



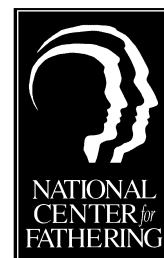
Implementation Guide

by George R. Williams, MS

Father involvement has never been this fun!

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About the National Center *for* Fathering

The National Center for Fathering was founded in 1990 by Dr. Ken Canfield in response to the dramatic trend towards fatherlessness in America. Providing research-based training and practical resources, the Center is the *only* national organization focused on equipping men to be the involved fathers, grandfathers and father figures their children need. The Center reaches more than one million dads annually through seminars, small group training, our *fathers.com* weekly e-mail, daily radio program and our award winning website, www.fathers.com.

Every child needs a dad they can count on. Children succeed when they have an involved father or father figure—a man whose heart is to love them, know them, guide them and help shape their destiny. The National Center for Fathering serves to help recruit, train and support men to be the dads and father figures children need.

About the Author



George R. Williams, MS, MFT is the executive director for the Urban Father-Child Partnership the urban initiative of the National Center for Fathering. George is a recognized expert as a fathering practitioner and has spoken and taught on the subject nationally.

George is the author of the fathering curricula *Coach DADS: Playbook, Reconnecting Education and Dads (R.E.A.D.) to Kids and Quenching the Father Thirst*. He earned his Master of Science degree from Friends University in

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Ron Nichols is the Director of Training for the National Center for Fathering. He designs and delivers father training workshops and presentations across the country for organizations including businesses, churches, civic groups, social service agencies, the military, hospitals and schools.

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Primary Consultant

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Mustafaa has been with KCMC for three years as an Infant/Toddler Development Specialist and Monitor Specialist. He and his wife Natasha have two children, Nazr and Naeema.

About the *Coach DADS* Program

Coach DADS is a fun interactive father-child program created to encourage fathers and father figures of pre-school children to get involved in their child's learning and development through play. *Coach DADS* was developed by the National Center for Fathering to be integrated into the parental involvement and child development programming of local Head Start pre-school agencies.

Coach DADS invites, prepares and involves fathers and father figures as "learning through play" coaches to reinforce the development of their child's social competence, school and life readiness; socially, physically, cognitively, and representationally⁸ received at the preschool site and at home.

Male Involvement Model

The Male Involvement Model (see figure 1.) is presented here to demonstrate how the *Coach Dads* program addresses aspects of male involvement. The six stages of the model are engagement, excitement, exchange, effect, efficacy, and extension.

These stages answer the questions: How are fathers recruited? What motivates the fathers? What are the belief barriers that need to be corrected? What behavior changes result? How is the program measured for effectiveness? How does the program generalize to other areas?

Male Involvement Model

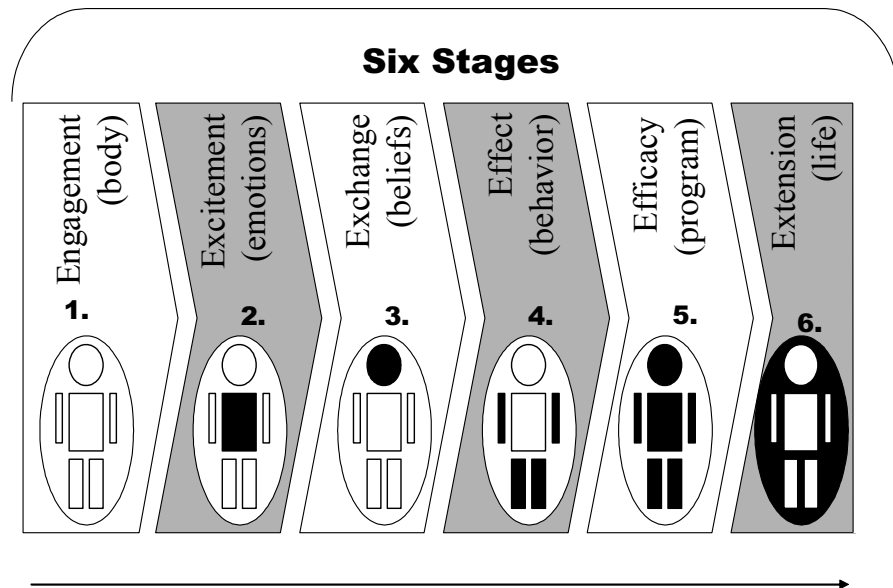


Figure 1.

Stage 1: Engagement (Body)

How do you get the father/father figure connected to a program? The *Coach Dads* program is a voluntary program where the fathers are invited to help their children learn through play.

There are three ways to engage a father in an involvement program. The first method is voluntarily by their *initiative*. In this case the father seeks out ways to be involved. Unfortunately father involvement is not a widely recognized need among men. Few fathers will ask how they can get involved, especially when they are not first asked to help.

The second method of engagement is mandatory through an *imperative*. It is the issue of a mandatory policy that fathers must

be involved. Many institutions are resistant to the policy first because there is not a conviction of the need and also because mandatory policy can be self-defeating. Reluctant participation soon becomes no participation. And it may harm participation in other important areas.

This brings us to the third method of engagement is through recruitment by *invitation*. The need for father involvement must be expressed with a request for the fathers to meet those needs.

This is third method is the strategy of the ***Coach Dads*** program. It creates a place for the fathers with their children and then invites the fathers to that place. Based on our experience in a similar father involvement program this strategy has been highly successful.

Stage 2: Excitement (Emotions)

What serves as the motivation for the father to attend and change? Through the ***Coach Dads*** program motivation for father involvement is provided through the shared interest of coaching and the excitement of playing with their child. Short term dependency on door prizes and food to motivate participation must move to motivation by the relationship with his child.

