

The Dad Difference

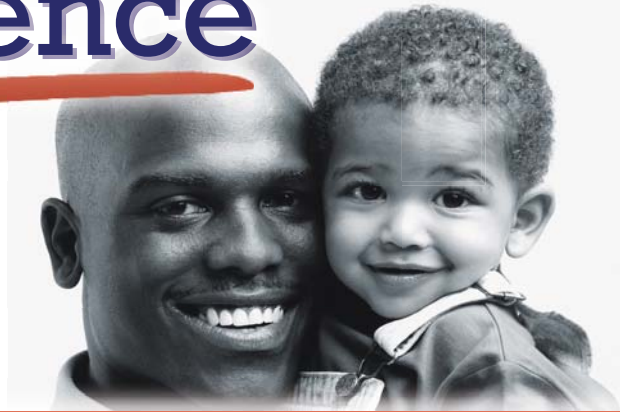
The official newsletter of



Dads Matter

Of Fayette County

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Volume 1, Issue 2

October-December 2007

What's Inside

Page two

Upcoming Events
The Three Cs of Discipline

Page three

Discipline: It's All in the Teaching
Calming "Fussy" Babies

Page four

Consistency
Book review - "Positive Discipline for Single Parents"

Page Five

Time Out
Web resources

Page Six

Discipline for the Ages
Fun for the Kids

Page Seven

Subscription Form

Growing Up, Reaching Out

Since the release of the first edition of this newsletter, Dads Matter has been quite busy trying to grow this fatherhood initiative in Fayette County. It's hard to believe that our first parenting education session occurred only five and a half months ago. Since we've begun, over 630 individuals have signed up to be on our client list. We've distributed almost 250 parent-child activity packets, 300 community resource directories, and 2600 newsletters! Below are just some of the major activities which we've either sponsored or participated in to help move the project forward and reach out into our communities:

- Parenting Education Discussion Groups (Monday evening & Wednesday morning)
- Bi-weekly newspaper column: "Ask Dads Matter"
- "Daddy and Me at the Library"
- Meet the Teacher nights at several schools
- Head Start 500's
- Community based health fairs
- Family Fun Fest
- Fayette County Fair
- HSTV
- WMBS Radio

As the reader can see, we've been busy. We know we need to "get the word out there" about the work we are doing in order to encourage folks to participate. As we continue to expand Dads Matter, we hope more and more dads will take advantage of the central core activity of our project: the parenting education discussion groups. Dads who have participated find the time well spent. Contact us today to see how you can be involved!



Bill Huebner, Project Supervisor, with Mr. McFeely of Mister Roger's Neighborhood at Family Fun Fest on June 14.



Many interested kids and parents at the "Daddy and Me at the Library" event on Monday, July 30.



One of our recent parenting discussion group sessions.



Camryn, age two, enjoying an extra-special ice cream sundae.

This publication is made possible because Dads Matter is a department of

Private
Industry
Council
OF WESTMORELAND/FAYETTE, INC.

UPCOMING EVENTS
ON PAGE 2!

The Three Cs of Discipline

by Colleen Zielinsky, Case Manager II, Fayette County Children and Youth Services

You have to be disciplined to discipline. Did you ever think of it that way? Discipline is a Latin-based word that means controlled, systematic behavior. Discipline is also training or guidance designed to produce an improved pattern of behavior. So, in order to effect change in your children's behavior, you must be in control yourself.

A good way to do this is to have a set of rules that guide and govern your own behavior as you discipline. Two basic and important things to be aware of in yourself are the two C's—clarity and consistency. Both are key to achieving the result you're looking for. Rules and expectations must be clear in order for children to follow them. Be aware, however, that each of us learns and understands in a different way. Make sure your children understand what you are asking of them by presenting rules in different ways. You may tell your children things, but you may want to make a "House Rules" poster, too. Your children will then be able see as

well as hear the rules. The poster can also save you some "preaching" as it reminds your children of the without a word from you. Let your kids help you make the poster. You might be surprised at some of the suggestions they make. Many research studies have found that kids really do want boundaries and rules. True, it's their nature to test, bend, break and fuss about the rules, but they still want and need them.

