

FATHERHOOD NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2023 - JANUARY 2024



Maternal & Child
Health Service



>> Please connect with us!

Contact our Fatherhood
Initiative project lead
James Craig
Jamescc@health.ok.gov
(405) 426-8089

Five Co-Parenting Tips for Stressed-Out Dads¹

Fathers can learn to cultivate better relationships with their children and co-parents.

Family Paths, Inc. offers families mental health and family support services in Oakland, CA. Below are some tips they provide to help stressed-out dads.

1. Practice empathy. A particularly powerful exercise that dads can tackle by putting themselves in the mom's shoes.

2. Press pause. It's easy to tune out or get angry when disagreements arise, but dads can give themselves time to think things through before reacting.

3. Ask yourself what you miss from being a kid.

Or what are the things you would have liked to have received from your father?

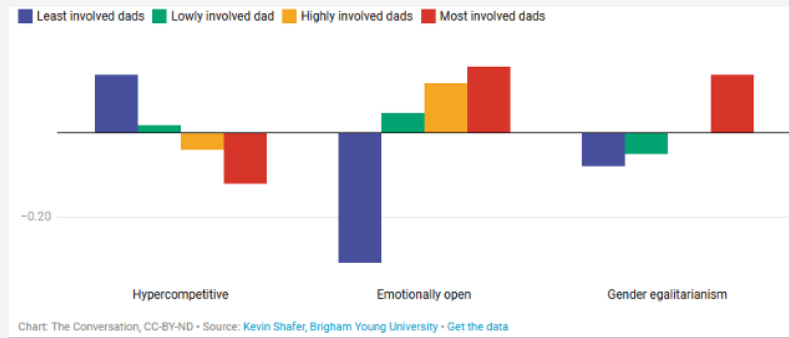
4. Focus on creating memories.

Take time to create memories big and small.

5. Keep a gratitude journal.

Being thankful for what you have is fundamental to good co-parenting, and dads can be grateful to the mother of their child, no matter how the two get along as a couple.

Nurturing dads raise emotionally intelligent kids - helping make society more respectful and equitable²



Nurturing versus stoic dads.

Surveying more than 2,500 American fathers 18 and older, Kevin Shafer, Associate Professor of Sociology and Director of Canadian Studies, Brigham Young University³, found that involved fathering has a long-lasting impact on the personal principles and cultural perspectives of children.

How dads instill values.

Broad paternal involvement with kids is important because dads have unique effects on kids. Children's values,

beliefs, emotional expression and social development are strongly associated with fathering.

Benefits of positive fathering for all.

- Mothers are healthier and happier.
- Men's self image and purpose of life increases.
- Communities gain increased trust when fathers positively participate in their kids activities, schooling and social network.



Longitudinal Associations Between Paternal Mental Health and Child Behavior and Cognition in Middle Childhood⁴

Middle childhood, beginning at six years of age, is critical for every child as a child learns novel cognitive, social, and behavioral skills during this transitory phase. A meta-analysis reported that paternal mental health issues present during pregnancy (prenatal) doubled the risk of psychiatric disorders in school-goers aged 6-8. Even paternal mental health-related conditions, e.g., substance abuse, have been shown to affect children adversely.

Likewise, environmental factors, such as family conflicts and differing parental views, may influence these associations. However, there is a lack of longitudinal follow-up studies examining the same. Moreover, there is a lack of understanding of how the type of paternal mental health symptoms, their timing and severity, and other socio-environmental factors interact with or mediate this association during middle childhood.

In the present study, researchers prospectively gathered data from the first trimester of pregnancy until a child grew 6 to 8 years of age from 2,366 mother-father-child triads of the Design, Develop, Discover (3D) pregnancy cohort study done in Canada. The study data suggests that prenatal paternal mental health may be moderately predictive; however, concurrent paternal mental health is highly predictive of the cognitive performance of a child in middle childhood. Yet it is not clear when this switch happens and what its underlying mechanisms are,, which presents an apparent paradox considering the existing literature.

It was also notable that a father's parenting styles, such as showing warmth, were associated with lower internalizing behaviors in the child, suggesting that fathers might help alleviate the effect of high maternal depression on a child's behavioral problems. In this study, children with fathers who self-reported higher anxious or depressive symptoms during pregnancy or middle childhood performed better on cognitive assessment and exhibited no or fewer behavioral difficulties at school.



Strong Dads

OSU Extension is hosting a program for fathers titled “Strong Dads”, utilizing the 24/7 dad curriculum, a 12-week program designed to equip fathers with the self-awareness, compassion, and sense of responsibility that every good parent needs. It focuses on building the man first and the father second. The Strong Dads program provides connection with other like-minded dads who are committed to doing the best for their children, as well as coaching for

setting and achieving an intentional father mindset. Participants who complete the program are rewarded for their time with the ability to earn up to \$100 in gift cards. The program is available in a total of nine counties in Oklahoma: Carter, Creek, Garfield, Kay, Muskogee, Oklahoma, Payne, Rogers and Tulsa. Learn more: <https://extension.okstate.edu/programs/family-and-consumer-sciences/strong-dads/about-us.html>

211

Call or text 211 or go to <http://211oklahoma.org/> for help with housing, food, utilities, mental health, transportation, information and other needs. **24/7 Free Service**



Dad Jokes

What do you call a person that is not a dad who makes dad jokes?

A Faux Pa

What did the buffalo say to his son when he dropped him off at school?

“Bison!”

When does a joke become a dad joke?

When it becomes apparent.

References

- 1 https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/five_coparenting_tips_for_stressed_out_dads
- 2 <https://theconversation.com/nurturing-dads-raise-emotionally-intelligent-kids-helping-make-society-more-respectful-and-equitable-161395>
- 3 <https://theconversation.com/profiles/kevin-shafer-340163>
- 4 Front. Psychol., 01 November 2023 Sec. Developmental Psychology Volume 14 – 2023