

The Dad Difference



**Dads
Matter**
Of Fayette County



Dads Matter of Fayette County is a department of the Private Industry Council of Westmoreland/Fayette, Inc.

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The official newsletter of Dads Matter of Fayette County

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Dad, you're the teacher!

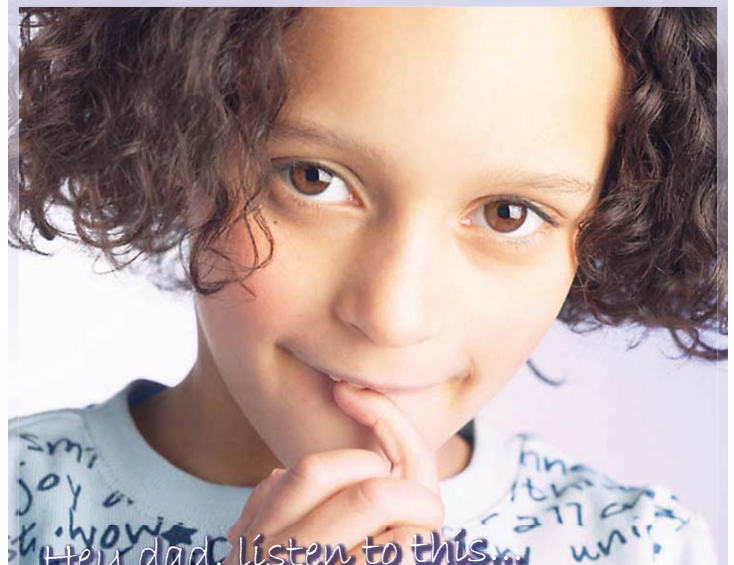
We've chosen "Dad's role in his children's education" as the theme for this issue. But wait a second Dad! We're not going to ask you do lectures on a chalk board and dole out homework to your children. Instead we just want to offer you concrete suggestions on how you can (1) make the most of your time spent with your children, (2) help them learn as much as they can about life and (3) do well in school.

It's natural when talking and playing with our children to step into the teacher role without much thought. Learning to talk, walk, run, play and many other things are skills our

children learn while under our direct care. The bond between parent and child creates the best foundation for learning. Our children look to us for guidance, protection, and nurturing from the beginning, so we need to keep reminding ourselves that raising our children is a learning process for which we have the main responsibility.

In this issue you will find important articles about reading to your child, being involved in their education, turning routine at-home activities into learning opportunities, how play contributes to learning in a young child and how to prepare your

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"Good parents give their children roots and wings. Roots to know where home is, wings to fly away and exercise what's been taught them."

- Jonas Salk, inventor of the smallpox vaccine

Dads Matter events

Looking for fun community events? Go to page 2!

Parenting Discussion Groups

Every Monday at 6:00 p.m. at PIC Office at 480 Coolspring Street in Uniontown. Our parenting discussion groups are wholesome, fun and just right for dads and moms. Give us a call or just show up. We'll see you there! Do you have a group of guys and gals that want to start a group? Give us a call.

Daddy and Me at the Library

Monday, March 31st at 6:00 p.m. at the Uniontown Library. You and your child will enjoy a story read by the Uniontown Library's storyteller, have a snack, and learn more about future fun educational opportunities for you and your child.

Doctor Dad - in-depth article on page 4!

Call us for new dates and times! Dr. Dad is perfect for those dads and moms expecting a baby or who have children under 2 years of age. This evening series covers child health, safety, nutrition and more. Call ahead to reserve your seats today!

Have an event or activity idea for us to do?

Tell us about it by calling 724-437-2590x322 or just send an e-mail to dadsmatter@privateindustrycouncil.com

>> Another view: Dr. Charles Machesky

We interviewed Dr. Charles Machesky, Superintendent of Schools for Uniontown Area School District to hear his perspectives on fatherhood, parenting, and education. Dr. Machesky is a 34-year veteran in public education. He has worked in the classroom as a Special Education teacher, school principal, Special Education Director, and for the past 6 years as district superintendent. He and his wife Mary have three daughters: Elizabeth, Angela and Suzanne.

Dads Matter: As an educator, what message would you like to send to young fathers in our community?

Dr. Charles Machesky: "The involvement of a father in his children's lives is immeasurable – you can't place a dollar value on it. I have seen time and time again the difference it makes both when the father is present and involved and when the father is absent and/or not involved in his children's lives.

