense of the social confusion of his surroundings.” (Barbara M. Stilwell, “The Consolidation of Conscience in Adolescence,” Commission on Children at Risk, Working Paper 13 (New York: Institute for American Values, 2002): 9.)
“Researchers have demonstrated the protective impact of extra-familial adult relationships for young people, including other adult relatives, friends’ parents, teachers or adults in health and social service settings, among others.”


“Primary nurturing of relationships influence early spiritual development – call it the spiritualization of attachment – and spiritual development can influence us biologically in the same ways that primary nurturing relationships do.”

“The famous Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget once observed that ‘the child spontaneously attributes to his parents the perfections and abilities which he will later transfer to God is his religious education gives him the possibility.” (Jean Piaget, “The Child’s Conception of the World (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951): 354.)

“Regarding monotheistic religion, ample research now suggests that children’s conceptions of God – who God is and how God acts – initially stem partly from the child’s actual day-to-day experiences with the parents. (Clinical and scholarly work in this area is extensive and dates back many decades. See Ana-Maria Rizzuto, The Birth of the Living God: a Psychoanalytic Study (Chicago: University of Chicago press, 1979). A. Vannesse and P. De Neuter, “The Semantic Differential Parenting Scale,” in Antoine Vergote and A. Tamayo, Parental Figures and the Representation of God)

“In some cases, the image of God is more strongly influenced by the child’s experience with the parent of the opposite sex, or with the preferred parent.” (Andre Godin and M. Hallez, “Parental images and divine paternity,” in Andre Godin (ed.), From Religious Experience to Religious Attitude (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1965). M.O. Nelson, “The concept of God and the feeling toward parents,” Journal of Individual

“Religiosity and spirituality significantly influence well-being.”

“For adolescents, religiosity is significantly associated with a reduced likelihood of both unintentional and intentional injury (both of which are leading causes of death for teenager).” (J.M. Wallace, Is Religion Good for Adolescents’ Health? (Philadelphia, PA: Center for Research on Religion and Urban Civil Society, University of Pennsylvania, 2002).


“Religious involvement appears to increase social connectedness. It also commonly exposes young people to messages about good behavior and connects them to other young people who are presumably sympathetic to those messages.”

“Positive religious coping mechanisms – including a framework of meaning as well as specific religious practices, such as the cultivation of gratitude – may help children and others deal with stressful situations and orient them towards specific goals.”
Some research indicated correlations between religiosity and several aspects of good parenting, including expressions of affection, monitoring, effectively establishing discipline, and parental involvement in children’s schools.”

“One study focusing on adolescent alcohol abuse points to the value of those families that provide ‘an important social context for the development of adolescent religiosity,’ partly due to the fact that ‘religious commitment, in turn, reduces the risk of alcohol use among teens.” (W.A. Mason and M. Windel, “Family, Religious, School, and Peer Influences on Adolescent Alcohol Use,” Prevention Researcher 9, no. 3 (2002): 6-7.)


Religious traditions from both East and West exhibit characteristics that tend to promote strong parental investment in children. Julie Thomas of Youngstown State University describes the many ways in which the Buddhist tradition fosters a healthy approach to parenting, including an emphasis on “the importance of parents engaging wholeheartedly in this dance of interconnectedness that in turn is vital to their children’s wellbeing.” See Julie E. Thomas and Lisa A. Wuyek, “Minding the Children with Mindfulness: A Buddhist Approach to Promoting Wellbeing in Children,” Commission on Children at Risk, Working Paper 15 (New York: Institute for American Values, 2002): 23.)

“Personal devotion among adolescents is associated with reduced risk-taking behavior. It is also associated with more effectively resolving feelings of loneliness, (111) greater regard for the self and for others, (112) and a stronger sense that life has meaning and purpose.” (113)

Sources:

“But that is a challenge to be embraced, not avoided. Denying or ignoring the spiritual needs of adolescents may end up creating a void in their lives that either devolves into depression or is filled by other forms of questing and challenge, such as drinking, unbridled consumerism, petty crime, sexual precocity, or flirtations with violence.”


“The human brain appears to be organized to ask ultimate questions and seek ultimate answers.”
“Exploring these questions of ultimate concern, and making choices and judgments about what we value and love, are characteristic human activities.”

“Recent advances in neurobiology also suggest that these spiritual and religious experiences stem partly from processes and structures that are deeply embedded in the human brain.”

“The neuroscientists Eugene d’Aquili and Andrew B. Newberg have used brain imaging to study individuals involved in spiritual practices such as contemplative prayer and meditation. During such states, they have found an increase in activity in a number of frontal brain regions, including the prefrontal cortex.” (Eugene d’Aquili and Andrew B. Newberg, The Mystical Mind: Probing the Biology of Religious Experience (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999): 118-199.)

“…Experiences are based in observable functions of the brain. The neurological roots of these experiences would render them as convincingly
real as any other of the brain’s perceptions. In this sense…they are reporting genuine, neurobiological events.” (Andrew Newberg and Eugene D’Aquili, Why God Won’t Go Away: Brain Science and the Biology of Belief (New York: Ballantine Books, 2001): 143.)

“This research suggests that the human need to know what is true about life’s purpose and ultimate ends is connected to brain functions underlying many spiritual and religious experiences.”

“These findings are one reason why these researchers suggest that human beings appear to have ‘no choice but to construct myths to explain their world.’” (Eugene d’Aquili and Andrew B. Newberg, The Mystical Mind: Probing the Biology of Religious Experience (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999): 86. They are using the word “myth” non-perjoratively, defining it as a religious explanation of the world.)


“Authoritative Communities”

“We are impressed by mounting scientific evidence suggesting that, in two basic ways, the human child is hardwired to connect.”

“First, we are hardwired to connect to other people.”

“Second, we are hardwired to connect to moral meaning and to the possibility of the transcendent.”

“Meeting these basic needs for connectedness is essential to health and to human flourishing.”

“These data, and our reflections on them, lead us in turn to a fundamental conclusion and recommendation: We believe that building and strengthening authoritative communities is likely to be our society’s best strategy for ameliorating the current crisis of childhood and improving the lives of U.S. children and adolescents.”
“If children are hardwired to connect, and if the current ecology of childhood is leading to a weakening of connectedness and therefore to growing numbers of suffering children, building and renewing authoritative communities is arguably the greatest imperative that we face as a society.”

“The Main Characteristics” [of an authoritative community]

“It is warm and nurturing.”
“Children typically learn to be what they admire, and having warm, nurturing relationships with admirable adults is arguably the single finest way to help children learn.”

“It establishes clear limits and expectations.”
“Close relationships matter, but so do clear rules and expectations. Children need adults to set clear standards and a positive vision of the goals they are to achieve and the people they are to become.”

“It is multi-generational.”
“A sizable body of scholarship confirms what most people sense intuitively: children benefit enormously from being around caring people in all stages of the life cycle. They benefit in special ways from being around old people, including, of course, their grandparents.” (See Arthur Kornhaber and Kenneth L. Woodward, Grandparents/Grandchildren: The Vital Connection (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press, 1981).)

“It reflects and transmits a shared understanding of what it means to be a good person.”

“What Happens When Authoritative Communities Get Weaker?”

“The family is usually the source of the most enduring and formative relationships in a child’s life.”

“Marriage is important in part because it is one of society’s principle ways of supporting and sustaining the consistent, enduring, nurturing relationships that children require of parents and kin.” (One of the most significant intellectual shifts of the 1990s, driven in part by new social science research findings, is the growing belief among scholars and leaders from across the political and ideological spectrum that marriage is important for children and that strengthening marriage is an important social goal. Let us give you several illustrations of this by now quite strong consensus. Here are two public policy experts, one a Republican and one a Democrat, writing in 2003 for the Brookings Institution: “Both scholars and politicians now agree that married two-parent families are good for children, and that poverty could be greatly reduced if marriage could be increased.” (Ron Haskins and Paul Offner, Achieving Compromise on Welfare Reform Reauthorization, Policy Brief (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, May 2003): 7.) Here is a 2003 statement from the National Council on Family Relations: “A large body of social science research indicates that healthy, married-parent families are an optimal environment for promoting the well-being of children. Children raised by both biological parents are less likely than children raised in single- or step-parent families to be poor, to drop out of school, to have difficulty finding a job, to become teen parents or to experience emotional or behavioral problems. Children living with single mothers are five times as likely to be poor as those in two-parent families.” (Marriage Promotion in Low-Income Families, Fact Sheet (Minneapolis: National Council on Family Relations, April 2003): 1.) Here is a 2003 statement from the Center for Law and Social Policy: “The legal basis and public support involved in the institution of marriage help to create the most likely conditions for the development of factors that children need most to thrive – consistent, stable, loving attention from two parents who cooperate and have sufficient resources and support from two extended families, two sets of friends, and society.” (Mary Parke, Are Married Parents Really Better for Children? What Research Says About the Effects of Family Structure on Child Well-Being (Washington, DC: Center for Law and Social Policy, May 2003): 7.) Here is a 2002 statement from Child Trends: “Marriage is one of the most beneficial resources for adults and children alike.” (Tamara Halle (Project Director), Charting Parenthood (Washington, DC: Child Trends, 2002): 49.) And here, of all people, is the U.S. Census Bureau – an agency that rarely reports data in a way suggestive of a clear value judgment about a social institution – in a 2003 report on the living arrangements of U.S. children: “Children in two-parent families generally had access to more financial resources and greater amounts of parental time. They also were more likely to participate in extracurricular activities, progress more steadily in school, and have more supervision over their activities such as television watching. The presence of two parents continues to be one of the most important factors in children’s lives.” (Jason Fields, Children’s Living Arrangements and Characteristics: March 2002, Current Population Reports P20-547 (Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau, June 2003): 19.)

This new consensus also recognizes that the differences in child outcomes between married-couple and other homes with children are not categorical, but instead involve what scholars call overlapping, distributions. That is, it is not the case that all (or most) children in one-parent homes experience negative outcomes that in turn are rare or non-existent among children from married-couple homes. Indeed, some children from one-parent homes do better than some children from two-parents homes. (The distributions overlap). Instead, the real differences
between the two groups center on the odds or the probabilities of negative outcomes. In general, for children growing up in married-couples homes, the odds of experiencing these negative outcomes are significantly lower.

In addition, quantitative studies on child outcomes in married-couple versus other homes often present findings in ways that can obscure some of the actual difference between the two groups, especially when the area being measured is mental and emotional health. For example, say that a study finds that 90 percent of children-of-marriage score within the “normal” range on a particular measure of mental health, compared to about 75 percent of children-of-divorce. Does that mean that the “gap” – the difference in the likelihood of suffering between the two groups – is about 15 percent? Well, that is one way to put it, and many scholars put it just that way. But the real answer is more complicated. Why? Because it is highly probable that those “normal” scores for the children-of-divorce are measurably lower than the “normal” scores of the children-of-marriage. Thus, while both the 75 percent and the 90 percent have scored within the “normal” range, there is still a real difference between these two “normal” groups, with the children-of-divorce being worse off. By the way, this is not a hypothetical case. See E. Mavis Hetherington, For Better or Worse: Divorce Reconsidered (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2003), 7, 150, 288.)

“Structurally, very high rates of divorce and increasing rates of unwed childbearing have led in recent decades to a significant disintegration of the two-parent family. One result of this trend is that, virtually with each passing year, a smaller and smaller proportion of U.S. children are living with their own biological, married parents. One particularly harmful aspect of this trend is the widespread absence of fathers in children’s lives.”

Sources:

152 The United States long had, and probably still has, the world’s highest divorce rate, though several other countries (including Sweden, the U.K, and Russia) appear to be approaching the U.S. in this respect. Although the incidence of divorce in the U.S. has declined modestly since its historic peak in the early 1980s, the U.S. refined divorce rate (divorces per 1,000 married women age 15 or older) was about 19.5 in 1998, compared to 9.2 in 1960. Of all U.S. persons age 15 or older in 2000, about 8.3 percent were divorced, more than four times the 1.8 percent in 1960. Of all recent first marriages in the U.S., between 40 and 45 percent are likely to end in divorce. See United Nations Statistical Yearbook (New York: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis, 1995). Daphne Spain and Suzanne M. Bianchi, Balancing Act: Motherhood, Marriage, and Employment Among American Women (New York: Russell Sage, 1996): 47.


“Putnam presents evidence suggesting that the great majority of U.S. social institutions focusing on what he terms civic engagement – political clubs and parties, civic and community groups based on face-to-face relationships and activities, houses of worship and other religious organizations, unions and other workplace associations, philanthropic organizations, and a vast array of informal social networks and institutions, from card-playing groups to family meals – have declined significantly in recent decades. In the late 1990s, Putnam’s thesis was widely debated by scholars. This scholarly attention has been fruitful and has led to some valuable findings and important qualifications.” (See Robert Wuthnow, “The United States: Bridging the Privileged and the Marginalized?” in Robert D. Putnam (ed.), Demoscrats in Flux: The Evolution of Social Capital in Contemporary Society (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002): 59-102.)

“But today there is also a rough scholarly consensus: Putnam was right.”

“So here is the story so far. On the one hand, a large body of evidence, including recent findings from the field of neuroscience, suggesting that the human person is hardwired to connect to other people and to moral and spiritual meaning.”

“A major population-based study from Sweden – that is, a focusing on all Swedish children – concludes that children living in one-parent homes have more than double the risk of psychiatric disease, suicide or attempted suicide, and alcohol-related disease, and more than three times the risk of drug-related disease, compared to Swedish children living in two-parent homes. These findings remained after the scholars controlled for a wide range of demographic and socioeconomic variables.” (Gunilla Ringback Weitoft et al., “Mortality, severe morbidity, and injury in children living with single parents in Sweden: a population-based study,” The Lancet 361 (January 2003): 289-295.)

“Strengthening authoritative communities is an urgent national priority for all of us who are seeking to understand and confront the crisis of childhood in the United States.”

“Building Authoritative Communities in Low-Income Neighborhoods”
“Cortes asks: ‘It’s been said ad nauseum that it takes a village to raise a child. Well, do we know what it means to build a village?’” (Ernesto Cortes, Jr., “The Broader Context of Community,” Family Affairs 7, no. 1-2 (New York: Institute for American Values, Spring 1996): 6.)

“Social Change”

“Concerning families, neighborhoods, and workplaces:”
We recommend that some U.S. ‘work-family’ advocates change their priorities, putting less emphasis on policies that free up parents to be better workers, and more emphasis on policies that free up workers to be better parents and better guides for the next generation.”

“Concerning moral and spiritual development:”

“In a society in which pluralism is a fact and freedom a birthright, finding new ways to strengthen, and not ignore or stunt, children’s moral and spiritual selves may be the single most important challenge facing youth service professionals and youth-serving organizations in the U.S. today.”

B. EXPERIMENTS IN LIVING: THE FATHERLESS FAMILY

(Excerpts pulled by Josh D. McDowell)

“In the 1970s and 1980s many people argued that the traditional family – based upon a married biological father and mother and their children – was outdated.” (p2)

“Under the guise of ‘freedom of choice’, ‘self-fulfillment’, and ‘equal respect for all kinds of families’, feminists and social rebels led a campaign to experiment with different family structures. Sometimes it was claimed that women and children did not need men, and were, in fact, often better off without them. On occasion it was said that families were not breaking down, they were just changing; that the most important thing for children was their parents’ happiness and self-fulfillment; and that children were resilient and would suffer few negative effects of divorce and family disruption. The idea of ‘staying together for the children’s sake’ was often derided. Some parents embraced the new thinking, but not all of those who took part in the ‘fatherless family experiment’ were willing subjects. As the idea that mothers and children did not need fathers took hold, many social and legal supports for marriage weakened. Some mothers and children were simply abandoned. Some fathers were pushed away.” (p2)

“Mill’s argument formed part of his wider case for avoiding social control unless the interests of other people were harmed. People were entitled to act on their own opinions ‘without hindrance, either physical or moral, from their fellow-men’ so long as it was ‘at their own risk and peril’. This last proviso, he said, was ‘of course indispensible’. He insisted that:”

‘When ... a person is led to violate a distinct and assignable obligation to any other person or persons, the case is taken out of the self-regarding class, and becomes amenable to moral disapprobation in the proper sense of the term.’ (p2)

“He specifically mentions the responsibility of a father for his children:”

‘If, for example, a man, through intemperance or extravagance, becomes unable to pay his debts, or, having undertaken the moral responsibility of a family, becomes from the same cause incapable of supporting or educating them, he is deservedly reprobated, and might be justly
"punished; but it is for the breach of duty to his family or creditors, not for the extravagance.’ (p2)

"After three decades of experimenting with the fatherless family, we are now in a position to evaluate the results.” (p2)

“Fewer children live with both their mother and their father”

- “The proportion of all households comprising a mother and father with dependent children fell from 38% in 1961 to 23% in 2001, while the percentage of lone-parent households tripled over the same period, from 2% to 6%.” (Social Trends 32 (2002), Office for National Statistics, London: The Stationery Office, p40) (p3)


“Twenty-five percent of children whose parents divorced in 2000 were under age five. Seventy percent were ten years old or younger.” (Social Trends 32 (2002), Office for National Statistics, London: The Stationery Office, p49) (p3)

**Births outside marriage**

“For most of the twentieth century, the percentage of births outside marriage hovered around 5%. Starting in the 1960s, the proportion began to increase gradually, reaching 10% in 1975, after which it began to increase more quickly. By 2000, the proportion of births outside marriage had quadrupled to 40%.”  (Social Trends 32 (2002), Office for National Statistics, London: The Stationery Office, p47) (p3)

**Changes in Marriage and Cohabitation**

“Numbers and rates of first marriages have fallen drastically. The number of first marriages fell from 300,000 in 1961 to 180,000 in 2000. The rate of first marriages has fallen from 83 per thousand single women in 1961 to 33 per thousand in 2000. For men, the rate has fallen from 75 per thousand in 1961 to 26 per thousand in 2000.”  (pp3-4)


“Of cohabiting couples who do not marry, only about 18% survive at least ten years (compared to 75% of couples who marry).”  (Kiernan, K. (1999), ‘Cohabitation in Western Europe’, Population Trends 96, Office for National Statistics, London: The Stationery Office.”  Pg. 15) (p4)
“So, when talking about cohabiting parents, the two important statistics to keep in mind are the following:” (p4)


- “Children born into married unions are estimated to be twice as likely as those born into cohabiting unions to spend their entire childhood with both natural parents (70% versus 36%).” (Ermisch, J. and Francesconi, M. (2000), ‘Patterns of household and family formation’, in Berthoud, R. and Gershuny, J. (eds.), Seven Years in the Lives of British Families, Bristol: The Policy Press, pp38-40) (p4)

“Cohabiting step-families are also on the increase. One in fourteen children is likely to live in an informal step-family at some time before their seventeenth birthday. The cohabiting man in these cases has neither a biological nor a legal tie to the lone mother’s child.” (Haskey, J. (1994), ‘Stepfamilies and stepchildren in Great Britain’, Population Trends 76, Office for National Statistics, London: The Stationery Office.” Pg. 15) (p4)

“Is the married two-parent family a thing of the past?”

“Most people still believe in the ideal of marriage and do, in fact, get married”

- “Over 50% of the adult population are married currently.” (Social Trends 32 (2002), Office for National Statistics, London: The Stationery Office, p42) (p4)

- “According to the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS), nearly 75% of childless cohabiting couples under the age of 35 expect to marry each other at some point in the future.” (Social Trends 32 (2002), Office for National Statistics, London: The Stationery Office, p43. Figures are for 1998) (p4)

- “It is estimated that nearly 90% of women born in the 1960s will marry by the time they reach the age of 45.” (Ermisch, J. and Francesconi, M. (2000), ‘Patterns of household and family formation’, in Berthoud, R. and Gershuny, J. (eds.), Seven Years in the Lives of British Families, Bristol: The Policy Press, p30) (p4)
• “Nine out of ten teenagers under age 16 want to get married. In a survey of over 2,000 students aged 13–15, only 4% agreed with the statement that ‘marriage is old-fashioned and no longer relevant’.” (Hill, C. (2000), Sex Under Sixteen?, London: Family Education Trust.) (p4)

“Adults throughout Europe share this view. Surveys by the Economic Commission for Europe found that 85%–90% of adults rejected the notion that marriage is old-fashioned.” (UN Economic Commission for Europe, Fertility and Family Surveys carried out annually 1992–1999. Pg. 15) (p4)

“Lone mothers
..Are poorer”
• “Lone mothers are twice as likely as two-parent families to live in poverty at any one time (69% of lone mothers are in the bottom 40% of household income versus 34% of couples with children).” (Households Below Average Income 1994/95-2000/01, Department for Work and Pensions, London: The Stationery Office (2002), pp. 81. These figures are for Before Housing Costs. After Housing Costs figures retain the same ratio, 72% versus 36%.) (p5)

• “Lone parents have twice as much risk of experiencing persistent low income (spending three out of four years in the bottom 30% of household income) as couples with children – 50% versus 22%.” (Households Below Average Income 1994/95-2000/01, Department for Work and Pensions, London: The Stationery Office (2002), p141.) (p5)

• “Lone parents are more than twice as likely as couples with children to have no savings (68% versus 28%).” (Social Trends 32 (2002), Office for National Statistics, London: The Stationery Office, from Family Resources Survey, Table 5.25p103) (p5)

• “Lone parents are eight times as likely to live in a workless household as couples with children (45% versus 5.4%).” (Work and Worklessness among Households, Office for National Statistics, London: The Stationery Office (Autumn 2001). (p5)

• “Lone parent households are over twelve times as likely to be receiving income support as couples with dependent children (51% versus 4%). They are 2.5 times as likely to be receiving working family’s tax credit (24% versus 9%).” (Family Resources Survey, Great Britain, 2000–01, Office for National Statistics, London: The Stationery Office (May 2002). (p5)
“Are more likely to suffer from stress, depression, and other emotional and psychological problems”

- “At the age of 33, divorced and never-married mothers were 2.5 times more likely than married mothers to experience high levels of psychological distress. Even after accounting for financial hardship, prior psychological distress, and other demographic factors, lone mothers were still 1.4 times more likely to have psychological distress.” (Hope, S., Power, C., Rodgers, B. (1999), ‘Does financial hardship account for elevated psychological distress in lone mothers?’, Social Science and Medicine 49 (12), pp.1637–1649.) (p5)


“Have more health problems”

- “Results from the British General Household Survey show that, even after controlling for demographic and socioeconomic circumstances, lone mothers still have significantly poorer health than partnered mothers for four out of five health variables.” (Benzeval, M. (1998), ‘The self-reported health status of lone parents’, Social Science and Medicine 46 (10), pp. 1337–1353.) (p5)

- “Divorced women have death rates which are 21% higher on average than those of married women. Death rates for divorced women aged 25 and older range from 35%-58% higher than those of married women of the same age.” (Mortality Statistics: General, Review of the Registrar General on Deaths in England and Wales, 1999, Series DH1 32, Office for National Statistics, London: The Stationery Office (2001). (p5)

“May have more problems interacting with their children”

- “Young people in lone-parent families were 30% more likely than those in two-parent families to report that their parents rarely or never knew where they were.” (Flood-Page, C., Campbell, S., Harrington, V., and Miller, J. (2000), Youth Crime: Findings from the 1998/99 Youth Lifestyles Survey, London: Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate.) (p5)

- “After controlling for other demographic factors, lone parents were…”
  - “2.25 times more likely to report their child’s behaviour was upsetting to them.”
“30% more likely to report significant arguments with their children.”
“60% more likely to expect too much or have too high expectations of their child.”
(Cockett and Tripp (1994), The Exeter Family Study: Family Breakdown and Its Impact on Children, p. 28.) (p5)

“Non-resident biological fathers”
“Are at risk of losing contact with their children”

- “Twenty to thirty percent of non-resident fathers have not seen their children in the last year. Another 20%–40% see their children less than once per week.” (Burghes, L., Clarke, L., and Cronin, N. (1997), Fathers and Fatherhood in Britain, London: Family Policy Studies Centre, pp. 65–67.) (p5)

“Are more likely to have health problems and engage in high-risk behavior”

- “Divorced men aged 20 to 60 have 70%–100% higher rates of death than married men.” (Mortality Statistics: General, Review of the Registrar General on Deaths in England and Wales, 1999 Series DH1 32, Office for National Statistics (2001). (p5)

- “In a population of young adults, divorced men and women were twice as likely to increase their drinking compared to those who remained married. In this case, there was virtually no selection effect. In other words, heavy drinking did not lead to divorce. Rather, divorce led to heavy drinking.” (Power, C., Rodgers, B., and Hope, S. (1999), ‘Heavy alcohol consumption and marital status: disentangling the relationship in a national study of young adults’, Addiction 94 (10), pp. 1477–1487.) (p5)

- “Divorced non-residential fathers were significantly more likely to smoke marijuana and to drive a car after drinking alcohol.” (Umberson, D. (1987), ‘Family status and health behaviors: Social control as a dimension of social integration’, Journal of Health and Social Behavior 28, pp. 306–319.) (p5)

- “Divorced men reported the highest rates of unsafe sex, with 15.7% reporting both multiple partners and lack of condom use in the previous year, compared with 3% of married men, 10.4% of cohabiting men, and 9.6% of single men.” (Wellings, K., Field, J., Johnson, A. M., Wadsworth, J. (1994), Sexual Behaviour in Britain, London: Penguin, p.363.) (p5)

“Children living without their biological fathers”
“Are more likely to live in poverty and deprivation”

- “Children living in lone-parent households are twice as likely to be in the bottom 40% of household income distribution compared with children living in two-parent households (75% versus 40%).” (Households Below Average Income 1994/95-2000/01, Department for Work and Pensions, 2002, p. 50.) (p5)

- “Even after controlling for low incomes, children living in lone-parent households are twice as likely to be in the bottom 40% of household income distribution compared with children living in two-parent households (75% versus 40%).” (Households Below Average Income 1994/95-2000/01, Department for Work and Pensions (2002), p. 50.) (p5)

- “Children living in lone-parent households are twice as likely to have emotional or mental problems.” (Gaulthier, A. H. (1999), ‘Inequalities in children’s environment: The case of Britain’, Childhood 6 (2), pp. 243–260.) (p6)


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“Are more likely to have emotional or mental problems”

- “After controlling for other demographic factors, children in lone-parent households are 2.8 times as likely to forego family outings.” (Cockett and Tripp (1994), The Exeter Family Study: Family Breakdown and Its Impact on Children, p. 31.) (p6)

“Have more trouble in school”

“After controlling for other demographic factors, children from lone-parent households were…” (p6)
  o “3.3 times more likely to report problems with their academic work,
  o 50% more likely to report difficulties with teachers.”

“Tend to have more trouble getting along with others”
• “After controlling for other demographic factors, children from lone-parent households are three times as likely to report problems with friendships.” (Cockett and Tripp (1994), The Exeter Family Study: Family Breakdown and Its Impact on Children, p. 27.) (p6)

• “Children from lone-parent households are more likely to have behaviour problems or engage in antisocial behaviour.” (Ferri, E. (1984), Step Children: A National Study, Windsor: NFER-Nelson; and Wadsworth, Burnell, Taylor and Butler (1985) ‘The influence of family type on children’s behaviour and development at five years’, pp. 245–254.) (p6)


“Have higher risk of health problems”
• “It has been estimated that parental divorce increases children’s risk of developing health problems by 50%.” (Mauldon, J. (1990), ‘The effects of marital disruption on children’s health’, Demography 27, pp. 431–46.) (p6)

• “In England and Wales during 2000, the sudden infant death rate for babies jointly registered by unmarried parents living at different addresses was over three times greater than for babies born to a married mother and father (0.66 per 1,000 live births as compared with 0.18). Where the birth was registered in the sole name of the mother, the rate of sudden infant death was seven times greater than for those born within marriage (1.27 per 1,000 live births as compared with 0.18).” (Mortality Statistics: Childhood, Infant and Perinatal, Review of the Registrar General on Deaths in England and Wales, 2000, Series DH3 33, Office for National Statistics (2002).) (p6)
• “After controlling for other demographic factors, children living in lone-parent households were 1.8 times as likely to have psychosomatic health symptoms and illness such as pains, headaches, stomach aches, and feeling sick.” (Cockett and Tripp (1994), The Exeter Family Study: Family Breakdown and Its Impact on Children, p. 21.) (p6)

“Are at greater risk of suffering physical, emotional, or sexual abuse.”

• “According to data from the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), young people are five times more likely to have experienced physical abuse and emotional maltreatment if they grew up in a lone-parent family, compared with children in two-birth-parent families.” (Cawson, P. (2002), Child Maltreatment in the Family, London: NSPCC.) (p6)

• “All studies of child-abuse victims which look at family type identify the step-family as representing the highest risk to children54 – with the risk of fatal abuse being 100 times higher than in two biological-parent families according to international experts Daly and Wilson, drawing on US data from 1976.”55 (p6)

Sources:

“However, the use of the term step-father has become problematic, as, whilst it used to refer to men who were married to women with children by other men, it is now used to describe any man in the household, whether married to the mother or not. An NSPCC study of 1988 which separated married step-fathers from unmarried cohabiting men found that married step-fathers were less likely to abuse: ‘for nonnatal fathers marriage appears to be associated with a greater commitment to the father role.’” (Gordon, M. and Creighton, S. (1988), ‘Natal and nonnatal fathers as sexual abusers in the United Kingdom: A Comparative Analysis’, Journal of Marriage and the Family 50, pp. 99–105.) (p6)

• “Analysis of 35 cases of fatal abuse which were the subject of public inquiries between 1968 and 1987 showed a risk for children living with their mother and an unrelated man which was over 70 times higher than it would have been for a child with two married biological parents.” (Whelan, R. (1994), Broken Homes and Battered Children, Oxford: Family Education Trust.) (p7)
“Are more likely to run away from home”
- “Children from lone-parent families are twice as likely to run away from home as those from two-birth-parent families (14% compared to 7%).” (Rees, G. and Rutherford, C. (2001), Home Run: Families and Young Runaways, London: The Children’s Society.) (p7)

“Teenagers living without their biological fathers”
“Are more likely to experience problems with sexual health”
- “According to the National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles, children from lone-parent households were more likely to have had intercourse before the age of 16 when compared with children from two-natural-parent households. Boys were 1.8 times as likely (42.3% versus 23%) and girls were 1.5 times as likely (36.5% versus 23.6%). After controlling for socio-economic status, level of communication with parents, educational levels and age at menarche for girls, the comparative odds of underage sex actually increased to 2.29 for boys and 1.65 for girls.” (p7)

- “Compared to young adults from two-natural parent households, young men from lone-parent households were 1.8 times as likely to have foregone contraception at first intercourse (13.6% versus 7.5%) and young women were 1.75 times as likely (16.1% versus 9.2%). After controlling for other factors, these comparative odds were reduced to 1.11 for men and 1.23 for women.” (p7)

- “Girls from lone-parent households were 1.6 times as likely to become mothers before the age of 18 (11% versus 6.8%). Controlling for other factors did not reduce the comparative odds.” (Wellings, K., Nanchanahal, K., MacDowall, W., et al. (2001), ‘Sexual behaviour in Britain: Early heterosexual experience’, The Lancet 358, pp. 1843–50. Analysis of first intercourse before age 16 included all respondents aged 16–24 years. Analysis of incidence of STIs included respondents aged 16–24 years who had had heterosexual intercourse before age 18. All other analyses included respondents aged 16–24 years who had had heterosexual intercourse by age 24.) (P7)

“Are more likely to become teenage parents”
- “Analysis of data from the National Child Development Study (NCDS) indicated that women whose parents had divorced were twice as likely to become teenage mothers as those from intact families (25% versus 14%).”
“Men from divorced families were 1.8 times more likely to become fathers by the age of 22 than men from intact families (23% versus 13%). After controlling for childhood poverty and behavioural and educational problems, the odds for teenage motherhood and early fatherhood were reduced to 1.4. This means that children of divorce were still 40% more likely to become parents early, even after considering other family background factors.” (Kiernan, K. (September 1997), ‘The legacy of parental divorce: Social, economic and family experiences in adulthood’, London: Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion, London School of Economics, pp 26–27.) (p7)

“Are more likely to offend”

• “Children aged 11 to 16 years were 25% more likely to have offended in the last year if they lived in lone-parent families.” (Youth Survey 2001: Research Study Conducted for the Youth Justice Board (January–March 2001), www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk/policy/YJBREP_published_report_2001.pdf, p. 9.) (p7)

• “Young men from lone-parent families were 1.6 times as likely to be persistent offenders as those from two-natural-parent families. The effects of living in lone-parent families seem to operate indirectly, through reduced levels of parental supervision.” (Flood-Page, Campbell, Harrington and Miller (2000), Youth Crime: Findings from the 1998/99 Youth Lifestyles Survey.) (p7)

• “In focus group discussions, young people in prisons spoke frequently about disruption in their family lives and about their fathers’ absence. One discussion went as follows:” (p7)

  “Interviewer: ‘I’ve just realised we’ve spent the whole time and nobody’s talked about dads.’”  
  “Teenager 1: ‘That’s because there’s no dads to talk about!’”   
  “Teenager 2: ‘We don’t need dads, at the end of the day a child needs its mum.’” (Lyon, J., Dennison, C., and Wilson, A. (2000), ‘Tell Them So They Listen’: Messages from Young People in Custody, London: Home Office, p. 8.)

“Another young woman said:”  
“…where I used to live…it’s like a rough, nasty area and you just see mums with six children, three kids, their boyfriend, not a dad. Kids grow up and they grudge other families…” (Lyon, Dennison and Wilson
“Are more likely to smoke”

- “In a sample of teenagers living in the West of Scotland, 15-year-olds from lone-parent households were twice as likely to be smokers as those from two-birth-parent homes (29% compared to 15%). After controlling for poverty, they were still 50% more likely to smoke.” (Sweeting, H., West, P., and Richards, M. (1998), ‘Teenage family life, lifestyles and life chances: Associations with family structure, conflict with parents and joint family activity’, International Journal of Law, Policy and the Family 12, pp. 15–46.) (p7)

- “In a sample of British 16-year-olds, those living in lone-parent households were 1.5 times as likely to smoke. Controlling for sex, household income, time spent with family, and relationship with parents, actually increased the odds that a teenager from a lone-parent family would smoke (to 1.8 times as likely).” (Ely, M., West, P., Sweeting, H., and Richards, M. (2000), ‘Teenage family life, life chances, lifestyles and health: A comparison of two contemporary cohorts’, International Journal of Law, Policy and the Family 14, pp. 1–30.) (p7)

“Are more likely to drink alcohol”

- “In the West of Scotland, 18-year-old girls from lone-parent households were twice as likely to drink heavily as those from intact two-birthparent homes (17.6% compared to 9.2%). This finding holds even after controlling for poverty.” (Sweeting, West and Richards (1998), ‘Teenage Family life, lifestyles and life chances’, pp. 15–46.) (p8)

- “British 16-year-olds from lone-parent households are no more likely to drink than those from intact households. This is mainly because higher levels of teenage drinking actually are associated with higher family incomes. After controlling for household income and sex, teenagers from lone-parent families were 40% more likely to drink.” (Ely, West, Sweeting and Richards (2000), ‘Teenage Family Life, Life chances, lifestyles and health’, pp. 1–30.) (P8)

“Are more likely to take drugs”

- “At age 15, boys from lone-parent households were twice as likely as those from intact two-birthparent households to have taken any drugs (22.4% compared with 10.8%). Girls from lone-parent homes were 25% more likely to have taken drugs by the age of 15 (8.2% compared with 6.5%) and 70% more likely to have taken drugs by age 18 (33.3%
compared with 19.6%). After controlling for poverty, teenagers from lone-parent homes were still 50% more likely to take drugs.” (Sweeting, West and Richards (1998), ‘Teenage Family life, lifestyles and life chances’, pp. 15–46.) (p8)

“Are more likely to play truant from school”
- “After controlling for social class, level of parental supervision, attachment to family, whether peers and siblings were in trouble with the police and standard of work at school, boys in lone-parent households were still 2.7 times more likely to truant than those from two-natural-parent households.” (Graham, J. and Bowling, B. (1995), Young People and Crime, London: Home Office, p. 120.) (p8)

“Are more likely to be excluded from school”
- “Children living with a lone mother are three times more likely than those in two-parent families to be excluded from school (15.6% versus 4.8%).” (Youth Survey 2001: Research Study Conducted for the Youth Justice Board (January–March 2001), www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk/policy/YJBREP_published_report_2001.pdf, p. 7.) (p8)

“Are more likely to leave school at 16”
- “Sixteen-year-olds from lone-parent households are twice as likely to leave school with no qualifications as those from intact families. Most studies have found that most or all of this increased risk occurs because lone-parent families generally are poorer, which in itself has a strong association with poor educational outcomes.” (Ely, West, Sweeting and Richards (2000), ‘Teenage Family Life, Life chances, lifestyles and health’, pp. 1–30.) (p8)

“Are more likely to have adjustment problems”
- “In one American study, adolescents whose parents divorced tended to have increased levels of externalising problems (aggressive and delinquent behaviour) and internalising problems (emotional distress, such as depression). In most cases, this was due to a reduction in the quality of the mother’s parenting. In addition, reductions in the level of father’s involvement were associated with increases in boys’ aggression and delinquent behaviour. Girls’ increased anti-social behaviour was explained in large part by post-divorce conflict between parents. For boys, parental divorce was associated with an increase in likelihood of depression, even accounting for other factors. The authors conclude that it might be that ‘parental divorce tends to be inherently depressing for

“Young adults who grew up not living with their biological fathers”

“Are less likely to attain qualifications”

• “Analysis of the National Child Development Study (NCDS) found that children from disrupted families were twice as likely to have no qualifications by the time they were 33 years old (20% versus 11% from intact families). Some of the differences in these results are due to the strong association of divorce with higher levels of poverty and behavioural problems for children.”

