



Increasing Father Engagement

“Father involvement in schools is associated with the higher likelihood of a student getting mostly A’s. This was true for fathers in biological parent families, for stepfathers, and for fathers heading single-parent families.”⁸⁹

Overview

Why it’s Important

A 2009 study conducted by the National PTA and the National Center for Fathering found significant increases in father involvement compared to a 1999 report – more fathers are engaging with their children at school as well as interacting with teachers, administrators and other parents.

However, many fathers demonstrated a lack of involvement:

- 39% never read to their child.
- 32% never visit their child’s classroom.
- 54% never volunteer at their child’s school
- 74% never have lunch with their child at school.⁹⁰

Yet, when fathers are involved in school their children:

- learn more and perform better in school.
- exhibit healthier behavior.
- have fewer discipline problems.
- are more likely to participate in extracurricular activities.
- enjoy school more.⁹¹



Strategies To Increase Engagement

Strategy: “Define “Father”

Action Step: When working to increase male involvement at your school, maintain a broad definition of “father.” Understand that your students’ male role models could include fathers and stepfathers as well as grandfathers, uncles, older brothers, family friends – or any other significant men in their lives. Be sure to issue open invitations to school events and to encourage all male role models to engage in the education of these youth.⁹²

Strategy: Plan Ahead

Action Step: The National Network of Partnership Schools encourages the development of One-Year Action Plans for Partnership to outline activities that address “two academic goals, one behavioral goal for student success and one overarching goal for a welcoming school climate of partnerships.” Using this model to plan goal-oriented father involvement activities will help your school build and sustain relationships with the significant male role models in your students’ lives.⁹³

Strategy: Start a Dad’s Club

Action Step: A “Dad’s Club” can promote consistent male engagement in your school. They may engage in fundraising, enhancing the school grounds, promoting parent/community involvement events, or any other activity your student’s fathers are interested in helping with. These volunteer organizations usually fare best as an extension of the school’s Parent-Teacher Association/Organization.

Strategy: Community Resources

Action Step: Seek out organizations that already have a high level of male involvement, such as Rotary, Kiwanis, or Lions clubs; religious institutions; and community centers. Distribute information about ways for fathers to be involved at the school and in their child’s education or even host events at their meeting place to involve men who may feel intimidated by or uncomfortable visiting the school.

Strategy: Non-Traditional Father Involvement

Action Step: It is also important for fathers to be involved in their child’s education at home. School staff should provide them with resources, such as those below, regarding literacy development, math skills, and homework strategies.

Additional Information & Resources

1. <http://www.mnfathers.org/>
2. <http://www.greatdad.com/category/430/read-aloud.html>
3. <http://www.nationalcompadresnetwork.com/>