

Fatherhood USA
Guide to Video Modules

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Note: The contents of this guide will be edited and reformatted by SCETV.

Overview

This is a guide to the use of four short (5 to 10 minute) videos derived from *Fatherhood U.S.A.*, a two-hour documentary special presented by SCETV (South Carolina Educational Television) and hosted by Senator Bill Bradley.

Fatherhood U.S.A., in its full two-hour format, goes beyond the popular media stereotypes of “deadbeat” dads and househusbands to provide an intimate glimpse at the lives of a racially and economically diverse group of fathers who are trying to be good fathers. Some face a legacy of father absence, either physical or emotional, poverty, or a workplace that isn’t always “father friendly.”

Each video module contains a series of brief, emotionally powerful vignettes that capture key issues presented in the longer documentary. The themes of the video modules are:

1. The Importance of Fathers
2. Father-Mother Communication
3. Juggling Work and Family
4. Fathers and Social Support

The video modules and accompanying guide are designed to stimulate discussion among groups that want to expand their understanding of contemporary fatherhood and of ways to support men’s involvement in the lives of their children. The guide provides ways to use the video modules with a group, as well as relevant background and resource information for group leaders.

Both the full documentary and the short videos were produced by Cine Qua Non, Inc. and The Fatherhood Project® at the Families and Work Institute in New York City. The guide was prepared by The Fatherhood Project® and SCETV.

Purpose: Why Use These Materials?

These materials will help any group – or individual-- that wants to:

- Understand the reality —rather than the rhetoric —of fatherhood in America.
- Examine if and how it is currently serving fathers.
- Expand and extend services to fathers and their families.
- Create a constructive dialogue between mothers and fathers, regardless of their marital status

Audience: Who Should Use These Materials?

These materials will be especially useful for practitioners, trainers, consultants, and teachers in:

- Family-support organizations --social service, educational, health, religious/spiritual, etc.
- Youth-service organizations
- Colleges, community colleges, and high schools
- Human Resources or Work/Life areas

Flexibility: How to Use These Materials

Each of these video modules can be incorporated into an existing training program, class, or seminar. Or they can be used to launch a new discussion about fathers. They are designed to be:

- Complementary: These videos are best used if the group leader is familiar with one or both hour-long segments of the longer *Fatherhood U.S.A.* documentary: “Dedicated, Not Deadbeat” (Program 1) or “Juggling Family and Work (Part 2). (This discussion guide will also be useful if a group leader decides to use either hour-long segment in its entirety).
- Modular: Each video and its accompanying print material can be used alone or in conjunction with one or more of the other video modules. Ninety (90) minutes is the suggested length for showing and discussing each module, but that length can be adjusted to fit the needs of any group.
- Interactive: These print materials suggest questions to promote group discussion. You do not have to be an expert on fatherhood to lead a group discussion. These materials provide relevant information in a concise format.

Resources

In addition to guidance on the use of the video modules, these materials include:

- Books: an annotated list is included of selected books for and about fathers, with special emphasis on books for practitioners who want to create a “father friendly environment”

- Organizations: a list of leading national organizations for and about fathers with their telephone number and web site
- Tips for Fathers: a list of 10 tips for being an effective father
- Overview of *Fatherhood U.S.A.*: a summary of each hour of the two-hour documentary, along with tips for viewing and using the full versions for a discussion group or community meeting
- **For Additional Information, Consultation or Training**
- Contact The Fatherhood Project, Families and Work Institute, 330 Seventh Avenue – 14th Floor, New York, NY 10001; James A. Levine, Ed.D., Director or Edward W. Pitt, M.S.W., Associate Director; <http://www.fatherhoodproject.org>

Video Module 1: The Importance of Fathers

Goal

This module is designed to focus discussion on the importance of fathers in children's lives, and of children to their fathers. Through several brief, emotionally-charged vignettes, it shows the negative impact that father absence can have and the positive impact that father presence can have on children. It also shows that the motivation to be a good father can lead men to significant changes in their lifestyle.

