

The Effects of Father Involvement: A Summary of the Research Evidence

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Introduction

Over the past 30 years, father involvement research has advanced dramatically. There is now a substantial literature that establishes a number of important trends in the way that men approach parenting and the effects that their involvement has on their children's development. This document presents an overview of some of those key trends. While we are unable to provide methodological detail in such a succinct summary, we endeavoured to compile as accurately as possible reliable research results that support these trends. It is clear from the research that father involvement has enormous implications for men on their own path of adult development, for their wives and partners in the co-parenting relationship and, most importantly, for their children in terms of social, emotional and cognitive development.

In presenting the research evidence, we have used author citations in the text. A copy of the full bibliography for these citations is available from the Father Involvement Initiative – Ontario Network (FII-ON) office. Furthermore, given the developments in the measurement of the father involvement construct itself, we have included a section at the end of this document on the different ways that father involvement has been measured in the research literature.

Influences of Father Involvement on Child Development Outcomes

Infants of highly involved fathers are more cognitively competent at 6 months and score higher on the Bayley Scales of Infant

Development (Pedersen, Rubinstein, & Yarrow, 1979; Pedersen, Anderson, & Kain, 1980).

By one year, they continue to have higher cognitive functioning (Nugent, 1991), are better problem solvers as toddlers (Easterbrooks & Goldberg, 1984), and have higher IQ's by age three (Yogman, Kindlan, & Earls, 1995).

School aged children of involved fathers are also better academic achievers. They are more likely to get A's, have better quantitative and verbal skills (Bing, 1963; Goldstein, 1982; Radin, 1982), have higher grade point averages, receive superior grades, or perform a year above their expected age level on academic tests (Astone & McLanahan, 1991; Blanchard & Biller, 1971; Cooksey & Fondell, 1996; Feldman & Wentzel, 1990; Goldstein, 1982; Gottfried, Gottfried, & Bathurst, 1988; National Center for Education Statistics, 1997; Shinn, 1978; Snarey 1993; Wentzel & Feldman, 1993). Children of involved fathers are also more likely to live in cognitively stimulating homes (William, 1997).

Children of involved fathers are more likely to demonstrate more cognitive competence on standardized intellectual assessments (Lamb 1987; Radin 1994) and have higher IQ's (Gottfried, Gottfried, & Bathurst, 1988; Honzik, 1967; Radin 1972; Shinn, 1978).

Children of involved fathers are more likely to enjoy school, have better attitudes toward school, participate in extracurricular activities, and graduate. They are also less likely to fail a grade, have poor attendance, or have behaviour problems at school, (Astone & McLanahan, 1991; Brown & Rife, 1991; Mosley & Thompson, 1995; National Center for Education Statistics, 1997; William, 1997)

Children of involved fathers are more likely to become educationally mobile young adults with higher levels of economic and educational achievement, career success, occupational competency, and psychological well being (Amato, 1994; Barber & Thomas, 1986; Barnett, Marshall, & Pleck, 1992a; Bell, 1969; Furstenberg & Harris, 1993; Harris, Furstenberg, & Marmar, 1998; Lozoff, 1974; Snarey, 1993).

Infants whose fathers are involved in their care are more likely to be securely attached to them, (Cox, Owen, Henderson, & Margand, 1992), be better able to handle strange situations, be more resilient in the face of stressful situations (Kotelchuck, 1976; Parke & Swain, 1975), be more curious and eager to explore the environment, relate more maturely to strangers, react more competently to complex and novel stimuli, and be more trusting in branching out in their explorations (Biller, 1993; Parke & Swain, 1975; Pruett, 1997).

Father involvement is positively correlated with children experiencing overall life satisfaction, less depression (Field et al., 1995; Furstenberg & Harris, 1993; Zimmerman et al., 1995), less emotional distress (Harris et al., 1998), and fewer expressions of negative emotionality such as fear and guilt (Easterbrooks & Goldberg, 1990).

