



# PEN Notes: Fact Sheet #5

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## Dads Do Make A Difference!

“The benefit of fathers’ involvement with their children begins in infancy. Infants whose fathers were closely involved with their care were found to be more mentally developed at one year of age than infants with less involved fathers....The importance of fathers’ role in their children’s’ up-bringing is also seen in the early and middle childhood years.... During the adolescent years, fathers’ attentiveness to their children was strongly related to their children’s school achievement. A study of over 30,000 high school seniors reported that 85 percent of “A” students had fathers who kept close track of how their children were doing in school.” (Source: Ohio State University, Family and Consumer Sciences)

### Fathers need to be involved in their children’s school.

A report released by the US Department of Education shows that when fathers are involved:

- ✓ Children are more likely to get A’s and less likely to repeat grades.
- ✓ Children do better in school whether or not fathers live at home or if the mother is involved.
- ✓ Children’s success is significant regardless of race, social status or father’s education.

#### And:

- Single fathers are more likely to be involved in their child’s education than fathers in two-parent families.
- Mothers and fathers are more likely to be involved in their child’s education when the schools provide a welcoming, safe, and disciplined learning environment.
- Having both parents involved in their child’s education greatly strengthens a child’s academic success.
- Kids feel valued when fathers tune in to their ideas and feelings.

### What schools can do to unite children, fathers, and schools:

1. Make parent groups more father-friendly.
2. Hold meetings when fathers can attend and have a “dad representative” at school board meetings and district-wide events.
3. Involve grandfather and father figures in school events with special invitations to them.
4. Declare “Fathers In School Day”
5. Encourage fathers to share their arts, talents and, if different, cultures and languages with the class.
6. Make sure all assigned texts, school records, and handouts avoid negative labeling of males.



One study showed that the involvement of fathers with children improves the chances of exam success at age 16. Young children with regular contact with their father are less likely to have a criminal primary school age record by the age of 21.

## What fathers can do with their children:



- ♥ Play with your children. All play helps to build children's brains—regardless of age.
- ♥ Create memory keepsake boxes for letters, pictures, videos, and other treasures.
- ♥ Take a walk together. Enjoy the outdoors and have heart-to-heart talks.
- ♥ Read books together and talk about the things you like and dislike about the books and how they relate to you.
- ♥ Plant a tree where you can both watch it grow over the years.
- ♥ Play ball, go fishing, ride bikes, or go to a movie together.
- ♥ And most of all keep talking to your child to keep those lines of communication open between the two of you.

## Schools can reach out to fathers in several ways:

1. Maintain a father-friendly environment. Make a special effort to involve males in leadership positions on advisory councils or in parent-teacher organizations.
2. Encourage fathers to personally invite other adult males to become active.
3. Encourage fathers to attend school events and to visit their child's classroom.
4. Have a "father night" where fathers or other males such as grandfathers or uncles are invited to bring the child to school.
5. Encourage fathers to volunteer in the classroom when their work schedules allow them to.
6. Provide classes at the school on fatherhood, English as a second language, GED certification, computers, or other requested topics.

## Benefits of Father Involvement for Boys:

Fathers who spend time with their sons—even as little as five minutes a day—are giving them a far greater chance to grow up as confident adults. Boys who feel that their fathers devote time especially to them and talk about their worries, school work, and social lives, almost all grow up to be motivated and optimistic young men full of confidence and hope. By contrast, boys who feel their fathers rarely or never did these things have lower self-esteem and confidence, and are more likely to be depressed, to dislike school, and to get into trouble with the police.

## Benefits of Father Involvement for Girls:

Fathers who spend time with their daughters help them feel capable. A daughter who has been helped to feel feminine and powerful by a loving, caring dad knows that the world is an interesting and fascinating place. She has a higher self-esteem and feels confident to plan for and control her future. Girls who have positive father involvement are three times less likely to become teenage mothers.

Research shows that children do better in school and in life when their fathers encourage them, show an interest in their learning at home, and participate in school activities, regardless of the child's age, or the family social status or income.

