

COLORADO
FATHERS'
RESOURCE
GUIDE

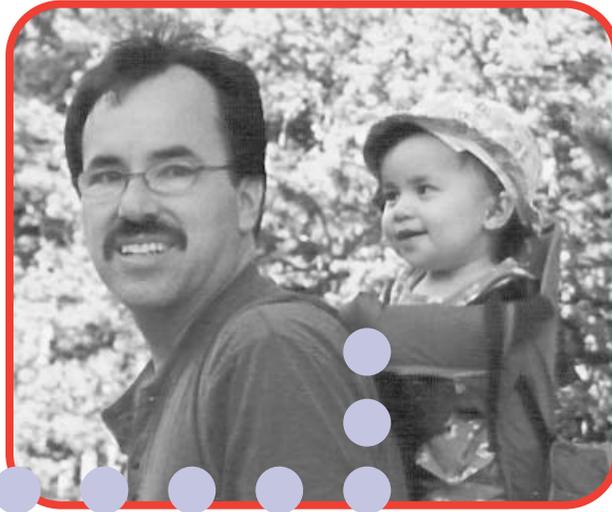


The *Colorado Fathers' Resource Guide*
was sponsored by the following
organizations:



The Children's Hospital





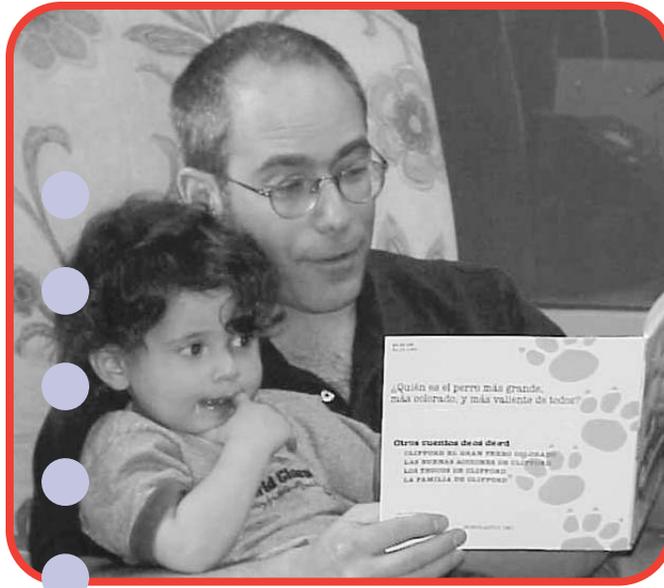
Dear Dads,

Parenting is one of the greatest responsibilities a person can undertake. As a father, you are being pulled in many different directions and the challenge is to effectively balance these demands.

Because life is more complex than ever, it is even more important for you to be involved with your child each day. Your son or daughter doesn't need expensive vacations or to be entertained every second. Children simply need to know that you are there to provide the emotional support they need. Whether you are a married dad, single dad, stepdad, grandfather, or even a father-figure, your attention and love are essential in raising a healthy child.

This guide was developed through the Colorado Fatherhood Connection to provide suggestions and resources for fathers. In addition there are tips on discipline, communication, and activities you can do with your child.

However challenging life may be, being a dad is one of life's greatest pleasures. The sponsors of this campaign want you to know that your kids just want you to be their biggest fan!

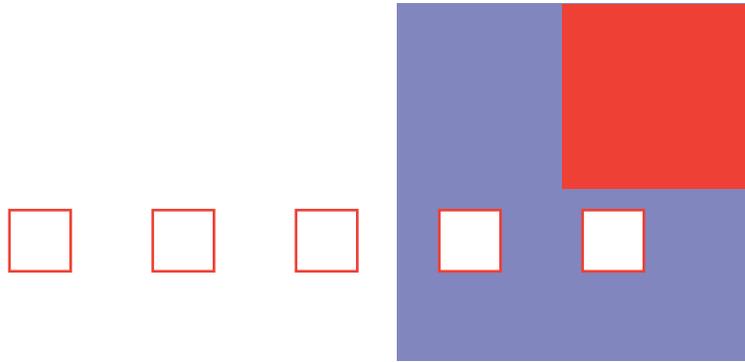


WHAT IS

Responsible FATHERHOOD?