“However, parental divorce during childhood also seems to have an impact in some areas which is not fully explained by those types of childhood problems. For example, after controlling for financial hardship, behaviour problems, social class and educational tests during childhood, women whose parents divorced were still 11% more likely to have no qualifications.”

“For men, controlling for the effects of childhood problems had little effect on their reduced chances of attaining high levels of qualifications. The interactions of parental divorce and other childhood problems and how they affect the education of young adults are quite complicated. The author of this study summarised the results this way: ‘poverty and behavioural problems are important factors in reducing educational success and parental divorce can amplify both.’” (Kiernan (September 1997), ‘The legacy of parental divorce: social, economic and family experiences in adulthood’, p. 11.)


“Are more likely to experience unemployment”

• “At age 33, men from disrupted family backgrounds were twice as likely to be unemployed (14% compared with 7%), and 1.6 times as likely to
have experienced more than one bout of unemployment since leaving school (23% compared with 14%). Again, the reasons for the differences in these risk levels are complicated. Some of the difference seems to be due to poverty and behaviour problems that existed before the divorce and persisted or deepened afterward. However, even after controlling for these factors, men whose parents divorced were still 1.4 times as likely to be unemployed and 1.3 times as likely to have experienced more than one bout of unemployment during adulthood.” (Kiernan (September 1997), ‘The legacy of parental divorce: social, economic and family experiences in adulthood’, p. 16. It is possible that depressed local economic conditions could simultaneously increase the likelihood of lone parenthood as well as the unemployment rate. On a national level, this would establish a statistical association between being brought up in a lone parent household and being subsequently unemployed. To determine whether this is a causal association, it would be necessary to control for local economic conditions.) (p9)

“Are more likely to have low incomes”

• “For women, the effects of parental divorce on income are complicated by the fact that parental divorce tends to increase the odds of early childbearing, which in turn reduces the likelihood that women will be employed. Women from disrupted families had median incomes that were 20% lower than those who grew up in two-parent families (£86 per week compared with £104). They were 30% more likely to be in the lowest quartile of net family incomes (32% compared with 25%). After controlling for early childbearing (which itself seems to be linked to parental divorce), women from disrupted families were still 13% less likely to be in the upper quartile of individual earnings and 20% more likely to be in the lowest quartile of family incomes.” (Kiernan (September 1997), ‘The legacy of parental divorce: social, economic and family experiences in adulthood’, pp. 18–19.) (p9)

“Are more likely be on income support”

• “Women from disrupted families were 1.3 times as likely to be on income support at age 33 (11% compared with 8%).” (Kiernan (September 1997), ‘The legacy of parental divorce: social, economic and family experiences in adulthood’, p. 16.) (p9)

“Are more likely to experience homelessness”

• “Young adults from disrupted families are 1.7 times more likely to have experienced homelessness (6.2% compared with 3.6%). For women, all of this effect is due to the fact that children from divorced households have a higher likelihood of experiencing poverty in childhood, which is
also related to homelessness in adulthood. However, for men, all the
difference in level of risk may be attributable to the divorce during early
childhood, rather than poverty or other problems experienced in
childhood.” (Kiernan (September 1997), ‘The legacy of parental divorce: social,
economic and family experiences in adulthood’, p. 21.) (p9)

“Are more likely to be caught offending and go to jail”
• “Although 20% of all dependent children live in lone-parent families, 70% of young offenders identified by Youth Offending Teams come from lone-parent families.” (Review 2001/2002: Building on Success, Youth Justice Board, London: The Stationery Office (July 2002).) (p9)

• “American studies have shown that boys from one-parent homes were twice as likely as those from two-birth-parent families to be incarcerated by the time they reached their early 30s.” (Harper, C. and McLanahan, S. (August 1998), ‘Father absence and youth incarceration’, San Francisco: paper presented at the annual meetings of the American Sociological Association.) (p9)

“Are more likely to suffer from long term emotional and psychological problems.”
• “In one American study, 20%-25% of children of divorce experienced long-term emotional or behavioural problems compared to 10% of children whose parents remained married.” (Hetherington (2002), For Better Or Worse: Divorce Reconsidered.) (p9)

• “Another study found that 11% of young adults whose parents had divorced had seven or more symptoms of emotional distress; only 8% who grew up in intact two-parent families did.” (Chase-Lansdale, P. L., Cherlin, A. J., and Kiernan, K. (1995), ‘The long-term effects of parental divorce on the mental health of young adults: A developmental perspective,’ Child Development 66, pp. 1614–34.) (p9)

• “One study, which followed 100 children of divorce through 25 years, found that, while the divorced parents may have felt liberated, many of their children suffered emotionally.” (Wallerstein, J. S. and Blakeslee, S. (1990), Second Chances: Men, Women and Children a Decade After Divorce, New York: Ticknor and Fields; and Wallerstein, J., Lewis, J. and Blakeslee, S. (2002), The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce: A 25 Year Landmark Study, London: Fusion Press.) (p9)

“Are more likely to develop health problems”
• “A Swedish study found that children of single parent families were 30% more likely to die over the 16-year study period. After controlling for poverty, children from single-parent families were: 70% more likely to have circulatory problems, 56% more likely to show signs of mental illness, 27% more likely to report chronic aches and pains, and 26% more likely to rate their health as poor.” (Lundbert, O. (1993), ‘The impact of childhood living conditions on illness and mortality in adulthood’, Social Science and Medicine 36, pp. 1047–52.) (p9)

• “NCDS data indicate that parental divorce during childhood increased the odds of young adults engaging in heavy and/or problem drinking. The link was weak when measured at age 23, but was strong by age 33. Controlling for possible mediating factors such as marital status or socio-economic circumstances did not substantially reduce the effects.” (Hope, S., Power, C., and Rodgers, B. (1998), ‘The relationship between parental separation in childhood and problem drinking in adulthood’, Addiction 93 (4), pp. 505–514.) (p9)

• “In a sample of young women who had had intercourse before age 18, those from lone-parent households were 1.4 times as likely to have had a sexually transmitted infection by age 24 (14.3% versus 10.2%). Controlling for other factors slightly increased the comparative odds to 1.53.” (Wellings, K., Nanchanahal, K., MacDowall, W., et al. (2001), ‘Sexual behaviour in Britain: Early heterosexual experience’, pp. 1843–50.) (p9)


“Tend to enter partnerships earlier and more often as a cohabitation”

• “NCDS data indicate that men from disrupted families were 1.7 times as likely and women 2.2 times as likely to enter their first union (marriage or cohabitation) as teenagers. Controlling for poverty and other problems in childhood reduced these odds to 1.6 and 1.66 respectively. For women, it is likely that the influence of parental divorce on early partnering operates mainly through increased risks of earlier sexual activity.” (Kiernan (September 1997), ‘The legacy of parental divorce: social, economic and family experiences in adulthood’, p. 23. Note that, according to the 1990/91 National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles, the tendency to early partnership occurs indirectly, mainly through the tendency of children of divorce to engage in sexual activity earlier. See Kiernan,
• “Women were 1.7 times as likely to cohabit before or instead of marrying in their first partnership if they came from a disrupted family. Men were 1.7 times as likely to cohabit before marrying and twice as likely to cohabit instead of marrying. Controlling for poverty and other childhood problems did not reduce the effects that parental divorce had on children’s preference for cohabiting.” (Kiernan (September 1997), ‘The legacy of parental divorce: social, economic and family experiences in adulthood’, p. 25.) (p10)

“Are more likely to divorce or dissolve their cohabiting unions”

• “The risk of partnership dissolution (including break-up of cohabiting unions as well as divorce) for men from disrupted families was 1.9 times higher and for women was 1.5 times higher than for those who had intact family backgrounds. These effects did not seem to operate through the experiences of childhood problems, but rather through the propensity of adults – especially women – who experienced parental divorce in childhood to enter partnerships earlier, which in turn increased the likelihood of partnership dissolution. However, even after controlling for early age at first partnership, men from disrupted families were still 30% more likely to have dissolved their first partnership.” (Kiernan (September 1997), ‘The legacy of parental divorce: social, economic and family experiences in adulthood’, p. 33.) (p10)

“Are more likely to have children outside marriage or outside any partnership”

• “Men and women from disrupted families were twice as likely to have their first child outside marriage or a cohabiting union than those who grew up in intact two-parent families (12.6% versus 6.6% for women and 7.1% versus 4% for men). The increased risk of having children outside any union operates in large part because children from disrupted families are more likely to have their first child at an earlier age, which in turn increases the risk of having children outside a partnership. Some of the risk also occurs through the increased risk of childhood problems, especially for women.” (Kiernan (September 1997), ‘The legacy of parental divorce: social, economic and family experiences in adulthood’, pp. 28–30.” Pg. 15-18) (p10)

“More than half of divorces occur in low-conflict marriages – what can be called ‘good enough’ marriages – which have a high potential for being
salvaged (in one study, 64% of the couples who said they were unhappy, but stayed together and worked on their relationship, reported being happy five years later). Divorces in these low-conflict marriages can be very damaging to children.”

Sources:


112 Booth and Amato (2001), ‘Parental predivorce relations and offspring postdivorce well-being,’ pp.197-212

“The weight of evidence indicates that the traditional family based upon a married father and mother is still the best environment for raising children, and it forms the soundest basis for the wider society.” (p14)

“Although a good society should tolerate people’s right to live as they wish, it must also hold adults responsible for the consequences of their actions.” (p14)

“As J.S. Mill argued, a good society must share the lessons learnt from its experience and hold up ideals to which all can aspire.” (p14)

“‘Human beings owe to each other help to distinguish the better from the worse, and encouragement to choose the former and avoid the latter. They should be forever stimulating each other to increased exercise of their higher faculties and increased direction of their feelings and aims towards wise instead of foolish, elevating instead of degrading, objects and contemplations.’ John Stuart Mill, On Liberty, 1859” (p14)

C. TIPS FOR DADS - “SIXTEEN THINGS FATHERS CAN DO TO SUPPORT THEIR PREGNANT PARTNERS”

1. “Go with your partner to her prenatal visits. The baby’s heart starts beating 22 days after conception, or the fifth week of pregnancy, and you can hear it with an ultrasound anywhere between the seventh and twelfth weeks. During the second trimester, go with your partner if she needs an ultrasound. You can see the baby’s head, arms, hands, legs, and feet. You may even find out the sex of the baby. During the third trimester, ask how you can help during the delivery.”

2. “Watch videotapes, listen to audiotapes, check out the Internet, or read books about prenatal development, birthing, and becoming a parent.”

3. “Help plan for the baby. Talk with your partner about what you both want for your baby. Ask friends and family members if you can borrow a crib, changing table, or baby clothes. Many people are glad to let you use their things. Save a little money each week. It will make it easier once the baby arrives.”

4. “Go to classes that will teach you and your partner about childbirth.”

5. “Help your partner stay healthy during pregnancy. Help her eat many different foods. Watch what you eat too. If you eat right, you will make it easier for her. Help your partner stay away from alcohol. Alcohol can cause birth defects. Encourage her to drink juice or milk.”

6. “Help your partner stay away from street drugs. If you use illegal drugs, stop now, and if your partner uses them, get help for her. Also, encourage her to check with the doctor before taking any over-the-counter drugs or prescription drugs.”

7. “Make sure your partner stays away from dangerous household products. Strong cleansers, paint products, and insecticides can all harm your baby. Do not let her empty the cat litter box.”

8. “Exercise during pregnancy. Walk or swim together. Both are safe exercises and provide time together.”
9. “Be sure your partner gets enough rest. Help with the household chores. Encourage her to use relaxation exercises and join in. Stress can be very harmful to both mother and baby. Talk out differences in a supportive way. If you find yourself becoming angry and having difficulty controlling negative feelings, seek out counseling. Never use physical force, intimidation, belittling comments, or other abusive behaviors. These are not productive for any relationship and are especially harmful during pregnancy.”

10. “Understand the different changes both you and your partner are going through as you prepare for parenthood. Pregnancy causes many changes in how a woman feels about how her body is changing. You can still have sex. Talk to each other about what feels good.”

11. “Support your partner’s choice on how to feed the baby. Breast milk is best for the baby. If mom chooses bottle feeding, you can often take over the feeding of the baby and give mom a rest. Even if breast feeding, mom can pump milk into a bottle, which will allow your participation in the feeding of the baby.”

12. “To attach with your baby, take time to learn about the developmental stages and how nutrition, lifestyles, and stress can affect prenatal growth. Listen to your child’s heartbeat, feel the kicks. From the second trimester on, you can play the ‘tapping’ game. Each time the mother feels the unborn baby kick, you can respond by tapping her stomach in the same area. The unborn baby quickly learns this ‘call and response’ game. Talk and sing to your baby. Direct positive thoughts and loving feelings to your unborn child. Visualize yourself holding, touching, rocking, or talking to your child. Think about the kind of father you want to be to your child.”

13. “Find an infant massage class and attend with your partner. Infant massage is a wonderful way to soothe a baby.”

14. “Learn how to bathe, feed, diaper, hold, and comfort a baby. All of these activities will build a father’s confidence and enhance bonding with the child.”
15. “Find a ‘New Fathers’ support group or talk to other men who have had or are going to have new babies. Share feelings, ideas on supporting the pregnant mom, and tips to make sure you are taking care of yourself.”

16. “As soon as the baby is born, hold the baby and look into the baby’s eyes. If you talked to the baby before he or she was born, speak to him or her at birth, then he or she will probably recognize your voice.”


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D. TIPS FOR DADS - “CARING FOR NEW MOMS”

“The first few weeks home with a new baby are often a gauntlet of doubt, sleep deprivation, and frustration, with sporadic moments of joy when the baby goes to sleep. It gets a lot better. It is generally worse for Mom. She is recovering from birth and a C-section, riding an emotional and physical roller coaster, trying to breast-feed a screaming infant she may believe she is starving, and has little experienced help.”

“Life as she knew it has evaporated. Her traditional support structure is gone. She feels trapped and often is physically attached. Under the best of circumstances, she may get no more than a few hours rest a day. Exhausted and overwhelmed, as well as due to her ‘maternal instinct,’ she is expected to also know and do all the baby needs. Talk about a setup!”

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

• “Quickly learn to change diapers, burp, and calm your crying baby by jumping in from the start. Show mom she can count on you.”
• “Coordinate any help. Obtain what is needed from family, friends, or neighbors, and make sure it is actually helpful.”
• “Keep necessary resources available, including phone numbers of doctors, the hospital, and helpful books, and use them.”
• “Tell her she is doing great and will be a wonderful mom.”
• “Help her get some sleep, and try to get some yourself.”
• “Mom also may think she inherently is supposed to know it all, but may feel overwhelmed and lost.”
• “Reassure her that you are in it together, and you will get through it together. Be positive, constructive, encouraging, and help build her confidence.”
• “Pitch in as much as possible. In the middle of the night when the baby is crying and both of you are dead tired, reach deep and find the strength to get up and handle the baby. Sleep will do her good.”
• “On occasion, when your baby is calm, remind her of the miracle that she brought into your world. Together, check out your baby’s fingers, toes, and nose, and talk of the future—your child’s first date, first day at school, and of course, the first time he sleeps through the night.”
“Some new moms totally thrive like they were born to be a mom. Some babies sleep through the night right off and rarely cry. If so, enjoy, but do not count on it. Be aware that ‘natural’ moms and calm babies need just as much from dad, so do not be left out.”

“More than any other issue, veteran dads stress the importance of taking care of new moms. When you are dog tired and perhaps taking heat for not being perfect, being magnanimous with mom can be trying. Down the road, however, when you look back, you will want to know you were up to it, and you will want her to know too. Often the little things count the most. ‘Nice job, Mom’ when your baby goes to sleep after being fussy. The impromptu backrub that feels good and leaves mom feeling loved and appreciated.”

E. “TWENTY LONG-DISTANCE ACTIVITIES FOR DADS AT A DISTANCE”

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

1. “Go to the mall and have a photo of yourself put on a pillow case and then send it to your child. If you have a favorite cologne, you might want to put a little bit on the pillowcase to remind your child of you.”

2. “Purchase or make stickers of your child’s name and stick them over the names of a character in one of their favorite books. You also can get a picture of your child’s face and place it over the character’s face.”

3. “Make a video or audiotape of you reading bedtime stories. Send them to your child along with the book.”

4. “Arrange for flowers or pizza to be delivered to your child before or after a special event (e.g., a play, recital, or sports game). Include a note telling them how proud you are of their accomplishment.”

5. “Send a package containing all the things your child will need if he or she gets sick. For example, you could send a can of chicken noodle soup, a special blanket or pillowcase, a video or audiotape wishing them a speedy recovery, crossword puzzles, or a stuffed animal.”

6. “Send home a photo documentary of what you do all day when you are away. Be sure to include things like what you eat and how you travel.” “Things that you might think are boring, your kids will be very interested in seeing. Have your child do the same.”

7. Have a star officially named after your child.”

8. “Send a postcard attack. (Send a postcard every day for a week straight; try to send postcards from unique places.)”
9. “If both you and your child have access to cell phones, then go fishing with them from a distance.”

10. “Include surprises within your letters: fast food wrappers, foreign currency, pencil shavings, coasters, Band-Aids, your own art, flower petals, Sunday comics, sand, fortunes from cookies, newspaper clippings, stamps, or old shoe laces.”

11. “If both you and your child have access to the Internet, then go on a virtual field trip together. Be sure to use a chat program so you can communicate with each other while looking at the Web sites. A couple of places to start would be NASA’s Web site at http://www.nasa.gov or the PBS Web site at http://www.pbs.org.”

12. “Find unique things to write your letters on, for example, things your child likes—a favorite color of paper, stickers, or pictures of things they like; fun objects—coaster, napkins, paper tray liners at restaurants, airsickness bags, old handkerchiefs, or pictures of you or of favorite spots; paper cut into special shapes (holiday shapes like shamrocks or hearts); or puzzles (cut your finished letter into pieces; try sending one piece at a time).”

13. “Send home some money so that your child can go to the ice cream parlor. Be sure to send a special letter along that can only be read at the ice cream parlor. If you both have access to cell phones, then you can both be at an ice cream parlor talking over your ice cream.”

14. “Write a newsletter (have a regular issue of your own family newsletter with columns about each child, family events, and exciting news).”

15. “If your child does not already have access to a speakerphone, then buy one. Set the phone in the middle of the room, and you will be able to have dinner with them, be there as they brush their teeth, and get ready for bed.”

16. “Start a letter and take it with you throughout the day. Add a sentence every now and then and be sure to add where you are when you write the different sentences (i.e., an elevator, taxi, or café).”
17. “Play Internet games together like Jeopardy or Wheel of Fortune. Other games that can be found on the Internet include golf, card games, chess, checkers, and strategy games.”

18. “Make a package that contains cookie cutters and the non-perishable ingredients of your child’s favorite cookie so you can ‘help’ them bake while you are away.”

19. “Choose a photo from your photo album that you can send to your child and then write a letter explaining the events surrounding it. Also, if both you and your child have access to the Internet, have a family home page.”

20. “Begin a life’s lessons booklet. Each week write down a few of the lessons you have learned in life and how you learned those lessons. When the booklet is full, send it to your child to use as he or she begins or continues the journey of life.”

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

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


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F. LETTERS FROM TEENS TO JOSH MCDOWELL

“I receive thousands of cards and letters from young people every year. My eyes light up when I read one like this, which I received recently from a high-school girl. Here’s an excerpt:

“Dear Josh,
My parents are both Christians and have been for many years. I have been raised in church all my life. My parents have been together for twenty years this July. They are the most loving, understanding people God could have given me as parents. I don’t know what I would do without my wonderful parents. They are the greatest!”

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But for every encouraging letter like this, I must get a dozen or more heartbreaking letters from young men and women who feel disconnected from one or both of their parents. Here are some of the sad words kids have written to me.” (Josh D. McDowell, “The Disconnected Generation,” W Publishing Group, 2000.— p 11)

“Dear Josh,
I am so lonely I can hardly stand it. I want to be special to someone, but there’s no one who cares about me. I can’t remember anyone touching me, smiling at me, or wanting to be with me. I feel so empty inside.”

“Dear Josh,
When I heard you speak, you talked a lot about God loving me. You said that Jesus Christ is a friend of teenagers like me. It’s hard to believe that when no one else cares about me. It’s just hard to believe anyone could like me. I want to love others, but I don’t know how. When I try to be friendly, I am afraid of being rejected. This has been going on so long it’s hard to believe things could ever change. I’m really jealous of people who have a lot of friends.”

“Dear Josh,
Sometimes I feel so alone, like no one cares. My folks live in their own world and I live in mine. It didn’t always seem to be this way. I know it sounds crazy, but I want them to leave me alone, and yet I want to be a part of their lives. Most of the time they do leave me alone and it gets pretty lonely. –Danny"

“Dear Josh,
My ex-girlfriend Kristina is having a lot of problems. When she was little her parents divorced and her dad moved to Florida. Then he came back and she spent the week at her dad’s. And when her dad and stepmom were at work, she was babysitting her brother and sister, and they had a boy come over. They didn’t do anything but her dad did find out that he was there. Well, he whipped her and then the fight started. And she ended up telling her dad that she hated him and she wasn’t ever coming back. She also said that she didn’t like God and that she didn’t want anything to do with him. –Steven”

“Dear Josh,
I have so many emotions built up inside of me that I’m so scared to let them all out. I feel that if I don’t let some of them out, I’m gonna explode. But on Thursday night, I let some out. The major one is that I hunger for someone to love me. –Joni”

“Dear Josh,
I want to thank you for sharing what you did about how girls who didn’t have father figures are very vulnerable. I used to believe any guy that said ‘I love you’, really and truly loved me. I know you really meant it when you said, ‘I love all of y’all!’ You’ve shown me more love in one hour than I’ve ever known in my almost 15 years. I wish you were my daddy. You’re kids are real lucky. –Sheri”

“Dear Josh,
I was raped at 15, it was exactly one month before my 16th birthday. Do you know how hard that was? I didn’t even tell my mom until about 1 month ago. My mom and dad are divorced and that’s hard because my dad has not been there for me. I tried to commit suicide once, well more
than once. …I am so glad that you are so straight forward with your youth
groups. Thank You! -Alison (18)”

“Dear Josh,
My parents are the most loving, understanding people God could have
given me as parents. I realized how good I have it and not to take it for
granted. I called my parents in Alabama to tell them both that I loved them.
– Leigh Anne”

“Dear Josh,
I’m not the product of a divorced household, I don’t do drugs, and I don’t
always get in trouble. Sometimes I feel like my voice is invisible, that it gets
swept away in the tidal wave of greater worries and cares of life. When
cries for affection or attention go unheard, it does hurt like a blow to the gut
or a slice of the heart. – Nicole”

“Dear Josh,
I am 13 years old and I admire you. You are the greatest person that I
know and you are the only one that knows what you are talking about. The
night when you were talking about dads it really touched my heart. I have a
dad, but I really don’t consider him my dad because all he ever does is yell
at us and work. The last time we ever went out together is never. He
doesn’t even ask me how my day went or anything that a dad should. I try
to do something with him or talk to him. All he wants to do is ignore me
and yell at me for no reason. When I was six my dad beat me. Everyday
when I would come home from school my mom would be at work, and my
sisters and brother would go outside and he would whip me. I have had
that in my heart for seven years. About 3 months I finally told my mother,
but she said she couldn’t do anything about it. I have thought and tried
committing suicide because I thought no one loved me…I could not see for
3 days because I cried so much. I am like a brick wall to everyone that
surrounds me…It was just that you talked about ‘pick me up daddy’ it really
tore my heart up into little pieces. I wanted to thank you for your kindness.
Thank you so much. I love you like you’re my father. Love your friend
forever, --Catrina”
“Dear Josh,
For 27 years, I have longed for a father whom I could hug without feeling repulsed. I have longed for a father who could love me the way God meant for a father to love his daughter. That has been my prayer for as long as I could remember. My desire for this has been especially strong over the past six years since I came forward about my father (sexually abusing me). You are a very compassionate man and I am sure it becomes quite difficult to hear so many stories like mine, but your compassion is a gift from God. You gave me a gift yesterday of having a loving father, even if it was only for a brief period of time. God never ceases to amaze me. He can turn a five minute conversation and the simple gesture of a hug into a life-changing event. – Alycia”

“Dear Josh,
About four months ago I fell in love. But it wasn’t with a person or a thing, it was with GOD! Josh you are so right. God loves me and I know you do too. I just wish my real parents did. I feel worthless. Patti”

“Dear Josh,
I thank you so much for what you have done for me and my friends this week. You have treated me so well. I can tell even in your voice how much you care for all of us. In my life, I haven’t gone through much, but I have always had a strong feeling of loneliness. In fact yesterday I saw a guy my age by the lake with his head in his hands. I went over and we talked for awhile. Over all I found that we had been both filled with loneliness and confusion for years. I don’t even know how to explain it. You and your family have really helped me see God’s love once again. I don’t know how to even express the changes you have brought in my life. – Kendra”

“Dear Josh,
I wanted to thank you for everything you did for me, including being my dad this week. I am so thankful for that because I don’t have a dad because my parents are divorced. Sometimes I feel very lonely not to have my dad for certain things in my life. I really don’t know my father because he divorced my mom when my sister was 1, my brother was 5, and I was 3. So I really don’t know the way he is. I wish you were my father because you treated me like a daughter this week. I am in the process of healing. I have
much anger inside of me. Every time I look at your picture, I just start to cry because I miss you so much. I want to let you know that I rededicated my life to Jesus because of you. I just wish that I had you as my dad, but I don’t. Every day that goes by I want to cry because I can not see you. Josh, I really wish you were my dad. If had three wishes, one of my wishes would be that you were my dad. Your daughter for the week, -- Christina”

“Dear Josh-
I realize that you don’t know me and I’m only a face in a crowd of teenagers…”Why don’t I have a father like you?” You made me cry today when you talked about your relationship with your daughter and how you show her you love her. I never cry. You learn not to in my family. All I want is a chance… I wish I had a father. I wish someone loved me like you love your family. You don’t know how badly I want to understand things, how much I want a chance to, and it may sound stupid but if someone would just hold me for a minute, no strings, no games, well I can’t really explain it.”

“Dear Josh-
I have been a born again Christian for two years. I am one of the 28.6 % of youth that is lonely and depressed. I have many friends but I am depressed. I am saved, but I am lonely. There are times I don’t feel loved. My dad drinks a little and works a lot. He isn’t around very much…- Michael”

“Dear Josh,
I don’t want a divorce like my mum’s experience or my brother and my sister! My family are Christians despite their divorces. In Birmingham, when I shook hands with you and you gave me a ‘peck’ on the cheek, I must say it made me feel ‘loved.’ A peck on the cheek is a fatherly expression. I’ve never had a kiss!!! I wish I’d had a father to phone me and say, ‘I love you Honey!”

“Dear Josh-
I am 15 years old. I watch your show every time I can. Thank you so much for just caring. I know you have never met me but its almost like you are
the dad I have never had. You see my real dad left me and my mom when I was a baby and just 3 years ago my step dad left. Neither one of the would fall under the name ‘Father.’ The other night you said most kids don’t want to have sex they just want someone to care. That is so true! I have almost fallen into the ‘sex trap’ because I wanted a man to love me. – Jennifer”

“Dear Josh-
I’m going to be sixteen on July 1st. I was eleven years old when my real dad molested me. Because of that I have tried to kill myself three times. I have closed up. I hated people. I’m saved now but I need to learn to love again. I’m tired of being alone, but yet afraid to trust someone. I’m afraid to trust people again. I love my Mother. I tell her a lot but I can’t tell her this. I don’t want her to be disappointed in me. I’m so afraid to love.”

“Dear Josh-
I am 15 years old. I’m one of those teenagers that is in search of their father’s love. I’m still in the search of love. Could you please pray for me and also for my dad and mom. Just pray that they will see that we (teens) do spell love ‘TIME.’ I wish so much that my daddy would do half the things with me that you’ve done with yours…he has not done anything since I was about five. And I’ve really needed it the past eight years. – Sharon”

“Dear Diary-
I felt lonely tonight. And I thought about the many times in my life that I have felt lonely, intense loneliness. As thought I were here all alone. And I realized that what I was lonely for was a ‘DADDY.’ To be able to call him up when I hurt and hear him say he understands and to listen to me. And I could call him because of our special relationship as I grew up. But I never had that with my dad. And so I am lonely without that link to my past.

And then I thought about the young girl who this very night will lose her virginity because she is searching for love, her daddy’s love. And I wanted to be able to stop her somehow and tell her that she’ll never find it in another man. How my heart is wrenched when I think of this girl… when I
think of myself, so many years ago. And my life has been a search for my
daddy’s love. And in Jesus, I am found and I am loved. FOREVER!
Source: Personal Diary, August 11, 1987”

“Dear Josh,

I’m 16 years old. I was so touched by your speech today. I have never
been touched before. Thank you.

I have a father, but my parents are divorced and yes, I still see my Dad
and my parents are still friends, but when I am with my father he treats me
more like an acquaintance rather than a father.

Today I felt your love and I really felt like I had a true father figure. I was
holding back a lot of tears and a lot of emotions. One thing I want more
than anything in this world is to marry the woman that I love and to be a
father. I know if I can be just half as good a father as you are, my children
will be truly blessed. I really did feel your love today, and thank you Josh,
for your speech today means so much to me. I can’t thank you enough. I
felt like I really was with a father today, and that someday I will be as good
a father and husband as you are. I love you. – Frank”

“I love you Josh. You’re the father I always wish I had! -- Kim”

“Dear Josh,

Our son is 19 years old and away at college. We received a letter from
him today and so very timely before your presentation tonight. It cut my
husband to the core of his heart. I pray you, would read this tonight to
father’s to let them know how a son needs his father’s love, affection, and
attention.

You wrote the longest letter you ever have to me. That means a lot to
me. Dad, I’ve always wanted to do things with you, but you never wanted
to do anything. I know you were very busy and have a hard time keeping
your head above water. But, if we both sacrifice a little, then maybe things
will get better between us. Mom makes me cry sometimes with her letters
but this one really has me going. I love you very much and I hope that we
can do things together before it is too late! Love your son.”

“My dearest Mr. McDowell,

I just want someone who will love me and not hurt me. I have had over
100 boyfriends in two years. Every one of them hurt me in one form or
another. One of them got drunk one night and beat me to the point of
death. I was away from home living on the streets of Spokane trying to
heal. My parents thought that I had just run away. When I came back my
body was healed, but my heart and soul held scars that still to this day
plague me. I feel as though I have what I would call a black or hard heart.
I just want love. The love of someone who will not hurt me. My father’s
harsh words have caused me more pain than anything. He has called me
a whore, a bitch, a slut. I am none of those. You want to know why he call
me this? Because I loved one guy more than anything.

I am adopted and my real mother hated me. She does not even know
who my father is. I was an accident. You want to know what my favorite
quote is? “Meaningless, meaningless, all is meaningless,” or “Never free,
ever me, so I dub thee unforgiven.” That is how I feel!

You want to know how I deal with all of this, I usually dress in all black
and wear black makeup and call myself a vampire. All I want is to love.
You want to know why I do not wear black anymore? Every time I do, my
father hits me. I am getting used to it, but I do not want any more pain. No
more! I just want to die. My nickname and the name I go by more often is
Black Rose. The sign of death and pain.

Dead in the Heart,
Amber

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1. Daddy,
   As I have gotten older, the hurt and anger I feel toward you has grown stronger.

   I remember being only 5 years old, and being so sick to my stomach, and crying, literally crying out for you to sit with me. But you weren’t there. I just knew that only my daddy would make me feel better. When you were home, you were mean, impatient and couldn’t care less about me or my sister.

   When I was nine, I remember waking in the middle of the night to hear you telling my mom that you didn’t care about her anymore (while she was begging and pleading with you, almost on her knees) and you were so cold. I could see you from my bed. The next day we moved out and every night I would blow you a kiss and imagine that kiss floating in the air until it made it to your cheek. That was the only way I could get myself to sleep, and even then it was a restless sleep.

   After several reconciliations with my mom, when I was twelve, you finally left. Do you remember promising me you would come see me on Halloween only to show up at midnight after I was asleep? You eventually just gave up on me and at one point, I didn’t even know where you were for two years. Then you called out of the blue one cold and cloudy day. I was so happy to hear from you, because at that time, I was still your little girl. And then, gone again. My God I went through that until I was in my early twenties. Then I had a child of my own and decided that I couldn’t constantly worry about you and wonder where you were. I just couldn’t try to make you love me anymore. I was mentally exhausted. I concentrated on raising my beautiful daughter. So for many years I blocked you out of my mind and life. However, in the last few years I have begun to experience a hurt that I have been holding in for such a long time. Yesterday, I literally sobbed all day long because I was yearning for a father and daughter relationship with you, but I know that will never happen. I know that you are now a lonely, depressed man and that is truly sad. You did this to yourself when you could have had so much more with a loving family, but you chose
chasing women, drugs and alcohol. Sometimes I hate you so much and I know I need to let that go. Maybe someday I will.

2. Papi,
I’ve struggled with anger and bitterness towards you. I’m angry that you were present but you were never emotionally present with us and you chose work, your ministry, and everything else above us. I’m grateful that you were there for us financially. Not a lot of children get that. But, we lived in the same house and still live in the same house but yet you cannot form or try to form a relationship with me nor my other siblings. I’m angry at you for never loving my mom even though you’ve been married to her for more than 25 years. You say you regret that you never developed a relationship with us when we were younger. I appreciate that. But, you say that and yet you still never try to have one! I didn’t want a Father I wanted a DAD. You were a pastor for 15 years, you taught people to love their wives and children, but yet you could never do that for me, my siblings, nor my mom. It pains me to think back on how much my older sisters had to go through with your family, and your dead marriage. I thank God I had them because I know I wouldn’t have been able to survive that type of environment. They protected me and loved me unconditionally. I try so hard to forgive you but the anger and bitterness sometimes rears its ugly head. Forgiveness isn’t really for you but for me. I still Love you Papi and I hope someday that you will change, not for us, but for mom. Love, Sara

3. Dear Dad,
When I was little you were my HERO. I loved you so much. I loved visiting you in Hawaii, anywhere. But one day I grew up. It was then that I realized you weren’t really there. Memories started to flash back. When we visited you, you would bring us to all the Grown Up places you usually go. Bars. One night you even left your two young beautiful daughters in the car sleeping while you partied it up in remote Virginia City, NV.

But then all the dots started to connect. Always used by guys, emotional problems, drug addiction.

I almost lost my life.
Thankfully my true Father, Jesus Christ came into my life. He said…when your father or mother forsakes you, I will take you up…..

It has been so true. I love my God so much, and I’m so glad He loves me too. It took me a long time to finally realize how much my FATHER IN HEAVEN loves me, but he was patient.

I have been clean for 15 years from a heroin/meth addiction, I have been married for 8 years, have 3 beautiful children with one on the way. And I LOVE MY JESUS!!!

I also am grateful that God has helped me forgive you. I truly forgive you…but am sad that the relationship is not there, but I can only hope that you will find God as your Father as well.

4. Dad,
I am angry with you. In 26 years, I have never verbalized that to you.

You were never there for us, and I am angry with you.

The only time you noticed or talked to me as a kid was to tell me I was not as thin as my older sister, and I am angry with you. I stopped eating for two years. When I was down to 100 pounds, you smiled at me and told me “almost looked skinny”. When I was down to 90 pounds and you finally asked why, I told you it was because you picked on me. You shook your head and walked away, and I am angry with you.

You ignored your son who wanted his dad in his life more than anything, and I am angry with you. He developed a relationship with a “father” figure who molested him repeatedly, and I am angry with you. You told that hurt little boy that it was his fault he was molested, and I am furious with you.

You never once encouraged your other son’s journey to find out who he was, and I am angry with you.

He turned to drugs to feel powerful. You told him he was going to end up in prison or dead. You turned your back on him, and I am angry with you.
I spent two days in Globe getting him out of jail. He was the size of a man in that orange jumpsuit, but he was very much a scared child. You were not there, and I am angry with you.

You did not attend your oldest daughter’s wedding. Dad she was the most beautiful bride, and you missed it. You passed up the opportunity to walk her down the aisle. Did you know she spent days picking out the song for her father/daughter dance? I saw the tears in her eyes when the music played, but you didn’t have to, and I am angry with you.

Your youngest daughter stops people when she walks in a room because she is so beautiful, but you’ve never told her that. She folds her arms across her chest and walks with her head down because she is not aware of her own intrinsic value, and I am angry with you.

But more than angry Dad, I feel sorry for you. You have missed out on 6 beautiful lives. Despite your absence, every one of your kids is thriving and doing well, and that is to the credit of God. Even if you never ask me for it, I forgive you, Dad. Genuine forgiveness does not include the expectation that people will change, but serves to set the hurt free. I reached that point in my life a few years ago, and I no longer hold on to bitterness. I hope this movie crosses your path one day and your eyes are opened to what your inaction has done. When that day comes, I hope your kids still have a place in their lives for you. I guarantee you, you will be amazed at what you find in them.

5. Dad,
After not hearing from you for 17 years I cannot believe we have finally begun to open up a line of communication. I can’t believe how much I have missed you. Although I am 40 years old I still have such a need for you to be my dad. Now to know that you are in the hospital with serious health conditions scares me. Just when I think I may have you back in my life. Please get better! We have so much to catch up on. I forgave you years ago for walking away and want you to be a very real part of my life. I thought it would be hard for me to say, but it is not….I love you dad!!

6. Dad,
I have often thought about how blessed I am to have you as my dad. I do think that I have always known that our family was special. I knew
that I was privileged to be a part of something that not everyone was able to experience. At least I thought I knew.

