

Summary of Research and Reference List for Website:

Title: Did you know: Fatherhood is being redefined?

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Summary of Research

1. The processes thru which fathers engage with children remain largely unexamined (Scharfe, 2003)
2. Despite an increasing focus on father involvement, workplace norms and governmental policy have been slow to recognize that fathers' responsibilities for children extend beyond breadwinning and are independent of their relationships with mothers (Silverstein & Auerbach, 1999)
3. The categories of love, availability, and role modeling were mentioned most often by the fathers in the open ended questions (Morman & Floyd, 2006)
4. An important component of fatherhood entails higher levels of responsivity in daily interactions with children, which in turn is fostered by egalitarian views of parenting (Matta & Knudson-Martin, 2006)
5. Adolescents rated the strength of their family units significantly lower than either their mother or father -- specifically, fathers differed from their adolescent children in perceptions of commitment to the family, spending time together, and the effective handling and solving of family conflict and crisis (Greeff & Roux, 1999)
6. Fathers are more likely to increase their involvement with their children if they have more boys in the family (Wood & Repetti, 2004)
7. Fathers tend to parent more like their fathers than their mothers (Losh-Hesselbart, 1987)
8. After a divorce, fathers and sons are more likely to maintain contact than fathers and daughters (Amato & Keith, 1991)
9. Men often link their perceptions of future fathering expectations with positive or negative experiences associated with their own fathers (Marsiglio, Hutchinson & Cohen, 2000)
10. For fathers, the paternal experience associated with raising a son has been found to influence the emotional health of the father (berry, 1990), his adult development, and his psychosocial adjustment (Snarney, 1993)
11. Men who made fathering a high priority have been found to be more successful and more satisfied in midlife than men who were less involved with their children (Lamb, 2004)
12. Men whose fathers were involved in raising them are more involved with raising their own children, taking more responsibility for them, showing more warmth, and more closely monitoring their behaviors and activities (Hofferth, 1999)
13. When qualitatively interviewed separately, fathers and sons defined good fathering as being love, availability, listening, affection, involvement, support, role model (morman & floyd, 2006)
14. Fathers are no longer seen as breadwinners but may take on other roles as caretakers and nurturers (Cabrera, Tamis-Lemonda, Bradley, Hofferet, & Lamb, 2000; Pleck, 1997; Pleck & Pleck, 1997; Summers et al., 1999)
15. Some low-income fathers who are unable to provide for their families due to poverty or job loss seem to have negative or decreased interactions with their children (Harold-Goldsmith, Radin, & Eccles, 1988; Larossa & Reitzes, 1993)
16. Young fathers experience multiple barriers to paternal involvement including lack of maturity, lack of economic support, unemployment, and low educational attainment (Dallas & Chen, 1998; Stouthamer-Loeber, & Wei, 1998)
17. Young fathers also experience resistance from maternal and paternal grandparents, as well as from the mothers (Rhein et al., 1997)
18. Despite the barriers young fathers face, it has been found that many desire to be involved with their children (Barret & Robinson, 1985; Glikman, 2004)
19. many young fathers struggle with 'lack of access' to their children (Dallas & Chen, 1998; Saleh et al., 2006)

The father-son relationship has been found to be a significant predictor of a son's future:

1. Communication behaviors (Buerkel-Rothfuss & Yerby, 1981; Fink, 1993)
2. Relational success and communication with a spouse (Beatty & Dobos, 1993; Berry, 1990)
3. Academic achievement (Singer & Weinstein, 2000)
4. Educational attainment (Harris, Furstenberg, & Marmer, 1998)
5. Income level (Duncan, Hill & Yeung, 1996)
6. Parenting style (Simons, Beaman, Conger, & Chao, 1993; Simons, Whitbeck, Conger, & Wu, 1991)
7. Potential for delinquent behavior and adolescent drinking (Barnes & Farrell, 1992; Simons, Johnson, & Conger, 1994)
8. Overall emotional health (Berry, 1990)
9. Healthy attitudes towards sexuality (Fisher, 1987)

When compared to sons raised with a father, the detrimental effects of sons growing up without their fathers' influence include:

1. Less likely to graduate from high school and more likely to be unemployed (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994)
2. Are five times more likely to be poor and ten times more likely to be extremely poor (Nelson, 1995)
3. Are more likely to engage in criminal behavior, become sexually active at an early age, and fail in their own marital relationships (Glenn & Kramer, 1987; Lykken, 1997; McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994)
4. Increased likelihood of poverty, crime, school problems, and cycles of repeat pregnancy (Argys, Peters, Brooks-Gunn & Smith, 1998; Lerman & Sorenson, 2000; Rhein et al., 1997)

Engaged fathers promote and reinforce an egalitarian social structure:

20. Paternal proximity, affection, and responsibility for routine child care are positively associated with female involvement in community decision making, and greater positions of authority.(Coltrane, 1988). (implications – redefining fatherhood has benefits on a societal level)
21. Primary care-taking fathers behave more like traditional mothers than traditional fathers in interactions with their infants; they tend to verbally interact with their children, treat sons and daughters more equally, and allow for greater self-direction (Coltrane, 1988).
22. Men and women are far more alike than they are different; however are restricted by gendered institutions (workplace, family, school, politics) where the dominant definitions are reinforced and reproduced (Kimmel, 2004).
23. When men got involved in child-centered behavior, they were more likely to share housework and child care (Coltrane & Adams, 2001).

Previous research has been based on the assumption that some men are bad fathers whereas others are good:

1. Good dad vs. bad dad: fathers are dichotomously portrayed as either the reluctant, absent, dysfunctional or violent man failing in or rejecting his duties of fathering – or – as the enlightened, contributing, loving, full and equal participant performing his duties as father with skill, care and concern (Furstenberg, 1988; Fox & Benson, 2004; Pleck, 2004)
2. Deficit models of fathering (Doherty, 1991)
3. Role-inadequacy (Hawkins & Dollahite, 1997)
4. Fathers as family's weak link (Larson & Richards, 1994)
5. "Disqualified fathers" (Kindlon & Thompson, 1999)

Be careful not to compare fathers to mothers as this may induce an 'idealized motherhood template', with motherhood always being framed as the dominant, privileged, and preferred model for parenting, and which may contribute to a 'cult of motherhood'. Be wary of mother-privileged assessments of effective parenting and advocate a perspective that values both fathering and mothering for their similar and unique contributions to family life (Allen & Hawkins, 1999; Hays, 1996; Dienhart, 2001; Deutsch, Servis, & Payne, 2001).

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