



Office of the State Superintendent of Education

Understanding Why Fathers Are Critical to Children's Health, Happiness, and Long Term Success



Christophe Beard
Head Start State Collaboration Office
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
Division of Early Learning (OSSE/DEL)
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A Nation of Families in Crisis



A Nation in Crisis – Fathers Absence

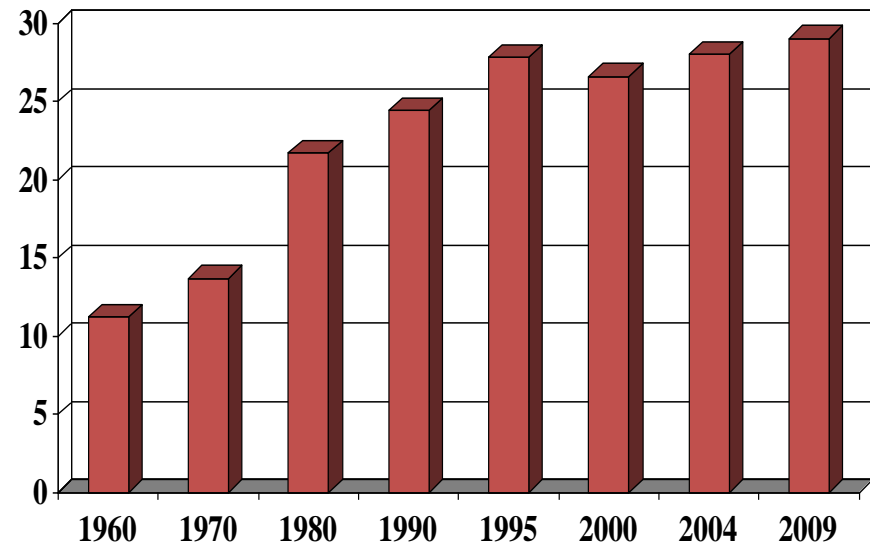


In 1960, 8 million children lived in father-absent homes

1 out of 3 children nationally live in father-absent homes

2 out of 3 African American children live in father-absent homes

Today, over 25 million children live in homes without their fathers!



Why?

