

# CO-OP COMMUNITY NEWS

From the Parent Advisory Council  
of the North Seattle Community College  
Cooperative Preschool Program



December 2005

## Dads Make a Difference

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It is a cliché but it's absolutely true. Current research is now validating the fact that dads make a difference.

I didn't need a researcher to remind me about the importance of fathers because these findings were poignantly validated in my own life this year. You see, my dad died this past June, and the difference he made in my life is indisputable. He bequeathed to my brother and me a firm foundation for living, as well as a blueprint for becoming happy, confident, compassionate members of planet earth.

So dads, consider the memories that you are making.

Today's evolving dads are stepping up to the parental plate and becoming more engaged with their children than ever before. That being said, they still lag behind moms in regard to time spent with children. In two parent families, the average time spent with a mother is 2 hours 21 minutes and 1 hour 46 minutes with fathers and that is four times the amount that non-custodial fathers spends with their kids. Time is a valuable commodity and a necessary one for memory-making.

Researchers are discovering that while fathers have long been neglected as having any significant impact on their children's lives, things are changing. We have learned many things, and this much we know with certainty; fathers are not mothers. Incredible, isn't it? Fathers' style of communication, playing, and caring is unique. Not better or worse than moms'— just different.

Times when dad's sole responsibility was being the "breadwinner" for the family are gone. The "Happy Days" family unit is obsolete. Can you see Marian asking Howard to do the laundry or cook dinner? Today's families are extremely diverse, propelling a blurring of stereotypical views of what a dad or a mom can, or even should do. Many dads today are the primary parent, an increase of 70% from 10 years ago. Today's fathers, like the mothers, often wear many hats and juggle numerous responsibilities when it comes to providing for the family.

Moms also play vital roles as well. Don't they? Sure they do. It goes without saying. So what's all the fuss? What difference do dads make in the lives of their children?

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### 2005-2006 Calendar

#### December

- 12 PAC Meeting
- 19-Jan.1 Winter Vacation (no school)

#### January

- 9 PAC Meeting
- 14 Elizabeth Crary Siblings Workshop 9:30 - 4:30
- 16 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (no school)

#### February

- 13 PAC Meeting
- 20-24 Mid-Winter Break (no school)
- 27 In-House Registration Begins

#### March

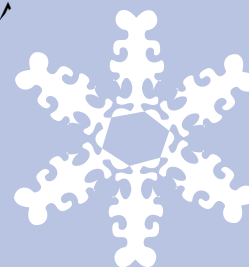
- 2 In-House Registration Ends
- 3 PAC Scholarship Deadline
- 13 PAC Meeting
- 13-16 Cross-over Registration
- 25 Open Registration

#### April

- 10-14 Spring Break (no school)
- 17 PAC Meeting

#### May

- 22 P/
- 26 I



## Dads Make a Difference

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Here's where researchers are telling us that dads make a difference.

### Academics

There is a strong association between a nurturing father and cognitive skills. Kids with involved dads stay in school longer, do better, have higher vocal and math skills, more advanced problem-solving skills, develop crucial problem-solving skills, and strengthen their curiosity and independence. Because many males have strong analytical skills, a father's encouragement and modeling may impact their child's ability to utilize these thinking skills as well. Reading to your child also is a strong predictor of reading success and verbal skills.

"A father's involvement shows that in two-parent families, half of students get mostly A's compared to 1/3 when fathers have low levels of involvement. Students are half as likely to repeat a grade (7% vs. 15%) and significantly less likely to have been suspended or expelled (10% vs. 18%)."

*Father Involvement in Schools, ERIC Digest, April 1998  
By Christine Winquist Nord*

Fathers seem to encourage their children's curiosity, frequently allowing the child to explore and actively solve both intellectual and physical challenges, even to the point of frustration. The mothers encourage exploration but are quicker to move in and solve problems for the child when frustration began.

### Gender awareness

Children with strong father involvement seem to resist stereotypical

pigeonholing. Seeing dad participate in various roles from diapering, to cooking, to budgeting, to running heavy equipment allows a child to observe diverse activities that can be performed, regardless of gender. Dads also play a huge role in acceptance of one's body image, mind, individual differences and moral standards.

### Self-esteem

Kids with active fathers are more confident and less fearful about exploring the world. They take calculated risks with less apprehension in order to learn new skills.