Fathers must be encouraged in their efforts to raise children well. “Responsible fathers” do not pose a threat to their families. Responsible fathers are men who:

- ◆ Wait until they are emotionally and financially prepared to father children.
- ◆ Establish legal paternity when they biologically father a child.
- ◆ Play an active role in their children’s education.
- ◆ Teach their children to care for themselves and others. This may mean understanding the importance of diet, rest, exercise, and self defense skills.
- ◆ Actively share parental responsibilities with the child’s mother.
- ◆ Provide moral and philosophical guidance for their child by:
 - Teaching through positive examples;
 - Teaching awareness of racial/ethnic and cultural identity; and
 - Teaching the importance of spirituality.



- ◆ Model responsible behavior including paying bills on time and following through on responsibilities and commitments.
- ◆ Recognize that a father's health and vitality are interconnected with those of his children.
- ◆ Love, care for, and protect their children.
- ◆ Determine, together with the mother, appropriate limits and discipline.
- ◆ Prioritize quantity and quality time with their children.
- ◆ Separate problems in other relationships from the relationship with their children.
- ◆ Take responsibility for knowing basic life and child development skills such as changing diapers, fostering early child development, and providing for basic health needs.
- ◆ Recognize that fatherhood is a life-long commitment.
- ◆ Build their child's self-esteem, self-worth, and self-confidence.
- ◆ Help their children learn how to make good decisions on their own using thoughtful consideration of options and the opinions of others.
- ◆ Teach their children how to be collaborative not just competitive.
- ◆ Maintain responsible relationships as a part of a family and as a role model.

FATHER -FRIENDLY Communities

A “father-friendly” environment supports and values the unique contribution fathers make to their children’s lives. Here are a few tips for making your community more “father-friendly,” and ultimately family-centered;

- ◆ Talk with fathers and listen to their needs.
- ◆ Promote father-child activities.
- ◆ Provide information and programs that are specific to the needs of fathers.
- ◆ Increase positive images of dads with their children.
- ◆ Provide gender diversity and intercultural competency training for all staff and board members.
- ◆ Hire men in visible positions, especially those where dads access services.
- ◆ Help develop and expand child care programs.
- ◆ Respect a father’s right to information regarding his child.

More ideas for...

Schools:

- Have a “Take Your Dad to School” event.
- Organize an essay contest on “Terrific Dads.”

Workplaces:

- Offer a brown bag parenting seminar specifically for dads.
- Offer a paternal leave policy for fathers.

Hospitals:

- Support and provide programs for new dads - see www.newdads.com
- Offer paternity establishment projects.

Churches:

- Start a fathers’ support group – e.g., Faith Partners (719) 444-8116.
- Provide counseling to couples getting married.

State Agencies & Non -Profits:

- Hang posters with positive images of fathers.
- Sponsor father-son and father-daughter events.

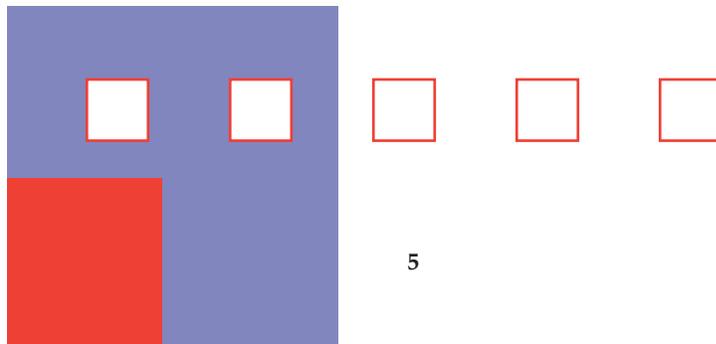
Media:

- Run a public service announcement on responsible fatherhood.
- Counter negative stereotypes of fathers by portraying them in a positive light.

