



ECRC Community Chronicle

EARLY CHILDHOOD RESOURCE CENTER :: *Winter News 2016*

Fathers Make All the Difference

THE IMPORTANCE OF FATHER INVOLVEMENT

As the National Fatherhood Initiative states, “there is a “Father Factor” in nearly all social ills facing America today.”¹ The National Center for Fathering agrees, stating that “more than 20 million children live in a home without the physical presence of a father... If it were classified as a disease, fatherlessness would be an epidemic worthy of attention as a national emergency.”²

Father involvement has an effect from the very start of a child’s life: infant mortality rates are 1.8 times higher for infants with unmarried mothers than for infants with married mothers.³ In 2011, 12 percent of children in married-couple families were living in poverty, compared to 44 percent of children in mother-only families.⁴

Single moms work miracles every day and are to be commended for that. However, the research clearly shows that a wide range of outcomes are vastly more positive when fathers are also involved and engaged in children’s lives:

- *Father involvement is linked to enhanced cognitive development during infancy, better than average social functioning in childhood, higher educational attainment, decreased likelihood of behavior problems in adolescence, and lower rates of delinquency and criminal behavior.*⁵
- *Father-child contact is associated with better social-emotional and academic functioning. Children with more involved fathers experience fewer behavioral problems and score higher on reading achievement.*⁶
- *Father involvement can even affect a child’s physical health: children with a father in the home are less likely to be asthmatic and less likely to experience asthma-related emergencies.*⁷

Continued on page 3



A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

THE FATHER FACTOR

Children need their fathers. Research and experience tell us that children succeed more often when Dad is in the picture. When Dad is involved, children grow up happier, healthier, and more adjusted. Their grades are better. They stay in school. They're much more likely to succeed and lead productive lives.

Sadly, though, too many fathers are letting their children down. Dad is often not in the picture. At the ECRC, we're working to help fathers become—and stay—engaged in their children's lives. We're helping them become the role models their children need and deserve.

We know that if we can reach enough dads, we can help Stark County's children begin—and stay—on the path to success. And that benefits us all, for many generations to come.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Hasselman". The signature is fluid and cursive.

SCOTT HASSELMAN



THE FATHER ABSENCE CRISIS IN AMERICA

Research shows when a child is raised in a father-absent home, he or she is affected in the following ways...

POVERTY



4X GREATER RISK OF POVERTY



7X MORE LIKELY TO BECOME PREGNANT AS TEEN

BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS

MORE LIKELY To Have BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS



CHILD ABUSE

MORE LIKELY TO FACE ABUSE AND NEGLECT



MOM-CHILD HEALTH



2X GREATER RISK OF INFANT MORTALITY

SUBSTANCE ABUSE



MORE LIKELY TO ABUSE DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

INCARCERATION

MORE LIKELY TO GO TO PRISON



CHILD OBESITY

2X MORE LIKELY TO SUFFER OBESITY



CRIME



MORE LIKELY TO COMMIT CRIME

EDUCATION



2X MORE LIKELY TO DROP OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL

Source: National Fatherhood Initiative

If it were classified as a disease, fatherlessness would be an epidemic worthy of attention as a national emergency.²

How Do We Get Dads Engaged?

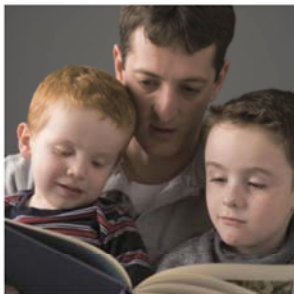
The Obama administration's 2012 *Promoting Responsible Fatherhood* report describes "the hole a man leaves when he abandons his responsibility to his children [as] one that no government can fill." It's true: it's impossible to mandate or require father involvement.⁸

So, how do we help dads step up? Community support can go a long way. For years, mothers have long been the target audience for social services and family programming. Here in Stark County, the Early Childhood Resource Center and its partners are offering programs that prioritize fathers. Programming ranges from classes on health and first aid to classes on strengthening parenting skills and successful co-parenting. Peer support is a crucial part of the fatherhood engagement strategy as well; the more fathers learn from each other and learn to lean on each other, the stronger they will be as parents and role models. All of this is part of a larger community effort to strengthen families and reduce infant mortality.