1. Source: *Father Facts, 5th Edition.*



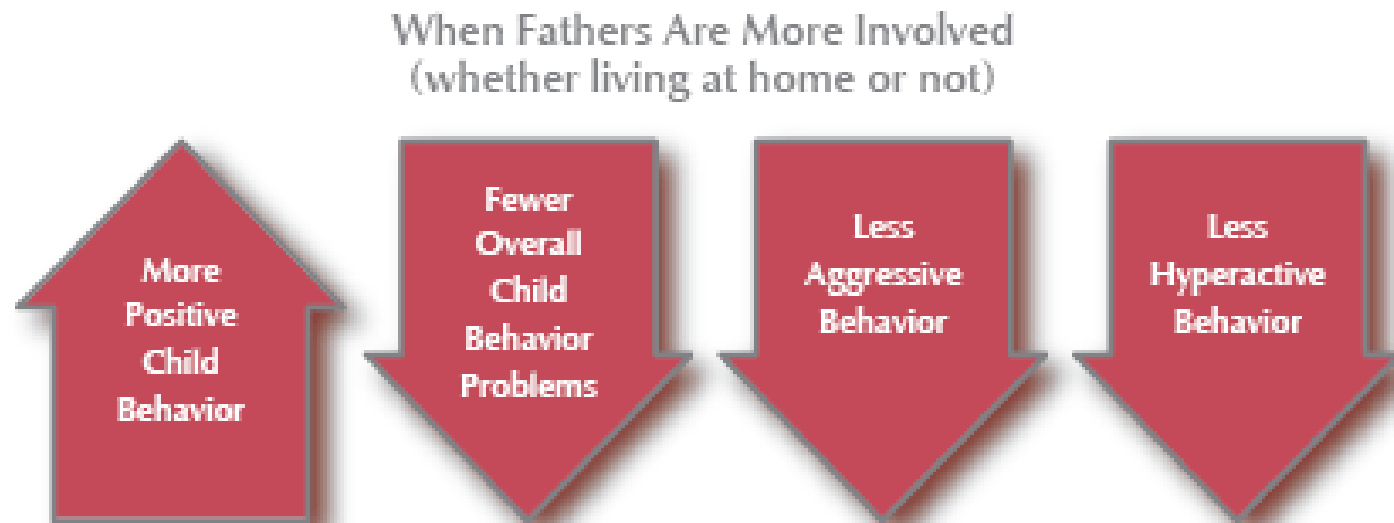
The Cost of Father Absence

- Children of father-absent homes are:
- Five times more likely to live in **poverty**
- Three times more likely to **fail in school**
- Two times more likely to develop **emotional or behavioral problems**
- Two times more likely to abuse **drugs**
- Two times more likely to be **abused and neglected**
- Two times more likely to become involved in **crime**
- Three times more likely to commit **suicide**

1. Source: *Father Facts, 5th Edition*.

FATHERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Less than half of Head Start children lived with both their mother and father. Whether or not fathers lived with their Head Start child, greater father involvement was related to more frequent positive social behavior and less frequent problem behavior at the end of the Head Start year.



FACES 2000

PARENT INVOLVEMENT IS RELATED TO IMPROVED CHILDREN'S OUTCOMES

Research has demonstrated that parent involvement is directly related to children's cognitive and social outcomes. Children with more involved parents scored higher on emergent literacy and math tasks, and also had more positive social behavior than children whose parents were less involved.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

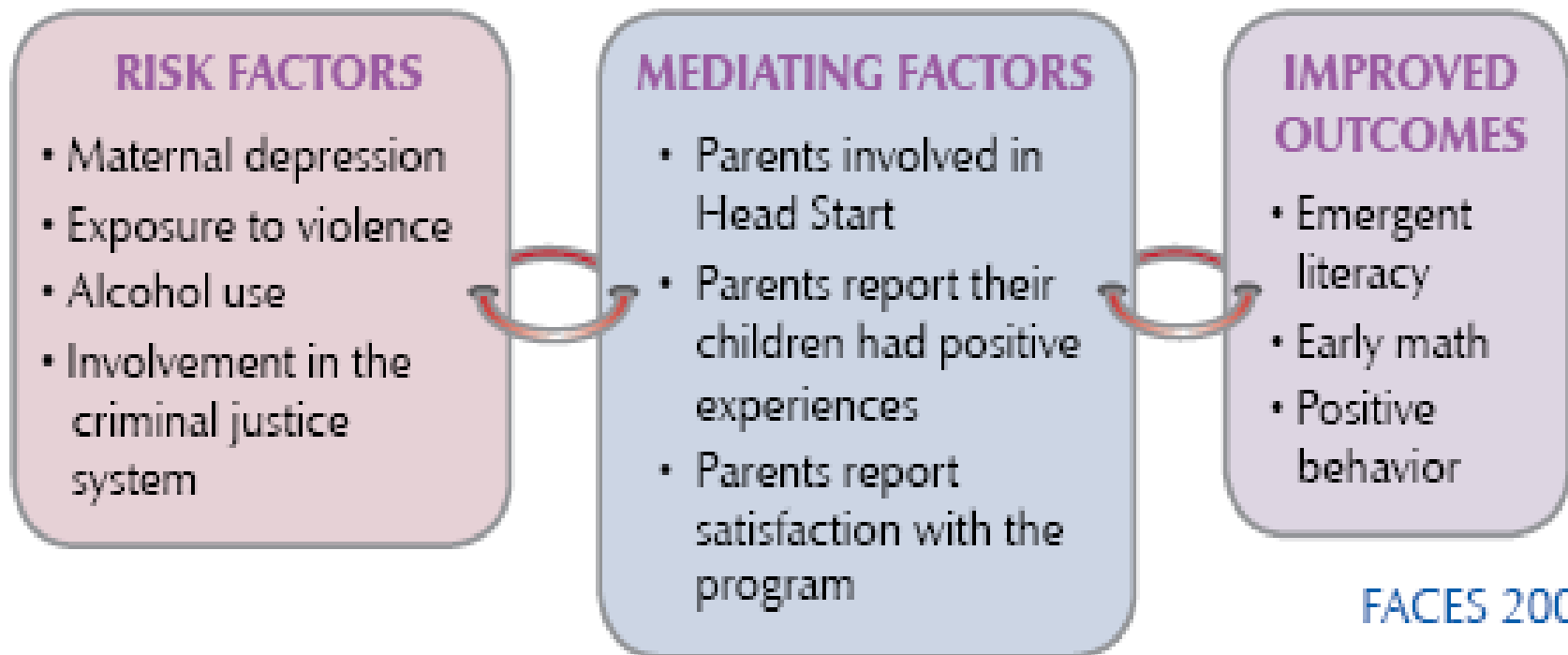
- Attend parent-teacher conferences
- Observe in their children's classrooms for at least 30 minutes
- Meet with a HS staff member in their homes
- Volunteer in child's classroom
- Prepare food for HS events
- Participate in fundraising
- Attend parent education meeting