Emotional Development and Well-Being

Children of involved fathers are more likely to demonstrate a greater tolerance for stress and frustration (Mischel, Shoda, & Peake, 1988), have superior problem solving and adaptive skills (Biller, 1993), be more playful, resourceful, skilful, and attentive when presented with a problem (Mischel et al., 1988), and are better able to manage their emotions and impulses in an adaptive manner (Easterbrooks & Goldberg, 1990).

Children of involved fathers are more likely to demonstrate a greater internal locus of control (Biller, 1993; Hoffman, 1971; Lamb, 1987; Mosley & Thompson, 1995; Radin, 1994; Williams & Radin, 1999), have a greater ability to take initiative, use self direction and control (Amato, 1989; Pruett, 1987), and display less impulsivity (Mischel, 1961).

Young adults who had nurturing and available fathers while growing up are more likely to score high on measures of self acceptance and personal and social adjustment (Fish & Biller, 1973), see themselves as dependable, trusting, practical, and friendly (Biller, 1993), be more likely to succeed in their work, and be mentally healthy (Heath & Heath, 1991). The variable that is most consistently associated with positive life outcomes is the quality of the father child relationship (Amato, 1998; Furstenberg & Harris, 1993; Lamb, 1997). Children are better off when their relationship with their father is secure, supportive, reciprocal, sensitive, close, nurturing, and warm (Biller, 1993; Easterbrooks & Goldberg, 1984; Lamb, 1986, 1997; Radin, 1981).

Social Development

Father involvement is positively correlated with children's overall social competence, maturity, and capacity for relatedness with others (Amato, 1987; Forehand & Nousiainen, 1993; Gottfried, Gottfried, & Bathurst, 1988; Krampe & Fairweather, 1993; Mischel et al., 1988; Parke, 1996; Snarey, 1993).

Children of involved fathers are more likely to have positive peer relations and be popular and well liked. Their peer relations are typified by less negativity, less aggression, less conflict, more reciprocity, more generosity, and more positive friendship qualities (Hooven, Gottman, & Katz, 1995; Lieberman, Doyle, & Markiewicz, 1999; Lindsey, Moffett, Clawson, & Mize, 1994;

Macdonald & Parke, 1984; Rutherford & Mussen, 1968; Youngblade and Belsky, 1992).

Children of involved fathers are more likely to have prosocial sibling interactions (Volling & Belsky, 1992), show fewer negative emotional reactions during play with peers, experience less tension in their interactions with other children, and solve conflicts by themselves rather than seeking the teacher's assistance (Suess, Grossman, & Sroufe, 1992).

Children who have involved fathers are more likely to grow up to be tolerant and understanding, (McClelland, Constantian, Regalado, & Stone, 1978), be well socialized and successful adults (Block & van der Lippe, 1973) have long term, successful marriages (Franz, McClelland, & Weinberger, 1991; Lozoff, 1974), have supportive social networks consisting of long-term close friendships (Franz et al., 1991), and adjust well to college both personally and socially (Reuter & Biller, 1973).

The strongest predictor of empathic concern in children and adults is high levels of paternal involvement while a child (Bernadette-Shapiro, Ehrensaft, & Shapiro, 1996; Koestner, Franz, & Weinberber, 1990; Lamb, 1987; Radin, 1994; Sears, Maccoby, & Levin, 1957).

Father warmth and nurturance significantly predicts children's moral maturity, is associated with more pro-social and positive moral behaviour in boys and girls (Mosely & Thompson, 1995), and is positively correlated with higher scores on measures of internal moral judgment, moral values, and conformity to rules (Hoffman 1971; Speicher-Dublin, 1982).

Decrease in Negative Child Development Outcomes

Father involvement protects children from engaging in delinquent behaviour (Harris et

al., 1998), and is associated with less substance abuse among adolescents (Coombs & Landsverk, 1988), less delinquency (Zimmerman et al., 1995), less drug use, truancy, and stealing (Barnes, 1984), less drinking (Harris et al., 1998), and a lower frequency of externalizing and internalizing symptoms such as acting out, disruptive behaviour, depression, sadness and lying (Mosley & Thompson, 1995). Adolescents who strongly identified with their fathers were 80% less likely to have been in jail and 75% less likely to have become unwed parents (Furstenberg & Harris, 1993).