But

Every day that goes by that I meet another young kid who is growing up without a dad in their home…

Every day that I talk with a friend who is still unwilling to believe that she deserves to be treated with respect…

Every day that I see the lifelong pain that wounds and scars my friends whose mom and dad chose divorce…

Every day that I watch these men choose {anything} over their families…

On those days I am overwhelmed with gratitude for you, dad. I am thankful to you
  for being present in my life
  for choosing my mother
  for cherishing her
  for respecting her
  for loving her
  for sacrificing for her
  for honoring her
  for being faithful to her
  for working hard to provide for us
  for investing in each of your girls
  for encouraging us when we were overwhelmed
  for helping us pick up the pieces when we made a mess of things
  for helping us pick up the pieces when we made a mess of things again
  for offering gentle guidance when we lost our way
  for loving us – even when we threw it back in your face
  for being patient with us
  for choosing to restore us, not to punish us
  for giving us hugs and kisses each night before bed
  for protecting us and making us feel safe
  for not being ashamed to wear your heart on your sleeve
  for pursuing your dreams
for encouraging me to pursue my dreams
for admitting your failures – and for allowing me to admit mine
for pushing me to do better
for telling me who Jesus is – and for showing me who Jesus is
for being willing to change
for being passionate about the things that are important to you – and to us
I am thankful that you never hesitate to tell us how much you love us. And you have consistently showed us just how much you love us.

You have given me such an incredible story to share, dad. You have given me purpose.

It is because of you that I will fight for these fatherless kids. Because I know just how much they are missing.

I love you, daddy.

7. Dad… I guess,
Some of my best memories are about you and most of my worst memories, also about you. You left me crying in the kitchen that day and I’ll never understand why. You suggested that my new step-father should just adopt me and I’ll never understand why. We haven’t talked in so many years and I’ll never understand why. You have left a gaping hole in my heart and I’ll never understand why. I thought I had overcome the hurt and confusion until the day my first son was born. It was on that day that I felt a love for someone that I never had experienced. I was THE happiest man on earth and then thoughts of you flooded my mind. How could you abandon me the way you did? What is it that I did to you that would cause a love a father has for his son to be shattered?

I walk around in this life with a pain that seems unbearable at times, a pain which must be hidden from most. If they could see inside they would turn and run. My wife has caught a glimpse of the agony and the damage that has been done and it certainly has taken a toll on our relationship. She tries to understand and she supports me almost any way she can. I thank God for her every chance I get. Many times I have asked God to take this pain from me and for some reason He has not. He will not allow me to be tested beyond my strength though and eventually, with His help, I will overcome. We should ALL be ever
grateful that we have a Father in heaven that will never forsake or abandon us.

Just know this, even though it burdens me that you have chosen to disregard this relationship, I will not give up. If for some reason you choose to pick back up where we left off, I would be happy to. I will continue to pray for you and our relationship. I don’t hate you. I hate what I have been through, but I don’t hate you. I will continue to raise my three sons striving to be the father I should be. I will not be perfect and may even fail them at times but I will never abandon them, no matter what. They will probably never be made aware of the excess baggage that I carry. I will never talk bad about you to them. Maybe one day you will know them and get to enjoy them as I have.

I am reminded of you every day. Each time I glance into the mirror I see your face. When I look down I see your hands doing things for me. I have even passed some of your traits on to my boys and sometimes catch a glimpse of you in them. Even though you’re not around you’re so much of what and who I am. It’s a shame that it had to be this way.

Your Son

8. Dearest Poppy,
Thank you for being there for the family all those years you provided for us...for your love of nature, the soil and gardening, which you imparted to me. Thank you for your love of your profession... writing... which you also imparted to me, along with your steadfastness, tenacity, powers of endurance, and commitment to excellence. Thank you for believing in me, encouraging and supporting me at every step in my career. Whatever I set my sights on now, I know you are with me, always. I love you, Poppy. Your daughter, D.

9. Dear Dad,
You will never know how much damage you have caused me. I remember when I was little you used to just ignore me. All you ever wanted was your drugs and beer and in the end they won. You told me once that you never gave a crap out me and that your drugs came first. So maybe it was the best that you left. I sometimes see my husband with my boys and how he treats them with so much love, And I think to
myself how much I wish that was me, I wish my dad could have loved me. And that’s all I have is a wish that I know will never come true..

10. Hi dad,
Your whole life you have had the chance to know me and you don’t. In the end there was always something more important, something else that got your attention. Never did you give me the idea that I was your No. 1.

And now I am a father and I know what is takes to be one. What it is to love your child. What it is like to always put your child first. Not because I have to, but because I want to.

And now I choose the joy of being the father that I am over the pain of being your son.

I wish things had gone differently, but they haven’t. At least you taught me how not to do things.

Goodbye dad

11. Dad,
You didn’t have to be my father but by some divine intervention I came into your’s and mom’s life. Mom says I completed your marriage. I don’t know quite how but I’m just so happy that you were my dad and no one else’s. You’re the best man in the whole world. You taught me how to be a tough little girl and how to do so many things that many people never even dream of. I will always hold all of your lessons close to my heart. I’ll never forget all the words of encouragement, the attitude I learned from you, and the smile that always told me you were proud. Well Dad, I’m proud too. Proud to be your daughter. Even though your blood doesn’t run through my veins, your love does. And I feel it ever day. You complete my life just like I complete your marriage. I truly love you more than you will ever know.

Love you forever,

“Lou”
12. Daddy how can i tell you that i love you you have always been there for us i remember as a little girl you always took time out even when you were tired from working all day to play with us and on your days off i remember you riding bikes with us. Even today as ill as you are your family still comes first you are forever telling us all how much you love us. You grew up without a father or a father model but you turned out to be a wonderful father I only wish my sons had a father as wonderful as you. pray that i will have you for a while longer for you r our life We love u dad You mean everything to us. You have been a wonderful husband to mom, Thank you for being you. We love you

13. Dad,
Every ounce of goodness of me comes from you. You showed me every day what real love is; your committment to mom. When she was so sick and could not be a real wife or companion to you, you never gave up on her. You came home everyday, doing what she couldn’t. It must have been tough to try to raise two girls and not to have your wife’s loving words or support. You reminded me often that you loved me; told me that everything you did was for me and sister and mom. You told us that you loved mom so much even though she was a different person. You still talk about how one day you will know her again. You took the time to talk to me and teach me what it takes to survive in the world. You gave me my work ethic; instilling it into me in my teenage years and keeping me out of trouble. You told me about mom; who she was before her mental illness. Where would I be without a Father like you? Even though I’ve lived in different places, and am far from home; where ever I go, there you are. You are a part of me and always will be. To say you are a great dad just isn’t enough. You have impacted the lives of not only your children but of your grand children. I LOVE YOU!!!

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H. “YES, MARGARET, FATHERS DO MATTER”

“Yes, Margaret, Fathers Do Matter”

“Anthropologist Margaret Mead famously said, ‘A father is a biological necessity but a social accident.’ In effect, she meant to suggest that dads are irrelevant in a child’s life (beyond conception, of course). That likely was never true, but it is an even greater fallacy today.”

“A new report by the Pew Research Center indicates that there are 2 million stay-at-home dads in this country (some father groups estimate the number would be closer to 7 million if it included caregiver dads who work part-time out of the home).”

“Do Fathers Matter: What Science is Telling Us About The Parent We’ve Overlooked, analyzes research showing that dads have a profound influence on their kids—socially, developmentally, economically, psychologically. They are role models and companions, and their positive presence is a big plus for kids. Here's some of what we know now:”

- “Men use bigger words and longer sentences around babies than moms, which may help boost their language development.”
- “Dads’ tendency to let kids figure things out for themselves helps them become better problem-solvers.”
- “A father’s early involvement with his daughter leads to a reduced risk of early puberty and teen pregnancy. Higher math scores, too.”
- “Healthy interaction with dad helps a child forge strong, fulfilling relationships later in life.”
- “Kids who feel close to their fathers are twice as likely to go to college or get a steady job after high school.”
- “Kids with nurturing, involved fathers develop stronger social skills, are better at sharing, and make friends more easily.”
• “The more physical, exciting play style of dads—playing tag, wrestling—helps teach kids emotional self-control.”

“…it’s clear that dads aren’t merely relevant but essential to their kids.”


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I. “DAN QUAYLE WAS RIGHT”

“Dan Quayle Was Right”

“The social-science evidence is in: though it may benefit the adults involved, the dissolution of intact two-parent families is harmful to large numbers of children. Moreover, the author argues, family diversity in the form of increasing numbers of single-parent and stepparent families does not strengthen the social fabric but, rather, dramatically weakens and undermines society”

by Barbara Dafoe Whitehead

“Divorce and out-of-wedlock childbirth are transforming the lives of American children. In the postwar generation more than 80 percent of children grew up in a family with two biological parents who were married to each other. By 1980 only 50 percent could expect to spend their entire childhood in an intact family. If current trends continue, less than half of all children born today will live continuously with their own mother and father throughout childhood. Most American children will spend several years in a single-mother family. Some will eventually live in stepparent families, but because stepfamilies are more likely to break up than intact (by which I mean two-biological-parent) families, an increasing number of children will experience family breakup two or even three times during childhood.”

“According to a growing body of social-scientific evidence, children in families disrupted by divorce and out-of-wedlock birth do worse than children in intact families on several measures of well-being. Children in single-parent families are six times as likely to be poor. They are also likely to stay poor longer. Twenty-two percent of children in one-parent families will experience poverty during childhood for seven years or more, as compared with only two percent of children in two parent families. A 1988 survey by the National Center for Health Statistics found that children in single-parent families are two to three times as likely as children in two-parent families to have emotional and behavioral problems. They are also more likely to drop out of high school, to get pregnant as teenagers, to abuse drugs, and to be in trouble with the law. Compared with children in intact families, children from disrupted families are at a much higher risk for physical or sexual abuse.”
“Contrary to popular belief, many children do not ‘bounce back’ after divorce or remarriage. Difficulties that are associated with family breakup often persist into adulthood. Children who grow up in single-parent or stepparent families are less successful as adults, particularly in the two domains of life--love and work--that are most essential to happiness. Needless to say, not all children experience such negative effects. However, research shows that many children from disrupted families have a harder time achieving intimacy in a relationship, forming a stable marriage, or even holding a steady job.”

Despite this growing body of evidence, it is nearly impossible to discuss changes in family structure without provoking angry protest. Many people see the discussion as no more than an attack on struggling single mothers and their children: Why blame single mothers when they are doing the very best they can? After all, the decision to end a marriage or a relationship is wrenching, and few parents are indifferent to the painful burden this decision imposes on their children. Many take the perilous step toward single parenthood as a last resort, after their best efforts to hold a marriage together have failed. Consequently, it can seem particularly cruel and unfeeling to remind parents of the hardships their children might suffer as a result of family breakup. Other people believe that the dramatic changes in family structure, though regrettable, are impossible to reverse. Family breakup is an inevitable feature of American life, and anyone who thinks otherwise is indulging in nostalgia or trying to turn back the clock. Since these new family forms are here to stay, the reasoning goes, we must accord respect to single parents, not criticize them. Typical is the view expressed by a Brooklyn woman in a recent letter to The New York Times: ‘Let’s stop moralizing or blaming single parents and unwed mothers, and give them the respect they have earned and the support they deserve.’”

“Such views are not to be dismissed. Indeed, they help to explain why family structure is such an explosive issue for Americans. The debate about it is not simply about the social-scientific evidence, although that is surely an important part of the discussion. It is also a debate over deeply held and often conflicting values. How do we begin to reconcile our long-standing belief in equality and diversity with an impressive body of evidence that suggests that not all family structures produce equal outcomes for children? How can we square traditional notions of public support for dependent women and children with a belief in women’s right to
pursue autonomy and independence in childbearing and child-rearing? How do we uphold the freedom of adults to pursue individual happiness in their private relationships and at the same time respond to the needs of children for stability, security, and permanence in their family lives? What do we do when the interests of adults and children conflict? These are the difficult issues at stake in the debate over family structure.”

“In the past these issues have turned out to be too difficult and too politically risky for debate. In the mid-1960s Daniel Patrick Moynihan, then an assistant secretary of labor, was denounced as a racist for calling attention to the relationship between the prevalence of black single-mother families and the lower socioeconomic standing of black children. For nearly twenty years the policy and research communities backed away from the entire issue. In 1980 the Carter Administration convened a historic White House Conference on Families, designed to address the growing problems of children and families in America. The result was a prolonged, publicly subsidized quarrel over the definition of family. No President since has tried to hold a national family conference. Last year, at a time when the rate of out-of-wedlock births had reached a historic high, Vice President Dan Quayle was ridiculed for criticizing Murphy Brown. In short, every time the issue of family structure has been raised, the response has been first controversy, then retreat, and finally silence.”

“Yet it is also risky to ignore the issue of changing family structure. In recent years the problems associated with family disruption have grown. Overall child well-being has declined, despite a decrease in the number of children per family, an increase in the educational level of parents, and historically high levels of public spending. After dropping in the 1960s and 1970s, the proportion of children in poverty has increased dramatically, from 15 percent in 1970 to 20 percent in 1990, while the percentage of adult Americans in poverty has remained roughly constant. The teen suicide rate has more than tripled. Juvenile crime has increased and become more violent. School performance has continued to decline. There are no signs that these trends are about to reverse themselves.”

“If we fail to come to terms with the relationship between family structure and declining child well-being, then it will be increasingly difficult to improve children's life prospects, no matter how many new programs the federal government funds. Nor will we be able to make progress in bettering school performance or reducing crime or improving the quality of the nation's
future work force—all domestic problems closely connected to family breakup. Worse, we may contribute to the problem by pursuing policies that actually increase family instability and breakup.”

“From Death to Divorce”

“Across time and across cultures, family disruption has been regarded as an event that threatens a child's well-being and even survival. This view is rooted in a fundamental biological fact: unlike the young of almost any other species, the human child is born in an abjectly helpless and immature state. Years of nurture and protection are needed before the child can achieve physical independence. Similarly, it takes years of interaction with at least one but ideally two or more adults for a child to develop into a socially competent adult. Children raised in virtual isolation from human beings, though physically intact, display few recognizably human behaviors. The social arrangement that has proved most successful in ensuring the physical survival and promoting the social development of the child is the family unit of the biological mother and father. Consequently, any event that permanently denies a child the presence and protection of a parent jeopardizes the life of the child.”

“The classic form of family disruption is the death of a parent. Throughout history this has been one of the risks of childhood. Mothers frequently died in childbirth, and it was not unusual for both parents to die before the child was grown. As recently as the early decades of this century children commonly suffered the death of at least one parent. Almost a quarter of the children born in this country in 1900 lost one parent by the time they were fifteen years old. Many of these children lived with their widowed parent, often in a household with other close relatives. Others grew up in orphanages and foster homes.”

“The meaning of parental death, as it has been transmitted over time and faithfully recorded in world literature and lore, is unambiguous and essentially unchanging. It is universally regarded as an untimely and tragic event. Death permanently severs the parent-child bond, disrupting forever one of the child's earliest and deepest human attachments. It also deprives a child of the presence and protection of an adult who has a biological stake in, as well as an emotional commitment to, the child's survival and well-being. In short, the death of a parent is the most extreme and severe loss a child can suffer.”
“Because a child is so vulnerable in a parent’s absence, there has been a common cultural response to the death of a parent: an outpouring of support from family, friends, and strangers alike. The surviving parent and child are united in their grief as well as their loss. Relatives and friends share in the loss and provide valuable emotional and financial assistance to the bereaved family. Other members of the community show sympathy for the child, and public assistance is available for those who need it. This cultural understanding of parental death has formed the basis for a tradition of public support to widows and their children. Indeed, as recently as the beginning of this century widows were the only mothers eligible for pensions in many states, and today widows with children receive more-generous welfare benefits from Survivors Insurance than do other single mothers with children who depend on Aid to Families With Dependent Children.”

“It has taken thousands upon thousands of years to reduce the threat of parental death. Not until the middle of the twentieth century did parental death cease to be a commonplace event for children in the United States. By then advances in medicine had dramatically reduced mortality rates for men and women.”

“At the same time, other forms of family disruption--separation, divorce, out-of wedlock birth--were held in check by powerful religious, social, and legal sanctions. Divorce was widely regarded both as a deviant behavior, especially threatening to mothers and children, and as a personal lapse: ‘Divorce is the public acknowledgment of failure’ a 1940s sociology textbook noted. Out-of-wedlock birth was stigmatized, and stigmatization is a powerful means of regulating behavior, as any smoker or overeater will testify. Sanctions against nonmarital childbirth discouraged behavior that hurt children and exacted compensatory behavior that helped them. Shotgun marriages and adoption, two common responses to nonmarital birth, carried a strong message about the risks of premarital sex and created an intact family for the child.”

“Consequently, children did not have to worry much about losing a parent through divorce or never having had one because of nonmarital birth. After a surge in divorces following the Second World War, the rate leveled off. Only 11 percent of children born in the 1950s would by the time they turned eighteen see their parents separate or divorce. Out-of-wedlock childbirth
barely figured as a cause of family disruption. In the 1950s and early 1960s, five percent of the nation's births were out of wedlock. Blacks were more likely than whites to bear children outside marriage, but the majority of black children born in the twenty years after the Second World War were born to married couples. The rate of family disruption reached a historic low point during those years.”

“A new standard of family security and stability was established in postwar America. For the first time in history the vast majority of the nation's children could expect to live with married biological parents throughout childhood. Children might still suffer other forms of adversity --poverty, racial discrimination, lack of educational opportunity--but only a few would be deprived of the nurture and protection of a mother and a father. No longer did children have to be haunted by the classic fears vividly dramatized in folklore and fable--that their parents would die, that they would have to live with a stepparent and stepsiblings, or that they would be abandoned. These were the years when the nation confidently boarded up orphanages and closed foundling hospitals, certain that such institutions would never again be needed. In movie theaters across the country parents and children could watch the drama of parental separation and death in the great Disney classics, secure in the knowledge that such nightmare visions as the death of Bambi's mother and the wrenching separation of Dumbo from his mother were only make believe.”

“In the 1960s the rate of family disruption suddenly began to rise. After inching up over the course of a century, the divorce rate soared. Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s the divorce rate held steady at fewer than ten divorces a year per 1,000 married couples. Then, beginning in about 1965, the rate increased sharply, peaking at twenty-three divorces per 1,000 marriages by 1979. (In 1974 divorce passed death as the leading cause of family breakup.) The rate has leveled off at about twenty-one divorces per 1,000 marriages--the figure for 1991. The out-of-wedlock birth rate also jumped. It went from five percent in 1960 to 27 percent in 1990. In 1990 close to 57 percent of births among black mothers were nonmarital, and about 17 percent among white mothers. Altogether, about one out of every four women who had a child in 1990 was not married. With rates of divorce and nonmarital birth so high, family disruption is at its peak. Never before have so many children experienced family breakup caused by events other than death. Each year a million children go through divorce or separation and almost as many more are born out of wedlock.”
“Half of all marriages now end in divorce. Following divorce, many people enter new relationships. Some begin living together. Nearly half of all cohabiting couples have children in the household. Fifteen percent have new children together. Many cohabiting couples eventually get married. However, both cohabiting and remarried couples are more likely to break up than couples in first marriages. Even social scientists find it hard to keep pace with the complexity and velocity of such patterns. In the revised edition (1992) of his book Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage, the sociologist Andrew Cherlin ruefully comments: ‘If there were a truth-in-labeling law for books, the title of this edition should be something long and unwieldy like Cohabitation, Marriage, Divorce, More Cohabitation, and Probably Remarriage.’”

“Under such conditions growing up can be a turbulent experience. In many single-parent families children must come to terms with the parent’s love life and romantic partners. Some children live with cohabiting couples, either their own unmarried parents or a biological parent and a live-in partner. Some children born to cohabiting parents see their parents break up. Others see their parents marry, but 56 percent of them (as compared with 31 percent of the children born to married parents) later see their parents’ marriages fall apart. All told, about three quarters of children born to cohabiting couples will live in a single-parent home at least briefly. One of every four children growing up in the 1990s will eventually enter a stepfamily. According to one survey, nearly half of all children in stepparent families will see their parents divorce again by the time they reach their late teens. Since 80 percent of divorced fathers remarry, things get even more complicated when the romantic or marital history of the noncustodial parent, usually the father, is taken into account. Consequently, as it affects a significant number of children, family disruption is best understood not as a single event but as a string of disruptive events: separation, divorce, life in a single-parent family, life with a parent and live-in lover, the remarriage of one or both parents, life in one stepparent family combined with visits to another stepparent family; the breakup of one or both stepparent families. And so on. This is one reason why public schools have a hard time knowing whom to call in an emergency.”

“Given its dramatic impact on children's lives, one might reasonably expect that this historic level of family disruption would be viewed with alarm, even regarded as a national crisis. Yet this has not been the case. In recent
years some people have argued that these trends pose a serious threat to children and to the nation as a whole, but they are dismissed as declinists, pessimists, or nostalgists, unwilling or unable to accept the new facts of life. The dominant view is that the changes in family structure are, on balance, positive.”

“A Shift in the Social Metric”

“There are several reasons why this is so, but the fundamental reason is that at some point in the 1970s Americans changed their minds about the meaning of these disruptive behaviors. What had once been regarded as hostile to children’s best interests was now considered essential to adults’ happiness. In the 1950s most Americans believed that parents should stay in an unhappy marriage for the sake of the children. The assumption was that a divorce would damage the children, and the prospect of such damage gave divorce its meaning. By the mid-1970s a majority of Americans rejected that view. Popular advice literature reflected the shift. A book on divorce published in the mid-1940s tersely asserted: ‘Children are entitled to the affection and association of two parents, not one.’ Thirty years later another popular divorce book proclaimed just the opposite: ‘A two-parent home is not the only emotional structure within which a child can be happy and healthy. . . . The parents who take care of themselves will be best able to take care of their children.’ At about the same time, the long-standing taboo against out-of-wedlock childbirth also collapsed. By the mid-1970s three fourths of Americans said that it was not morally wrong for a woman to have a child outside marriage.”

“Once the social metric shifts from child well-being to adult well-being, it is hard to see divorce and nonmarital birth in anything but a positive light. However distressing and difficult they may be, both of these behaviors can hold out the promise of greater adult choice, freedom, and happiness. For unhappy spouses, divorce offers a way to escape a troubled or even abusive relationship and make a fresh start. For single parents, remarriage is a second try at marital happiness as well as a chance for relief from the stress, loneliness, and economic hardship of raising a child alone. For some unmarried women, nonmarital birth is a way to beat the biological clock, avoid marrying the wrong man, and experience the pleasures of motherhood. Moreover, divorce and out-of-wedlock birth involve a measure of agency and choice; they are man- and woman-made events. To be sure, not everyone exercises choice in divorce or nonmarital birth. Men leave
wives for younger women, teenage girls get pregnant accidentally--yet even these unhappy events reflect the expansion of the boundaries of freedom and choice.”

“This cultural shift helps explain what otherwise would be inexplicable: the failure to see the rise in family disruption as a severe and troubling national problem. It explains why there is virtually no widespread public sentiment for restigmatizing either of these classically disruptive behaviors and no sense--no public consensus- that they can or should be avoided in the future. On the contrary, the prevailing opinion is that we should accept the changes in family structure as inevitable and devise new forms of public and private support for single-parent families.”

“The View From Hollywood”

“With its affirmation of the liberating effects of divorce and nonmarital childbirth, this opinion is a fixture of American popular culture today. Madison Avenue and Hollywood did not invent these behaviors, as their highly paid publicists are quick to point out, but they have played an influential role in defending and even celebrating divorce and unwed motherhood. More precisely, they have taken the raw material of demography and fashioned it into a powerful fantasy of individual renewal and rebirth. Consider, for example, the teaser for People magazine's cover story on Joan Lunden’s divorce: ‘After the painful end of her 13-year marriage, the Good Morning America cohost is discovering a new life as a single mother--and as her own woman.’ People does not dwell on the anguish Lunden and her children might have experienced over the breakup of their family, or the difficulties of single motherhood, even for celebrity mothers. Instead, it celebrates Joan Lunden's steps toward independence and a better life. People, characteristically, focuses on her shopping: in the first weeks after her breakup Lunden leased ‘a brand-new six bedroom, 8,000 square foot' house and then went to Bloomingdale's, where she scooped up sheets, pillows, a toaster, dishes, seven televisions, and roomfuls of fun furniture that was ‘totally unlike the serious traditional pieces she was giving up.’”

“This is not just the view taken in supermarket magazines. Even the conservative bastion of the greeting-card industry, Hallmark, offers a line of cards commenmorating divorce as liberation. ‘Think of your former marriage as a record album,’ says one Contemporary card. ‘It was full of music--both
happy and sad. But what’s important now is . . . YOU! the recently released HOT, NEW, SINGLE! You're going to be at the TOP OF THE CHARTS!

Another card reads: ‘Getting divorced can be very healthy! Watch how it improves your circulation! Best of luck! . . . ‘ Hallmark's hip Shoebox Greetings division depicts two female praying mantises. Mantis One: ‘It’s tough being a single parent.’ Mantis Two: ‘Yeah . . . Maybe we shouldn't have eaten our husbands.’"

“Divorce is a tired convention in Hollywood, but unwed parenthood is very much in fashion: in the past year or so babies were born to Warren Beatty and Annette Bening, Jack Nicholson and Rebecca Broussard, and Eddie Murphy and Nicole Mitchell. Vanity Fair celebrated Jack Nicholson's fatherhood with a cover story (April, 1992) called ‘Happy Jack.’ What made Jack happy, it turned out, was no-fault fatherhood. He and Broussard, the twenty-nine-year-old mother of his children, lived in separate houses. Nicholson said, ‘It's an unusual arrangement, but the last twenty-five years or so have shown me that I'm not good at cohabitation. . . . I see Rebecca as much as any other person who is cohabiting. And she prefers it. I think most people would in a more honest and truthful world.’ As for more-permanent commitments, the man who is not good at cohabitation said: ‘I don’t discuss marriage much with Rebecca. Those discussions are the very thing I'm trying to avoid. I'm after this immediate real thing. That's all I believe in.’ (Perhaps Nicholson should have had the discussion. Not long after the story appeared, Broussard broke off the relationship.)”

“As this story shows, unwed parenthood is thought of not only as a way to find happiness but also as a way to exhibit such virtues as honesty and courage. A similar argument was offered in defense of Murphy Brown's unwed motherhood. Many of Murphy's fans were quick to point out that Murphy suffered over her decision to bear a child out of wedlock. Faced with an accidental pregnancy and a faithless lover, she agonized over her plight and, after much mental anguish, bravely decided to go ahead. In short, having a baby without a husband represented a higher level of maternal devotion and sacrifice than having a baby with a husband. Murphy was not just exercising her rights as a woman; she was exhibiting true moral heroism.”

“On the night Murphy Brown became an unwed mother, 34 million Americans tuned in, and CBS posted a 35 percent share of the audience. The show did not stir significant protest at the grass roots and lost none of
its advertisers. The actress Candice Bergen subsequently appeared on the cover of nearly every women's and news magazine in the country and received an honorary degree at the University of Pennsylvania as well as an Emmy award. The show's creator, Diane English, popped up in Hanes stocking ads. Judged by conventional measures of approval, Murphy Brown's motherhood was a hit at the box office.”

“Increasingly, the media depicts the married two-parent family as a source of pathology. According to a spate of celebrity memoirs and interviews, the married parent family harbors terrible secrets of abuse, violence, and incest. A bumper sticker I saw in Amherst, Massachusetts, read unspoken traditional Family Values: Abuse, Alcoholism, Incest. The pop therapist John Bradshaw explains away this generation's problems with the dictum that 96 percent of families are dysfunctional, made that way by the addicted society we live in. David Lynch creates a new aesthetic of creepiness by juxtaposing scenes of traditional family life with images of seduction and perversion. A Boston-area museum puts on an exhibit called ‘Goodbye to Apple Pie,’ featuring several artists' visions of child abuse, including one mixed-media piece with knives poking through a little girl's skirt. The piece is titled Father Knows Best.”

“No one would claim that two-parent families are free from conflict, violence, or abuse. However, the attempt to discredit the two-parent family can be understood as part of what Daniel Patrick Moynihan has described as a larger effort to accommodate higher levels of social deviance. ‘The amount of deviant behavior in American society has increased beyond the levels the community can 'afford to recognize,' Moynihan argues. One response has been to normalize what was once considered deviant behavior, such as out-of-wedlock birth. An accompanying response has been to detect deviance in what once stood as a social norm, such as the married-couple family. Together these responses reduce the acknowledged levels of deviance by eroding earlier distinctions between the normal and the deviant.”

“Several recent studies describe family life in its postwar heyday as the seedbed of alcoholism and abuse. According to Stephanie Coontz, the author of the book The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap, family life for married mothers in the 1950s consisted of ‘booze, bowling, bridge, and boredom.’ Coontz writes: ‘Few would have guessed that radiant Marilyn Van Derbur, crowned Miss America in 1958,
had been sexually violated by her wealthy, respectable father from the time she was five until she was eighteen, when she moved away to college.’ Even the budget-stretching casserole comes under attack as a sign of culinary dysfunction. According to one food writer, this homely staple of postwar family life brings back images of ‘the good mother of the 50’s . . . locked in Ozzie and Harriet land, unable to move past the canvas of a Corning Ware dish, the palette of a can of Campbell's soup, the mushy dominion of which she was queen.”

“Nevertheless, the popular portrait of family life does not simply reflect the views of a cultural elite, as some have argued. There is strong support at the grass roots for much of this view of family change. Survey after survey shows that Americans are less inclined than they were a generation ago to value sexual fidelity, lifelong marriage, and parenthood as worthwhile personal goals. Motherhood no longer defines adult womanhood, as everyone knows; equally important is the fact that fatherhood has declined as a norm for men. In 1976 less than half as many fathers as in 1957 said that providing for children was a life goal. The proportion of working men who found marriage and children burdensome and restrictive more than doubled in the same period. Fewer than half of all adult Americans today regard the idea of sacrifice for others as a positive moral virtue.”

“Dinosaurs Divorce”

“It is true that many adults benefit from divorce or remarriage. According to one study, nearly 80 percent of divorced women and 50 percent of divorced men say they are better off out of the marriage. Half of divorced adults in the same study report greater happiness. A competent self-help book called Divorce and New Beginnings notes the advantages of single parenthood: single parents can ‘develop their own interests, fulfill their own needs, choose their own friends and engage in social activities of their choice. Money, even if limited, can be spent as they see fit.’ Apparently, some women appreciate the opportunity to have children out of wedlock. ‘The real world, however, does not always allow women who are dedicated to their careers to devote the time and energy it takes to find – or be found by – the perfect husband and father wanna-be,’ one woman said in a letter to The Washington Post. A mother and chiropractor from Avon, Connecticut, explained her unwed maternity to an interviewer this way: ‘It is selfish, but this was something I needed to do for me.’”
“There is very little in contemporary popular culture to contradict this optimistic view. But in a few small places another perspective may be found. Several racks down from its divorce cards, Hallmark offers a line of cards for children--To Kids With Love. These cards come six to a pack. Each card in the pack has a slightly different message. According to the package, the ‘thinking of you’ messages will let a special kid ‘know how much you care.’ Though Hallmark doesn't quite say so, it's clear these cards are aimed at divorced parents. ‘I'm sorry I'm not always there when you need me but I hope you know I'm always just a phone call away.’ Another card reads: ‘Even though your dad and I don't live together anymore, I know he's still a very special part of your life. And as much as I miss you when you're not with me, I'm still happy that you two can spend time together.’”

“Hallmark's messages are grounded in a substantial body of well-funded market research. Therefore it is worth reflecting on the divergence in sentiment between the divorce cards for adults and the divorce cards for kids. For grown-ups, divorce heralds new beginnings (A HOT NEW SINGLE). For children, divorce brings separation and loss (‘I'm sorry I'm not always there when you need me’).”

“An even more telling glimpse into the meaning of family disruption can be found in the growing children's literature on family dissolution. Take, for example, the popular children's book Dinosaurs Divorce: A Guide for Changing Families (1986), by Laurene Krasny Brown and Marc Brown. This is a picture book, written for very young children. The book begins with a short glossary of ‘divorce words’ and encourages children to ‘see if you can find them’ in the story. The words include ‘family counselor,’ ‘separation agreement,’ ‘alimony,’ and ‘child custody.’ The book is illustrated with cartoonish drawings of green dinosaur parents who fight, drink too much, and break up. One panel shows the father dinosaur, suitcase in hand, getting into a yellow car.”

“The dinosaur children are offered simple, straightforward advice on what to do about the divorce. On custody decisions: ‘When parents can't agree, lawyers and judges decide. Try to be honest if they ask you questions; it will help them make better decisions.’ On selling the house: ‘If you move, you may have to say good-bye to friends and familiar places. But soon your new home will feel like the place you really belong.’ On the economic impact of divorce: ‘Living with one parent almost always means there will
be less money. Be prepared to give up some things.’ On holidays: ‘Divorce may mean twice as much celebrating at holiday times, but you may feel pulled apart.’ On parents' new lovers: ‘You may sometimes feel jealous and want your parent to yourself. Be polite to your parents' new friends, even if you don't like them at first.’ On parents' remarriage: ‘Not everyone loves his or her stepparents, but showing them respect is important.’”

“These cards and books point to an uncomfortable and generally unacknowledged fact: what contributes to a parent's happiness may detract from a child's happiness. All too often the adult quest for freedom, independence, and choice in family relationships conflicts with a child's developmental needs for stability, constancy, harmony, and permanence in family life. In short, family disruption creates a deep division between parents' interests and the interests of children.”

“One of the worst consequences of these divided interests is a withdrawal of parental investment in children's well-being. As the Stanford economist Victor Fuchs has pointed out, the main source of social investment in children is private. The investment comes from the children's parents. But parents in disrupted families have less time, attention, and money to devote to their children. The single most important source of disinvestment has been the widespread withdrawal of financial support and involvement by fathers. Maternal investment, too, has declined, as women try to raise families on their own and work outside the home. Moreover, both mothers and fathers commonly respond to family breakup by investing more heavily in themselves and in their own personal and romantic lives.”

“Sometimes the tables are completely turned. Children are called upon to invest in the emotional well-being of their parents. Indeed, this seems to be the larger message of many of the children's books on divorce and remarriage. Dinosaurs Divorce asks children to be sympathetic, understanding, respectful, and polite to confused, unhappy parents. The sacrifice comes from the children: ‘Be prepared to give up some things.’ In the world of divorcing dinosaurs, the children rather than the grown-ups are the exemplars of patience, restraint, and good sense.”

“Three Seventies Assumptions”

“As it first took shape in the 1970s, the optimistic view of family change rested on three bold new assumptions. At that time, because the
emergence of the changes in family life was so recent, there was little hard
evidence to confirm or dispute these assumptions. But this was an
expansive moment in American life.”

“The first assumption was an economic one: that a woman could now
afford to be a mother without also being a wife. There were ample grounds
for believing this. Women's work-force participation had been gradually
increasing in the postwar period, and by the beginning of the 1970s women
were a strong presence in the workplace. What’s more, even though there
was still a substantial wage gap between men and women, women had
made considerable progress in a relatively short time toward better-paying
jobs and greater employment opportunities. More women than ever before
could aspire to serious careers as business executives, doctors, lawyers,
airline pilots, and politicians. This circumstance, combined with the
increased availability of child care, meant that women could take on the
responsibilities of a breadwinner, perhaps even a sole breadwinner. This
was particularly true for middle-class women. According to a highly
regarded 1977 study by the Carnegie Council on Children, ‘The greater
availability of jobs for women means that more middle-class children today
survive their parents' divorce without a catastrophic plunge into poverty.’”

“Feminists, who had long argued that the path to greater equality for
women lay in the world of work outside the home, endorsed this
assumption. In fact, for many, economic independence was a stepping-
stone toward freedom from both men and marriage. As women began to
earn their own money, they were less dependent on men or marriage, and
marriage diminished in importance. In Gloria Steinem's memorable words,
‘A woman without a man is like a fish without a bicycle.’”

“This assumption also gained momentum as the meaning of work changed
for women. Increasingly, work had an expressive as well as an economic
dimension: being a working mother not only gave you an income but also
made you more interesting and fulfilled than a stay-at-home mother.
Consequently, the optimistic economic scenario was driven by a cultural
imperative. Women would achieve financial independence because,
culturally as well as economically, it was the right thing to do.”

“The second assumption was that family disruption would not cause lasting
harm to children and could actually enrich their lives. Creative Divorce: A
New Opportunity for Personal Growth, a popular book of the seventies,
spoke confidently to this point: ‘Children can survive any family crisis without permanent damage--and grow as human beings in the process…’ Moreover, single-parent and stepparent families created a more extensive kinship network than the nuclear family. This network would envelop children in a web of warm and supportive relationships. ‘Belonging to a stepfamily means there are more people in your life,’ a children's book published in 1982 notes. ‘More sisters and brothers, including the step ones. More people you think of as grandparents and aunts and uncles. More cousins. More neighbors and friends. . . . Getting to know and like so many people (and having them like you) is one of the best parts of what being in a stepfamily . . . is all about.’

“The third assumption was that the new diversity in family structure would make America a better place. Just as the nation has been strengthened by the diversity of its ethnic and racial groups, so it would be strengthened by diverse family forms. The emergence of these brave new families was but the latest chapter in the saga of American pluralism.”

“Another version of the diversity argument stated that the real problem was not family disruption itself but the stigma still attached to these emergent family forms. This lingering stigma placed children at psychological risk, making them feel ashamed or different; as the ranks of single-parent and stepparent families grew, children would feel normal and good about themselves.”

“These assumptions continue to be appealing, because they accord with strongly held American beliefs in social progress. Americans see progress in the expansion of individual opportunities for choice, freedom, and self-expression. Moreover, Americans identify progress with growing tolerance of diversity. Over the past half century, the pollster Daniel Yankelovich writes, the United States has steadily grown more open-minded and accepting of groups that were previously perceived as alien, untrustworthy, or unsuitable for public leadership or social esteem. One such group is the burgeoning number of single-parent and stepparent families.”

