



ME WHAI PĀPĀ NGĀ TAMARIKI

WHY DADS?



**NZ's Best Father's Research, Parenting
Information and Support for Families**

KidzNeedDadz.org.nz

 **KidzNeedDadz**

WHY DADS?

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FOREWORD

It is possible that a child can get everything they need, from one parent, but without lots of help, it is likely to result in one exhausted parent. From early pregnancy and first parenting months, an involved father can help, support or arrange to meet many practical and emotional needs, of both the mother and child.

A well informed, engaged dad is vital to mum's recovery from any baby time issues or role changes.

Dads are wide open to learning around baby time, they are actually prewired to be caring parents and children benefit immensely from the ways dads are different. From a child's earliest days through to their teenage years, dads add extras, full whakapapa, family traditions, helping expand their children's self-esteem.

Dads also play different and often with physical contact, bringing healthy connection and in the form of 'rough' or play-fights, teaching vital skills in resourcefulness, understanding strength and developing resilience.

Research has found that a good bond with both mum and dad, by three years young, sets a child up for life.

Mum and dad do better if they have the Co-Pregnancy Conversation, about who does what, how to work as a team, give each other space and support. Get this balance right and your children are likely to benefit. For investment in a child's happiness, at least one happy, successful parent is apparently paramount.

With so many high-needs teenagers, and here in Auckland where by age 2, around 30% of children have no involved father, we have to ask why? Which dads could have been saved by early engagement or support?

Most maternity services engage both parents, if they don't, is this fair? What if dad ends up with baby?

We hope Why Dads? helps mums, dads and professionals to inform and encourage fathers.

Good outcomes for mothers and children probably depend on one.

Brendon

Brendon Smith
Kidz Need Dadz

Most men hopefully, have children as part of a loving relationship, they find out about a pregnancy as soon as possible. In the event of any awkward decisions, if fully informed, a father can confirm his position and contribute, like a parent or guardian should. In the event of a miscarriage or unexpected loss in the risky first trimester, a supportive father can help the mother by being a caring, listening and considerate partner.

Prior to conception, men should know that they are much more likely to pass on pollutants, including drugs which, at the time of conception, through their sperm, may affect the baby.

Once a pregnancy is in full swing, most mums experience this major transition, from independent individual to 24hr support provider for another being, over a few months. The transition travels a random route for fathers.

Getting an expecting dad to midwife visits, early scans and related meetings, may bring him along. During the last trimester, if an expecting dad feels a kick or a movement, for him, it could be - hey presto, we are dad!

We hope he is fully involved and attending ante-natal classes, ready to be a main support for mum and ready to be a busy, new, involved parent. We hope dads understand the benefits of hugs, along with emotional and physical intimacy. Understanding where your partner is at, how things are for her, may be all Dad has to do.

He may get a long abstinence from intercourse, while baby assumes ownership of the breasts. We hope mum is not alone, at first, and dad has someone to talk to, about dad stuff, even if they work full time.

During pregnancy, dads should abstain from drinking or smoking, anywhere near mum or baby, even right through breastfeeding. We also hope dad takes an interest in mum's diet or exercise needs.

Dads who get to hold baby soon after birth are more protective and likely to stay involved for life. Dads who know about the first few weeks with baby, how it may be crazy, stay home and help, things will usually be fine.

Mums get a drop in their oestrogen but increases in cortisol and testosterone, they may seem more stressed, possibly assertive or even aggressive in defending their needs, probably for the first time in dads' experience.

Most mums resume normal hormonal or related lives within weeks, but for tricky, caesarean or trauma births, allow 2-4mths.

Dad may need to work less and help with baby and chores.

If Mum does not have her mother around, in the first month at home, Dad has to be even more involved or pro-active in organising support.

In the first few days after baby, establishing breastfeeding can be quite a challenge. Dad should know all the benefits and cost savings in breast feeding, plus how to help and support the intricacies of the process. Make mum a comfy chair with no direct sun or noise, distract the toddler if necessary.

MEN AND PREGNANCY



DID YOU KNOW? DADS HORMONES CHANGE TOO!

Dads close to their partner in the third trimester... during the week or so, either side of the birth:

- Experience increases in levels of cortisol and prolactin, the 'stress hormone' and the 'breast feeding hormone' - these induce Oxytocin, commonly known as the bonding hormone.
- Get less testosterone and increased oestrogen - notice a reduced sex drive.
- Feel changes to a similar degree as mothers, esp. around the day of birth
- Recover or adjust back to normal levels within 2-3 weeks after birth.

RELATIONSHIP CHANGES DURING PREGNANCY

Having a baby is a major transition in a Mum and a Dad's lives, plus their relationship. All of a sudden, there's another person.

Their family dynamic is altered, in some ways, forever. In many cultures this has high spiritual relevance with significant, informative rituals. Modern men's lack of anticipation of how their 'relationship' changes around baby time is increasingly recognised as a factor in relationship break-ups.

Changes in relationships between new mums and dads may be based on:

- Our ideas of ourselves as a parent and our roles
- Our expectations of our partner, as a parent and in that role
- A new or expecting mum's increased practical and/or support needs

How many of us live and work like our parents did?

Couples should plan as a new, unique combination, form their own Co-Pregnancy - Co Parenting partnership. Couples who talk more about how they will share the roles of care and parenting, home and work, are more likely to stay-the-course if any baby time adjustment issues arise.

If dad is unaware of impending or recent changes, unsure of what to do, or unable to fix things, he may feel stressed. If he was his own worries, but no other support, it may be the first time that he has held anything back from his partner, for fear of upsetting her during a time when she is busy or fragile.

Expecting mums can be quite assertive about their needs during pregnancy and are encouraged to be. Coupled with a man's sense of responsibility for his partner, this may lead to him feeling unable to share or reach out for support. For some men this can have devastating effects, especially if he is isolated or working too hard.

