



The Dad Difference



Dads Matter of Fayette County
Official Quarterly Newsletter

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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.

Why do Dads matter?

Research tells us that the role of a father in raising his children is special and equally valuable as is that of the mother. The following are a sample of the results of good father involvement:

- Fathers who are affectionate and spend time with their children contribute to their children having good self-esteem.
- Fathers who see the importance of education have children who do better in school.
- Fathers who spend quality time with their children create happy memories that last a lifetime.
- Being an involved father is good for children and good for fathers.

- When non-resident fathers pay child support, their children are more likely to be healthy.
- When fathers are actively involved with their children, they are less likely to be absent from school.

Research has also shown that children who grow up without a father involved in their lives are more likely to be poor; have educational, health, emotional and psychological problems; be victims of child abuse; and engage in criminal behavior.

For these reasons, and many more, Dads Matter of Fayette County is here to try to help you and help our children grow up in a community where parents, especially dads, have the information and support they need to be involved in their child's life.

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Upcoming events

Dads Matter Classes

Every Monday evening at 6:00 p.m.
Held at **Uniontown PIC Office** at 480 Coolspring Road, Uniontown, PA. Call 724-437-2590 for more information.

Story Square Concert Series & Farmers' Market

Every Monday evening through the end of August, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.
Held in **Storey Square** in downtown Uniontown during the summer months. See <http://www.commercialcenterassociates.com> for a schedule and details.

Independence Day Celebration

Sun., July 1 – 1:00 p.m. to dusk
Held at the **Uniontown Mall** on Route 40. Barbeque cook-off, live music, kids games, ending with fireworks at dusk.

Fayette County Fair

July 26 – Aug 4
Held at the **Fayette County Fairgrounds** on Route 119 in Dunbar, PA. Food, live music, rides, and fun for the whole family!

Father-Child Reading Night

Mon., July 30 – 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.
Bring your children to the Uniontown library to hear a children's book read and find out what you can do to help your child gain a love of reading.

For more information on family events taking place in Fayette County, go to <http://www.fayettecounty.net/happenings.html>

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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On the Road to Responsible Fatherhood

The official Dads Matter kickoff event on May 19th, 2007

Robin Cole (pictured at right) was the first of two guest speakers at the Dads Matter kickoff event on Sat., May 19. The former Pittsburgh Steeler and two-time Super Bowl champion shared some very personal life experiences and gave great advice on how dads should take care of themselves and their families. "When I think about my father, he was a guy who never quit and taught me right from wrong."

The second speaker Dr. Jeffrey Johnson (pictured below) is the co-author of the parenting materials used by Dads Matter and a 30-year veteran of the fatherhood movement.



Johnson said, "I had two lovely parents in my life - my father died at age 39 of lung cancer. I'm a month away from 51 and I can't imagine my life without my father."

Both speakers urged parents to be there for their kids, stay involved in their children's lives, and take good care of themselves too.

Some attendees even won prizes like Pirates tickets, a toolkit, and a gift certificate to Woodlands World.

We'll send you more info about our next event soon. You won't want to miss it!

A Message from Our President and CEO



We hope you enjoy your first issue of "The Dad Difference" newsletter for the Dads Matter project. Dads Matter is another example of how the Private Industry Council is trying to encourage family development and promote growth and opportunities for Fayette County. The development of our children is critical to establishing a strong future for the County. Providing them with good solid male role models will go a long way in helping to assure that future. We see this newsletter as another way in which the Dads Matter project can provide men with useful information about becoming the best fathers they can be.

Tim Yurcisin

President and CEO of the Private Industry Council



"You can learn many things from children. How much patience you have, for instance."
- Franklin P. Jones



Parenting 101 – It Starts With You!

Most expecting parents reach a point either before the baby is born or soon afterward when they ask: “What do I know about being a parent?” Special classes on how to raise children are not usually part of what we learn in school. Our thoughts and ideas about what we should do as a parent generally begin during our own childhood.

We often begin by raising our children the way we were raised – good or bad. However, if abuse or neglect were a part of our growing up, we can make choices to do things differently with our own children.

Knowing that how we were raised has an effect on how we can be as a parent, it is important to ask ourselves some simple, but important questions about our values and desires for our own children:

1. What do I remember about how my parent(s) raised me?
2. Do I think how my parent(s) handled most situations was good or not?
3. What do I think is important for my

child to be able to do, believe, and make choices about?

4. How did my parent(s) handle discipline? Do I want to handle discipline the same way?
5. How important is education to me? How important do I want it to be for my children?
6. What do I think about working? What do I want my children to believe about working and being independent?
7. What do I want my children to remember about their childhood?