IMPROVED OUTCOMES

- Vocabulary
- Book knowledge
- Early writing
- Early math
- Letter identification
- Parent reports of positive social behavior
- Less aggressive behavior
- Fewer overall behavior problems

HEAD START'S PROTECTIVE ROLE FOR CHILDREN

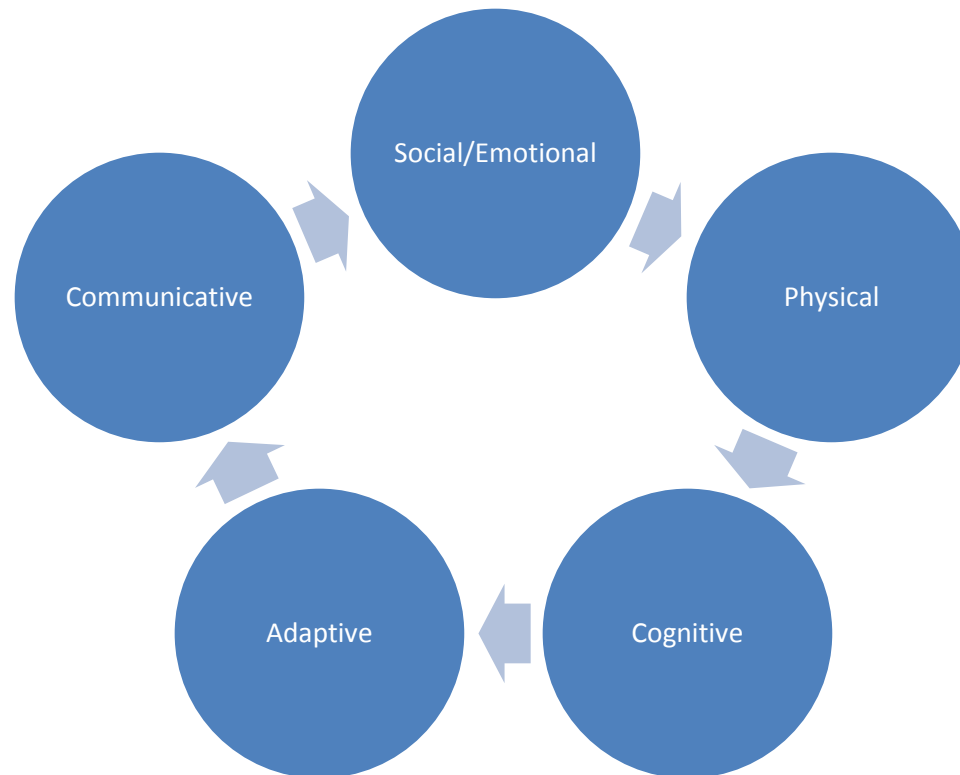
Head Start may play a role in protecting children from the negative outcomes associated with family risk factors. When parents were involved and/or satisfied with Head Start, their children's outcomes were improved compared to parents who were not involved or satisfied—even if the family experienced multiple risk factors.