Key Points

- **Father Power:** Fathers play a powerful role in children's lives, across all income, racial, and ethnic groups. It is not just children who benefit from the involvement of fathers. Mothers and fathers benefit too.
- **Presence and Absence:** Physical presence is not a guarantee that a man is emotionally and psychologically available for his children. Physical absence does not automatically mean that a man is emotionally detached from or uninterested in his children.
- **Fatherhood as a Pathway to Change.** Fathers care about their children, but do not necessarily demonstrate their care in the same way as mothers. Men's motivation to be good fathers can lead them to significant changes in their lifestyle.

Discussion Questions

This video module has four clearly marked segments. Each segment shows men in a variety of circumstances. Use the whole segment or part of any segment to stimulate discussion.

1. **Introduction:** Joe Jones, founding director of the Men's Services Program at the Baltimore Healthy Start, asserts that "We are at a critical point in our nation's history," with so many fathers absent from their children's lives. Paul, a young father, reflects on the influence of his father, whom he never knew: "I don't know what it is, I just love him." To build on this, ask the group:

Q1: How many of you grew up in families without a father present?

Q2: What percentage of the families you serve do not have a father living in the household?

Q3: What do you think are the causes?

2. **Father Absence:** Several adult children reflect on the physical and psychological absence of their fathers: a young father asserts “If my father had been there, things would have been different;” a factory worker wonders whether his emotional withdrawal from his children is a repeat of what he experienced as a child; an executive talks to his father about missing his high school graduation. And an absent father tells his son “I don’t want you to be like me.” Questions for the group:

Q1: Can a father be absent even if he is in the home? How have you observed this?

Q2: How has father absence affected you and any of the families you serve?

Q3: What can be done to offset the effects of father absence?

Sidebar: Risks to Children of Father Absence

Children in mother only families often lose a variety of resources, not just financial support but ties to the father’s family of origin and networks of friends. Children in father absent families are at heightened risk for:

- Poverty: five times more likely to be poor and ten times more likely to be extremely poor.
- School failure
- Juvenile delinquency
- Teen pregnancy

Sidebar: Men’s Income and Family Structure

Data from the U.S. Census Bureau show a dramatic correlation since the late 1960’s between men’s earnings and the maintenance of two-parent families:

- One-fifth of all men in their 30s have annual earnings of less than \$10,000
- If they earn more than \$50,000 per year, men in their 30s are twice as likely to be married as men earning less than \$10,000 per year
- When men are unemployed, couples are twice as likely to experience a separation and/or divorce as when men are employed

3. **Father Presence:** Chris, a young adult, reflects on the importance of having his father present when he was growing up in the inner city. Bart, an executive, realizes that “in the end, it’s not the meetings I went to...in the end it’s your family that counts.” Questions for the group:

Q1: What are the benefits of father involvement—for children, men, and women? How have you personally experienced this?

Q2: How have children in any of the families you serve experienced the benefits of father involvement?

Q3: In what ways have the men you work with experienced the benefits of being a father?

Sidebar: Advantages to Children of Father Involvement

Along with the increase in father absence is a counter-trend: increased involvement in childrearing by fathers in two-parent households. Between 1977 and 1997, these fathers added an extra half-hour per workday and an hour on non-workdays to the time they spend with their children.

Father involvement has a number of positive effects for children. But it is not the mere presence of the father or the quantity of his involvement that has an effect on children, but the *quality* of that involvement—that is, the way he interacts with his children.

Prenatal care: The involvement and support of the mother's male partner—whether or not the couple is married—is the single best predictor of whether or not a mother receives adequate prenatal care, which in turn can greatly influence the health of a baby at birth.

Infant Development: Babies with actively involved fathers score higher on the Bailey Test of Mental and Motor Development, one of the standard pediatric tests for assessing growth and development. Premature infants whose fathers spend more time playing with them have better cognitive outcomes at age 3, whether or not the father is living in the same household.