The program must hold the father's interest. The alternative is for the program to be irrelevant or boring to the needs and interest of the father. Most men get excited about what is interesting to them and what they feel competent in. They are more likely to participate in the long term.

Few fathers can relate to the exciting experience of teaching. Many more can relate to the exciting experiences of coaching and sports. This ***Coach Dads*** program gives the father the role to become their child's "play-coach". A coach is one who is

personally involved in training, instructing or teaching. Fathers in the ***Coach Dads*** program experience the most fun and excitement possible in a father involvement program coaching their children in play!

Stage 3: Exchange (Beliefs)

What false and misleading ideas need to be changed before the dad can be empowered with new skills? Beliefs are formed from many different sources including society, culture, family, experiences, history and self talk. In many cases men adapt beliefs about themselves for society that are untrue.

We live in a society where fathers have lost their role in education (albeit they are slowly regaining it). There are some ideas that have emerged that need to be changed. One such idea is whether dads can make a difference in their child's education? The answer is yes. Another idea that needs changing is can a dad help his child if he doesn't have a degree or is illiterate? The answer is again, yes.

The ***Coach Dads*** program empowers the dads with the ideas that they are critical to the education of their children. As the 17th Century proverb states, "One father is more influential than one hundred schoolmasters." And they can make a difference in very simple ways that begin with play.

Stage 4: Effect (Behavior)

What is the new positive behavior that is the result of the practice of a new skill? What is the behavior change that the program is successful in producing with the fathers? Remembering the adage, "You cannot talk your way out of something you behaved your way into" reminds us it is about actions and not merely talk.

Change is always about a loss and gain. What did you stop doing and what did you start doing? Change is more likely when what is gained is much more desirable than what was lost.

In the *Coach Dads* program it is about stopping sidelining and becoming involved. The new behavior is something that is an attainable goal for the dad. The *Coach Dads* program's target new behavior is to deliberately spend five minutes a day five days a week playing with their child to promote learning.

Stage 5: Efficacy (Program)

What are the measures of the effectiveness of the change? One of the behaviors that must be changed is fathers who are not involved in their child's education to become involved. The times of the father's involvement must be tracked. The specific involvement to track for the father in the *Coach Dads* program is play at the site or in the home.

Another level of effectiveness is the changes in the child. What kind of impact does father involvement have of the child? How are changes measured in the child? Any standardized testing with the child would be useful.

Built into the *Coach Dads* program is the Dad's Journal in the *Coach Dads* playbook. The journal records the time the father spends playing with his child. It also records the father's observations of his child's development. It also records the child's own written and drawn development.

Stage 6: Extension (Life)

Does the new behavior extend to other areas of the father-child relationship? Through learning and practicing a new behavior can

The Play Book

increase confidence in the role that will help a father expand his role to other areas of his child's life.

Also the context of the small group brings about the on-going support of other men who are practicing the same behavior. In this group ideas of other ways to involve with their child can be brought to the table.

The ***Coach Dads*** program provides skill that can raise confidence in the fathering role. Also built into the program is a support group for the fathers that meet on a regular basis.

Coach Dads Program Components

Coach DADS is as easy as ABC, built around three (3) components of fathers coaching their child's development through guided play at the site and home. The program can be summed up as a coachable dad being involved in a child's play, celebrating the results (see figure 2).

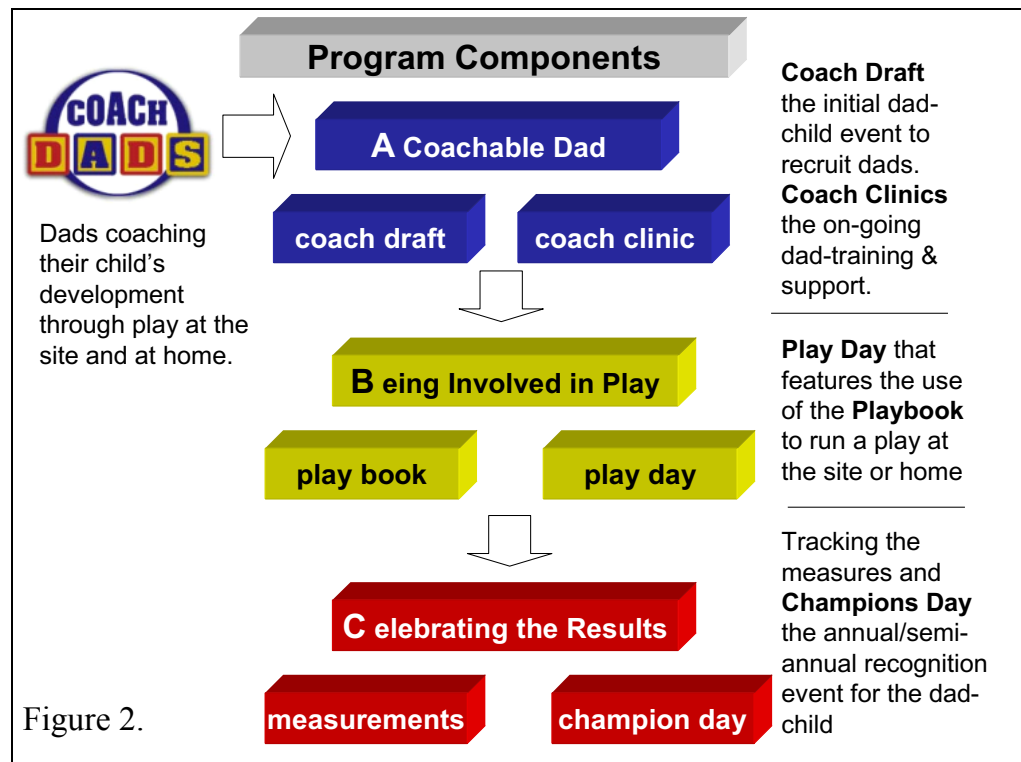


Figure 2.