Effects on Early Child Development

Areas of Development:

Infants and toddlers are developing in many ways. When children are raised in loving relationships with caring adults, healthy, well-balanced children are the result.



How is Your School Doing Engaging Families?

Fortress School Excuses



“Parents don’t care about their children’s education, and they are the main reason the kids are failing”

“Parents don’t come to conferences, no matter what we do”

Director picks a small group of “cooperative parents”
to help out

“We’re teachers, not social workers”

“We’re doing all we can to reach families



Supportive Schools Checklist



- ✓ Parent-teacher conferences are held twice a year
- ✓ School holds curriculum night three or four times a year
- ✓ Parents raise issues at PTA meetings or see the principal
- ✓ Multicultural nights are held once a year
- ✓ Home visits are made to every new family.
- ✓ All family activities connect to what students are learning.
- ✓ There is a clear, open process for resolving problems.
- ✓ Parents and teacher research issues together.
- ✓ Parents are actively encouraged to participate in planning.



Connecting

The best type of schools and programs put families and children needs at the center of their mission.



Honoring

Family members are respected, validated and affirmed for any type of involvement or contribution they make.



Lessons Learned and Moving Forward

Lessons on Fatherhood Staffing Structures

- **Choosing a fatherhood staffing structure.**
 - Staffing structures that feature a fatherhood coordinator and one or more male involvement specialists appear to facilitate the effective allocation of responsibility for fatherhood work.
- **Determining the qualifications of fatherhood staff.**
 - To engage fathers effectively, fatherhood staff need academic qualifications paired with strong interpersonal and communication skills
- **Hiring fathers as staff members.**
 - Participating or "graduate" fathers may serve as a valuable pool of potential staff candidates.
- **Encouraging communication between fatherhood and other program staff.**
 - Frequent communication among fatherhood and other staff facilitates father involvement in all aspects of the program.
- **Weathering fatherhood staff turnover.**
 - Involving all program staff in providing services for fathers also helped programs weather staff turnover without major disruption to their efforts to engage fathers.