Awareness OF YOUR CHILD

How well do you know your child? Here are a few questions to help you know your child better:

- ◆ Who are your child's male/female heroes?
- ◆ What is beautiful about being a member of his/her cultural group?
- ◆ What are your child's most treasured possessions?
- ◆ Who are your child's closest friends?
- ◆ What causes your child the greatest stress?
- ◆ What was your child's most prized accomplishment this past year?
- ◆ What was your child's biggest discouragement this past year?
- ◆ What are your child's "favorites" - *favorite color, favorite food, favorite movie, favorite book...*?
- ◆ What member of your extended family does your child like the most?
- ◆ Ask your child, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" Give your child the opportunity to learn more about his/her interests.
- ◆ What college does your child want to attend?
- ◆ What is something that really upsets your child?
- ◆ If your child had \$20 to spend, what would he/she buy?
- ◆ What does your child like to do with you?
- ◆ What is the most important thing you need to discuss with your child in the next six months?



IDEAS ON Discipline

The goal of discipline is to help children build their own self-control. Discipline techniques are often age specific and may need to change as your child grows and develops. When your child makes a mistake, focus on the behavior not the child.

Tips for Encouraging Appropriate Behavior:

- ◆ Help your child clearly understand your expectations of his/her behavior.
- ◆ Discuss consequences of misbehavior before it occurs. Have the child help set the consequence.
- ◆ Give praise often so your child knows how well he/she is doing.
- ◆ Realize problems can be expected when your child is hungry, bored, tired, or frustrated.
- ◆ Give your child safe choices.
- ◆ Don't wait to deal with your child until you have been pushed past your limit.
- ◆ Teach your child appropriate behavior by modeling appropriate behavior.

Tips for when Misbehavior Occurs:

- ◆ Understand that misbehavior is often a sign of an unmet need. Look deep and recognize the cause of the misbehavior and deal with that also.
- ◆ Step in immediately if a child is harming him/herself or others.
- ◆ Let your child know why he/she is being disciplined.
- ◆ Be consistent in disciplining your child to avoid confusion. It is helpful for both parents to agree on discipline styles and expectations.
- ◆ If you and the mother disagree on discipline styles and expectations, help your child understand and adjust to the inconsistencies. Explain that in the "real world" there can be different expectations and standards.
- ◆ Use calm, positive words instead of threatening language.
- ◆ Be sure consequences fit the behavior and that they are realistic and enforceable.

Eight STEPS FOR BETTER Listening

- ◆ Adopt an open posture. Crossed arms and legs can suggest, "I'm not listening to you." An open posture may show your child that you are interested in what he/she is saying.
- ◆ Put yourself on your child's level - kneel, lean towards the child. This can communicate, "You have my attention, and I'm listening."
- ◆ Stay relaxed. If you fidget nervously when your child is talking, he/she may think you'd rather be somewhere else.
- ◆ Listen for your child's feelings and needs.
- ◆ Be available and listen when your child needs to talk.
- ◆ Watch your child. Learn to read his/her non-verbal behavior: posture, body movements, and gestures. Notice frowns, smiles, and raised eyebrows. Listen to voice quality and pitch, emphasis, pauses, and inflections. The way in which your child says something can tell you more than what he/she is actually saying.
- ◆ Actively give your child non-verbal feedback. Nod. Smile. Look surprised. These small signals can mean more than you realize.
- ◆ The last step to listening is speaking. But, before you give your response, restate in your own words what your child has told you. This proves that you were listening, and it gives the child the opportunity to say, "Yes, that's it exactly" or "No, what I really mean is this..."
- ◆ Keep in mind that one of the goals of communication is to increase understanding.