“The Education of Sara McLanahan”

“In 1981 Sara McLanahan, now a sociologist at Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School, read a three-part series by Ken Auletta in The
New Yorker. Later published as a book titled The Underclass, the series presented a vivid portrait of the drug addicts, welfare mothers, and school dropouts who took part in an education and-training program in New York City. Many were the children of single mothers, and it was Auletta's clear implication that single-mother families were contributing to the growth of an underclass. McLanahan was taken aback by this notion. ‘It struck me as strange that he would be viewing single mothers at that level of pathology.’”

“I'd gone to graduate school in the days when the politically correct argument was that single-parent families were just another alternative family form, and it was fine,’ McLanahan explains, as she recalls the state of social-scientific thinking in the 1970s. Several empirical studies that were then current supported an optimistic view of family change. (They used tiny samples, however, and did not track the well-being of children over time.) One, All Our Kin, by Carol Stack, was required reading for thousands of university students. It said that single mothers had strengths that had gone undetected and unappreciated by earlier researchers. The single-mother family, it suggested, is an economically resourceful and socially embedded institution. In the late 1970s McLanahan wrote a similar study that looked at a small sample of white single mothers and how they coped. ‘So I was very much of that tradition.’”

“By the early 1980s, however, nearly two decades had passed since the changes in family life had begun. During the intervening years a fuller body of empirical research had emerged: studies that used large samples, or followed families through time, or did both. Moreover, several of the studies offered a child's-eye view of family disruption. The National Survey on Children, conducted by the psychologist Nicholas Zill, had set out in 1976 to track a large sample of children aged seven to eleven. It also interviewed the children's parents and teachers. It surveyed its subjects again in 1981 and 1987. By the time of its third round of interviews the eleven-year-olds of 1976 were the twenty-two-year-olds of 1987. The California Children of Divorce Study, directed by Judith Wallerstein, a clinical psychologist, had also been going on for a decade. E. Mavis Hetherington, of the University of Virginia, was conducting a similar study of children from both intact and divorced families. For the first time it was possible to test the optimistic view against a large and longitudinal body of evidence.”

“It was to this body of evidence that Sara McLanahan turned. When she did, she found little to support the optimistic view of single motherhood. On
the contrary. When she published her findings with Irwin Garfinkel in a 1986 book, Single Mothers and Their Children, her portrait of single motherhood proved to be as troubling in its own way as Auletta's.

“One of the leading assumptions of the time was that single motherhood was economically viable. Even if single mothers did face economic trials, they wouldn't face them for long, it was argued, because they wouldn't remain single for long: single motherhood would be a brief phase of three to five years, followed by marriage. Single mothers would be economically resilient: if they experienced setbacks, they would recover quickly. It was also said that single mothers would be supported by informal networks of family, friends, neighbors, and other single mothers. As McLanahan shows in her study, the evidence demolishes all these claims.”

“For the vast majority of single mothers, the economic spectrum turns out to be narrow, running between precarious and desperate. Half the single mothers in the United States live below the poverty line. (Currently, one out of ten married couples with children is poor.) Many others live on the edge of poverty. Even single mothers who are far from poor are likely to experience persistent economic insecurity. Divorce almost always brings a decline in the standard of living for the mother and children.”

“Moreover, the poverty experienced by single mothers is no more brief than it is mild. A significant number of all single mothers never marry or remarry. Those who do, do so only after spending roughly six years, on average, as single parents. For black mothers the duration is much longer. Only 33 percent of African American mothers had remarried within ten years of separation. Consequently, single motherhood is hardly a fleeting event for the mother, and it is likely to occupy a third of the child's childhood. Even the notion that single mothers are knit together in economically supportive networks is not borne out by the evidence. On the contrary, single parenthood forces many women to be on the move, in search of cheaper housing and better jobs. This need-driven restless mobility makes it more difficult for them to sustain supportive ties to family and friends, let alone other single mothers.”

“Single-mother families are vulnerable not just to poverty but to a particularly debilitating form of poverty: welfare dependency. The dependency takes two forms: First, single mothers, particularly unwed mothers, stay on welfare longer than other welfare recipients. Of those
never-married mothers who receive welfare benefits, almost 40 percent remain on the rolls for ten years or longer. Second, welfare dependency tends to be passed on from one generation to the next. McLanahan says, ‘Evidence on intergenerational poverty indicates that, indeed, offspring from [single-mother] families are far more likely to be poor and to form mother-only families than are offspring who live with two parents most of their pre-adult life.’ Nor is the intergenerational impact of single motherhood limited to African Americans, as many people seem to believe. Among white families, daughters of single parents are 53 percent more likely to marry as teenagers, 111 percent more likely to have children as teenagers, 164 percent more likely to have a premarital birth, and 92 percent more likely to dissolve their own marriages. All these intergenerational consequences of single motherhood increase the likelihood of chronic welfare dependency.”

“McLanahan cites three reasons why single-mother families are so vulnerable economically. For one thing, their earnings are low. Second, unless the mothers are widowed, they don't receive public subsidies large enough to lift them out of poverty. And finally, they do not get much support from family members – especially the fathers of their children. In 1982 single white mothers received an average of $1,246 in alimony and child support, black mothers an average of $322. Such payments accounted for about 10 percent of the income of single white mothers and for about 3.5 percent of the income of single black mothers. These amounts were dramatically smaller than the income of the father in a two-parent family and also smaller than the income from a second earner in a two-parent family. Roughly 60 percent of single white mothers and 80 percent of single black mothers received no support at all.”

“Until the mid-1980s, when stricter standards were put in place, child-support awards were only about half to two-thirds what the current guidelines require. Accordingly, there is often a big difference in the living standards of divorced fathers and of divorced mothers with children. After divorce the average annual income of mothers and children is $13,500 for whites and $9,000 for nonwhites, as compared with $25,000 for white nonresident fathers and $13,600 for nonwhite nonresident fathers. Moreover, since child-support awards account for a smaller portion of the income of a high-earning father, the drop in living standards can be especially sharp for mothers who were married to upper-level managers and professionals.”
“Unwed mothers are unlikely to be awarded any child support at all, partly because the paternity of their children may not have been established. According to one recent study, only 20 percent of unmarried mothers receive child support. Even if single mothers escape poverty, economic uncertainty remains a condition of life. Divorce brings a reduction in income and standard of living for the vast majority of single mothers. One study, for example, found that income for mothers and children declines on average about 30 percent, while fathers experience a 10 to 15 percent increase in income in the year following a separation. Things get even more difficult when fathers fail to meet their child-support obligations. As a result, many divorced mothers experience a wearing uncertainty about the family budget: whether the check will come in or not; whether new sneakers can be bought this month or not; whether the electric bill will be paid on time or not. Uncertainty about money triggers other kinds of uncertainty. Mothers and children often have to move to cheaper housing after a divorce. One study shows that about 38 percent of divorced mothers and their children move during the first year after a divorce. Even several years later the rate of moves for single mothers is about a third higher than the rate for two-parent families. It is also common for a mother to change her job or increase her working hours or both following a divorce. Even the composition of the household is likely to change, with other adults, such as boyfriends or babysitters, moving in and out.”

“All this uncertainty can be devastating to children. Anyone who knows children knows that they are deeply conservative creatures. They like things to stay the same. So pronounced is this tendency that certain children have been known to request the same peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwich for lunch for years on end. Children are particularly set in their ways when it comes to family, friends, neighborhoods, and schools. Yet when a family breaks up, all these things may change. The novelist Pat Conroy has observed that ‘each divorce is the death of a small civilization.’ No one feels this more acutely than children.”

“Sara McLanahan’s investigation and others like it have helped to establish a broad consensus on the economic impact of family disruption on children. Most social scientists now agree that single motherhood is an important and growing cause of poverty, and that children suffer as a result. (They continue to argue, however, about the relationship between family structure and such economic factors as income inequality, the loss of jobs in the inner city, and the growth of low-wage jobs.) By the mid-1980s, however, it
was clear that the problem of family disruption was not confined to the urban underclass, nor was its sole impact economic. Divorce and out-of-wedlock childbirth were affecting middle- and upper-class children, and these more privileged children were suffering negative consequences as well. It appeared that the problems associated with family breakup were far deeper and far more widespread than anyone had previously imagined.”

“The Missing Father”

“Judith Wallerstein is one of the pioneers in research on the long-term psychological impact of family disruption on children. The California Children of Divorce Study, which she directs, remains the most enduring study of the long-term effects of divorce on children and their parents. Moreover, it represents the best-known effort to look at the impact of divorce on middle-class children. The California children entered the study without pathological family histories. Before divorce they lived in stable, protected homes. And although some of the children did experience economic insecurity as the result of divorce, they were generally free from the most severe forms of poverty associated with family breakup. Thus the study and the resulting book (which Wallerstein wrote with Sandra Blakeslee), Second Chances: Men, Women, and Children a Decade After Divorce (1989), provide new insight into the consequences of divorce which are not associated with extreme forms of economic or emotional deprivation.”

“When, in 1971, Wallerstein and her colleagues set out to conduct clinical interviews with 131 children from the San Francisco area, they thought they were embarking on a short-term study. Most experts believed that divorce was like a bad cold. There was a phase of acute discomfort, and then a short recovery phase. According to the conventional wisdom, kids would be back on their feet in no time at all. Yet when Wallerstein met these children for a second interview more than a year later, she was amazed to discover that there had been no miraculous recovery. In fact, the children seemed to be doing worse.”

“The news that children did not ‘get over’ divorce was not particularly welcome at the time. Wallerstein recalls, ‘We got angry letters from therapists, parents, and lawyers saying we were undoubtedly wrong. They said children are really much better off being released from an unhappy marriage. Divorce, they said, is a liberating experience.’ One of the main
results of the California study was to overturn this optimistic view. In Wallerstein's cautionary words, ‘Divorce is deceptive. Legally it is a single event, but psychologically it is a chain – sometimes a never-ending chain – of events, relocations, and radically shifting relationships strung through time, a process that forever changes the lives of the people involved.’

“Five years after divorce more than a third of the children experienced moderate or severe depression. At ten years a significant number of the now young men and women appeared to be troubled, drifting, and underachieving. At fifteen years many of the thirtyish adults were struggling to establish strong love relationships of their own. In short, far from recovering from their parents' divorce, a significant percentage of these grownups were still suffering from its effects. In fact, according to Wallerstein, the long-term effects of divorce emerge at a time when young adults are trying to make their own decisions about love, marriage, and family. Not all children in the study suffered negative consequences. But Wallerstein's research presents a sobering picture of divorce. ‘The child of divorce faces many additional psychological burdens in addition to the normative tasks of growing up,’ she says.”

“Divorce not only makes it more difficult for young adults to establish new relationships. It also weakens the oldest primary relationship: that between parent and child. According to Wallerstein, ‘Parent-child relationships are permanently altered by divorce in ways that our society has not anticipated.’ Not only do children experience a loss of parental attention at the onset of divorce, but they soon find that at every stage of their development their parents are not available in the same way they once were. ‘In a reasonably happy intact family,’ Wallerstein observes, ‘the child gravitates first to one parent and then to the other, using skills and attributes from each in climbing the developmental ladder.’ In a divorced family, children find it ‘harder to find the needed parent at needed times.’ This may help explain why very young children suffer the most as the result of family disruption. Their opportunities to engage in this kind of ongoing process are the most truncated and compromised.”

“The father-child bond is severely, often irreparably, damaged in disrupted families. In a situation without historical precedent, an astonishing and disheartening number of American fathers are failing to provide financial support to their children. Often, more than the father’s support check is missing. Increasingly, children are bereft of any contact with their fathers.
According to the National Survey of Children, in disrupted families only one child in six, on average, saw his or her father as often as once a week in the past year. Close to half did not see their father at all in the past year. As time goes on, contact becomes even more infrequent. Ten years after a marriage breaks up, more than two thirds of children report not having seen their father for a year. Not surprisingly, when asked to name the ‘adults you look up to and admire,’ only 20 percent of children in single-parent families named their father, as compared with 52 percent of children in two-parent families. A favorite complaint among Baby Boom Americans is that their fathers were emotionally remote guys who worked hard, came home at night to eat supper, and didn’t have much to say to or do with the kids. But the current generation has a far worse father problem: many of their fathers are vanishing entirely.”

“Even for fathers who maintain regular contact, the pattern of father-child relationships changes. The sociologists Andrew Cherlin and Frank Furstenberg, who have studied broken families, write that the fathers behave more like other relatives than like parents. Rather than helping with homework or carrying out a project with their children, nonresidential fathers are likely to take the kids shopping, to the movies, or out to dinner. Instead of providing steady advice and guidance, divorced fathers become ‘treat’ dads.”

“Apparently – and paradoxically – it is the visiting relationship itself, rather than the frequency of visits, that is the real source of the problem. According to Wallerstein, the few children in the California study who reported visiting with their fathers once or twice a week over a ten-year period still felt rejected. The need to schedule a special time to be with the child, the repeated leave-takings, and the lack of connection to the child’s regular, daily schedule leaves many fathers adrift, frustrated, and confused. Wallerstein calls the visiting father a parent without portfolio.”

“The deterioration in father-child bonds is most severe among children who experience divorce at an early age, according to a recent study. Nearly three quarters of the respondents, now young men and women, report having poor relationships with their fathers. Close to half have received psychological help, nearly a third have dropped out of high school, and about a quarter report having experienced high levels of problem behavior or emotional distress by the time they became young adults.”
“Long-Term Effects”

“Since most children live with their mothers after divorce, one might expect that the mother-child bond would remain unaltered and might even be strengthened. Yet research shows that the mother-child bond is also weakened as the result of divorce. Only half of the children who were close to their mothers before a divorce remained equally close after the divorce. Boys, particularly, had difficulties with their mothers. Moreover, mother-child relationships deteriorated over time. Whereas teenagers in disrupted families were no more likely than teenagers in intact families to report poor relationships with their mothers, 30 percent of young adults from disrupted families have poor relationships with their mothers, as compared with 16 percent of young adults from intact families. Mother-daughter relationships often deteriorate as the daughter reaches young adulthood. The only group in society that derives any benefit from these weakened parent-child ties is the therapeutic community. Young adults from disrupted families are nearly twice as likely as those from intact families to receive psychological help.”

“Some social scientists have criticized Judith Wallerstein’s research because her study is based on a small clinical sample and does not include a control group of children from intact families. However, other studies generally support and strengthen her findings. Nicholas Zill has found similar long-term effects on children of divorce, reporting that ‘effects of marital discord and family disruption are visible twelve to twenty-two years later in poor relationships with parents, high levels of problem behavior, and an increased likelihood of dropping out of high school and receiving psychological help.’ Moreover, Zill’s research also found signs of distress in young women who seemed relatively well adjusted in middle childhood and adolescence. Girls in single-parent families are also at much greater risk for precocious sexuality, teenage marriage, teenage pregnancy, nonmarital birth, and divorce than are girls in two-parent families.”

“Zill's research shows that family disruption strongly affects school achievement as well. Children in disrupted families are nearly twice as likely as those in intact families to drop out of high school; among children who do drop out, those from disrupted families are less likely eventually to earn a diploma or a GED. Boys are at greater risk for dropping out than girls, and are also more likely to exhibit aggressive, acting-out behaviors. Other research confirms these findings. According to a study by the National Association of Elementary School Principals, 33 percent of two-
parent elementary school students are ranked as high achievers, as compared with 17 percent of single-parent students. The children in single-parent families are also more likely to be truant or late or to have disciplinary action taken against them. Even after controlling for race, income, and religion, scholars find significant differences in educational attainment between children who grow up in intact families and children who do not. In his 1992 study America’s Smallest School: The Family, Paul Barton shows that the proportion of two-parent families varies widely from state to state and is related to variations in academic achievement. North Dakota, for example, scores highest on the math-proficiency test and second highest on the two-parent-family scale. The District of Columbia is second lowest on the math test and lowest in the nation on the two-parent-family scale.”

“Zill notes that ‘while coming from a disrupted family significantly increases a young adult’s risks of experiencing social, emotional or academic difficulties, it does not foreordain such difficulties. The majority of young people from disrupted families have successfully completed high school, do not currently display high levels of emotional distress or problem behavior, and enjoy reasonable relationships with their mothers.’ Nevertheless, a majority of these young adults do show maladjustment in their relationships with their fathers.”

“These findings underscore the importance of both a mother and a father in fostering the emotional well-being of children. Obviously, not all children in two-parent families are free from emotional turmoil, but few are burdened with the troubles that accompany family breakup. Moreover, as the sociologist Amitai Etzioni explains in a new book, The Spirit of Community, two parents in an intact family make up what might be called a mutually supportive education coalition. When both parents are present, they can play different, even contradictory, roles. One parent may goad the child to achieve, while the other may encourage the child to take time out to daydream or toss a football around. One may emphasize taking intellectual risks, while the other may insist on following the teacher’s guidelines. At the same time, the parents regularly exchange information about the child’s school problems and achievements, and have a sense of the overall educational mission. However, Etzioni writes,”

“The sequence of divorce followed by a succession of boy or girlfriends, a second marriage, and frequently another
divorce and another turnover of partners often means a repeatedly disrupted educational coalition. Each change in participants involves a change in the educational agenda for the child. Each new partner cannot be expected to pick up the previous one's educational post and program...As a result, changes in parenting partners mean, at best, a deep disruption in a child's education, though of course several disruptions cut deeper into the effectiveness of the educational coalition than just one.”

“The Bad News About Stepparents”

“Perhaps the most striking, and potentially disturbing, new research has to do with children in stepparent families. Until quite recently the optimistic assumption was that children saw their lives improve when they became part of a stepfamily. When Nicholas Zill and his colleagues began to study the effects of remarriage on children, their working hypothesis was that stepparent families would make up for the shortcomings of the single-parent family. Clearly, most children are better off economically when they are able to share in the income of two adults. When a second adult joins the household, there may be a reduction in the time and work pressures on the single parent.”

“The research overturns this optimistic assumption, however. In general the evidence suggests that remarriage neither reproduces nor restores the intact family structure, even when it brings more income and a second adult into the household. Quite the contrary. Indeed, children living with stepparents appear to be even more disadvantaged than children living in a stable single-parent family. Other difficulties seem to offset the advantages of extra income and an extra pair of hands. However much our modern sympathies reject the fairy-tale portrait of stepparents, the latest research confirms that the old stories are anthropologically quite accurate. Stepfamilies disrupt established loyalties, create new uncertainties, provoke deep anxieties, and sometimes threaten a child's physical safety as well as emotional security.”

“Parents and children have dramatically different interests in and expectations for a new marriage. For a single parent, remarriage brings new commitments, the hope of enduring love and happiness, and relief from stress and loneliness. For a child, the same event often provokes
confused feelings of sadness, anger, and rejection. Nearly half the children in Wallerstein's study said they felt left out in their stepfamilies. The National Commission on Children, a bipartisan group headed by Senator John D. Rockefeller, of West Virginia, reported that children from stepfamilies were more likely to say they often felt lonely or blue than children from either single-parent or intact families. Children in stepfamilies were the most likely to report that they wanted more time with their mothers. When mothers remarry, daughters tend to have a harder time adjusting than sons. Evidently, boys often respond positively to a male presence in the household, while girls who have established close ties to their mother in a single-parent family often see the stepfather as a rival and an intruder. According to one study, boys in remarried families are less likely to drop out of school than boys in single-parent families, while the opposite is true for girls.”

“A large percentage of children do not even consider stepparents to be part of their families, according to the National Survey on Children. The NSC asked children, ‘When you think of your family, who do you include?’ Only 10 percent of the children failed to mention a biological parent, but a third left out a stepparent. Even children who rarely saw their noncustodial parents almost always named them as family members. The weak sense of attachment is mutual. When parents were asked the same question, only one percent failed to mention a biological child, while 15 percent left out a stepchild. In the same study stepparents with both natural children and stepchildren said that it was harder for them to love their stepchildren than their biological children and that their children would have been better off if they had grown up with two biological parents.”

“One of the most severe risks associated with stepparent-child ties is the risk of sexual abuse. As Judith Wallerstein explains, 'The presence of a stepfather can raise the difficult issue of a thinner incest barrier.' The incest taboo is strongly reinforced, Wallerstein says, by knowledge of paternity and by the experience of caring for a child since birth. A stepfather enters the family without either credential and plays a sexual role as the mother's husband. As a result, stepfathers can pose a sexual risk to the children, especially to daughters. According to a study by the Canadian researchers Martin Daly and Margo Wilson, preschool children in stepfamilies are forty times as likely as children in intact families to suffer physical or sexual abuse. (Most of the sexual abuse was committed by a third party, such as a neighbor, a stepfather's male friend, or another nonrelative.) Stepfathers
discriminate in their abuse: they are far more likely to assault nonbiological children than their own natural children.”

“Sexual abuse represents the most extreme threat to children's well-being. Stepfamilies also seem less likely to make the kind of ordinary investments in the children that other families do. Although it is true that the stepfamily household has a higher income than the single-parent household, it does not follow that the additional income is reliably available to the children. To begin with, children's claim on stepparents' resources is shaky.”

“Stepparents are not legally required to support stepchildren, so their financial support of these children is entirely voluntary. Moreover, since stepfamilies are far more likely to break up than intact families, particularly in the first five years, there is always the risk – far greater than the risk of unemployment in an intact family – that the second income will vanish with another divorce. The financial commitment to a child's education appears weaker in stepparent families, perhaps because the stepparent believes that the responsibility for educating the child rests with the biological parent.”

“Similarly, studies suggest that even though they may have the time, the parents in stepfamilies do not invest as much of it in their children as the parents in intact families or even single parents do. A 1991 survey by the National Commission on Children showed that the parents in stepfamilies were less likely to be involved in a child's school life, including involvement in extracurricular activities, than either intact-family parents or single parents. They were the least likely to report being involved in such time-consuming activities as coaching a child's team, accompanying class trips, or helping with school projects. According to McLanahan's research, children in stepparent families report lower educational aspirations on the part of their parents and lower levels of parental involvement with schoolwork. In short, it appears that family income and the number of adults in the household are not the only factors affecting children's well-being.”

“**Diminishing Investments**”

“There are several reasons for this diminished interest and investment. In the law, as in the children's eyes, stepparents are shadowy figures. According to the legal scholar David Chambers, family law has pretty much ignored stepparents. Chambers writes, ‘In the substantial majority of states,
stepparents, even when they live with a child, have no legal obligation to contribute to the child's support; nor does a stepparent's presence in the home alter the support obligations of a noncustodial parent. The stepparent also has . . . no authority to approve emergency medical treatment or even to sign a permission slip…” When a marriage breaks up, the stepparent has no continuing obligation to provide for a stepchild, no matter how long or how much he or she has been contributing to the support of the child. In short, Chambers says, stepparent relationships are based wholly on consent, subject to the inclinations of the adult and the child. The only way a stepparent can acquire the legal status of a parent is through adoption. Some researchers also point to the cultural ambiguity of the stepparent's role as a source of diminished interest, while others insist that it is the absence of a blood tie that weakens the bond between stepparent and child.”

“Whatever its causes, the diminished investment in children in both single-parent and stepparent families has a significant impact on their life chances. Take parental help with college costs. The parents in intact families are far more likely to contribute to children's college costs than are those in disrupted families. Moreover, they are usually able to arrive at a shared understanding of which children will go to college, where they will go, how much the parents will contribute, and how much the children will contribute. But when families break up, these informal understandings can vanish. The issue of college tuition remains one of the most contested areas of parental support, especially for higher-income parents.”

“The law does not step in even when familial understandings break down. In the 1980s many states lowered the age covered by child-support agreements from twenty-one to eighteen, thus eliminating college as a cost associated with support for a minor child. Consequently, the question of college tuition is typically not addressed in child-custody agreements. Even in states where the courts do require parents to contribute to college costs, the requirement may be in jeopardy. In a recent decision in Pennsylvania the court overturned an earlier decision ordering divorced parents to contribute to college tuition. This decision is likely to inspire challenges in other states where courts have required parents to pay for college. Increasingly, help in paying for college is entirely voluntary.”

“Judith Wallerstein has been analyzing the educational decisions of the college-age men and women in her study. She reports that ‘a full 42
percent of these men and women from middle class families appeared to have ended their educations without attempting college or had left college before achieving a degree at either the two-year or the four-year level.’ A significant percentage of these young people have the ability to attend college. Typical of this group are Nick and Terry, sons of a college professor. They had been close to their father before the divorce, but their father remarried soon after the divorce and saw his sons only occasionally, even though he lived nearby. At age nineteen Nick had completed a few junior-college courses and was earning a living as a salesman. Terry, twenty-one, who had been tested as a gifted student, was doing blue-collar work irregularly.”

“Sixty-seven percent of the college-age students from disrupted families attended college, as compared with 85 percent of other students who attended the same high schools. Of those attending college, several had fathers who were financially capable of contributing to college costs but did not. The withdrawal of support for college suggests that other customary forms of parental help-giving, too, may decline as the result of family breakup. For example, nearly a quarter of first-home purchases since 1980 have involved help from relatives, usually parents. The median amount of help is $5,000. It is hard to imagine that parents who refuse to contribute to college costs will offer help in buying first homes, or help in buying cars or health insurance for young adult family members. And although it is too soon to tell, family disruption may affect the generational transmission of wealth. Baby Boomers will inherit their parents’ estates, some substantial, accumulated over a lifetime by parents who lived and saved together. To be sure, the postwar generation benefited from an expanding economy and a rising standard of living, but its ability to accumulate wealth also owed something to family stability. The lifetime assets, like the marriage itself, remained intact. It is unlikely that the children of disrupted families will be in so favorable a position.”

“Moreover, children from disrupted families may be less likely to help their aging parents. The sociologist Alice Rossi, who has studied intergenerational patterns of help-giving, says that adult obligation has its roots in early-childhood experience. Children who grow up in intact families experience higher levels of obligation to kin than children from broken families. Children's sense of obligation to a nonresidential father is particularly weak. Among adults with both parents living, those separated from their father during childhood are less likely than others to see the
father regularly. Half of them see their father more than once a year, as compared with nine out of ten of those whose parents are still married. Apparently a kind of bitter justice is at work here. Fathers who do not support or see their young children may not be able to count on their adult children's support when they are old and need money, love, and attention."

“In short, as Andrew Cherlin and Frank Furstenburg put it, ‘Through divorce and remarriage, individuals are related to more and more people, to each of whom they owe less and less.’ Moreover, as Nicholas Zill argues, weaker parent-child attachments leave many children more strongly exposed to influences outside the family, such as peers, boyfriends or girlfriends, and the media. Although these outside forces can sometimes be helpful, common sense and research opinion argue against putting too much faith in peer groups or the media as surrogates for Mom and Dad.”

“Poverty, Crime, Education”

“Family disruption would be a serious problem even if it affected only individual children and families. But its impact is far broader. Indeed, it is not an exaggeration to characterize it as a central cause of many of our most vexing social problems. Consider three problems that most Americans believe rank among the nation’s pressing concerns: poverty, crime, and declining school performance.”

“More than half of the increase in child poverty in the 1980s is attributable to changes in family structure, according to David Eggebeen and Daniel Lichter, of Pennsylvania State University. In fact, if family structure in the United States had remained relatively constant since 1960, the rate of child poverty would be a third lower than it is today. This does not bode well for the future. With more than half of today’s children likely to live in single-parent families, poverty and associated welfare costs threaten to become even heavier burdens on the nation.”

“Crime in American cities has increased dramatically and grown more violent over recent decades. Much of this can be attributed to the rise in disrupted families. Nationally, more than 70 percent of all juveniles in state reform institutions come from fatherless homes. A number of scholarly studies find that even after the groups of subjects are controlled for income, boys from single-mother homes are significantly more likely than others to commit crimes and to wind up in the juvenile justice, court, and penitentiary
systems. One such study summarizes the relationship between crime and one-parent families in this way: ‘The relationship is so strong that controlling for family configuration erases the relationship between race and crime and between low income and crime. This conclusion shows up time and again in the literature.’ The nation’s mayors, as well as police officers, social workers, probation officers, and court officials, consistently point to family breakup as the most important source of rising rates of crime.”

“Terrible as poverty and crime are, they tend to be concentrated in inner cities and isolated from the everyday experience of many Americans. The same cannot be said of the problem of declining school performance. Nowhere has the impact of family breakup been more profound or widespread than in the nation’s public schools. There is a strong consensus that the schools are failing in their historic mission to prepare every American child to be a good worker and a good citizen. And nearly everyone agrees that the schools must undergo dramatic reform in order to reach that goal. In pursuit of that goal, moreover, we have suffered no shortage of bright ideas or pilot projects or bold experiments in school reform. But there is little evidence that measures such as curricular reform, school-based management, and school choice will address, let alone solve, the biggest problem schools face: the rising number of children who come from disrupted families.”

“The great educational tragedy of our time is that many American children are failing in school not because they are intellectually or physically impaired but because they are emotionally incapacitated. In schools across the nation principals report a dramatic rise in the aggressive, acting-out behavior characteristic of children, especially boys, who are living in single-parent families. The discipline problems in today’s suburban schools – assaults on teachers, unprovoked attacks on other students, screaming outbursts in class – outstrip the problems that were evident in the toughest city schools a generation ago. Moreover, teachers find many children emotionally distracted, so upset and preoccupied by the explosive drama of their own family lives that they are unable to concentrate on such mundane matters as multiplication tables.”

“In response, many schools have turned to therapeutic remediation. A growing proportion of many school budgets is devoted to counseling and other psychological services. The curriculum is becoming more therapeutic:
children are taking courses in self-esteem, conflict resolution, and aggression management. Parental advisory groups are conscientiously debating alternative approaches to traditional school discipline, ranging from teacher training in mediation to the introduction of metal detectors and security guards in the schools. Schools are increasingly becoming emergency rooms of the emotions, devoted not only to developing minds but also to repairing hearts. As a result, the mission of the school, along with the culture of the classroom, is slowly changing. What we are seeing, largely as a result of the new burdens of family disruption, is the psychologization of American education.”

“Taken together, the research presents a powerful challenge to the prevailing view of family change as social progress. Not a single one of the assumptions underlying that view can be sustained against the empirical evidence. Single-parent families are not able to do well economically on a mother's income. In fact, most teeter on the economic brink, and many fall into poverty and welfare dependency. Growing up in a disrupted family does not enrich a child's life or expand the number of adults committed to the child's well-being. In fact, disrupted families threaten the psychological well-being of children and diminish the investment of adult time and money in them. Family diversity in the form of increasing numbers of single-parent and stepparent families does not strengthen the social fabric. It dramatically weakens and undermines society, placing new burdens on schools, courts, prisons, and the welfare system. These new families are not an improvement on the nuclear family, nor are they even just as good, whether you look at outcomes for children or outcomes for society as a whole. In short, far from representing social progress, family change represents a stunning example of social regress.”

“The Two-Parent Advantage”

“All this evidence gives rise to an obvious conclusion: growing up in an intact two-parent family is an important source of advantage for American children. Though far from perfect as a social institution, the intact family offers children greater security and better outcomes than its fast-growing alternatives: single-parent and stepparent families. Not only does the intact family protect the child from poverty and economic insecurity; it also provides greater noneconomic investments of parental time, attention, and emotional support over the entire life course. This does not mean that all two-parent families are better for children than all single parent families. But
in the face of the evidence it becomes increasingly difficult to sustain the proposition that all family structures produce equally good outcomes for children.”

“Curiously, many in the research community are hesitant to say that two-parent families generally promote better outcomes for children than single-parent families. Some argue that we need finer measures of the extent of the family-structure effect. As one scholar has noted, it is possible, by disaggregating the data in certain ways, to make family structure ‘go away’ as an independent variable. Other researchers point to studies that show that children suffer psychological effects as a result of family conflict preceding family breakup. Consequently, they reason, it is the conflict rather than the structure of the family that is responsible for many of the problems associated with family disruption. Others, including Judith Wallerstein, caution against treating children in divorced families and children in intact families as separate populations, because doing so tends to exaggerate the differences between the two groups. ‘We have to take this family by family,’ Wallerstein says.”

“Some of the caution among researchers can also be attributed to ideological pressures. Privately, social scientists worry that their research may serve ideological causes that they themselves do not support, or that their work may be misinterpreted as an attempt to ‘tell people what to do.’ Some are fearful that they will be attacked by feminist colleagues, or, more generally, that their comments will be regarded as an effort to turn back the clock to the 1950s – a goal that has almost no constituency in the academy. Even more fundamental, it has become risky for anyone – scholar, politician, religious leader – to make normative statements today. This reflects not only the persistent drive toward ‘value neutrality’ in the professions but also a deep confusion about the purposes of public discourse. The dominant view appears to be that social criticism, like criticism of individuals, is psychologically damaging. The worst thing you can do is to make people feel guilty or bad about themselves.”

“When one sets aside these constraints, however, the case against the two-parent family is remarkably weak. It is true that disaggregating data can make family structure less significant as a factor, just as disaggregating Hurricane Andrew into wind, rain, and tides can make it disappear as a meteorological phenomenon. Nonetheless, research opinion as well as common sense suggests that the effects of changes in family structure are great enough to cause concern. Nicholas Zill argues that many of the risk
factors for children are doubled or more than doubled as the result of family disruption. ‘In epidemiological terms,’ he writes, ‘the doubling of a hazard is a substantial increase…the increase in risk that dietary cholesterol poses for cardiovascular disease, for example, is far less than double, yet millions of Americans have altered their diets because of the perceived hazard.’"

“The argument that family conflict, rather than the breakup of parents, is the cause of children’s psychological distress is persuasive on its face. Children who grow up in high-conflict families, whether the families stay together or eventually split up, are undoubtedly at great psychological risk. And surely no one would dispute that there must be societal measures available, including divorce, to remove children from families where they are in danger. Yet only a minority of divorces grow out of pathological situations; much more common are divorces in families unscarred by physical assault. Moreover, an equally compelling hypothesis is that family breakup generates its own conflict. Certainly, many families exhibit more conflictual and even violent behavior as a consequence of divorce than they did before divorce.”

“Finally, it is important to note that clinical insights are different from sociological findings. Clinicians work with individual families, who cannot and should not be defined by statistical aggregates. Appropriate to a clinical approach, moreover, is a focus on the internal dynamics of family functioning and on the immense variability in human behavior. Nevertheless, there is enough empirical evidence to justify sociological statements about the causes of declining child well-being and to demonstrate that despite the plasticity of human response, there are some useful rules of thumb to guide our thinking about and policies affecting the family.”

“For example, Sara McLanahan says, three structural constants are commonly associated with intact families, even intact families who would not win any ‘Family of the Year’ awards. The first is economic. In intact families, children share in the income of two adults. Indeed, as a number of analysts have pointed out, the two parent family is becoming more rather than less necessary, because more and more families need two incomes to sustain a middle-class standard of living.”

“McLanahan believes that most intact families also provide a stable authority structure. Family breakup commonly upsets the established
boundaries of authority in a family. Children are often required to make decisions or accept responsibilities once considered the province of parents. Moreover, children, even very young children, are often expected to behave like mature adults, so that the grown-ups in the family can be free to deal with the emotional fallout of the failed relationship. In some instances family disruption creates a complete vacuum in authority; everyone invents his or her own rules. With lines of authority disrupted or absent, children find it much more difficult to engage in the normal kinds of testing behavior, the trial and error, the failing and succeeding, that define the developmental pathway toward character and competence. McLanahan says, ‘Children need to be the ones to challenge the rules. The parents need to set the boundaries and let the kids push the boundaries. The children shouldn't have to walk the straight and narrow at all times.’”

“Finally, McLanahan holds that children in intact families benefit from stability in what she neutrally terms ‘household personnel.’ Family disruption frequently brings new adults into the family, including stepparents, live-in boyfriends or girlfriends, and casual sexual partners. Like stepfathers, boyfriends can present a real threat to children's, particularly to daughters', security and well-being. But physical or sexual abuse represents only the most extreme such threat. Even the very best of boyfriends can disrupt and undermine a child's sense of peace and security, McLanahan says. ‘It's not as though you're going from an unhappy marriage to peacefulness. There can be a constant changing until the mother finds a suitable partner.’”

“McLanahan's argument helps explain why children of widows tend to do better than children of divorced or unmarried mothers. Widows differ from other single mothers in all three respects. They are economically more secure, because they receive more public assistance through Survivors Insurance, and possibly private insurance or other kinds of support from family members. Thus widows are less likely to leave the neighborhood in search of a new or better job and a cheaper house or apartment. Moreover, the death of a father is not likely to disrupt the authority structure radically. When a father dies, he is no longer physically present, but his death does not dethrone him as an authority figure in the child's life. On the contrary, his authority may be magnified through death. The mother can draw on the powerful memory of the departed father as a way of intensifying her parental authority: ‘Your father would have wanted it this way.’ Finally,
since widows tend to be older than divorced mothers, their love life may be less distracting.”

“Regarding the two-parent family, the sociologist David Popenoe, who has devoted much of his career to the study of families, both in the United States and in Scandinavia, makes this straightforward assertion: Social science research is almost never conclusive. There are always methodological difficulties and stones left unturned. Yet in three decades of work as a social scientist, I know of few other bodies of data in which the weight of evidence is so decisively on one side of the issue: on the whole, for children, two-parent families are preferable to single-parent and stepfamilies.”

“The Regime Effect”

“The rise in family disruption is not unique to American society. It is evident in virtually all advanced nations, including Japan, where it is also shaped by the growing participation of women in the work force. Yet the United States has made divorce easier and quicker than in any other Western nation with the sole exception of Sweden – and the trend toward solo motherhood has also been more pronounced in America. (Sweden has an equally high rate of out-of-wedlock birth, but the majority of such births are to cohabiting couples, a long-established pattern in Swedish society.) More to the point, nowhere has family breakup been greeted by a more triumphant rhetoric of renewal than in America.”