There's almost like a void you can see, when you watch children, if dad isn't there. Dads do so much to help children develop strong self-esteem."

DM: How do you see Dads Matter and Uniontown Area School District partnering to make a difference in our children's education?

Dr. M.: "I have seen so much of what Dads Matter can accomplish, just in the short time we've been working together.

The event [Dads Impact] held at LaFayette School on November 17th and sponsored by Dads Matter did a lot to bring people together, perhaps for the first time, to hear about and talk about important issues related to the impact a father can have on his family. I welcome any opportunity to expand our work with Dads Matter in the future. Although we've been recently targeting LaFayette

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Dad, you're the teacher!

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child for the next educational setting (transition). Research has shown that the more interest a father takes in his child's education on all levels the greater the likelihood that the child will reach higher levels of success in school. We have also learned that school attendance rates are better when dad is actively involved in the child's education.

We rarely think of home as a classroom, but all daily routines can be turned into a learning opportunity. For example, we can talk about shapes when we play with blocks and sometimes puzzles. We can talk about safety when we're using tools. We can teach our children about hygiene when we bathe them and brush teeth. We can teach them about loud, soft, quiet, happy, sad, and more.

Although we devoted our last issue to discipline, it bears repeating here that when we discipline our children the right way we are teaching them how to best manage their own behavior. Just thinking about discipline as teaching sheds a whole new perspective on what we do and why. Instead of punishing our children for doing something wrong, we use consequences and discussion to help them choose the best ways to behave.

As always, feel free to contact us for more information that can help you in your role as a parent because...Dads Matter!

Featured educational activity

'Beginning to Read' Workshops

A series of six sessions of strategies and guided practice to help you help your child be successful at reading. Sponsored by the Albert Gallatin School District.

Who is it for? These workshops are for parents & grandparents who want to help their 4- and 5-year old pre-kindergarten children with reading.

Where is it held? D. Ferd Swaney Elementary in the Albert Gallatin School District

Free childcare and refreshments will be provided and there will be door prizes too.

Note: Space is limited so parents & grandparents from Albert Gallatin School District will get first priority when filling these workshop sessions.

To RSVP or get more info, call AG today at 724-564-7189 ext. 113.

Also check out our Dads Matter events on page 1!



Session Schedule

January 7 - 6:00pm to 7:30pm
February 6 - 6:00pm to 7:30pm
March 3 - 6:00pm to 7:30pm
April 29 - 6:00pm to 7:30pm
May 19 - 6:00pm to 7:30pm
June 3 - 6:00pm to 7:30pm

Another view: Dr. Charles Machesky

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School in our partnership with Dads Matter, the need is not isolated to just that area.”

DM: As a father, what are some of the things you feel you did right in raising your children that you'd like to pass along to young dads?

Dr. M.: “You don’t get a report card as a dad, however sometimes down the road your children let you know how they’ve benefited from what you’ve tried to communicate to them as they grow up. My daughters, 23 and 26, recently told me that they feel they

always remember me letting them make mistakes and then giving guidance and insight into how to ‘fix’ the problem created by their mistakes. I tried always to be there for them and to be a positive role model. For example, while I was encouraging them to value their education, I was in school myself as a fifty-year-old completing my PhD. My daughters also have said that everything I’ve tried to tell them has come true – that I’ve imparted wisdom in them. I wasn’t afraid to say ‘no’ and

have a good reason as to why I had to say so.”

DM: What is the main message you want to send to parents about their role in their children's education?

Dr. M.: “Some parents still don’t seem to realize that when their children enter school, the parent’s role in their child’s education is just beginning. The idea that ‘It’s the schools responsibility for my child to learn,’ is just not right. It is so important that parents see the school as their partner in educating their children.

To ensure success, parents need to reinforce and support the school’s efforts on behalf of their children. Help their children follow through with what is sent home from the school. Please be open minded in dealing with school personnel and know that we are there doing the best we can for the families of our community. The more parents and schools can work in cooperation with one another, the better chance all children will have for academic success.

Dads Impact: They Make A Difference!

Saturday, November 19, 2007

Over 80 dads, moms, and children attended Dads Impact and gained valuable insight about the impact an involved father has on his children.

Our guests were touched by the messages of former Steeler Ted Petersen, local family law attorney Sheryl Heid, Nate Frezzell of Young Inspiration, and several leaders of the fatherhood movement including Dr. Jeffery Johnson, Joel Austin, and Harry Tender. We send a warm thank you to all who attended and everyone who helped make Dads Impact possible through donations and other support.