The following sections provide a narrative to take a closer how the three components work together to create the overall program. A numbered list breakdown of the components is provided in the implementation section of this guide.

A Coachable Dad

A **Coachable Dad** is the target of this *Coach Dads* program. A coach must first be coached. A coachable dad is a willing father/father figure to learn what he must do and available to do it with a sense of passionate purpose to help his child's development through play.

The target of this program is male involvement and some of those reasons are covered in the article, "Why Get Dads Involved in Pre-School?" in Appendix A. The main purpose is that male involvement in education is largely absent but when it is present children benefit.

Since the industrial revolution fathers have steadily lost their place in the role of educating our children. It has evolved to the point that the norm is for males not to be involved in the education of children. This is especially true in the early years of a child's education. Fortunately this trend is slowly turning around. But true progress will take the effort of teachers, administrators and mothers that can help create a place for the fathers to return.

There is no denial that the absence of fathers in education involvement is as diverse as it is complex. Yet it will require the whole system to make at least minor changes to reverse this trend. Some people in the system have to be open to seeing their blind spots of where they may be promoting father absence in education through their conscious or unconscious beliefs and actions.

The *Coach Dads* program attempts to give children what they want and need; both their mother and father involved in their education.

COACH DRAFT

The **Coach Draft** is a kick-off event held at the site to recruit and train the men as *Coach Dads*. It is also an enjoyable dad-child

interaction fun time which is referred to as the **Dad & Child Night Out**.

The Head Coach is the male point person for the program at the site. The Head Coach insures a flyer is sent home with every child at the site inviting fathers and father figures (including mothers) to a Dad & Child Night Out filled with food, fathers and fun.

At the event the men and children eat together. Next all the men receive a ***Coach Dads PlayBook*** and are led through some fun interactive plays from the ***PlayBook*** with their children. At the close of the time they are challenged to become a Coach Dad by picking one day out the week when they drop off or pick up their child to run a play from the ***PlayBook***.

COACH CLINIC

The **Coach Clinic** provides on-going dad training and regular support for the dads of the site. The Head Coach either creates a new monthly meeting for the *Coach Dads* or simply invites them to an existing father support group.

At the meetings the fathers have an opportunity to share their coaching experiences and receive and give additional training and support. This creates a place of belonging and purpose for the dads. Each has a job at the site and that is to coach their child's learning through play.

Special Coach Clinics can be called by other teachers and administrators at the site. It is not necessary that the guest instructors to be male. Also other experts and instructors can be brought in to instruct.

Being Involved in Play

Being Involved in Play with his child to help their development is the goal of the Coach Dads program. For more information about the topic of fathers and play reference the article, “Fathering is Child’s Play?” in Appendix A.

Someone has said, “Man is more childlike than woman,” and it seems men of any maturity level are often more predisposed to play. Perhaps the excuse to play again is one of the benefits of being a dad. One area of play in which fathers are recognized as experts is rough-and-tumble play. The play of fathers is typically more physical and exciting than that of mothers.

Although many fathers care for their infants, many more are likely to play with their infants than to care for them. The vast majority of exchanges between fathers and their babies are brief play episodes that come at a specific period of the day. As the infants grow older, fathers generally increase the time they spend with them, and are more likely to engage in physical play. Fathers will swing their toddlers around, or “wrestle” with them on the floor, ride with them on their back or shoulders, or crawl after them in a “chase”.

Fathers’ unique approach to play can benefit their children. Dads at play help their children further develop their physical abilities. Dads at play can help a child cope with emotional issues. Dads at play help their children develop social skills and moral character. Dads at play help their children to develop cognitively. As children develop intellectually, dads learn to adjust the play activities accordingly.

Much of the above benefits of play happen unintentionally, and yet

The Play Book

if fathers understood the significance of play for a child's well being and development, they would likely engage in play more frequently and for longer periods of time. And that is the purpose of the Coach Dads program. It is deliberate play.

PLAYDAY

The **PlayDay** is the day chosen by the dad/father figure once a week run a play from the *PlayBook* with his child preferably at the site or at home. The **PlayDay** is the dad's weekly visit at the site for 5-10 minutes when he drops his child off or when he picks his child up and runs a play.

In the *PlayBook* he selects a play to go over. The *Coach Dad* spends 5-10 minutes in a fun interaction of "coaching" his child on that play. Once the time is over the *Coach Dad* will turn to the back of the play book to the *Dad's Journal* and writes a one sentence entry of what he noticed or enjoyed about the **PlayDay** with his child.

PLAYBOOK

The **PlayBook** is a book containing 31 dad-child plays around four types of development through play: social, physical, cognitive and representational.

Each *Coach Dad* receives a playbook during the initial Coach Draft Coach Clinic or a later clinic. The dad uses the book for the weekly 5-10 minute playtime with his child on the *PlayDay*. The playbook is broken down into four "playing fields" that represent developmental domains of social, physical, cognitive and representational.

The playing field is switched from week to week (e.g. the first week using the social playing field and the next week using the physical playing field, etc.) Under each playing field are five

different plays to allow a different play for each day of the month (although we are asking the dads pick only one day a week).

Also contained in the playbook is a 52-week one-line journal. At the end of the Game Day the dads are requested to fill out a one-line comment on the experience for that day.

Celebrating the Results

Celebrating Results of dads/father figures and children is about measuring the results of the program using the dad's journal and celebrating involvement on an annual/semi-annual basis.

