



I'm a Parent Now

Effective Fathering for Young Dads

A parenting workshop from the My Dad Matters toolkit

Introduction

In this workshop we will take a closer look at three important areas in which we want the young fathers to obtain knowledge, with respect to their role of being a father. They include:

- the importance of good character,
- the six (6) dimensions of fatherhood, and
- understanding their child's development in the first three years.

Facilitator note:

It's important when facilitating groups with young fathers to not be critical of them and point out their flaws, but simply remind them of the importance of modelling the type of character that is necessary to have a positive impact on their children.

Understanding Character



Learning Objectives

We want the fathers to end this portion of workshop with an understanding of the character traits they want to strive to possess to be the best parents they can be.

Character plays a key role in how children grow and learn to get along with others. In the first activity we want to ask the fathers what they think good character traits are required in order to be a caring, loving father for their children.

Share these thoughts about character with the dads:

Character involves:

- Knowing right from wrong, and having the will to choose it.
- Honouring other people.
- Acting with wisdom- learning from mistakes.
- Recognizing the positive character traits that we possess and using them.

Activity

Ask the fathers the types of character traits that they feel are necessary to be a good father. Examples would be honesty, caring, trustworthy etc.

Write their thoughts on a flipchart or whiteboard.

Ask the fathers to take a good look at the flipchart. Ask them how many of these traits they possess.

Facilitator note:

You may want to remind the group that you yourself are not a perfect father/parent and that we evolve over time, learning from our mistakes and become better parents.



Six Dimensions of Fatherhood

Learning Objectives

- **Understanding Nurturing/Affection:** The fathers will know how to demonstrate appropriate nurturing techniques within the family context.
- **Understanding Responsibility/ Providing:** The fathers will demonstrate the ability to make a viable one-year plan for a successful fathering experience.
- **Understanding Commitment/Interacting:** The fathers will articulate their commitment to parenting.

Introduction

In this activity we take a closer look at the six dimensions of fatherhood and how these dimensions can define us as a father.

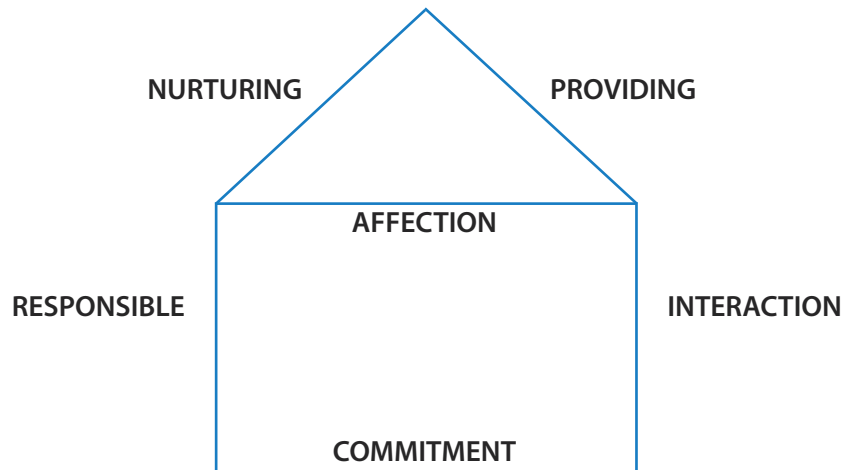
Facilitator note:

In this part of the workshop we will build a house. You can begin the conversation with being a committed father is a lot like the foundation of a home, a strong foundation is as also crucial to parenting. Without a solid foundation our house will crumble. This would be a good time to remind the fathers that by attending this group they have already started making a commitment.

Activity

Draw an outline of a house. Write “commitment” along the bottom of the house. Ask the fathers for ways they show commitment to their children and families.

Continue with the other five dimensions, one at a time, asking fathers for examples. You can refer to the suggestions below, if necessary. When complete, your house should look something like this:



The Committed Father: Foundation

- Thinking of their children during work, school, outing, a trip.
- Talking of his child with friends.
- Being preoccupied with having mental images of the child.
- Self-sacrifice.
- Carrying pictures of their children in their wallet.

The Interactive Father: Right Wall

- Playing with children in activities they like.
- Attending sports games/clubs.
- Asking how their day went.
- Knowing their friends.
- Spending quality time.

The Responsible Father: Left Wall

- Attending doctors appointment
- Programming or after school activities.
- Making sure they are properly dressed for the weather.
- Taking charge of the health booklet.
- Modelling behaviour.

The Affectionate Father: Ceiling

- Communicating.
- Vocalizing.
- Playing with our children.
- Hugs and kisses (holding children's hand).
- Expressing positive emotions.

The Nurturing Father: Left Roof

- Feeding the child.
- Changing diapers at night.
- Putting child to sleep
- Giving the bath.
- Always attending to their needs when hurt, scared, crying.

The Provider Father: Right Roof

- Paying rent.
- Purchasing food.
- Giving love.
- Offering a safe environment.
- Buying clothing.

Facilitator note:

When discussing the various headings above, it's good to give one or two examples and then ask the fathers for their ideas (for example: when dressing your child for the weather you would not send your child to school in the winter wearing only a t-shirt).

Activity: My One Year Action Plan

At this time you can hand out the My One Year Action Plan worksheet (on the following page), or have the dads create their own.

Have the fathers come up with at least one thing they would like to do different based on what you have been talking about so far.

Ask them to write that down, including when, and who can help them.

My One Year Action Plan

MY COMMITMENT	WHEN I'LL HAVE IT DONE	WHO CAN HELP ME?



Ages and Stages

Learning Objectives

After this portion of the workshop, participants should be able to identify what age group a specific developmental milestone typically falls within, while also being able to identify that all children are different and so the milestones are strictly a guideline. The fathers will have an understanding of their child’s development.

Activity

Separate the fathers into two groups and have them work together in identifying the ages and stages in the three age categories listed in the table below. You will need each of developmental milestones listed below on little slips of paper and the categories references labelled on the wall or white board. Please remind the fathers that this is only a guideline, because all children develop differently. For example, some children are walking by 12 months and some take up to 18 months.

0 TO 6 MONTHS				
Lifts head when on tummy	Vocalizes sounds and recognizes faces	Recognizes and plays with hands and feet	Rolls over in both directions	Turns towards sound and voices

6 TO 12 MONTHS				
Sits without support	Says words like “mama” or “dada”	Stands while holding onto things	Starts to crawl	Laughs and giggles

1 TO 2 YEARS		
Begins to use words	Eats with fingers and learn to use utensils	Can empty containers of contents, plays ball and enjoys riding toys
Has temper tantrums when frustrated	Walks/runs and goes up and down stairs	Can understand simple tasks

2 TO 3 YEARS			
Stacks blocks	Can jump with both feet	Washes and dries their own hands	Can draw lines and circles
Can say own name and can identify some colours	Uses 50 to 70 words	Uses three to four words in a sentence	

Facilitator note:

Feel free to include other developmental milestones and ages (if your participants have older children) as you see fit. Choose the ones that relate best to your group of fathers.

Wrap Up

Ask the fathers for one thing they have learned in this workshop. Thank the fathers for taking part.

I'm a Parent Now: Effective Fathering for Young Dads
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Engaging Men Raising the Next Generation

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