

The State of Fatherhood in Minnesota 2008

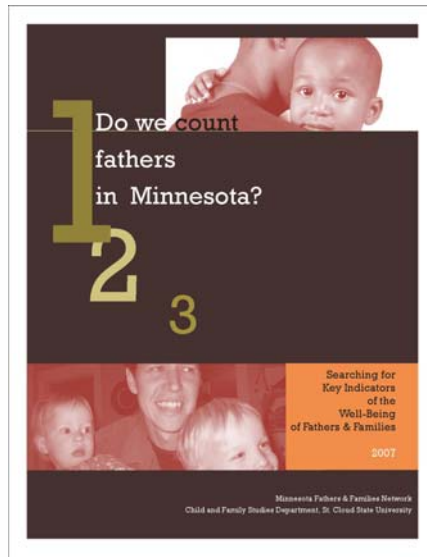


Minnesota Fatherhood Summit
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Glen Palm

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State of Fatherhood In MN

- Explore important themes from “Do We Count Fathers”
 - Diversity of Relationships/Family Contexts
 - Changes in Fathers’ Roles
 - Levels of Involvement
 - Common Challenges for Fathers
- MFFN Vision of Healthy Fatherhood
- Supporting Healthy Fatherhood in Minnesota



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Multiple Definitions of Fatherhood

- Biological Father
- Legal Father
- Putative Father
- Adoptive Father
- Step Father
- Foster Father
- Social Father
- Adjudicated Father
- Single Father
- Custodial Father
- Non-Resident Father

Fathers' Changing Roles

	0-4	5-12
■ Show love and affection	92%	87%
■ Safety/protection	89%	88%
■ Provide moral guidance	84%	85%
■ Play with children	78%	71%
■ Teach and Encourage	77%	74%
■ Provide financial support	76%	70%

Percent who rated role as Very Important

Show Love & Affection



- “Being..the kind of father I would like to have -one who take an interest, makes time and openly expresses his love for his kids. Giving my heart to my kids.”

Father of 0-4 year old

Provide Moral Guidance

- “Being able to watch my sons grow up and learn right from wrong as well as responsibility. Instilling values in them that I know will carry them through life.”
- “Being the guide in their life to train, grow and learn with them about myself and teach them the values that make me what I am.”

Father of a 5-12 year old

Father of 0-4 year old

Teach and Encourage



- “ I love teaching my son every little thing I can..Watching him learn is the best part of my day.” Father of 0-4 year old
- Helping my kids understand new stuff and learning from my kids the parts about my self that I don't like that show up in them.” Father of 5-12 year old

Responsible Father

- “ The fact that I have a daughter. The fact that I have a family. These facts mentally support me as a man and a human and make me stronger in life. Motivate me to be more responsible.”

Father of 0-4 year old



What I Enjoy Most about Being a Father

- “The look they give me and they make me feel like superman.”

Father of 0-4 year old



Fathers of Children 0-4 Involvement (3 or more times a week)

- Nurturance & Physical Care
 - Hold, comfort or cuddle child 94.7%
 - Change diaper/help with toileting 87.6%
- Guidance/Teaching
 - Set & Enforce rules/limits 90.7%
 - Read books with child 78.1%
- Shared Responsibilities
 - Get up with child during the night 42.7%
 - Take child on errands 54.8%

Fathers of Children 5-12 Involvement (1-2 times a week)

- Recreation
 - Watch TV with child 73% (48%)
 - Supervise play with friends 54% (23%)
 - Teaching/Coaching
 - Do Homework with child` 78% (51%)
 - Read/look at books 73% (52%)
 - Sports/Active play 71% (41%)
 - Community Involvement
 - Take to religious activities 50% (4%)
 - Supervise group activities 30% (8%)
- () = 3 times a week or more used on 0-4 slide

Common Challenges/Barriers Identified by Fathers

Common themes from survey

- Discipline/Guidance
- Time & Energy for Work & Family
- Relationship with Partner/Child's Mother
- Own Upbringing/Male Socialization

Discipline/Guidance



- “Discipline is difficult. I know that the kids need to understand the rules, but the period it may take them to grasp can be longer than I would like”
Father of 0-4 year old
- Finding the balance between giving my son everything he needs versus spoiling him.”
Father of a 0-4 year old

Co-Parenting Relationship

- “Agree with parenting issues with child’s mother.” Father of 0-4 year old
- “Having both parents on the same page in respect to discipline and ideals. My oldest has been raised without a dad most of his life until I married his mother.”