The goal of the Coach Dads program is to make a meaningful difference in the lives of our children. And through celebration of that difference we hope to facilitate continued efforts on the part of the dads and children for their accomplishment no matter how small they might be.

MEASUREMENTS

There are a variety of items that can be measured that starts with a needs assessment.

The sign-in sheets at the site is used to collect number of participants in the Coach Draft, Dad & Child Night Out along with the number of fathers coming out to the site.

The dad's journal in the PlayBook is used to collect, how many PlayDays, what type of activities were played, how many home plays, the father's observation of play, the child's drawing and writings in the PlayBook.

Finally a simple pre-post self-test for the father measures fathering

satisfaction and confidence on a Likert scale.

CHAMPIONS DAY

Champions Day is a celebration day to recognize anyone and everyone involved in promoting the Coach Dads program through a small token or award (e.g. ribbon, medal, certificate, etc.)

The **Champions Day** occurs at least once a year as a non-competitive event that showcases and celebrates the coach-player/father-child team. This event can be done in combination with other regularly scheduled site events. The purpose is to demonstrate to the fathers and children that the whole site endorses and supports the Coach Dads program.

Coach DADS: Implementation and Facilitation Guide

The **Coach DADS Facilitator's Guide** is the essential resource for the person responsible for implementing the Coach DADS program at the local Head Start or pre-school program agency.

This guide is provides the background and structure of the Coach DADS program, techniques in reaching out to fathers and father-figures of preschoolers, and step-by-step outline of implementing the program.

The Facilitator

This curriculum is not written for a specific group of men but attempts to be relevant to a broad audience of men. It is the role of the facilitator to adapt the content, approach and delivery to meet the group's background. This requires knowing your group including: cultural background, family status, session timing, word choice and usage, exercise execution, emphasis of material, break timing, etc.

The term instructor can be misleading in that the instructor is associated with lecturing. The richness of the experience of learning is gauge by how little the instructor speaks and how much the group participates in the dialogue. This is why the term facilitator is more descriptive of the instructor. The facilitator assists the group through the journey of learning.

The curriculum was designed to give the facilitator the tools he needs to create a learning environment that will encourage self-discovery. It provides a framework that will touch on almost every aspect of fathering. And yet for the facilitator this curriculum is the servant not the master. The facilitator must be sensitive to the needs of the class and not sacrifice those needs at the expense of the "agenda."

The various learning styles of the men were considered with the overall object of that being relevant, engaging and producing life changing results. Nothing can supercharge a presentation more than the facilitator personalizing the wording, stories, illustrations, examples and transitions for his group.

The Small Group

The facilitator-led small group is a key part of this curriculum. The power of change is assisted through the dynamics of the small group. Some optimum small group considerations are:

- Male facilitator – that role model openness and acceptance
- Eight (8) to Twelve (12) men group size – sharing something in common, benefits of variety in group experiences, insuring all can participate and allowing for attrition
- One (1) session – allowing participation by all with necessary breaks and efficient usage of the time
- Facility – maintains or builds self-esteem, provides privacy and comfort that facilitates openness of sharing

In the context of the small group these men share the same struggles of fatherhood, the hope to be a better father, support and encouragement from one another and the accountability to change.

There is no other place or class that a man has access to that allows them to talk about issues that really matter. Coming together around the topic of fathering gives men permission to put down the walls and share openly and honesty. These sessions together are a direct investment in their children and the future of our society.

Facilitator Preparation

- Review Instructor notes and reference material in instructor guide.
- See Training Program Agendas for suggested program content and timing.
- Use book material, personal experiences and instructor guide to provide emphasis and clarity.
- Personalize instruction by adding appropriate stories, including your own examples and stories.

Facilitator Guide Format

Instructor dialogue

State: Anything the instructor says appears in this bold font and it will be indented. **Emphasize the statement if it appears in highlighted reverse text.**

Instruct: Instructions will appear in same bold font.

Ask: Do you understand? *Answers appear in italics.*

Transition: Next we will talk about instructor notes.

Facilitator Notes

Note: Any tips, information and suggestions for instructor when conducting or preparing for program appear in this font.

SUPPLIES NEEDED

Need for L1-A:
Extra blank copy
paper to make
airplanes

1. Box in left margin signals trainer supplies needed for the activity
2. Heading "Need for L1-A" represents Lesson 1 activity "A"

