

National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse Technical Assistance Webinar

Working with Dads: Parenting Skills Development

April 19, 2011, 2:00 – 3:45 p.m. EDT

Facilitator

Nigel Vann: Senior Director of Training & Technical Assistance,
National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse

Presenters

Jan Watson, Parents as Teachers, St. Louis, MO

Trena Pollard, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, NM

John Badalament, Modern Dads, Boston, MA



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What Does the Research Tell Us?

- “Research shows that even very young children who have experienced high father involvement show an increase in curiosity and in problem solving capacity. Fathers’ involvement seems to encourage children’s exploration of the world around them and confidence in their ability to solve problems.”
- Although mother-infant attachment is central to the development of infants, research shows that father-infant attachment security may have unique effects – and may be more influential on occasion.
- *“Bottom line: the closer the connection between father and child, the better off they both are now and in the future”*

(Kyle Pruett, Fatherneed, 2000)



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Zero to Three 2009 National Parent Survey

- Fathers are not as informed about young children's social-emotional development. They are less aware of the kinds of experiences that have a strong or major influence on the social and emotional development of a young child.
- They are also less likely to understand that young children can begin to sense whether their parents are angry or sad and can be affected by their parents' moods by 6 months of age.
- Not as many fathers as mothers are aware that talking and singing to newborns have an important influence on the cognitive development of young children.



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How do we get this message across to dads?

- Begin by examining our own experiences and biases. Assume dads do want to be involved.
- Utilize strategies, handouts, activities that:
 - Engage
 - Challenge
 - Encourage reflection
 - Provide knowledge
 - Teach skills



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Sample Handouts

From

- **Healthy Families San Angelo, TX**
(hfsatx.com)
- **National Fatherhood Initiative**
(www.fatherhood.org)
- **University of Arkansas**
(<http://psychiatry.uams.edu/tips>)



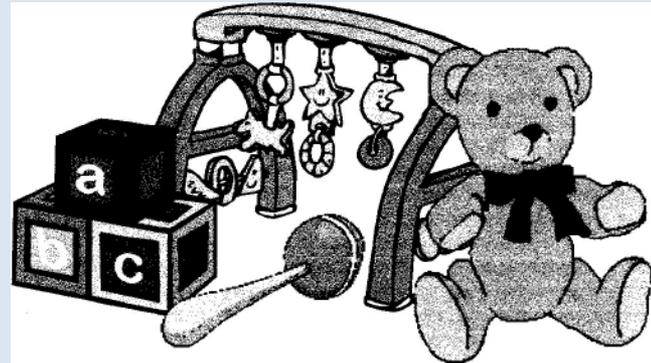
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YOUR BABY'S FAVORITE TOY

- Here's a heads-up. Before you go out and spend lots of money on expensive toys, answer this question:
- **"What's *the best toy* for my *baby to play with?*"**

www.hfsatx.com



- ***Nope, it's none of these things.***
- ***IT'S YOU!***



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"How do I go about bonding?"

- One of the best ways to bond is to find a private, peaceful time you can spend with your baby. Smile at him, look into his eyes, and talk to him.
- The earlier you start being with your baby and doing things with him the more bonded you will both feel.
- Learn the things he does that show you what he wants. Does he want to be picked up, played with, or just rocked to sleep?
- As time goes by, your baby learns that he can count on you. This makes him feel safe and helps him feel good about himself.

FROM: OHFSA *Doing the Dad Thing!: Birth to 36 Months* (www.hfsatx.com)



- But bonding doesn't happen all at once.
- There's nothing wrong with you if you don't seem to hit it off with your baby right away. Don't worry. Pretty soon you will win his heart...
- **...AND HE WILL WIN YOURS!**



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Ways for dads to impart positive lessons to their kids

- Respect your children's mother
- Spend time with your children
- Earn the right to be heard
- Discipline with love
- Be a teacher
- Eat together as a family
- Read to your children
- Show affection
- Realize that a father's job is never done

