

## DADS RAISING GIRLS

In our last edition of the newsletter we spoke about Mums Raising Boys and the challenges and rewards this relationship can bring. This time we will be providing information for Dads Raising Girls, and help Fathers navigate what can be a complex, yet extremely important role.

Dads can underestimate their importance a little girl's life but being a good role model and being actively involved in her world, right through into her teenage years, has huge social and health benefits for her. When Dads can build a close and healthy relationship with daughters, they are better protected from cultural and media female sexualisation that is directed at young girls. Girls who have involved, loving dads are not as susceptible to harmful behaviours such as radical dieting or binge drinking as a teen and do better in school and in other areas. Dads active involvement helps her develop a healthy sense of self and ultimately it will help her choose a partner who will treat her well.

### Common Myths around father-daughter relationships

**Myth:** Women are naturally better carers of young children than men.

**Busted:** Women are not natural experts – when left in charge of babies, men and women can develop skills at the same rate.

**Myth:** Fathers should be more like mothers.

**Busted:** Fathers should be fathers, and mothers should be mothers. Men look at things differently to women and have something unique to offer.

**Myth:** Young children need their mother more than their father.

**Busted:** Among 1-2 years olds, even a child who spends relatively little time with dad, can become as psychologically attached to him as to mum.

**Myth:** The man should earn the money and the women take care of the house and children.

**Busted:** There are no longer “traditional” roles for men and women. Many men choose to balance work and family life more equally and some even take on the primary parenting role.





## Here are few ideas to help build the Dad-Daughter bond:

- Play with her – including physical play
- Teach her new things
- Learn about the development of girls
- Be aware and informed of the issues facing girls/women today
- Show respect to her mother
- Share your life experiences
- Read and listen to music together
- Tell her you are proud of her
- Help with homework/housework
- Be there for important moments where possible
- Learn her interests and friends. Find a shared interest
- Develop rituals – Daddy-daughter dates
- Write notes and letters, SMS, email
- Ask her how she feels, her opinion (before yours)
- Know and talk to her teacher
- If you talk to your daughter now, chances are she'll talk to you later
- Don't forget to speak to other Dads or reach out for support if needed

## Girls who are close to their Dad are:

- More likely to do better at school
- More likely to get a better job
- More likely to have good relationships with other men
- More likely to have higher self-esteem
- Less likely to abuse drugs and alcohol
- Less likely to get into trouble with police
- Less likely to experience teen pregnancy
- Less likely to have an eating disorder

## For more information:

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