Traditional male support networks, such as working men's clubs, sports clubs, or even the local pub, have broken down in many communities, or they always include mixed-gender situations. This can make it difficult for a man to find a safe place to talk about relationship or parenting issues without appearing disloyal in front of women.

Recommendations also include that dads take lots of leave, reduce overtime, do less shift work and be home, helping as much as possible. If dad is honourably busy, tell him to get his sister or his mate's wife involved!

Many Dads reaching out to KND for support, when they hear about these issues, say "If only I had known!"

Information and support for both Mum and Dad during pregnancy can bring awareness. If all attention is on the mother, even as she has such obvious needs, dads are even less likely to receive outside support than in other life situations, more likely to feel guilty about asking for such support in the first place.

Dads may not see the differences between their relationship to their partner and to their baby.

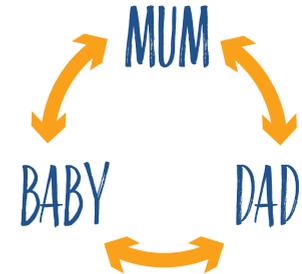
It can be said that while a mother has individual relationships to her partner and to each of her children, a man may think he has a relationship with each of his family. Her actions will be directed towards what she sees as being best for the individual child or her partner, his actions also towards the wellbeing of the family as a whole.

Fathers may feel they are doing an important job if they can provide their partner and child with choices: career opportunities for mum that do not arise from financial necessity, a safe "nest", opportunities for activities as a family, and for quality childcare or education. He may think he has done his job, Mum is the parent of babies.

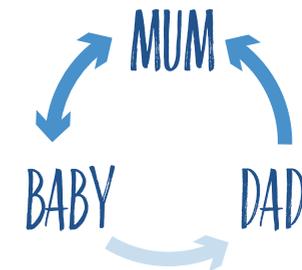
This attitude was useful at a time when a main provider/caregiver split in men's and women's roles existed, it can be counterproductive in modern situations. It can lead to role confusion in care sharing and adjustment issues in situations where the father is either the main caregiver, or if he spends significant time with the children due to shift work or self-employment. The couple may need to conjure up a new co-parenting partnership.

RELATIONSHIP AFTER CHILDBIRTH:

.....
How SHE sees it...



.....
...and how HE sees it



DADS CAN HELP DURING PREGNANCY

- Be a caring, listening and considerate partner
- No drinking or smoking near pregnant mums or babies.
- Support your Mum's diet or exercise needs
- Attend ante-natal classes or discussions
- Talk to baby, softly through the last weeks
- Be informed about labour or birth expectations, especially Mum's pain control preferences.
- If busy at work, arrange support for your partner
- Understand the coming relationship changes
- Understand your hormones and mood swings!
- Buy a bassinet and paint baby's room, quick!
- Organise a celebration, christening or naming day, but ensure the clean-up is not mum's job!

DADS AND BABIES

Dad's role at the birth is up to Mum. He could be very involved, eg, at-home-birth dads, part of the team in a maternity ward or birthing center, or bystander in a tricky labour.

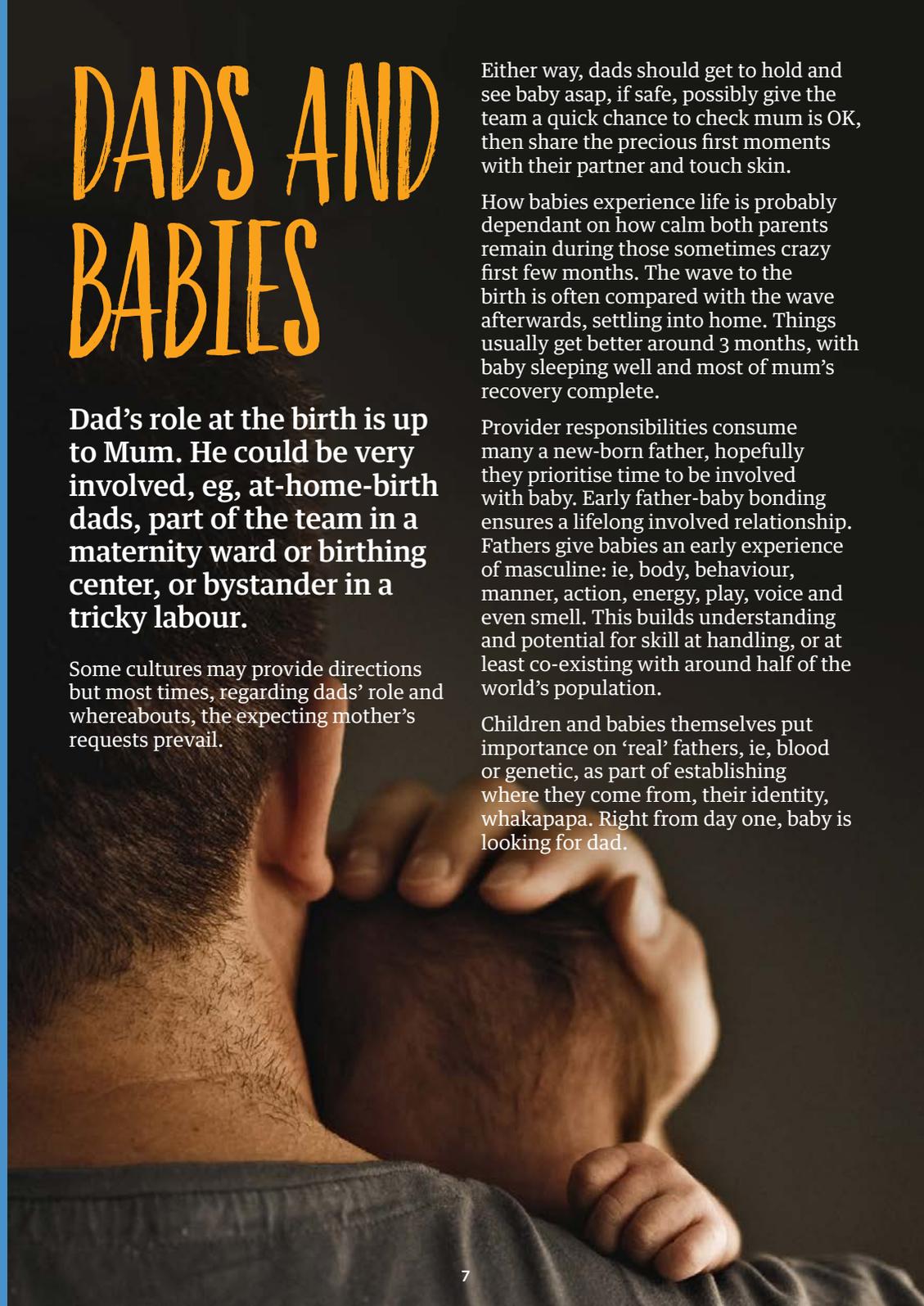
Some cultures may provide directions but most times, regarding dads' role and whereabouts, the expecting mother's requests prevail.