Effects of Father Absence on Child Development Outcomes

Children who live without their fathers, are, on average, more likely to have problems in school performance (Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan, 1997; Horn & Sylvester, 2002). For example, they are more likely to have lower scores on achievement tests (McLanahan & Sandefeur, 1994; Snarey, 1993; US Department of Health and Human Services, 1995) lower scores on intellectual ability and intelligence tests (Duncan, Brooks-Gunn, & Klebanov, 1994; Luster & McAdoo, 1994), have lower grade point averages, (McLanahan & Sandefeur, 1994), be academic underachievers - working below grade level (Blanchard & Biller, 1971), have trouble solving complex mathematical and puzzle tasks, (Biller, 1981), or spend an average of 3.5 hours less per week studying (Zick & Allen, 1996).

Children who live without their fathers, are, on average, more likely to experience behaviour problems at school (Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan, 1997; Horn & Sylvester, 2002) such as having difficulty paying attention, disobedience, (Mott, Kowaleski-Jones, & Mehaghan, 1997), being expelled, suspended (Dawson, 1991), or

have poor school attendance. They are more likely to drop out of highschool, less likely to graduate and enroll in college, and more likely to be out of school and work in their mid 20's (McLanahan & Sandefeur, 1994).

Boys who live without their fathers consistently score lower on a variety of moral indexes - such as measures of internal moral judgement, guilt following transgressions, acceptance of blame, moral values and rule conformity (Hoffman, 1971). Girls who live without their fathers are more likely to cheat, lie, and not feel sorry after misbehaving (Parke, 1996; Mott et al., 1997). Both boys and girls are less likely to be able to delay gratification, have poor impulse control over anger and sexual gratification, and have a weaker sense of right and wrong (Hetherington & Martin, 1979).

Children in father absent homes are more likely to have problems in emotional and psychosocial adjustment (Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan, 1997; Horn & Sylvester, 2002). Boys, on average, are more likely to be more unhappy, sad, depressed, dependent, and hyperactive. Girls, on average, are more likely to become overly dependent (Mott et al., 1997) and have internalizing problems such as anxiety and depression (Kandel, Rosenbaum, & Chen, 1994). Both boys and girls are more likely to develop disruptive or anxiety disorders (Kasen, Cohen, Brook, & Hartmark, 1996), have conduct problems (Kandel et al., 1994), suffer from psychological disorders, or commit suicide (Brent, Perper, Moritz, & Liotus, 1995).

Children who live without their fathers are, on average, more likely to choose deviant peers, have trouble getting along with other children, be at higher risk for peer problems (Mott et al., 1997), and be more aggressive (Horn & Sylvester, 2002).

Children who live without their fathers are, on average, at greater risk of being physically abused, or harmed by physical or emotional neglect (Sedlak & Broadhurst, 1996).

Children who live without their fathers are more likely to engage in criminal behaviour (Horn & Sylvester, 2002), or commit a school crime - such as possessing, using, or distributing alcohol or drugs, possessing a weapon, or assaulting a teacher, administrator, or another student (Jenkins, 1995).

Children who live with a single parent or in step families are more likely to use and abuse illegal drugs, alcohol, or tobacco compared to children who live with both biological or adoptive parents (Johnson, Haffmann, & Gerstein, 1996).

Adolescents who live without their father are more likely to engage in greater and earlier sexual activity and are more likely to become pregnant as a teenager (Miller & Moore, 1990; Metzler, Noell, Biglan, & Ary, 1994; US Department of Health and Human Services, 1988).

Children who live without their fathers are, on average, more likely to be poor and experience health problems (Horn & Sylvester, 2002).

Benefits of Father Involvement for Fathers

Men who are involved fathers feel more self confident and effective as parents, (DeLuccie, 1996; Russell, 1982), find parenthood more satisfying (Owen, Chase-Lansdale & Lamb, 1982), feel more intrinsically important to their child (Lamb, 1987) and feel encouraged to be even more involved (DeLuccie, 1996).