Father^{TO} Son

- ◆ Help him take responsibility for his own behavior. Don't encourage a "boys will be boys" attitude that excuses selfishness, impulsiveness, and domination.
- ◆ Allow him the full range of emotions. Help him learn that real men can be afraid, can hurt, and can cry. Boys need to find safe places to cry where they will not be ridiculed.
- ◆ It is important for fathers to model appropriate expressions of anger that do not threaten, control, or hurt anyone else. Anger is a necessary emotion that needs to be expressed with care and consideration of others.
- ◆ Encourage him to respect girls and women as equals, rather than objects to be controlled, dominated, or manipulated. Discourage condescending jokes and put-downs. If your son makes a negative comment about women, step in and correct him.
- ◆ Help him learn how to be an active ally to females. Role play situations that are most likely to come up and model being a good ally.
- ◆ Encourage him to learn negotiating skills. Teach him that compromise is a necessary part of human relationships and is not a sign of weakness or a lack of "backbone."
- ◆ Teach him that it's all right for a man to ask for help, support, and healthy affection. Let him know how much you value your friendships and partnerships.
- ◆ Teach him that masculinity is about having moral principles and being a man of character.
- ◆ Talk with him about the violence he sees in the world. Help him to understand why people are violent. Discuss ways to respond to the violence we see on TV shows, movies, video games, etc.
- ◆ Help him to find friends who are supportive. Let him know that boys who are sarcastic, shaming, and harassing are behaving out of their own weakness.
- ◆ Discuss healthy sexuality with him, and the importance of being responsible.

**Adapted from "15 Ways Fathers Can Nurture Non-Violent Sons" By Michael Obstaz, Ph.D.*



FATHER TO

Daughter

- ◆ Tell her that she is capable and can achieve her goals.
- ◆ Listen to her. Encourage her to tell you about her interests, goals, and dreams.
- ◆ The father who has worked on being a sensitive listener will be the natural person for his daughter to go to when she has questions about boys/men.
- ◆ Model positive masculinity; make your family a high priority, keep your promises, and show concern for others.
- ◆ Model healthy and respectful behavior toward women.
- ◆ Take her shopping and do your best to identify her unique tastes.
- ◆ Tell her that she is beautiful inwardly. Point out some specific examples.
- ◆ Let your daughter know that you accept and love her for who she is.
- ◆ Ask her what she enjoys doing with you and then set up time to do that activity.
- ◆ Show your daughter approval and affection. If you don't she may think that you don't care or that something is wrong with her.
- ◆ Talk about her career interests. Take her to work with you.

CREATIVE Activities TO DO WITH YOUR Children

- ◆ Cook and eat a meal together.
- ◆ Go for walks together.
- ◆ Plant a garden together.
- ◆ Meet your child's friend who you don't already know.
- ◆ Meet your child's teacher. Visit your child's school or classroom.
- ◆ If your children are not living with you, commit yourself to a phone call or lunch date.
- ◆ Visit a museum, the zoo, a playground.
- ◆ Explore and celebrate your family's culture with your children – share stories about your ancestors, look-up your genealogy, create a family tree.
- ◆ Encourage your children to learn more about their culture and the cultures of others – read stories about the history of your ancestors, invite ethnic and international friends to your home.
- ◆ Put an encouraging note in the textbook of your child's "worst" subject.
- ◆ Teach your children how to resolve conflicts productively and model that behavior.
- ◆ Take your children to the library and give them time to browse and check out some books. Read together.
- ◆ Discuss with your children some goals for the school year – theirs and yours.
- ◆ Encourage your children to join various clubs and organizations.
- ◆ Listen to your children's favorite music. Ask them what they like about it.
- ◆ Read a newspaper article to your child and ask what he/she thinks about it.
- ◆ Discuss an area in which you and your child disagree – and listen!
- ◆ Ask your children what they would like to do and then make it happen!
- ◆ Laugh together.