Either way, dads should get to hold and see baby asap, if safe, possibly give the team a quick chance to check mum is OK, then share the precious first moments with their partner and touch skin.

How babies experience life is probably dependant on how calm both parents remain during those sometimes crazy first few months. The wave to the birth is often compared with the wave afterwards, settling into home. Things usually get better around 3 months, with baby sleeping well and most of mum's recovery complete.

Provider responsibilities consume many a new-born father, hopefully they prioritise time to be involved with baby. Early father-baby bonding ensures a lifelong involved relationship. Fathers give babies an early experience of masculine: ie, body, behaviour, manner, action, energy, play, voice and even smell. This builds understanding and potential for skill at handling, or at least co-existing with around half of the world's population.

Children and babies themselves put importance on 'real' fathers, ie, blood or genetic, as part of establishing where they come from, their identity, whakapapa. Right from day one, baby is looking for dad.



DADS WITH NEW BABIES CAN...

- Be at the birth, support their partner, hold and treasure baby
- Support new-mum and baby heaps, especially the first few weeks
- Understand the gradual changes and recovery of their new-mums
- Enjoy bonding, including lots of play and skin-to-skin
- Support breast-feeding, for as long as possible
- Change nappies, get baby ready for feed-time
- Help with bath-time, hold baby in the water
- Stimulate baby, funny faces and noises
- Take care of baby, give mum a break.
- Play peek-a-boo and hidey-go-seek!
- Gently fly baby on airplane rides...!

PREGNANCY, BIRTH AND BEYOND

By understanding the early weeks of pregnancy, mums may have different appetites and aversions, by helping cook and taking an interest helps get us through the early weeks.

The later weeks, dads may need to carry the washing and anything heavy, Mum has a load!

If mum is alone at home, organise some contact, even if it's your mate's, brothers' wife...

Attend all the screening and scan appointments, take an interest, show your mates!

Listen at Ante-natal classes, the big test happens during labour, what did mum want?

If you feel anxious or worried, get someone to talk to, or try **0800 KND 123**

DADS LOVE TODDLERS

Dads are usually just like mums, in caring for a baby, cuddling, nurturing and gently protecting.

In front of mums, dads are very similar, safe and probably within the limits set by mothers.

If mums are not looking, dads play different! They introduce their own aspects of play and learn.

Mums teach togetherness, empathy and community. Dads test their children, hold them in different ways, play tricks on children by introducing silly aspects to obvious games, check whether the children are aware of other influences, introduce play fights, opening and challenging children's physical and emotional development.

Child development involves touch, through this children experience acceptance, love and connection. Through tickle or gentle play fights, girls especially experience healthy touch and acceptance. Through hugs with both parents, children experience connection with their wider world, right throughout their childhoods.

In slightly more risky or even rough play, dads encourage exercise, fitness, feelings of thrill and skill that empower and stimulate children. Play fights help boys measure their strength, without hurting anyone, while girls get mild knocks, which helps build their resilience.

Adaptability and resourcefulness progress with these sorts of games. Expectations dads place on children may generate early sport achievements or aspects of creativity.

Dads introduce problem solving, tests and tricks into games and play.

Gentle play-fights help develop resourceful, resilient children.

Dads introduce problem solving, tests and tricks into games and play.

Fathers build positive self-esteem that originates from a man. Failure to do this can make the young adult feel uneasy when around men, or uneasy being a man.

For sons, understanding of father is critical for a solid positive identity. Fathers need to touch children in affirming and nonsexual ways. For both sons and daughters, sex and affection may become confused if they do not.

Touch develops greater personal respect for children's bodies and a sense of being connected.. Boys especially need hugging and holding by men.

Children of involved dads develop a sense of adventure and confidence in their world. Fathers encourage big picture views and community driven action in children.

Dad time appears to have an important connection with the outdoors and wild places.



DADS AND DISCIPLINE

‘Wait till your father gets home!’ says the mum, after she has been running the household, nurturing the young ones and providing unconditional love.

With their distance and time away from the children, objective views and more rigid behaviour boundaries, fathers or full-time working mothers can often bring a better sense of justice and perspective to the complexities of parenting.

Consistency over time and unique appraisal for each child or incident brings order and reason to the multitude of developmental stages in every child’s life, plus it gives mothers a break!

The involved father’s guidance imparts a sense of internal structure, order and discipline. Children need focus and direction in a world that lacks balance and boundary.