The other "C"—consistency is sometimes easier said than done. To be effective, discipline must be consistent. The consequence for the offense must be the same every time. If you hear yourself saying, "just this once," or "the next time you do that", you're not being consistent. Breaking a

"Discipline and punishment are not the same."

clearly stated rule requires a consequence—even if it is the child's birthday. By letting your child off the hook, you just muddy the

clarity of the rules and take the easy way out. Your discipline thus lacks discipline.

For good measure, let's take a look at another "C"—calmness. If you can discipline yourself to be calmly clear and consistent, disciplining your child will become easier and more effective. You are training your child to behave within the guidelines.

Discipline and punishment are not the same. Punishment happens after "the crime" is committed. It is inflicted and, at times, harsh. Punishment often involves physical consequences such as smacking or withholding meals. It is simply the penalty for the misbehavior and contributes little, if any, to a change in the behavior.

Discipline actually happens before your child misbehaves. The rules are clearly and consistently set in advance; breaking of the rules involves clear and consistent consequences.

Before you became a parent, you may not have realized it can be hard work at times. When your children know what is expected of them and what to expect from you, things get a lot easier. And that takes discipline!

Ms. Zielinsky may be contacted at Fayette County Children and Youth Services by calling 724-430-0000x1234 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.

A Note From Bill



Welcome to the second edition of the Dads Matter uses on the many different aspects of "Discipline". Most of us have strong feelings about discipline as well as many questions

about the best way to teach our children to behave. Hopefully the information contained in this edition will be helpful to you.

I would also like to take this opportunity to encourage you to consider participating in one of our Dads Matter parenting discussion groups. We currently meet on Monday evenings from 6:00 to 7:30 pm at our offices located at 480 Coolspring Road. We can also set up sessions in community settings and at times convenient to you dads. Please contact us and ask about how you can be involved – we're sure you'll benefit from the time spent....

*Sincerely,
Bill Huebner
Dads Matter Project Supervisor*

UPCOMING EVENTS

Dads Matter parenting discussion sessions

Every Monday evening, 6:00 to 7:30 pm

Location: Private Industry Council,
480 Coolspring Road, Uniontown

Call 724-437-2590 to join us today. It's free!

Daddy and Me at the Library

Monday, November 26th, 6:00 to 7:30 pm

Location: Uniontown Library

Dr. Dad Parenting Sessions

(Held in conjunction with the Uniontown Hospital Birthing Center)

Starting in October

Location: To be determined

Call 724-437-2590 for more info!

All Pro Dad

(Father/Child breakfasts)

Starting in October

Locations: To be determined

Call 724-437-2590 for more info!

Celebrate the Family

Wednesday, October 10, 8:00 am to 3:00 pm

Location: To be determined

Call Debra Hudak at 724-725-9269 or Gayla

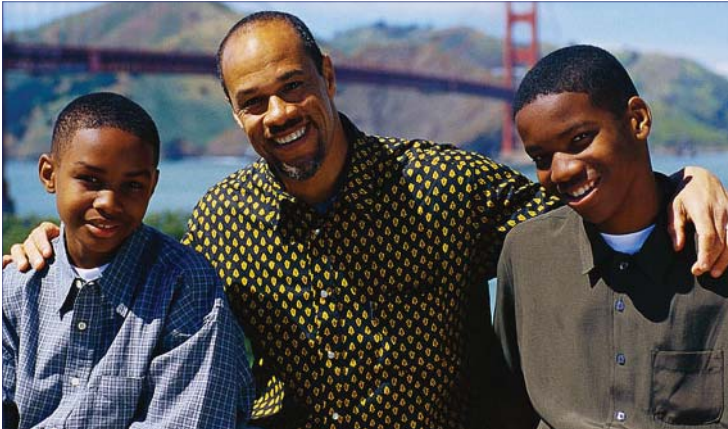
Lafferty at 724-439-9407 for more info.

Quote Corner

"By helping our children learn to be self-disciplined, we are also helping them learn how to become independent of us as, sooner or later, they must. And we are helping them learn how to be loving parents to children of their own."

~ Mister Fred Rogers

Discipline: It's All In The Teaching



When talking about the focus for this next newsletter, the Dads Matter staff easily came to a unanimous decision that “discipline” would be a good topic to cover. Whenever our clients are asked what parenting topics would be most useful or helpful to them, discipline is usually right at the top of the list. An inquiry using a popular internet search engine resulted in almost 94 million articles when “Discipline” was typed in – indicating the interest is widespread well beyond our client base. We hope this newsletter will provide you with good ideas and information about discipline techniques that work. We recognize at Dads Matter that some beliefs about

discipline, particularly whether or not to spank, are personal. We will try to present information on a variety of ways to help you teach your children self-control.