Preschool: Children with involved fathers demonstrate a greater ability to take initiative and direct themselves

Elementary School: Children with involved fathers manage stress better and develop better peer relations. While both boys and girls do better cognitively, girls especially develop a stronger sense of competence in mathematics.

High School: Children with involved fathers are much more likely to be academically motivated and to succeed academically.

4. **Fathers Care: Motivation to Change:** A young father realizes that his history of petty crime almost cost him the things he cares about most: “my kids, my wife, my future.” A physician decides to get to work at 9 a.m. instead of 7 a.m., trading off being a “Big Shot” for the opportunity to spend the morning time with his young children. Questions for discussion:

Q1: What specific decisions or choices about your work or personal life have you made because you are a father?

Q2: Among those men you work with or serve, describe how any been motivated to make significant changes in their lives because of their fatherhood?

Sidebar

“That men and children can affect each other as profoundly as any relationship that they will ever have in their life is a truth many young fathers do not understand and many older fathers hold as a canon.”

--Kyle Pruett, M.D., Yale University Child Study Center

Video Module 2: Father-Mother Communication

Goal

This module is designed to focus discussion on the importance of good communication between fathers and mothers, regardless of their marital status. Several brief, emotionally-charged vignettes show that father presence does not guarantee good communication, which requires ongoing effort and can often benefit from professional or other social support.

Key Points

- **Impact on Children:** A father's effectiveness with his children is affected by his ability to establish and maintain decent communication with his partner, regardless of marital status.
- **More Than Father Presence:** Father presence is not, in itself, sufficient to guarantee good communication between mother and father.
- **Ongoing Effort:** Good communication requires ongoing effort. It does not just happen "naturally," but requires the work and commitment of both parents.
- **Outside Support:** Resources outside the family can play a vital role in helping a couple communicate effectively.

Discussion Questions

This video module presents four couples, from very different backgrounds, trying to talk with each another or reflecting on what it is like to try to talk with each other. Each couple reveals a different dimension of communication. It is best to show all four couples before starting a discussion or trying out the role playing exercise described below.

1. **Don and Karen:** A factory worker from Kansas City who thought that his marriage was solid discovers that his wife is not willing to keep on living together. "The real issue," says Don, "was not communicating with my family...and not being there when I was there."
2. **Paul and Delvina:** A young father is facing a jail sentence. His children's mother (they are not married) says he has to think about how life is going to be without his friends, without his without her, and without his job.
3. **Bart and Margo:** A father and mother disagree over their daughter's bedtime. Such conflicts have increased since the father lost his job as an executive and took over more of the daily child care, while his wife continued her job as an attorney.

4. **Jeremy and Vicki:** A young father with a history of spousal abuse recognizes that it is “a lot harder to have a conversation” than to hit his partner.
5. **Al and Sandra:** A highly involved father feels unappreciated by his wife. She tells her co-workers what a great husband she has, but does not give her husband this positive feedback, taking him for granted.

Questions for discussion:

Q1: What factors contribute to a breakdown in communication between mothers and fathers? Do they have different styles? Do they have different needs? Are they concerned about different things?

Q2: What factors contribute to making communication work?

Q3: What do you do in your personal life to make communication work?

Q4: How do you and can you promote effective communication between the mothers and fathers you work with?

Role-Playing Exercise

Another way to stimulate discussion and get to the same questions listed above is through a role-playing exercise.

Show the “Bart and Margo” segment, a discipline disagreement centered on their child’s bedtime. Then ask one member of your group to play the role of a father and another person to play the role of a mother. Give them these lines and ask them to improvise a continuation of the conversation

Father: I try to put her to bed and you undermine me.

Mother: I agree but I didn’t have a child not to spend time with her.

After the group has observed the role play, ask the following questions:

Q1: Is this couple communicating effectively?

Q2: What would enable them to communicate more effectively?

Sidebar 1: Communicating With Your Partner

Hurts

Helps

Looking away	Making eye contact
Interrupting	Acting Concerned
Saying something that doesn't relate	Asking clarifying questions
Acting distracted	Providing Feedback

Sidebar 2: Guidelines for Negotiating Mother-Father Differences

Step 1: DON'T THROW FLAMES

- No name calling
- No blaming
- No getting physical
- No bringing up the past
- No "You always...."