Fathers often demonstrate more rigid boundaries than mothers, this may especially help boys or challenging girls as regularity in discipline engenders trust and security.

For daughters it is important to learn how to relate to a man in a safe, confident, affirming and boundary-setting manner. Loving approval from a father may prevent dependence and vulnerability in her relationships with men.

Fathers regular healthy touch and boundary setting helps teach daughters to deal safely with men’s sexuality.



DADS AND LEARNING



From the earliest days, the different types of stimulation dads provide will enhance and expand the nature of their children’s experiences. Dads are less verbal and encourage risk taking.

While it is said that children get their intelligence from their mothers, now most stay-at-home parents are women, it could also be said that children get more worldliness from dads.

Fathers in the past were usually in charge of children’s education, coming home from work to check homework and measure performance. Modern dads give objective, accurate feedback and praise.

From six weeks, babies know to expect play from dads, by age two they develop physical strength, activity and problem solving skills, play fights help manage excitement and decipher emotions.

For more gentle children, fathers help develop physical activity with safety strategies and rules.

Fathers can show how to manage aggression, anger and frustration through well managed, rules based, rough play. Emotions and feelings are more freely expressed and earlier understood.

Children may get self-esteem or approval from dad time that helps them to get on with life.

Fathers can add to a mother’s experiences and influences, provide multiple benchmarks, expose children to different work places, practices, connections and relationships.

Children who are raised with involved fathers tend to score higher on measures of verbal and mathematical abilities, plus demonstrate greater problem-solving and social skills.



PROVIDER DADS

Working fathers have to juggle work with quality parenting time, and love their child's mother!

Some fathers spend as little as 5 minutes a day actually talking/listening with their children. Take every opportunity to pick up/drop off your children.

Introduce other adults into their lives as mentors. Holiday with families who have similar age kids. Play games or enjoy idle time with your children.

Encourage independence - the more you do for your children, the more you disable them. Tell your children stories, include a few about what you were doing, at their age.

Give children most of your first ten minutes when you're home! Ask questions and listen hard!!

Some dads are driven to success at the cost of everything around them, thus some kids are more driven to success due to absence of father's time, inherent acceptance and love, which means dads who work too much, may also make kids more driven and successful.

Research papers that support the need for two parents.

In a 2004 study by the National Council on Family Relations, researchers noted that adolescents living outside two-biological-parent married families tend to exhibit more behavioural and emotional problems” and are “significantly less engaged in school.”

A study published in the February 2007 issue of the Journal of Population Economics notes: “There is longstanding evidence that youths raised by single parents are more likely to perform poorly in school and partake in ‘deviant’ behaviors such as smoking, sex, substance use, and crime.

Researchers such as Elizabeth Gould of Princeton University are discovering indications that fatherhood may increase the nerve connections in the region of a man's brain that controls certain types of goal-oriented behavior, including planning and foresight, judgment, and the prediction of behavioral consequences. The bottom line? The closer the relationship between Father&Child, the better it is for both—now and in the future.

Kyle Pruett, in his book *Fatherhood*, shows the effects of father attitude to care on a child's development. After considering dozens of potential influences, such as social class, economic and marital circumstances, birth order, and gender of children, Pruett concludes that a father's attitudes toward and behavioral sensitivity to the care of his children have a more positive influence on the child's socio-emotional development than the total amount of time spent in interaction with the child.

A February 2006 study by the University of Maryland's Population Research Center found strong links between a father's residence with his children and their well-being. While the authors expected to find that well-being was higher overall for children when their fathers lived with them, they seemed surprised when the evidence indicated it was higher still when the father was committed enough to be married to the children's mother, the finding that the legal relationship between the parents is also linked to child well-being is a relatively new and important discovery.”

POSTNATAL DEPRESSION PARTNER'S PERSPECTIVE



Fathers can be affected by postnatal depression directly or indirectly. Where they are affected indirectly (through their partner's depression) common issues are:

- Not knowing how to help a partner through her depression,
- Attempts to help or diagnose are frustrated or met with evasion.
- Disappointment: a father expects a baby to be a joyful event, and a happy time. He may feel his partner does not share the idea.
- Partner's anxieties 'rub off' on him and he feels agitated but not sure why.
- Feeling overwhelmed by responsibilities, partly by partner's altered needs and functionality.

A father may have long days at work and feel he has the baby thrown into his arms as soon as he comes home. Some fathers may go without sleep, or come home after a nightshift to a partner that does not seem to be coping and take over baby anyway.

His ability to function as a parent may be reduced due to pressure.

His reaction to a complaint may be direct and confrontational, not meaning to offend his partner, but needing an answer or solution to issues rather than just hearing the emotion. Some understanding about listening empathetically may improve reactions. Mothers may have to be careful not to dismiss the good things dads contribute.

POSTNATAL DEPRESSION IN FATHERS

Fathers can suffer from postnatal depression themselves. According to some studies postnatal depression is as common in men as in women (20-30% of all births). At the core of such adjustment problems for men are often:

- Uncertainty about their role (how much or how little does their partner want help)
- Mixed messages about his role from friends, family, media
- Own understanding of fatherhood not matching expectations
- Bonding with baby is frustrated by an exclusive mother-baby bond
- He may feel he is not earning enough to make him useful enough

- Reality different from expectations, initial relationship with the baby
- Feeling 'trapped' in the family, i.e. loss of emotional attention from partner, no real gain in emotional attention from offspring may make a father perceive family life as unrewarding, while at the same time social pressures prevent him from doing other things he might enjoy
- Unable to help or resolve problems with his partner, as if a failure
- Trapped in relationship he was unsure about, even if a keen father
- Not recognising or foreseeing signs of depression in his partner

A father may also crash or burn when his partner begins to recover from a trauma birth, PND themselves or even mild PTSD, especially as the events of the past months catch up with him.