Involvement fathers are more likely to see their interactions with their children positively (DeLuccie, 1996), be attentive to their children's development (Lamb, 1987), better understand, and be accepting of their children (Almeida & Galambos, 1991; Russell, 1982), and enjoy closer, richer father-child relationships, (Gronseth, 1975; Lamb, 1987; Lamb, Pleck, & Levine, 1987; Owen et al., 1982; Snarey, 1993).

Fathers who are involved in their children's lives are more likely to exhibit greater psychosocial maturity (Pleck, 1997; Snarey, 1993), be more satisfied with their lives (Eggebean & Knoester, 2001), feel less psychological distress (Barnett, Marshall, & Pleck, 1992b; Gove & Mongione, 1983; Ozer, Barnett, Brennan, & Sperling, 1998), and be more able to understand themselves, empathically understand others, and integrate their feelings in an ongoing way (Heath, 1994).

Involvement fathers report fewer accidental and premature deaths, less than average contact with the law, less substance abuse, fewer hospital admissions, and a greater sense of well being overall (Pleck, 1997).

Involvement fathers are more likely to participate in the community (Heath, 1978, 1994; Heath & Heath, 1991; Eggebean & Knoester, 2001), do more socializing (Eggebean & Knoester, 2001), serve in civic or community leaderships positions (Snarey, 1993), and attend church more often (Chaves, 1991; Eggebean & Knoester, 2001; Ploch & Hastings, 1998; Stolzenberg, Blair-Loy, & Waite, 1995).

Some evidence suggests that involvement fathering is correlated with marital stability (Cowan & Cowan, 1992) and is associated with marital satisfaction in midlife (Heath & Heath, 1991; Snarey, 1993). Involvement fathers are more likely to feel happily married ten or twenty years after the birth of their first child (Snarey, 1993), and be

more connected to their family (Eggebean & Knoester, 2001).

Overall, men who are involvement fathers during early adulthood usually turn out to be good spouses, workers, and citizens at midlife (Snarey, 1993). Despite some of the documented short term costs of involvement for men such as stress, increased work- family conflict, and decreased self esteem; long term, high involvement has a modest, positive impact on occupational mobility, work success, and societal generativity (Hawkins, Christiansen, Sargent, & Hill, 1993; Snarey 1993). In fact, men's emotional involvement with their children has been found to act as a buffer against work related stresses (Barnett et al., 1992b).

Co-Parental Relationship

The quality of the co-parental relationship has both direct implications for how involvement fathers are, and indirect implications for child development outcomes. As a result, marriage becomes an important context within which to promote and sustain involvement. This next section explores three dimensions of the co-parental relationship: 1) the importance of marriage for involvement, 2) the mother's role in involvement, and 3) how the quality of the co-parental relationship indirectly affects child development outcomes.

1) The Importance of Spousal Relations for Involvement

The kind of mother-father relationship most conducive to responsible fathering...is a caring, committed, collaborative marriage" (Doherty, Kouneski, & Erickson, 1998, p. 286).

Marital quality plays an important role in fathering for a number of reasons:

- Fathers appear to withdraw from their children when not getting along with the mother (mothers do not show similar withdrawal)
- The optimal conditions for father involvement are when a father lives with his children and has a good partnership with the mother.
- Although these conditions can be met outside of marriage, cohabiting couples are more susceptible to long term instability (Doherty et al,1998).

Belsky (1984) calls the marital relationship “the principal support system for parents.”(P.87).

Some research indicates that there is a positive correlation between marital quality and the following: levels of father involvement in child care responsibilities (Bouchard & Lee, 2000; Harris & Morgan, 1991; McBride & Mills, 1993), the quality of the father-child relationship (Belsky & Volling, 1987; Cox, Owen, Lewis, & Henderson, 1989; Doherty et al., 1998; Feldman, Nash, & Aschenbrenner, 1983; Levy-Schiff & Israelaschivili, 1988), the father’s satisfaction in his own paternal role, and his competence as a parent (Bouchard & Lee, 2000).

These correlations indicate that the marital relationship is an important context for the quality of men’s experiences as a father (Bouchard & Lee, 2000). Men are more likely to understand their role of being a father and a husband as a “package deal” - one contingent upon the other (Townsend, 2002). Therefore, if marital conflict is high, fathers have a much more difficult time being involved with their children which weakens the father-child relationship (Coiro & Emery, 1998; Doherty et al., 1998).