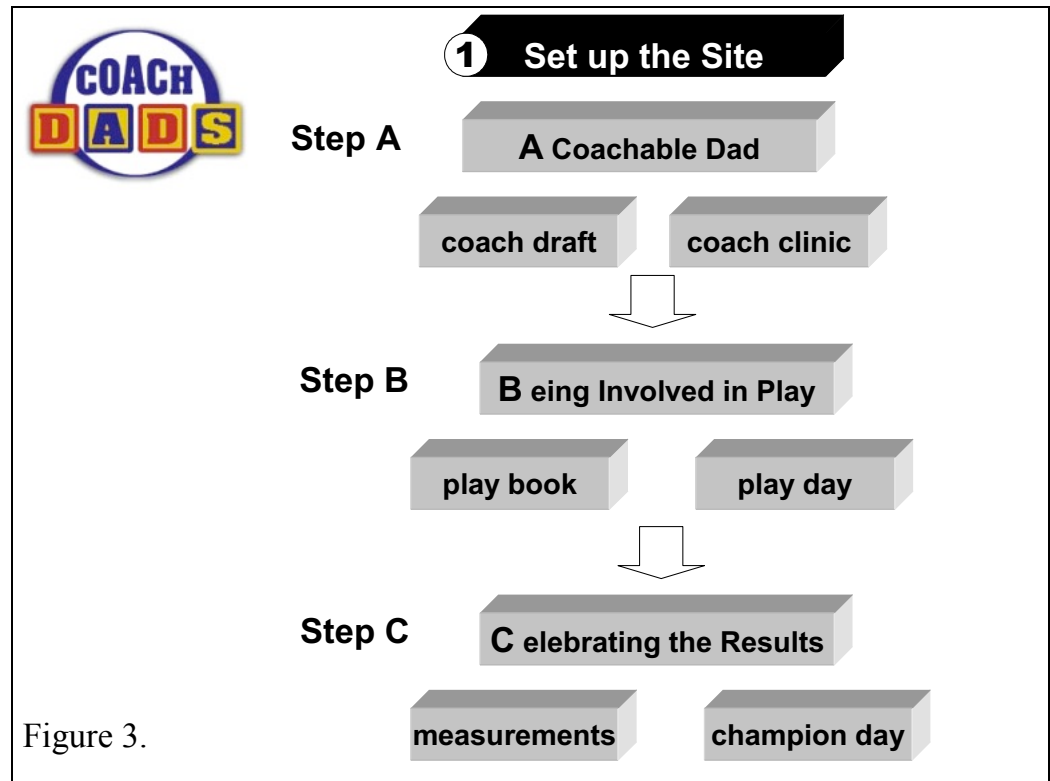


THE COACH DADS PLAYBOOK

1. Symbol quickly identifies PlayBook
2. Pg. ## represents the page number in the PlayBook
3. 9 Min. represents the estimated number of minutes for the activity
4. The actual contents of the Dad Guide appears in this font

(1) Set up the Site

These are the steps required for setting up a site for the Coach Dads Program.

**(1): Set up the Site**

1. Meet with site director.
2. Share the key benefits of the program.
 - ☐ Fathers involvement
 - ☐ Supports site learning
 - ☐ Development through play
 - ☐ Improved school readiness
3. Review the program outline.

The Play Book

- ☐ Review figure 2.
- 4. Get the site director to agree to sites role in the program.
 - ☐ Committed to the involvement of dads.
 - ☐ Communicate to the site the importance and support of the program.
 - ☐ Select a Head Coach.
 - ☐ Fund the program with parental involvement funds.
- 5. Begin preparations for the Coach Draft.

Step A (2): Coach Draft

The Coach Draft is a kick-off event held at the site to recruit and train the men as Coach Dads.

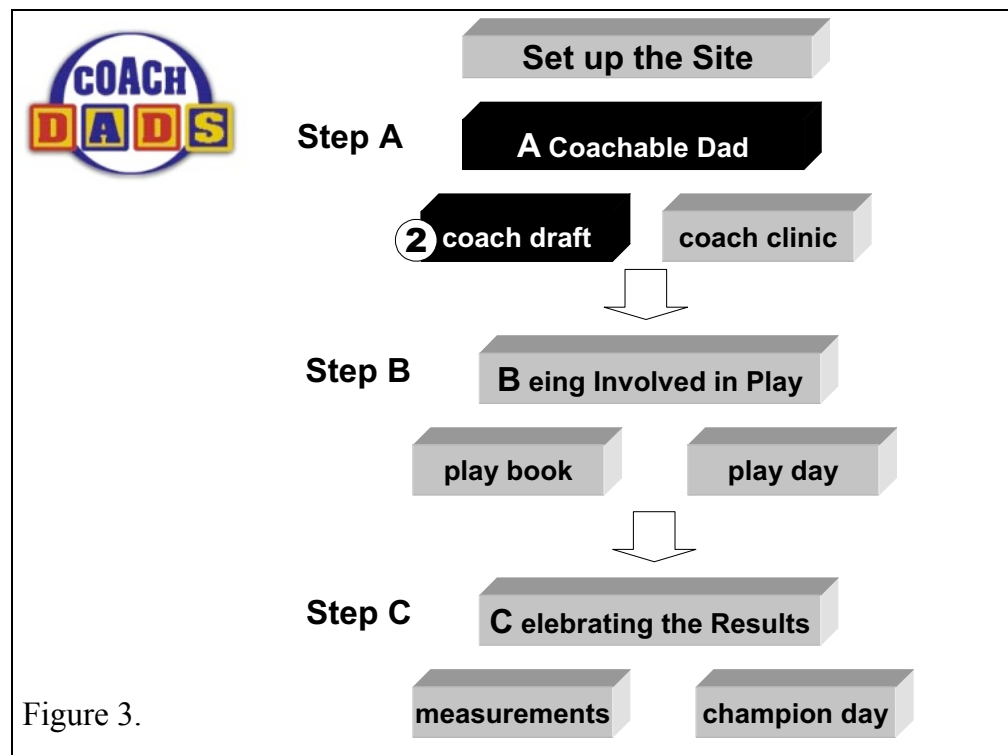


Figure 3.

Step A (2): Coach Draft**1. Schedule a Dads & Kids Night Out.**

- ☐ Tuesday or Thursday is often days with the least conflicts.
- ☐ Consider shift changes.
- ☐ Event last one hour.