Lessons on Making Programs Father-Friendly

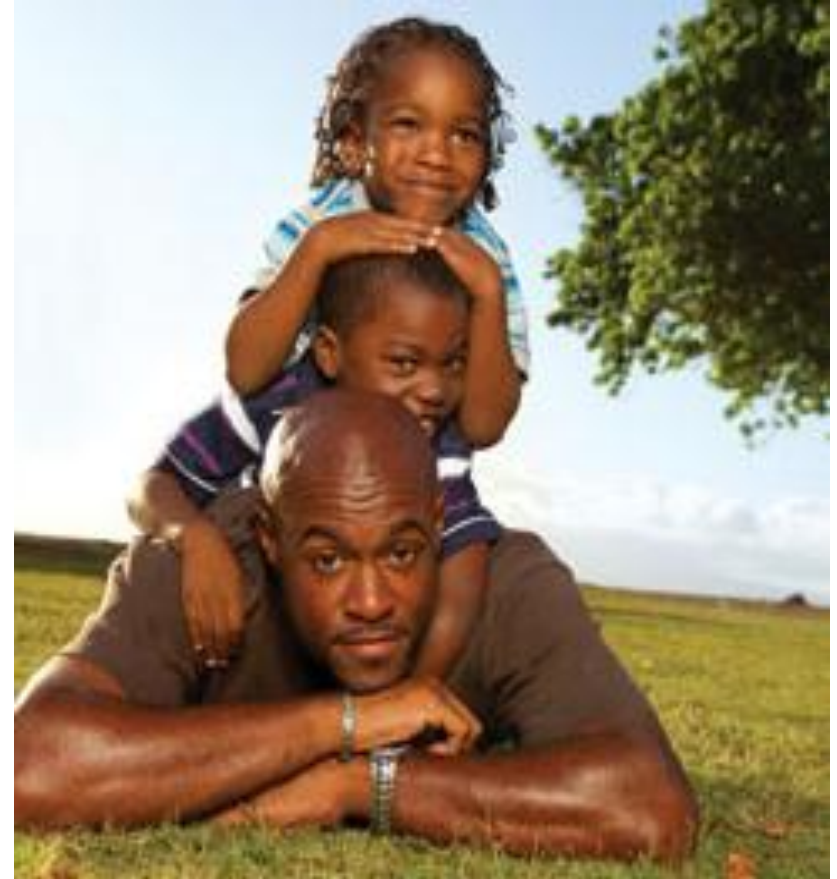


- **Training staff for work with fathers.**
 - Internal staff training sessions on the importance of father involvement can be successful in making staff more receptive to including men.
- **Evaluating all staff on their work with fathers.**
 - Evaluating the efforts of staff to involve fathers is another way to send a clear signal to staff that father involvement is an important, and expected, part of their jobs.
- **Providing fathers with personal staff attention.**
 - Learn fathers' names, engage fathers in short conversations, invite them to participate in the classroom, etc., shows fathers that they are welcome and appreciated.
- **Overcoming resistance from mothers.**