Developed by NFI, www.fatherhood.org

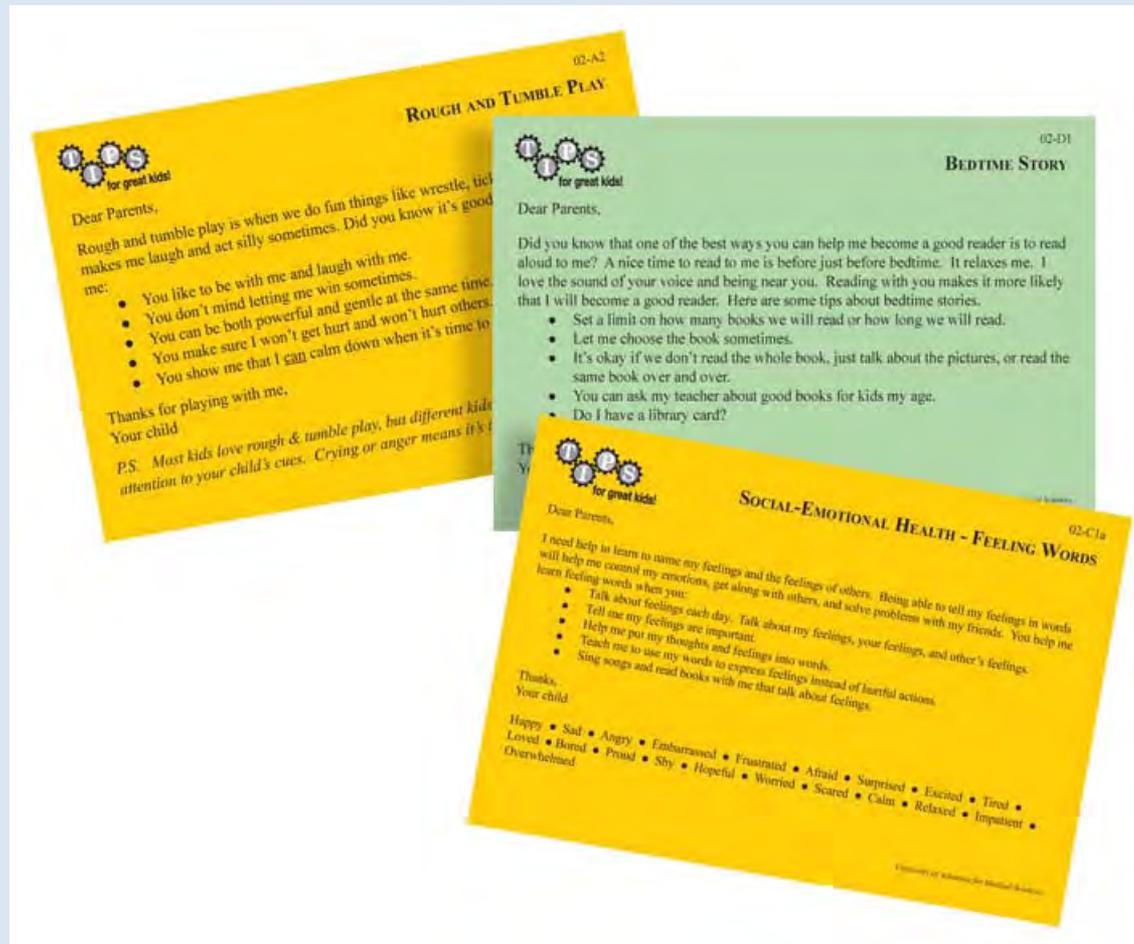


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Teaching Important Parenting Skills: TIPS for Great Kids!

Univ. of Arkansas for Medical Sciences



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Working with Fathers to Enhance Parenting Skills

Jan Watson, MAT
Program Support and TA Manager
Parents as Teachers, St. Louis, MO



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Fatherhood Grant Activities

- **PAT oversees 5 partner sites in 4 states**
- **Target – Fathers of children birth to kindergarten entry enrolled in PAT.**
- **Points of contact - home visits & group meetings.**
- **Goals – increase father involvement and increase knowledge of child development to help fathers parent in positive and age appropriate ways.**



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Curricula to help achieve grant goals

- **PAT Prenatal & Three and 3-K Curricula resources and handouts**
- **24/7 Dad (NFI)**
- **Young Dads/Young Moms (PAT)**
- **Focus on Fathering**



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Parenting topics

Focus on Fathering* curriculum topics:

- 1) Child Development
- 2) Choosing Child Care
- 3) Connecting with Your Child
- 4) Discipline
- 5) Healthy Relationships for Me and My Child
- 6) Helping Your Child Deal with Feelings
- 7) Parenting Apart
- 8) Places to Go
- 9) Reading with Your Child
- 10) Self-Esteem
- 11) Siblings and Friends
- 12) Ways to Play