In general, the word “discipline” comes from a Latin word, disciplina, which means teaching or learning. In essence, this is what the word should mean today. However,

we often confuse discipline with punishment and forget the teaching and learning aspects. One Online dictionary refers to discipline as “...any training intended to develop moral character, or produce a pattern of behaviour.” The goal of parents when considering the discipline of their children should be that they are teaching them to be self-controlled, or self-disciplined. Otherwise, our jobs as parents would be solely to follow our children around and constantly monitor and manage their behavior. With a focus on self-control, we are teaching our children what is expected of them and giving them the tools to make good choices on how to behave in many

different situations. Lets face it, when they walk out the door and go off to school, we want them to be able to deal with the world around them and act reasonably well in public.

In contrast, discipline is not about just punishing children for doing things wrong. Sometimes they might think that’s what we are doing, so our job is to help them understand what we are trying to help them learn. It may be that there will be consequences to what they do wrong, but the consequences are intended to draw their attention to what they’ve done and make it so they don’t want to do it again. For example, staying up past bedtime to play with video games might result in losing that privilege for a period of time. For a younger child, writing on the walls with crayons may result in the crayons being taken away.

We hope this newsletter gives you some resources and practical suggestions for how to help your children manage their behavior. As always, please feel free to contact us for help with specific situations.

Thinking about joining us for one of our Dads Matter parenting discussion groups? Call Dads Matter at 724-437-2590 for the latest dates and times!

Calming “Fussy” Babies

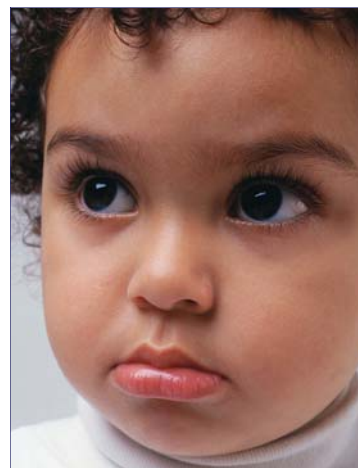
by Pat Tobal, MSN, RN, Nurse Supervisor, Fayette County Nurse Family Partnership

It is estimated that one out of every five babies has repeated episodes of fussiness for no apparent reason. When the most common causes – hunger, wet diaper, loneliness, gas, and/or feeling cold – have been addressed and the crying persists, the baby is frequently referred to as having “colic”, and the frustrated parents become willing to try almost anything to calm their baby.

It is at this point that the question of disciplining infants comes up. The age old question, “Can you spoil a new baby?” is raised and parents wrestle with their natural instinct to pick up their crying baby and the fear that doing so will harm them for life! A study done at John Hopkins University found that you can’t spoil an infant, especially in the first four months of life. The more you love and cuddle your baby, the more confident and resilient he will become. This is good news for the major-

ity of parents, but is not comforting for those whose baby continues to cry even when held.

Noted pediatrician, Dr. Harvey Karp, has researched the problem of colic and proposes that many babies who experience the symptoms may actually need support in making the transition from the warmth and safety of the mother’s womb into the outside world. He has identified a “calming reflex” that can be activated by a series of techniques which he terms the “5 S’s”- swaddling, side/stomach, shushing, swinging, and sucking. Most babies require a combination of



these techniques, done correctly, to become calm.

Information on “The Cuddle Cure”, which is a combination of the 5 “S’s”, can be found in the book “The Happiest Baby on the Block” by Dr. Karp. The nurses of the Fayette County Nurse Family Partnership are certified “Happiest Baby” educators and are available to answer questions on the technique as well as to offer presentations to interested groups at no cost.

For more information, or to schedule a program, contact Debbie at 724 437-6050x1208.

Consistency, Consistency, Consistency

If there's one key to being able to do a good job of teaching self discipline to your children it is: consistency. We warn the dads who come to our Dads Matter parenting discussion groups that they are going to hear that word a lot from us as we talk about discipline.