Step 2: IDENTIFY WHAT YOU WANT

- Use "I" statements to avoid blaming
- Be as specific as possible
- Use videotalk: describe what you want as if you were looking at a scene in a video
- Don't ask your kids to take sides

Step 3: FIND COMMON GROUND IN YOUR CHILD

- Identify your goals for your child
- Identify which goals you agree on
- Identify different ways of enabling your child to achieve those goals

Step 4: GO FORWARD

- Resolve your disagreement enough to take some action—even if it's not perfect
- Hammer out a compromise in front of your children
- Make up in front of your children—a hug or kiss helps!

Video Module 3: Juggling Work and Family

Goal

This module is designed to focus discussion on “working fathers.” Several brief vignettes reveal the largely unrecognized extent to which fathers—not just mothers—experience the conflict between work and family life, and suggest ways in which the workplace can be supportive of fathers.

Key Points

- **Work/Family Issues Are Not for Women Only:** Although they do not often disclose it and the media do not report on it, fathers experience significant work/family conflict. In fact, the latest research from the Families and Work Institute shows that 70 percent of both working mothers and fathers experience some or a lot of work/family conflict.
- **Workplace Policy and Culture Are Both Critical:** Workplace policies and procedures can have a significant impact on fathers. Just as important, however, is workplace culture. Co-workers who expect that women are or should be the only caretakers for children can make it hard for a working father who wants to be involved with his family.
- **“Father Friendly” is Becoming a Business Asset:** Some workplaces are trying to become more father friendly. Business support for fathers is not just good for families (children, mothers, and fathers) but also good for the bottom line.

Discussion Questions

This video module presents three fathers, from very different backgrounds, trying to balance the demands of his job with his responsibilities to care for his family in ways other than by being a provider. It is best to show all three fathers before starting a discussion or trying out the role playing exercise described below.

1. **Bart:** Bart is a mid-level manager in New York City. His boss casually expects him to work through the President’s Day weekend, without ever asking Bart about any family obligations. “There were times when I would leave early because of a family issue,” says Bart, “but I was very quiet about it.” On the job, Bart learned to keep his family needs invisible.
2. **Don:** Bart is a factory worker in Kansas City. His job requires him to work three-days on, then three-days off, on continuous rotating shifts that do not give him any regular schedule for work or family. “The hours I work, it’s real easy to absorb

yourself,” says Don. According to his wife, Karen, “At times I felt like a single mother.”

3. **Al:** Al is a tool mechanic in Los Angeles who thought being a dad was going to be easy. Although his employer has policies that are supportive to working mothers and fathers, his co-workers think that it is a woman’s job to take care of the family. They give Al a hard time when he has to leave work to take his daughter to the doctor.

Questions for discussion:

Q1: Do working fathers have the same types of work/family conflicts as working mothers? What sorts of work/family conflicts do you experience? What about the fathers you work with?

Q2: Why isn’t men’s experience of work/family conflict more visible?

Q3: How do peer groups at work affect men’s willingness or ability to deal with work/family issues?

Q4: What positive steps do you know of that have been taken to create a more “father friendly” workplace? What steps would you recommend?

Role-Playing Exercise

Another way to stimulate discussion is through a role-playing exercise designed to tease out the assumptions we make about working mothers and working fathers.

Role Assignment: Ask two members of your group, preferably one male and one female, to volunteer. Assign one the role of the working mother, the other the role of the working father.

Situation and Task: Explain to your volunteers the situation they are in: It is 6 a.m. on a workday and their three-year-old child wakes up with a terrible sore throat and a fever. The day care center will not take a sick child and they have no other back up child care plans. Both of them have equally important responsibilities at work that day. Their task is to handle the competing demands of their work/family dilemma. Give them three minutes to play out their roles. After the role play is complete, ask your group members to discuss it. Here are suggested questions:

Q1: What assumptions did the actors make about the roles and responsibilities of mothers and fathers—in child care and at work?