He may feel guilty spending any time on himself, or waiting for the depression to be over so that they can get on with happy family life...

Either way he needs support as a parent and as a partner.

The birth of a baby, especially the first baby, is a time of great changes which both partners need to adjust to. There are major changes in the relationship of parents to each other, which can be a substantial contributing factor to the depression in either or both partners. It makes sense to involve both, men and women, in the postnatal relationship adjustment or counselling process.

If a mother becomes enrolled in a programme for the treatment of postnatal depression, the father should be given information about the programme as well as general resources about father support.

This plays a role in thinking about how the father sees himself in the relationship and in relation to the child. A worker dealing with the mother most should also try to establish a relationship with the father. This is to keep an eye on the father's own mental health, and it may also aid the depressed mother by giving her the feeling that her family is in need, not just her in isolation.

Where parents are separated, establishing contact with the father may also be useful, unless this would distress the mother even further. Running a partner evening can go a long way in establishing a support network for the fathers.

For a part of the evening the group should be split in men and women, and the male group facilitated by another man. Relationship issues can then be discussed more easily in the re-united group between men and women.

Questions you may ask a father with a postnatally depressed partner, or when facilitating a men's group during a postnatal depression programme:

What is it like to come home from work at the moment?

Does she appreciate your efforts to help?

How do you feel about having a baby?

Are you worried about baby?

Do you know what to do to help her out of her PND?

Do you want to know more about postnatal depression?

Research papers Continued...

Kyle Pruett makes several suggestions to help men develop a strong connection with their children. "What I mean by fathering is involved fathering," he writes. "This is male behavior beyond insemination that promotes the well-being and healthy development of one's child and family in active ways."

Then, with the caveat that "a list of behaviors can't possibly encompass all important aspects of fathering," he names a few of the "everyday characteristics" of an involved father:

1. Feeling and behaving responsibly toward one's child
2. Being emotionally engaged
3. Being physically accessible
4. Providing material support to sustain the child's needs
5. Exerting influence in child-rearing decisions

Are fathers necessary? Based on the statistics, the right type of father is in high demand. In fact, loving, engaged and committed fathers are perhaps more important than ever before.

Loving involvement requires more than words. A father must be plugged in to the daily operation of his family so he can clearly see his children's needs. It is increasingly evident that fathers can't sit on the sidelines or let mothers parent alone.

No man is perfect. The first thing a dad should realize is that you cannot be a perfect parent in all aspects but he can try to be a good one. We all commit mistakes but we should learn from our mistakes and the mistakes of others and better ourselves.

- So, how to be a good father to your children?
- How to be a father your kids would be proud of?
- What are the traits or qualities one should develop to be a good father?

I am sure many men would want to know the answers to the questions so that they can develop those characteristics.

LONG TERM BENEFITS OF AN ACTIVE INVOLVED FATHER

Few parents would now argue that single-parenting is ideal. While some single parents do great jobs, they probably find it exhausting.

An impressive body of research suggests that fathers and mothers make different though equally important contributions to the healthy development of children and that neither parent is dispensable.

At Kidz Need Dadz we often refer to the H and X of kids.

Boys need to watch and copy dads to learn how to be a man and especially how to behave in front of women. Boys also need mums to learn approximately how to have a relationship with a woman.

Girls need to watch and copy mums to learn how to be a woman and especially how to behave in front of men. Girls also need dads around to learn and practice how to have a relationship with a man.

The love a girl gives to her dad, is her first test of whether her love will one day win her a good man.

Fathers interrupt that intensity between the mother and the child, which builds more individuality.

Fathers double the extended family and this can teach families to work together in common cause.

For a son, a trusted and affirming father prevents unhealthy dependence on, or use of women for approval, identity, companionship and support.

For both boys and girls, love and dependency can be confused without a father.

Fathers tend to promote a sense of risk-taking and excitement in children.

Fathers often trick their children, test them, plus they expend physical exercise.