Young children often become confused when

“Children need for both parents and the caregivers involved in their lives to follow the same rules and expectations for them.”

they are trying to understand what we expect from them. Our consistency in telling them what we allow and what we don't allow them to do is important in helping them to begin to understand and follow the rules we expect them to follow. If we are changeable and don't expect them to follow the same rules all the time, our children will not be able to manage their own behavior – to self-discipline.

As children mature they begin to test limits. For toddlers and preschoolers, testing the limits is a natural part of becoming independent from us. Even though they test the barriers and rules over and over again, they are not necessarily challenging us in a bad way. They are really trying to see where they have control of their lives and where they don't.

Also, at this age, they still need the security of knowing we have the ability to help them monitor their behavior. Actually, the tendency to test the

limits and gain independence continues on into the teenage years, showing up in different behaviors yet based on the same motivations.

Another area of consistency that is important in helping children learn self-discipline is between parents. Children need for both parents and the caregivers involved in their lives to follow the same

rules and expectations for them. This includes grandparents as well and requires communication and cooperation among the adults for the good of the children.

The child's parents should be able to set the rules to be managed by all of the adults in a child's life so they have a secure set of limits no matter who is responsible for them at any given time. This is not always easy as we all have ideas about child-rearing. In addition, this can be an area where

divorced and separated families struggle.

However, the children will benefit most from the consistent messages they receive from the adults around them. It is well worth the effort to try to agree on what the children will be permitted to do and what they will not.

As dads, we often run the gamut as to how we feel about discipline. Some of us enjoy the “fun” part of being a parent and may be more likely to “bend the rules” at any given time. Others of us have a tendency towards strict discipline which can sometimes lead to a lack of flexibility when it otherwise might be necessary. Balance tempered by our love for our children can go a long way in helping us set reasonable limits for our children.

Consistency in discipline is one way of communicating a clear message to our children about how they can learn to be on their “best behavior”.

Want to learn more about this topic? Join us for our next Dads Matter parenting discussion groups! Call us today to get the latest dates and times: 724-437-2590!

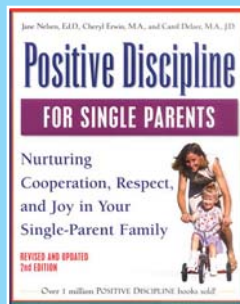
Quote Corner

“Kids spell love [like this:] T-I-M-E.”

~ Vince DiCaro
Spokesman for the National Fatherhood Initiative

Book Review: “Positive Discipline for Single Parents”

by Jane Nelson, Ed.D., Cheryl Erwin, and Carol Delzer; published by Prima Publishing, Roseville, California 1999



“Single parents are, above all else, parents...” And so begins “Positive Discipline for Single Parents”. This book presents that whether single or coupled, parents face many of the

same issues. Single parents often get caught up in a vicious cycle of focusing on how their single status will have a negative impact upon their children. This book is a good resource that helps single parents discover that their issues might be valid but that they don't have to be as long as they are positive, recognize that they can meet their children's needs, and consistently apply good parenting skills.

For the most part, the authors emphasize that effective discipline is preventive disci-

pline, which is anticipating situations and providing options for your child, as well as ways to teach your child self-discipline. Communication is very important as the parent helps their child learn what is expected of them and gives them ways to manage their own behavior.

The book not only includes information about discipline techniques that will be useful to single parents, but this book is also a good source of information for single parents on how to adjust to their situation and get over the guilt and fears associated with raising children in a one parent household.

Overall, this book is an easy read with practical information that will be beneficial to single parents, as well as coupled parents, that are looking for ideas on how to manage their situation as well as disciplining their children in a positive manner.

Time Out

As parents look for ideas or methods to use when disciplining their children, "time out" is one that is often considered. This technique can be used well and not-so-well in helping children deal with the consequences of their behavior and learn about ways to calm themselves down.

When effectively using time out, the parent removes the child from a situation or play space for a set period of time. The purpose for removing the child is to place them in a different setting where they can become quiet, the parent can talk to them about their misbehavior, and they experience the consequence of not being able to do something or play with something they enjoy. The time out period also gives the parent the opportunity to "regroup" and think without anger or frustration so they can calmly deal with their child.