*(available for free download at www.parentsasteachers.org on the Resource Tab)



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Topic 9 – Reading With Your Child

Fathers May Not Read to Their Children Because -

- Uncomfortable reading themselves – low literacy level
- Don't know the importance of reading and how it supports academic success
- Not sure what to read to their children (reading may not have been part of the routine in the home he was raised in)
- No-one to advise them about age appropriate books
- Don't know where to start
- Not enough time – too many other demands
- Mothers may want to be the “educational expert” and not encourage the father to read books to their child



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Reading With Your Child

Why: Address barriers and empower fathers.

What: Provides hands-on experience evaluating quality books for young children.

How:

- Dads share their experience with books.
- Discussion points emphasize the importance of reading aloud & challenges experienced.
- Activity - Review three to four age appropriate books
Check Out a Book handout as a guide to evaluate books (sample next slide).
- Debrief.
- Handouts/Resources.



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Check Out a Book Handout



Activity Handout Check Out a Book

Book Titles	Book One	Book Two	Book Three	Book Four
Would this book be interesting to your child?				
What areas of development would this book promote?				
Are there a variety of characters, representing various cultural groups and roles?				
Will this book promote discussion between you and your child?				
Does this book portray a variety of cultures?				
Is this book free from stereotypes?				
Do you feel this book is appropriate for your child?				
Does this book have rhyme, rhythm, or repetition?				
Does this book have a simple plot that will allow your child to become involved?				

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Parent Handout Reading Together

Did you know that you can help your child get ready to read, even while he is very young? Fathers are important role models for reading. Read to your child from birth. It's the best way to make him a successful reader when he starts school.

Early Stages

Developing language is the first step in learning to read. It occurs very early in life. When you read to your child from the time he is born

- you expose him to spoken language
- he hears words that may not occur in the normal course of a day
- he is exposed to a wide variety of speech sounds
- he learns to associate reading with love, comfort and pleasure because you hold and cuddle him while you read
- as he grows he will like reading

Toddler Years

Toddlers have the reputation for being on the go. But toddlers learn important things from reading—they just learn them standing up! Children this age

- like books that have photographs of objects and text that names the pictures
- learn words in preparation for speaking and reading
- need nursery rhymes and books with rhyming text because rhyming helps them hear letter sounds
- are learning how to handle a book; for example they hold the book right side up and turn paper pages
- will listen for a short while, then move away. Keep reading! Your child will come back.

Preschool

As children enter the preschool years, they are able to follow a story and know the characters in a book. When you read to your preschooler, he will

- learn new words

Created by Parents as Teachers National Center, Inc., May 2008

To find a Parents as Teachers program near you, call 1.866.728.4968 or www.ParentsAsTeachers.org.

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- follow complex stories
- build his knowledge of the world around him
- understand concepts such as numbers and opposites
- get new ideas
- begin to notice letters and words on signs, menus, and lists
- be able to find the title and author of the book
- use his finger to underline what you are reading

When you are with him, read to your child each day, no matter how young he is. You will be giving him just the right experiences he needs to become a good reader in the future.

Experts say...
 Susan Hall and Louise Moats sum up the benefits of reading aloud to your child in the early years:

- Your child develops background knowledge for more complicated learning.
- Your child builds his vocabulary.
- Your child is exposed to rich language patterns.
- Your child learns the structure of a story.
- Your child learns how to handle books and becomes familiar with reading.
- Your child identifies reading as a pleasurable activity.

Books I want to read to my child:

Courtesy of Parents as Teachers National Center, Inc., May 2006.



Strategies to Empower Fathers to Read to Their Children

- **Share age appropriate books**
- **To ensure success, share age appropriate expectations**
 - follow the child's lead
 - child may turn pages fast
 - child may get up and walk around in the middle of the story – keep on reading!
- **Model techniques for success**
 - to focus/engage infants, tap on the page
 - connect what is on the page to what toddlers know and experience
 - read partial text and let preschoolers fill in the rest
 - ask questions about what is happening in the story, etc.



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The Importance of Reading With Your Child – take-aways for dads

Reading aloud to children:

- Helps children hear the sounds of speech so they are able to speak them and later read them.
- Helps dads form attachments with kids.
- Introduces children to new ideas and concepts and exposes them to proper sentence structure, which is not always used in everyday language.
- Means they are more likely to enjoy reading themselves as they grow up.
- Supports school readiness –emerging literacy skills are essential for kindergarten success.
- Associates reading with love, comfort and pleasure if you cuddle while you read.



