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Chicago Dept of Public Health



OFFICE OF VIOLENCE PREVENTION

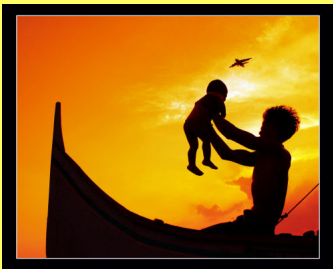

Violence Prevention E-Brief

Fathers As Protective Factors

According to Kyle Pruett, a Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at Yale Medical School and author of *Fatherneed: Why Father Care Is as Essential as Mother Care for Your Child*, fathers are not even mentioned in half the research on the relationship between family and child development, and yet, when we bother to look for the father's impact, WOW, do we find it! Dads can be powerful protective factors in their children's lives. They can:

- Help their child separate from Mom when the time comes for that major step
- Compliment Mom's safety and nurturing with challenges and stimulation
- Support their child's novelty-seeking behavior
- Help master frustration
- Improve children's interactions with siblings
- Help a child learn to form relationships with both sexes
- Stretch their child's communication skills

Tool Box for Fathers

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build in rituals with your children...read a story, have a special goodnight, a regular 'date' • Be affectionate– tell them often how much you love them • Laugh and cry together! • Let them know you believe and hope in them • Be attentive –be there! 	<p>Some DAD stereotype-busters <i>from Kyle Pruett</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single African-American dads stick around more than others • Absence from the home does not equal less paternal contact • Most teen dads see their children at least every other day
 <p>A man never stands as tall as when he kneels to help a child</p>	<p>A growing body of research shows that father involvement enhances children's well-being.</p> <p>Children with involved fathers exhibit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • greater school readiness • increased cognitive development • higher level of empathy and other positive characteristics.  <p><i>(Administration of Children and Families 2004)</i></p>