Some research indicates that increased father involvement can have positive consequences for the marriage. For example, Snarey (1993) found that fathers who were involved in their children’s lives were significantly more likely to enjoy a stable marriage at midlife. (Father involvement accounted for 25% of the variance in the father’s midlife marital success.) Other researchers have found a similar relationship between competent fathering behaviours and increased marital satisfaction and marital stability in later life (Belsky, 1984; Cowan & Cowan, 1992; Feldman, et al., 1983; Heath & Heath, 1991).

2) Mother’s Role in Father Involvement

When mothers are supportive of their spouse’s parenting (view them as competent parents, provide encouragement, expect and believe parenting is a joint venture), men are more likely to be involved with, and responsible for their children (Biller, 1993; Coverman, 1985; Cowan & Cowan, 1987; DeLuccie, 1995, 1996; Doherty et al., 1998; McBride & Rane, 1998; Paisley, Futris & Skinner, 2002; Simons, Whitbek, Conger, & Melby, 1990;), feel recognized as a parental figure (Jordan, 1990), place a greater importance on their father role identity (Paisley et al., 2002), and feel more satisfaction, pleasure, competence, and comfort in their paternal role (Biller, 1993; Bouchard & Lee, 2000; Coffman, Levitt, & Brown 1994; Cowan & Cowan, 1987; DeLuccie, 1996).

Mothers can serve as gatekeepers to the father-child relationship. Many women are ambivalent about greater father involvement for a variety of reasons including concerns about their husband’s competence as a caregiver, feared loss of control over a domain in which they exercised significant power, and an unwillingness to change their standards for housework and childcare. The

father's level of involvement in the child's life is therefore, partly determined by the extent to which mothers permit participation (Allen & Hawkins, 1999; Daly, 2002; DeLuccie, 1995; Dickie & Carnahan, 1980; Seery & Crowley, 2000).

3) The Co-Parental Relationship has Indirect Effects on Child Development Outcomes

The co-parental relationship indirectly affects the parent-child relationship. For example, when fathers are supportive and encouraging, mothers are more competent parents. They are more patient, flexible, emotionally responsive, sensitive, and available to their infants and young children (Belsky, 1981; Cowan & Cowan, 1987; Feiring & Lewis, 1978; Parke & Anderson, 1987; Snarey, 1993). This tends to enhance the quality of the mother-child relationship and thus facilitates positive developmental outcomes for their children (Lamb 1997), such as being popular with peers (Boyum & Parke, 1995), increased self-control and academic competence (Brody et al., 1994), and positive relationships with peers and intimate partners (Amato, 1998). The effect of a supportive co-parental relationship seems to work for fathers as well. Therefore, support from wives can improve the quality of the father's parenting (Amato, 1998; Conger & Elder, 1994), which in turn has positive child development outcomes.

When the co-parental relationship is not supportive, children suffer. For example, husbands who show little warmth or are abusive towards their wives, have wives who are more likely to feel emotionally drained, irritable, and distracted. This increases the likelihood that they will employ non-effective parenting strategies (such as harsher and less consistent discipline) when interacting with their children and respond to them in an impatient, non-nurturing manner (Amato, 1998).

Research consistently documents a negative association between marital discord and children development outcomes such as academic success, behavioural conduct, emotional adjustment, self esteem, and social competence (Amato, 1998; Cummings & O'Reilly, 1997; Davies & Cummings, 1994; Emery, 1988; Grych & Fincham, 1990; Kandel, 1990).

Happily married parents interact more positively with their infant (Levy-Schiff, 1994), preschool child (Lindahl, Clements, & Markman, 1997), and school age child (Simons, Beaman, Conger, & Chao, 1993).

A positive co-parental relationship models many important relationship skills that children can use in their own relationships such as: providing emotional support, resolving conflict effectively, showing respect, and positive, open communication patterns (Amato, 1998).