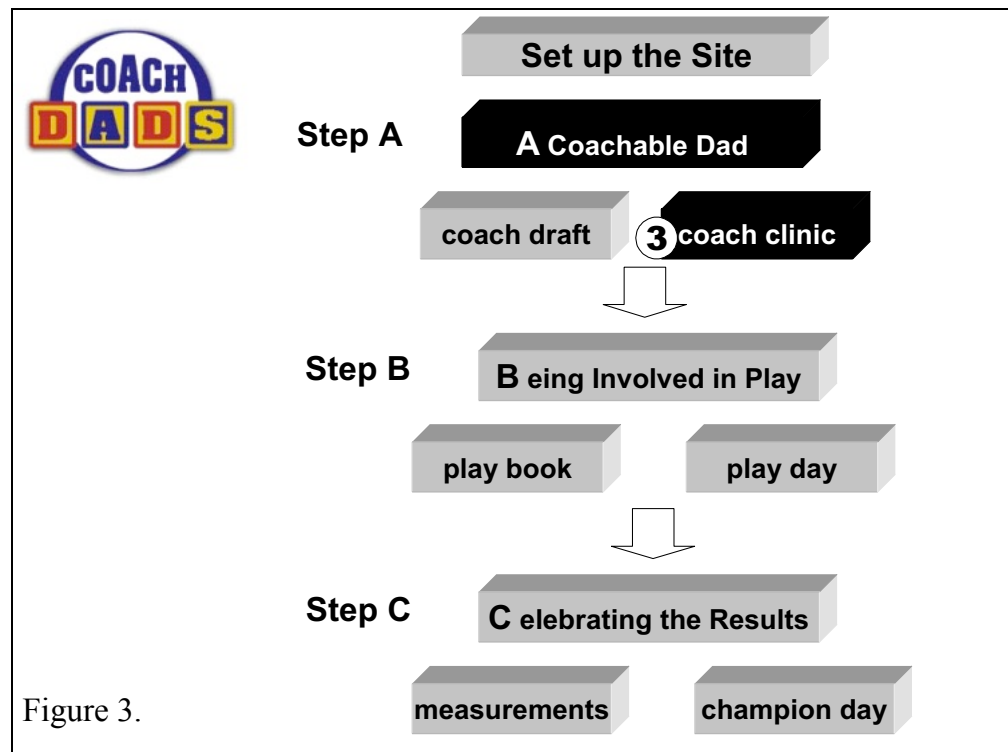
2. Use Appendix B Form A: Flyer**3. Send out a flyer the week before the event to allow fathers and father-figures to sign up.**

- ☐ Ask teachers to encourage dads and father figures to come out.
- ☐ Rely on mothers to do recruiting.
- ☐ Use the flyers for initial count of participants.
- ☐ Resend the flyers the day before the event as a reminder.

4. Use the Appendix B: Dad & Child Night Out Script

Step A (3): Coach Clinic

The Coach Clinic provides on-going dad training and regular support for the dads at the site.

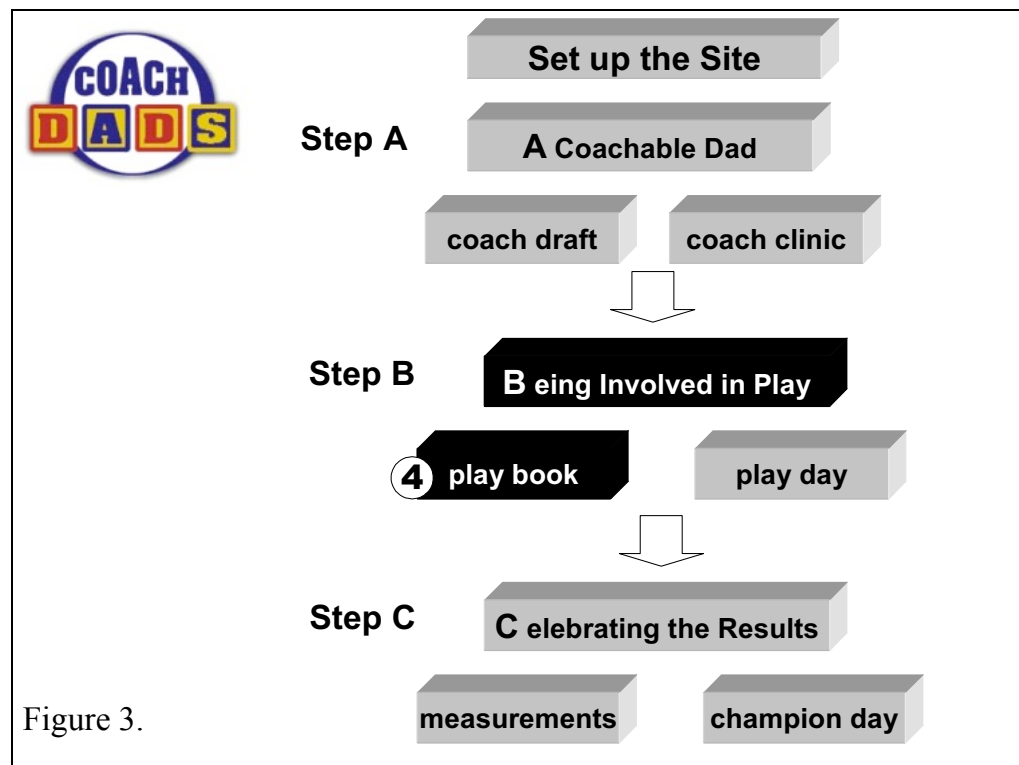
**Step A (3): Coach Clinic**

1. Set the clinic dates.
2. The clinic may be a part of a regular scheduled meeting.
3. The clinic can be a time for special training.
4. The clinic is an opportunity for men to speak about and get their concerns addressed.
5. At the clinic men from the site who have experience in relevant

areas may be call on to train.

Step B (4): Play Book

The Play Book is a book containing 31 dad-child plays around four types of development through play: social, physical, cognitive and representational.