“What is striking about this rhetoric is how deeply it reflects classic themes in American public life. It draws its language and imagery from the nation's founding myth. It depicts family breakup as a drama of revolution and rebirth. The nuclear family represents the corrupt past, an institution guilty of the abuse of power and the suppression of individual freedom. Breaking up the family is like breaking away from Old World tyranny. Liberated from the bonds of the family, the individual can achieve independence and experience a new beginning, a fresh start, a new birth of freedom. In short, family breakup recapitulates the American experience.”

“This rhetoric is an example of what the University of Maryland political philosopher William Galston has called the ‘regime effect.’ The founding of the United States set in motion a new political order based to an unprecedented degree on individual rights, personal choice, and egalitarian
relationships. Since then these values have spread beyond their original domain of political relationships to define social relationships as well. During the past twenty-five years these values have had a particularly profound impact on the family.”

“Increasingly, political principles of individual rights and choice shape our understanding of family commitment and solidarity. Family relationships are viewed not as permanent or binding but as voluntary and easily terminable. Moreover, under the sway of the regime effect the family loses its central importance as an institution in the civil society, accomplishing certain social goals such as raising children and caring for its members, and becomes a means to achieving greater individual happiness--a lifestyle choice. Thus, Galston says, what is happening to the American family reflects the ‘unfolding logic of authoritative, deeply American moral-political principles.’”

“One benefit of the regime effect is to create greater equality in adult family relationships. Husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, enjoy relationships far more egalitarian than past relationships were, and most Americans prefer it that way. But the political principles of the regime effect can threaten another kind of family relationship – that between parent and child. Owing to their biological and developmental immaturity, children are needy dependents. They are not able to express their choices according to limited, easily terminable, voluntary agreements. They are not able to act as negotiators in family decisions, even those that most affect their own interests. As one writer has put it, ‘a newborn does not make a good partner.’ Correspondingly, the parental role is antithetical to the spirit of the regime. Parental investment in children involves a diminished investment in self, a willing deference to the needs and claims of the dependent child. Perhaps more than any other family relationship, the parent-child relationship – shaped as it is by patterns of dependency and deference – can be undermined and weakened by the principles of the regime.”

“More than a century and a half ago Alexis de Tocqueville made the striking observation that an individualistic society depends on a communitarian institution like the family for its continued existence. The family cannot be constituted like the liberal state, nor can it be governed entirely by that state's principles. Yet the family serves as the seedbed for the virtues required by a liberal state. The family is responsible for teaching lessons of independence, self-restraint, responsibility, and right conduct, which are
essential to a free, democratic society. If the family fails in these tasks, then the entire experiment in democratic self-rule is jeopardized.”

“To take one example: independence is basic to successful functioning in American life. We assume that most people in America will be able to work, care for themselves and their families, think for themselves, and inculcate the same traits of independence and initiative in their children. We depend on families to teach people to do these things. The erosion of the two-parent family undermines the capacity of families to impart this knowledge; children of long-term welfare dependent single parents are far more likely than others to be dependent themselves. Similarly, the children in disrupted families have a harder time forging bonds of trust with others and giving and getting help across the generations. This, too, may lead to greater dependency on the resources of the state.”

“Over the past two and a half decades Americans have been conducting what is tantamount to a vast natural experiment in family life. Many would argue that this experiment was necessary, worthwhile, and long overdue. The results of the experiment are coming in, and they are clear. Adults have benefited from the changes in family life in important ways, but the same cannot be said for children. Indeed, this is the first generation in the nation’s history to do worse psychologically, socially, and economically than its parents. Most poignantly, in survey after survey the children of broken families confess deep longings for an intact family.”

“Nonetheless, as Galston is quick to point out, the regime effect is not an irresistible undertow that will carry away the family. It is more like a swift current, against which it is possible to swim. People learn; societies can change, particularly when it becomes apparent that certain behaviors damage the social ecology, threaten the public order, and impose new burdens on core institutions. Whether Americans will act to overcome the legacy of family disruption is a crucial but as yet unanswered question.”

(Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, “Dan Quayle was Right”, The Atlantic, April 1, 1993, http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1993/04/dan-quayle-was-right/307015/)

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

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

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

1. “The youngest of two sons desired his inheritance, and the father divided his living among both of his sons (v.12). He enabled them both to make choices.”

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

3. “Riotous living always leads to famine. The son had spent all about him and now had spent all that was in him (v.14-16).”

4. “‘He came to himself’ (v.16)...he awakened to the value of a father with uncompromising rules and boundaries; yet, a home doused in grace, love, and strength. The son knew His father’s love and house would enable his recovery.”

5. “The son repented unto heaven and then to his father. He was not just a son returning for another fix or in search of a father who would soothe unrepentive wounds. No, he was not coming for repetitious prayers, religiousness, or sympathy...he was coming home to submit. There is a lot of pig slop between ‘Father, give me’ and ‘Father, make me’ (v.19). Boundaries and grace enabled the rebirth.”

6. “The father had been minding the road for sometime. I have a hunch he had servants checking on the wayward son but these servants would
have been told not to rescue the son until repentance had full sway. God’s grace and strength enabled the father!”

7. “‘My son who was dead is alive again’ (v.24, 32) The father had never disowned the son; but, the unrepentive actions of the son had severed the son to a state of death. The father’s grace, love, and boundaries enabled the son to find a rebirth. (see Jer. 3:14)”

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

“Our Heavenly Father will enable us! Everywhere you look, people (often Christians) lament, the choices of their offspring…while their own homes pivot to accommodate the choices of the wayward young. Should we not example our heavenly Father’s house? Adam chose everything he thought was coming to him but he could not return to relationship with God till he repented and sought the boundaries anew and the grace beyond comprehension! No one sneaks in the house of God. His house has only a front door and He always stands in it!”

“The enemy will say, ‘It is too late to rebuild the house you have modeled before your lineage.’ That is a lie! It is God that will enable. God is most desirous of enabling each of us….to help children, even our children, to find the road home! Dare to sit down with your young, admit failures, ask forgiveness from them, and then vow to them you will establish the Lord in your house. A house with boundaries and with extravagant grace…now that is HOME! Watch as your children rise up and call you blessed!”

K. 5 THINGS EVERY KID MUST GET FROM DAD”

By Carey Casey & The National Center for Fathering

“At the National Center for Fathering, we work to improve the lives of children and reverse the trends of fatherlessness by inspiring and equipping fathers, grandfathers and father figures to be actively engaged in the life of every child. The research is clear: children thrive when they have an involved father—someone who loves them, knows them, guides them, and helps them achieve their destiny.”

“This free book is part of our ongoing efforts to provide practical, research-based training and resources that inspire and equip men to be the involved fathers, grandfathers and father figures their children need.”

“This book focuses on daughters and sons separately, providing one section for fathers of daughters and one for fathers of sons. That said, many of the ideas are universal to all children, so be sure to check out each section, regardless of your child’s gender.”

“Five Things Every DAUGHTER Must Get from Dad”

“In many families, dads guide their sons and moms guide their daughters. But particularly as girls mature, they need their dads’ perspective as they approach significant crossroads. Daughters need the benefit of their dads’ life experiences and wisdom as they consider important life decisions and think through possible consequences of their choices.”

“Your daughter also needs to know that you cherish her as a person and you admire her as a lovely young woman. She isn’t just another person; she is special and unique, and worthy of your attention. She is royalty.”

“Here are five things your daughter MUST GET from you …

1. “She needs you to give her words of comfort.”

“What would be your first words to your daughter if…”

• “She lost something important?”
• “She injured herself in a minor accident because she was being careless?”
• “She caused a fender-bender?”
• “She came to you and told you that she’s pregnant?”

“What would your first words be?”

“Would they be comforting words, or words of anger, disappointment, and judgment?”

“Daughters around the country tell us the same thing: They do not think they can talk to their dads about their problems because they are afraid of what their dads will say or do. They do not sense unconditional acceptance from their dads. If they make a mistake, daughters feel their dads will judge them and be disappointed, first and foremost. Though we do not think a dad should relax his values or stop having high expectations for his daughter’s behavior, sometimes comforting a daughter is more important than driving home a point. Certainly, comforting a daughter is more important than proving that you are right. You will have other opportunities to teach your daughter about right and wrong, but if your daughter comes to you with a problem, your first priority should be to comfort her by:

1. “Allowing her to express her feelings,”
2. “Actively listening to her, and”
3. “Responding with empathy.”

“This three-tiered process for comforting your daughter is particularly important if she is disappointed or if she has disappointed you.”

“First, allow her to express her feelings.”

“Your daughter needs freedom to express what she’s thinking, knowing that you will respond calmly. Even when your daughter has made a mistake, keeping your cool and refusing to overreact are important steps if you want to build a relationship that encourages your daughter to come to you and tell you whatever is in her heart or on her mind.”

“The secret is to establish a relationship of acceptance during the day-to-day ups and downs of life with your daughter. Demonstrate that she is accepted, no matter what—that she can come to you about
anything. Then, when a crisis occurs, she will be much more likely to reach for you.”

“Let’s say that your teenage daughter has a friend whom you think is bad news. They have a fight, and your daughter becomes the victim of her former friend’s bullying tactics. She confides in you.”

“You might be tempted to say, ‘I told you not to hang out with her!’”

“But resist the temptation. More important is that your daughter feels that she can confide in you. So replace the judgmental words with **consoling words like, ‘Are you okay?’**”

“Show her that her emotions, comfort, and safety are your main concern.”

“**Closely related to the first, actively listening to your daughter is an important part of comforting her.**”

“Allowing her to express herself won’t make a difference if you don’t also ask clarifying questions, clear your mind of preconceptions, read her voice inflections and body language, and keep listening for the heart of her concern.”

“Actively listening to your daughter means that you use your ears, eyes, mouth, heart, and body language.”

- “With your ears, listen to her words.”
- “With your eyes, look for facial expressions and non-verbal cues she might be sending.”
- “With your mouth, ask follow-up questions to make sure you understand.”
- “With your heart, tune into the feelings your daughter is communicating. Pay close attention even if your daughter is talking about something you think is trivial. Remember that she feels the subject is important, so try to tune into her feelings instead of your own judgment. Always keep in mind that you want her to keep coming back to you when more important matters are on her mind.”
• “With your body, demonstrate through your own facial expressions and non-verbal cues that you are interested and ready to hear more. Put down the paper, turn the TV off, shift your whole body away from the computer—whatever it takes to give your complete attention to your daughter.”

“And third, respond with empathy when consequences are necessary.”

“If your daughter misbehaves, consequences are necessary. But instead of showing anger, try showing empathy and sadness. This allows your daughter to contemplate and learn from her mistakes. On the other hand, when parents respond with anger, daughters miss the lesson because they are too angry, frustrated, or resentful.”

“Anger + Consequences = More Anger”
“Empathy + Consequences = Opportunities to Learn and Self-Correct”

“When a child misbehaves, a dad’s first reaction is often to try to fix the problem, launching into a lecture about what she should do, or what lesson she should learn. But if you simply express sadness about the situation and concern for what your child is going through, your daughter will know you are there for her. This will help prevent a meltdown.”

“Say you come in from the garage to find little Amy drawing on the living room walls with her crayons.”

“An angry response might sound like this: ‘Amy! What are you doing? You should know better! Go to your room right now!’”

“Amy feeds off your anger and launches a screaming tantrum of her own. More importantly, rather than focusing on what she did wrong, she will probably focus on the heated emotions and the angry confrontation.”

“Sound familiar?”

“Empathy might go like this: ‘Amy, this is so sad. We don’t write on walls. Crayons are for paper. What are you going to do to fix this?’”
“Chances are, you’ll be struggling to control your anger in situations like this. If this is the case, consider adding something like, ‘Why don’t you go sit in the kitchen for a few minutes and see if you can think of some good solutions.’”

“The key is to handle it in a way that prompts her to think about the problem and attempt to solve it herself (even if she gets some help from you). This allows her an opportunity to learn and self-correct, all the while feeling loved by her dad. (I’ll share more about correction and discipline under point #5.)”

“YOUR Homework:”
1. “Ask your daughter: ‘Am I a good listener?’ If she says that you are not, consider her answer a blessing. You can make some changes and build a stronger relationship with her.”
2. “Then ask: ‘How can you tell when I’m not really listening?’”
3. “Follow this up with: ‘How can I do better?’”
4. “Practice the skills of active listening.”
   • “Face your child squarely. This posture says, ‘I am available to you; I choose to be with you.’”
   • “Adopt an open posture. Crossed arms and legs say, ‘I am not interested.’ An open posture shows your child that you are open to her and what she has to say.”
   • “Put yourself on your child’s level. If your daughter is young, kneel or squat down so you are at eye level. This communicates, ‘I want to know more about you.’”
   • “Maintain good eye contact. Have you ever talked to someone whose eyes seem to be looking at everything in the room but you? How did that make you feel? That’s not something you want your kids to experience.”
   • “Stay relaxed as you listen. If you fidget nervously as your daughter is talking, she will think you would rather be somewhere else.”
   • “Watch your child. Learn to read her nonverbal behavior: posture, body movements, and gestures. Notice frowns, smiles, raised brows, and twisted lips. Listen to voice quality and pitch, emphasis, pauses, and inflections. The way in which your daughter says something can tell you more than what she is actually saying.”
• “Actively give your daughter nonverbal feedback. Nod. Smile. Raise your eyebrows. Look surprised. These small signals mean more than you realize. They will encourage your child to open up even more and let you into her life.”
• “The last step to listening is speaking. But before you give a response, say, ‘Let me make sure I understand...’ then restate in your own words what your daughter has told you. This proves you were listening. It also gives your daughter the opportunity to say, ‘Yes, that is it exactly,’ or ‘No, what I really mean is this...’”

2. “She Needs to Know You Think She Is Beautiful, Inside and Out.”

“When it comes to daughters’ self-image, dads are a huge influence—and it goes deeper than appearance. Girls feel pressure to be smart, thin, pretty, and involved in certain activities. Dads have the ability to combat these pressures and make their daughters feel beautiful, inside and out.”

“Let’s start with your daughter’s body image.”

“Some daughters have told us that they felt unloved by their dads because of all the comments from their dads about exercise and food.”

“Most outside influences in our daughters’ lives—from TV and the movies to magazines to their peers—glorify women who are thin, without even an ounce extra in the ‘wrong’ places. We also live in a world that oftentimes places more emphasis on a girl’s outer beauty than on her inner beauty.”

“Unless a child’s home life combats these pressures, this environment can lead to all kinds of insecurities and disorders.”

“Part of your job as a dad is to be concerned for your children’s long-term health. Teaching a child to make healthy nutritional choices and exercise habits is important, and dads should join their daughters in eating well and being physically active. But dads must never criticize their daughter’s body shape or appearance. Never. Not even if the child does need to lose weight.”
“Before anything else, always affirm your daughter as unique and beautiful and highly valued.”

“If your daughter does, in fact, need to lose weight for health reasons, focus on being healthy. Never comment on her weight or how she looks. Instead, talk about making healthy lifestyle choices.”

“Instead of telling your daughter to eat more vegetables so that she can lose weight, say things like, ‘I want our family to eat more vegetables so we have more energy and live longer.’”

“If need be, have a compassionate female doctor talk to your daughter about how her weight relates to her health, but remember that the focus should always be on health and not on appearance. Otherwise, your daughter will begin to believe that her physical qualities are as important (or more important) than her non-physical qualities.”

“Speaking of non-physical qualities, make sure you affirm your daughter’s positive attributes.

“Go ahead and compliment your daughter when she has taken care to look attractive, just as you would a son who has intentionally spent time making sure he looks handsome. But more important is your ability to compliment her other qualities, like emotional strength, sense of humor, loyalty, intelligence, and courage. Make it clear that what you love most about your daughter are her non-physical qualities, and that even without her physical features, you would still love her just as much.”

“If your daughter tells a funny joke, say, ‘I’m so lucky to have a daughter with such a great sense of humor.’”

“If she does something kind for a sibling, say, ‘I sure am proud of my daughter for treating others with such respect.’”

“If she stands up to a bully, say, ‘Wow. I admire you for being so courageous!’”

“It’s almost impossible to overdo verbal affirmations. Open your heart to your child, see her, and tell her how beautiful she is on the inside.”
“Remember that physical assurance is also important.”

“For many dads, physically affirming their daughters is a bit scary, particularly as their daughters grow and begin entering puberty.”

“Dad, let me assure you: more than ever, your daughter needs your affirmations in ways she can physically feel. Without physical affection, your daughter might think you don’t care or that something is wrong with her, particularly if you used to be affectionate but have withdrawn affection as your daughter has grown older.”

“If you are cold—physically or otherwise—to your daughter, she will go looking for affection and warmth in other places, and these might not be healthy or appropriate places.”

“So look for appropriate ways to demonstrate affection: a kiss on her forehead, an arm around her shoulder, or a squeeze of her hand. And she may not admit it, but she still needs big bear hugs, too.”

“Next, get involved in her pursuits.”

“What causes laughter and silliness in your daughter? What brings that mischievous grin to her face, or makes her fall on the floor in convulsions of hilarity? Find out, and then capitalize on it for the benefit of your relationship.”

“Show that she is worth investing your time and energy. Show her that you like seeing her happy. Spend time just hanging out together, and be intentional about bringing fun and humor to her life. If she likes to cook, help her make up crazy concoctions like grasshopper-gut oatmeal (regular old oatmeal with green food coloring). If she’s an athlete, attend her sporting events. If she’s a ‘girly girl,’ compliment her fashion choices.”

“Look for activities the two of you can enjoy together. You could spend time playing music, camping, finishing word puzzles, playing computer games, jogging, playing softball, or whatever clicks for the two of you. And remember to look for an adventure—big or small—that only a dad can do with his kids. One dad I know took a mountain-climbing trip in
Colorado with his teenage daughter. Another created a race between his kids to see who could change a car tire the fastest.”

“I know it’s tough when our daughters have different interests, and most of us don’t understand the female sex that well in the first place. But almost no one fits perfectly into gender stereotypes. I guarantee that you can find some ‘feminine’ interests and your daughter can find some ‘masculine’ interests that the two of you can enjoy together. **I challenge you to be creative— and even make sacrifices if necessary—to find that common ground with your daughter.** Find fun activities and small or big adventures that allow you to spend time together, and good things are bound to happen.”

“**Finally, demonstrate confidence in her abilities.**”

“You might share something you’re working on and ask her opinion. You could give her a challenging assignment and express trust that she can handle it. Teach her how to do ‘adult’ things, like changing the oil or fixing flat tires.”

“If your daughter knows that you think of her as a future achiever, her whole outlook on the future can change. Literally, it shapes her destiny. It will serve her well in relationships, in her education, and in career pursuits.”

“**YOUR Homework:**”

1. “Verbally point out the positives—at least six or seven times more often than you focus on the things she needs to improve. Point out qualities of her inner beauty more than physical beauty.”
2. “Block off time on your calendar to have lunch with your daughter, whether she’s two or twenty.”
3. “On a special holiday, write your daughter a letter listing specifically what you appreciate about her. If she’s too young to read it, save it until she’s older.”
4. “Find an activity she enjoys and do it together. Does she like to dance? Perhaps you could take an evening ballroom dancing class. If she likes volleyball or tennis, make it a tradition to play game weekly. Let me re-emphasize: Get involved in something she enjoys and is interested in doing. This might require you to stretch a bit and learn something new. Remember, the idea is for
her to look forward to it.”

5. “Try asking your daughter three questions that TV news anchor Diane Sawyer remembers her father asking her:”
   • What do you love?”
   • “Where is the most adventurous place you could do it?”
   • “How can you use it to serve other people?”

6. “Ask your daughter to teach you something she enjoys, and be committed to really learning it.”

3. “She Needs You to Cast a Positive Vision Without Placing Expectations.”

“‘Vision’ has to do with the attitudes a dad conveys about who his daughter is and what she can become. All dads give vision to their children, good or bad. When it comes to casting vision, there isn’t much middle ground. While some fathers give blessing and approval, others create a demanding home, condemning atmosphere, or pessimistic environment.”

“If we aren’t intentionally positive in the way we influence our children’s future, then it’s a net negative. And being negative or uncertain about your daughter’s future can be devastating.”

Here are some examples of a negative vision ...”

“A negative vision can be downright demanding: ‘No kid of mine is going to come home with a report card with Cs on it.’”

“The only ribbon acceptable is a first-place ribbon.”

“It can also be condemning: ‘I know you are lying to me. You’re turning into a liar!’”

“Or, it can be pessimistic and discouraging: ‘Don’t worry about doing well in geometry; boys are better at these subjects.’”

“It’s likely she’ll associate math with inadequacy—and maybe all her classes will suffer.”
“On the other hand, a positive vision allows children to see the good in their actions and their character.”

“Here are some examples of a positive vision …”

“Stating the positive is easy when you truly believe your child is doing something positive. ‘Wow! Look at your arm. You really can throw a ball far.’”

“You got five As and one B. You must be so proud. I know I am!”

“But imagine that your child is crying about something trivial. She isn’t misbehaving; you just think she’s being overly sensitive. Even then, your job is to cast a positive vision. Instead of calling her a baby or chastising her, you can find something positive to say.”

“You might say, ‘You have such a sensitive heart. I bet you will end up helping a lot of people in your lifetime.’”

“You might look at a report card and see a few less-than-stellar grades. You know that your daughter tried hard, but academia isn’t her strength.”

“Instead of immediately focusing on her weaker subjects, you could say, ‘Wow! You are doing great in creative writing. I’m not surprised. I bet you could entertain the world with your short stories. I know I always love it when you tell me stories!’”

“(Of course, if your daughter is really struggling, you might have to talk to her about her study habits, but your first response should be a positive one. And subsequent conversations should come from concern and encouragement.)”

“In many little ways, our daughters are asking us, ‘What am I good at, Dad? What do you see in me?’ We need to be ready with words of hope and promise.”

“When we encourage our children to think big, we’re giving them self-confidence for the future and jump-starting their journey toward their true potential.”
“Casting a positive vision includes helping to prepare your daughter for her future romantic relationships.”

“As much as we would like to choose whom our daughters will date and eventually marry, we are not making these decisions. So, from a young age, we need to focus on preparing our daughters to make wise choices. We do this in two ways.”

“First, teach your children about becoming the right person a lot more than finding the right person. Your daughter doesn’t need to be out looking for Mr. Right all day long. Instead, keep her focused on becoming a young woman of character.”

“Then, when that young man shows up, your daughter will be ready and able to spot those qualities that would make him a good partner.”

“The second way you can prepare your daughter is through your example.”

“You are the main man when it comes to setting her expectations for how other young men treat her. When she begins dating and thinking about what she wants in a husband, do you want her to settle for a relationship that is merely okay? One that may not be a source of real contentment or joy, but as long as she can tolerate the guy and he is not abusive, then she will live with that?”

“Of course not! You want her to marry someone who treats her like royalty! Someone who works to have healthy communication, really listens and cares, gives her genuine compliments, and considers every moment with her to be precious. If that’s what you want her to expect—and not settle for less—then that’s exactly what you have to model for her every day.”

“Do this by showing your wife that you are still head-over-heels in love with her. At the same time, treat your daughters (and your sons, for that matter) like royalty.”

“And if you are not married to your children’s mother, you must still treat your ex with respect.”
“By modeling kindness, respect, and love, you teach your daughters to develop healthy expectations about all relationships. If Mom and Dad treat each other well, and they are respectful toward all people in their life, your children will be more likely to develop benevolence toward relationships, and they will walk away from any relationship that is unhealthy.”

“YOUR Homework:”
1. Don’t ignore your daughter’s vocational future. Help her discover and develop her gifts and talents, and—without pressure or expectations—talk about some occupations or life pursuits those might turn into someday.”
2. “Each and every day, make a point to sit with her in her room and give her the chance to talk for at least five minutes straight, without any interruptions, as she shares about her day. Just listen. Then be ready to share if she asks about your day.”
3. “Simply ask your daughter, ‘What are your dreams?’ whether she is seven, seventeen, or twenty-seven. Then be ready to listen attentively nod, and encourage her. Even if her goals seem somewhat outlandish, convey optimism. Your instinct may be to downplay her dreams with a dose of reality. But don’t! Let her dream. Tell her that anything is possible, and there are great things in store for her.”
4. “Every day, convey your unconditional love for her. Make sure she knows she doesn’t have to achieve to win your approval. You love her no matter what.”
5. “Encourage your child to be physically active. Research shows that girls who participate in sports and physical activities are less likely to be obese, have heart disease, take drugs, be sexually active, drop out of school, and struggle with depression.”
6. “You are the standard she will use when it comes to choosing a husband. So take an honest look at your own marriage. Are you controlling, demanding, or moody? Or are you considerate of your wife? Do you do your part around the house? Do you show evidence of a loving and affectionate marriage? With your wife—and children—do you communicate openly and make yourself available when they need to talk?  
7. :Make the Championship Fathering Commitment at www.fathers.com/cf.”
4. “She Needs You to Protect Her, and Not Just Physically.”

“We typically think of protection as defending our daughters’ physical safety, but there are also emotional, moral, and spiritual dangers out there. If we’re fulfilling our role, our girls will have a sense of security even when we can’t personally be there to protect them.”

“First, be aware and guard against the many forces that could threaten her.”

“There are people who could try to lure your daughter into a destructive lifestyle, or who encourage her to adopt a world-view that doesn’t match with your values … not to mention that she could be exposed to violence and sex on TV, the Internet, in music, and in movies. You have to be aware and ready to take appropriate action.”

“One dad I know was shocked to hear that his daughter’s ninth-grade biology teacher had played an R-rated movie in class. Supposedly, the movie was educational. The girl was offended, and she asked her dad to watch the film himself. He, too, found it offensive and contrary to his beliefs, so he immediately wrote a two-page memo to the assistant principal, and he called his daughter’s teacher, trying to show them why it’s unwise to show such films to ninth graders, who are certainly under the given age for R-rated movies. He tried hard not to come across as a senseless, angry parent, but he did see the need to be a little bit of a ‘father bear’ and take action to defend his cub.”

“Second, prepare her to handle dangerous situations.”

“We can’t always be there, but teaching our daughters skills is another way of protecting them. We can talk through scenarios and help them think through appropriate responses—whether it’s calling 9-1-1 or responding to strangers who might approach them.”

“Have conversations like, ‘What happens when you lie to a friend?’”

“Or, ‘What do you suppose a teenage boy is thinking about when your friend wears an outfit like that?’”
“We should prepare them to handle an uncomfortable dating situation, or an adult who does something inappropriate. We need to teach them how to say ‘no.’”

“YOUR Homework:”
• “Does your daughter trust you to protect her? If not, you can build that kind of relationship during everyday interactions. Hold her hand as she crosses the street. Make sure she wears a seat belt. Give her a curfew. Warn her about drugs and alcohol. Each time you say or do something to keep her safe, you’re building trust. She’s learning that you care and she can count on you.”
• “During times of worry or crisis, be there to hold your daughter tight and whisper in her ear, ‘I’m here. It’s gonna be okay.’ Then be willing to stay there as long as it takes and help her through the challenge.”

5. “She Needs You to Walk the Fine Line.”

“One morning some years ago, I was driving my three oldest children to meet the school bus. They were in grade school.”

“They were in the back seat, and on this particular day my daughters were talking about who wore what to school, and they were wishing they could wear the designer labels that some other kids wore.”

“During this time, there had been stories on the news about people who killed each other for a certain brand of shoe or jacket. My kids were growing up in this crazy environment, and I really believed that they had lost their minds. Some kids didn’t even own more than one pair of clothes, and my kids wanted designer labels?”

“In that moment, I started worrying about everything they could get involved in: drugs, alcohol, sex, and a greater focus on material things.”

“Those thoughts were churning in my head, and in a moment of what I would like to believe was righteous anger, I stopped the car, turned it around, and said, ‘We’re not going to school today; we’re going back home.’”

“We had to talk about some things. They were a little bit shocked, so I think they listened to me pretty well. Then I took them to school later on.”
“That’s one time when I became aware of how the culture can sneak up on us. We don’t notice it so much, but then we have a wake-up experience—like I did that day—where we see or hear something and we ask, ‘How did this happen?’”

“Did I make the right choice that day? I think I did. And I want to encourage you, Dad, to stay watchful and confront tough issues as they arise.”

“Turn the car around. Have a heart-to-heart talk. Go for a one-on-one campout. Take a missions trip with your son or daughter. I know one dad and teenage daughter who volunteered to work at a soup kitchen once or twice a week for a whole summer. The dad wanted to expose her to a side of life she hadn’t seen and help tame her materialism.”

“Dads, if our kids are given the opportunity, sometimes they will lose their minds. Part of our coaching role is to bring them back to earth. Your daughter needs you to guide her. But she also needs you to walk a fine line. Your guidance should be more than simply setting a fine example, but it should not be an endless stream of lectures.”

“Guiding means discerning what’s right in the midst of all the gray areas in our culture.”

“Young women are under a lot of pressure to look, act, and be a certain way—to maintain a certain image. They also face expectations with regard to their future aspirations. Often, dads can bring an analytical approach to help clarify the picture and guide them along.”

“Our daughters need the benefit of our experience and wisdom as they consider options and think through possible consequences of their choices. Discernment involves making wise decisions about life’s choices. It’s about sifting through opinion, facts, and knowledge, and then judging and examining that information so you can form a coherent conclusion. As dads, it’s our job to model discernment and then equip our daughters to be discerning as they face tough choices and peer pressure.”
“Let’s say, for instance, that your daughter’s best childhood friend is the school ‘nerd,’ Leslie. Other kids are starting to tease your daughter for being friends with Leslie. Your daughter tells you that she’s not sure she should invite Leslie to her birthday party.”

“You might be tempted to lecture her about any number of things, including:”

- “Making decisions for herself,”
- “Being a leader versus being a follower, and”
- “Being kind to her friends.”

“Instead, help her discern right from wrong by asking questions like:”

- “Do you like Leslie?”
- “How do you think it would make Leslie feel if you didn’t invite her?”
- “Do you think the other kids are being considerate?”
- “What would happen if you started letting the others kids make decisions on your behalf?”
- “What if the roles were reversed and you were labeled a ‘nerd’? Would you want Leslie to invite you to her party?”

“Often, you can guide her through the follow-up questions you ask. You’re still helping to shape her thinking, but it doesn’t come across as a lecture, and she may feel a sense of accomplishment at coming to a sound conclusion at least partially on her own.”

“We can also guide through correction.”

“Ultimately, correcting behavior is the goal of discipline. You want your daughter to shift her behavior to something different. Enforcing limits and consequences is important, but we must also communicate why a daughter’s behavior is being corrected. If you do not draw a line between action and consequence, your child will not have an opportunity to self-correct. When you think about discipline issues and how you respond, don’t settle on snap judgments and quick answers. Come up with consequences and experiences that will help shape your child’s character and change her heart. Those moments of foolishness and
disobedience are really opportunities for your child to learn and grow. Make the most of them.”

“For instance, if your child loses her cell phone—a cell phone that you paid for—tell her that she must either repay you or purchase a replacement cell phone using her own money. If your toddler draws on the walls, have her clean the walls, tell Mom what she did, and then apologize.”

“And remember that you do not have the right to belittle your daughter in the process. You must show her respect, even in her worst moments, and no matter how she might treat you. How we carry out correction makes all the difference.”

“Think about this: If one of your friends were in a bad mood, you wouldn’t start yelling at him to shape up. You’d never say something like, ‘I can’t believe I have to put up with this from you, you miserable brat!”

“Surely our daughters deserve at least that much consideration.”

“YOUR Homework:”

1. “Monitor your daughter’s media habits: watch what she watches on TV or online; check out movies before she watches them; learn about music artists before she downloads songs or albums.”

2. “Encourage your daughter to be in relationships with older girls and women who are a positive influence on her.”

3. “Next time your daughter has a problem or asks for your opinion about something, respond only in questions to help her think through the situation (but of course, your questions are helping to guide her to a positive solution.)”

4. “Sit down with your child’s mom at a time when things are calm, and come up with a plan for situations where your daughter needs correction. That way, you won’t be making things up as you go next time something happens.

“Dad, you are a tremendous and vital resource to meeting these five needs in the life of your daughter. These needs are not limited by age, but manifest themselves in heart of a little girl and continue on throughout her adult life—even in her own marriage relationship.”
“Five Things Every SON Must Get from Dad”

“Since you used to be a boy, you might have a more natural companionship with your sons than your daughters; you are probably more alike, and you might enjoy more of the same activities.”

“Oddly enough, even though it might be easier to build rapport with your son, you might have a distant relationship. Building a close connection with sons requires intention, as does giving them a healthy model of what it means to be a boy, man, and father.”

“Here are five key things that your son needs from you …”

1. “He Needs a Living Example.”

“Your son needs reference points, and you serve as your son’s example of a man. Living a responsible lifestyle can impact your children and children’s children for generations. That’s the kind of power your example can have.”

“A dad’s example really encompasses all aspects of life. But let me mention a few areas where you need to be intentional about modeling:”

“First, set the example for expressing emotions responsibly.”

“While there’s been a lot of progress in the last few decades, many men don’t think of emotional vulnerability as a masculine trait. A lot of dads hide their emotions, as if having an emotion makes a person weak. But sons need to see their fathers’ feelings; it’s a vital part of who they are.”

“So instead of shutting down when you feel nervous or ashamed, look for ways to open up. Stay engaged with your family members and learn healthy ways of expressing emotions. It may take time, but it’s something you must learn. At first, you can start by writing notes or letters to family members, and then go from there.”

“Or, start by talking to another dad. Find some other men who are good models of this—whether in your extended family, your neighborhood,
or your local church. Talk about what happens during times of real pressure and challenge as it relates to the emotional side of your life, and then develop skills you can use at home.”

“Second, learn to regulate anger—and other negative emotions.”

“Research shows that most men are comfortable showing just one emotion. Guess what it is?”

“Anger.”

“Imagine if this is the only emotion your sweet son can show. Consider what this means for his future relationships!”

“My friend, Jason, tells of the splintered mark in his teenage son’s bedroom door, just above the handle. Jason doesn’t have a short temper, but one night he and his son were engaged in a verbal sparring match. The son decided it was over, and Jason was determined that it wasn’t. The boy slammed the door, and Jason slammed his fist into the veneer of the door. He was embarrassed—and everyone was shocked. To his credit, he quickly apologized.”

“Maybe you can remember the overwhelming frustration of having a baby who kept crying and crying despite every sensible thing you tried. Or maybe you’re going through that right now.”

“Harvard researcher Samuel Osherson wrote, ‘Anger is often a father’s way of responding to the powerlessness of parenting.’”

“Isn’t that true? In many areas of our lives, we have a sense of control; or at least we know what to expect most of the time. But with our kids, some situations are simply beyond us. We’re powerless, and sometimes clueless.”

“Here is something that might sound familiar: At home after a terrible day at work, you ask your son to pick up his toys before dinner. He doesn’t listen. You’re too tired for this. Can’t he just obey you this once? You ask again. No response. You raise your voice, and now he hears you, but whines because he doesn’t want to comply.”
“Your immediate response is anger. So how do you regulate it? Here are some suggestions from various experts.”

1. “First, get away. Say you have to use the restroom, or go for a walk. Once you’re alone, do something to change your mood to positive. Pray for patience and wisdom. Think about the joy that your son has brought you, recall his sense of humor, or his gentleness, or some other gift. Keep focusing on the positives until you know the chance for an outburst has subsided.”

2. “Second, use self-talk. Repeat words and phrases to help calm yourself down. For example, you might say or think to yourself: Hold on, big guy. You are losing it. Don’t do something foolish here. Or repeat a simple phrase (‘firm but pleasant’ is one of my favorites) or repeat a quick prayer asking for help.”

3. “When you are finally ready to confront the child again, choose statements that express empathy and sadness. This puts the responsibility back on your son’s shoulders. You could say, ‘Hmmm, it’s too bad that you didn’t clean up your toys like I asked. You must feel bad about that. Now you are going to miss out on something fun. What do you think that should be?’ Your son might offer a reasonable punishment, but of course you should be ready to suggest an appropriate consequence if needed, such as missing dessert, losing TV-time, or being ‘grounded’ from playing with his favorite toy.”

“That way you’re not pointing at the child, you’re partnering with him.”

“If your anger habits are deeply ingrained and you can’t make any progress in this area—or if your anger is getting destructive toward yourself or others—it may be time to get professional help. A compassionate, trained professional can offer insights, encouragement and motivation to help you.”

“Along with modeling for your son’s emotional life, your son also needs you to set the example for what it means to respect women.”

“One day, Mike was outside in the yard, talking with a neighbor boy. The boy, who was about ten, told Mike that he had a new ‘girlfriend.’”
“Mike’s first response was, ‘Is she pretty?’”

“At the time, Mike’s question seemed harmless enough, but the more he thought about it, the more he realized that in that brief moment he had just classified ‘looks’ as more important than about a dozen character traits that are actually of much greater importance.”

“Boys get most of their ideas about women and how to relate to women from their dads and the key father figures in their lives. So with that in mind, ask yourself: What are my words and actions teaching my son?”

“Do you want your sons to see women as objects? To value women only for their appearance? You may think those habits develop during adolescence, but—like so many character traits—they are really learned much earlier.”

“Dad, use your powerful influence to model respect for women—to your sons, the boys in your neighborhood, and even other men. Demonstrate that women are to be valued for their fascinating character, their intelligence and integrity, and the feminine personality traits that complement and complete our masculine approach to things.”

“Being a healthy role model is particularly true for fathers who have experienced a family break-up.”

“For divorced dads, being a good model means dealing positively with feelings toward an ex-wife. If you are divorced, remember that your kids love both you and your ex. They don’t want to hear their mother blasted. No matter what she is saying or doing, you need to respect her as the mother of your children.”

