

# Children need father who's involved

Father's Day is just around the corner. This is the perfect time to celebrate fathers and their important role in the development of their children. Children need fathers who love and care for them on a consistent basis. The latest research indicates that fathers who are involved in raising their children make a positive and lasting difference in their lives of their children.

For all the fathers out there, Dr. Steven Green, a child development specialist with Texas Co-operative Extension, has researched and prepared "20 Reasons Why Your Child Needs You to Be an Active Father."

1. Lets your child know that you love him or her. Love is more than just saying, "I love you." It is equally important to spend time doing things together. Children who feel loved are more likely to develop a strong emotional bond with their father and a healthy self-esteem.

2. Provides your child with greater financial resources. Research shows that families with an active father are usually better off financially. Their children are more likely to have access to resources that support healthy development, such as food, clothing, shelter and quality medical care.

3. Provides your child with a positive male role model. Children, regardless of gender, need positive male and female role models in their lives. Involved fathers promote positive behaviours by setting a proper example for their children.

4. Provides your children with emotional support. Children need emotional support from their parents. It is important that fathers listen and support their children when they experience joy, sadness, fear and frustration. When fathers support their children emotionally, their children are more in tune with the needs of others.

5. Enhances your child's self-esteem. Children tend to be happier and more confident when their fathers are actively involved in their lives.

6. Enhances your child's intellectual development. Children who are raised with actively involved fathers tend to score higher on measures of verbal and mathematical ability, and also demonstrate

Lori McMechan

## PARENTING POINTS

Lori McMechan is a parenting group facilitator at the Elspeth Reid Family Resource Centre, a facility of Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba.  
 » 255 Ninth St., Brandon  
 » 726-6280

greater problem-solving and social skills.

7. Provides your child with guidance and discipline. Active fathers play an important role in teaching their children proper behaviour by setting and enforcing healthy limits.

8. Gives your child someone to play with. One of the best ways for fathers to bond with their children is through play. Researchers say there are definite differences in the ways father and mothers play with their children. Fathers tend to use a more physical style of play that benefits children in many ways, including enhanced cognitive ability.

9. Provides your child with someone to talk to when they have questions. Involved fathers can be valuable sources of information for children who are seeking answers to life's important questions.

10. Increases your child's chances for academic success. Involved fathers support their children's academic success, and the benefits appear to extend even into adulthood.

11. Provides your child with an alternative perspective on life. Research suggests men and women often differ in their parenting styles. It can be healthy for children to be exposed to different perspectives on life.

12. Lowers your child's chances for early sexual activity. Children with actively involved fathers are less likely to engage in early sexual activity, thus reducing the chances of teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

13. Lowers your child's chances for school failure. Children are less likely to drop out of school when their fathers are involved.

14. Lowers your child's chances for youth suicide. Children with actively involved fathers are less likely to commit suicide than children with uninvolved fathers.

15. Lowers your child's chances for juvenile delinquency. The benefits of having an active father in the early years extend into the teen years. Children with active fathers are less likely to commit juvenile crimes.

16. Lowers your child's chances for adult criminality. The chances your child will commit crimes as an adult also diminish when he grows up with an actively involved father.

17. Provides your child with a sense of physical and emotional security. When fathers are involved, children develop a sense of security (emotionally and physically). A trust relationship is developed and the child does not have to worry about being abandoned.

18. Facilitates your child's moral development. Children need a moral compass to guide them when they face difficult moral issues. Fathers, like mothers, help children to develop a sense of right and wrong that serves as a foundation for establishing moral character.

19. Promotes a healthy gender identity in your child. Boys and girls benefit from having healthy role models of both sexes. Research points out that mothers and fathers socialize their children in different ways. Fathers can help their children, especially boys, develop a healthy sense of what it means to be male.

20. Helps your child learn important life skills. Most of the essential life skills children will need to survive are learned in the home. Fathers have a unique opportunity to teach their children valuable skills that will enable them to grow up to be healthy and productive adults.

Sources:

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