

Welcome!

# Parenting Together Even If You Are Not

Dad Allies  
Learning Series Session  
April 14, 2022  
11:30-1:00 PM

Michael Ramos – National Trainer  
on Fatherhood Engagement and  
Co-parenting



Thomas V.  
Giddens Jr.  
Foundation



# Engaging Dads & Co-Parenting



# Why is it so Difficult?

- Gender/Norm Stereotypes
- The Reason we are Co-Parenting
- Separating Relationships from Parenting
- Other Reasons?





# Obstacles

- **Criticism** – Attacking someone's personality or character rather than a behavior
- **Contempt** – Insults and psychological abuse, hostile humor, sarcasm, sneers, rolling your eyes
- **Defensiveness** – Denying responsibility, making excuses, yes-butting, cross complaining
- **Stonewalling** – Similar to withdrawal and avoidance, refusal to respond as a pattern



**Why is it so Important**

# Gender Impact

## **Mothers** tend to:

- Do more teaching
- Play more verbal and visual games.
- Be more cautious
- Stay with activities longer

## **Dads** tend to:

- Teach
- Get babies excited
- Play more physical and active
- Encourage Exploration

## **Different does not mean wrong**

These differences help babies learn:

- How to manage their emotions
- How to get calm when they're stirred up and excited

They learn they can have strong, exciting feelings and then be calmed.

# Father's Attitudes

- Dads see parenting as central to their identity
- Work-family balance is a challenge for many working fathers.
- Dads are much more involved in child care than they were 50 years ago.
- While they're spending more time with their children, many dads feel they're not doing enough.
- Most Americans think men face a lot of pressure to provide financially for their family.

<https://pewrsr.ch/2F2s3dl>



**AS THE FATHER  
SEES**



**AS THE CHILD  
SEES**



**AS THE MOTHER  
SEES**





# Co-Parenting Stats

---

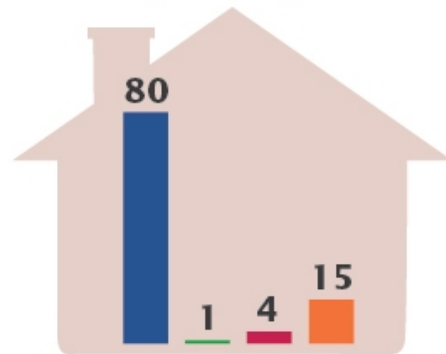


# Fathers Numbers

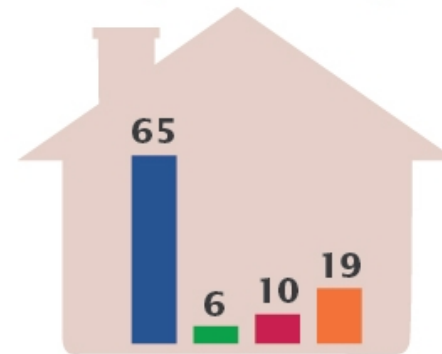
- 74.7 million fathers in the United States (ages 15 +)
- 28% of adult men are fathers to biological children under 18 years old
- 9% have children with more than one person
- 2% of adult men are single fathers to bio children under 18
- Men are 22% of all single parents (2.5 million)
- 7% of fathers are stay-at-home in 2016
- 17% of all stay-at-home parents are men

# Living Arrangements of Children Under Age 18

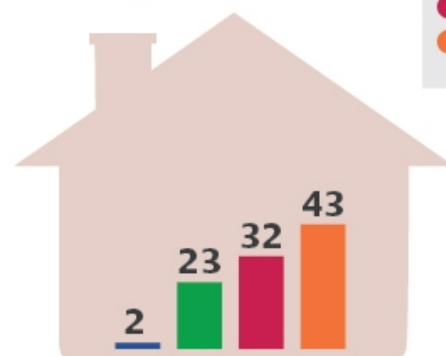
**50.7M**  
Living with two parents



**17.2M**  
Living with mother only



**2.8M**  
Living with no parent present

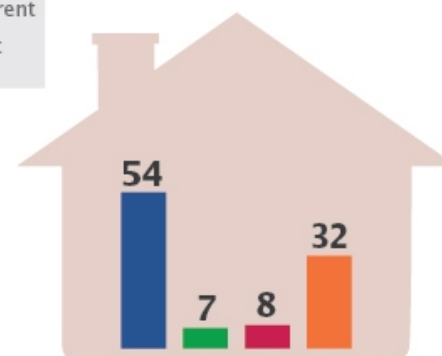


**What other relatives live in the household?**

(In percent)

- Sibling only
- Grandparent only
- Both sibling and grandparent
- No sibling or grandparent