In the Dads Matter classes, our early sessions start out talking about ourselves as men first and then as fathers. Dads are encouraged to think about themselves and what they believe is important. We then spend time talking about how that can affect our children and the ways in which we raise them.

Starting with ourselves, we can then have a better understanding about the impact we can have on our children’s lives.

For more information about attending a Dads Matter class, contact us at 724-437-2590 or email us at dadsmatter@privateindustrycouncil.com.

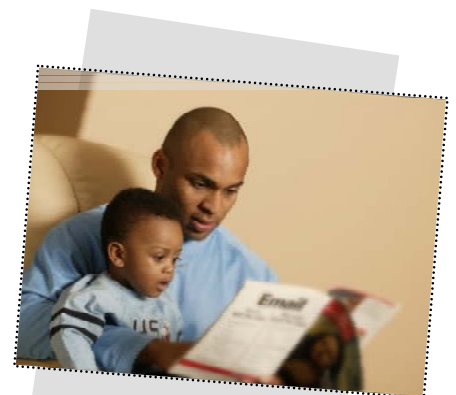
Getting started and staying informed



Welcome to the first newsletter for the Dads Matter fatherhood project! We hope you will find this newsletter to be useful to you in many ways. We plan to include articles about a variety of topics that will help you in raising your children. We also plan to provide you with information about upcoming events for parents and families. Another feature will be for us to include reviews on Web sites and books on parenting that we believe will be helpful. We welcome your comments and questions. We hope you find this newsletter to be a valuable source of information for you and your family.

Bill Huebner

Dads Matter Project Supervisor



“Life doesn't come with an instruction book. That's why we have fathers.”

– Author Unknown



Dads Matter Parenting Classes for Fathers

Dads Matter parenting classes usually last an hour to an hour and a half. They can meet for as little as 6 sessions or continue on for several more sessions, depending on the needs and questions of the men who attend.

All who attend a series of classes receive a certificate of completion from Dads Matter. Support is also available for transportation and/or child care.

The time and location of classes can be flexible, depending on who wants to attend and where (if we have a group of guys in an area that want to meet, we'll figure out a convenient time and location).

Currently, we run regular classes on Monday evenings at 6:00pm in our

offices at 480A Coolspring Road, Uniontown, PA.

Here are some of the basic topics we cover:

- Values and decision-making
- Communication and relationships
- Child growth and development
- Helping your child learn
- Discipline
- Building your child's self-esteem
- Taking care of yourself and raising healthy children

Contact us to find out more – sign up for a class today! Just call the Dads Matter office at 724-437-2590.



The power of our actions in the community



This newsletter represents one of the ways Dads Matter is reaching our community with information about the project and good parenting practices. We are at ground zero for getting started with this responsible fatherhood initiative in Fayette County and hope to see it grow as we move forward. We are excited about being a part of this movement and believe we can accomplish good things for the children and families of our county.

Colette Sandzimier
 VP Early Childhood Division of the Private Industry Council

“I think that the classes have taught me how to communicate with my step-daughter better. I think that the people that have taught this class are very knowledgeable of the subjects that are brought up in class. This is a great class and I hope that many more fathers can benefit from this in the future. I really think that this community will benefit from this program.”

Ivan Smith,
 Dads Matter participant



Fatherhood Resources on the Web:

For those of us who have discovered the usefulness of the Internet, we know how easy it is to find Web sites for just about anything. Fatherhood is no exception. There are many sites devoted to supporting dads and their efforts to be good fathers. Here are a couple of sites that we've discovered at Dads Matter and visit regularly:

www.fatherhood.org The National Fatherhood Initiative web site – provides information on latest research, supports for dads and organizations, regular e-mails about tips and advice for dads.

www.allprodad.com A web site sponsored by the Family First Council and affiliated with the National Football League. This web site is full of information and suggestions for dads. Register at this site to receive daily "Play of the Day" e-mail announcements.

www.fathers.com Sponsored by the National Center for Fathering. The mission of this organization is to do research on fathers and fathering, and to develop practical resources to prepare dads for nearly every fathering situation.

www.daads.com A web site for dads who away from their children for long periods of time because of work, travel, or custody/visitation situations. Offers practical advice on staying connected with your children.

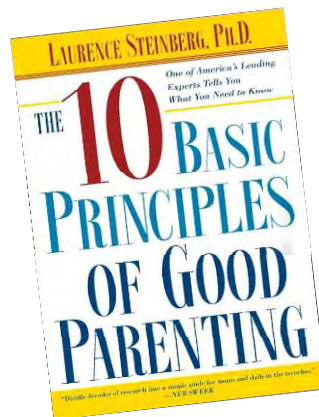
Book Review

The 10 Basic Principles of Good Parenting by Laurence Steinberg, Ph.D., Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, ISBN 0-7432-5116-4

There are a ton of books on the market that tell parents the best ways to raise your children. Seemingly, everybody has advice on what they think a parent should and shouldn't do with their child. A lot of the information in those books is based on opinions, observations or someone's experiences with their own family. In *The 10 basic Principles of Good Parenting*, Laurence Steinberg bases his advice on more than 25 years worth of research.