Step B (4): About Play Book

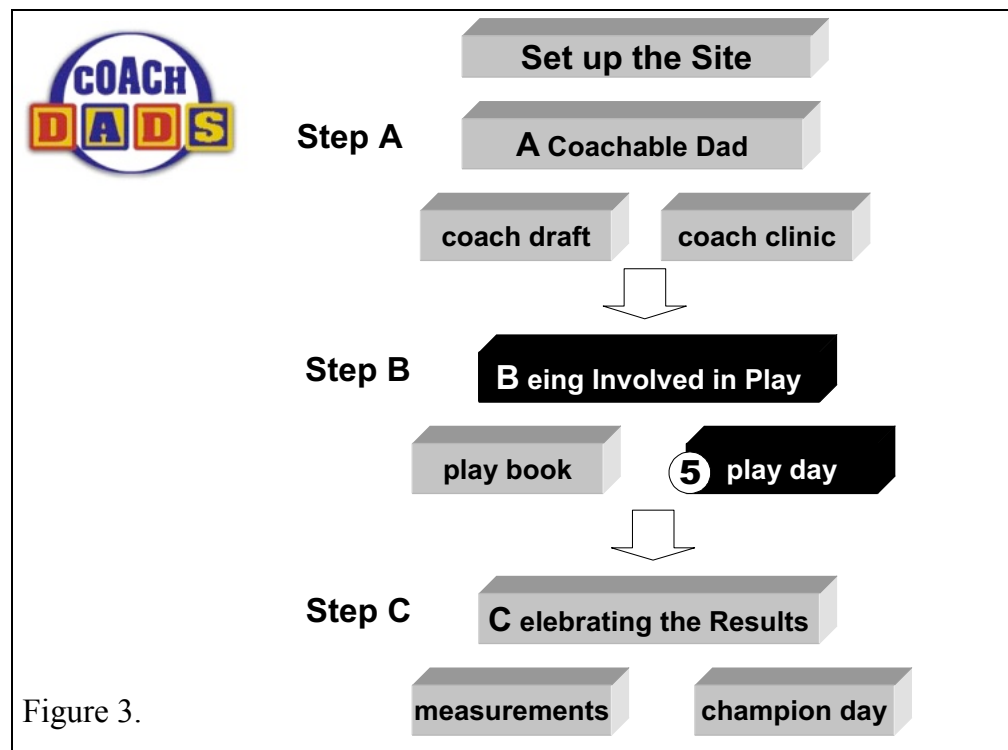
1. Fathers and father figures need to receive training on how to use the Coach Dad Play Book.
2. The first Coach Draft provides that training. Alternately they can receive training at a Coach Clinic.
3. Each trained father and father figure should receive a Coach Dad Play Book.

The Play Book

4. The Play Book can be used by the dad-child at the site or at home.
5. Choose between two goals for the dad-child. The first goal is for the dad-child to use the Play Book 5 on 5. Five days a week for five minutes a day. The second goal is five to ten minutes on any day once a week.
6. At the end of the play day the dads enter a one sentence observation about that play in their Coach Dad Play Book Journal section.

Step B (5): Play Day

The Play Day is any day the dad-child run a five to ten minute play from the Play Book at the site or at home.

**Step B (5): Play Day**

The Play Book

1. The **PlayDay** is the day chosen by the dad/father figure once a week run a play from the *PlayBook* with his child preferably at the site or at home.
2. The **PlayDay** is the dad's weekly visit at the site for 5-10 minutes when he drops his child off or when he picks his child up and runs a play.
3. In the *PlayBook* he selects a play to go over.
4. The *Coach Dad* spends 5-10 minutes in a fun interaction of "coaching" his child on that play.
5. Once the time is over the *Coach Dad* will turn to the back of the play book to the *Dad's Journal* and writes a one sentence entry of what he noticed or enjoyed about the **PlayDay** with his child.

Step C (6): Measurements

There are a variety of items that need to be considered to assess the Coach Dads program.

