

Wade Horn: What these videos will help you do may prove to be one of the most important things you've ever done in Head Start. We now know that children with involved, committed and responsible fathers in their lives are more likely to have strong skills, good health and more confidence than those who don't. They are also less likely to get involved in drugs or get into trouble with the law. And they are more likely to graduate high school and continue their education.

Setting up or improving your fatherhood program may not be easy, but the rewards are great because a child with both a loving involved father and mother is a child who truly has a great Head Start in life.

Erle Armstrong: Say alligator. Bethany (Erle's daughter): Alligator. Erle: My father had some problems and took some problems out on me my...my brother and my sisters. It's kind of rough, it's kind of rough.

Justin (Erle's son): Dad, can you help me with this ...Erle Armstrong: I never had no one there to tell me in my football game "You did great, I'm proud of you," and I would watch other children and their fathers and I felt there was something missing. And I was kind of jealous that they had something that I didn't have. Next bar. Erle's wife: Move your arms, that a girl.

Erle Armstrong: Back in '98 my wife told me that I was going to be a father and I was thinking about it and I don't think anybody's ever ready to be a father. (To son) You're a good kid. Justin: Thanks Daddio. Erle Armstrong (To son): I love you.

The more I thought about it – me being a Dad – I was proud, I was very proud and I vowed that I would raise my children the best I could. (To daughter) I love you Bethany. Bethany: I love you. Erle Armstrong: All right guys, hit it.

I took some workshops through ABCD, I volunteered...started volunteering my time (To child: Oh, cookie, num num num!) and I learned how to actually talk to the children and explain to them you know, if they know what they're doing wrong, I explain to them why it's wrong and I help 'em you know, to...to get along with one another.

Justin, Justin did you hear your sister tell you to stop? Justin: Yes. Erle Armstrong: What does stop mean? Justin: Stop.

Erle Armstrong: Next time she tells you to stop, you need to stop. And Bethany, you need to stop antagonizing him. Okay? Bethany: All right. Erle Armstrong: All right! Go play. Savouí Graham: It is a joy to see the fathers make a change in their whole mindset, in their whole approach to fatherhood.

Woman 1: A house, for who -- for you or for your doggie? Child 1: For you. Woman 1: You made a house for me, well thank you. Erle Armstrong (To children): Can I borrow your knife?

I never thought that I would be a teacher or even want to be. It's just something I happened on to by volunteering. I walked into ABCD, a little young kid -- I can't remember what his name was -- he stopped me on the way in and asked me what, you know, what my name was. So I says okay, I squatted down and looked at him eye-to-eye and says, you know, "I'm Mr. Erle." He's like, "Well, you know Mr. Erle it's really good to see you here."

And I asked him, I said, "Well, why?" He says, "Because you know, I haven't seen my dad in a long time. My daddy's in and out of jail and..." And...it just touched me. It melted...it basically melted me and from that point on I knew that...that teaching, you know, working with the kids was something that I wanted to do.

Narrator: Millions of American children are living without a father. Millions more live with their dad but he's not involved in their life. In fact, more than one fatherhood program started when someone casually made this observation and said, "Where are the dads?" Child: A cookie.

Narrator: The anchor of this Building Block is that the most important thing you can do is teach your staff and parents why fathers are essential. Woman 1: Come on down, Rebecca. Man 1: Hey, aren't you up high? Come on down, Rebecca. Woman 1: Hang on, your shoe's untied -- you gotta tie your shoe.

Narrator: Mothers and fathers are different, they parent differently and this makes for a big benefit for children. Man 1: All right! Way to go! Narrator: Fathers have a distinct style of interacting with their children and children learn that men and women are different and have different ways of dealing with life.

Man 2: Get the Blues Clues out. Narrator: Fathers tickle more and wrestle while moms say, "Not so high"... Child: I like to go high. Woman 1: It's too high for Mommy, love. Narrator: And are quieter, more gentle in their interactions.