When fathers are emotionally supportive of their spouses, wives are more likely to enjoy a greater sense of well being, good post partum mental health (Gjerdingen, Froberg, & Fontaine, 1991), and have a relatively problem free pregnancy, delivery process, and nursing experience, (Biller, 1993).

Non- Residential Fathers

Payment of Child Support

The amount of child support paid by non-resident fathers is positively and significantly associated with children's well being, including improved cognitive test scores, higher reading, verbal, and math ability (Argys, Peters, Brooks-Gunn, & Smith, 1998; King, 1994), and better educational achievement, success and competence - including higher grades and attained education

level (Amato & Gilbreth, 1999; Graham, Beller, & Hernandez, 1994; King, 1994; Knox & Bane, 1994; Marsiglio, Amato, Day, & Lamb, 2000; McLanahan, Seltzer, Hanson, & Thomson, 1994).

Child support payments improve children's access to educational resources, increase the amount of stimulation in the home and improve children's health and nutrition (Graham et al., 1994; Knox & Bane, 1994).

Payment of child support is negatively and significantly related to reports of children's behavioural problems (Furstenberg, Morgan, & Allison, 1987; McLanahan et al., 1994) and children's externalizing problems (Amato & Gilbreth, 1999). It is, however, positively associated with positive behavioural adjustment and adaptation after divorce (King, 1994; Lamb, Sternberg, & Thompson, 1997).

The positive correlation between payment of child support and desirable child development outcomes continues to exist after controlling for influences of maternal income, interparental conflict, and frequency of contact (Amato, 1998).

Relationship with the Mother and Child

Research consistently indicates that the most crucial mediating variable for child development outcomes for children with non-residential fathers is the father's relationship with the mother and the child (Amato, 1998; Marsiglio et al., 2000). Other variables, such as the father's frequency of contact with their child and their child's feelings about their fathers have proven to be inconsistent predictors of child development outcomes or adjustment (Amato, 1998; Marsiglio et al., 2000).

Following divorce, children consistently do better in many domains of child development when they are able to maintain meaningful

relationships with both parents unless the levels of interparental conflict remain unusually high (Amato, 1993; Emery, 1982; Guildubaldi & Perry, 1985; Heath & MacKinnon, 1988; Hess & Camara, 1979; Hetherington, Cox, & Cox, 1982, 1985; Kurdek, 1986; Lamb, 1997; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1980).

Positive child developmental outcomes for children are associated with the quality of the non-residential father's parenting and how they interact with the child. For example, non-residential fathers who engage in authoritative parenting (setting and enforcing rules, monitoring, supervising, helping with homework, provide advice and emotional support, providing consistent discipline, praising children's accomplishments) are less likely to have adolescents who experience symptoms of depression or various externalizing problems (Barber, 1994; Furstenberg & Cherlin, 1991; Simons, Whitbek, Beaman, & Conger, 1994).

Extrinsic support (going out to dinner, buying things, and seeing movies together) and frequency of contact do not consistently contribute in a positive way to child development (Marsiglio et al., 2000; Young, Miller, Norton, & Hill, 1995) because they do not facilitate authoritative parenting.

Overall, non-residential fathers have the potential to contribute to their child's development by 1) paying child support, 2) developing a collaborative and cooperative relationship with the child's mother, and 3) investing in an authoritative parental role.

Fathers, Work, & Family

Importance of the Provider Role

Economic support of the family is an indirect, but important way, fathers can contribute to

their child's development. Christiansen & Palkovitz (2001) argue that economic provision for child and family needs is the foundation on which many fathers build their involvement in family life and that it is integrated and connected with many other forms of father involvement.

Fathers who do not provide economically for their families are more likely to disengage from involvement in many other aspects of their children's lives than fathers who do provide economically (Christensen & Palkovitz, 2001).

Snarey (1993) found that when compared with men who are not fathers, fathers exhibit a greater attachment to the labour force and career out of a sense of responsibility to provide for their children. Other research indicates a similar trend. Fatherhood encourages men to be more serious about their work productivity but not to "over commit" to their jobs and careers (Coltrane, 1995; Eggebean & Knoester, 2001; Gutman, 1994).