“What does it say to your son if you blast his mother? What does it say about the sanctity of sex and love if you repeatedly tell your son that you hate his mother? Keep this in mind, particularly if your son’s mother is mistreating you.”
“Taking the high road will always serve your well. Your children will respect you, and they will develop a healthier attitude toward romantic relationships.”

“Even if you feel like things aren’t fair and your ex is being vindictive and unreasonable, your best course of action is clear. You need to maintain your poise, keep your dignity, and do the right thing. Many guys would go to the other extreme and do something hurtful toward their ex. But you can’t do that.”

“Being positive even in the face of conflict shows children how to handle adversity. As hard as it is, this trains a boy to function in a tough situation and show respect for people at all times.”

“One final note: If your ex-wife is open to it, I suggest you seek counseling, not necessarily to repair your relationship, but to learn how to be strong co-parents.”

“Of course, if you are married, be a good model.”

“Dad, your marriage is an important foundation for your son. He needs to see what a healthy, loving marriage looks like. So make yours strong! Show respect to your bride and encourage your kids to honor her as well.”

“It’s hard to connect with your wife when the most pressing needs seem to be the kids. But, men, I can’t affirm enough the importance of your marriage. It’s vital that you nurture that relationship. You do need regular communication time with your bride to catch up on your day, talk through issues, discuss the kids, and just enjoy each other—even if it means telling your children to let you be alone for 15 minutes sometime in the evening.”

“It’s good for children to see that their parents value and defend their time together. Children draw great security and confidence from seeing you value your marriage, which is the foundation of the whole family.”

“And don’t forget to leave the kids with grandparents or a babysitter for a regular date night or a weekend away. The kids may protest, but
they’ll get used to it, and in the long run, they will take comfort in seeing your commitment to each other and to the family. It’s worth your investment of time and money.”

“YOUR Homework:”

1. “Model courageous humility for your son. Whenever you do something that hurts him or makes him feel left out—or if there’s some lingering hurt in the past—go to him humbly, ask for forgiveness, and commit to do better in the future.”

2. “Increase the amount of verbal affirmation you give to your son. Consciously strive to notice and praise what he does well. Become comfortable saying things like, ‘I love you, Son, just the way you are. And nothing you ever do will change that.’”

3. “Make your Championship Fathering Commitment, and tell your son that you plan to be a great dad. Tell him to ‘call you out’ any time you drop the ball.”

4. “Once a day, call your wife from work just to check in. That will help create an expectancy and atmosphere for communication when you get home, and you’ll have some idea of what’s going on at home before you walk in the door.”

5. “Ask your children’s mother what you can do to help relieve some of the stress she’s feeling, then make it your goal to help her address that issue. And take a leading role in getting your son involved in that task or chore as well.”

6. “Train your son to look for ways to serve his mother and other women: holding doors, offering his jacket, giving up his seat, holding or offering an umbrella, etc. Reward him for finding new ways to express good, old-fashioned chivalry. Ask him to point out when you drop the ball in this area.”

7. “Make it a point to show appreciation for your wife in front of your son. Tell her how she makes you a better man and father. Be specific. Think of five things you’ve learned from her over the years and thank her for her partnership, caring and insight.

8. “Make the Championship Fathering Commitment at www.fathers.com/cf.”

2. “He Needs a Four-Part Plan.”

“Dad, do you have a plan to help your son become a real man?”
“You’ve heard the maxim: if you fail to plan, you may as well plan to fail. Your son needs a dad who is thinking about his future and taking action to prepare them for that future—whether we’re talking about tomorrow, next week, next year, or ten years from now.”

“This consists of:”
1. “Vocational planning”
2. “Relationship planning”
3. “Rites of passage”
4. “Skills, attitudes, and values planning”

“You can help your son plan for his vocational future by:”
• “Helping him explore a wide variety of interests and hobbies. Is he gifted at music? Has he been to space camp? Is he a superstar athlete? He won’t know unless he tries.”
• “Even with a young son, you can start planting ideas in his mind about the kinds of careers that might go with his interests and talents. Don’t focus on just one career path, and do all you can to avoid pressuring him. Simply seek to help him learn and explore. It’s good for him to learn early on that his skills and interests can translate into a profession or a life calling.”
• “Helping your son brainstorm about career possibilities, and then exposing him to jobs that might interest him. You can do this well before high school. If he wants to be surgeon, see if you can take a tour of a hospital and ask a surgeon questions about his line of work.”
• “Showing him the variety of jobs within an industry. If he likes music, point out that there’s much more to it than performing. He could be a sound technician, or a producer. He could work in radio, or he could be a composer. Some children do grow up to be sports stars, but he could also be a coach, sports journalist, or play-by-play announcer. Some children do become movie stars, but the movie industry also needs lighting technicians, screenwriters, set designers, make-up artists, and so on.”
• “Trying not to talk negatively about your own work. Those comments under your breath make a big impression, and shape your son’s ideas about work. You should want your son to love his job, even if you don’t love your job. Think of something positive to say about your job so that your son believes that work can be fun. You could even take your kid to work with you so that he can witness first-hand your commitment to integrity as an employee.”
• “Helping your child see the opportunities in front of him. Your son probably isn’t thinking about ways he can start building his career while in junior high or high school, but he can. If he likes to skate, for example, he could be a skating teacher’s assistant or get a part time job at the rink.”

• “Encouraging an entrepreneurial spirit. Those baby-sitting and lawn-mowing jobs teach your kids that both time and effort have their rewards. Even young children can begin to learn this by helping at your summer garage sale. Sure, not every lemonade stand will be a huge success, but those setbacks can be even more valuable learning opportunities. Why didn’t it work? What could he do differently next time?

• “Keeping dreams alive. Your son might not have what it takes to be the next Michael Phelps, but encourage his dreams nonetheless. Plenty of other people will tell him the cold-hard facts, but he has at least two people who believe in him unconditionally: you and his mom. Instead, instill an optimistic spirit about the future that is grounded in realism. Talk to your son about what it takes to become an Olympic swimmer, look at the stats together, and set goals for your son to meet. In that kind of atmosphere, even seemingly impossible dreams can become a reality for your son.”

• “Being in touch with your son’s studies. The activities and curricula in schools are diverse enough that you’ll be able to identify strengths and interests. What’s on his mind after school? What are his favorite classes, and why? And be sure, talk to teachers, coaches and counselors. Take advantage of assessment tools—the aptitude, personality, and career tests—and discuss the positive results with your child. Ask, ‘Did you know that you possess this skill? What do you think about it?’”

“Then there’s his relational future.”

“Dad, don’t leave your son to learn these things from his friends or some men’s magazine he picks up. Give him accurate information. Help him really understand the importance of integrity, purity, and respect for women, and that you’re available to talk anytime. You can help him plan for a healthy relationship by:”
• “Talking about what to look for in a mate, discussing what it takes to make a marriage work, and having regular discussions about how he relates to the opposite sex.”
• “Encouraging him to develop positive relationships with everyone—coaches, friends, siblings, bosses, and teachers. If he treats his friends poorly, he’ll likely treat a spouse poorly, so be sure to look for signs that your son is not a good friend. If he isn’t, use this as an opportunity to correct behavior.”
• “Pointing him toward friendships that inspire him to be his best. Peers play a powerful role in his life, and you can influence his decisions about friends through the quality of your own relationship with him and by getting to know his friends and what they stand for.”
• “Talking about what love is. It often involves strong emotions, but it’s more about a steadfast commitment and a decision to serve and seek her best interests—even when the emotions take a temporary backseat. Early on, your son needs to learn about the importance of protecting a young woman’s integrity and well-being.”
• “Giving him a long-range perspective. Most likely, a teenage relationship will not turn into a marriage. So, why get serious with anyone? It’s much better to work at a strong friendship. If it does become serious, that friendship will be the best preparation anyway.”
• “Talking specifically about boundaries. What’s appropriate with physical affection? What about risky behaviors involving drugs or alcohol that could arise? The stereotype is for the boy to convince the girl to do something she shouldn’t, but it does happen the other way around sometimes.”
• “Sharing some of your own experiences. Tailor the discussion based on your child’s maturity level, but share lessons you learned and the stories behind them. Being open will also help you build a stronger relationship.”

“Third, give some thought to rites of passage—benchmarks along the way that help signal new levels of maturity and responsibility, and that affirm him as a beloved son.
“Imagine this scenario: You’re out in the country with your fourteen-year-old son, coming back from someone’s house. You pull the car over to the side of the deserted dirt road and turn off the ignition.”

“‘Dad, what’s going on?’ your son asks.”
“You take the car keys and dangle them in front of his face.”

“‘Son,’ you say, ‘why don’t we trade places?’”

“Your son gets a look on his face that is elation combined with fear. He gets behind the wheel, and you don’t even have to remind him to buckle his seat belt. He starts the car and revs it a few times. His left hand tries to find just the right place on the wheel; his right hand grips the stick shift. He flashes you a smile, slips the car into gear, and both of your hearts race as you spin down the road. You have communicated that you trust him with your car—and actually with your very life!”

“It is a father’s unique privilege to bring his son through various rites of passage. Maybe you’ll get him up early on Saturday to go out to breakfast with you and your adult friends. Maybe it will be the first time you let him stay home without a babysitter while you and your wife go out of town for a few days. Or the first time you trust him with your credit card or your electric razor. Or when you take him down to open his first checking account.”

“These are big moments for all boys and, as fathers, we need to be there to share them.”

“I suppose a driver’s education instructor could teach him to drive just as well ...another dad in the neighborhood could help him check the oil in the car or change his first tire. But there’s something different, something special about a boy learning these things from his father. You are your son’s measuring stick for manhood. And there are many ways you can tell him, ‘I’m proud of the way you’re growing into a young man.”

“These rite of passage moments should happen continually along the journey. Significant events should be celebrated with new privileges and responsibilities. Create opportunities to talk with him about what it means to be a man. What are the marks of true manhood? Help him recognize people in the world who are getting it right … or missing the mark.”

“You could:”
• “Take a trip together to have fun and talk about what it means to be a man.”
• “When your son reaches a milestone, give him a gift—a plaque, a book, or maybe something that your father gave you. Talk to him about the significance of that gift and your hopes for his growing maturity.”
• “Work together at a local soup kitchen or help clean an inner-city neighborhood. Demonstrate that manhood includes serving others.”

“On a camping trip, talk about appropriate guidelines for dating and responsible sexuality. Be open about your life, and invite him to ask questions.”

“So, I’d suggest listing some skills, attitudes, and values to instill in your son by the time he leaves home.”

“Look specifically at what you want to develop in your son. Do a little brainstorming to create a list.”

• “In the category of skills, consider adding the following: Balancing a checkbook, accepting criticism and correction, prayer, personal health and cleanliness, home management, financial management, basic automobile upkeep, essential skills for cooking, the ability to say ‘no.’”
• “When considering his attitude, add the following to your list (assuming they are important to you): A sense of humor, perseverance and diligence, self-respect, servanthood, humility, thankfulness, an appreciation for simplicity, a can-do spirit, optimism”
• “With respect to his values, think about: Honesty, respect for privacy, modesty, the value of hard work, appreciation for the arts, a love of learning, courage, personal integrity, family togetherness.”

“Review your list from time to time to help assess how your son is progressing in each area. Brainstorm with your wife about some ways you can teach him a particular skill or value. You’ll want to avoid placing unrealistic expectations, but encourage his growth and development at the same time.”

“YOUR Homework:”
1. “Take your son to tour a workplace of a career he might like to pursue someday.”
2. “Tell your son five good things about your work.”
3. “Help your son with a lemonade stand, garage sale, or mowing enterprise.”
4. “Tell your son about when you met his mom and some highlights (and lowlights) from your dates together.”
5. “Write him a letter blessing him and offering your thoughts about this stage in his life, including your own memories about what you were doing when you were that age.”
6. “Create a list of skills, attitudes, and values you hope your son develops.”
7. “Tell your son about a skill your father taught you. Then ask, ‘What would you like to learn from me?’”
8. “Choose a value or principle that’s important to you and brainstorm for a specific way you can help your son appreciate or grow in that area.”

3. “He needs moral and spiritual benchmarks.”

“Spiritual benchmarks are events, experiences, or habits that help to activate your son’s faith and teach him what it means to live a life that looks out beyond himself. We can focus on three areas that are important to a son’s moral development:”

“Respect for authority: Does your son respond to authority in a proper way? Does he respect those who are over him? Submitting to authority will help teach your son humility.”

“At the National Center for Fathering, we recently received an e-mail from a dad saying, “I am concerned for my 12-year-old son’s attitude toward his mother. Somehow he and I have improved our relationship since he entered this age, but my wife is feeling that her relationship with him is deteriorating.”

“He barely speaks to her, and any conversation she tries to have with him ends up in an argument. Is this normal?”

“Maybe this boy is reflecting some attitudes of his friends. Or, he might be trying to separate himself from being a ‘momma’s boy’ and forge
ahead into what he thinks is a more clear-cut masculinity. Or, he may be adopting some of the disrespect that he has watched his father model toward his mother.”

“Dads need to confront their children about improper behaviors and hold them accountable, clearly stating, ‘This is unacceptable.’”

“You are your son’s main instructor about what a man is and how he should act. If your son is being disrespectful toward an authority figure, sit down with him, tell him what you’ve observed, and explain why that behavior is wrong. If he continues to act rudely, keep establishing consequences until his behavior changes.”

“**Spiritual vitality:** By example, sons will gain an appreciation for prayer, worship, and other acts of devotion. Many fathers are absent from equipping their sons in this area. And if boys grow up without a masculine model of spiritual vitality, they may view faith as a feminine pursuit. But a real man shows compassion and strength, humility and decisiveness.”

“So while you strive to model submission, humility and love, you also need to show your sons that walking by faith also requires toughness, resourcefulness, and courage.”

“In today’s world, many dads work long hours, kids’ schedules are jam packed, and there is just no regular time for extended or regular family devotions. But dads can’t use that as an excuse. If it’s important to you, make sure it gets on the calendar, and follow through. I would also recommend one-on-one times with each of your kids, where you read and discuss Scriptures and check in about how they’re doing and what challenges they’re facing.”

“In addition, get creative and invest real time by grabbing bits and pieces of life here and there.”

- “When driving your son to and from school or games, talk about things happening in your life and his, and ask him how he has seen God at work around him, or about friends who might have specific needs.”
• “During meals, try bringing up a question for everyone to discuss—some challenge they are likely to face. How did you handle that issue, and how did it impact your faith?”
• “Take children along for routine errands, and show them how you operate in the real world.”

“Real-life experiences of service: Give your son many experiences serving others, from the family whose car has broken down on the side of the road ... to the inner-city project or homeless shelter in your community ... to the missions trip to Brazil. Maybe these could even be combined with rites-of-passage activities with your son.”

“As a dad, you must intentionally look for opportunities that will help your son grow and stretch. Maybe he can serve as a camp counselor or volunteer at a local shelter or other charity. Take your son to help out at a senior care center; tutor a disadvantaged child; work in a soup kitchen; sponsor a child overseas. Some of the most profound life changes for teens come during mission trips to third-world cultures, or charity projects in your neighborhood or city.”

“YOUR Homework:”
1. “Challenge your son to never let another student sit alone in the school cafeteria. He should take the initiative to go over and sit by that student.”
2. “Get your family involved in service-oriented activities on an ongoing basis: sponsoring a needy child, supporting a missions organization, or helping a family you know who may be in need.”
3. “Encourage and assist youth workers, coaches, and other mentors who are investing in your son’s life. Show appreciation for what they do. Even though you are the one with primary responsibility to train your son, they are wonderful assets who can sometimes get through to your son at times when you can’t.”
4. “He needs a ‘respect-and-purity’ monitor.”

“Part of our work through the years has included helping with development training for some players in the NFL. I’ll never forget the day I was talking with one player and trying to help him through a tough time that was made worse because of his drinking habit.”
“I asked him, ‘Where did you first take a drink?’”

“And he told me, ‘I drank a beer with my dad when I was a kid.’”

“I can remember another time when a young man had been drinking, then got in a car with his buddies and had an accident. All the other guys in the car either died or had serious injuries, but this young man came out fine, though he served a short time in jail. He came to me afterward to talk about it.”

“Again, I asked him, ‘Shoot me straight. When’s the first time you ever took a drink?’”

“He said, ‘With my dad.’”

“Most dads would never intentionally initiate their son into a potentially destructive habit like this or hand their child a bottle of something dangerous. But that’s exactly what can happen if we aren’t intentionally teaching them respect and helping them remain ‘pure.’”

“This is why I say you must be a ‘respect-and-purity’ monitor.”

“Many young men have lost their sense of respect, and it especially shows in their speech. They trash talk, curse, and make crude jokes. They denigrate women or use foul language in front of children. Somewhere along the way, someone failed to correct their behavior.”

“Monitor the way your sons are talking, and teach them to use their speech for positive ends—like articulating thoughts and feelings, building relationships, giving encouragement, and speaking words of life and peace.”

“Teach him how to respect other adults—looking them in the eye, shaking hands firmly, speaking clearly, and even using ‘Sir’ and ‘Ma’am.’”

“If your son is disrespectful toward a woman, particularly his mother, hold him accountable by saying, ‘That is unacceptable. Your mother is my wife. You cannot talk to her like that.’ You are your son’s main instructor about what a man is and how he should act. Sit down with
your son, tell him what you’ve observed, and explain why that behavior is wrong. If he continues to act rudely, keep imposing consequences until his behavior changes.”

“Be sure, too, to do everything you can to help your son protect his innocence and purity.”

“The ultimate goal is to raise a boy who has self-discipline—an internal strength that helps him avoid life’s pitfalls and make wise choices, based on solid values. This includes:”
• “Abstaining from sex. Talk to your son about how putting the brakes on his sex drive now leads to greater rewards later. To prove the point, look for other examples of the benefits of delayed gratification. Tell him: ‘Taking extra groundballs instead of watching TV might earn you a starting spot on the varsity team. Finishing homework Friday night would allow you to really enjoy your weekend. And spending less on fast food or music downloads today and you can buy that bass guitar tomorrow.’”
• “Having integrity with his school work, which will lead to be a valuable employee.”
• “Playing by the rules in games.”
• “Handling money with honesty.”
• “Saying ‘no’ to drugs and alcohol.”

“YOUR Homework:”
1. Is there anything in your life that would make you ashamed if your children or your bride found out? Maybe it’s time to eliminate that from your life and put positive accountability into place.”
2. “Talk to your son early and often about sex. You know your own children best, but remember this: first messages are usually the most powerful. It’s better for you to present an accurate message from a perspective that includes your faith and values than for them to learn from someone on the playground or even from their teachers at school. That way you won’t have to change or argue against what they’ve already heard.”
3. “Ask your son’s mom about ways he is showing disrespect. Then talk with your son. Set clear, specific expectations for respectful behavior in his behavior, speech, body language, and tone of voice.”
4. “With an older son, tell him about your first exposure to drugs, alcohol, pornography, or the first time you committed a crime (whether or not you were caught). Ask about how prevalent those things are at his school, and tell him you’ll keep checking in with him.”

5. “He needs you to show him how to love.”

“We need to cultivate love—or responsible action toward others—in our sons.”

“Too many dads fail to affirm their sons, because it’s just too uncomfortable. They rarely show them physical affection or speak words of blessing. Maybe it’s time to start some new habits.”

“You’re the best resource your son has if he is going to learn to be vulnerable and trust the people he’s close to. You can teach him that love is a positive, manly attribute.”

“Good communication is vital. Make communication a high priority so that you can teach your son by example and through practice. In a nutshell, listen first before making your opinions known, and do away with lectures in favor of two-way discussions.”

“Be open to receiving feedback, even if it’s negative. And importantly, take the initiative in rebuilding relationships when fractures occur. Have the courage to admit when you’re wrong and seek forgiveness. See, those are all demonstrations of love.”

“By being a good communicator, you serve as a model for your son in hopes that he will communicate with you. But let’s be honest: getting your son (especially if he’s a teenager) to talk with you can be one of the greatest challenges of your fathering career, but it is doable.”

“The public service announcements on television make it sound like the best approach is to just start a conversation about drugs or alcohol at the breakfast table. But most teenagers would just roll their eyes, and probably tune you out.”

“How do you bridge the gap?”
1. “The first suggestion is a paradox.”
   • “To get your son to talk, don’t try to get him to talk.”
   • “Sure, face-to-face chats are great if you can pull ‘em off. But usually, the best approach is to talk sideways.”
   • “A teenage boy will talk to you much more easily while you’re working on a project together or doing something fun. So enlist his help as you work on the car, shoot some hoops, hang drywall, run errands together, or join him in something he wants to do. Suddenly, he’ll bring up something that’s been on his mind or willingly respond to a question you throw out.”
2. “Second, watch for cues that he’s ready to talk. For example, maybe he talks more at a certain time of the day, or when he’s in a particular mood. The cues may be subtle, but you can learn to spot them.”
3. “Third, be available. He may have a pressing question at eleven o’clock at night—or at three o’clock in the morning. His concerns may sound hair-brained or trivial or way off the mark. That’s okay, dad. Be flexible. Let him know that he can come to you anytime, about anything. Those times may be rare, so be ready. And put aside the cellphone or laptop, or turn off the TV when it happens.”

“And a word for dads who don’t yet have a teenager: Build a close relationship with your son now. If it’s easy for him to talk to you during these younger years, there won’t be a gap to bridge, and that will do a lot to ease the strain once you have a teenager.”

“Another other key factor is closely related, but worth mentioning separately: showing affection. Boys with affectionate fathers develop positive self-esteem, they tend to thrive in schoolwork, and have fewer gender identity issues.”

“When Juan was very young, his father abandoned him, his mother and little sister for another woman. His father did maintain regular contact, but their time together was filled with harsh ridicule for very superficial reasons. This confused Juan. He wondered if he was normal, and he felt as though he never quite had his father’s approval.”
“Here’s what Juan said: ‘More than anything, I wanted my dad to show his emotions in a positive way, to hold me and tell me everything would be okay. Since I didn’t receive that, I’ve got a lot of work to do before I get married and have a family someday.’”

“Juan’s story demonstrates—among other things—the profound need sons have for physical affection and attention from their dads. Their self-esteem blossoms when we nurture them in appropriate ways.”

“With sons, affection can be less direct—more shoulder-to-shoulder. Boys gain self-esteem from sustained contact, such as wrestling, playing or being picked up by their dad, sitting on his lap, or being held for safety.”

“That can include any physical contact, like wrestling or roughhousing, pats on the back, piggy back rides, tickle fights, and so on. This doesn’t mean dads should neglect a more direct approach—big bear hugs and other displays of affection are still important on into adulthood. But with boys, think ‘shoulder-to-shoulder.’”

“Verbal affection is important as well. Positive words give sons confidence and belonging, and again provide a model of a man who can express love in healthy ways. We need to tell our sons how much they mean to us, point out their positive character traits, and say, ‘I love you, and I’m proud to be your dad.’”

“When I played ball in high school, I used to run back punts and kick-offs. And I can vividly remember a few times when our team was behind or it was a close game, and our coach instilled great confidence in me through his words.”

“As I waited there for the kick-off, I would hear him say, ‘We need one, Carey. Run it back for us.’”

“He showed that he was depending on me, and his words helped me focus and dig a little deeper, reaching for excellence.”
“There’s great power in words, especially for fathers. Proverbs 12:18 says: ‘Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.’”

“Dad, your words have that kind of power with your children. You can bet they’ll remember many of your statements for years to come. Their whole outlook on life could be determined by what you say—for better or for worse.”

“You can be challenging and inspiring like my coach was. Or you can be reckless with your words. When speaking to your son, have you ever heard yourself saying something like, ‘What are you thinking?’ or ‘Can’t you do anything right?’”

“But remember that you can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar. Our children will respond much better to positive words than criticism, or preaching at them, or nagging them to do what we want. We need to use words intentionally to bless and to build up.”

“Saying, ‘I love you’ is great, but don’t stop there. Make sure they understand that there’s nothing they can do that will make you stop loving them. No matter what, your love is never up for grabs. It’s constant and reliable.”

“And then, like my coach did, instill confidence in your child to do his best. Tell him, ‘I’m proud of you,’ or, ‘You can do it.’”

“YOUR Homework:”
1. “Show interest in what he likes, and affirm his positive qualities—especially in those areas that are not like you.”
2. “Be intentional about giving your son more physical affection like what I have described: hugs and kisses, grabbing him and holding him in your arms, a hand on the shoulder, a pat on the back, a tousle of his hair. Include lots of loving physical contact as you interact and play together.”
3. “Start a new project with your son that allows you to be side-by-side for long stretches of time.”
4. “Notice something that your son does well and affirm him for it. Tell him, ‘I’m proud of you. You can do anything you set your mind to.’”
5. “Make the Championship Fathering Commitment at www.fathers.com/cf.”

“About the Championship Fathering Commitment”
“At the National Center for Fathering, our vision is to have an actively engaged father or father figure in the life of every child.”

“That vision begins with the conviction that every child needs a dad he or she can count on. We know that children thrive when they have an involved father—someone who loves them, knows them, guides them, and helps them achieve their destiny.”

“Motivated by this heartfelt conviction and encompassing vision, the Center’s board, employees, and volunteers work to inspire and equip men to make and live out a commitment to Championship Fathering.”

“You can join this movement by making the Championship Fathering Commitment.”

“Even if you are an involved dad, your children and grandchildren will grow up in a world full of unfathered kids, and they will be affected by a culture that places too little significance on the role of strong fathers.”

“Dads are a critical part of the solution, and we have to get involved. For the sake of our children and grandchildren and millions of other kids, we need to stand up and be counted. So please join me in making the Championship Fathering Commitment at www.fathers.com/cf.”

“The Championship Fathering Commitment”
“I will love my children.”
“I will coach my children.”
“I will model for my children.”
“I will encourage other children.”
“I will enlist other dads as members of the Championship Fathering team.”

About the National Center for Fathering
“The National Center for Fathering (Fathers.com) is a leading national nonprofit organization seeking to improve the lives of children and establish a positive fathering and family legacy that will impact future generations by
inspiring and equipping fathers and father figures to be actively engaged in
the life of every child. NCF offers innovative tools and resources that
inspire and equip fathers to be more involved with their children to give
each child a better future and to create a positive fathering legacy.”

“Our goal is to enlist 6.5 million who are committed to reversing the cultural
trend toward fatherlessness. The Center reaches more than one million
dads through seminars, small-group training, our WATCH D.O.G.S (Dads
of Great Students) program, our daily radio program, and our weekly
e-mail tips for dads.”

(Carey Casey, “5 Things Every Kid Must Get From Dad,” National Center
Updates January, 2019

What it Means to be a ‘Good’ Father in America Has Changed. Here’s How

“The purpose of Father’s Day, an annual holiday that falls in the U.S. on the third Sunday in June is clear: families spend some quality time with dad, maybe buying him a gift, to show their appreciation. But the work they’re appreciating — the role that Americans expect fathers to play throughout the rest of the year — is a complicated one.

In practice, every family — and what that family expects from a father, if one is present — is different. But that has never stopped anyone from imagining that there’s a certain way to be a “good” dad.

Some of the tensions there are near-constant, like the contradictory expectations between going out and being a breadwinner and staying home and spending quality time with the kids. Some of them are distinctly modern, like the impact of social media. And over time, as the role of the American dad has been subject to increasing analysis, there’s been less and less agreement on the right way to be a father.

The American Dad Emerges

In the early years of the United States’ existence, the concept of what it meant to be a dad was something that, as far as historians can tell, people just didn’t think all that much about. In that period, a good dad imparted faith and knowledge, and that was that.

“The topic of fatherhood was not commonly discussed in Colonial American sources,” historian Shawn Johansen, author of *Family Men: Middle-Class Fatherhood in Early Industrializing America*, told TIME in an email. “Fathers were to teach their children religious piety and doctrine, while inculcating good work habits and the necessary knowledge to succeed in a mostly agrarian economy.”

That began to change — like so much else — in the 19th century, in the years after the Civil War. The growth of the U.S. commercial economy meant that it became more common for a family’s primary source of income to be a job performed outside the home rather than a farm or family
business, meaning that someone, usually the father, left every day for work. This shift jump-started the rise of a middle class, just around the same time that children started to be seen more as individuals with rights that must be protected rather than just another pair of hands. Kids started to leave home for public school, too, and it was the responsibility of the father to guide them, especially sons, to later finding their own jobs. (Johansen notes another “surprising” change in this period when it comes to American fatherhood: this is when some men in the middle class start to be present in the room when their children are born.) Industrialization led to a unique set of expectations for working-class fathers, too.

“Fathers’ identities revolved around bread-winning and their ability to place children in work positions,” says Johansen. “The vagaries of industrial work, however, made working-class fathers’ authority more vulnerable than even the middle-class fathers.”

In American cities, as immigration boomed, dads in those communities faced their own challenges, as they struggled to balance expectations that a father would control his family against the common situation in which his children were the ones better assimilated into their new community.

New Fatherhood

So, by the time the 20th century begins, bread-winning is the primary characteristic of society’s idea of a good American father. But, perhaps not surprisingly, there was soon a swing back toward recognition — if not accommodation — of the rest of a father’s job.

Around the turn of the century, expectations for American kids evolved quickly, and fathers’ roles changed accordingly. Families were having fewer children — Johansen points out that the typical white American woman bore six children in 1800, and only three in 1900 — which meant parents might concentrate more on each one. Amid the growing professionalization of psychology, child development (including the impact of the father) became more widely studied. The psychologist G. Stanley Hall led Americans to recognize adolescence as a life stage, and to take the minds of young people seriously.

But at the same time, the trend continued toward men spending more and more time working outside the home. Urbanization and suburbanization,
the institution of the 40-hour work week and the spread of the automobile all contributed.

“I think the key change for the invention of the modern father is in the 1920s,” says historian Robert L. Griswold, author of *Fatherhood in America: A History.* “The advent of the automobile” is part of the broader growth of consumer society, heaping on the pressure on breadwinners to “earn more bread,” as Griswold puts it, just as families were also realizing just how much a father’s non-economic role in the family mattered.

In what’s often billed as the beginning of a “New Fatherhood movement,” a surge in literature argued that men should be changing diapers, imparting words of wisdom and playing with children when they weren’t at work.

Not coincidentally, this is the same period when Father’s Day becomes a thing. The Great Depression was hard on marriages, especially as society expected fathers to provide for their families but female-dominated service jobs were hit less badly than male-dominated industrial jobs were. Some advocates thought there should be a national holiday to raise the self-esteem of unemployed and under-employed men. (Despite the push, Father’s Day would only become law in 1972 when President Richard Nixon signed a measure making the day official for the third Sunday of June.)

Even so, recognizing the importance of fathers didn’t mean it was easy for dads to spend more time with their kids. During World War II, fathers went from being “absent from work during the Depression, to absent at war,” as Griswold puts it. Fathers weren’t drafted until late 1943 — contributing to a spike in marriages, as starting a family was a way to avoid the draft — because of experts’ concerns about what kind of impact the draft would have on the American family. U.S. Senator Burton K. Wheeler (D-MT) argued that “slackers” in “government bureaus” should be sent to war before “American homes are broken up.”

The Modern Father

The next major shift is one that continues to this day. Since the women’s liberation movement took off in the late ’60s, leading to more opportunities for women pursue a wider range of job and education opportunities, the image of the family breadwinner changed. The rise of no-fault divorces also led to more kids splitting time between homes. Though there had always
been women who supported their families, and families that didn’t conform to the mom-dad-kids model, in the late 20th century American society began to recognize that truth in a new way. And as Americans in families of all types struggled to figure out what it meant to be a “good” parent, fatherhood was part of the battle.

In keeping with the spirit of the times, the “New Fatherhood” movement came back in full force, with renewed concern about the role fathers would now be expected to play in the family as it evolved.

“More children will go to sleep tonight in a fatherless home than ever in the nation’s history,” TIME declared in a cover story on fatherhood that hit newsstands for Father’s Day 1993, amid increased public awareness of this situation. “Talk to the experts in crime, drug abuse, depression, school failure, and they can point to some study somewhere blaming those problems on the disappearance of fathers from the American family. But talk to the fathers who do stay with their families, and the story grows more complicated. What they are hearing, from their bosses, from institutions, from the culture around them, even from their own wives, very often comes down to a devastating message: We don’t really trust men to be parents, and we don’t really need them to be.”

The idea that fathers get the message that they’re not needed — especially now that social media has increased the platforms by which ideas about good parenting can be offered — is still an issue. For example, a study that recently appeared in The Journal of Child and Family Studies suggests that such as “maternal gate-closing,” the idea that mothers still know the most about childcare, could be overwhelming fathers and negatively affecting their confidence in their own ability to parent.

Clearly society has not yet arrived at the perfect image of the “good” American dad, so the evolution continues. And thinking about the evolution is an element of that process. One of the most important parts of this centuries-old balancing act, that recent study’s author Lauren Altenburger told TIME, is for fathers and mothers all to “communicate openly about parenting.”

The Meaning of Father Involvement for Children


- “Fathers can have direct contact with their children (engagement);
- “They can make themselves available to their children even when they are not in physical contact (accessibility);”
- “A father regardless of geographical distance can be available to his child by arranging for regular phone calls or visits, writing letters, getting a beeper so that he is always available for a phone call from his child, or participating in school activities.”
- “They can take responsibility for their children's care and welfare, again regardless of physical proximity (responsibility).”
- “Researchers find that often father involvement is of a different nature than mother involvement. For instance, especially when children are young, fathers are more likely to engage children in play activities, while mothers tend to spend more time in routine caregiving activities with their children. (Parke, R. D. (1996). Fatherhood. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.) Furthermore, mothers' and fathers' play styles have been found to differ on average, with fathers engaging their young children in more physical and stimulating interaction during play.” (Parke, R. D., & Tinsley, B. J. (1987). "Parent-Infant Interaction." In J. Osofsky (Ed.), Handbook of Infancy. New York: Wiley.)
• “However, despite differences in the type of activities that mothers and fathers engage in with their children, researchers have concluded that mothers and fathers influence their children in similar ways with regard to the development of morality, competence in social interactions, academic achievement, and mental health.” (Lamb, M. E., Pleck, J. H., & Levine, J. A. (1986). "Effects of Increased Paternal Involvement on Children in Two-Parent Families." In R. A. Lewis & R. E. Salt (Eds.), Men in Families (pp. 141-158). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.) “One area where fathers may have a disproportionate influence is on children's gender role development.” (Lamb. "Effects of Increased Paternal Involvement on Children in Two-Parent Families." pp. 141-158.)

“Some of the major roles that fathers assume with regard to their children.”

1. “Dad as Economic Provider. Traditionally, fathers have been seen as the main source of financial support and protection for the family. Even fathers who do not live with their children are expected to contribute to the food, shelter, and clothing of their children by providing child support payments. Being unable to provide economic support may limit father-child interactions in the short run and hinder child development in the long run.” (Ray, A., & Hans, S. (1996, June). Caregiving and Providing: The Effect of Paternal Involvement of Urban Low-Income African American Fathers on Parental Relations. Paper presented at the Conference on Developmental, Ethnographic, and Demographic Perspectives on Fatherhood, Sponsored by the Demographic and Behavioral Sciences Branch and the Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Branch of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, and the NICHD Family and Child Well-Being Research Network, Bethesda, MD.) “Fathers who work long hours also may be limiting the actual amount of time available to interact with their children, however they may also serve as important and

2. “Dad as Friend and Playmate. Some have characterized fathers as the "fun parent." As mentioned above, in terms of relative frequency, fathers devote more time to playing with their children than do mothers. However, fathers' play styles are sensitive to and shift with the development of the child. When children are young (i.e., from birth until approximately age 4), fathers tend to engage their children in tactile, physical, and stimulating activities. As children enter middle childhood (i.e., the elementary school years), fathers are more likely to engage their children in less physically rigorous recreational activities, such as walks, outings, and private talks.” (Parke, R. D. (1996). Fatherhood. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press) “This is true for fathers who live with their children as well as those who do not.” (Simons, R. L., & Beaman, J. (1996). "Father's Parenting." In R. L. Simmons and Associates (Eds.), Understanding Differences Between Divorced and Intact Families. (pp. 94-103). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage)

3. “Dad as Caregiver. Fathers can -- and often do -- provide many forms of affection and comfort to their children. Indeed, most of the research evidence shows that fathers are just as warm and nurturing as mothers. Fathers also engage in as many kinds of child care activities as mothers, although mothers on average provide more child care. Fathers are the main providers of child care for children whose mothers work outside of the home.” (Casper, L. M. (1997). "My Daddy Takes Care of Me! Fathers as Care Providers." Current Population Reports, P70-59)

4. “Dad as Teacher and Role Model. Fathers, like mothers, assume the responsibility of teaching their children what they need to know
to survive in the world. These life lessons may come in the form of teaching a child about letters, shapes, and numbers when the child is an infant or toddler or helping a fifth grader with his or her homework, or coaching a child (at any age) on how to get along with others. Oftentimes fathers teach by example. For instance, a father can teach a child about empathy by being sensitive to others in the child's presence. There is some evidence that suggests modeling certain behaviors, such as church attendance, can have positive effects on long-range outcomes for children.” (Duncan, G. J., Hill, M., & Yeung, W. J. (1996). Father's time allocation and children's well-being. Paper presented at the NICHD-sponsored Conference on Father Involvement, October 10-11, Bethesda, MD.)

5. “Dad as Monitor and Disciplinarian. Contrary to popular belief, fathers are not the sole or main disciplinarians of their children.” (Yogman, M. W., Cooley, J., & Kindlon, D. (1988). "Fathers, Infants, and Toddlers." In P. Bronstein & C. P. Cowan (Eds.), Fatherhood Today: Mens' Changing Role in the Family. (pp. 53-65). New York: John Wiley & Sons) Particularly in the first two years of life, mothers are more likely to discipline their child than are fathers. Nevertheless, fathers also fulfill this important role of monitoring and regulating child behavior.”

