



## **Father-Child Relationship**

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### **Abstract:**

Many studies tend to focus more on mothers or talk about parents or caregivers in general. Nevertheless, fathers have as important an impact on their own children' development as mothers do. This paper focuses more on the fathers' relationship with their children and how that develops and affects the children lives. The fathers' involvement in taking care of their children with mothers can be affected by cultural differences. Also, how they affect them on all the many different domains (cognitive, language, social, and physical). The group of children would be infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and those who are in early elementary school. The fathers have both direct and indirect impacts on their own children (Tamis-LeMonda, Shannon, Cabrera & Lamb, 2004, p.1808). Both of them are important to raise a healthy kid on all the development domains. The father's children relationships are important as the mother's children relationship as well. The fathers can develop their children in each domain. The fathers can affect even direct or indirect in their children lives. We need to help the fathers to have some healthy relationships with their children in many different ways.

**Keywords:** Fathers relationships, childhood, children' development, skills



## **1. Introduction:**

It is important for children to build relationships with adults around them, this helps them to improve their social, cognitive, physical, and language development. In addition, the adults around children should take care of these domains because they can have positive or negative effects on children. Parents especially need to form these bonds as they have more influence over their kids than any other adults. Many studies tend to focus more on the mother or talk about the parents or caregivers in general. “The impact of mothers on child development has been the topic of a great deal of study over the past fifty years” (Paquette, 2004, p. 198). Nevertheless, the fathers have as important an impact on their own children’ development as the mothers do. This paper focuses more on the fathers’ relationship with their children and how that develops and affects the children lives.

The absence of a father from their lives for any reason tends to affect children negatively regardless of their gender. In the case of boys, they may have more problems with gender identity in schools, it can also affect the boys’ physical development because the fathers have the most important effect in this domain. Girls may be affected by their fathers absent, so that would affect the girls’ sexual lives. (Cabrera, Ryan, Shannon, Brooks-Gunn, Vogel, Raikes, Tamis-Lemonda, and Cohen, 2004, p. 9).

The fathers’ involvement in raising their children can negatively and positively impact their lives. It can be negative if they see their fathers’ bad behaviors all the time; For instance, using drugs or disadvantaging other people in anyway would have a big impact on the children’ behaviors too, they will become more likely to commit a crime and get themselves in trouble at an early age. As a result, there would be more negative outcomes, which would affect our community by increasing the rate of the crimes, from those children. on the other hand, there are many ways in which fathers can be a positive influence on their children’s life, such as the children’s language, cognitive, and physical abilities.



More interaction with their fathers in early life can help children to develop a greater vocabulary

and better cognitive skills. fathers also play an important role in their children's physical play more than the mothers do. The fathers would play more with their children some physical games, and the children can learn many things while they play with their fathers.

The fathers' involvement in taking care of their children with the mothers can be affected by culture differences. In many cultures, fathers do not give as much time to their children as the mothers do. They may give just little things for their children, and they may see that it is the mother's job to take care of the children and raise them as well. The fathers have to work and bring the money for them to eat and live. Nevertheless, the world has been changed, so the mothers could go outside of her home to work and help her family when they need that. Working mothers are one reason for the changes in many cultures, as women find a place outside of the home it has become necessary for men to take on a more active role inside of the home in raising their children. The second reason is many fathers are becoming educated on the importance of a father child bond in child development, this leads to a more involved father since the fathers now know that this will lead to a positive long-term effect in their children' lives.

This paper will focus just on the fathers' relationship with their children. Also, how they affect them on all the many different domains (cognitive, language, social, and physical). The group of children would be infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and those who are in early elementary school. The fathers have both direct and indirect impacts on their own children (Tamis-LeMonda, Shannon, Cabrera & Lamb, 2004, p.1808). Both of them are important to raise a healthy kid on all the development domains.



## **Infancy**

Many researchers have found that fathers could have an influence their unborn children. They would help the mothers and share with them their emotional stress during their pregnancy months. This involvement during pregnancy can have many benefits on the relationship between father and child later. Fathers can get involved by going along to doctors' appointments to check on the health of both the mother and the baby. They can see the ultrasound and hear their first heartbeats. This creates an emotional bond between the father and their unborn children. Also, the parents can work to together to buy the nursery or the baby clothes and stuff. That would be helpful for all of them: fathers, mothers, and children. According to Condon, Corkindale, Boyce, & Gamble (2012), the father-infant attachment future relationship can begin during this time. It is important to let the fathers experience these emotions even if the expectant parents are not married yet.

