

# Fathers Are Best

TFL President, Bob Vander Plaats, frequently comes under scrutiny for opposing same-sex “marriage” and other arrangements that seek to replace marriage or family.

But those bringing scrutiny are asking the wrong questions. They shouldn’t be asking “How can you be against, (fill in the blank)?” They, and we all, should be asking, “What is best?”

Let’s take, for example, the importance and role of fathers in the lives of their children and ask the most important question:

What kind of impact can a father have in the well being of his family?

A noted sociologist, Dr. David Popenoe, is one of the pioneers of the relatively young field of research into fathers and fatherhood. “Fathers are far more than just ‘second adults’ in the home,” he says. “Involved fathers bring positive benefits to their children that no other person is as likely to bring.”<sup>6</sup> Fathers have a direct impact on the well-being of their children.

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/fatherhood/chaptertwo.cfm>

## ***How does a father influence his children?***

*“The best thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother.” – John Wooden, Wooden: A Lifetime of Observations and Reflections On and Off the Court*

One of the most important influences a father can have on his child is indirect—fathers influence their children in large part through the quality of their relationship with the mother of their children. A father who has a good relationship with the mother of their children is more likely to be involved and to spend time with their children and to have children who are psychologically and emotionally healthier. Similarly, a mother who feels affirmed by her children's father and who enjoys the benefits of a happy relationship is more likely to be a better mother. Indeed, the quality of the relationship affects the parenting behavior of both parents. They are more responsive, affectionate, and confident with their infants; more self-controlled in dealing with defiant toddlers; and better confidants for teenagers seeking advice and emotional support.<sup>7</sup>

*Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. Ephesians 5:25*

Fathers who treat the mothers of their children with respect and deal with conflict within the relationship in an adult and appropriate manner are more likely to have boys who understand how they are to treat women and who are less likely to act in an aggressive fashion toward females. Girls with involved, respectful fathers see how they should expect men to treat them and are less likely to become involved in violent or unhealthy relationships. In contrast, research has shown that husbands who display anger, show contempt for, or who stonewall their wives (i.e., "the silent treatment") are more likely to have children who are anxious, withdrawn, or antisocial.<sup>8</sup>

***Fathers are major teachers of their***

# ***children – even more than government schools.***

*Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it. Proverbs 22:6*

Children with involved, caring fathers have better educational outcomes. A number of studies suggest that fathers who are involved, nurturing, and playful with their infants have children with higher IQs, as well as better linguistic and cognitive capacities.<sup>9</sup> Toddlers with involved fathers go on to start school with higher levels of academic readiness. They are more patient and can handle the stresses and frustrations associated with schooling more readily than children with less involved fathers.<sup>10</sup>

## ***Fathers teach best by example***

These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the door frames of your houses and on your gates. Deuteronomy 6:6-9

The way fathers play with their children also has an important impact on a child's emotional and social development. Fathers spend a much higher percentage of their one-on-one interaction with infants and preschoolers in stimulating, playful activity than do mothers. From these interactions, children learn how to regulate their feelings and behavior. Rough-housing with dad, for example, can teach children how to deal with aggressive impulses and physical contact without losing

control of their emotions.<sup>19</sup> Generally speaking, fathers also tend to promote independence and an orientation to the outside world. Fathers often push achievement while mothers stress nurturing, both of which are important to healthy development. As a result, children who grow up with involved fathers are more comfortable exploring the world around them and more likely to exhibit self-control and pro-social behavior.<sup>20</sup>

## **In conclusion,**

there is no one like a dad! No matter if you feel like you are messing it up, or feel like you can be doing better, keep at it, work hard, do your best, because there is absolutely no one in the world who can do it better than you.

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