Q2: What assumptions did the actors make about the father’s and mother’s workplaces?

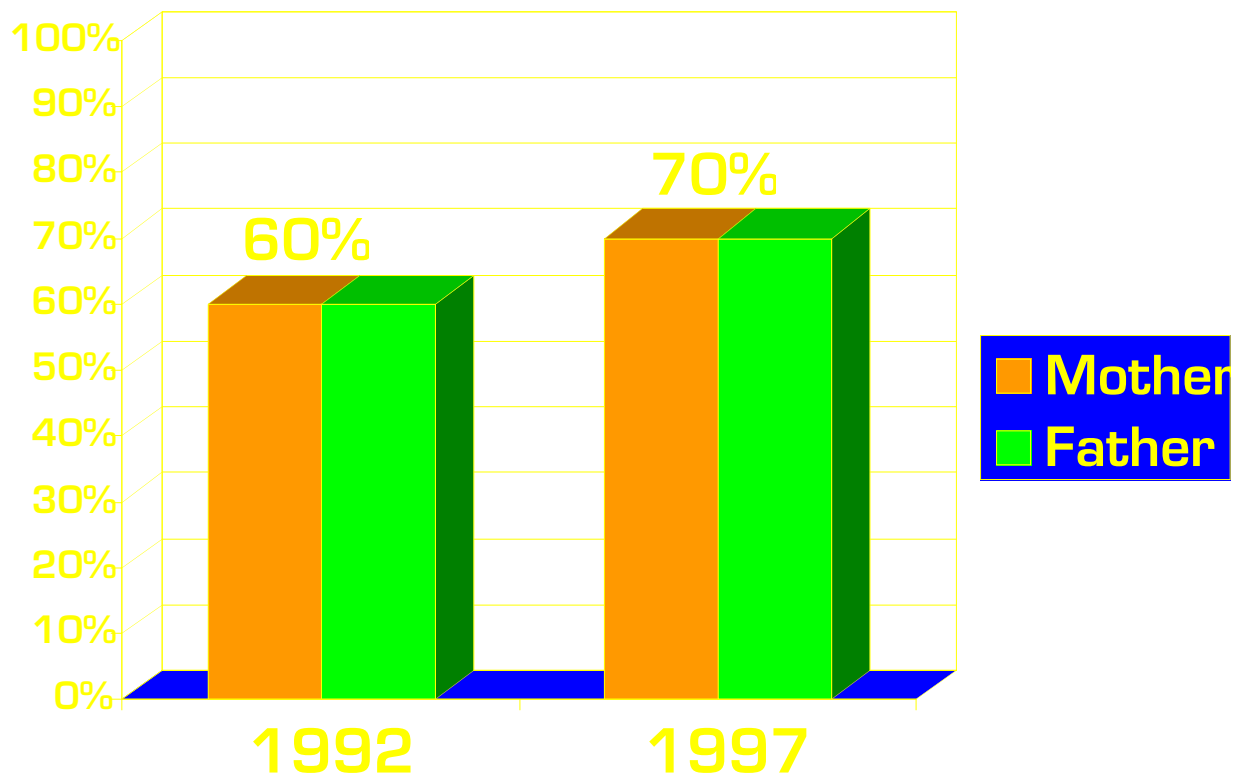
Q3: How do the assumptions about both work and family affect the outcome of this all-too-common childrearing dilemma?

Q4: What alternative assumptions and solutions are there for this dilemma?

Sidebar 1: Work-Family Conflict Among Mothers and Fathers

The popular stereotype in our society is that *working mother* symbolizes conflict, while *working father* is a redundancy—that saying “fathers work” is like saying “fathers father.”

But research from the Families and Work Institute (FWI) in New York City shows that the same proportion of fathers as mothers experience significant work-family conflict: 70 percent in 1997, up from 60 percent in 1992, regardless of race or socioeconomic class.