CO-PARENTING

Tips FOR NON-MARRIED Parents

It is a child's right to have the best relationship possible with both biological parents. Children need to feel loved by both parents and need to know that they do not have to choose one parent over the other. Having co-parenting skills benefits everyone.

- ◆ Keep a flexible routine and leave room for spontaneity. Help your children feel that they are fortunate to have two homes, mom's and dad's. Live as close to each other as possible.
- ◆ Talk to each other and keep focused on the subject of your children. Children should not serve as the direct line of communication between parents.
- ◆ Help prepare your child for visits. Be positive about the experience.
- ◆ Share information. Have a calendar with all the family engagements written on it and let the other parent know of any changed plans.
- ◆ Set up a system for monthly phone calls or meetings with a specific list of required issues to discuss.
- ◆ Never talk badly about the other parent in front of your children.
- ◆ Take the anger out of your communications. Do not use your child as a way to get back at each other.
- ◆ Learn to communicate in a less reactive, more proactive way.
- ◆ If you have ongoing difficulties dealing appropriately with the other parent, seek counseling to learn ways to effectively co-parent your child.

For more information on co-parenting skills and resources:

Colorado Council of Mediators(800) 864-4317,
www.coloradomediation.org

Colorado Office of Dispute Resolution(303) 837-3672

Co-Parenting After Divorce. D. Schulman. (1997)

Live-Away Dads: Staying a Part of Your Children's Lives When They Aren't a Part of Your Home. W. C. Klatt. (1999)

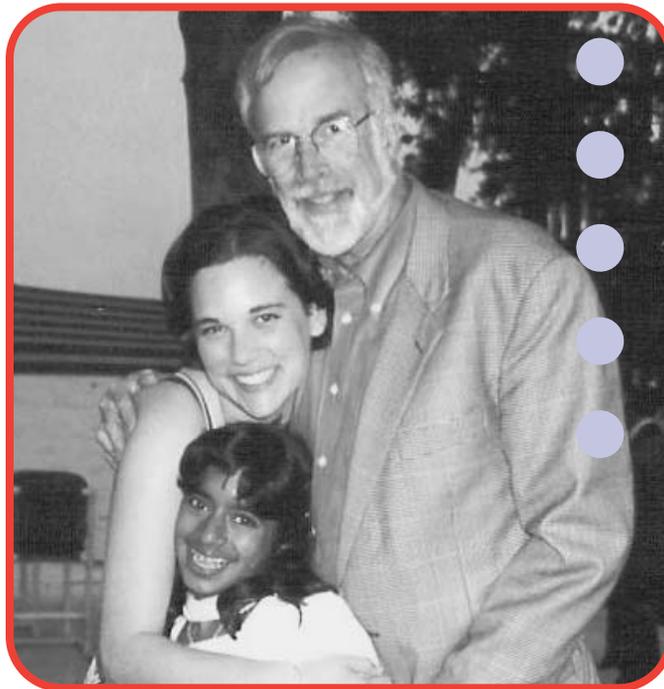
Mom's House, Dad's House. I. Ricci. (1982)

101 Ways to Be a Long Distance Super Dad – or Mom, Too!
G. Newman. (1999)

Rights OF FATHERHOOD

Every child has a right to a responsible, loving, and involved father. Men who are responsible fathers should be granted rights that acknowledge and support their commitment to being better dads. These fathers have a right to:

- ◆ Establish themselves legally as a father.
- ◆ Have a positive and nurturing relationship with their children.
- ◆ Be involved in their child's mental, physical, emotional and spiritual development.
- ◆ Be valued in the community and not be discriminated against.
- ◆ Be geographically close to their child.
- ◆ Have equal access to their child.
- ◆ Have environments that are "father-friendly."
- ◆ Receive appropriate resources and information on being a good father.
- ◆ Learn how to become responsible fathers.