6. “Dad as Protector. Fathers monitor their children's safety by organizing the child's environment and eliminating hazards from the child's path. This seems to be a particularly salient role to fathers whose children live in inner-city neighborhoods.” (Ray. Caregiving and Providing.) “Fathers also may teach their children about health risks and how to keep themselves safe when the parent is not around (e.g., teaching them not to talk to strangers).”

7. “Dad as Advocate. Fathers look out for their children's welfare in many ways, including ensuring their children's needs are being met by outside institutions. A recent study found that fathers' involvement in their children's schools is linked to positive school
outcomes for the child, including higher class standing, more enjoyment of school, and a lowered likelihood of grade repetition, suspension or expulsion.” (Nord, C.W., Brimhall, D., & West, J. (1997). Father's Involvement in Schools. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education) “The same study found that 27 percent of fathers in two-parent families and 46 percent of custodial fathers attended at least three school-related activities a year. In addition, 31 percent of fathers who do not live with their child but saw their child at least once in the past year participated in at least one school event in the current school year. The study also found that fathers who are single parents are just as involved in their children's schools as are single mothers. Of course, other factors, such as school policies and practices, the father's work schedule, and the family's economic status and family structure may contribute to how involved a father will be in his child's schooling."

8. “Dad as Resource. There are many ways that fathers fulfill the role of resource or "behind the scenes support." For example, men can provide emotional support to the mothers of their children, and help mothers in practical ways with the care of the child -- whether they live with the mother or not. One study found that mothers who are supported in their breast-feeding efforts by their husbands continue to breast-feed their children longer than those women who do not receive similar support.” (Entwisle, D. R., & Doering, S. G. (1981). The First Birth: A Family Turning Point. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press) “Fathers also may provide children with links to extended family and community resources. This role may be particularly important to fathers who do not live with their children. By introducing the child to extended family, a father can facilitate the transmission of family history and cultural knowledge to his child. Especially for older children, the connection to community resources can help build the child's own social capital.”

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**The Science of Dad and the ‘Father Effect’**

“Children with involved fathers:”

1. “Less likely to break the law”
2. “Drop out of school”
3. “Unlikely to become homeless or to rely on welfare”
4. “More likely to have higher IQ scores than their peers.”
5. “They suffer from fewer psychological problems and may be less prone to obesity.”

““There needs to be a minimum amount of time spent together, but the quality of time is more important than the quantity of time,” Amato says. “Just watching television together, for example, isn’t going to help much.””

“Studies suggest that men who drink before conception are more likely to have sons who abuse alcohol, and that poor dietary choices in men can lead to negative pregnancy outcomes. At least one study suggests that men who are stressed before conception may predispose their offspring to high blood sugar.”

“In a 2011 literature review on paternal involvement during pregnancy and labor, the authors claim that the preponderance of evidence suggests that dads who are actively involved and invested in the baby before he or she is born disproportionately remain involved in the child’s life. And, as numerous studies have shown, more paternal involvement means better outcomes for kids. To foster this connection, some scientists have argued that healthy women and newborns should return
home as soon as possible after delivery, especially if the father is not allowed to stay overnight in the hospital.”

“What an engaged, active, involved father looks like:”

1. “For dads who live apart from their kids, there are limited options for engaging fatherly interactions. “Writing letters, phone calls — even if you’re not in physical proximity, knowing your dad cares and wants to be involved to the extent that they can is really important,” Marcy Carlson, a sociologist at the University of Wisconsin, told Fatherly. If you can’t even do that, buying love isn’t the worst idea. “There’s tons of evidence that financial support of kids is good for their outcomes,” she says. “If dads can provide for their children, that goes a long way.””

2. “But just because you’re around doesn’t mean you can rest on your laurels and hope that sitting near your children will somehow raise their IQs or inoculate them against risky sexual behaviors. “The quantity of interaction doesn’t really benefit kids, but if you have more high-quality, engaged parenting that does seem to be positively related to outcomes for children,” Carlson says. Warmth is also a key factor. Fathers who spent a lot of time with their kids but are dismissive or insulting tend to have only negative impacts.”

3. ““Low quality fathering can involve behaving coldly toward one’s children, insulting them, or engaging in problem behaviors that are largely incompatible with being a present and engaged father,” Danielle DelPriore, a developmental psychologist at the University of Utah, told Fatherly.”

“One 1991 study cited in the book found that infants attained higher cognitive scores at age one if their fathers were involved in their lives when they were one month old. Preterm infants similarly score higher at 36 months if their dads play an active role from birth, and a separate study found that infants who played with their dads at nine months enjoyed similar benefits.”
“When infants transition into toddlers at around age one, Father Effects become even more pronounced. Studies suggest that when fathers are involved in everyday tasks — dinner, playing in the backyard — rather than expansive but one-off trips, toddlers and young children benefit. Dads also seem to offer a unique touch, with at least one study suggesting that fathers are better than mothers at teaching children how to swim, because they are less overprotective and more likely to let their children venture into the deep end or swim facing away from them.”

“As anecdotal evidence indicates, sons especially need their dads. In the book Do Fathers Matter? Paul Raeburn describes how scientists observed that U.S. and Norwegian boys whose fathers were off fighting in World War II during their childhoods later had trouble forging relationships with others as they matured. Similar studies cited in the book show that sons who grow up without fathers (or with disengaged fathers) tend to be less popular in preschool. Broadly, the research suggests that boys lean on their fathers more than anyone else as they develop social skills. And one large study of nearly 9,000 adults confirmed that a father’s death affects sons more strongly than daughters, leading to the same sort of health problems seen after an ugly divorce.”

“Most studies suggest that, until children hit puberty, the Father Effect is roughly equal for boys and girls. Both boys and girls who are fortunate enough to have dads in their lives excel and, in some cases, outperform their peers. But when raging hormones kick in, studies demonstrate that dads suddenly become the arbiters of sexual behavior, too. And that is most acutely felt by teenage daughters, who take fewer sexual risks if they have strong relationships with their dads.”

“Numerous past studies find a link between low quality fathering and daughters’ sexual outcomes, including early and risky sexual behavior,” Danielle DelPriore, who has studied how dads impact risky sex, told Fatherly. “A father who is cold or disengaged may change
daughters’ social environments and sexual psychology in ways that promote unrestricted sexual behavior.”

“One of DelPriore’s studies on the phenomenon — or “daddy issues”, as it is popularly portrayed — tracked 101 sister pairs between the ages of 18 and 36. This was a particularly well-controlled study, because it allowed DelPriore and her colleagues to examine how two women with similar genetics who were raised under similar environmental conditions might differ in their sexual risk-taking. She found that, when one sister grew up with an active, warm father and the other was raised in a broken home or after their father became less engaged, the former grew up to largely avoid casual unprotected sex while the latter often embraced it. Although DelPriore examined several outside factors — including relationships with mothers — one of the most salient links between a woman and her sexual decision-making was how close she felt to her father.”

“DelPriore defined “engaged fathers” as those who behave warmly and interact meaningfully with their kids. They’re the sort of dads who help with homework and attend sporting events, seldom insulting their children or behaving coldly. “When it comes to daughters, taking the time to listen to them, learn about their lives, show up for important events, and provide emotional support, could protect against early and unrestricted sexual behavior,” she says. “Dads do not have to be perfect and making a genuine effort to be there for their daughters could make a big difference.”

“How to be a good dad:”

1. “Making healthy decisions before conceiving so that your kid has the best shot in life, genetically speaking.”

2. “Coaching your partner through pregnancy and birth so that your bond to your child starts early.”

3. “Playing with your infant even though he’ll never remember.”
4. “Counseling your teenage daughter about making smart choices.”

5. “Legitimately caring for your children and modeling good behavior.”

6. “Dads need to realize that their kids are always watching and that what they do matters. How well a dad parents influences a child’s psychological, cognitive, and social development, and strongly steers him or her toward adulthood. Because dads do matter.”

“‘Fathers and mothers are children’s most important teachers,’”


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**Strengthening Father-Daughter Relationships**

“Family research suggests that daughters who have secure and loving relationships with their fathers:”

- “Have [better grades in school](https://www.fatherly.com/health-science/science-benefits-of-fatherhood-dads-father-effect/)”
- “Feel better about themselves”
- “Are more assertive without being [aggressive](https://www.fatherly.com/health-science/science-benefits-of-fatherhood-dads-father-effect/)”
- “Feel more confident in relationships with men in general”
- “Are more likely to be admitted to graduate school and get a degree”

“So, what can a father do to create a loving and secure relationship with his daughter?”

1. “Start on Her Birthday”

“Fathers who best create this positive relationship start on the day she is born. Get involved in her life from the very outset. Take an active role in
caring for this baby girl. The more time you spend with her earlier, the easier it will be to continue building the relationship later.”


“What it is great when a dad teaches his daughter to ride a bike or to read or do chores, often the best things he can teach her are ‘guy things.’ Skills like fixing a car, fishing, golfing, or home repairs will serve a girl just as well as a boy and will give her confidence that she can tackle anything. Just being with her dad doing things he is good at will be a real treat for her.”

3. “Listen”

“Many of our daughters love to talk and girls tend to vocalize more than the boys do growing up. What a dad can do to build his relationship with his daughter is to listen more. Pay attention to what she says when you are together. Listen to what she is thinking, dreaming and wishing in her life. And most of all, keep confidences. When she shares something with you that is private and bares her soul, don't repeat the story. It is one sure way to hurt your relationship when you violate a trust.”

4. “Make Time For Fun”

“It's important to make daddy/daughter dates. We suggest checking out the latest toys at the toy store or go out for an ice cream treat. Do things together that are fun and entertaining such as miniature golfing, hiking, swimming, going to library storytime and going to plays. Building fun memories in a positive environment can make a big difference.”

5. “Tell Her She's Beautiful”

“This will sound a little corny to some fathers, but it is important. Modern culture and the media often give our daughters messages that they need to be the right weight, wear the right makeup, dress stylishly and sometimes immodestly to be beautiful. When you tell your daughter she is beautiful, emphasize the importance of being beautiful inside — more than skin-
deep. Compliment her when her eyes sparkle or when she breaks into a big smile.”

6. “Write Notes and Letters”

“You may remember from your dating years that girls love cards and notes and letters. Take the time occasionally to write your daughter a letter expressing your feelings, letting her know how you feel about her and how proud you are of her. These little personal expressions mean and lot to our daughters and are a good way of showing love.”

7. “Be a Great Example of Manhood”

“The way your daughter sees you treat women makes a big difference in how she will see men later in her life. Be on your best behavior with her, her mother and other female friends and relatives. Simple courtesy and kindness will go a long way in helping her know what to expect of men in her later life.”

“Making time and expending energy in building your relationship with your daughter will pay big dividends over time. Even though it may seem like more fun to spend time with the boys, there is still nothing quite like the relationship that can develop between a daughter and her daddy.”


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**Missing fathers and America’s broken boys – the vast majority of mass shooters come from broken homes**

“Girls who grow up deprived of their father are more likely to become depressed, more likely to self-harm, and more likely to be promiscuous. But they still have their mothers, with whom they clearly identify. Boys do not
have a comparable identification and thus suffer more from father absence. They also tend to act out in a manner that’s harmful to others, which girls typically do not.”

“The root of fatherlessness rests in two things:”

1. “Our culture’s dismissal of men as valuable human beings who have something unique to offer;”

2. “It’s dismissal of marriage as an institution that’s crucial to the health and well-being of children.”

“The unfortunate result is that some divorced mothers use any opportunity to undermine their children’s relationship with their father or, if not that, dismiss the significance of a father’s role. In 2016, when Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt were getting divorced, Jolie actually said it never crossed her mind her son ‘Mad’ would need a father.”

“It’s not that single mothers can’t be great mothers. They can. But they cannot be fathers.”

“When boys don’t have this model, they suffer. And when they suffer, society suffers. A majority of school shooters come from fatherless homes; and a study of older male shooters (think Steven Paddock of the Las Vegas massacre) produces similar results. Indeed, the consequences of fatherlessness are simply staggering.”

“The root of fatherlessness is deep and wide, but it ultimately rests in two things: our culture’s dismissal of men as valuable human beings who have something unique to offer—on the one hand, we tell them to ‘man up,’ and on the other we tell them manhood is the problem—and its dismissal of marriage as an institution that’s crucial to the health and well-being of children. This long-standing belief has been supplanted by the notion that marriage is about the emotional fulfillment of adults.”

(Suzanne Venker, “Missing fathers and America’s broken boys – the vast majority of mass shooters come from broken homes”, Fox News, February
At the cellular level, a child’s loss of a father is associated with increased stress

“In a study (http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2017/07/14/peds.2016-3245) published July 18 in the journal Pediatrics, a team of researchers, including those from Princeton University, report that the loss of a father has a significant adverse effect on telomeres, the protective nucleoprotein end caps of chromosomes. At 9 years of age, children who had lost their father had significantly shorter telomeres — 14 percent shorter on average — than children who had not. Death had the largest association, and the effects were greater for boys than girls.”

“They determined that father loss is clearly associated with cellular function as estimated by telomere length: any father loss between birth and 9 years of age leads to a reduction in telomere length, and the effect is greatest for children whose fathers die, about 16 percent shorter. The researchers speculated that there are many reasons why father loss might be a major stressor for a child, such as the loss of family income following a separation or divorce. ‘The father is being removed from the life of the child and that is plausibly associated with an increase in stress, for both economic and emotional reasons,’ said Notterman, a senior research scholar and lecturer with the rank of professor of molecular biology.”

“…they did find some evidence that boys respond more negatively, as measured by telomere length, to the loss of or separation from a father than girls.”

(Pooja Makhijani, “At the cellular level, a child’s loss of a father is associated with increased stress”, Princeton, July 18, 2017,
The Research is in: Fathers are not replaceable

“Two independent researchers at prestigious British universities reached similar conclusions: the nuclear family works.”

1. “The presence of the biological father cannot easily be replaced by another father figure.”

2. “The stable presence of the father in the life of the children greatly enhances children’s mental and linguistic development.”

“Elena Mariani, who holds a doctorate in demography at the London School of Economics, published a study in the European Journal of Population entitled ‘Family Trajectories and the Well-being of Children Born to Lone Mothers in the UK,’ along with co-authors Berkay Özcan and Alice Goisis. The study ‘confirms that the absence of the father figure has negative effects for children even if that absence is not due to separation, as in cases where the father was not there since birth.’”

“…children who have a stepfather, for example, do not seem to benefit from the new family situation compared to children who have only lived with the mother.”

“…children in broken and then reconstituted families remain ‘disadvantaged with respect to children who have lived with their biological parents since birth.’”

“‘Even as early as three months, these father-child interactions can positively predict cognitive development almost two years later…’

“‘We also found that children interacting with sensitive, calm and less anxious fathers during a book session at the age of two showed better
cognitive development, including attention, problem-solving, language and social skills,’ explains Dr. Vaheshta Sethna, King’s College, one of three institutions (along with Imperial College and Oxford) that conducted the research. ‘This suggests that reading activities and educational references may support cognitive and learning development in these children,’ she added.”

“A ‘good dad’ who is attentive to the needs of his child will make him or her a serene adult.”

“…government-sponsored report in the UK, ‘the quality and content of father’s involvement matter more for children’s outcomes than the quantity of time fathers spend with their children.’”

“…children benefit greatly when fathers take an interest in their education. Some of the positive outcomes include better test scores and a higher level of educational attainment overall. Children with involved, attentive fathers are also more likely to show a more positive attitude and better behavior, the report found.”

(Lucandrea Massaro, “The research is in: Fathers are not replaceable”, Aleteia, June 30, 2017, https://aleteia.org/2017/06/30/the-research-is-in-fathers-are-irreplaceable/)

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Father Engagement from Three Months Strengthens Infants’ Cognitive Development

“Our study on the fathers’ roles in early child development, conducted in the UK, has found that baby boys and girls showed cognitive gains at 24 months when dad engaged positively with them, from as early as three months of age.”

“…children at 24 months. Toddlers whose dads were sensitive and calm during a book-sharing session had better cognitive development.”
“The study was also unusual in looking at children from socioeconomically diverse families with co-resident parents – wealthier as well as poorer…”

“‘Even good mothering, for all its many benefits, wasn’t a substitute for dad’s added bit of magic.’”


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7 Facts About American Dads

“Dads are just as likely as moms to say that parenting is extremely important to their identity.”

1. “Some 57% of fathers said this in a 2015 survey by the Center, compared with 58% of mothers.”

2. “54% reported that parenting is rewarding all of the time, as did 52% of moms.”

3. “46% of fathers and 41% of mothers said they find parenting enjoyable all of the time.”

“In 2016, fathers reported spending, on average, eight hours a week on child care – about triple the time they provided back in 1965. And fathers put in about 10 hours a week on household chores in 2016, up from four hours in 1965. By comparison, mothers spent an average of about 14 hours a week on child care and 18 hours a week on housework in 2016.”

“Just 39% of fathers said in 2015 that they are doing a “very good job” raising their children, compared with 51% of mothers.”

“About a quarter of couples (27%) who live with children younger than 18 are in families where only the father works. This marks a dramatic change
from 1970, when almost half of these couples (47%) were in families where only the dad worked.”

“Seven-in-ten adults say it’s equally important for new babies to bond with their mother and their father. In 2016, about a quarter (27%) said it’s more important for new babies to bond with their moms, and 2% said it’s more important for new babies to bond with their fathers.”


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The Crisis of Fatherless Shooters

“Among the 25 most-cited school shooters since Columbine, 75 percent were reared in broken homes.”

“After the Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre, scholar Brad Wilcox called attention to the work of criminologists Michael Gottfredson and Travis Hirschi, which found the absence of fathers to be one of the “most powerful predictors of crimes.” He explained that fathers are role models for their sons who maintain authority and discipline, thereby helping them develop self-control and empathy toward others, key character traits lacking in violent youth.”

“Dr. Warren Farrell, author of the “The Boy Crisis,” says that when a boy asks “Who am I?” the answer is that his identity is comprised of half his dad and half his mom. If he thinks his father has abandoned him, he fears he is not worthy. Boys who do not have a strong relationship with their fathers may lack a model of healthy masculinity. Many of the school shooters struggled with a sense of “damaged masculinity” and sought to become “ultramasculine.” Langman says that at the end of this spectrum is “getting a gun to suddenly have power.””
“In fact, the fathers of three of the most infamous school shooters were absent from their sons’ lives. The father of Adam Lanza, the Sandy Hook shooter, had not seen his son in two years and later told reporters he wished his son had never been born. The adoptive father of Nikolas Cruz died when Cruz was 5 years old. And the father of 6-year-old Dedrick Owens, the country’s youngest school shooter, was in jail when his son killed his first grade classmate. Dedrick Owens’ father has said that he suspects his son’s crime was a reaction to his absence.”

“Since the 1965 Moynihan report, the breakdown of the American family has been hotly debated. Democratic Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan’s finding that fatherlessness would lead to poorer outcomes for African-American children was published at a time when only 25 percent of African-American households were led by a single parent. Today, 24 percent of white non-Hispanic families are headed by a single parent and the rate has reached 66 percent among African-Americans. If we don’t reverse current trends on marriage, the number of fatherless children will only grow.”

“And the good news is that communities are devising creative ways to help make up for the absences of dads. One example is in Dallas, where Billy Earl Dade Middle School held its annual “Breakfast with Dads.” To ensure that all 150 male students who wanted a mentor would have one, an organizer put out a request on a Facebook page for 50 “volunteer fathers.” Nearly 600 men from all different walks of life and careers answered the call.”


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**Fewer Americans are Celebrating Father’s Day, Because More Kids are Growing Up Without Fathers**

“A U.S. Census Bureau study found that the percentage of children living in single-parent households increased from 12 percent in 1960 to 31 percent
in 2016. During that same timeframe, “the percentage of children living with only their mother nearly tripled.”

“These numbers are sobering because according to recent studies, kids who lack an engaged father (and so may be less likely to observe Father’s Day) are also less likely to experience a healthy, contented, and successful life.”

“Many national studies have confirmed my own anecdotal observations. Fathers are essential to boys and girls.”

“Studies have repeatedly shown that children who are raised with involved fathers are less likely to struggle academically, repeat a grade, get expelled or suspended from school, and get pregnant as teenage girls.”

“Children with involved fathers are more likely to attend college, get a good job and stay out of jail.”

“Studies also show that kids raised without involved fathers are more likely to live in poverty, be abused or neglected, use drugs or alcohol and commit crimes.”

“Researchers have recently discovered that fathers who are engaged with their kids are less likely to suffer from stress and depression and are more likely to have increased self-esteem, job and relationship satisfaction, and confidence in their parenting skills.”


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How Fathers, Present and Absent, Shape Our World

“…with nearly one in three children now being born into fatherless homes in the United States... Examining the lives of recent school shooters, we find that 82% grew up in broken homes with at least one parent absent. Six out of seven young male shooters on CNN’s recently published list of “Deadliest Mass Shootings in Modern U.S. History” were not raised to adulthood by their fathers…”

“Venturing into the world of the fatherless in America, we find a bleak and tragic tale. Children in fatherless homes are twice as likely to live in poverty compared to all families in America, and four times as likely to live in poverty compared to children living with a married father and mother. Even when controlling for income, odds of incarceration are significantly higher in fatherless households. Students from fatherless families have twice the risk of dropping of of high school as those from homes with a married father and mother. Girls, too, clearly suffer from the lack of a responsible image of what it means to be a man – those who grow up in fatherless families are twice as likely to experience teen pregnancy than those with mother-father families.”

“Nationwide, children from fatherless homes are more likely to live in poverty, suffer academic underachievement, become incarcerated, experience violence, become pregnant as a teen-ager, and more – but does this hold true in our commonwealth? A 2017 Massachusetts Family Institute report shows that, unfortunately, the stories of our boys are no different. Of all children in Massachusetts living in poverty, 51% have grown up with a never-married mother and 26% with a divorced or separated mother, in contrast to only 5% with a married father and mother.”

“Median household income is consistently lower in Massachusetts cities like Springfield, Boston, and Lynn, where the percentage of children in married-parent households is lowest. Of children who have experienced neighborhood violence, 25% had never-married mothers and 16% divorced or separated mothers, compared to 4% with both married parents. Forty-one percent of all children experiencing violence in their Massachusetts
neighborhoods grew up in fatherless families, compared to 4% who grew up with both married parents.”

“…If we hope to equip our nation’s children for responsible citizenship to secure a bright American future, we must bring back our fathers.”


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The Connection Between a Healthy Marriage and a Healthy Heart

“…a study in the Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health followed 620 married fathers in the U.K. and found that those who reported that their marriages flourished over time also experienced improvements in several cardiovascular disease risk factors, including cholesterol and body mass index (BMI), compared with those who reported being in consistently happy or unhappy marriages. Those whose relationships deteriorated over time found a worsening in some of those same risk factors, including blood pressure.”

“While this is the first study to look at the effects of marital health on cardiovascular measures over an extended period of time, it’s not the first study to look at the relationship between marriage and heart health (or health in general). In 2011 the journal Demography published a study that followed men and women aged 25 years and older from the mid-1980s to the end of the 1990s. The researchers found that those who were married, especially men, tended to live longer than those who were not married.”

“In 2014, a study published in Psychological Bulletin analyzed 126 published research papers over the past 50 years that looked at the association between marriage quality and physical health in more than 72,000 people. The researchers found that happier marriages were related to better health outcomes, including fewer hospitalizations, fewer severe
diseases and less physical pain. “The results of the new study are not surprising given the rich literature on how social support helps with cardiac issues,” says Matthew Burg, PhD, a clinical psychologist and professor of cardiovascular medicine at the Yale School of Medicine who studies how stress and emotional factors affect cardiovascular disease.”

“For over a decade, Dr. Burg ran one of several studies in a multi-center trial funded by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute to study heart attack patients and how their levels of “social support,” loosely defined as the feeling of being cared for and having people to rely on in times of need, affected how quickly they recovered. He and his colleagues found that those with low levels of social support and/or depression had the most difficulty bouncing back from a heart attack. In cases like these, the researchers found that group therapy made a significant difference.”

(Jenny Chen, ‘The connection between a healthy marriage and a healthy heart’, Yale Medicine, February 7, 2018, https://www.yalemedicine.org/stories/healthy-marriage-healthy-heart/)

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Juvenile delinquents: Boys with hostile fathers commit more crime

“…boys with hostile fathers commit more crime and use a larger variety of drugs and alcohol than boys with absentee fathers, a new study suggests.”


“longitudinal study of 1,216 male juvenile delinquents”

“The key findings:”

“Most of the boys with harsh fathers were Latino while most with absentee fathers were black.”
“Boys with harsh fathers had a higher rate of delinquency than those with uninvolved dads. The sons of hostile men reported committing more crime and using a larger variety of drugs and alcohol.”

“Kids with harsh fathers or absentee fathers reported engaging in more offending behaviors and using more substances than kids with “high quality” relationships with their dads.”

“About 29 percent of youth in the sample did not have a parent with a high school diploma. About 36 percent had a parent who went to college or received some level of training after high school.”

“Father absence is widely acknowledged as a key contributor to delinquency, leading to efforts to promote father involvement with youth to deter juvenile delinquency. However, not all involved fathers develop positive, high-quality relationships with their sons, and father presence in some cases can be more detrimental than father absence.”


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Acknowledging the Unique Role of Fathers

“meta-analysis of 34 studies”

“…whether fathers make a unique contribution in raising children…”

“…what kinds of outcomes result…”

“…a total of 52 studies…”

“…the total number of subjects was approximately 37,300…”

“…while mothers often tested as being more nurturing in their relationship with children, fathers tended to be more involved in preparing children to
deal with life. Fathers also appeared to have more of a realistic assessment of their children. “

“Fathers often played unique roles in that their involvement and/or monitoring was associated with lower rates of delinquency and substance abuse among boys and girls….”

“…there is often a balance established when the unique role of the father is combined with the distinct role of the mother.”

“…mothers consistently demonstrated higher average levels of patience and nurturing than did fathers, but fathers tended to have higher expectations of their children than mothers and tended to emphasize the preparatory aspect of child-rearing more than mothers did.”


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This Father’s Day, More Than a Quarter of Kids Have Absentee Fathers

“the share of kids living apart from their dads varies widely by race or ethnic group, ranging from 57 percent for African Americans, to 28 percent for Hispanics, to 16 percent for non-Hispanic whites, to 10 percent for Asians.”

“One reason is that minority men are more likely to be incarcerated. As of 2016, only 0.4 percent of non-Hispanic white men over 15 were
incarcerated, according to Justice Department data, versus 2.6 percent of minority males in the same age range. America’s overall incarceration rate more than quadrupled between 1980 and 2008 and has declined only slowly since.”

“Men in prison can’t be fathers in the household. These high rates of incarceration result in large numbers of separated families, and even when fathers are released from prison, ongoing supervision can make normal family life extremely challenging.”

(Lyman Stone, W. Bradford Wilcox, “This father’s day, more than a quarter of kids have absentee fathers”, IFS Institute for Family Studies, June 17, 2018, https://www.nationalreview.com/2018/06/fathers-day-one-quarter-of-kids-have-absentee-dads/)

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Five Myths About Fathers

“Dads now represent slightly more than 5% of all stay-at-home parents…”

“For instance, in 2017, 267,000 of America’s 21 million married fathers with children under 15 were at home caring for their children. By contrast, about 23 percent (4.96 million) of those families had a stay-at-home mom as of 2017.”

“Cohabiting Dads Are Just the Same as Married Dads.”

“With the rise of cohabitation over the last 40 years, a large minority of American children will spend some time in a household headed by a cohabiting couple. “

“Experts now estimate that more than 40% of American children will spend some time in a cohabiting household, either because they are born into such a household or because one of their parents cohabits after a breakup. Faced with this reality, many journalists, scholars, and advocates are tempted to minimize the differences between married and cohabiting fathers and families.”
“But the reality is that, on average, cohabiting fathers do not compare with married fathers. As Sandra Hofferth of the University of Maryland and Kermyt Anderson of the University of Oklahoma found in study from a few years ago, married fathers are significantly more involved and affectionate with their children than are cohabiting fathers. In fact, from their research, they conclude “that marriage per se confers the advantage in terms of father involvement above and beyond the characteristics of the fathers themselves.”

“Married fathers are also much more likely than their cohabiting peers to stick around. The 2017 World Family Map found that children born to cohabiting couples are about twice as likely to experience a parental breakup by age 12 as children born to married parents. “

“Another study by Wendy Manning at Bowling Green State and Pamela Smock at the University of Michigan found that 50% of children born to cohabiting parents saw their parents break up by age five; by comparison, only 15% of children born to married parents saw their parents’ divorce by age five. Dad is much more likely to stick around if he has a wedding ring on his finger.”

“The best social science presents a rather different picture than the rosy one Loh sought to paint. According to research by Sara McLanahan of Princeton University and Paul Amato of Penn State, girls whose parents’ divorce are about twice as likely to drop out of high school, to become pregnant as teenagers, and to suffer from psychological problems such as depression and thoughts of suicide.”

“New research indicates they are also less likely, as they move into adulthood, to attend and graduate from graduate school. Girls whose parents’ divorce are also much more likely to divorce later in life.”

“Dads Are Dispensable”

“The final myth propagated by some journalists in connection with fatherhood these days is the myth of the dispensable father. Often conjured up in glowing profiles of women who have become single mothers by
choice, this myth holds that fathers do not play a central role in children’s lives.”

“This myth fails to take into account the now-vast social scientific literature showing that children typically do better in an intact, married families with their fathers than they do in families headed by single mothers.”

“It also overlooks the growing body of research indicating that fathers bring distinctive talents to the parenting enterprise. The work of psychologist Ross Parke, for instance, indicates that fathers are more likely than mothers to engage their children in vigorous physical play (e.g., roughhousing), to challenge their children—including their daughters—to embrace life’s challenges, and to be firm disciplinarians.”

“Not surprisingly, children benefit physically, mentally, and emotionally from being exposed to the distinctive paternal style. Sociologist David Eggebeen has shown, for instance, that teenagers are significantly less likely to suffer from depression and delinquency when they have involved and affectionate fathers, even after controlling for the quality of their relationship with their mother. In his words, “What these analyses clearly show is that mothers and fathers both make vital contributions to adolescent well-being.”

“Likewise, Charlotte Hilton Anderson wrote a piece for Redbook last year that highlights how involved and affectionate fathers can play a crucial role in steering their daughters away from a host of unhealthy behaviors, ranging from eating disorders to early sexual activity.”

“In fact, it turns out that dads are more important than moms in protecting their teenage daughters from early sex (for more on how dads positively impact their daughters into adulthood, read Linda Nielsen’s IFS article).”

For Black Boys, Family Structure Still Matters

“Three of the strongest neighborhood predictors of “smaller gaps” between black and white boys in economic mobility were, to quote Chetty et al., “measures of father presence and marriage rates.”

“The new Chetty et al. study actually offers further evidence that family structure appears to play an “important role” in the racial gap in economic mobility in America.”

“Family structure doesn’t really matter—at least when it comes to explaining the stark racial gap in upward mobility between black and white boys.” This was one popular takeaway from the latest blockbuster study on economic opportunity released this week from Stanford economist Raj Chetty and his colleagues Nathaniel Hendren, Maggie Jones, and Sonya Porter.”

“In the study, Chetty et al. found that black boys are much less likely to realize the American Dream—economically speaking—as they move into adulthood, compared to white boys; by contrast, black girls are much more likely to do well economically as young adults, compared to white girls.”

“In covering this study, a number of media outlets, scholars, and commentators argued the new research showed that family structure did not have much to do with the racial gap in mobility between black and white boys. Consider Bloomberg columnist Noah Smith’s take on the study…”

“There’s only one problem with this interpretation: It’s not borne out by a careful review of the study.”

“Here are three ways the new Chetty et al. study actually indicates that family structure matters for the economic prospects of black boys, and for the racial gap in economic mobility between white and black boys.”

“Black boys prosper in neighborhoods with more black fathers.”
“The new study suggests that neighborhood effects are powerful when it comes to predicting the gap in economic mobility between black and white boys in terms of their individual income as adults. Specifically, there is a “strong positive association between black father presence [in the neighborhood] and black males’ income.” What’s more: black boys’ employment rates are higher, and their school suspension rates are lower in “areas with higher black father presence.” They also found that community marriage rates are some of the strongest predictors of smaller black-white gaps in economic mobility for boys.”

“In fact, as the figure above shows, three of the strongest neighborhood predictors of “smaller gaps” between black and white boys in economic mobility are, to quote Chetty et al., “measures of father presence and marriage rates.” More specifically, the figure above indicates the racial gap was smaller when more black fathers, white fathers, and married adults lived in a black boy’s neighborhood. So much for the idea that family structure doesn’t matter much for the racial gap in boys’ individual economic mobility.”

“To get the full story on family structure and the racial gap in boys’ economic mobility as they move into adulthood, I had to turn to their appendix. Online Appendix Figure VI (shown above) from their study indicates the black-white gap for boys in their adult individual income ranking shrinks by almost 25% when one factors in their family structure growing up but does not control for their household income growing up. (This figure also clearly shows that the gap for black and white girls in their adult income ranking is also related to family structure.) “

“To put this another way, one reason the racial gap in economic mobility for boys is so large is that so many black boys live in single-parent homes with one income and so many white boys live in two-parent homes with two incomes. If you control for household income growing up, you miss the ways in which racial differences in family structure affect outcomes for boys via their impact on family income.”
“In sum, when it comes to assessing the impact of family structure on the racial gap in economic mobility between black and white boys, this new study suggests that (1) family structure at the neighborhood level influences economic mobility for black boys, (2) family structure at the household level influences economic mobility for black boys (if you don’t control for their family income growing up), and (3) family structure in adulthood influences black boys’ household income as adults. So, sorry Noah Smith, the new Chetty et al. study actually offers further evidence that family structure seems to play an “important role” in the racial gap in economic mobility in America—including the gap between white and black boys as they move into adulthood.”


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The Health Boosting Power of a Father’s Time: An Interview with Marlon R. Tracey

“When it comes to child well-being, just how much is a biological father’s time worth—particularly for children in fragile families headed by lone mothers? Economics professors Marlon R. Tracey and Solomon W. Polachek sought to answer that question, and more specifically, to determine "the causal impact of nonresident father-involvement on child health," by using a sample of unmarried parents from the first two waves of the Fragile Families and Child Well-Being Study.”

“In their study published this January in the Journal of Health Economics, they found that babies born to unmarried mothers who looked like their fathers at birth had better health outcomes one year later. “

“The reason for the health boost is that non-resident fathers spent more time with babies who resembled them (an average of 2.5 additional days per month)—perhaps because child resemblance signals to an unmarried father, who may be uncertain about paternity, that a child is really his.”
“As we reported in the paper, “we focus on the first year of birth because that period is crucial for a nonresident father to create and maintain a bond with a child.” Otherwise, as prior studies show, nonresident fathers may have low or decreasing involvement over time. And that’s because, for unmarried, nonresident fathers, closeness to the mother is most likely to deteriorate after the first year, affecting involvement with the child.”

“If the positive impact we find for the first year holds true for later child years, then I think the decreasing involvement in later years would be associated with poorer child health outcomes.”


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6 ways fathers can build healthy money habits in their children

1. “Spark an interest in investing”

“The best way to learn about investing is by doing. Help your children invest a small amount of money in a particular stock or mutual fund. This real-time experience will teach them how to place a trade, read the daily quotes and track news related to their investment.”

“For young children, you may want to work with them to develop a list of three or four companies that interest them. Do the research for each stock together, then let them choose the one they think will be the best investment.”

“If you have teenagers with summer job income, you may consider opening a Roth IRA and contributing some funds (up to the gross amount they’ve earned or a maximum of $5,500 in 2018) for them to self-manage. Some ideas for purchases for them to research could include stock in a favorite fast food restaurant, a favorite clothing line, a car manufacturer, an
entertainment company, or mutual funds that focus on a particular sector of interest such as technology, cyber security or socially-conscious investments.”

2. “Share examples of your successes and failures”

“Another great way to teach your children about finances is to share real life stories of your own encounters with money dilemmas and successes. Tell them how you got started and what worked for you at various stages of your life. Be willing to expose your own mistakes so those around you can learn from them. “

“Explain that having fears about money, or not grasping all of the complexities of investing is natural. Talk about how you’ve managed to grow wealth in the face of your own money fears.”

3. “Show them how to develop core money skills”

“It’s surprising how many young adults arrive at college not having been taught basic money skills. Even if you’re footing their entire college bill, your children need to understand how to create and then follow through with a spending budget. Some easy ways to accomplish this include sharing how you manage the household budget to live within your means.”

“You may want to give your college student a credit card with a modest limit. Having their own credit card will teach them how to limit spending, pay their bill on time, and build a strong credit rating for future use. “

“If your children are younger, give them a small weekly allowance to cover snacks or spending on toys. By making these decisions, they learn how to prioritize their wants and to say no to some things in order to save for more important goals. For more ideas on raising money-smart kids, listen to our interview: Raising Financially Responsible Kids.”

“Once your young adult has a job, teach them how to read their paycheck and to check it for accuracy. They will see how quickly taxes can eat into their salary. Encourage them to have a spending plan as a way to establish
the discipline needed to have money available when unexpected things turn up like a birthday gift for their friend’s party or a coveted ticket to the summer music festival.”

4. “Encourage lifelong learning especially during career breaks”

“As parents, we know all too well the high cost of a college education. It seems we spend a lot of time supporting the college decision, but that support isn’t always continued throughout the college experience and into the student’s first job.”

“Stay engaged by encouraging them to consider electives that best align with their career goals. Connect them with people you know who currently work in their field of study for conversations about career choices and potential starting salaries. If you’re celebrating the graduation of a college student, here are some ideas specific to their key financial needs: Financial Tips & Resources for College Grads.”