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Child-focused Activities for Nonresident Fathers

**Teach, engage, and connect
incarcerated fathers and children
through outreach projects**

Trena Pollard
Incarcerated Fathers Program
New Mexico State University
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Brief Description of Program:

➤ Incarcerated Fathers Program

New Mexico State University

➤ Class series are weekly for 15 sessions; 2.5 hours/session

Nurturing Parenting® Program www.nurturingparenting.com

Creating a Process of Change for Men Who Batter **The Duluth Curriculum**

Life Skills Advisors Volunteer Program Handbook **Washington State University**

Money on the Bookshelf **University of Nevada Cooperative Extension**

- **Southern New Mexico Correctional Facility**
- **La Tuna Federal Corrections Institution**

Population Ethnicity

58.6% Hispanic

24.0% Anglo

9.9% African American

6.6% Native American

0.2% Asian American

0.7% Other



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Overcoming barriers to help incarcerated fathers communicate and connect with their children

- Choose curricula topics that can be translated into activities that enhance learning, encourage connection, promote communication, and also provide a tangible product for the child.
- Choose method of developing projects that encourages all fathers to participate, keeping in mind the literacy level of all involved.



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Class Topics

1. What is *Nurturing Parenting*?

Pre Assessment

2. Developing Family Morals & Values

3. Building Self Worth/Praise

4. Praise Card Mail-out (Lab)*

5. Ages & Stages

Appropriate Expectations

6. Personal Power/Job Prep

7. Make Your Own Book Mail-out (Lab)*

8. What is Discipline?

9. Understanding Feelings *

10. Managing Anger/Money Mgt *

11. Stress-Staying in Control

12. Children's Art Mail-out (Lab)*

13. STDs, AID, HIV Awareness

14. Review & Post Assessment

15. Certificates & Final Mail-out *

Age appropriate literature

* Entire class period utilized for children's outreach

* Children's outreach incorporated into class curricula



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Session 4: The Topic of Praise

- Gives fathers a chance to practice knowledge gained
- Allows fathers to stay focused on child
- Reinforces father/child communication
- Opens door to discuss praise as discipline
- Provides fathers opportunity for self-reflection



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Session 4: The Topic of Praise

How to Complete the Project

- Fathers choose one card for each child
- Fathers color the card
- Fathers use “Praise for Being” and “Praise for Doing” words/phrases on the inside

Cost effective materials:

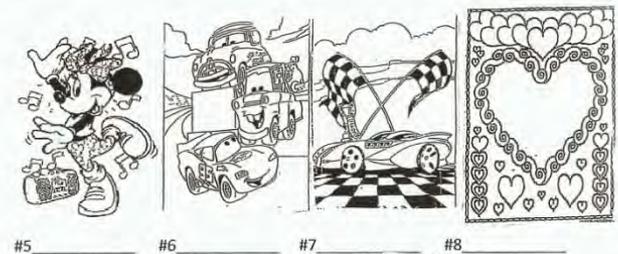
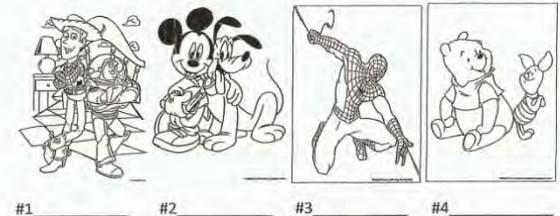
- Choose images from free coloring book pages
- Print on card stock paper
- Greeting card envelopes
- Colored pencils

www.free-coloring-pages.com



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Order Form



Please Print Name: _____



Session 4: The Topic of Praise

The Completed Project

Card Front



Sentiment inside card

Your Mother told me that
you were recognized for
being student of the
month!