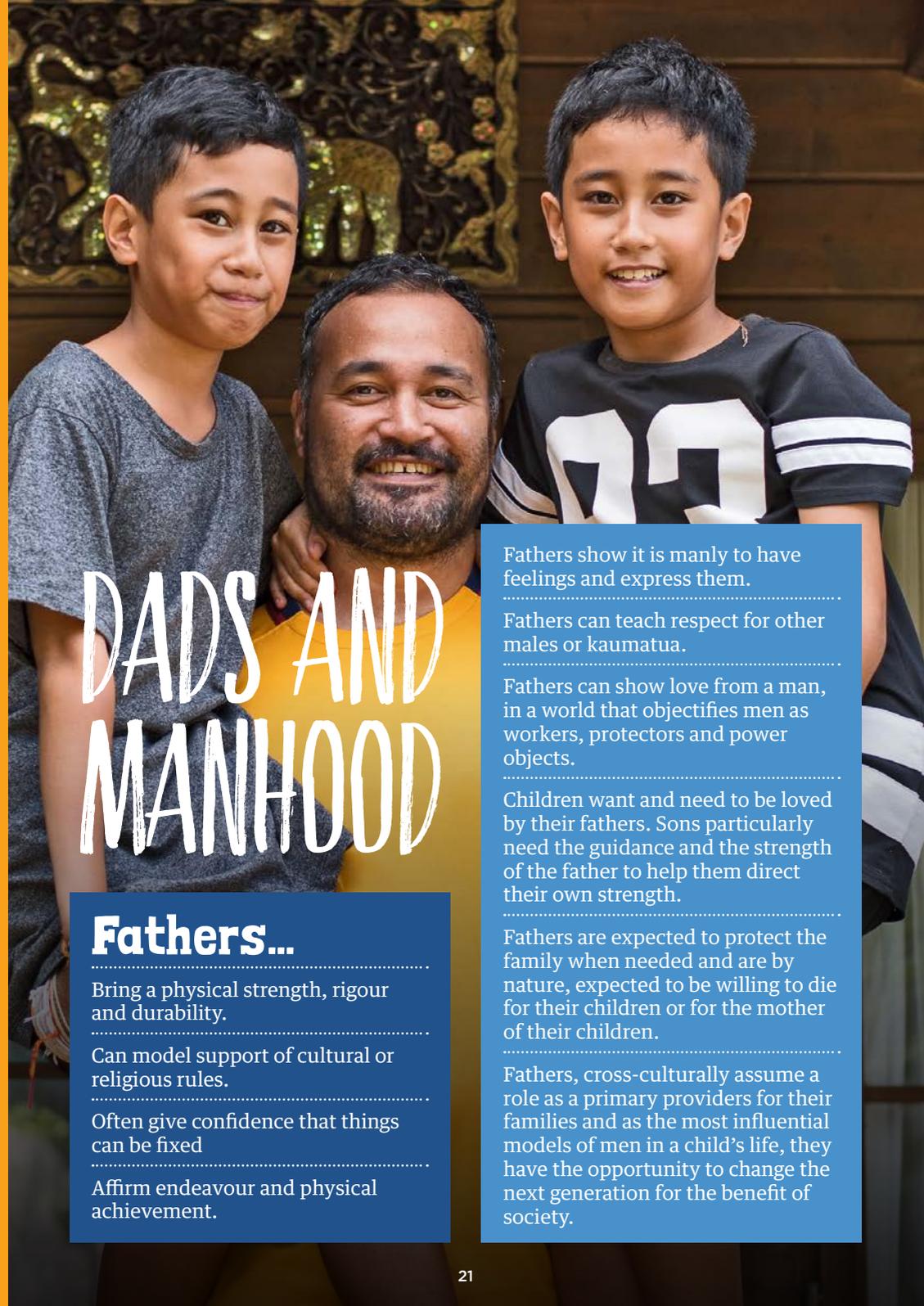
Fathers often demonstrate a respectful, loving and equal relationship with a woman.

Fathers can back up mothers and demonstrate affection and respect for women.

Fathers can support mothers in giving each child two parents to listen to them, watch and interact with.

Mothers and fathers demonstrate through their modelling how to have happy, respectful relationships.

A report from Warwick Pudney and others called, "Fathering our City" for Waitakere City in 2004 collated information on needs and statistics for New Zealand on fatherlessness. We gratefully acknowledge their work and parts of the report that have been used in this publication.



DADS AND MANHOOD

Fathers...

Bring a physical strength, rigour and durability.

Can model support of cultural or religious rules.

Often give confidence that things can be fixed

Affirm endeavour and physical achievement.

Fathers show it is manly to have feelings and express them.

Fathers can teach respect for other males or kaumatua.

Fathers can show love from a man, in a world that objectifies men as workers, protectors and power objects.

Children want and need to be loved by their fathers. Sons particularly need the guidance and the strength of the father to help them direct their own strength.

Fathers are expected to protect the family when needed and are by nature, expected to be willing to die for their children or for the mother of their children.

Fathers, cross-culturally assume a role as a primary providers for their families and as the most influential models of men in a child's life, they have the opportunity to change the next generation for the benefit of society.

DADS AND SELF-ESTEEM



.....
Accuracy and uniqueness are vital aspects to giving praise.
.....

Over use of approving acceptances may end up impeding motivation.
.....

Specific endorsements and careful feedback on areas to improve are far better than general praise or a simple pass mark.
.....

Catch your kids, as well as others, being good, and praise them. Praise their effort, special details and use constructive ideas.
.....

Reward determination, enterprise and initiative as well as results. From the age of six, boys especially take notice of their dads.
.....

Make sure each of your children think they are most important. Spend quality time each week with your teenage daughter, know her dreams and her best friends.
.....

Know that your adolescent boy will learn most things by osmosis, that is by just being around his father, he will absorb behaviours.
.....

Show affection, hold and cuddle your kids, play tickle fights! Hang out with your kids as long as they let you.
.....

Tell your daughter she is beautiful, clever and sweet, every day. Listen to your children's issues, stories, sadness, anger, fears or joy.
.....

Fathers who support their children emotionally tend to raise children who are more in-tune with the needs of others.
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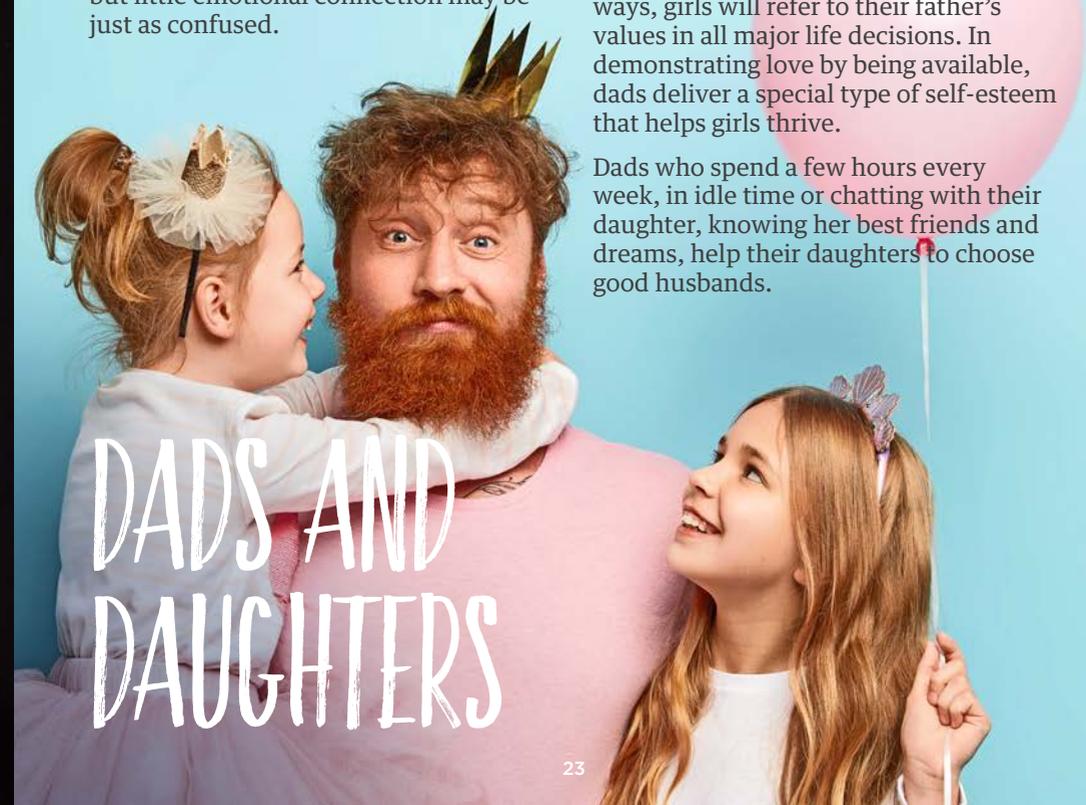
Active fathers help children's self-esteem by being fully involved in their lives and letting them know that they are highly valued.
.....

