



THE REAL MAGIC OF FATHER INVOLVEMENT

Infants of highly involved fathers, as measured by interaction, including higher levels of play and caregiving, are more cognitively competent at 6 months. By one year they continue to have higher cognitive functioning and are better problem solvers as toddlers ... by age 3 they have higher IQ's and when they get to school, they are more likely to enjoy it.

These school aged children of involved fathers are then **better academic achievers** and are more likely to get A's, have **higher grade averages**, even performing a year above their expected age level on academic tests. Father involvement is positively correlated with **children's overall life satisfaction** and their experience of **less depression less emotional distress, less expressions of negative emotionality such as fear and guilt, less conduct problems, less psychological distress, greater sense of social competence, higher levels of self-reported happiness and have fewer anxiety symptoms.**

Children of involved fathers are **more likely to have superior problem solving skills and be more playful, resourceful, skillful, and attentive when presented with a problem.** They are better able to manage their emotions and impulses in an appropriate manner.

Father involvement also leads to **greater ability to take initiative**, use self direction and control and display **less impulsivity**. It contributes significantly and independently to **adolescent happiness**. Children of involved fathers are more likely to have **positive peer relations** and be popular and well liked.

Daughters of involved fathers are more willing to try new things, keep busier, and are **happier** - High father involvement also made kids feel more accepted and so **children of involved fathers had higher self-esteem**. Children who felt close to their involved fathers are also more likely to have long term, **successful marriages** be satisfied with their romantic partners in midlife, have more successful intimate relationships, and be **less likely to divorce**.

Men who are involved fathers feel more self confident and effective as parents, and **find parenthood more satisfying** and they feel more intrinsically important to their child, and feel encouraged to be even more involved.

So good, isn't it! So what's the magic?

HOW IT ALL WORKS - THE REAL MAGIC OF FATHER INVOLVEMENT

When fathers are supportive and encouraging, mothers are just much more competent parents. When fathers are supportive and encouraging, mothers can be more patient, flexible, emotionally responsive, sensitive, and available to their infants and young children.

This enriches the **mother-child relationship** and thus facilitates positive developmental outcomes for their children, namely increased self-control, academic competence, and positive relationships. It's the reverse when dads are absent or abusive, so staying family wellbeing often hinges on whether dad chooses a positive path.

Drawn from a variety of research sources cited in Sarah Allen, S., and Daly, K., (2007) The Effects of Father Involvement: An Updated Research Summary of the Evidence Inventory, Centre for Families, Work & Well-Being, University of Guelph, Guelph.