Effects of Family Income on Child Development outcomes

Note: The effects of income on child development outcomes are mostly due to the father's income. For example, in dual earner families, fathers contribute approximately 2/3 of total income (Work-Life compendium, 2001).

Research consistently documents that poverty has many detrimental effects on child development outcomes, putting them at greater risk of poor nutrition and health problems (Klerman, 1991), low school grades, dropping out of school (Levin, 1986), emotional and behavioural problems such as depression, low self-esteem, conduct disorders, and conflict with peers (Brooks-Gunn, Britto, & Brady, 1999; Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 1997; Klerman, 1991;

Marsiglio, Amato, Day, & Lamb, 2000; Mayer, 1997; McLoyd, 1989; McLoyd & Wilson, 1991).

In contrast, fathers earnings are positively associated with the educational attainment (Hill & Duncan, 1987; Kaplan, Lancaster, & Anderson, 1998; Yeung, Duncan & Hill, 2000), psychological well being, (Amato, 1998), and earned income (Behrman & Taubman, 1985) of young adult sons and daughters even when mother's earnings are controlled.

Paternal education is positively associated with children's grade point averages (Alwin & Thornton, 1984; DiMaggio, 1982) cognitive and achievement test scores (Alwin & Thornton, 1984; Amato, 1987, Blau & Grossberg, 1992; Mercy & Steelman, 1982; Parcel & Menaghan, 1994; Steelman & Dolby, 1983) school attendance (Brown & Rife, 1991), and occupational status and earnings (Amato, 1998; Jencks, Crouse, & Mueser 1983; Kerkhoff, Cambell & Trott, 1982; Kiker & Condon, 1981; Sewell, Hauser, & Wolf, 1980).

Impact of Father Involvement on Work

Overall, men who are involved fathers during early adulthood usually turn out to be good spouses, workers, and citizens at midlife (Snarey, 1993).

Despite some of the documented short term costs of father involvement for men such as stress, increased work- family conflict, and decreased self esteem, long term, high involvement has a modest, positive impact on occupational mobility, work success, and societal generativity (Snarey 1993; Hawkins, Christiansen, Sargent, & Hill, 1993).

Men's emotional involvement with their children was found to act as a buffer against work related stresses (Barnett, Marshall & Pleck, 1992b). Westermeyer's research (1998) found that career success did not come at the expense of marriages or community service.

Research indicates that men who occupy many roles such as husbands, employees, and fathers report higher well being and lower distress (Barnett, 1997), and are more mentally healthy (Westermeyer, 1998).

Balancing Work and Family: Barriers and Pathways.

Pathways:

Several forms of work organizational supports have been identified as necessary to facilitate an optimal work/family balance for fathers. They include: family responsibility leave, supportive supervisors and co-workers, work time flexibility, work-place flexibility (Lee & Duxbury, 1998), and flexible implementation of corporate policies at the local level (Palkovitz, Christensen, & Dunn, 1998).

Flex-time and pro-family corporate practices are associated with more father involvement (Pleck, 1997).

Barriers:

Workplace barriers such as longer work hours are ranked by fathers as the most important reason for low levels of paternal involvement and source of stress in balancing work and family life (Haas, 1992; Milkie & Peltola, 1999; Yankelovich, 1974).

Men are more likely to work more hours, and less likely to take advantage of flexible

work arrangements or parental leave (Robinson & Godbey, 1997).

Fathers who work long hours are more likely to feel overloaded, be less accepting of their adolescent children, and be less effective in taking the child's perspective. The combination of long working hours and role overload predicted this relationship quality (Crouter, Bumpas, Head, & McHale, 2001).

Measures of Father Involvement

Although innovative discussions exist on the limitations of past father involvement definitions, constructs, and measures, this discussion will highlight briefly some of the main ways father involvement has been measured, with an emphasis on the ways father involvement has been measured in the majority of the research cited in this document.

The most dominant measures of father involvement include the use of time diaries, correlational studies that demonstrate the salience of father presence by studying families without fathers, and variations of Lamb, Pleck, Charnov, & Levine's (1985) constructs of engagement, accessibility, and responsibility.