You only need to tell your daughter she is beautiful, clever and nice, every day.

Psychiatrist Frank Pittman says in 'Women and Their Fathers' by Victoria Secunda, "When it comes to little girls, God the father has nothing on father, the god. This is an awesome responsibility."

Dad is usually the first man a little girl loves and learns to relate to. How Dad responds to her, and how he encourages her, may form the basis of how she will relate to all men in her family, relationships and work domains throughout her life.

A girl feels abandonment, betrayal and anger when she is denied a close connection to her father. Unless adequately dealt with, they will plague her young and adult years. A girl who has close physical proximity to a dad, but little emotional connection may be just as confused.



DADS AND DAUGHTERS

Daughters want dads who can show feelings; who nurture; who adjust to a daughters continually changing emotions or transition to womanhood; dads who, according to Victoria Secunda, "walk the thin line between too much closeness and too much distance".

Dads are expected to be an actively involved parent and demonstrate a healthy marriage. A father who displays affection, respect, and a true partnership with his wife provides an incredible example that his daughter will want to mirror in her own life.

When a father fully and wholeheartedly supports his daughter, she will develop strong self-esteem and a positive self-image. Without having to agree to everything, a dad's unconditional love allows girls to take risks, make the odd mistake, but know they will still be protected and cared for.

Dads need to be role models in many ways, girls will refer to their father's values in all major life decisions. In demonstrating love by being available, dads deliver a special type of self-esteem that helps girls thrive.

Dads who spend a few hours every week, in idle time or chatting with their daughter, knowing her best friends and dreams, help their daughters to choose good husbands.

Solo dads are the fastest growing share of the parenting sector.

Around one in six solo parents is a dad and according to NZ Census 2006, as they grow older, there are more solo dads than mums.

In early Britain, it is said that many children spent a part of their childhood in homes where dad was the only surviving parent. Oldest siblings, aunts and nannies filled the gaps in childbirth survival. The percentage of solo dads in NZ has stayed reasonable steady at 16-17% for over thirty years.

Solo dads who saw Kidz Need Dadz around 2009 said, 'someone to talk to' and parenting support, along with 'help with work' are top of their wish lists.

Most felt that their kids were happy, but around half said they would not be solo dads if they had a choice. They also asked for a fathers' newsletter, a drop in centre for dads, a support group and/or ways to meet other dads.

Solo dads have very similar needs to solo mums, they ask for support less and are often isolated by a combination of inevitable and avoidable issues. Dads may not easily fit in to coffee groups as group dynamics change, while parenting agencies may not actively invite dads due to policy.

Many solo dads are in high risk, young parenting situations with low money and education. These dads need even more support to ensure their children are not missing out. Most solo dads of young children had lived with the children's mother previously, so may be dealing with loss issues.

Warren Farrell quotes in a US study that academic outcomes for children of solo dads was higher than for solo mums, probably due to the commitment and focus most dads bring to their role.

We know that many solo dads do a fantastic job with little or minimal help, developing great children and hopefully leaving a legacy of parenting mentorship for generations to come.

SHARED CARE DADS

Fathers who are forced into a new arrangement or even a lifetime of shared-care, struggle into a mode that's almost the opposite of what fathers want to be, available, protective and dependable.

It is harder to make shared care work if it is imposed on parents who are highly conflicted.

Parents who willingly agree to a shared-care deal are typically older and continue to live in close proximity to one another. Their children tend to be of school age and their parenting relationship is co-operative, flexible and focused on their child's welfare. Outcomes are usually better here.

Children need to see and hear their parents co-operating about them, if not everything, with age appropriate child consultation and hopefully special time for each child.

Communication requires both parents to show respect to each other, in front of the child. When the children see and hear this, their self-esteem rises as they know their parents have but their issues below the children's needs. Abuse of a parent in front of a child, is abuse of half the child.

Parents should aim to agree on Guardianship decisions, early parenting mix, pre-school or ongoing medical needs, while children should be consulted on all possible subjects.

Good outcomes for children are more likely based on the quality of relationship between the parents than an even split of time with each parent. Dads need regular contact and kids need financial support - but Disneyland dads who are also soft on discipline create dependent children.

Quality time for shared care dads may be similar to that of provider dads who work too hard. Plan holidays with other kids and demand family friendly work conditions, including parental leave, flexible hours and work from home options.