The father-infant relationship will depend on the relationship of the parents with each other. If they are good together, their children would be good in their relationships with them and other people. That would affect the children personality as well as who they become in the future. In addition, physical contact between parent and child can affect the child's cognitive abilities. That can help develop their sensory and experience some new things allowing those infants to learn about everything around them. At this age, they just rely on adults to guide them in learning about this new world around them.

Sometimes when there is a newborn in a home most of the attention go this newborn. The mother would focus in this little one without looking to the father. That would be hard for the father to handle it or expect it to be out this little one life. The father would need to transfer to this fatherhood especially with the first baby at their family. The mother has to let the father share and help her with this little one. Also, they can have some time together to talk or read something for the new baby or take a walk outside of the home together.



The fathers could join a group of other fathers who would have some experience to help them deal with their new lives, or they can find anyone from their environment who would like to help them. This support would be more important for the whole family especially the child development.

### Toddlerhood

In this age group, the fathers would be more active to give their children because they can see their reaction more than when they were infants. Moreover, the fathers would like to spend more time with their toddlers to see them much growing up. They would play some games around the home or outside like on a playground. They like to see them walking and experience the things around them and watch their reaction to these new things to them.

The fathers' engagement in this age is really important for them. That would affect their language and how many words the toddlers would have or say because in this age they would start to talk and understand their parents more. Those toddlers can learn many words while they are with their fathers. For example, during playing or reading story for them, those children would learn many different words. Also, they may copy their fathers sound to say these words. In addition, the fathers' engagement plays an important role in the toddlers' physical development because most of the fathers encourage their children to take risk more than the mothers. The mothers seem to be more overprotect some time for their children. Toddlers need to try some new things by themselves to learn and develop their muscles and mind. They need to touch and test any things in front of them just to get the experience from their senses.



Mostly, the toddlers try to be on their fathers' side more than the mother at this time. That may be because they feel like they are an independent person than needing their mothers to help them. As a result, they would look for someone around them to make them feel they are now independent, and they find their fathers as a good person to identify themselves. This mostly happened with the staying home mothers because they sit with their toddlers most of the day. Nevertheless, once the fathers come home the toddler would like to be with them more than the mothers.

As for the all the children age, playing is important for them to develop and learn. When the father play with his child, that would affect the child on a long term impact. Which is definitely impact the child future development language, social, cognitive, and physical. The children learn through playing time more than any things. The fathers should guide their toddlers while they are playing to make them learn from it and enjoy at the same time.

#### Preschool

At this age, the fathers would encourage their children to find themselves more than in the toddlerhood. They would let them take more risks, but they would make sure that they are safe at the same time. In addition, the fathers help their children to improve their self-regulation which start in their toddlerhood and continue to be in this age too. The self-regulation can be improving by some activities with the preschoolers. For example, the fathers can let their children draw themselves on a paper. Then the fathers would know how their children would see themselves from their eyes. Also, they can play with them some games which need taking turns to let them pay attention to other people around them.

This age would the good one to play more physical play with their preschoolers. The children would have a chance for time to play face to face with their fathers and have some attachment to them. The playing would develop their physical and relationship attachment. "Children who were securely attached to their fathers exhibited higher pretend play competency than insecure children" (Paquette, 2004, p.205).



Preschoolers understand the sex difference better and know more about their gender. They would label some toys or colors to be for boys or girls. They really do care about these things because they are important for them, and would identify themselves being a boy or girl. Fathers seem to spend more time at this age with their sons than their daughters. That may be because the fathers and the preschoolers would like to spend more time playing some physical games. The boys are more active and take more risk than girls, so being with their fathers is good for them to find themselves. The fathers would like to be with their boys to show them this world as a male and make them stronger to face their own problems.

What is really matter at this age is how much vocabulary they have. The fathers can read for them some interesting stories for them to help them build their literacy. In addition, talking with them would be helpful for them to encourage them to use and have more vocabulary. The preschoolers are talkative to show the new word that they knew. More activity can fathers do with their preschoolers is during watching the television, the father can talk about the show or move with them. Also, they can ask them about the deeper meaning of the movie, or what they understand from it.

#### Early Elementary School

The relationship between fathers and children at this age would affect the children development and their education at school. Consequently, that would affect more than just their development as in the infants through the preschoolers. It would affect their education and may be their future careers as well (Driscoll &Pianta, 2011, p.1). The father should take care of this point and help their children to start building their own future. The children still need the fathers to be closer to them to be confident. There should be more contact at this age between the fathers and their children to have some secure attachment with them.

The children at this age still have more energy to play and participate in many different games or sports. Nevertheless, their growing is much slower than during their infancy, toddlerhood, or at the preschool age. Some of their small muscles need to improve as their fingers. The fathers may help in this age by making the children more comfortable with being more growing up.