- **Allowing staff time and flexibility to work with fathers when they are available.**
- **Making the physical program environment father-friendly.**
- **Assessing staff perceptions of progress toward father-friendliness.**



Lessons on Getting and Keeping Fathers Involved

- **Involving fathers in family enrollment.**
 - Get dads involved early!
- **Making all staff responsible for engaging fathers.**
- **Taking advantage of every opportunity to engage fathers.**
 - Program staff can think of ways to include fathers in all phases of their work.
- **Mailing information and invitations to fathers is not nearly as effective as person-to-person.**



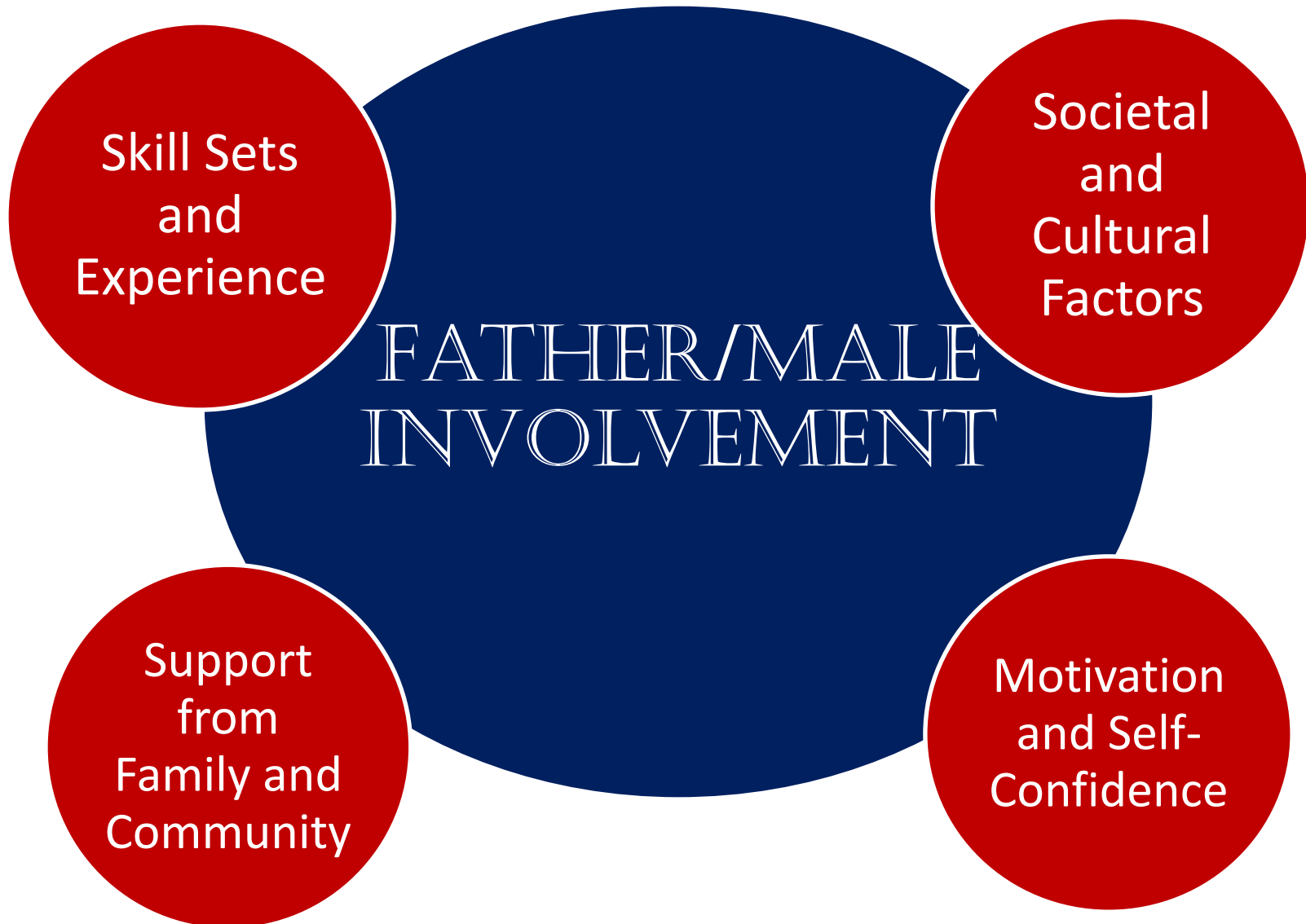
Lessons on Service Offerings and Referrals for Fathers