We hope to see you at Dads Matter event soon. Go to the front page for a list of upcoming Dads Matter events.



“Fathers...your role is strong. It is equal to that of the mother!”

- Joel Austin, President/CEO of Daddy UniverseCity



“When you give affection to your children, that builds their self esteem.”

- Ted Petersen, former Pittsburgh Steeler



Want to know about upcoming events, groups, activities and more? Get a FREE subscription to “The Dad Difference” newsletter! Just complete and return the subscription form on the back cover. Or, contact Dads Matter directly at 724-437-2590x322 or dadsmatter@privateindustrycouncil.com

New!

Doctor DAD™

A new Dads Matter program for all “expectant” dads and fathers of infants and toddlers



Ok, so we bring the baby home from the hospital – excited and scared at the same time. How do we take care of this fragile little bundle? We think we’ve got the holding thing down rather well – we’re not as afraid we’re going to break them anymore, but... What about feeding? What if they get sick? How do I know if they are sick? When should I call the doctor? These are natural fears but they can be overcome... Doctor DAD can help!

Doctor DAD training is for expectant parents and parents of young children that provides real practical information and fun activities (did you ever taste formula?) in a relaxed setting about how to care for your newborn up to about age 2. In just a few hours Doctor DAD can help new parents like you comfortable dealing with day-to-day care of your newborn child or very young child.

Doctor DAD topics include

- ⊙ When to call the doctor

- ⊙ Early nutrition
- ⊙ Fever
- ⊙ Home safety
- ⊙ Immunizations
- ⊙ Treating minor burns and injuries
- ⊙ The well child
- ⊙ Your child’s temperament
- ⊙ How to take a temperature

Doctor DAD can be customized into four 1-hour sessions, two 2-hour sessions, or one 4-hour session, depending on the interests and needs of the families involved.

If you’re participating in labor preparation classes at the Family Beginnings Birthing Center at Uniontown Hospital, you will be able to experience Doctor DAD there. It’s a collaborative effort between Dads Matter, Uniontown Hospital and the Crime Victims’ Center.

To sign up for Doctor DAD, contact Dads Matter by phone at 724-437-2590x322 or send e-mail to dadsmatter@privateindustrycouncil.com

Cool after school

Another way to enhance your child’s learning experience is to enroll them in an after school program.

Many school districts & local agencies offer after school opportunities to their students. These programs provide extra attention to school subjects that can help your child. Here is a list of some after school programs in the area. Contact your local school district to see what else they may offer.

Young Inspiration

Open to all Uniontown Area School District students in grades 4 to 12. Contact Alice Coleman at 724-438-1966.

East End United Community Center

Offers tutoring to all students in all grades. Contact Tracy Wrona at 724-437-1660.

Dare2XL

Open to Connellsville and Brownsville area students in 3rd, 4th and 5th grades. Contact Connellsville Area at 724-628-3300 or Brownsville Area at 724-785-2021.

Web sites on education

Our top choices for learning ideas.

Family Education Network

<http://fun.familyeducation.com>

Play games and find arts & crafts projects and other after-school activities, plus explore ideas, decorations, and homemade gifts for the holidays.

Family Fun

<http://familyfun.go.com/>

Choose from many arts & crafts projects, recipes, games, and other fun ideas.

Education World At Home

http://www.education-world.com/At_Home/

Education World At Home has lots of resources for students, parents and teachers.

Have a Web site you’d like to see posted here? Contact us: 724-437-2590x322.

Getting your child ready for what's next

Even though it is winter, it's not too late to be thinking about next fall – especially if you have a child going from pre-school to kindergarten, elementary school to middle school, middle to high school or even high school to college. We often refer to these movements from one setting to another as “transitions.” Educators say it is very important for us as parents to help prepare our children for the change and its challenges. Schools will often schedule meetings with pre-schools and Head Start to discuss how to best work together to prepare children for entry into kindergarten. These meetings work best when parents are also part of the planning as well as the transition activities developed. For school transitions in upper grades and even into college, orientation meetings are held for the child and parents to help them become aware of what to anticipate in the next educational environment.

So what can parents do to help their children through these transitions? Preparation is the key. As you stay involved in your child's education, talk to the teachers regularly, visit the schools and ask questions about what will be expected from

“My father used to play with my brother and me in the yard. Mother would come out and say, “You're tearing up the grass.” “We're not raising grass,” my dad would reply, “We're raising boys.”

