

## Why Father Figures Are Important During Child Development, According to Science

An involved dad has more impact on a child's life than just a few corny (yet funny) dad jokes. Recent studies have shown that children with involved father figures are less likely to get in trouble with the law, do better in school, and are more likely to stay employed.

On the flip-side children without attentive father figures "are three times as likely to find themselves in the juvenile system before the age of 18 compared to those with involved fathers" says child psychiatrist and clinical professor of child psychiatry at the Yale School of Medicine, Dr. Kyle Pruett.

When kids experience both discipline styles from mom and dad, it equips them with a wider array of problem-solving skills that they can take with them into adulthood.

Pruett explains that mothers tend to use social and emotional consequences in disciplining, while fathers focus on having children ready for the "real world", warning that unruly behavior can lead to losing friends or jobs.

These two approaches give children a broader range to look back at when it comes to solving issues.

Without both tactics of problem solving, as the children grow up they have issues at work and school because they can't express themselves or figure out issues the way they intend or want.

Professor Brenda Volling from the University of Michigan Psychology and director of the Center for Human Growth and Development notes that men are more likely to engage in a little roughhousing play with children, which in theory, could help kids regulate their emotions better. This way they don't get as frustrated as easily.

Another benefit of an involved father figure is oddly enough, delay sexual activity, which translates to lower cases of teenage pregnancy. Research shows that the reason for this is that if the father is involved in the children's care, the kids feel valued. This prevents them from looking elsewhere for love.

Pruett also said that an involved father has a "profound effect" on a kid's success as a

student.

A study published in [Sex Roles](#) in 2016, found that U.S. teenagers with supportive fathers had higher optimism and self-efficacy. This then transferred to doing better in school. These results even occurred when the father figures had little education and limited English.

Science has also explored the impact that a father has on a child's language development. Fathers don't usually modify their speech when talking to kids. So, a child is more likely to development their language competence from their father's vocabulary. Another interesting observation the study noted was that men are less likely to finish a child's sentence, forcing the kid to work harder when speaking with their dad.

Compared to studies focusing on the effect of motherhood on children, studies for fatherhood still need a lot of research.

Volling suspects that the lack of studies is due to the history of parenting roles.

"Decades ago, we actually thought men were incapable of taking care of children, and women had to be the stay-at-home parent," she said, "but today we realize that both men and women can be effective parents."

While we wait on more dad research, don't forget to thank yours this Father's Day for all the things he was able to give you.

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### Summary



Article Name

Why Father Figures Are Important During Child Development, According to Science

Description

This father's day we examine the role that father figures can play in the development of a child and how importance it is to have an engaged father.