Ideas FOR FATHERHOOD Programs

Fathers are an asset to their child's development, and communities can become an asset to a father's growth and development. Here are a few strategies for an effective fatherhood program:

- ◆ Have men in leadership roles in your program. However, keep in mind that women can play a key role in involving fathers and developing quality programs.
- ◆ Promote partnerships between fathers. Match up new dads with current participants and form peer support groups.
- ◆ Provide fathers with information on child development.
- ◆ Make it easy for fathers to attend activities. Have flexible schedules, provide or pay for transportation, and offer child care.
- ◆ Offer life skills training. Teach classes on parenting, relationships, anger management, and leadership.
- ◆ Acknowledge the important role of mothers.
- ◆ Encourage and nurture awareness and growth of racial/ethnic identity.
- ◆ Listen and learn from fathers. Survey fathers for their ideas and interests, and let them know you value their opinions.
- ◆ Recognize all kinds of fathers. From teen dads, to men who serve as father-figures, to incarcerated fathers, remember that all dads need support.

*The Colorado Fatherhood Connection offers
The Fatherhood Program Toolbox training to support the
development of effective programs for fathers.
For more information call 303/837-8466,
email – fatherhood@what-works.org*



FATHERHOOD Programs

Center on Fathering

325 North El Paso St., Colorado Springs, CO 80903
(800) MY DAD 34 (693-2334),

www.geocities.com/heartland/meadows/5042/

**Provides comprehensive and individualized services to help fathers be more involved in the lives of their children.*

Colorado Department of Human Services/Division of Child Support Enforcement

(720) 947-5000, www.childsupport.state.co.us/

**Offers programs that put children first by helping both parents assume responsibility for the economic and social well-being, health and stability of their children.*

Contact the Child Support Enforcement office in your county for local information.

Example of county programs:

- El Paso County/Parent Opportunity Program -
(719) 457-6335, www.co.el-paso.co.us/humansvc
- Larimer County/ PARENT Program -
(970) 498-6427, www.fortnet.org/PARENT/
- Mesa County/ PARENT Program -
(970) 248-2787, www.mcdss.co.gov
- Pueblo County/Yes 2 Kids Program -
(719) 253-7879, www.co.pueblo.co.us/departments

Colorado Fatherhood Connection

1580 Logan St. Suite 315, Denver, CO 80203
(303) 837-8466, email: fatherhood@what-works.org

**Offers technical assistance and training to new and existing fatherhood initiatives.*

Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition/ Los Padres

3621 W. 73d Ave., Westminster, CO 80030
(720) 890-0123

**A training program offering parenting and leadership skills to fathers.*



Exempla Saint Joseph Hospital/Boot Camp for New Dads

1835 Franklin St., Denver, CO 80218
 (303) 866-8280, www.newdads.com (national website)
**Hands-on training for new fathers.*

Family Star/EHS

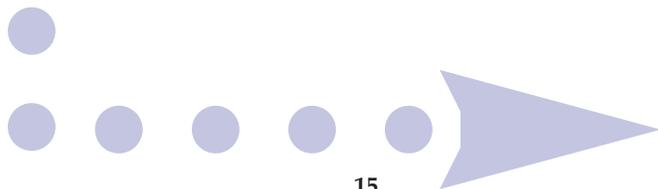
2246 Federal Blvd., Denver, CO 80211
 (303) 477-7827
**A bilingual, fatherhood empowerment program offering
 dads life skill-building opportunities.*

**Human Services Inc. Florence Crittenton Center for
 Young Families/Young Fathers Program**

2600 West 29th Ave., Denver, CO 80211
 (303) 561-1246, www.humanservicesinc.org
**Provides comprehensive services to prepare young fathers
 for the responsibilities and joys of fatherhood.*

