



The Importance of Dads

“I need a Daddy to be a Child” states 4 year old Tara. Tara lived with her mother and did not know about Daddies in a home until she visited a friend with two parents in the home. What did you do with my Daddy? Tara asked her Mother.

Children know instinctively that they need their fathers in their lives and research supports their knowledge. While there are many studies the one by **W. Bradford Wilcox**, director of the [National Marriage Project](#) and associate professor of sociology at the University of Virginia, offers a clear explanation between the special input of fathers from mothers' in at least four ways: **playing, encouraging risk, protecting and disciplining.**

The study showed the following differences and influence when Fathers were active in their child's lives whether they lived in the home or not.

Playing: Fathers are more physically challenging with children. From these interactions, children learn how to regulate their feelings and behavior

Encouraging risk: Fathers encourage their children to take risks. Dads are more likely to encourage their children to overcome obstacles thus encouraging them to try new experiences building skills and confidence

Protecting: Fathers appear to be better at keeping predators and bad influences from harming their children helping their children feel secure.

When fathers are more involved, they can better monitor what's going on in their children's lives, including interaction with peers and adults.

Disciplining: "Fathers tend to be more willing than mothers to confront their children and enforce discipline, leaving their children with the impression that they in fact have more authority. Thus children listen more intensely to Fathers and internalize the lessons being taught.

What do we, as parents and as a society, need to do to ensure that fathers are actively involved in their children's lives?

We offer the following recommendations:

- 1) Implement the results of recognized research throughout our systems that support families including the courts, school districts, social services and medical environments to ensure that Fathers are actively incorporated into their children's lives.

- 2) Support both parents in their differing parenting roles through education classes and shared information
- 3) Celebrate Father-child relationships in our communities through activities and recognition
- 4) Educate men in the importance of their involvement in their children's lives
- 5) Provide opportunities for Fathers to be and stay involve in their children's lives
- 6) Create father friendly work, school and community environments to encourage father's involvement in their children's daily lives

An Article from The Stephan Center

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