



U.S. Department of Health
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RESIDENT FATHERS AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT MIDDLE CHILDHOOD (7 - 10)

Definitions and Topics

- **Resident fathers** are men who co-reside with their children.
- **Academic achievement/performance** refers to school-age children's grades, test scores, cognitive abilities, and overall school performance and functioning.
- **Father Engagement** refers to fathers' use of authoritative (demanding and responsive) parenting and direct participation in activities with the child.
- **Father Supportiveness** refers to fathers' demonstration of support and encouragement toward his child.
- **Father Responsibility** refers to fathers' taking responsibility for a child's care or wellbeing, such as arranging for childcare, providing transportation, taking child to medical appointments, etc.
- **Father Warmth/Sensitivity/Closeness** refers to fathers' demonstration of warmth and affection for his child (e.g., hugging), his sensitivity to his child's needs and desires, and the degree of closeness or intimacy in the relationship between the father and his child.
- **Externalizing behavior problems** involve antisocial conduct such as fighting, non-compliance, poor performance in school, and delinquent behavior.
- **Socioemotional development** refers to children's mental health, self-efficacy, feelings of self-worth, and development of positive relationships with peers and other adults outside the family.

Academic Achievement/ Performance

Father Engagement

- Five- to twelve-year-old children with resident fathers who exhibit high levels of involvement in their education (e.g., communicating with the teacher, volunteering at school) have better math and reading achievement scores (measured by the Woodcock Johnson), compared with children whose fathers are less involved in their education.
Source: McBride, B. A., Schoppe-Sullivan, S. J., & Ho, M. (2005). The mediating role of fathers' school involvement on student achievement. *Applied Developmental Psychology*, 26, 201-216.
- The amount of time that resident fathers spend engaged in shared activities (e.g., working on projects, eating meals, in leisure activities) with their 5 to 11 year old children has a positive influence on children's academic achievement (i.e., grades).
Source: Cooksey, E. C., & Fondell, M. M. (1996). Spending time with his kids: Effects of family structure on fathers' and children's lives. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 58(3), 693-707.

Take Time to Be a Dad Today

- Children in grades kindergarten through 12 are more likely to do well academically, to participate in extracurricular activities, and to enjoy school and are less likely to have ever repeated a grade or to have been suspended or expelled if their resident fathers have high as opposed to low involvement in their schools (e.g., attending a general school meeting, attending a regularly scheduled parent-teacher conference, attending a school or class event, and serving as a volunteer at the school).
Source: Nord, C. W. (1998). *Students do better when their fathers are involved at school* (NCES 98-121). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

Father Supportiveness

- Boys whose resident fathers demonstrate a high level of support for their autonomy at 54 months show greater self-reliance, which leads to higher reading and math achievement scores in grade 3 (measured by the Woodcock–Johnson Tests of Psychoeducational Achievement- Revised).
Source: National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Early Child Care Research Network. (2008). Mothers' and fathers' support for child autonomy and early school achievement. *Developmental Psychology*, 44(4), 895-907.
- Resident Fathers who show interest in their 10-year-old's education have daughters with higher educational attainment by the time they are age 26.
Source: Flouri, E. (2006). Parental interest in children's education, children's self-esteem and locus of control, and later educational attainment: Twenty-six year follow-up of the 1970 British Birth Cohort. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, Vol. 76 Issue 1, p41-55, 15p.

Socioemotional Development

Father supportiveness

- Children who perceive their resident fathers as being highly accepting of them (measured by the Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire, Child PARQ: Father Version) exhibit better psychological adjustment (measured by the Personality Assessment Questionnaire, Child PAQ), compared with children who perceive their fathers as being less accepting.
Source: Veneziano, R. A., & Rohner, R. P. (1998). Perceived paternal acceptance, paternal involvement, and youths' psychological adjustment in a rural, biracial southern community. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 60, 335-343.
- Boys whose resident fathers demonstrate a high level of support for their autonomy at 54 months show greater self-reliance, which leads to higher reading and math achievement scores in grade 3 (measured by the Woodcock–Johnson Tests of Psychoeducational Achievement- Revised).
Source: National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Early Child Care Research Network. (2008). Mothers' and fathers' support for child autonomy and early school achievement. *Developmental Psychology*, 44(4), 895-907.

Father Engagement

- Resident Fathers who were more engaged with their 10- to 11-year-old children (e.g., played with, helped, comforted, and took them on outings) have children with higher self-esteem (measured by the Harter Self Perception Profile) and greater preference for “feminine” activities, compared with children of fathers who were less engaged in these types of caregiving.
Source: Deutsch, F. M., Servis, L. J., & Payne, J. D. (2000). Paternal participation in child care and its effects on children's self-esteem and attitudes toward gendered roles. *Journal of Family Issues*, 22, 1000-1024.
- High levels of resident father participation in child care (measured by the Paternal Involvement in Child Care Index, PICCI) are associated with higher levels of empathy (measured by the Index of Empathy for Children and Adolescents) among first-grade boys, compared with boys who have less involved fathers.
Source: Bernadett-Shapiro, S., Ehrensaft, D., & Shapiro, J. L. (1996). Father participation in childcare and the development of empathy in sons: An empirical study. *Family Therapy*, 23(2), 77-93.