Steinberg's point in writing this book is very simple: You have to be knowledgeable to be a good parent.

You may be thinking, "Well children don't come with a how-to book, so where will I get this knowledge?" Steinberg's book is a good place to start. The information he



presents is research based, but it is written in terms that you and I can easily understand. When you are reading the book, it feels like you are sitting and listening to advice from a favorite relative. Each of the 10 principles has its own chapter, where the reader is given practical

information on how to follow through on that principle. The book contains a lot of information but is easy reading and could be finished in a reasonable amount of time.

In the chapter devoted to the principle of "WHAT YOU DO MATTERS", Steinberg talks about how it is ok for parents to take some time to think about how they would like to handle situations with their children instead of making snap judgments. He states "Always ask yourself this: What effect will my decision have on my child?"

The 10 Basic Principles of Good Parenting is a map for the road to success for parents. It is a book that a parent can read and re-read when the need arises. It can help with raising a happy, healthy child, as well as help you become a happier, more confident parent.



Daddy Interaction with Different Ages of Children



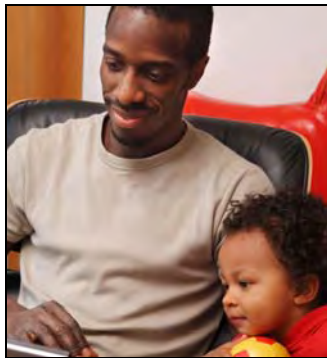
Dad & the baby

Talk to your baby - from the beginning – all the time. Father’s voice is different from mother’s voice and children can tell the difference from the earliest weeks. They learn to trust you by hearing your voice. Name objects that you and your child are playing with. This helps your child learn the connection between names and objects. Talk about what you are doing when changing or bathing or feeding them.



Dad & the 3-year-old

Read to your child every day. Read books, magazines, signs you see on the street. Help your child learn that reading is a normal and natural part of life. Even fathers who are not strong readers can make up stories to go along with pictures. The important experiences are closeness, hearing language, and seeing that words correspond to pictures and make a story. Seeing you read lets children know that reading is an important thing we do.



Dad & the 4-year-old

Help build your child’s imagination and language skills by making up creative stories with them. Start a story and let your child add the key parts, for example: “The horses were all the color of _____ and the best part is that they all could _____ whenever they wanted. And after the horses left the magic mountain, they all started to _____, which really made everyone laugh! Another thing you can do is when reading a story to them, stop and ask: “What do you think will happen next?”



Dad and the teen:

Listening and communication are the keys to staying connected with your teen. Sometimes, you may need to repeat back to them what you heard them saying to you in order to show them that you really are listening. Sometimes, the opposite is a good idea too - have them repeat back to you what you’ve just said to make sure they heard what you were saying. One-on-one time with teens is an important way of keeping close. Even as they “push away” they still want to know you are there for them.



Family

B	H	S	D	R	A	C	S	C	N	R	L	G	E	V
D	A	G	E	N	A	A	H	F	E	E	Z	R	C	O
M	S	B	R	F	A	I	Z	V	P	H	C	A	E	K
V	I	I	Y	A	L	B	N	L	H	T	C	N	I	U
T	E	R	S	D	N	R	S	J	E	O	T	D	N	X
L	D	P	R	T	H	D	V	U	W	M	R	F	T	Q
Q	P	E	C	O	E	W	M	O	H	E	J	A	J	M
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T	E	F	G	M	K	I	A	E	E	H	E	E	N	W
F	A	M	I	L	Y	F	K	F	L	F	E	R	T	T
U	L	W	G	C	V	F	I	B	M	C	M	R	O	H
B	D	T	V	N	N	W	P	L	A	Y	N	Y	N	C
K	B	L	R	E	H	T	O	R	B	S	S	U	H	K
T	C	N	U	U	X	S	P	G	U	M	M	O	L	G

Fatherhood Fact:

An estimated 24.7 million children (36.3%) live absent from their biological father!

AUNT

CAR

FATHER

HOUSE

MOTHER

PLAY

UNCLE

BABY

CHILDREN

GRANDFATHER

HUSBAND

NEPHEW

SISTER

WIFE

BROTHER

FAMILY

GRANDMOTHER

LEARN

NIECE

TOYS