Sidebar 2: What Working Parents Want Most

When asked what would most help them balance their work and family lives, what do most working parents choose:

- (a) More time off the job.
- (b) More money.
- (c) More control over their working time.

Answer: (c)

Sidebar 3: Family and Medical Leave Act

The Law: The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 went into effect on August 5, 1993, and provides benefits to both male and female employees.

Eligible Employers: It covers all public agencies (local, state, and federal) and private-sector employers with 50 or more employees.

Benefits: Up to twelve-weeks of unpaid job-protected leave in a twelve-month period for specified family and medical reasons, including:

- Birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child
- Care of a spouse, parent, or child with a serious medical condition
- Care of your own serious medical condition

Sidebar 4: Business Benefits of a Father-Friendly Work Environment

Supporting men in being good fathers is good for men, good for children, good for women—and good for business. Recent research suggests that providing a family friendly work environment for both mothers and fathers can yield:

- Increased loyalty and commitment to the job
- Reduced absenteeism
- Reduced turnover

Video Module 4: Fathers and Social Support

Goal

This module is designed to focus discussion on the importance to fathers of social supports.

Key Points

- **Social Supports Are Vital to Fathers:** Group support in the workplace and in the community can play a vital role in helping men with a variety of parenting and family issues.
- **Social Supports for Fathers Are Varied:** Men benefit from different types of individual and group supports.
- **Women Are Key:** As parents, partners, or professionals, women play a vital role in supporting men as fathers.

Discussion Questions

This video module shows five fathers, from very different backgrounds, in different social support situations. Show all the fathers – or any combination of them – before starting a discussion with the questions suggested below:

1. **Eric:** Eric Cyrs is in charge of the Fathers Program at the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. In this scene he talks with a group of workers about the ways in which the workplace does and does not support them as fathers.
2. **Joe and Chris:** Joe Jones runs the Men's Services Program of Baltimore Healthy Start. In this scene he accompanies Chris, a young unmarried father, on a trip to the jewelry store. Chris wants to buy a ring and propose marriage to his children's mother.
3. **Don:** Don's teenage daughter is having difficulty in school. To provide support to Don in his role as a father, the teacher recommends that Don join a father's group at the high school. The group helps Don gain a perspective he never had on how his relationship with his own father has influenced his relationship with his daughter.
4. **Bart:** Downsized from his job, Bart is taking greater day-to-day responsibility for his children. But when he goes to the playground, where there are so few dads during the weekday, he feels his value is up for judgment. A friend recommends that Bart join a local group for fathers, where Bart develops a new understanding of the importance of his role.

5. **Jeremy:** Jeremy is attending a support group for men who have threatened or abused their partners or spouses. The group helps Jeremy deal with the legacy of abuse he faced when growing up. In the person of Barry, one of the group counselors, Jeremy discovers the first man in his life whom he is able to trust.

Questions for discussion:

Q1: Have you ever participated in a support group? Or do you know any men who have participated in such a group? What was the experience like—for you? For them?

Q2: Is support something that men need? If so, why don't men seek it out more often or more easily?

Q3: What sorts of support are most helpful to men? Is there any value in having an all-male support group?

Q4: What sorts of support does your organization provide to fathers? What could it provide?

Q5: What role do women have in supporting men?

Sidebar 1: Tips for Reaching Out to Men

- Men respond to specific tasks rather than to general advice. “You need to take Timmy to the doctor on Tuesday” means more than “You need to be more involved in your children’s health.”
- Men will open up after it is demonstrated that the worker is in their corner.
- Just because men don't ask for support does not mean they don't need or want it.
- Don't expect an immediate response from men. It may take time to build trust and establish your level of commitment.

Sidebar 2: Tips for Operating a Support Group

Here are tips from some leaders around the country:

- **Focus:** “Figure out your focus—whether advocacy, education, or support. Whatever it is, you should enhance men as parents, but not at the expense of mothers. – Neil Tift, Director, Fathers’ Resource Center, Minneapolis, MN
- **Value the Difference:** “Value a father’s offerings as different from a mother’s. Promote those differences.” – James May, Director, National Father’s Network, Seattle, WA

- **Attitude:** “Assume that fathers want, need, and have the responsibility for becoming actively involved parents. At all times, in every way, treat participants with dignity and respect.”