Also, they can work together to put all the energy in a good place or activity, such as playing any kind of sport after the school. The fathers should join their children to work as team and play. That would help them to contact and talk together about the same things. For the small muscles, the fathers can work with their children to write a story about their lives, or let them work on some small puzzle.

The children in early elementary age would focus more on themselves and their personality. Also, they would join the groups who include their same gender. They would play more with them and do many other things, such as talking about some interesting topics for them. Thus, this would be a good time for fathers to build some relationship with their sons. According to Driscoll and Pianta study fathers are closer to their daughters than their sons. The fathers need to be closer for both of them even they are boys or girls. The children want their father support at this age to learn more about their gender identity.

#### Recommendations

##### **1. Early Childhood Practitioners**

All the practitioners should support the father's children relationships because at it said it is important to build these relationships to help the children develop more. The practitioners can make some workshop activities for the fathers and their children, so they can work and play together that would contribute the father's children relationships. While they doing their workshop, the practitioners should guidance them to get the best effect. For example, they can make a father-child day which means the fathers must spend all the day with their children in the schools. In that day, the fathers can play and work with their children to know better. Also, they would share with them all their experience about the life.

Moreover, the practitioners should engage and encourage the fathers as much as they could. They can make some small groups conversation to talk about some father-children relationships studies. They should focus on the impact of this on their children' lives, and how that would affect the children future negatively or positively. The fathers need to take this seriously because their children will be our next generation.





The practitioners can learn about the father-child secure attachment to talking about it with the fathers. In addition, they can share what they knew about their children age normal development in language, social, physical, and cognitive. That would be helpful for fathers to know about their children level in each domain, and the fathers would help their children to grow in a healthy way to make sure that they are on with their development chart.

The most important things to do between both fathers and practitioners is to work together for the children future. Working together for the children benefits would be more effective to them. They practitioners should have their short and long goals for the children to discuss it with their fathers. On the fathers' side, they have to put their own goals for their children development to be ready to share them and work on them with the practitioners.

## **2. Early Childhood Researchers**

Those, who research on the early childhood, need to focus more on the father's children relationships than just focusing on the motherhood. The fathers have a unique impact on their children development. There are some researchers, but they are not enough, and our community needs those research to have the healthy generation who develop very well. They need to do more studies on the father's effect on each domain in their children lives.

They can focus on the culture difference and take some samples from many different countries around the world. The European countries and Americans countries are different than some Asian countries. In addition, they should compare how parents from other cultures may treat their children and build a relationship with them. How that would affect the children and make them different than the other children from the other countries. How that would affect each child on the negative or positive way.

There should more research on the early elementary age because it found that there is just few research on this age. Most of the research for this group focused on their relationships with those children and their peers or their teachers at the school.



They did not pay attention to the children home environment which is still important for them to be in a healthy relationship with their fathers. Also, they may found some relationship between the children further attachment and the children academic levels. For this point, there are few studies about this topic, and there should be more attention about the children academic levels and how that related to their relationships with their fathers. From this point of view, that would affect the children future career and who they are going to be as an adult.

The researchers should focus on both the fatherhood and childhood together because they are connected to each other in some way. Any effect in one of the father or child life would affect the other differently. Also, it may affect their relationship with each other. For instance, if the father has some stress in his work or life, that completely would affect the child development. The father may be very busy to get rid of his stress, and they do not have that much time for their children. It can be some studies focus on the negative effect on both of the father and child lives. The finding should be some solution to make their relationships better.

### **3. Policy-Makers**

Many Americans have to work in two jobs to help their family and children have a good life. They may be away from home until the night, and when they get home their children would be sleeping. That for sure affect their relationship and their children develop with their fathers' absence. Their father would be not completely absence, but they do not see them as it should be. There many researchers who said the time is not important as the guilty. That means if they stay with them all day without doing any things that would be non-effective time for both of them. Nevertheless, if they stay for just an hour focusing on playing with them, that would more effective for their relationships. However, if they really work all day, they would be tired to spend more time with the children. The political maker should spend more funding for the children education and basic needs to help their fathers spend some time with them.



They have to make sure that money would be helpful for those fathers by contacting those fathers and let them talk to listen.

The political makers can make some public servers for those children in their early age. For instance, they can found some public hospitals and clinic to help the children being healthy and live without any medical issues. In addition, they can found more free daycare centers, preschools, and kindergartens. They need to check them and make sure they are high quality educated to raise those children.

## **Conclusion**

The father's children relationships are important as the mother's children relationship as well. The fathers can develop their children in each domain. The fathers can affect even direct or indirect in their children lives. We need to help the father to have some healthy relationships with their children in many different ways.



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