*I AM SOOOO
PROUD OF YOU*

*I Love U,
Daddy*



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Session 7: Make Your Own Book

Diverse topics can be addressed in this activity

- Dads make 1 book for each child.
- The wardens allow the men to work on this project outside of class period. It has proven to keep them focused on their children.
- Dads choose from 6 different blank book types:

www.bookblanks.com

www.barnesandnoble.com (Make Your Own Little Golden Book)

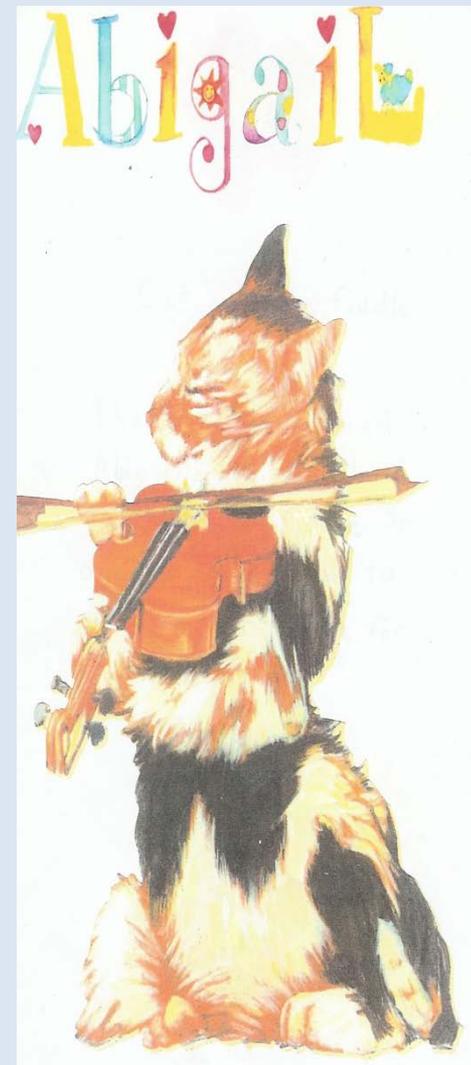
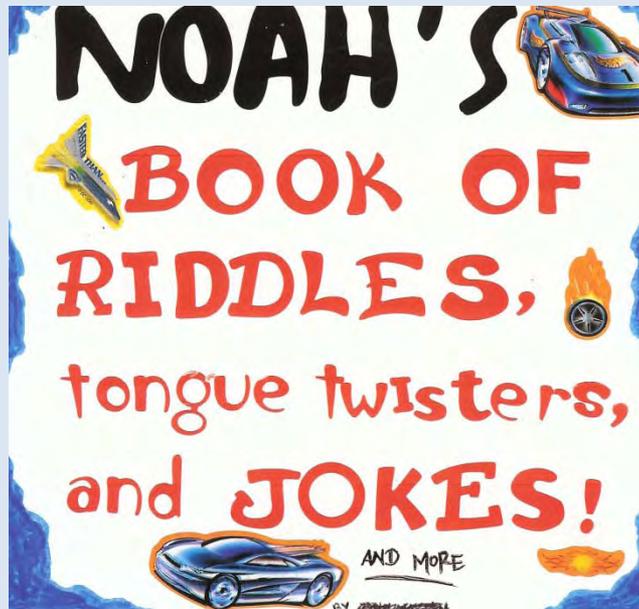


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Keep the materials simple

Stickers, blank books, markers



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Session 12: Handkerchief Art