10 Tips for Fathers

1. Be there.
Children want and need your physical presence, from infancy onward.
2. Listen.
Being there means more than being present physically.
3. Support your partner.
Work together on behalf of your child, even if you're not living together.
4. Learn to disagree with your partner.
5. Get to know and be known to the people in your child's world.
Teachers, caregivers, doctors – all of them are an important part
6. Get to know and be known to your children's friends and their parents.
If you have concerns about who your child is hanging out with, be sure to discuss this with your child.
7. Play with your children.
One of the best ways to learn about and develop a lasting connection with your children is to play with them—to enter their world.
8. Teach by example.
Children follow what you do more than what you say.
9. Discipline with love.
To discipline means to guide or lead out the best in your child, and that is best done with love.
10. Keep your sense of humor.
Nobody said fatherhood would be easy. If you can survive fatherhood, you can survive anything!

Resources

Books

Here is a starter kit of books focused on fatherhood and written in accessible language for both parents and practitioners.

For Parents

Brott, Armin. and Ash, Jennifer. *The Expectant Father: Facts, Tips, and Advice for Dads-to-Be*. New York: Abbeville, 1995.

Brott, Armin. *The New Father: A Dad's Guide to the First Year*. New York: Abbeville, 1997.

Brott, Armin. *A Dad's Guide to the Toddler Years*. New York: Abbeville, 1998.

Canfield, Ken. *The 7 Secrets of Effective Fathers*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishing, Inc., 1994.

Horn, Wade and Rosenberg, Jeffrey. *Better Homes and Gardens New Father Book*. Des Moines: Meredith, 1998.

Levine, James and Pittinsky, Todd. *Working Fathers: New Strategies for Balancing Work and Family*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1997.

Leving, Jeffery and Dachman, Kenneth. *Father's Rights*. New York: Basic Books, 1997.

Pruett, Kyle. *The Nurturing Father*. New York: Warner Books, 1987.

For Practitioners

Levine, James, Murphy, Dennis, and Wilson, Sherrill. *Getting Men Involved: Strategies for Early Childhood Programs*. New York: Scholastic, 1993.

Levine, James and Pitt, Edward. *New Expectations: Community Strategies for Responsible Fatherhood*. New York: Families and Work Institute, 1995.

May, James. *Circles of Care and Understanding: Support Programs for Fathers of Children with Special Needs*. Bethesda, MD: Association for Care of Children's Health, 1992.

Minnesota Fathering Alliance. *Working with Fathers*. Stillwater, MN: Nu Ink Unlimited, 1992.

Parke, Ross. *Fathers*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996.

Public/Private Ventures. *Fatherhood Development: A Curriculum for Young Fathers*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures, 1995.

Union Industrial Home for Children. *Basic Handbook for Establishing a Comprehensive Teen Fathers Program*. Trenton, NJ: Union Industrial Home for Children, 1991.

Quick Guide to National Organizations

American Fathers Coalition	(202) 543-0615 afc@CapAccess.org
At-Home Dad	(508) 685-7931 Athomedad@aol.com
Center on Fathers, Families and Public Policy	(312) 341-0900
Children's Rights Council	(202) 547-6227
Father-to-Father/FatherNet	(612) 626-1212 www.fathernet.org
The Fatherhood Project/Families and Work Institute	(212) 465-2044 www.fatherhoodproject.org
Institute for Responsible Fatherhood and Family Revitalization	(202) 293-4420 www.responsiblefatherhood.org
National Center for Fathering	(913) 384-4661 www.ncf.org
National Center on Fathers and Families	(215) 686-3910 www.ncoff.gse.upenn.edu
National Fatherhood Initiative	(717) 581-8860 www.nfi.org
National Fathers' Network	(206) 747-4004 www.fathersnetwork.org
National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families	(202) 822-6725 www.npcl.org

Overview of Fatherhood U.S.A.