“Even adult children benefit from another person’s opinion about how to face inevitable challenges in work or career decisions along the way. If you have an adult daughter, emphasize the importance of continuing her education throughout her lifetime, even when she’s not officially in the workforce. Maintaining relevant job skills is one way to maintain employability which can serve as a potential financial safety net. “

“Even if they are fully employed, adult women still have the wage gap to overcome, so a father’s support and guidance can help her find ways to achieve independence in the face of these challenges. Similarly, breadwinner women or those in nontraditional careers stand to benefit from a father as a cheerleader—giving her strength to break through barriers she may encounter along the way.”

5. “Support financial education”

“One of the reasons young adults are ill prepared to manage finances in adulthood is that our educational system often doesn’t provide formal education in money management. In fact, unless they are studying
business or finance, many college graduates will graduate into the workforce never having had a class in personal finance.”

“Since most college students have elective requirements, guide your children towards electives that teach basic financial education. Some examples include the basics of investing or an intro to economics course. You may want to suggest online resources you’ve found helpful along the way. If you have self-learners, there are also many books that serve as good presents. See our Her Wealth’s Top 10 Books to Know and Grow Your Wealth for some ideas.”

6. “Seize opportunities to talk about money “

“We know that “money talk” can be uncomfortable. Our goal is to break the taboo around these conversations by finding ways to lighten up the topic. One of the easiest ways to open a money conversation is to encourage questions. You may find that your children ask questions you can’t answer, which is a perfect opportunity to investigate and learn something new together.”

“Without establishing a rigid schedule, consider making a mental note to bring up money-related topics on occasion, when teachable moments occur. Holiday time, before they head off to college, when they’re changing jobs, or while they are preparing for their first child can be natural times to bring up the topic of money. Starting with reassurance that your guidance is always available may be enough to make the talk comfortable. Supporting healthy attitudes towards money and positive experiences talking about money may help your children to open up if a financial dilemma arises in the future.”

The Importance of Dads in an Increasingly Fatherless America

Pew reports that only 11 percent of American children lived apart from their dads in 1960. Today, that number has grown to 27 percent. One in every three American children are now growing up in a home without their biological father.

Studies have found that children raised without a father are:

At a higher risk of having behavioral problems.

Four times more likely to live in poverty.

More likely to be incarcerated in their lifetime.

Twice as likely to never graduate high school.

At a seven times higher risk of teen pregnancy.

More vulnerable to abuse and neglect.

More likely to abuse drugs and alcohol.

Twice as likely to be obese.


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On Father’s Day, here are 5 new discoveries about dads

1. Dads are more engaged with their kids.

Just this month, it was reported that today’s fathers are more involved in their children’s lives than in the past. Dr. Kevin Shafer, a sociology professor at Brigham Young University who co-authored the study with sociologists from Ball State University, said: "We found that today’s dads
spend more time, provide more care, and are more loving toward their kids than ever before."

2. Dads are getting older.

The endearing term "dear old Dad" is not that far off the mark, if a recent study is any indication. A Stanford University Medical Center study last August found that the average age of newborns' fathers has increased by 3.5 years over the past four decades.

From the same study, it was reported that "the portion of newborns' fathers who are 40 or older doubled from 4.1% to 8.9%" over the study period, while "the proportion of dads who were 50 or older rose from half a percent to nearly one in every 100."

3. A dad's treatment of his daughter impacts how she views men.

We have known this for years, of course, based on a wealth of solid research. However, a study last November from the University of Utah drives the point home once again. The research revealed that women who grew up without a caring father are conditioned to see more sexual intent in other men.

Danielle J. DelPriore, the study's lead author, said: "This research underscores an important psychological change – perceiving greater sexual interest among men – that could increase a woman's likelihood of engaging in unrestricted or risky sexual behavior in response to growing up with a disengaged father."

4. Dads like it when their babies look like them.

Finally, a fascinating study from Binghamton University, part of the State University of New York, released in March reveals that dads like it when there is a clear resemblance between them and their offspring.

According to Science News: "Data from the first two waves of the study indicated that infants who looked like their father at birth were healthier one year later, suggesting that father-child resemblance induces a father to spend more time engaged in positive parenting, as these fathers spent an
average of 2.5 more days per month with their babies than fathers who didn't resemble their offspring.”


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Fatherlessness is harder of Father's Day but 'father figures,' other role models fill in

Having a parent leave the home permanently can cause trauma in a child’s life, just like having an incarcerated or physically abusive parent, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which developed the method of tracking adverse childhood experiences, or ACEs.

"Children, youth and young adults who have experienced trauma are three times more likely to develop serious mental illness and substance abuse later in life,” said psychiatrist Elinore McCance-Katz, assistant secretary for mental health and substance abuse for the Department of Health and Human Services.

Nearly half of the nation’s children under 18 – 46% – have experienced at least one traumatic event, including sexual abuse, neglect, incarceration of a parent, being a victim or witnessing community violence, or the death or absence of a parent, according to a January report by HHS' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

(Jayne O'Donnell and Sierra Lewter, “Fatherlessness is harder of Father's Day but 'father figures,' other role models fill in”, USA Today, June 15,2018, https://www.cbs19.tv/article/news/nation-now/fatherlessness-is-harder-on-fathers-day-but-father-figures-other-role-models-fill-in/465-e51720b5-3428-4d09-a019-1ef0cf2d2d9e)

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How Dads Affect Their Daughters into Adulthood

“…daughters whose fathers have been actively engaged throughout childhood in promoting their academic or athletic achievements and encouraging their self-reliance and assertiveness are more likely to graduate from college and to enter the higher paying, more demanding jobs traditionally held by males. This helps explain why girls who have no brothers are overly represented among the world’s political leaders: they tend to receive more encouragement from their fathers to be high achievers. Even college and professional female athletes often credit their fathers for helping them to become tenacious, self-disciplined, ambitious, and successful.”

“Interestingly, too, when female college students were asked what they would do if their fathers disapproved of their career plans, the overwhelming majority said they would not change their plans. But the daughters who communicated the most comfortably and had the closest relationships with their fathers were more willing to reconsider their plans if their fathers disapproved.”

“Another question on many people’s minds is: how does a father influence his daughter’s romantic life—who she dates, when she starts having sex, and the quality of her relationships with men? Not surprisingly, a girl who has a secure, supportive, communicative relationship with her father is less likely to get pregnant as a teenager and less likely to become sexually active in her early teens.” “This, in turn, leads to waiting longer to get married and to have children—largely because she is focused on achieving her educational goals first.”

“The well-fathered daughter is also the most likely to have relationships with men that are emotionally intimate and fulfilling. During the college years, these daughters are more likely than poorly-fathered women to turn to their boyfriends for emotional comfort and support and they are less likely to be “talked into” having sex. As a consequence of having made wiser decisions in regard to sex and dating, these daughters generally have more satisfying, more long-lasting marriages. What is surprising is not that
fathers have such an impact on their daughters’ relationships with men, but that they generally have more impact than mothers do.”

“Their better relationships with men may also be related to the fact that well-fathered daughters are less likely to become clinically depressed or to develop eating disorders. They are also less dissatisfied with their appearance and their body weight. As a consequence of having better emotional and mental health, these young women are more apt to have the kinds of skills and attitudes that lead to more fulfilling relationships with men.”

“…scholars have found an intriguing link between the way daughters deal with stress as adults and the kind of relationships they had with their dads during childhood. For example, undergraduate women who did not have good relationships with their fathers had lower than normal cortisol levels. And people with low cortisol levels tend to be overly sensitive and overly reactive when confronted with stress. Indeed, the low cortisol daughters were more likely than the higher cortisol daughters (who had the better relationships with their dads) to describe their relationships with men in stressful terms of rejection, unpredictability or coercion.”

“So how can fathers and daughters forge a close, positive relationship? Some research suggests certain turning points or significant events can draw them closer. Both fathers and daughters said in one study that participating in activities together, especially athletic activities, while she was growing up made them closer. Some daughters also mentioned working with their dads or vacationing alone with him. Her leaving for college, getting married, and having children often deepened their relationship and made it less stressful—largely because the daughter gained a better understanding of her father’s perspective and because he began treating her more like an adult.”

(Linda Nielsen is a professor of educational and adolescent psychology at Wake Forest University and the author of Father-Daughter Relationships: Contemporary Research & Issues (2013) and Between Fathers & Daughters: Enriching and Rebuilding Your Adult Relationship (2012).)
Do Fathers Matter? Answers from the New Science of Fatherhood

“As recently as a generation ago, in the 1970s, most psychologists and other “experts” thought that, besides bringing home a paycheck, fathers didn’t matter much for their kids. There wasn’t much evidence for the irrelevancy of fathers. But there wasn’t a lot of data to suggest they were relevant, either. Few had asked the question, and nobody knew the answer. The irrelevancy of fathers had become an article of faith among researchers, and why would any of them question something they knew to be true?”

“But then researchers started challenging that assumption and studying fathers’ roles in greater detail. To sum up their conclusions, we now know that fathers are vastly important in their children’s lives, in ways that both scholars and parenting experts have overlooked.”

“Children whose fathers played with them, read to them, took them on outings, and helped care for them had fewer behavioral problems in the early school years, and less likelihood of delinquency or criminal behavior as adolescents.”

“Among disadvantaged children born prematurely, those with engaged fathers had higher IQs at age three than those children whose fathers had not been playing with them or helping to care for them. Children with involved fathers were less likely to smoke as teenagers. And here was a particularly stunning result: fathers reading to seven-year-old girls and asking sixteen-year-old girls about school helped to prevent depression and other psychological ailments in the kids decades later. “

“The researchers’ conclusion? Enough is now known about the positive impact of fathers’ presence on children’s lives that governments should
start changing public policies to encourage fathers to spend time with their children.”

“So, dads, even after Father’s Day is over, keep in mind how much your parenting matters—even when it looks like you’re just goofing around with your kids.”


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**Children Are Most Likely to Live With Two Parents in These Countries**
*For these countries, the percent of children who live with no parents was not measured.

In most cases, children living with just one parent are living with their mother. (In the U.S., for instance, three-quarters of single-parent households are headed by a mother.) That means that as the U.S. celebrates Father's Day this Sunday, in some countries, roughly four in ten kids are growing up without a father.


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Fathers’ Roles in the Care and Development of Their Children: The Role of Pediatricians [or Pastors]

“Father involvement in the early childhood years is associated with positive child developmental and psychological outcomes over time…”

“…3 years of age, father-child communication was a significant and unique predictor of advanced language development in the child but mother-child communication was not.” (Pancsofar N, Vernon-Feagans L. Mother and father language input to young children: contributions to later language. J Appl Dev Psychol. 2006;27(6):571–587)

“Mothers tailor word choice to the child’s known vocabulary, whereas fathers are more likely to introduce new words.” (Raeburn P. Do Fathers Matter? New York, NY: Farrar, Straus, Giroux; 2014)

“Child health care providers have an opportunity to encourage fathers to speak to their infants more.”
“…when fathers were more involved (caring, playing, communicating) in infancy, children had decreased mental health symptomatology at 9 years of age.” (Raeburn P. *Do Fathers Matter?* New York, NY: Farrar, Straus, Giroux; 2014)


“…positive father involvement was inversely associated with child behavior trajectories, such that more involvement was accompanied by less child maladaptive behavior…”


“…and predicts less adolescent depressive symptoms for both genders.” (Cookston JT, Finlay AK. Father involvement and adolescent adjustment longitudinal findings from Add Health. *Fathering.* 2006;4(2):137–158)


“Extrapolating from animal studies, exposure to fathers’ pheromones may slow female pubertal development.” (Raeburn P. Do Fathers Matter? New York, NY: Farrar, Straus, Giroux; 2014)

“Adolescents whose nonresident fathers are involved have been shown to be less likely to begin smoking regularly.” (Menning CL. Nonresident fathers’ involvement and adolescents’ smoking. J Health Soc Behav.2006;47(1):3246pmid:16583774)


“Although mothers are generally more involved with their children’s direct care, a father’s participation in care has been linked to higher adherence to treatment, better child psychological adjustment, and improved health
status compared with families with nonparticipating fathers.”

“Intervention programs with parents of developmentally delayed children have far better child outcomes when fathers participate in the parent training along with mothers.” (Bagner DM657pmid:23772849)

“Among preterm infants in the NICU (especially those with low-income black fathers), increased paternal involvement was associated with improved cognitive outcome at 3 years of age, even after adjusting for family income, neonatal health, and paternal age.”

“Age at first sexual experience, age at birth of the first child, and relationship status of partners are also indicators of multipartner fertility.”

“Men whose first children are born outside of marriage are 3 times as likely to experience multipartner fertility than are men who are married to the mother of their first child at the time of birth.”

“According to 2010 census data, there are 352 000 gay male couples in the United States, and approximately 10% of them are raising children.” (US

“Large sample surveys from the 2003–2013 American Time Use Survey (N = 44 188) showed that women with same-sex partners as well as opposite-sex partners and men with same-sex partners spent more time with their children than did men with opposite-sex partners.” (Prickett KC, Martin-Storey A, Crosnoe R A research note on time with children in different-and same-sex two-parent families. Demography. 2015;52(3):905–918pmid:25911578)


“Because of higher rates of several stressors (eg, racism, unemployment, poverty, incarceration, and homelessness) not as commonly associated with white fathers, black fathers may be at higher risk of depression and other poor mental health outcomes.”


“A meta-analysis of fathers’ mental health and child…”

“Other studies have shown that father involvement is associated with a decrease in externalizing behavior problems.”

“Depressed parents tend to spend less time with their children (aged 3 years and younger) and limit physical contact (ie, hugging and cuddling) and are more likely to express frustration in child rearing.”

“New York City introduced a Young Men’s Initiative in 2011, committing $3 million, part of which established a City University of New York Fatherhood Academy to boost fathers’ parenting skills, resulting in a 15% decrease in teenage pregnancies.”
“Fourteen Pediatric Opportunities to Involve Fathers [Same for Pastors] in Ongoing Care…”

“Welcome fathers and express appreciation for their attendance. Speak directly to the father as well as the mother or partner and solicit his opinions. Encourage office staff and nurses to actively encourage father involvement at all pediatric office visits, especially during the early critical years. Starting with the prenatal visit, actively engage the father (e.g., at the prenatal visit, ask the father about his decision whether to circumcise the infant if male).”

“Introduce yourself to the father and the mother or other parent, especially if this is the first visit. Politely explore the father’s relationship to the other parent (e.g., married, living together or not) and his cultural traditions and personal beliefs about his role in caring for the child. Assess differences in parenting beliefs and help parents negotiate, if necessary.”

“Recognize that mothers and fathers may not always agree on how best to raise a child. For example, parents may disagree on the approach to discipline or issues of firearm safety. Pediatricians can serve as a mediator in such discussions, meeting with both parents or caregivers together to discuss these and other behavior-management issues, and should avoid (whenever possible) siding with 1 parent or the other on important parenting issues.”

“Emphasize how children look to their fathers as role models of behavior and are likely to imitate behaviors they see. Use this in a positive way to encourage the increased use of seat belts and helmets for bike riding and decreased tobacco, alcohol, and other substance use.”

“Screen fathers for perinatal depression. Useful screens include the Edinburgh Postpartum Depression Scale (EPDS) or the version that uses the partners report (EPDS-P), the Gotland Male Depression Scale (GMDS), and the more general Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale (CES-D) and Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9). As with maternal
depression screening, have a plan in place (referral to own physician) if either parent screens positive or exhibits depressive symptoms.”

“Review the need for parents to keep up to date on adult vaccines and recommend any needed updates for vaccines, such as pertussis and influenza immunizations.”

“Stress the unique role many fathers play in encouraging age-appropriate physical play and modeling physical activity such as exercise.”

“Explore the family composition, cultural beliefs about fathering and men’s roles in families, physical health of both parents, and the division of child care tasks within the family. If parents are not both living in the household, discuss living and visiting arrangements, time together, and custody arrangements. In the event of a parental separation or divorce, encourage both fathers as well as mothers to continue to communicate individually with the pediatrician.”

“Encourage fathers to assume some roles early on in the care of the child, and encourage the mother to let the father be involved and learn from his own mistakes. Early time alone with the child helps a father gain confidence and develop his own style of interaction and provides a mother or other parent with much-needed time alone. Ask fathers what skills they feel are lacking and develop a list of local or online resources to support fathers in gaining confidence and skills in parenting.”

“Inform the family about the normal elation, fatigue, and challenges of being a father. Discuss openly the usual interruptions in sleep for the whole family, the decreases in sleep for the whole family, the decrease in energy, the alterations in time together as a couple and individual free time, and the changes in intimacy and the sexual relationship. This may be the first time some fathers will have discussed these issues openly.”

“Educate fathers about the practicalities of breastfeeding and how to support mothers’ nursing. If mothers plan to return to work after the first few months at home, they may need the infant to be flexible about taking a bottle while they are at work. If so, this represents an opportunity for fathers
to participate in feeding by offering a daily bottle of the mother’s milk (once breastfeeding is well established) to foster the necessary infant flexibility to take a bottle in addition to continuing to breastfeed whenever possible. In addition, fathers provide important skin-to-skin care and help the mother in routine tasks that facilitate rest, bonding, and continued breastfeeding.”

“Discuss how the couple is adapting to parenthood (with each child). Asking questions such as “How is your relationship (or the family) adjusting to the new infant?” or “How is it now that your child is older?” opens the door to reflection and discussion and can remind parents of the importance of their own partner relationship and the need to nurture and maintain it. Encourage parents to continue to dedicate time for adult activities without children.”

“As advocates for children and families, pediatricians can identify current and necessary future public policies that support fathers’ involvement with their children. Promote the use of policies such as the Family Medical Leave Act (codified at 29 CFR S825 [1993]) and flexible work schedules as ways to balance employment and family responsibilities. “Use it or lose it” paternity leave policies abroad have resulted in more than 90% of new fathers taking brief paternity leave to bond with their newborn infants.”

“In most cases, permission for medical procedures can be granted by either legal parent, but in some cases it may be important to include both parents in such discussions and even legal documents. Even if not legally required, it is usually advisable for pediatricians to include fathers who share custody, whether residing with the child or not, in written communications about the child, such as results of testing or subspecialist evaluations.”

[Michael Yogman, Craig F. Garfield, “Fathers’ Roles in the Care and Development of Their Children: The Role of Pediatricians [or Pastors]”, APP News & Journals Gateway, (http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/138/1/e20161128)]

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Dads Influence Teen Daughters’ Decisions on Sex

“…a recent Harvard study (https://mcc.qse.harvard.edu/thetalkconfirmed) that young adults are hungry for guidance in romance, particularly from their parents. “

“Both parents needs to share with young women that current social science shows saving sex for marriage (https://ifstudies.org/blog/counterintuitive-trends-in-the-link-between-premarital-sex-and-marital-stability/) and avoiding cohabitation can help ensure a happy, long-lasting marriage, and help them avoid divorce in the future. It should also be communicated that even more so than men, most women prefer romantic, committed sex (especially sex within marriage) to one-night stands (https://qz.com/685852/hookup-culture/), and support their daughters in choices that honor their own deep-held desires, even when they run counter to their male peers or the culture.”


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Father’s Rejection may increase child’s social anxiety, loneliness

The study — conducted by Hio Wa "Grace" Mak, doctoral student of human development and family studies — examined how parental rejection, as well as the overall well-being of the family unit, were related to changes in adolescents’ social anxiety, friendships and feelings of loneliness over time. Mak worked with Gregory Fosco, associate professor of human development and family studies, and Mark Feinberg, research professor of health and human development, at Penn State’s Prevention Research Center.

“This suggests that fathers’ rejecting attitudes toward their adolescent children may make them more nervous about approaching social
situations, which in turn is related to more social isolation and feelings of loneliness."

“Often, when we try to intervene and help promote positive peer relationships, we focus on the school setting, where a lot of these friendships are taking place,” Fosco said. “I think these findings suggest that we should also reach out to families to help them support this sense of belonging and connection. We might be overlooking the family as an important piece of cultivating these healthy peer relationships.”


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**The Difference Fathers Make for College Graduation**

“US Department of Education study found that among children living with both biological parents, those with highly involved fathers were 42 percent more likely to earn A's and 33 percent less likely to be held back a year in school than children whose dads had low levels of involvement. But little research has examined the association between paternal involvement…”

“National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, a study of a nationally representative sample of adolescents who were in grades 7–12 in the 1994–95 school year. The Add Health data indicate that young adults who had involved fathers when they were in high school are significantly more likely to graduate from college.”
“…teens who reported that their fathers were not involved, teens with involved fathers were 98 percent more likely to graduate from college, and teens with very involved fathers were 105 percent more likely to graduate from college…”

“Clearly, young women and men with more engaged fathers are more likely to acquire a college diploma than their peers without such a father.”

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

“Second, involved fathers may help children steer clear of risky behaviors—from delinquency to teenage pregnancy—that might prevent them from completing college.”

“Third, involved fathers may help foster an authoritative family environment (characterized by an appropriate mix of engagement, affection, and supervision) that is generally conducive to learning.”
“Fourth, involved fathers may be more likely to provide financial support to children seeking a college education.”

Among today’s millennials between ages 25 and 32, every year college graduates earn on average about $17,500 more than their peers with only a high school diploma. A recent Brookings Institution study found that, over a lifetime, a college degree provides an income premium of about $570,000—what this study calls a “tremendous return” on this education investment.”

“This brief shows that young men and women with involved fathers are significantly more likely to earn a college diploma. Specifically, compared to their peers whose fathers are not involved, young adults with involved fathers were at least 98 percent more likely to graduate from college.”

“Moreover, paternal involvement is especially prevalent among young adults from college-educated homes, and these young adults are also more likely to live in an intact family.”

“This means that young adults from such homes tend to be triply advantaged: they typically enjoy more economic resources, an intact family, and an involved father.”


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Absent dads tied to stress-related cellular changes in kids

“The loss of a father due to death, divorce or jail is associated with children having shorter caps on the ends of their chromosomes, according to a study that points to a possible biological explanation for health problems often encountered by kids with absent dads.”
“The protective caps known as telomeres shrink with age, and are also thought to erode with extreme stress.”

“At age 9, kids who had lost a father had 14 percent shorter telomeres than children whose dad was still involved in their lives, researchers report in Pediatrics. Death had the biggest impact, and the association was stronger for boys than for girls.”


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The Boy Crisis, the Dad Solution

“While Dr. Farrell identifies ten causes of the boy crisis, he found that by far the biggest cause is a lack of father involvement. He explains why children who have minimal or no father involvement (who are “dad deprived”) suffer in more than 70 different areas in comparison to children who are “dad-enriched.”

“Farrell says the boy crisis is global. Among the 60 largest developed nations, boys are falling behind girls in every academic area, as well as in social skills, career preparation, mental health and physical health. He found that in developed nations, with fewer survival concerns, there was less stigma for women to have children without being married.”

“In the U.S., for example, 53 percent of women under 30 who have children are not married. Among these women, dad-deprived children are the norm. Dad-deprived girls suffer considerably, but the boys (with no role model) suffer even more.”

“As Farrell puts it, “the boy crisis resides where fathers do not reside.”

“Among the 70 deprivations Farrell documents is that dad-deprivation is the greatest predictor of a boy becoming addicted to drugs or committing
suicide. Dad-deprived boys are much more likely to drink excessively, be bullies, drop out of school, be alienated and rudderless.”

“…boys who hurt, hurt us.”

“One of the differences is a dad’s tendency to enforce boundaries. Farrell says children often feel insecure when a boundary is unenforced — picture a child in a black, dark room, not knowing where the walls are. Dads use methods such as roughhousing to make boundary enforcement work without rebellion.”

“Farrell has found that postponed gratification is the single biggest predictor of a child’s success and the best way to prevent ADHD. Not having the discipline to focus leads to becoming distracted rather than finishing homework and leads to not being able to focus on the practice needed to stand out in sports.”

“Children raised predominantly by dads are 15 percent likely to have ADHD. Whereas children raised by moms are 30 percent likely to have ADHD. (This is despite the fact that dads get the more challenging children to deal with.)”


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Understanding the Importance of Fathers and How to Help Them

“Although we often associate the modern celebration of Father’s Day with bad ties, bad jokes, and bad clothes, you might be surprised to know that its origins are in part rooted in concern over children growing up without a father’s guidance.

In December 1907, a terrible mine explosion killed 360 men and left about 1,000 children fatherless in Monongah, West Virginia. In its aftermath, an area woman named Grace Golden Clayton, who was concerned about
those children growing up without fathers, appealed to her minister to set aside a special day to commemorate fathers as well as honor her own dad, who was also a Methodist preacher. On July 5, 1908, her appeal was answered with a special Father’s Day sermon at Williams Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church, South.”

Although individual fathers are certainly important, there is also power in a community of fathers within a neighborhood. The presence of fathers in low-income neighborhoods is associated with better outcomes for boys of color who live there, including higher employment rates and lower suspension rates—even if the fathers aren’t their own.

Dads benefit from having a community around them, too. Low-income fathers with larger and more diverse social networks reported receiving more frequent and more types of support than dads with smaller networks.

However, in-depth interviews of low-income fathers who participated in responsible fatherhood programs found that many lack the support of friends and family, particularly when it comes to helping them carry out their role as fathers. In fact, the average participant reported only 5 core ties to friends and family members, compared with a national average of 23 such ties.

That’s particularly important, because not only do fathers with larger social networks report more support from friends and family, but fathers with larger social networks also named twice as many organizational sources of support such as public entities, nonprofit groups, religious organizations, or community service agencies as fathers with fewer or no social ties did.

Participants in responsible fatherhood programs credited these programs with helping them learn skills to be better and more involved parents and providers, and participants found strong and inspiring role models in the program staff, many of whom had overcome similar challenges.

Strong social networks and the availability of responsible fatherhood programs are likely to be even more important for dads who are involved with the criminal justice system. Although having an incarcerated parent is
linked to worse outcomes for children, few programs focus specifically on children with incarcerated fathers, and fathers with a criminal record face additional hurdles in financially supporting themselves and their children.


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**The Father Absence Crisis in America**

“Research shows when a child grows up in a father-absent home, he or she is…”

“… four times more likely to live in poverty…”

Children in father-absent homes are almost four times more likely to be poor. (u.s. census bureau)

“…more likely to suffer emotional and behavioral problems…”

Children of single mothers show higher levels of aggressive behavior than children born to married mothers. (journal of marriage and family)

“… two times greater risk of infant mortality…”

Infant mortality rates are nearly two times higher for infants of unmarried mothers than for married mothers. (national center for health statistics)

“…more likely to go to prison…”

One in five prison inmates had a father in prison. (department of justice, office of justice programs)

“…more likely to commit crime…”
Study of juvenile offenders indicated that family structure significantly predicts delinquency. (journal of youth and adolescence)

“…seven times more likely to become pregnant as a teen…”

Teens without fathers are twice as likely to be involved in early sexual activity and seven times more likely to get pregnant as an adolescent. (child development journal)

“…more likely to face abuse and neglect…”

Compared to children living with married biological parents, those whose single parent had a live-in partner had more than 8 times the rate of maltreatment overall, over 10 times the rate of abuse and more than 6 times the rate of neglect. (child's bureau)

“…more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol…”

“…Youth are more at risk of first substance use without a highly involved father.” (social science research)

Adolescents whose fathers were drug abusers revealed that paternal smoking and drug use lead to strained father-child relationships. This weakened relationship led to greater adolescent maladjustment with family and friends and a higher risk for adolescent drug use and smoking.

Fathers who smoke cigarettes were less likely to enforce antismoking rules for their children and had weaker bonds in terms of adolescent admiration and emulation. (pediatrics)

“…two times more likely to suffer obesity…”

Obese children are more likely to live in father-absent homes than are non-obese children. (national longitudinal survey of youth)

“…two times more likely to drop out of high school…”

Students living in father-absent homes are twice as likely to repeat a grade in school. (u.s. department of education)
Father involvement in schools is associated with the higher likelihood of their children getting mostly a's. (U.S. department of education)

In the typical elementary school classroom of 20 students, 7 of them—over 33 percent—are growing up without their biological father in the home. (U.S census bureau)

There is a crisis in America. According to the U.S census bureau, 19.7 million children, more than 1 in 4, live without a father in the home. Consequently, there is a “father factor” in nearly all of the societal ills facing America today.

Research shows when a child is raised in a father-absent home, he or she is affected in the following ways... Source: 2017. U.S. census bureau. Data represent children living without a biological, step, or adoptive father.

“Poverty 4x greater risk of poverty 2x more likely to suffer obesity child…”

“Obesity 2x greater risk of infant mortality mom-child health more likely to…”

“Teen pregnancy 7x more likely to become pregnant as a teen…”

“Behavioral problems more likely to have behavioral problems…”

“Child abuse more likely to face abuse and neglect…”

“Mom-child health 2x greater risk of infant mortality…”

“Substance abuse more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol…”

“Incarceration more likely to go to prison…”

“Child obesity 2x more likely to suffer obesity…”

“Crime more likely to commit crime…”

“Education 2x more likely to drop out of high school…”

“…19.7 million children without their father at home…”

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The Meaning of Father Involvement for Children

A recent study found that fathers' involvement in their children's schools is linked to positive school outcomes for the child, including higher class standing, more enjoyment of school, and a lowered likelihood of grade repetition, suspension or expulsion. (Nord, C.W., Brimhall, D., & West, J. (1997). Father's Involvement in Schools. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.)

Ben Bennett

Ben grew up in Virginia Beach, Virginia and met Christ at an early age. After being heavily involved in Cru throughout college, and developing a great desire to see college students transformed by the gospel, he joined their staff in 2011.

For over 10 years of his life, Ben battled a porn addiction and other forms of habitual sexual sin before coming to lasting freedom through a Biblical and clinical approach to sexual addiction recovery.

Ben currently resides in Dallas, Texas and serves with Josh McDowell Ministry as an author, speaker, and evangelist supporting the health and restoration of men and women struggling with woundedness, habitual sin, and sexual brokenness.

For more than fifty years, Josh McDowell has been at the forefront of cultural trends and groundbreaking ministry. Ben will serve alongside Josh, writing, speaking and shining the light of Christ into the darkest places, and helping believers be prepared to share with confidence, knowing the reason why Christianity is reliable, relational and relevant to our lives.

Ben is available to speak on:

iGen for Jesus | Overcoming Sin & Setbacks | You, Me, We | Wholeness In A Sex Saturated World | Relevant, Reliable, Relational: The Bible?
WHO’S TALKING ABOUT BEN?

“Ben speaks from personal experience of the freedom Christ offers each and every troubled heart. It is such a delight for me to hear Ben speak for his generation in such a relevant, reliable, and relational way.”

-Dr. Ted Roberts // Pastor, Counselor, and Founder of Pure Desire Ministries

“While many young people today struggle with hurt, mental health issues, and addictions, few have a story of freedom to share like Ben’s that renews hope, gives a roadmap to healing, and inspires next steps. I’ve personally benefited greatly from what Ben has to share and I think many people in all walks of life will too.”

-Karl Armentrout // Cru National Conference and Events Director

“My hidden sin had me imprisoned in silence, guilt, and secrets for years. When I attended Ben’s session, he shared his journey of liberty from sin, and I felt the Holy Spirit moving and convicting me. Through Ben’s personal encouragement and passion for sharing the love of God, I shared my darkest sin with others and began the journey of healing and freedom through Jesus and His wonderful people. Thank you Ben.”

-Marylyn // Texas College Student

Ben is the author of:

Living Free
FLESH SERIES: Sex, Lust, Porn and The Christian

Josh, Ben, and Jake are launching a movement focused on speaking, equipping, and connecting individuals to solutions to overcoming unwanted struggles.

Through interactive speaking, digital content, and practical next step resources, God is raising up a generation of young people who are passionate about following Jesus wholeheartedly and working through the setbacks and sin that hinder them.

For more information or to book Ben please contact:

Ben.Bennett@josh.org
www.josh.org/Ben
972-907-1000 ext 135
2001 W. Plano Pkwy, Ste 2400
Plano, TX 75075

For more information and to book Ben please contact:
Jake Kissack

Jake was raised where the buffalo still do roam. His family owns a 3000 acre cattle ranch in Wyoming. His adventurous heart was pursued and captivated by Jesus as far back as memory serves. His passion to see Jesus bring life to all was bolstered in his master’s degree thesis work on how pornography negatively affects the church.

His 13 year journey with a porn addiction crushed his passion and compelled him to seek true freedom, which was found through Christian sexual addiction recovery.

Jake resides in Dallas, Texas and serves with the Josh McDowell ministry as a developing author, speaker, storyteller and evangelist, supporting the health and restoration of men and women struggling with porn and sexual brokenness.

For more than fifty years, Josh McDowell has been at the forefront of cultural trends and groundbreaking ministry. Jake will serve alongside Josh, writing, speaking and shining the light of Christ into the darkest places, and helping believers be prepared to share with confidence, knowing the reason why Christianity is reliable, relational and relevant to our lives.

Jake is available to speak on:

When God Talks | Empowered to Live Life Fully Alive | Connections that Count
Wholeness in A Sex Saturated World | Unshakable Truth // Live For Love
WHO’S TALKING ABOUT JAKE?

Jake is wholesome, invigorating and smart. His ability to speak is only surpassed by his contagious love for Christ and the Scripture. He wins the hearts and minds of students through stories.

-Josh D. McDowell // Author/Speaker

Jake communicates with compassion for the wounded and broken and has an authentic desire to see people healed and set free. God’s work through his message has been a beacon of hope that has empowered struggling students to find freedom and live wholehearted.

-Sherry Broesamle // Field Director of People & Culture, CRU

Jake’s heart and passion is to participate in and see God heal wounds and restore people.

-Austin Adams // Family Pastor, Crossroads Community Church

Jake passionately plants seeds of gospel hope and invites people to live whole heartedly for the glory of God. His message is culturally relevant, Gospel focused, and needed wherever young people are gathering.

-Kurt Sauder // Author, Speaker, Radio Host, Further Still Ministries

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For more information and to book Jake please contact:

- Email: Jacob.Kissak@cru.org
- Phone: 307-299-3208
- Website: www.josh.org/Jake

2001 W Plano Pkwy, Ste 2400
Plano, TX 75075
Alex McClellan serves with Josh McDowell Ministry, a Cru ministry (formerly Campus Crusade for Christ). An effective communicator with international experience, Alex is passionate about engaging others with the gospel, and he has joined our team to share the truth of Christ — until the whole world hears.

For more than fifty years, Josh McDowell has been at the forefront of cultural trends and groundbreaking ministry. Alex will serve alongside Josh, writing, speaking and shining the light of Christ into the darkest places, and helping believers be prepared to share with confidence, knowing the reason why Christianity is reliable, relational and relevant to our lives.

Alex is available to speak on:

- You Can Handle the Truth!
- How To Find The Meaning Of Life
- Reasons To Believe In The Resurrection
- Will The Real Jesus Please Stand Up
- How Do You Make Sense of Suffering?
- Can We Trust The Bible?
- Be Prepared to Share (1 Peter 3)
- Be Prepared to Shine (Matthew 5) and more...
WHO’S TALKING ABOUT ALEX?

“Alex is a winsome and effective communicator who understands how skeptics view the gospel and the questions they raise...I enthusiastically recommend his work.”

—Ravi Zacharias, Ravi Zacharias International Ministry

“Alex’s ministry has been immensely beneficial to the church in helping to train, equip and prepare God’s people for the task of bringing the gospel to the world and the world to Christ.”

—Wayne Sutton, Senior Pastor, Carrubbers Christian Centre, Edinburgh, Scotland.

“Alex is gifted in providing a strong intellectual and culturally relevant expression of the Christian faith and this has been a powerful way for our students to build their own foundation in Christ and His Word.”

—Peter Thomas, National Director, Capernwray Bible School, Australia

Alex is the author of:

A Jigsaw Guide to the Meaning of Life (JGzP, 2016)

Alex and Sheryl have been married for over twenty years and have three children: Sophia, Moriah and Asher. The family lived in Scotland, UK, before relocating to the USA, and they currently reside in San Diego, California.

For more information and to book Alex please contact:

Alex@josh.org
www.josh.org/Alex

469-440-9152
2001 W Plano Pkwy, Ste 2400
Plano, TX 75075
Josh McDowell has been at the forefront of cultural trends and groundbreaking ministry for more than 54 years. He shares the essentials of the Christian faith in everyday language so that people of all ages and stages can know Christ, understand what they believe and why it is true, and learn how to live, share and defend their faith.

Well known as an articulate speaker, Josh has spoken to approximately 35 million people, in 140 countries. Josh has written or co-authored more than 150 books in over 100 languages including More Than a Carpenter with over 27 million copies distributed and Evidence That Demands a Verdict, named one of the twentieth century’s top 40 books and one of the thirteen most influential books of the last 50 years on Christian thought by World Magazine. Evidence That Demands a Verdict also just won the 2018 Evangelical Christian Publishers Association award in the Bible Reference Book category.

Josh is available to speak on:

Relationships | Parenting | Reliability of Scripture | My Journey
Self Image | Sexual Integrity | Truth in Today’s Culture
WHO’S TALKING ABOUT JOSH?

“This has helped me more than any other kind of seminar on speaking”
-Cru Staff Member, Young Communicators Seminar

“His message spoke to all of us but certainly impacted the hearts and minds of the teens the most.”
-Alpha Women’s Center of Grand Rapids Staff Member

“Youth leaders and teachers spoke to us for weeks after the dinner telling us his message opened paths to discussion of needs with their groups.”
-Ministry Leader and Event Host

“Josh’s message was a deep examination of God’s truth made relevant for your contemporary, apathetic youth culture.”
-Tim Rickman, High School Principal, Wesleyan Education Center

Josh McDowell is an award-winning author and international speaker. He has written or co-written more than 150 books—some in over 100 languages—and has spoken to approximately 35 million people in 140 countries.

Josh and his wife Dottie have been married 46 years. They have four children and ten grandchildren.

For more information and to book Josh please contact:

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