Father of a 5-12 year old



Balancing Work & Family



- “Finding energy & time to balance the fatherhood portion of life with work responsibilities”

-Father of 5-12 year old

Balancing Work & Family

- Time, time time. Our society is structured in such a way that I find myself having to balance work and family time. Perhaps it is my fault because of the economic and recreational choices the I have made.”
- Being expected to work all the time as opposed to spending time with my daughter. Paying very high child support on my youngest daughter and not being able to see her because it cost too much.”

Father of 5-12 year old

Father of 5-12 year old

Male Socialization/Upbringing

- “Limiting my anger over mistakes. Balancing wanting child to learn with allowing for mistakes and independent thought.”
- “Being able to discontinue generational mistakes made.”
- “Discipline, I tend to yell a lot and I hate the fact that I get so angry sometimes.”

Father of 5-12 year old

Father of 0-4 year old

Father of 0-4 year old

MFFN Vision



Healthy Fathers=Healthy Families= Healthy Communities

The Fatherhood Revolution

- From the quiet revolution of the 1970s and 1980s in the privacy of the family



Fathers' Revolution of 21st Century UK leading the Way

- “One priority I have argued for is what I call a fathers’ revolution—with more fathers becoming directly involved in their children’s learning and schooling...And we must do more to encourage dads’ role in the home.”

Gordon Brown UK Prime Minister



Important Steps in Minnesota

- 1. Raise Standards of Behavior for Fathers
- 2. Directly Address Barriers to Father Involvement from Male Socialization
- 3. Early Education and Intervention for All Fathers
- 4. Recruit more men to work with fathers
- 5. Identify common ground and support each other working with all fathers

Raising Standards for Fathering Behavior

- 90% of fathers in MN in our survey said they were above average fathers.
- Gender equity in both the workplace and home as a goal.



Directly Address Attitudes From Male Socialization

- Beliefs about fathers' primary role as breadwinner
- Reluctance of men to seek help-ask for directions about child rearing
- Beliefs that formal learning, education and schools are women's work



R. Goldman (2005)

Increase Father Involvement with Infants & Toddlers

- Critical Period for fathers
 - To build a secure attachment
 - To learn caretaking skills
 - To build habits of responsibility
 - To learn new ways to guide child behavior



Recruiting Men to Work with Fatherhood Programs

- How do we attract more men to this work?
- How do we build our leadership capacity for working with fathers?



Fathers to the Forefront

- **Policy Arena:** Identify and implement policy changes that strengthen fathers and families.
- **Education Arena:** Strengthen education for all aspects of fatherhood across many settings.
- **Services and Support Arena:** Create and expand resources for fathers and all men seeking support to become the best parent they can be.
- **Research Arena:** Develop data streams that “count fathers”, identify and advocate for promising practices around fathers.

Proposed Set of Indicators

- **Age of Fathers** at birth of child
- **Education level** of fathers at birth of child
- **Marital status** of fathers at birth of child
- **Paternity establishment** rate for unmarried births
- **Rate of Child Support payments** by fathers
- Father's perceptions of **Roles**
- Father's assessment of **Quality of own Parenting**
- Father's **Satisfaction** with Parenting
- Father involvement and **engagement patterns** with children
- **Sources of Support** for Fathers
- **Programs** for Fathers
 - Number of programs
 - Types of services
 - Number of fathers served

Benefits of Positive Father-Child Relationship for Children

- Improved social skills
- Improved cognitive skills
- Increased problem solving abilities
- Fewer behavior problems
- High level of school success
- Higher self-esteem



Benefits for Fathers

- Greater sense of well-being
- More empathic
- Less self-centered
- Decrease in risky and unhealthy behaviors
- Increased self-scrutiny



Value Fatherhood

**“It is the most
important thing
that I have ever
done.”**

Father of 0-4 year old