In addition to the video modules, the full two-hour version of *Fatherhood U.S.A.* is also available. Each hour can be used as the basis of a community forum or workshop.

Fatherhood USA, hosted by Senator Bill Bradley, deals with real dads with real problems, some are part of an intact family and some are trying to establish a family under tough circumstances. These men must not only juggle children and work but attitudes toward fatherhood in the factory and office and on the street. All are succeeding at fatherhood and all get support from other dads.

Fatherhood U.S.A. does not try to “sugar coat” the difficulties of fatherhood and family life. Some scenes may make viewers uncomfortable. It is these moments of the film, in particular, that make a focus for discussion with members of your group or community.

Dedicated, Not Deadbeat (Program 1)

Absent fathers, unmarried fathers, deadbeat dads—negative depictions of fathers have become a media staple. But what about men struggling to stay involved with their kids despite a legacy of fatherlessness, poverty, or incarceration? What does it take to keep men connected to their families. This hour looks beyond the stereotypes, at what happens when men in fragile families find an environment that supports their importance as fathers.

A Baltimore Story: If a father is unmarried and provides little financial support to his young son and daughter, can he still be a good family man? Paul Hope, 21, an unemployed father of two, seems poised to repeat the legacy of fatherlessness with which he grew up. Convicted of assault for a street fight, he may be sent to jail. He joins Baltimore Men’s Services, part of a local Healthy Start Program, and, with his friend Chris, also a young father, he starts a job in a federally-funded housing/work program and is determined not to be an absent father. Chris marries, begins working, and moves off welfare.

A Boston Story: Should a father who hits his wife be removed from his children? Jeremy Stevens, 28, has five children, is unemployed, and has a criminal history. He seems poised to repeat the domestic abuse with which he grew up. Arrested for hitting his girlfriend, Vicki, he nearly lands in jail—another dad disconnected from his children. But a judge mandates he join a program that aims to break the cycle of violence and train him to become the father he never had himself. By the end of our story, Jeremy works full-time caring for retarded adults, and the family is about to move into an innovative housing program that will them leave welfare.

Juggling Family and Work (Program 2)

There is no shortage of media attention to the challenges working mothers face trying to balance work and family. But what about working fathers? We rarely hear about men

juggling work and family. This program looks at men from across the country as they confront the daily dilemma of being a dad while handling the pressures of a workplace that isn't always "father friendly." It deals with one of the most important business issues of the future: creating a family-friendly workplace for mothers *and* fathers.

A New York Story: How can downsizing "upsized" a man's commitment to fathering? Shortly after a massive heart attack, Bart Morrison, 44, was downsized from his executive job. When Bart is home, unemployed, while his wife still works, he takes responsibility for the care of his two small children and he unexpectedly discovers the importance of his role as a father. By the end of our story, Bart finds a new job and gains a new perspective on old dilemmas. As a manager, he is now more committed to creating a family-friendly workplace for the fathers and mothers who work for him.

A Kansas Story: How can a man with traditional attitudes about fathering and a relentless work schedule change his understanding of his role as a father? Don Hicks is a factory worker on a rotating shift, with a schedule typical of hundreds of thousands of line workers today—it maximizes productivity, not the quality of family life. Don and his wife, Karen, are on the verge of a divorce that will only further distance him from his two teenage daughters. During the segment he works to turn his life and marriage around, joins a fathering group, cuts back on sleep to make extra time for his daughters, and learns to take on his share of household responsibilities.

A California Story: How can a man who is attempting to share parenting equitably with his wife get the support he needs from the workplace? Al Franco, 35, works for the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, one of the nation's best companies for working fathers. Al and his wife Sandra are juggling work and caring for three preschool children when their oldest girl comes down with what may be a serious disease. Al frequently leaves work to care for her, and his co-workers give him a hard time for "being mommy," but the company's commitment to supporting dads helps him through this critical period, until he finds out his child will be okay.