The statistics are clear: father engagement is crucial to a child's growth and development. The ECRC believes that offering resources for fathers is a long-term investment that will benefit the families in our community for generations to come. ♦

NOTES: 1) <http://www.fatherhood.org/fatherhood-data-statistics>; 2) <http://www.fathers.com/statistics-and-research/the-extent-of-fatherlessness>; 3) Matthews, T.J., Sally C. Curtin, and Marian F. MacDorman. Infant Mortality Statistics from the 1998 Period Linked Birth/Infant Death Data Set. National Vital Statistics Reports, Vol. 48, No. 12. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, 2000; 4) U.S. Census Bureau, Children's Living Arrangements and Characteristics: March 2011, Table C8. Washington D.C.: 2011; 5) <http://www.fira.ca/article.php?id=126>; 6) Howard, K. S., Burke Lefever, J. E., Borkowski, J.G., & Whitman, T. L. (2006). Fathers' influence in the lives of children with adolescent mothers. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 20, 468- 476; 7) http://www.fira.ca/cms/documents/29/Effects_of_Father_Involvement.pdf; 8) https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/fatherhood_report_6.13.12_final.pdf

Helping Our Community THRIVE



THRIVE stands for Toward Health Resiliency for Infant Vitality and Equity. It's a partnership of agencies, organizations, and community members working to make sure all Stark County babies will celebrate their first birthday.

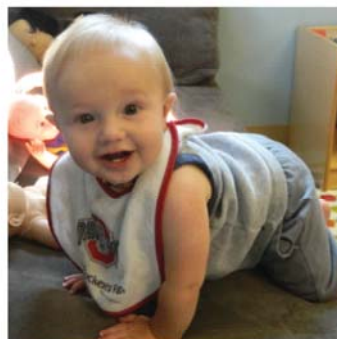
The Ohio Department of Medicaid recently awarded Canton-Stark County THRIVE a \$2.9 million grant to support local work to reduce infant mortality and strengthen families. Grant-supported efforts will include a spectrum of programs for pregnant moms, fathers, and families.

Grant resources focused specifically on fathers include the funding of a fatherhood coordinator for the Stark County Fatherhood Coalition, a group of more than 15 agencies and organizations. The coordinator will help drive the coalition's efforts to ensure that necessary services are made available and accessible. With a coordinator in

place, the coalition will be focusing on four program areas: responsible parenting, economic stability, healthy marriage/healthy family programs, and parenting time assistance.

The responsible parenting programming will be provided by the ECRC, which will offer an array of parenting programs, including 24/7 Dad classes to help strengthen parenting skills, peer support programs for fathers, Doctor Dad classes teaching the basics of caring for a new baby, and outreach to fathers of newborns and fathers ages 16 to 24, to help them learn about their crucial role as fathers and to help them learn about and access parenting resources that are available.

The ECRC will also be providing healthy marriage/healthy family services, including counseling, mentoring, and dissemination of information about the benefits of marriage and two-parent involvement in raising children, and the Parent Café program, which helps parents strengthen the protective factors that reduce the likelihood of abuse and neglect. +



“I absolutely loved the Parent Café. it was very nice to have parents who could help you out of situations. Also, it was nice to hear you're not alone in parenting. Even if you are a single parent, there's so much help available!”

— A Stark County Parent

RESOURCES FOR STARK COUNTY FATHERS

Children are happier and healthier when both parents are involved in their lives. The ECRC and its partners offer many resources for fathers. These resources include:

24/7 Dad Classes to help dads strengthen their bonds with their children as they learn about the critical role they play in their children's lives.

Doctor Dad Classes to teach dads how to keep their babies safe and healthy, and what to do if their babies are sick or injured.

Healthy Relationship Program to help fathers strengthen and sustain healthy relationships with their spouse or partner, and improve communication between co-parents.

Individual Consultations to help parents strengthen parenting skills and address concerns.

Parenting Time Assistance Program

to help non-custodial parents establish parenting time orders and enforce compliance when necessary.

Peer Support Groups to provide a community network of fathers who can offer ready parenting support and real-world solutions.

Parent Cafés, which help parents throughout our community connect, share, and learn from one another in a casual, open environment. Participating parents find support and develop coping strategies that help them parent effectively, even under stress.

For more information on resources for Stark County fathers, call (330) 491-3272.

DID YOU KNOW?

Your gift of just \$15* will provide one family with:

- 50 storytime sessions
- 50 books to take home and read together
- 20 keepsakes for the refrigerator
- 30 ooey-goey, hands-on learning projects
- Infinite giggles, hundreds of hugs, and priceless parent-child bonding
- The critical school readiness skills needed for a lifetime of success.

Consider a gift to the ECRC today. You'll change a child's world, guaranteed.