Ivette Cintron: I could share some of the examples that some of our fathers even shared during meetings. Lets say you have a mom and dad and a child out on the playground and the mom is telling the child, "Be careful while you're going on that monkey bar, don't go too high, please. You know, I don't want you to fall or anything like that." And then we had our father saying that we're telling him, "Come on go a little higher, come on go a little higher, you know, we're here, you're not gonna fall, don't worry, try a little harder."

So there was father's were able to clearly tell us and point out how they would handle some situations differently then moms would. Erle: Kings of the world.

Narrator: Fathers tend to encourage independence while mothers encourage security. Children who roughhouse with their dads learn that overly aggressive forms of behavior are not acceptable. They learn self-control and where the limits are and understand when told "enough is enough."

Man 2: Joe, you better not go much higher now, you're pretty -- you're about high enough. Them branches are getting too little up there. Child: I know. Man 2: All right.

Narrator: Dads even talk differently. Child: Da-da? Man 1: Yes honey. Child: Why -- how does juice be made?

Man 1: Juice is made by taking all the fruit and it goes to a factory and they pasteurize the juice just like they do mild. Woman 1: Pasteurized is when they make it safe and healthy and they take the germs out of it so it's safe for people to drink.

Narrator: Mom's way facilitates immediate communication while Dad's way challenges the child to listen and expand her vocabulary an important building block of academic success. Michael Lamb: In this society dads tend to bring a more...of an emphasis on risk-taking and play and trying out new things -- something that sort of encourages kids to really stretch themselves intellectually and socially. And moms tend to play more of a role of of calming the child and not so much holding it back, but keeping its...its behavior within limits.

Narrator: Fathers discipline differently. Erle Armstrong: Justin, Justin did you hear your sister tell you to stop? Narrator: And tend to prepare children for the real world. Dads discipline by stressing justice, fairness and duty. Erle: And Bethany, you need to stop antagonizing him, okay?

Narrator: And they are more rule-oriented while moms stress sympathy care and help and are more relationship-oriented. Fathers help children prepare for the reality and harshness of the real world and mothers help protect against it. Both are necessary as children grow into adulthood.

Michael Lamb: There have been thousands of studies that have focused on the importance and the benefits that accrue to children of having committed, responsible, involved fathers in their lives. So I see that as perhaps one of the best established findings we have in developmental psychology.

Narrator: Girls and boys who grow up with an involved father are more secure with the world of men. Boys learn respect for the opposite sex and are less likely to act aggressively and are more confident. They learn how to grow up to be a good man. Girls with involved fathers learn how they should be treated by men when they grow up. They don't wonder what a man's beard feels like or what it's like to be hugged by strong arms.

This knowledge builds emotional security and protects a girl from the exploitation of predatory males and when she

grows up makes it more likely she will choose a partner who treats her with respect. Savoui: Dads are critical, positively -- when they're positively involved with their children, the children win and that's really what it's all about.

Narrator: A substantial body of research and testing shows clear benefits to father involvement. It's better when dad lives in the home, of course, but even fathers who don't live with their children can make a positive impact. The key is their level of involvement. Children who have an involved father are more successful in school. They have increased verbal skills and are better in math...

Man 1: And you got a four, very good. Narrator: better at problem solving and overall more confident and interested in learning. Just look at some of the statistics. Children who feel a closeness and warmth with their father are twice as likely to enter college, 75% less likely to have a child in their teen years, 80% less likely to go to jail and half as likely to be depressed. The likelihood that a young male will get in trouble with the law doubles if he is raised without a father.

The research is absolutely clear, the one human being most capable of helping a boy grow up to be a caring and responsible adult is his father. Ivette Cintron: Children are better off when both parents are involved in...in their lives, whatever that might look like. It might look different, you know, in different families, but there's a clear message that that's important and staff has bought into that message. And so I think that...that's what has made us successful.

Narrator: Fathers help children achieve all the things your Head Start Program works to help children attain. A child with a loving involved mother and father is a child that has an incredible Head Start in life.

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