

SIX KEY COMPONENTS FOR EFFECTIVE FATHERS

1. NURTURANCE

Fathers should learn a variety of ways to direct caring behavior towards their children. Fathers should be able to hug and kiss their child comfortably, patiently demonstrate activities, verbally communicate affection, and give credit for achievements. Nurturance fosters a sense of independence and self reliance in children. According to Henry Biller, author of Fathers and Families, "The father's nurturance enhances his effectiveness as a role model, limit setter, and facilitator of positive moral development" (1993, 75-76).

2. PROVIDER/PROTECTOR

These were once two of the most important roles society placed on the father. While these roles may have lost some importance in today's society, they are still components for effective fathering. It is still important for fathers to financially provide for their children, however fathers also need to provide support, love, guidance, and problem solving skills. By providing these things fathers are also providing protection by safeguarding their children from destructive forces in society such as violence, teen pregnancy and child poverty.

3. ACCESSIBILITY

Being a good father requires the investment of a significant amount of time. It is important for fathers to be there when their children need them. Being accessible for children encourages open communication, builds trust and gives an opportunity to take a more active and informed role in a child's life.

4. FLEXIBILITY

With the increase of working mothers it is important for the father to be flexible in his role. The father must not only be willing to provide for his children, but also be able and willing to cook their dinners and change their diapers. Being flexible helps to eliminate gender role stereotypes and decreases the stresses of role overload for the mother.

5. DEVOTED

When all else fails, the father must be willing to put his family before himself. Being devoted means accepting the responsibilities of fatherhood. It is increasingly important for fathers to stand by their families in times of crisis. A devoted father shows his children the importance of responsibility.

6. PARENTAL ALLIANCE WITH THE MOTHER

This is one of the most important factors in a family. Henry Biller takes note of this when he states, "The quality of the father-mother relationship has much impact on the child.

When there is a severe imbalance in the family system, problems result for the parents as well as the children Two parents cooperating have a much better chance of dealing with problems" (1993, 248). Through parental alliance discipline is more easily perceived.

Source: Thanks to Rob Soucek

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Fatherless America: Confronting our Most Urgent Social Problem, by David Blankenhorn

Fathers and Families: Paternal Factors in Child Development, by Henry B. Biller

Complete Smart Dads Toolkit, by Paul Lewis

She Calls Me Daddy, by Robert Wolgemuth

The Expectant Father: Facts, Tips, and Advice for Dads-to-Be, by Armin A. Brott and Jennifer Ash

The Father Factor: What You Need to Know to Make a Difference, by Henry B. Biller, Ph.D. and Robert J. Trotter

The Gift of Fatherhood: How Men's Lives Are Transformed by Their Children, by Aaron Hass, Ph.D.

Questions from Dad: A Very Cool Way to Communicate with Kids, by Dwight Twilly

The National Fatherhood Initiative offers a free resource catalog and other information. Call 1-800-790-DADS

[FatherWork](http://fatherwork.byu.edu), on the web at <http://fatherwork.byu.edu>