

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF FATHERS IN THE HOME**

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"Wait till your father gets home!" used to be a mother's ultimate threat. But with the two-parent household becoming less and less common, a new research study in *Child Development* (1999) set out to study how important contact with dad is to children's development. This study found that even when fathers do not live at home, children whose fathers are actively involved in their lives tend to have better cognitive and language skills and fewer behavior problems. They found that fathers who are involved with their children have children with fewer problems. That added involvement from a father helps children tremendously.

The researchers wanted to see how aspects of father involvement were related to the children's cognitive development, language ability, and behavior. They found that both mothers' and fathers' satisfaction with parenting were significantly related to the children's cognitive abilities and to their behavior. Whether the father lived with the child was not related to either of these factors. Maternal education and whether fathers contributed financially were also predictive of the children's language development and behavior. And where fathers lived with the child, "the home was more child-centered," according to the report.

This research concluded that the importance of father-child interaction to children's well-being is very important. This study also note that rather than just looking at whether the biological father lives with the child, researchers need to consider father roles from functional and cultural perspectives. Fathers definitely play an important part in children's development. I think these results show that our society should develop family-oriented policies and programs that promote positive father involvement.