**3.0M**  
Living with father only



M = millions

# How Many Men Are Dads?

Proportion of Men Age 15 and Over Who Are Fathers



Roughly 6 in 10 men are fathers

United States<sup>®</sup>  
**Census**  
Bureau

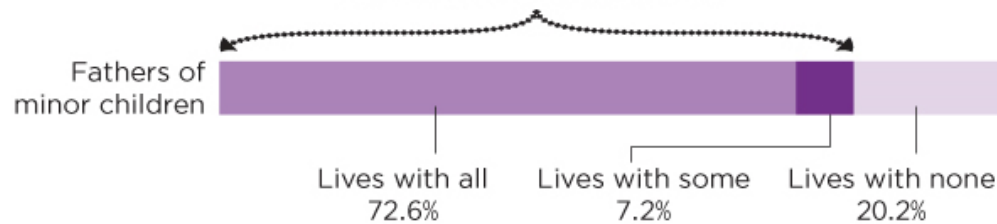
U.S. Department of Commerce  
Economics and Statistics Administration  
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU  
[census.gov](http://census.gov)

Source: Survey of Income and Program Participation,  
2014 Panel, Wave 1,  
[www.census.gov/sipp/](http://www.census.gov/sipp/)

# How Many Dads Live with Their Kids?

## Coreidence of Fathers and Their Biological Children Age 18 and Under

79.8% of fathers of minor biological children live with all or some of them





# Making Families Stronger by Engaging Dads and Encouraging Co-Parenting





# Why are fathers so important?

- **Children** with involved fathers:
- More likely to be emotionally secure & socially connected to peers
- Have increased curiosity, math and verbal skills
- Get into less trouble at home, in school, and their neighborhood
- Have increased sense of stability & security, combating toxic stress
- More likely to finish high school and attend college
- More likely to find and keep a steady job
- Girls have higher self-esteem; Boys have fewer school behavior problems

**Mothers** with involved partners are more likely to:

- have healthier habits
- More likely to receive 1<sup>st</sup> trimester prenatal care
- reduce smoking (36% reduction)
- attend parenting classes
- higher birthweight, full-term births
- be more successful at breastfeeding
- lower infant mortality
- dads help more with baby

# Dads Impact

- “Fathers provide relatively more excitatory, destabilizing, and challenging environments for children. This facilitates the process of child exploration and opens children to the world outside the safety provided by the mother-child attachment relationship.”
- (Hagman, Amanda, “Father-Child Play Behaviors and Child Emotion Regulation “ (2014). All Graduate Theses and Dissertations. Paper 2801.

## Benefits for children - example

“The most significant factor for mothers to initiate bottle-feeding was the mother’s perception of the father’s attitude . . . Generally, fathers had more positive attitudes than their partners expected.”



Pediatrics, November 2000

## Benefits for fathers - example

Involved fathers experience a wider range of emotions and develop expanded ability for compassion.

Fatherneed: Why Father Care is as Essential as Mother Care for Your Child, Kyle Pruett, MD





## Other benefits for children

- Enter school more patient, curious and confident
  - Fewer behavior problems in boys
  - Girls tend to be happier, more willing to try new things
- 
- Building Blocks for Father Involvement
  - U.S. Administration for Children and Families
  - June 2004

# Strategies to Engage Dads

- Request father info on all forms and reports
- Include dads' story's and photos in newsletters
- Regularly ask about fathers in supervision
- Encourage fathers to participate
- Explain to dad why he is important
- Ask about the child's birth from dad's POV
- Suggest specific actions he can take
- Use team sports as a metaphor for family life
- Help fathers connect to other fathers
- Address mom's concerns

# Methods to Begin Conversations with Fathers

- Invite fathers to be present for activities
- Help staff person develop self-confidence
- Model communication for couples
- Address resistance from moms and others
- Advise parents how to divide childcare tasks
- Invite fathers to be present on home visits
- Use dad specific curricula and language

# Reflective Listening

- Listen with a clear and open mind
- Listen for content as well as feelings
- Listen for the underlying meaning
- Put yourself in the other's position.
- Look for nonverbal cues
- Restate and reflect: "I hear you saying \_\_\_\_\_ and you feel \_\_\_\_\_."



# Program Goal Examples

- Implement participant focus groups with dads
- Update referral form to gather dad's info
- Create a dad curriculum box within our library
- Identify male role model for program planning
- Hold training on enhancing our work with dads
- Sponsor Annual Father's Day Event
- Increase outreach to places where males gather,
  - i.e., barber shops, sporting events, etc.



# Dads encourage independence

- Mom's are ready to help babies, so they don't get too frustrated.
- Dad's help babies manage their frustration and keep going.
- Babies need BOTH.



**Things WE can do Better**

# State of the World's Fathers Unlocking the Power of Men's Care 2019

- **Improve laws and policies**
  - policies to engage men in prenatal visits, childbirth, and postnatal care,
  - governments and employers offer equal, fully paid, non-transferable parental leave for all parents
- **Transform social and gender norms**
  - change attitudes of service providers
  - media campaigns to inspire men, their families, and their communities
- **Guarantee economic and physical security for vulnerable families**
- **Help couples and co-parents thrive**
  - Father-specific parent training
- **Put individual fathers' care into action**
  - Early years and baby groups should be more inclusive of dads,
  - Build fathers' confidence and competence.

## Contact Info:

- Michael Ramos
- [fatherhoodtrainings@gmail.com](mailto:fatherhoodtrainings@gmail.com)
- [Michael.Ramos@mass.gov](mailto:Michael.Ramos@mass.gov)
- 617-416-8182