Shared care dads who demonstrate respect for the children's mother, even in tricky circumstances, show that they know children need this. Dads who keep such promises help develop self-esteem immensely and keep children's faith in adults alive.



SOLO DADS

KIDZ NEED DADZ RESOURCES



DISCOVERING FATHERHOOD

Correspondence Parenting Course

10-modules that are crucial to good parenting. Each module comes with a questionnaire. The answers are evaluated and marked, written feedback is given. Tailored selections of modules can be made to suit your stage or situation. A certificate is awarded on completion.

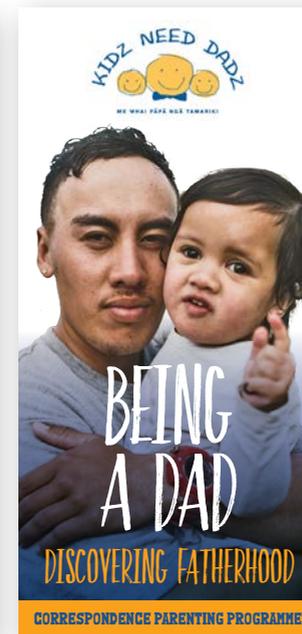
MODULE 1
Early Childhood - Brain Development and the Father's Role.
MODULE 2
Early Childhood - Behaviour, Discipline and Parenting Styles (young children).
MODULE 3
Early Childhood - Learning and Safety, Playing and Thinking.
MODULE 4
Pre-schoolers and Beyond, Toilet Training, Sleeping and Routines.
MODULE 5
Choosing Childcare and School, Helping Your Child Succeed.

MODULE 6
Parenting 5 - 12 Year Olds, Supporting Emotional Development.
MODULE 7
Your Own Upbringing - How it Impacts on Your Parenting, Parenting Values.
MODULE 8
Teenagers, The Teenage Brain, Adolescent Brain and Behaviour.
MODULE 9
Development and Issues, Teen Problems and Teen Stages.
MODULE 10
When Parents Don't Live Together, Separation, Blended Families, and Behind Bars.



Need a Hand?

DL brochure outlining what we can do to help fathers and resources.



Discovering Fatherhood

Information on our comprehensive correspondence course regarding parenting from infancy through to the late teens.



New Dads!

DL brochure with advice for birth time.

USEFUL LINKS

Active Movement DVDs from SPARC.org.nz

Music, dance, exercise routines for parents of babies and toddlers.

21 Practical Alternatives to Smacking

pdf file - google search via Barnardos

Parenting through Separation

A free program at justice.govt.nz/family

SKIP.org.nz

Tips for new parents

GreatFathers.org.nz

Good info for new dads

RaisingChildren.org.nz

App/Support for all parents

Call any Kidz Need Dadz office for local services and latest resources.

ABSENCE OF DADS

Things that may happen when Fathers are Absent:

Children may feel unprotected. There is increased risk of abuse from new partners, strangers and the mother. (Farrel, 2001)

Boys have more trouble with the police and law and anti-social behaviour. 90% of West Auckland police-involved youth are fatherless. (Police Interview Nov.2005)

Boys are more inclined to suicide and have poor mental health. Fatherless males are 5 times more likely to suicide. 63% of NZ youth suicides are from fatherless homes. (McCann 1999)

Boys will likely be more dependent on mothers. The intensified relationship can make adolescent separation more troublesome and adversarial.

Boys are likely to transfer that dependency to a woman partner.

Boys may lack the clear, more black and white boundaries that males tend to hold. Under- fathered men are more likely to be violent to their partners.

Under-fathered girls are more likely to become pregnant. (US and NZ, 2 to 8 times Ellis, 2003)

The under-fathered child is more likely to use drugs. Fatherless boys are 10 times more likely to abuse chemicals. (NZ McCann)

Fatherless boys may feel angry and cheated, uneasy around friendly adult males. Authority figures receive a lot of the projected anger felt for the absent father.

Truancy may increase. Fatherless boys are 71% of high school dropouts. (US 2001) and 9 times more likely to drop out of high school. (NZ McCann 1999)

Fatherless boys are 20 times more likely to end up in prison. (McCann 1999)

Solo parent boys may feel a duty to be 'the man' of the house and may become prematurely adultified.

Poverty is more common in fatherless homes. Single parent families are 3x more likely to experience poverty than a 2 parent home

Educational achievements may be reduced. 80% of referrals to Resource Teachers of Learning and Behaviour are Boys. (NZ 2009)

90% of all homeless and runaway children come from fatherless homes. (Farrell US 2002)

There may be difficulty feeling confident while dealing with or around males in later life for both boys and girls.

Physical health, happiness and social skills may all be reduced, especially if father absence is linked to parental alienation.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?



There is only so much we can cover in a resource like this. Kidz Need Dadz also offer staff or agency training:

- PMH and Dads training for Midwives, Plunket and Maternity workers
- Engaging Dads for family support agencies like CYFs/OT, Barnardos
- Self Litigating Dads for parents attending mediation or Family Court.

OUR MISSION

Strengthening father/child relationships through support, education & fun.

WHAT WE OFFER

DadzKare Personal/ Group Support

- Baby Time Issues
- Parenting Support
- Mediation, Shared Care
- Surviving Separation

KND Education

- Why Dads? - Baby Time booklets
- Parenting Correspondence Course
- Anger Management, by Correspondence

KidzKare Supervised Contact Services

KND Family Fun Events

DadzKare Support Line

0800 563 123

FIND OUT
HOW WE CAN
SUPPORT YOU

- Email/Msg/Txt
- Phone: 0800 563 123
- Make appointment
- Drop in to see us
- Dadzkare Group
- Fun Events



KidzNeedDadz.org.nz

 **KidzNeedDadz**



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