Visit ecresourcecenter.org to learn about programs, services, and volunteer opportunities, and to donate securely online.

*Numbers based on weekly family program attendance.



EDUCATION IN ACTION



Tyresse, second from the left, along with his siblings and father, Jeffery, learning through play.

Jeffery Hicks: Committed SPARK Dad

Tyresse is learning so much as a SPARK child. Deana, Tyresse's mother, learned about SPARK at the library. But Jeffery, Tyresse's dad, has taken on the role of the learning advocate – the main parent who consistently works alongside the SPARK parent partner to get the child ready for school.

Jeffery and Deanna have four young children. During this SPARK lesson, all four are in the living area together. Even as his brothers and sister are noisily playing around him, Tyresse remains engaged with and focused on the lesson. Jeffery stays by his side, patiently encouraging Tyresse the whole time.

Tyresse listens intently to the family's SPARK parent partner, Ms. Susan. When she asks what letter she's pointing to, Tyresse smiles and shakes his head no. She then starts saying, "ba, ba," and tells him to put his wrists together. He mimics her, saying "ba, ba." When she says, "B for Bat," he swings his imaginary bat and proudly says, "B: bat!" Jeffery tells him, "Nice job!"

Jeffery likes SPARK because his son can "make mistakes and not feel that something is wrong." SPARK allows Tyresse to figure things out, "to learn and use his brain." Being in SPARK has given Tyresse confidence. The lessons are individually geared toward Tyresse's specific needs and fit him completely.

SPARK has helped Jeffery, too. It's given him an understanding of what Tyresse already knows and what specific skills they should work on together in between monthly SPARK lessons.

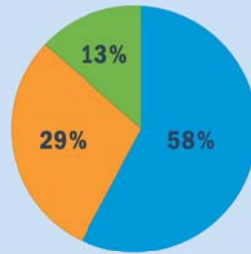
Jeffery is definitely a hands-on dad, encouraging Tyresse and prompting him to "tell us your favorite animal from a farm." He jumps right in to put on an animal finger puppet and sing Old McDonald. He congratulates Tyresse as he gets answers right, telling him, "You are a master builder!" Whatever it takes, this dad will be right on it. ♦

SPARK Children Make Gains in Reading and Math

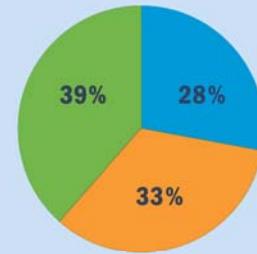
The results are in, yet again. The charts show the pre- and post-participation scores for the cohort of SPARK children throughout the state who just began kindergarten. The results are clear: children gain reading and math skills after participating in the SPARK kindergarten readiness program. This is just one more piece of evidence that SPARK children have a skills advantage, and they're starting school ready to succeed.

PRESCHOOL EARLY NUMERACY SKILLS SCREENING, BRIEF VERSION (PENS-B) ASSESSMENT SPARK Ohio Scores

Before Participating in SPARK

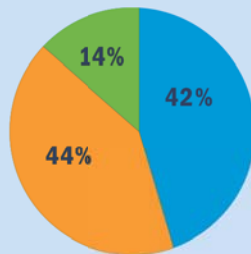


After Participating in SPARK

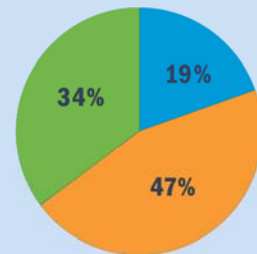


GET READY TO READ ASSESSMENT SPARK Ohio Scores

Before Participating in SPARK



After Participating in SPARK



■ Below average ■ Average ■ Above average

Big, Big, Really Big Thanks!

Our Big, Big Really Big Toy Box family fundraising event was an overwhelming success, with more than 700 in attendance. We thank everyone who sponsored, planned, volunteered, and attended.

A special thank you to our sponsors:

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EARLY CHILDHOOD RESOURCE CENTER

A Ministry of the Sisters of Charity Health System

1718 CLEVELAND AVENUE NORTHWEST
CANTON, OHIO 44703

ecresourcecenter.org

OUR MISSION

The mission of the Early Childhood Resource Center is to promote the healthy development of young children by strengthening families, improving the quality of early learning experiences, increasing school and community readiness, and informing public policy.

CENTER HOURS

Monday 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Tuesday 8:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Wednesday 8:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Thursday 8:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Friday 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

The Center is closed on weekends.

330.491.3272

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