

What Moms Should Know About Dads

As a mother, you had the joy of experiencing your child growing inside your womb. Your child's father, on the other hand, was watching from the outside. Now that your child is out in the world, their father can be more involved. When he is, everybody wins.

Parenthood is a process. Parents are in a transition from a lifestyle centered on themselves to one centered on someone else. For some parents this transition is easier than for others. And it can be different for mothers than for fathers.

The more your child's father participates in everyday care of his baby, the faster they will bond. Building attachment with both of their parents is good for your baby's brain.

It is equally important that you and the father spend time with each other. This helps you build a stronger and stronger relationship and gives your child the best opportunity to be raised in harmony.

Parenting behaviors

You and your baby's father can both work to develop good parenting habits. If your baby's dad has little experience with newborns, show him how to diaper, feed, and rock the baby. Encourage him along the way. With practice, he will feel more confident about the whole situation.

You don't want to send the message that only you know what to do when it comes to caring for the baby. If you criticize him, he may decide that caring for the baby is your job and not his to share. This is a loss for your baby's development—it's important to them when both their parents are involved.



Father-child interaction

Interaction between fathers and children has positive effects for both. Fathers tend to develop responsibility and a sense of protection toward their child. The chemicals in their brains change—their bodies produce more nurturing hormones and their testosterone levels go down. Children

“Don't ever doubt the impact that fathers have on children. Children with strongly committed fathers learn about trust early on. They learn about trust with their hearts. They learn they are wanted, that they have value, that they can afford to be secure and confident and set their sights high. They get the encouragement they need to keep going through the rough spots in life. Boys learn from their fathers how to be fathers. I learned all those things from my own father, and I count my blessings.” – Vice President Al Gore

tend to play with their fathers in a more active way than they do with their mothers, which is good for their developing muscles.

Children also might feel different emotions when they are with their fathers. This is because fathers tend to excite their children. Mothers, on the other hand, tend to contain or calm them. Both types of interaction are good for social-emotional development.

Finally, children enjoy hearing the lower pitch of their father's voice. From the time they are newborns, they can recognize their father's voice. They like to listen to his words as they watch his actions. This helps them learn language.

Two parents, two households

If you aren't with your child's father, you should still allow him to have a relationship with his child. Unless the court forbids it, a father has a right to spend time with his child.

Work out an arrangement to share time with the baby. This will provide you with extra free time. Too often, the mother is saddled with the entire responsibility while the father doesn't even get to see his child. A stressed-out mother may have less energy to provide the nurturing, responsive care children need.

Also try to work out an arrangement for child support. Research has shown that the effects of child support are greater when the agreement is reached cooperatively rather than by court order.

Many states offer free mediation services to try to work together if at all possible when discussing child support and visitation.

Without two parents working together as a team, children may have more difficulty learning empathy, reciprocity, fairness, and self-command because they don't see these important behaviors modeled as frequently by adults they look up to.