Child also receives materials to create own project



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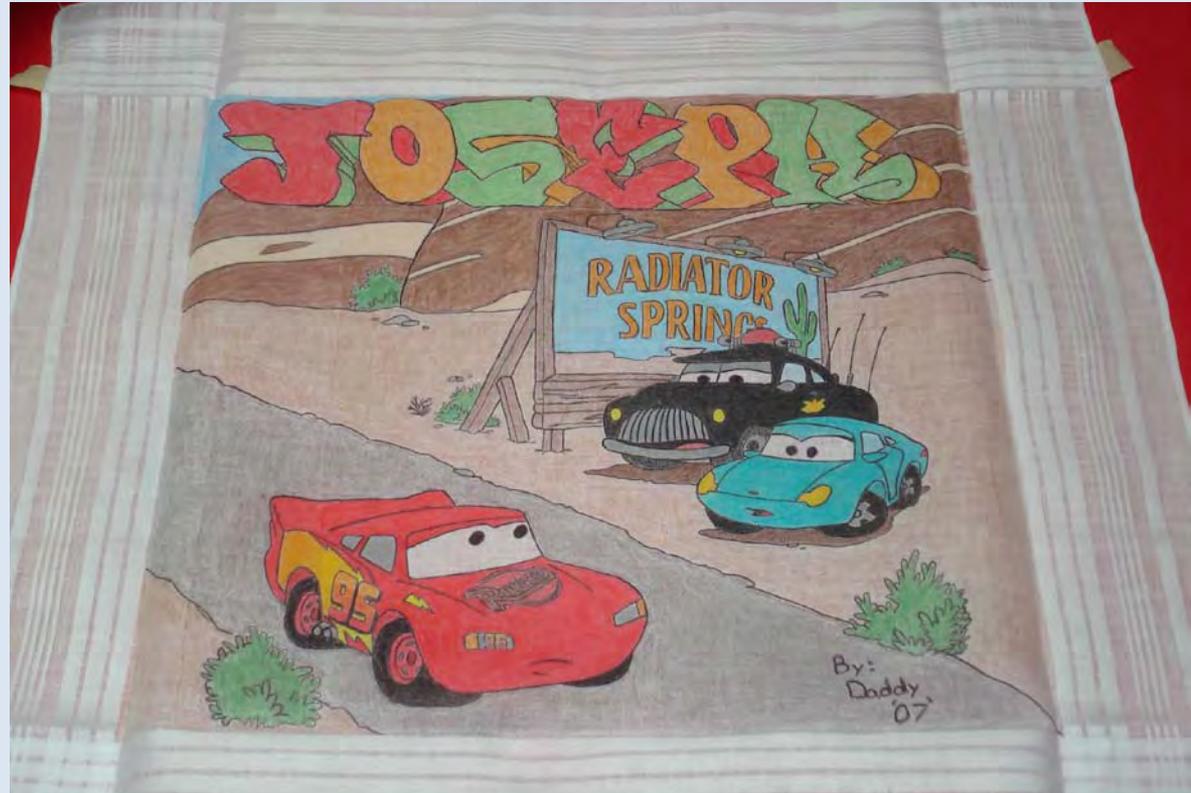


Completed Project

Can supplement topics such as:

- Human needs
 - Emotional
 - Intellectual
 - Creative, etc.
- Age Appropriateness
- Communication

Cost Effective Materials:
White Handkerchief
Free Coloring Pages
\$ Store Coloring Book
(for child)
Colored Pencils



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The Modern Dads Dilemma

John Badalament
Modern Dads

john@moderndads.net



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The Dad's Vision Statement

Imagine twenty years from now your child is interviewed for a documentary film about his/her relationship with you...

1. What do you hope he would say?
2. What do you hope she wouldn't say?
3. What are your priorities today?
4. What do you need to change?



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Bridging the Past and Present



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GIFTS and LIABILITIES

- A good work ethic
- Faced down adversity
- Warm, caring, loving
- Showed humility
- Assertiveness
- Showed up to events
- Empathy
- Handled conflict responsibly
- Good listener
- Valued diversity
- Often or completely absent
- Didn't control anger
- Deceptive
- Overtly critical
- Workaholic
- Wouldn't talk about feelings
- Sexist attitudes
- Cast a big shadow
- Lacked self-confidence



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Action #2 Bridge The Past and Present

Choose 3 Gifts from the list in Action #1 that you want to pass on to your children and fill in the chart below. For example, if your father's gift was that he showed up at all of your games/events, you may be trying to pass this on by rearranging your schedule at work. You will know you're successful by asking your child if they think you show up enough.

	_____		_____	
	my father's gift:		how I will pass it on:	
	_____		_____	
	my father's gift:		how I will pass it on:	
	_____		_____	
	my father's gift:		how I will pass it on:	



The Food Legacy

Talking with dads about nutrition

-What messages did you receive from your parents about food?

-What messages do you want to give your children about food?



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Connecting Emotionally

Knowing and Being Known



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Research Highlights

- “Children with highly involved dads (resident or non-resident) got higher grades, more involved in extra-curricular activities, less likely to drop out, felt more competent, and enjoyed school more.”
 - *U.S. Department of Education, 2005*
- “Connectedness (to parent, to school) is the single most protective factor in reducing behavioral risks...including drug use, early sexual activity, smoking and depression...”
 - *National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, 2002*



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Knowing

The Modern Dads Quiz: How well do you know your children?

- What recent accomplishment is your child most proud of?
- Name one of your child's big disappointments this year.
- What are your child's current prized possessions?
- What is your child's favorite food?
- Can you name your child's teachers?
- Name two things your child did at school in the past two weeks.