- Six- to eight-year-old Israeli children referred to mental health clinics who have highly involved resident fathers are rated as having less severe mental health problems compared with referred children who have less involved fathers.

Source: Soliman, P., & Mayseless, O. B. (1982). Correlates between mother's employment, father's involvement and child's mental health. *Israel Journal of Psychiatry and Related Sciences*, 19(2), 121-127.

Father Responsibility

- Resident Fathers who took more responsibility for things such as transporting children, planning activities, and arranging childcare have children who express more egalitarian views toward gender roles in the family.

Source: Deutsch, F. M., Servis, L. J., & Payne, J. D. (2000). Paternal participation in child care and its effects on children's self-esteem and attitudes toward gendered roles. *Journal of Family Issues*, 22, 1000-1024.

Father Warmth/ Sensitivity/ Closeness

- A higher-quality resident father-child relationship or stepfather-stepchild relationship is associated with higher self-esteem (measured by the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale) among school-aged children.

Source: Amato, P. R. (1986). Father involvement and the self-esteem of children and adolescents. *Australian Journal of Sex, Marriage & Family*, 7(1), 6-16.

- Children whose resident fathers are behaviorally and emotionally involved when they are 7 to 11 years old have better well-being in adolescence than children whose fathers exhibit less behavioral and emotional involvement. Specifically, boys who indicated that their fathers treated them like grown-ups had better self-esteem and girls who felt they spent enough time with their fathers had better mental health. For both boys and girls, feeling close to their fathers was associated with better self-esteem and life satisfaction.

Source: Wenk, D., Hardesty, C. L., Morgan, C. S., & Blair, S. L. (1994). The influence of paternal involvement on the well-being of sons and daughters. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 56, 229-234.

Externalizing Behaviors

Father Warmth/ Sensitivity/ Closeness

- Sixth-grade children who report that their resident fathers are affectionate and caring and who are satisfied and happy with their relationships with their fathers exhibit less of an increase in antisocial behaviors (e.g., delinquency, substance use, violence) over time, compared with children who have a less positive relationship with their fathers.

Source: Kosterman, R., Haggerty, K. P., Spoth, R., & Redmond, C. (2004). Unique influence of mothers and fathers on their children's antisocial behavior. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 66, 762-778.

- High levels of resident father closeness with 5- to 18-year-old children are associated with fewer child behavior problems at home (e.g., running away, trouble with police, emotional/behavioral problems, and parent reports of how difficult the child is to raise) and at school (e.g., repeating a grade, getting suspended/expelled).

Source: Amato, P. R., & Rivera, F. (1999). Paternal involvement and children's behavior problems. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 61(2), 375-384.

Father Supportiveness

- High levels of resident father support (e.g., hugging, praising) of 5- to 18-year-old children are associated with fewer child behavior problems at home (e.g., running away, trouble with police, emotional/behavioral problems, and parent reports of how difficult the child is to raise) and at school (e.g., repeating a grade, getting suspended/expelled).
Source: Amato, P. R., & Rivera, F. (1999). Paternal involvement and children's behavior problems. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 61(2), 375-384.

Father Engagement

- Resident Fathers' active care (i.e., more hours spent feeding, bathing, dressing, and putting child to bed) with difficult-to-raise children is associated with fewer behavior problems among pre-school aged children (as measured by the Behavioral Problems Index, BPI) as grade-schoolers, independently of mothers' care.
Source: Aldous, J., & Mulligan, G. M. (2002). Fathers' child care and children's behavior problems: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Family Issues*, 23(5), 624-647.
- High levels of resident father engagement (e.g., eating together, engaging in activities, playing, talking, helping with homework) with their 5- to 18-year-old children are associated with fewer child behavior problems at home (e.g., running away, trouble with police, emotional/behavioral problems, and parent reports of how difficult the child is to raise) and at school (e.g., repeating a grade, getting suspended/expelled).
Source: Amato, P. R., & Rivera, F. (1999). Paternal involvement and children's behavior problems. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 61(2), 375-384.
- Boys whose resident fathers are highly involved (e.g., take child on outings, read to child, manage child, show interest in child's education) at age 7 are less likely to report having been in trouble with the law at age 16.
Source: Flouri, E., & Buchanan, A. (2002). Father involvement in childhood and trouble with the police in adolescence: Findings from the 1958 British Cohort. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 17, 689-701.
- Sixth-grade children with highly engaged resident fathers (e.g., fathers who talk with them, work on things together, do other activities together like shopping or sports) exhibit less of an increase in antisocial behaviors (e.g., substance use, delinquency, and violence) over time, compared with children who have less involved fathers.
Source: Kosterman, R., Haggerty, K. P., Spoth, R., & Redmond, C. (2004). Unique influence of mothers and fathers on their children's antisocial behavior. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 66, 762-778.