



## **A Father's Impact on His Child**

In honor of Father's Day, Southeast CASA (Court-Appointed Special Advocates for Children) would like to salute all of the wonderful fathers, grandfathers, uncles, stepfathers, and other men who make a difference in the lives of children in our community.

Time together between a father and child is time well spent. These interactions are the building blocks of early learning. According to experts, infants who receive lots of affection from their fathers tend to be more secure, giving them the confidence to freely explore their environment when a parent is close by. As these children become older, they are more likely to get along well with their peers. Attention from their father helps to strengthen a child's independence, sense of self, and a positive outlook through which they view the world.

Dads play a key role in a child's language development. Moms and dads often communicate differently. Dads tend to ask more who, why, where, and what questions than moms do, which can promote more sophisticated vocabulary.

The way that fathers play with their children affects their emotional and social development. Dads spend a lot of their one-to-one time with infants and preschoolers in

stimulating, playful activities. From these interactions, children learn how to regulate their feelings and behavior.

Children with involved, caring fathers also do better in school, extending to when the child is an adolescent and young adult. Additionally, children possessing a good relationship with their fathers are more likely to avoid violence, risky behaviors, and drugs.

One third of the children in South Dakota live in one-parent households. Over the span of 20 years, the number of “Male Householder” families in South Dakota (no wife present) has increased by **98%**. In 1990 there were 7,076 male householder families, but by 2010 there were 14,000 such families.

When a father is not living in the same home as his child, it may be even more important that he be as involved in his child’s life as possible. A father’s love and the quality of their time together is more important to a child’s emotional well-being than the number of hours they are not in each other’s presence. Non-resident fathers can still have positive effects on their children’s social, academic, and behavioral development when they make sure to spend quality time with each other.

Thank you to all of the men in our community for the difference they make in their children’s lives!

For more information about Southeast CASA, visit [www.southeastcasa.org](http://www.southeastcasa.org).

