Fathers Matter, Too
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Fathers are often left out of conversations about child and adolescent development. This may leave fathers feeling unimportant or unnecessary. However, fathers have an important impact on their children’s development.

Research has consistently shown that fathers who use authoritative parenting (showing warmth, setting and enforcing limits for acceptable behavior, granting appropriate freedom and responsibility) tend to have adolescents who experience fewer symptoms of depression, have higher self-esteem, engage in less delinquent behavior, engage in less drug, alcohol, and tobacco use, and have better grades.

Rob Palkovitz, a leading researcher in fathering, stresses that there are many different ways that fathers can be involved in adolescents’ lives. Here are some examples (Hawkins et al., 2002):

- Set and enforce rules
- Encourage your teen to succeed in and follow rules at school
- Give appropriate help with homework
- Encourage your teen to develop talents and help him or her plan for the future
- Take financial responsibility for your teen
- Give your teen’s mother encouragement and emotional support
- Spend time with your teen, doing what he or she likes to do, or talking about what he or she wants to talk about
- Praise your teen for doing something well or doing the right thing
- Tell your teen that you love him or her
- Attend events your teen participates in
- Know where your teen is, who he or she is with, and what he or she is doing

For more information on fathering go to: www.fatherhood.gov

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