



What Women And Other Providers Can Do To Encourage Fathers

1. Understand that fathers/men often don't know how much children need them
 - a. Men are often scared and uncertain about what is appropriate with children
 - b. Create experiential learning situations where fathers can safely learn
2. Encourage mothers to encourage fathers
 - a. It WORKS. When moms encourage dads in a supportive way, dads participate
 - b. When fathers are actively engaged, mothers will have much more "down time"
 - c. Whether or not a mom likes a father or not is not nearly as important as is the father available and interested in his children's welfare. It is often essential to remind mothers about the good father will do for them, if fathers are allowed and encouraged to be involved.
 - d. As trusted female educators who are in a position of knowledge about children's needs, you can educate mothers about the long term value to both a child and to the mom when a father is involved
3. Use 'kid gloves' when fathers make mistakes
 - a. Sometimes what you are witnessing is their struggle and effort. If shamed or discouraged they may not try again (at least not soon)
 - b. Encourage fathers and be specific what you appreciate about them.
4. Understand that some men won't immediately respond to your good intentions/efforts
 - a. When working with men, remember men don't open up immediately
 - b. To build trust - show fathers you trust them
 - c. If you are uncomfortable, or if you perceive the man to be uncomfortable, ask another man for assistance
5. Specifically let dads know they are welcome
 - a. Talk to men when visiting or calling their homes; when arriving at centers, in your newsletters
 - b. Create a sign "Dads Welcome. Come On In"
6. Do not make assumptions about a man's interests or abilities but do assume fathers will be involved!
 - a. Not all men know how to change a light bulb or know how to appropriately discipline a child
 - b. Ask fathers what they like to do and/or how they would like to be involved
7. Encourage "emotion coaching"/nurturing behavior/Father's Love
 - a. Provide men experiences to see that children need their empathy, validation of their feelings and praise for their accomplishments
 - b. More than anything else a father will do, it is his love and the bond of that love that will ensure his connectedness throughout the child's lifetime.