One study shows that adolescent daughters' self-esteem is best predicted by fathers' physical affection and mothers' general support. In comparison, sons' self-esteem is best predicted by fathers' sustained contact and mothers' companionship. (Role of Father's Love in Child Development Deserves More Attention by Allison Thomas, *Advance*, February 11, 2002)

### Social Interactions

Children with involved fathers (who've been regularly engaged in bathing, feeding, diapering and general care) are more socially adept and also exhibit less impulsivity. They are more patient when waiting their turn, yet remain assertive in standing up for themselves. Of special interest is the finding that children of fathers who demonstrate positive ways of solving problems also tend to display more self-control, in moral, as well as the physical realm. Gee, what a novel thought!

### Emotional Development

Kids who participate in dad's more physical, active involvement are

more compassionate, have greater tolerance and resiliency, are more empathetic, manage stress better, have greater job satisfaction as adults and are generally more content individuals. Who could know that such rough and tumble play could have such long-lasting results! Involved parents remain the single strongest determinant of adult empathy.

### Physical Development

From the very beginning, fathers seem to "activate" babies. They hold them differently, handle them differently and speak to them differently than moms. The more a dad visits a baby in the hospital, the higher the weight gain. Researchers have discovered that because of the more active play that dads typically enjoy, gross motor development is accelerated allowing more flexibility and discovery, a path to confident exploration.

So the next time you see a dad with the kids, giving mom a needed break, cut him some slack. He's trying. And his children are the one who will forever benefit from his effort.

### Postscript

After my father passed away, my 4-year-old niece, Kendyl, came into the family room where dad had virtually lived the past year and half. He was always there in his favorite big man LAZ-Boy recliner. My brother had already spoken with her about dad's death but when she came into the room, she stopped and just stood in front of the recliner.

"Pooh," my brother asked, "What's

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**Don't Wait For Summer**

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wrong? Are you OK?" "Yes," she replied, "I'm just sad." "Would it help to talk about it?" my brother asked. "Tell me. What will you miss most about Papa Buster being gone?" Without hesitation she replied, "His chair is empty."

Then she asked, "Daddy, what will you miss most?"


My brother thought about all the years of guidance, support and advice dad had given him. He remembered the time and financial sacrifices offered for his well-being and the sometimes frivolous possessions. Reflecting on his laughter, his patience, his model of integrity and kindness to his human man, Tony sifted through years of caring trying to determine what he would miss the most. Then he softly answered, "His chair is empty."

**Bibliography**

Charting Parenthood: A Statistical Portrait of Fathers and Mothers in America, July 2002.

Fathers. Zero To Three: National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families.

Goldstein, Lisa A. New Millennium Dads: Today's Fathers Are Taking on a Bigger Parenting Role. iParenting Media.

Pruett, Kyle D. How Men and Children Affect Each Other's Development. Yale Child Study Center, New Haven, Connecticut Edited from the Zero to Three Journal, August/September 1997 (Vol. 18:1). 



The Puget Sound Network for Compassionate Communication website lists many wonderful opportunities to make our lives more wonderful. Some Seattle offerings are introductions Dec. 16, Jan. 6, Jan. 20, and Feb. 17. Dec. 13 - 14 there is and NVC dancefloors workshop tying in with our recent movement lecture! Or try Family Patterns Dec. 12 and 19th. Doug Dolstad is hosting a couples workshop on Vashon Feb. 18th and 19th. What better Valentine's gift than a romantic weekend during which your communication is enhanced! Knowing Doug, it will be a fun time. See [www.psncc.org](http://www.psncc.org).

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**NSCC Cooperative  
 Preschool Program**  
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**(NSCC Parent Ed Office)**

<b>NSCC Co-op Preschool Openings for 2005-06*</b>				
	Co-op	Openings	Contact	Phone
<b>Toddlers</b>	Northgate	13	Yoon Kang-O'Higgins	729-5918
<b>Pre-3s</b>	Northwest	6	Karla Gore	697-8294
<b>3-5s</b>	Crown Hill AM	2	Angie Kilkenny	789-6165
	Crown Hill PM	2	Jennifer Chamberlin	782-5384
	Sandhurst	5	Katy Ryan	522-3680
	Victory Heights PM	6	Theresa Venice	306-8907
	Wallingford 3-4's	2	Wyly Astley	240-1656
	Wallingford 4-5's	1	Lisa Drake	632-9817
<b>Fives</b>	Meadowbrook	7	Debbie Fields	985-9446
<b>Web Link</b>	To view current listings and for descriptions of each co-op, please go to our web site at: <a href="http://northseattlecoops.org">northseattlecoops.org</a> *current as of 11-18-05			