Father Involvement Measured as Time Spent Together

This includes frequency of contact, amount of time spent together (doing things such as shared meals, shared leisure time, or time spent reading together), and the perceived accessibility and availability of the father. This can also include the amount of time fathers spend performing routine physical child care such as bathing, preparing meals, and clothing in addition to the amount of time father's spend playing with their

child, and how effective, mutual and reciprocal the play is.

Father Involvement Measured as the Quality of the Father-Child Relationship

A father is defined as an involved father if his relationship with his child can be described as being sensitive, warm, close, friendly, supportive, intimate, nurturing, affectionate, encouraging, comforting, and accepting. In addition, fathers are classified as being involved if their child has developed a strong, secure attachment to them.

Father Involvement Measured as Investment in Paternal Role

Measures assess the level of investment in child rearing, including the father's ability to be an authoritative parent (exercises appropriate control and limits while allowing autonomy; takes responsibility for limit setting and discipline; monitors child's activities), the degree to which he is facilitative and attentive to his child's needs, and the amount of support he provides his children with school related activities.

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Father-child play is important for children because it is physical and highly stimulating, which allows the child to experience the activation and regulation of arousal.[iii] It also helps children understand and test boundaries in a safe environment, which helps them in countless ways as they figure out the world. In their comprehensive report, "The Effects of Father Involvement: An Updated Research Summary of the Evidence," researchers Sarah Allen, PhD, and Kerry Daly, PhD, define an involved father as one who is "sensitive, warm, close, friendly, supportive, intimate, nurturing, affectionate." If the positive effects of father involvement can be ascertained, fathers may be encouraged to remain involved with their children. Regardless of results, a better understanding of father involvement can lead to the development of more effective parent education and prevention programs, and to a decrease in preschool behavior problems. This can have long-term effects, since behavior problems identified in the preschool years often persist (Campbell & Ewing, 1990). In *The Effects of Father Involvement: A summary of the Research Evidence* Allen and Daly write: Young adults who had nurturing and available fathers while growing up are more likely to score high on measures of self-acceptance and personal and social adjustment, see themselves as dependable, trusting, practical, and friendly, be more likely to succeed in their work, and be mentally healthy. The variable that is most consistently associated with positive life outcomes is the quality of the father-child relationship. That safe feeling of being able to trust the most important male figure vanishes. The immediate short-term effect and the broken trust lingers into the lasting impacts. The way a child is raised shapes them into the person who they are and will become.

Involved fathers – especially biological fathers – bring positive benefits to their children that no other person is as likely to bring. They provide protection and economic support and male role models. They have a parenting style that is significantly different from that of a mother and that difference is important in healthy child development. David Popenoe, *Life Without Father*, (New York: The Free Press, 1996), p. 163. But we can offer a few examples of some of the relevant research. Kathleen Harris, “When and Why Fathers Matter: Impacts of Father Involvement on Children of Adolescent Mothers,” in *Young Unwed Fathers: Changing Roles and Emerging Policies*, R. Lerman and T. Ooms, eds. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993). Positive forms of father involvement (involvement in child-related activities, engagement in multiple forms of involvement and developing a positive father-child relationship) were associated with children’s social and emotional well-being as well as behavioral adjustment and academic achievement. Get More Research on the Father Factor in *Father Facts 8* >. Source: Adamsons, K., & Johnson, S. K. (2013). Information on poverty and income statistics: A summary of 2012 current population survey data. Retrieved from: <http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/12/PovertyAndIncomeEst/ib.cfm>. Learn more about the effects of father absence and fatherless homes, and how get involved by visiting the following resources: Resource Library. Getting Started. Increased involvement of fathers in their children’s lives has been associated with a range of positive outcomes for the children. Methods The analyses presented in this report are based on a nationally representative sample of 10,403 men aged 15–44 years in the household population of the United States. Research has shown a number of factors that affect the extent to which fathers are involved in their children’s lives. The questions about activities that a man engaged in with his children were summary measures asked generally about all of his coresidential and all of his noncoresidential children in the age groups—that is, the questions were not asked for specific children.