The following guidelines are usually given for time-outs:

1. Decide what type of behavior warrants a time-out (such as fighting, arguing or throwing tantrums), and try to enforce this fairly and consistently. All adults involved with the child should follow similar guidelines when using a time-out.
2. Designate a corner or similar space where the child is to stand or sit during time-outs. Never use their bed.
3. Use an age appropriate time length for the time-out. For a short time-out, approximately one minute per year of age is reasonable; that time may be doubled if necessary if the child pushes their limits during the time-out.
4. Young children have difficulty under-

standing the concept of time. Use a timer as a way of preventing having to answer the question: "Is it time for me to go play now?"

5. The time-out should always have verbal warnings before the discipline to allow the child to make appropriate choices. If their bad behavior continues, they should have an explanation for the time-out as they are being escorted to that area. Even one-year olds understand when they have reached their parental limit, but the explanations should be age appropriate.

6. Afterwards both the parent and the child should try to leave the incident behind after a

discussion about why they were placed in time out and what they should do differently the next time.

Some not so effective ways of using time out include: too long of a time period, sending the child to their room (where all the toys and other playthings may reside), yelling at and humiliating the child for misbehavior. Another mis-use of time out would be to impose the time out period without explaining why it is necessary.

As discipline means to teach, no disciplinary technique should be used without the child understanding why the behavior was not acceptable and what behavior is expected.

Quote Central

"Fatherhood is a skill-based activity that we can get better at..."

~ Vince DiCaro, Spokesman for the National Fatherhood Initiative

"Fathers leave an indelible mark on their children and society. We must encourage, equip, and support dads as they become the true heroes of the coming generation."

~ Ken Canfield, Ph.D., Founder of the National Center for Fathering

"To know that one person breathes easier because you have lived is to have succeeded."

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

"With all of the media influences today, Parents need to have the 'best voice' that really gets through to their children."

~ Jay McGraw

Web Resources on Discipline

Effective Discipline, a Healthy Approach

<http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/behaviour/EffectiveDiscipline.htm>

25 Ways to Talk So Your Children Will Listen

<http://www.askdrsears.com/html/6/T061000.asp>

Disciplining for Dads

<http://fatherhood.about.com/od/discipliningfordads/>

Discipline for Dads: How Dads Can Encourage Good Behavior

<http://www.supernanny.us.com/Advice/-/Parenting-skills/-/Discipline-and-reward/Discipline-for-dads.aspx>

Discipline for the Ages

Infants + Toddlers

Discipline is very simple at this stage. It is actually more preventive on your end. Making sure that your home is childproof is essential because a child in this age group does not understand that they have limits. It



is up to you to provide a safe environment. With infants, responding to their cries and being gentle with them allows them to know that they are secure, and that is vital to discipline. With toddlers, the best tip would be to model appropriate behaviors. Understand that your child is learning that they are separate from you – yet they also need the security of knowing you are still there for them. They will start to exercise their new vocabulary, which includes the word “no”. Try not to take it personally: whatever your baby does, it is not to ‘get at’ you. Redirection also works well at this age. Instead of telling your child what they can’t do, show them what they can do. Giving your child choices at this stage is preparing them for learning self-discipline. Let your child choose between two activities that you deem acceptable.

Pre-Schoolers

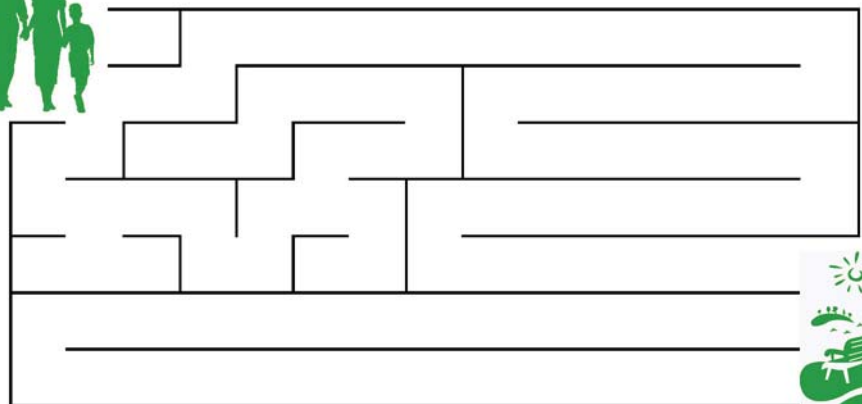


At this age, the important job is to teach the rules of your family as they begin to understand the connection between actions and consequences. Explain before you take action in disciplining them when they misbehave. Again, help them understand

what they can do in addition to what they cannot do. Children at this age are easily excited, like to be in control, and can sometimes be bossy. Instead of engaging in a battle of wills with your child, set things up for her to want to do what you want her to do. Try “Let’s see if you can pick up the toys and put them in the box before I make your bed”, rather than “I want you to put your toys away now.” Most of the time, your child will want to please you and will behave as he knows you would like. Now is the time to make sure that you “say what you mean, and mean what you say”. Make sure that you are clear on your expectations and be consistent. If a certain behavior was not acceptable last week, it shouldn’t be acceptable this week.