- **Assessing fathers' needs early and often.**
- **Providing fathers with opportunities to bond with their children and families.**
 - Fathers reported enjoying "daddy and me" time in which to play and bond with their children.
- **Supporting positive co-parenting relationships.** Being sensitive to the different types of families structures.
- **Encouraging father participation in child development services.**
 - Many fathers appear to be more comfortable participating in child development services when they are given clearly delineated roles.
- **Developing successful support groups for fathers.**
 - Offering father-only activities, such as sporting events, camping or fishing trips, is another opportunity for staff and fathers to get to know each other and develop mutual trust.
- **Helping fathers find stable employment in better-paying jobs.**
- **Lessons on Partnerships with Local OCSE**
 - Facilitating child support workshops for fathers.
 - Offering separate child support workshops for mothers.



Keys to Sustained Father/Male Involvement



Training the Next Generation of Fathers



The responsibility for children's personal and educational development is a shared, collaborative enterprise among parents, school staff, and community members.

Our young boys are especially at risk for falling to live up to their own potential.



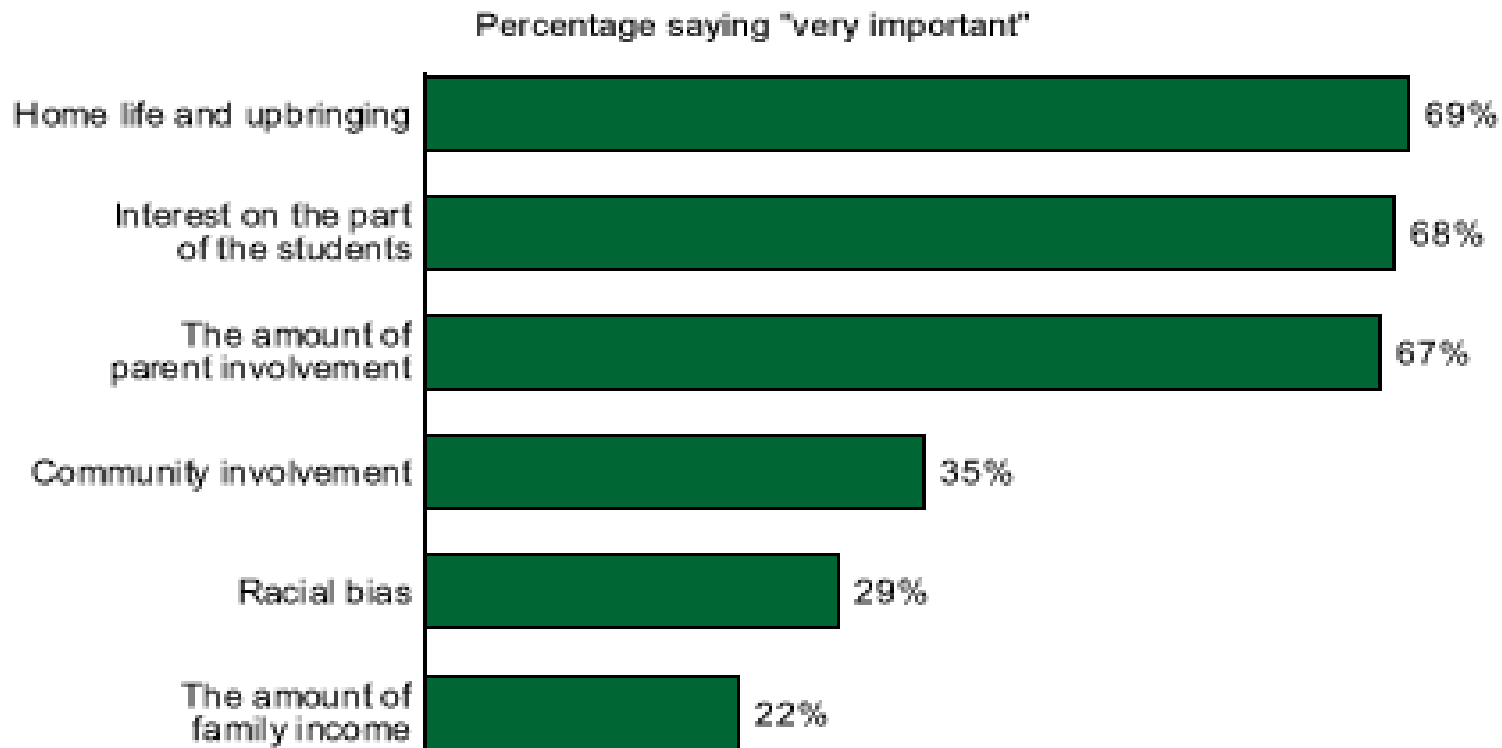
It truly takes a village!



“It doesn’t matter nearly as much what happens at the White House, as much as it does at your house.”

What Parents Think About Achievement

In your opinion, how important do you think each of the following factors is in contributing to the achievement gap between white children, and black and Hispanic children?

