WEBSITE RESOURCE FOR STRENGTHENING THE RELATIONSHIPS OF FATHERS AND THEIR CHILDREN TO INCREASE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT.

by

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INTRODUCTION

Research Question

The definition of fatherhood is the state of being a father. One can only wish that being a father was as simple as the definition. The author Kent Nerburn wrote some strong truth “It is much easier to become a father than be one.” Fatherhood is intimidating, even to those who have experience. We can master our jobs and careers, sports, but we lose a lot of that control in fatherhood. If a child is crying we can’t make them stop, we can help. If our son or daughter is failing in school, we can’t make them pass, we can only help. Fatherhood takes a lot of slow, hard work and that can make us feel like failures. There is a father absence that is taking over America and I believe we, as fathers can do better to impact our students life through the exploration of this question: “How can empowering fathers in their child’s life increase student academic achievement?” As a male and father of three daughters (and mostly likely more to come) and an educator, I have a responsibility to raise and serve children. This chapter introduces some of the challenges men face and challenges students face when a father is not present. Information on how we can be better fathers will also be presented.

Capstone Project

A father that is active and present in the family is of the utmost importance. Even though more and more research is showing just how important fathers are, there are many challenges and frustrations that fathers can face. What can be to help fathers be
more effective and support their families? This led me to wonder, how can I design and create an effective online resource that is easily accessible, meaningful and useful for fathers to use and learn to create better relationships with their children and families?

**Audience**

Currently, today's world is ruled by the tech industry, with articles, research, all kinds of information at almost everyone's fingertips. By choosing to do an online resource/website, it is something user friendly that doesn't carry a lot of weight, creating a fingertip reference. There are many informational resources that provide statistics and help. This method of a resource will provide fathers with ideas and means to build relationships. The website is intended for all fathers: single, married, divorced, young, old. The plan was to mainly focus on local families within my school community, family and friends, before branching out further, as I included local and area events as well. The community in which I serve as an educator is urban lower class with around 90+% on free and reduced lunch. Many do not have fathers in their homes or active with their education. This website is to be a resource for these families that can be easily linked and sent to fathers which then is used with smart devices when they spend time with their children.

**Description**

There is a homepage that offers an introduction, welcome, page guide and shortcut links to local, city and area event pages. There is different pages for resources on activities for improvement in academic areas-literacy, science, math. There is a wide range of extracurricular activities to allow fathers and families to manipulate the website
depending on child’s age and grade. There is a specific page for these extracurricular activities of just dad and me around the twin cities. The goal of this capstone project was to design and create an effective online resource that provides information, including home activities and local involvements that will help to strengthen a father’s relationship and boost children’s academic skills.

Summary

The information which I researched strongly supports and encourages fathers to be involved with their child/children and in doing so will help give their child a better chance to succeed with lasting effects on their development and learning. The benefits that an involved father can give to their child, starts during the pregnancy and birth and carries on with their child into adulthood. The website project I created, https://sites.google.com/view/heartoffatherhood, is published and will be used to help supports families in Minnesota, closely related to my teaching in North Minneapolis. During the next few years, the website will be monitored, updated and changed based on feedback and reviews from friends, colleagues and families. The capstone project has given me great benefits in my professional growth in the field of education, granted there were and still are limitations in the website setup and in the userface. I know this website helped me take the next step in pursuit of family research, support and instruction.
CAPSTONE PROJECT

Website

This capstone project was created to be a website that would be an informational resource to fathers to see how powerful their relationship with their children can be and give them insight into how they can interact with their children. The website provides information on the role of fathers, impact, academics, activities in the twin cities, NAZ (North side achievement zone) and other online resources. I started my website during the month of August, 2017 and finished its founding in December of 2017 using the web creator from google sites. My website, https://sites.google.com/view/heartoffatherhood, is designed with families, fathers and children in mind. The next pages will contain screenshots in a progression through the website and provide a overview for how it functions.
A Father’s Impact

Being a father and dad is one of the most important roles in the life of your child, next to the child’s mother, we have an equal impact on our children. There is a father absence crisis over taking America. This is intimidating, as we all want what is best for our child and we don't want to see them fail, even in the slightest, because that means we failed. My first step at becoming a better father for my child is knowing I will fail, however, I need to be a model for my children and students to show what to do when you fail, there are ways to overcome. I am going to have an impact on my children whether I want to or not, but not being present in my children's lives puts them instantly at a disadvantage to succeed.

Academics

The impact a father has, greatly affects the development of the whole child. It is important for fathers to see and reflect on how they can have positive impacts on their son’s and daughter’s development in education. A Father’s involvement is linked to improved quantitative and verbal skills, improved problem-solving ability and higher academic achievement for children.

One of the most important things a father can do to help their child succeed academically is to READ with them. Even when children are newborns, can't even walk or talk and even to continue to read with them beyond the years of when they can already read themselves.

Benefits:
Cognitive Development:

Infants of highly involved fathers, as measured by amount of interaction, including higher levels of play and caregiving activities, are more cognitively competent at 6 months and score higher on the Bayley Scales of Infant Development. By one year they continue to have higher cognitive functioning, are better problem solvers as toddlers, and have higher IQ's by age three.

School aged children of involved fathers are also better academic achievers. They are more likely to get A’s, have better quantitative and verbal skills, have higher grade point averages, get better achievement test scores, receive superior grades, perform a year above their expected age level on academic tests, obtain higher scores on reading achievement, or learn more and perform better in school.

Children of involved fathers are more likely to demonstrate more cognitive competence on standardized intellectual assessments and have higher IQ's.

Practice Reading Skills

Activities

Minnesota Zoo connecting people, animals and the natural world.
Take Action

Quality time or Ordinary time.

A major dimension of fathering is play.

Fathers tend to raise their children through play, whether direct or indirectly, this occurs from the child's birth through adolescence. The play is both physically stimulating and exciting. It frequently resembles an apprenticeship or teaching relationships, and emphasizes often teamwork and competitive testing of abilities. The way fathers play affects everything from the management of emotions to intelligence and academic achievement. It is particularly important in promoting the essential virtue of self-control.

A committee assembled by the Board of Children and Families of the National Research Council, concluded that children learn critical lessons about how to recognize and deal with highly charged emotions in the context of playing with their fathers. Fathers, in effect, give children practice in regulating their own emotions and recognizing others' emotional clues.

Fathers tend to stress competition, challenge, initiative, risk taking and independence. A father's involvement shows a strong connection to "improved executive and verbal skills, increased problem-solving ability, and higher, academic achievement for children." Improved fathers, it turns out, may be of

Resources

Wondering where to start? There are online resources that can help.

Mocha Dad - One Father's Quest to be a Better Dad
One Father's Quest to be a Better Dad

https://fatherhoodfactor.com/
NAZ is specifically focused and based in North Minneapolis.

The organization collaborates and supports:

- Child scholars
- Families
- Full ecosystem of solutions (health, college, housing, budgeting)
REFERENCES

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