Fun for the Kids

Game One: Help your family get to the playground. Figure out which route you need to take so that you will arrive safely at the playground. You can’t go across walls, you can only go through openings.



Game Two: Unscramble the letters to reveal a message!

INTO SCOOLES I LEAP SPAC
FUL CRI LEAV ING OLOR

Discipline **for** the Ages (continued)

School-Age Children

By this age, your child should be able to understand the difference between right and wrong, as well as understand that every action has a consequence. Follow through with what you say consistently, or else you will risk undermining your own authority. Your children still want to please you, even when you set your expectations rather high. And be careful not to use unrealistic threats of punishment – your words become meaningless as you can't or won't be able to follow through. Also, be sure to notice when your child is doing something "right" and offer praise right away. Now is a good time to talk to your child about the different values and behaviors that you would like them to exhibit. Ask for your child's input. If your child has "buy-in" to the rules and consequences, he will be more likely to follow them. It will also teach your child about self-discipline, which is one of the major goals for discipline.



Teenagers



Although your children should know what is expected of them, they still need you to help them keep the boundaries set for them. Expectations about homework, drugs, alcohol, dating, etc. should be thoroughly and continually discussed. Teens go through a discovery period about how to handle newfound freedoms similar to what toddlers go through, but obviously in a different way. They are trying to be independent, and that means at times they may rebel. Understand that this is normal. And by no means should you allow your child to disregard your rules, but use this as an opportunity to talk with your teen about how they are feeling as well as how you feel about what is happening. Remember that you, as the parent, are still in control, however it is okay to start allowing your teen input on changing some of the rules or consequences – negotiation is ok and sometimes necessary. Make certain your teens know that you are hearing them, even if it means repeating back word for word what they are trying to say to you. You may not always agree, but you will gain ground by demonstrating that you are listening to them.

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SUBSCRIBE: You can get our newsletter mailed to you free of charge! ^{or e-mailed!} Just fill out this form and mail, fax, or bring it back to us.



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First Name _____ M.I. _____
Last Name _____
Address _____
City _____ Zip Code _____
Home Phone _____
Cell Phone _____
E-mail Address _____
Gender Male Female

1a. When is the best time to contact you?
 Morning Afternoon
 Evening Anytime

1b. How?
 Phone
 E-mail
 Mail

2. Are you interested in
 Parenting classes/meetings Parenting tips
 Events with great speakers Other (specify) _____

Recruiter Initials _____ Date ____/____/____

The Dad Difference

**UPCOMING EVENTS
ON PAGE 2!**

The official newsletter of



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Get involved with Dads Matter! In addition to our weekly Parenting Discussion Groups, consider joining us for two more awesome opportunities: a Doctor DAD seminar and our monthly ALL PRO DAD breakfasts!



For all "expectant" dads and dads of infants and toddlers...

Do you feel "squirmy" about taking care of that brand new baby? Do you know what to do with a baby thermometer? Do you know more about changing a tire than changing a baby? If your answer is "yes" to any of the above, Doctor DAD training is for YOU! Doctor Dad is a two session, four-hour seminar designed to take the mystery out caring for infants and toddlers.

Call our office today to sign up for our next Doctor DAD seminar: 724-437-2590.



ALL PRO DAD.

For dads of school-age children...

Bring your child and join us for breakfast once a month at LaFayette School. You and your child will enjoy a delicious meal, learn more about important parenting topics, and connect with your child.

Call today to get the latest dates and times for this excellent bonding opportunity: 724-437-2590.

Disclaimer: (1) Dads Matter of Fayette County is a project of the Private Industry Council of Westmoreland/Fayette, Inc. Participation in Dads Matter of Fayette County is strictly voluntary. (2) Funding for this project was provided by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Grant: 90FR0075/01. (3) 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.

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