La Pa's

211 W. Myrtle, Fort Collins, CO 80521
 (970) 495-4624, www.lapas.org
**An educational service for new fathers.*





COMMUNITY Resources

Colorado State Agencies

General Information..... www.state.co.us
Department of Education/ Advocate Line
(800) 886-7687, www.cde.state.co.us
Department of Human Services/ Advocate Line
(800) 536-5298, www.cdhs.state.co.us
Department of Labor and Employment/Workforce Centers
(303) 620-4718, www.coworkforce.com/workers.asp

Health

Centura Health Advisor(800) 327-6877
Child Health Plan Plus(800) 359-1991,
www.cchp.org
Family Health Line(800) 688-7777
The Children’s Hospital(800) 458-6500

Job Training/Employment

America’s Workforce Network.....(800) 872-5627,
www.servicelocator.org
Denver Work and Family Center(303) 825-1115

Legal Assistance

Colorado Legal Services(303) 837-1321
Fathers for Equal Rights(303) 937-3911
Metro Lawyer Referral Service(303) 831-8000

Parenting Support

Families First Family Support Line(303) 695-7996
Mile High United Way Helpline(303) 433-8900
National Parent Information Networkwww.npin.org
Talking with Kids About Tough Issues
www.talkingwithkids.org

Child Support

Child Support worksheets are available online.....
www.courts.state.co.us under *forms* and *self help/ domestic*
Denver Couty Child Support Office.....(720) 944-2960
Division of Child Support Enforcement
www.childsupport.state.co.us.

Child Care

Child Care Aware(800) 424-2246,
www.childcareaware.org
Colorado Division of Child Care(800) 799-5876,
www.cdhs.state.co.us/childcare



RECOMMENDED
Books
ON FATHERHOOD

- Adventures in Fatherhood. K. Canfield. (1998)
- Angry All the Time, An Emergency Guide to Anger Control. R. Potter. (1994)
- Boyhood, Growing Up Male: A Multicultural Anthology. Edited by F. Abbot, M. Kimmel. (1998)
- Real Boys: Rescuing Our Sons from the Myths of Boyhood. W. Pollack. (1999)
- The New Father Book: What Every Man Needs to Know to Be a Good Dad. W. Horn. (1998)
- Wisdom of Our Fathers: Inspiring Life Lessons from Men Who Have Had Time to Learn Them. J. Kita. (1999)
- Working Fathers: New Strategies for Balancing Work and Family. J. Levine & T. Pittinsky. (1998)

Additional Resources for Dads & Fatherhood
Program Staff

- AVANCE, INC.
(210) 270-4630, www.avance.org
- Father-to-Father/FatherNet
(612) 625-7849, www.Cyfc.umn.edu/FatherNet
- Fatherhood Project/ Families and Work Institute
(212) 465-2044, www.familiesandwork.org
- Fatherhood USA/SCETV
(803) 737-3397, www.sctv.org/fatherhoodusa
- Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization
(800) 732-8437, www.responsiblefatherhood.org
- National Center for Fathering
(800) 593-DADS, www.fathers.com
- National Fatherhood Initiative
(800) 790-DADS, www.fatherhood.org
- National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute
(323) 728-7770, www.nlffi.org
- Stay at Home Dads
(850) 434-2626, www.slowlane.com
- Washington States Fathers Network – Kindering Center
(425) 747-4004 ext. 218, www.fathersnetwork.org



**For more information about
fatherhood resources contact:**

Colorado Fatherhood Connection

1580 Logan Street, Suite 315
Denver, CO 80203
(303) 837-8466

email: fatherhood@what-works.org.
www.coloradofoundation.org

The Colorado Fatherhood Connection provides technical assistance and training to communities and organizations enabling them to develop or enhance comprehensive services for fathers. Contact us for a listing of training and publications



Be A Fan of Your Kid is a public service campaign designed to provide tips, suggestions and resources for fathers on positive fathering and role modeling.

For more information visit
www.BeAFanOfYourKid.org.