

What a difference a dad makes



A guide for families

PIECE (Paternal Involvement and its Effects on Children's Education) is a major study that analysed data from almost 5,000 two-parent households in England.



Why fathers matter for your child's education

Our research shows that when dads get involved regularly in focused, interactive activities with their children, it may give them an educational advantage.

Spending time together reading, sharing stories, playing with toys or games, arts and crafts, doing musical activities, going to the park, and playing sports or active games, could help to improve a child's grades in the first year of primary school. And the earlier dads start engaging with their children (e.g., before they start school), the better.

Our study found that if dads are involved at age 3, their child is more likely to do better at school at age 5. And if dads are involved at age 5, their child is more likely to do better at school at age 7.



Our top tips

- 1** Spend as much time as you can on interactive, focused activities with your child like reading a book or playing together. You don't need expensive toys or books – what's important is listening and responding to the child. These beneficial, back-and-forth interactions help build young children's brains, and are sometimes called 'serve and return' interactions.
- 2** Get into a habit of doing things together regularly, even just 10 minutes a day can help. If the week is too busy, can you do more at weekends?
- 3** Team up with your child's mum to share the less exciting jobs like cleaning and laundry. The more you can find time for BOTH of you to have high quality interactions with your child, the better it is for everyone.
- 4** Play your part in building a good relationship with your child's teachers. Make sure the school/nursery/childminder has your contact details on file, and be clear that you'd also like to receive communications directly.



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