- Harmon Killebrew



The following web link provides a list of children's books that deal with various transitions children face: <http://www.indianatransition.org/13-B%20Young%20Children/Suggested%20Children%20books.doc>

you and your child when they enroll – all of these will help you be better informed and equipped to help your child. Plan a visit with your child if at all possible to help remove any fears they may have by helping them meet the teachers and see first-hand what happens in the classroom.

If your child has any type of

special need, it is particularly important that information about your child's individualized goals and supports is shared with the new professionals that will be working with your child. This should happen well in advance of their arrival in order to give the new teachers and support staff (if needed) the opportunity

to be ready to work with your child right away.

Another way you can help your child is to read books to them about what they can expect. A lot of children's books are available that help parents and children

talk about what the next school will be like.

Finally dad, it is important for you

to talk to your child about your own experiences growing up – encourage them with your own success at making it through school. By starting early, you'll both have plenty of time to talk about what's coming in order to be ready when those school bells start ringing next fall.

“Talk to your child about your own experiences...”

Learning at home: a natural part of life

As our children's first teachers we can easily make learning at home a fun ongoing extension of what they are covering in school. There are plenty of things that you can do at home for almost no extra money. Your daily routine, for example, can be lots of fun while your children learn important concepts.

Math

When you are cooking, allow your children to help with the measuring. If more than one measurement is involved, you can have the child compare which is greater or less than. They can also figure out how many of one measurement it takes to make another measurement. While you are doing laundry is a perfect time to teach the young ones math concepts. Having the child help you put clothes in to piles based on colors is great for sorting. When you are folding the laundry you can have your child put the socks together which helps them learn about matching and pairs. For older children, playing board games is very helpful. Monopoly is great for math. Even the language you use can help the child learn math concepts.



Have your child estimate the time it might take to finish something, the cost of a certain object, or how much of a certain item they have.

Science

When you do yard work, or take care of your plants, have your child help you. As you talk to them about the plants, you can emphasize things about plant life, what they need to grow, and other science concepts. Keep magnifying glasses on hand so that children can explore things closely.

Reading

Subscribe to a magazine that caters to their interests. A lot of magazines now have a child or teen companion magazine. The subscription won't be free but it will be worth it for the children if it captures their

interest and gets them more interested in reading for fun. For younger children, you can encourage reading and letter recognition by letting them read the grocery list for you when you take them shopping. Or tell them to find a certain food product that begins with the letter "B," for example. The newspaper comics are another

way to get your child interested in reading. You can take turns reading them to each other. They will enjoy spending that time with you.

There are many other ways to help your child learn at home that are practical and fun. Take what interests your child as well as what goes on in your home that would be a good learning opportunity.

You can talk to your child's teacher, if they are already in school, and ask them what learning concepts would be good for you to include in home activities.

For even more ideas, see the next page for "25 fun and educational activities to do with your children."



Monday, November 26, 2007

The theme this time was "The Steelers." The children were treated to a pajama party story reading time. After story time the children participated in "Steeler Bingo,"

with strands of gold and black beads as prizes. Then they each made their own Steeler pom pom. It was an awesome night for everyone. After snack time the children each chose a book to take home. Parents were part of the activities and Dads Matter spoke with them about how to help their children learn.

Daddy & Me is a monthly activity usually on Monday nights.

Reserve your spot for the next one: 724-437-2590x322!

and educational! 25 fun activities to do with your children

There are so many things your child can learn while you play together. Take what you like and make your own list.

1. Play a board game – talk about rules and strategies
2. Walk in the woods – talk about what you might see around the bend
3. Toss a ball – eye-hand coordination, exercise
4. Go to a local museum - talk about history and why it's important
5. Fix a meal – talk about nutrition, following directions, measuring
6. Outdoor grilling – talk about safety around flames
7. Put together a puzzle – talk about shapes, sizes, matching – good for concentration
8. Building or fixing something with tools – talk about the name of each tool and what it is for
9. Play a card game – rules, strategies, math concepts
10. Build something with blocks – balance, shapes, sizes, pretend
11. Watch a movie – talk about the plot, what's going to happen next
12. Build something with pipe cleaners – talk about shapes, sizes, angles, texture
13. Camp out in the living room – pretend, tent construction, talk about what you need to live outdoors
14. Go to a ball game – talk about rules, strategies, sportsmanship
15. Make roads out of construction paper and play with toy cars – hand-eye coordination, staying on the lines, cutting, talk about why we have roads
16. Let your daughter serve you an imaginary meal from her kitchen set – pretend, table manners, table conversation
17. Go on a Daddy/Daughter date – talk about dating and relationships, talk about restaurant etiquette, ordering from a menu
18. Play on the swings – see who can go highest, why do we stick to the swing, taking turns
19. Color a picture – colors, eye-hand coordination, mixing colors, shapes
20. Go to a family wedding – talk about tradition, family history, public behavior, relationships
21. Take pictures – photography, light, stillness, contrast, memories
22. Go swimming – teach your child how to swim, water safety, shallow and deep
23. Play “Simon Says” – listening, rules, following directions
24. Read a book together – take turns reading, talk about the plot and characters
25. Visit the fire station – talk to the firemen about what they do, talk about volunteering