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Knowing and Being Known The Relationship Check-Up

- Two things I like about myself/you are...
- Something I need more/less of from you...
- A subject / find difficult to talk with you about is...
- A subject I think *you* find difficult to talk about with me is...
- One thing / could do to improve our relationship is...
- One thing *you* could do to improve our relationship is...
- In the next 6 months, I would like us to...



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Contact Information

- To learn more about speaking, training, films, books and upcoming events, please visit: www.moderndads.net
- Questions or comments, e-mail: john@moderndads.net



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Developing Age Appropriate Discipline Strategies

- The word “discipline” comes from a Latin word meaning “to teach” or “to guide.”
- Fathers are teachers; children are “disciples” of their fathers.
- See activities in two curricula: 24/7 Dad (www.fatherhood.org) and Responsible Fatherhood (www.mdrc.org)



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A few questions for dads

- Can you identify some of your children's behaviors that are causing problems?
- Think about a time in your childhood when a parent or relative corrected your behavior – How old were you? What were you doing? How did the adult respond? What did that feel like?
- What's the difference between punishment and discipline?



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Punishment or Discipline?

- Punishment tells children only that they have been bad; not what to do instead
- Focuses on “control”
- Fear based (e.g. loss of privileges, love, safety, belongings)
- Often involves hitting, yelling, taking something away
- Can show that violence is a good way to resolve conflict
- Has potential to turn in to abuse
- Discipline teaches children how to act
- Should make sense to children
- Connection with what they did wrong – lessons about consequences
- Chance to correct mistakes
- Puts kids in control of actions
- Needs to be clear, consistent, doable
- Can include praise, reinforcement of good behavior, correction of negative behavior



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Focus on Fathering

Topic 4: Discipline

Why: Discipline is an on-going challenge for most parents. Starting early, we need to:

- teach appropriate behavior
- provide for safety and well-being
- set limits/delay gratification
- support pro-social skills.

What: Fathers reflect on their attitudes, beliefs and goals for discipline.



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Discipline (topic 4): continued

How:

- Share discipline experiences and effectiveness of current techniques
- Discussion points (e.g. purpose of discipline; reflect on own family histories; acknowledge this is very personal topic influenced by parental values, family history, and culture)
- Activity:
 - Statements about discipline are read one at a time
 - Fathers respond by holding up a specified colored index card to indicate strong agreement or strong disagreement with statement.
 - Sharing of response begins with “I believe ..” or “I think...”
- Debrief – see take aways on next slide
- Handouts/Resources



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Activity:

Read the below statements one at a time out loud. Have the fathers hold up a predetermined color (i.e. green) index card if they strongly agree with the statement or the other color of index card (i.e. red) if they strongly disagree with the statement. Reassure them that there are no correct or incorrect answers. Ask someone who strongly agrees to share why. Next, ask someone who strongly disagrees to share his point of view. Ask the fathers to begin their sharing with the statement "I believe..." or "I think..."

Choose any number (as time allows) of the following statements. Add more as time allows.

- Discipline is teaching.
- Discipline and punishment mean the same thing.
- Safety-proofing a home for a child is a form of discipline.
- Children should be seen and not heard.
- Verbal reprimands, such as yelling and shaming are effective forms of discipline.
- I want to discipline my child as I was disciplined.
- It is important to tell a child why he should not do something.
- Physical punishment, such as spanking or paddling, is an effective form of discipline.
- It is important to have a child treat older adults with respect.

Debrief

Have fathers share their thoughts on the activity(ies). Ask fathers to share some of the problem behaviors they have observed or been advised of in their children. Help fathers think about how their child might respond to new, suggested techniques.

Summary

Summarize the goal and key points of the parent meeting.

Created by James W. Lockyer/NoRedPen.com, Inc. - July 2008.



Take-away messages for dads:

- Good discipline teaches children acceptable behavior.
- Important to reflect on discipline beliefs before situations arise.
- Understanding developmental characteristics will help with setting realistic and reasonable expectations for behavior.
- Limit setting is part of discipline and must be developmentally appropriate.
- Consistent and predictable responses are key.
- Most effective when relationship is restored after the issue is dealt with and consequence given.



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The Heart of a Father

“I have become better at learning how to play with my child and teach her how to play and learn at the same time.”

(Participating father)

“I have been thinking before I react to things and explain things to my kids so they understand.”

(Participating father)



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