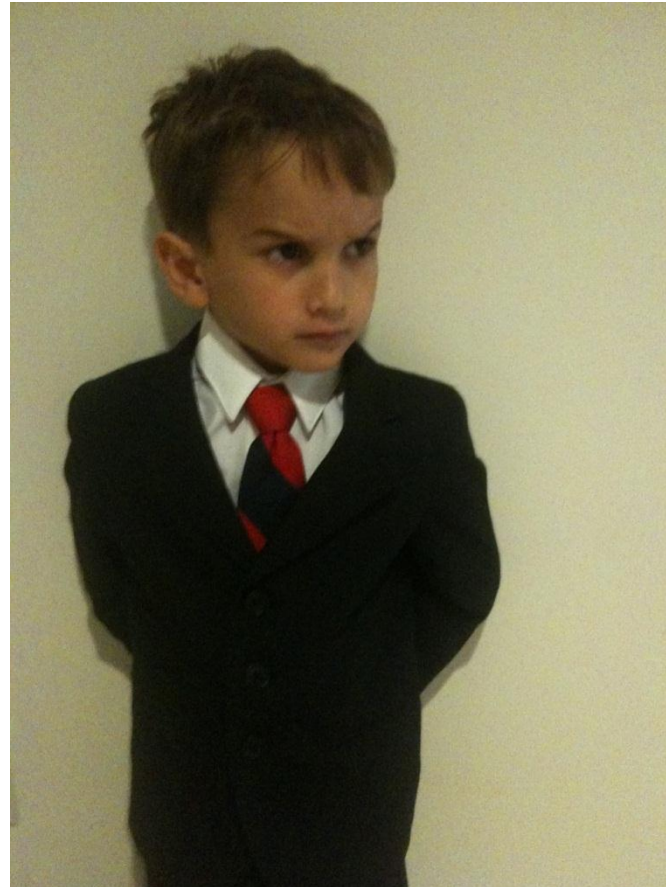


Parent Involvement Tips

- 1. Establish a daily family routine.** Examples: Providing time and a quiet place to study, assigning responsibility for household chores, being firm about bedtime and having dinner together.
- 2. Monitor out-of-school activities.** Examples: Setting limits on TV watching, checking up on children when parents are not home, arranging for after-school activities and supervised care.
- 3. Model the value of learning, self-discipline, and hard work.** Examples: Communicating through questioning and conversation, demonstrating that achievement comes from working hard.
- 4. Be an advocate and cheerleader for your child in school and other activities.**
- 5. Express high but realistic expectations for achievement.** Examples: Setting goals and standards that are appropriate for children's age and maturity, recognizing and encouraging special talents, informing friends and family about successes.
- 6. Encourage children's development/ progress in school.** Examples: Maintaining a warm and supportive home, showing interest in children's progress at school, helping with homework, discussing the value of a good education and possible career options, staying in touch with teachers and school staff.
- 7. Encourage reading, writing, and discussions among family members.** Examples: Reading, listening to children read and talking about what is being read.

What Comes Next?

Time to Get Down To Business!



The 4-E Strategy



- **EDUCATE** - Raising awareness and enhancing knowledge
- **EQUIP** – Supporting programs and families with training and resources. “Bridging the gap.”
- **ENGAGE** – Connecting government, community, business, and families to work together to address the needs of children.
 - Creating Problem-Solving State, Local, Public and Private Partnerships
 - Increasing Collaboration in support of Non-custodial Parents
- **EMPOWER** – Creating champions by building capacity and long term sustainability.



Target Goals for Fathers

- Father's are an invaluable asset.
- Breaking the Cycle of Intergenerational Poverty
- It's about more than child support (financial stability, getting credit fixed, saving, and paying down debt).
- Reducing the father absence, increasing father presence, and improving outcomes for children, families and communities.
- Helping fathers improve their economic status by providing asset-building activities, job search, job training, job retention and job enhancement; and encouraging education, including career-advancing education.
- Creating family supporting institutions that effectively build capacity and have lasting sustainability.

Clearinghouse



NATIONAL
Responsible
Fatherhood
CLEARINGHOUSE

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Family Assistance

www.fatherhood.gov
Call: 1(877)4DAD411

Providing you with information, resources, and technical assistance



Specific Areas for:

- Fathers & Families
- Grantees
- Community Partners
- Policymakers
- Researchers

Tools & Topics Include:

- Email Updates
- Funding
- Domestic Violence
- Incarceration /Reentry
- Mental Health/ Substance Abuse
- Statistics
- Media Materials
- Library Search

“Take time to be a dad today”

The NRFC launched its national media campaign in April 2008 to encourage fathers to "Take time to be a dad today".

The media campaign is intended to raise responsible fatherhood awareness and encourage fathers to become actively involved in their child's life.

Media materials have been developed for the general public and for use by OFA-funded grantees including NRFC printed promotional materials, and video and radio Public Service Announcements (PSA).

- Ads on the NRFC website www.fatherhood.gov/media



Thank You!



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Email: christophe.beard@dc.gov