The Dads Matter office is located...in the Private Industry Council office in the old North Union school building.

Address: 480A Coolspring Street, Uniontown PA 15401

Phone: 724-437-2590x322

Fax: 724-437-8159

E-mail: dadsmatter@privateindustrycouncil.com

Web: www.privateindustrycouncil.com

The Mission of Dads Matter of Fayette County is to:

“...enable fathers to improve their relationships with their children; improve parenting skills; and help fathers overcome barriers that often prohibit them from being effective and nurturing parents by providing them with training and learning opportunities.”

Disclaimer:

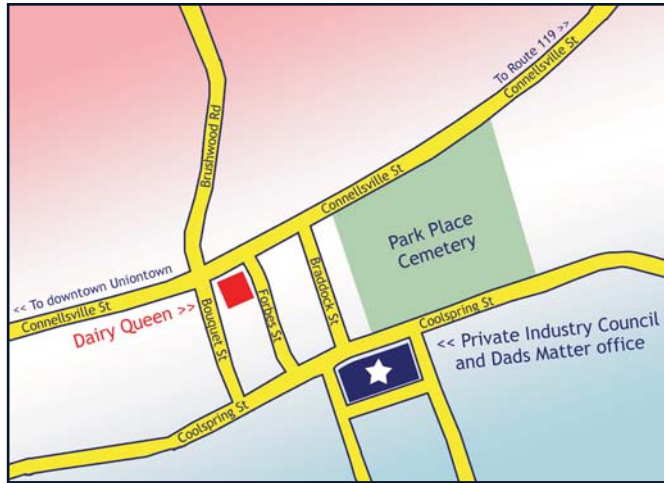
(1) Dads Matter of Fayette County is a department of the Private Industry Council of Westmoreland/Fayette, Inc. Participation in Dads Matter of Fayette County is FREE and strictly voluntary.

(2) The Private Industry Council of Westmoreland/Fayette, Inc. is a 501c3 non-profit corporation headquartered in Greensburg, PA.

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(4) Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.

The Dad Difference



Directions to the Dads Matter office

From north of Uniontown including routes 201, 982, and 119
Turn onto 119 South. Get off the Connellsville St. exit. Go straight at the stop light onto Connellsville St. Go until you see Park Place Cemetery on your left, then turn left onto the next street which is Braddock St. Go straight to the end of Braddock St., park in the closest part of the parking lot, and come inside the main front door.

From south of Uniontown including Routes 40, 21, 857
Turn onto 119 North. Get off the Connellsville St. exit. Turn left at the end of the ramp. Turn right at the stop light onto Connellsville St. Go until you see Park Place Cemetery on your left, then turn left onto the next street which is Braddock St. Go straight to the end of Braddock St., park in the closest part of the parking lot, and come inside the main front door.

Contact us at 724-437-2590x322!



Your dedicated Dads Matter team

Tiffany Blaho

As case manager, Tiffany (left) brings a lot of energy to the Dads Matter team. Tiffany has a degree in Education and has worked at UASD and Young Inspiration. She is a proud mother of three.

Bill Huebner

Bill (center) has been involved with Head Start in PA and WV for over 28 years. As project supervisor, he brings knowledge, wisdom and leadership experience. Bill and his wife have two adult children.

Seth Caton

As outreach and recruitment specialist, Seth (right) contributes his skills in marketing, graphic design and Web design. He and his wife have two kids: a toddler and an infant.



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Address _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

E-mail Address _____

Gender: Male Female

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Please contact me about: Parenting Discussion Groups Doctor DAD Daddy & Me at the Library
 Other Events & Activities Other _____