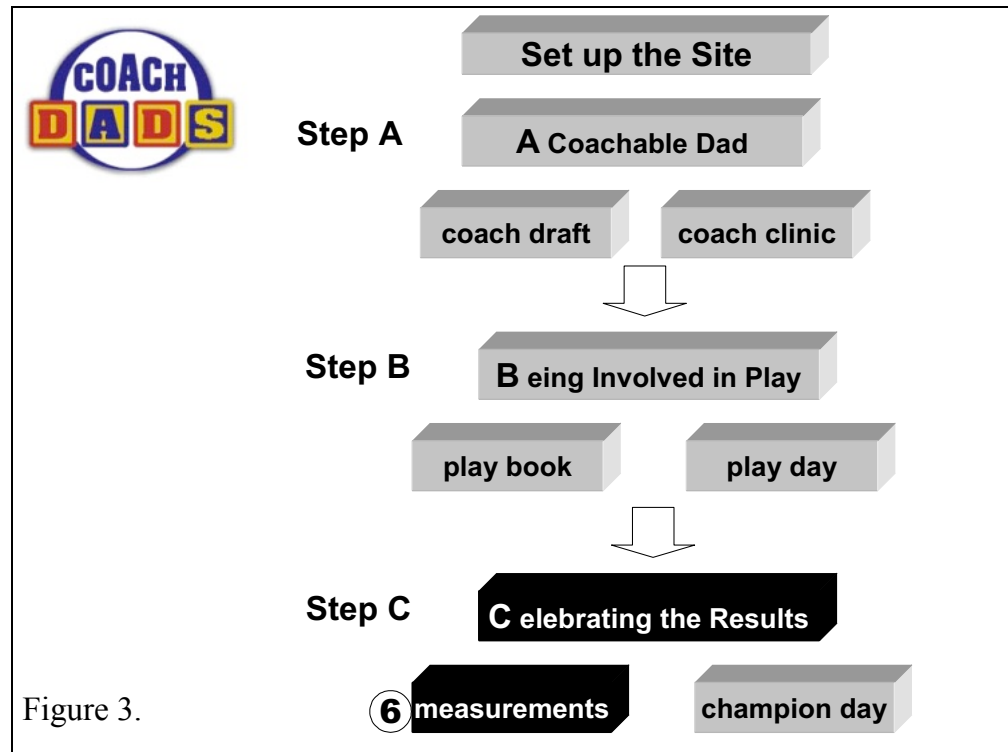


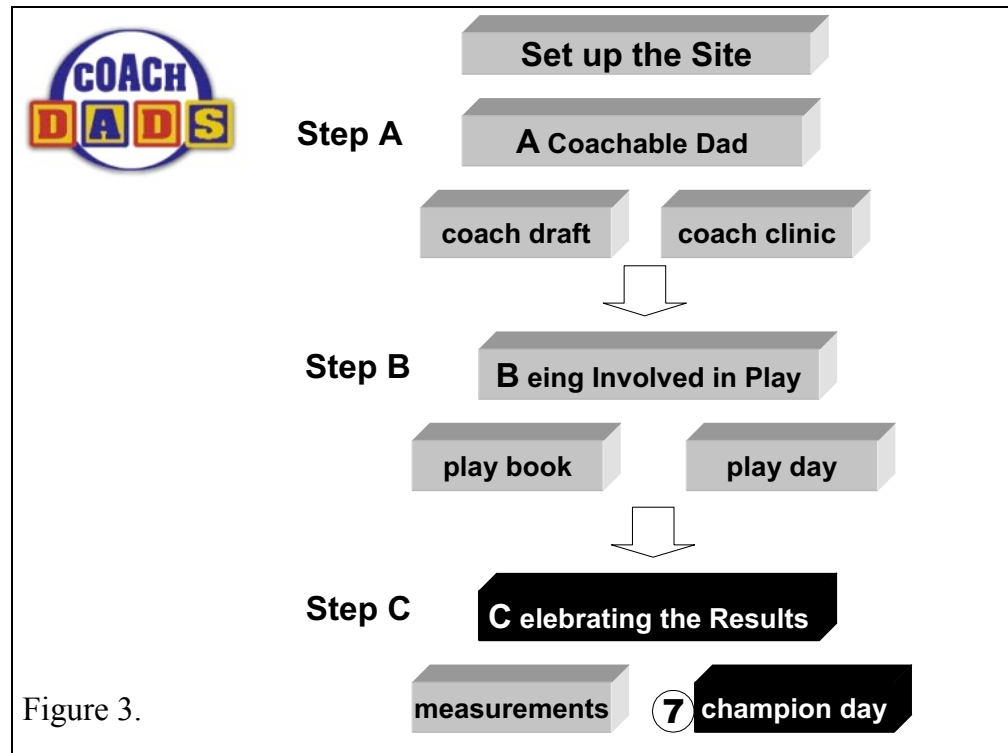
Figure 3.

Step C (6): Measurements

1. There are a variety of items that can be measured that starts with a needs assessment.
2. The sign-in sheets at the site is used to collect number of participants in the Coach Draft, Dad & Child Night Out along with the number of fathers coming out to the site.
3. The dad's journal in the PlayBook is used to collect, how many PlayDays, what type of activities were played, how many home plays, the father's observation of play, the child's drawing and writings in the PlayBook.
4. Finally a simple pre-post self-test for the father measures fathering satisfaction and confidence on a Likert scale.

Step C (7): Champion Day

Champion Day is a celebration day to recognize anyone and everyone involved in promoting the Coach Dads program.

**Step C (7): Champion Day**

1. Champion Day is an event to encourage the Coaches and children on their involvement together.
2. Champion Day can occur in conjunction with another meeting or be its own separate event.
3. Invite the Coaches, Children, Families Staff and the community to Champion Day.
4. Snacks would be provided for everyone. Each child will be

The Play Book

assigned a Coach for this event.

5. The site would be set up so fathers can spend up to 15-30 minutes playing with their children with or without the playbook.
6. The goal is just to highlight the skills they have acquired in knowing what to do with their children.
7. During that time the others attendees can mingle encouraging the Coaches and children without interfering with the play or drawing unwanted attention to the child.
8. At the end of the Champion Day event each Coach and Child(ren) will be recognized in an award ceremony with a certificate of thanks and a ribbon.
9. The Men receive a blue ribbon and Women Coaches receive a red ribbon and the all the children receive a yellow ribbon.
 - ☐ The ribbons may be purchased or made by the children as a craft.

Appendix A: Articles

Why get Dads involved in pre-school?

By George R. Williams

Head Start Children

Education is paramount to a child's foundation for success. Research shows that a child's academic performance is related to how they will do financially later in life.¹ The US is the leader of industrialized nations for child poverty and according to the

Education Department, only 20% of our minority kindergartners arrive with the skills needed to learn to read, compared with 50% of their classmates. This exposes the wide achievement gap between rich and poor and white and minority students.²

These children need help. One strategy to close this gap and give these children a head start is to involve their parents to help them develop and reach social and educational competence. Children need their parents and parental involvement is a research-proven method that works. Parents are the common denominator throughout the educational experiences of their children.

Educators must partner with the parents to provide them with the necessary knowledge and skills to help their children's education. This can continue throughout the children's entire educational journey from pre-school through college. To increase the likelihood of success this must start pre-school to involve the parents.

It is important to recognize that the term parent includes the father as the other main educator and nurturer of his child. Involving uninvolved fathers and father figures is the focus of this program. And the reason is that an involved father in education brings another important human resource to the aid of his child.

The Heart of Dads

Being a father is more of an art than science. It is an art that involves the heart. The heart of the father that is turned to his child to paint a picture of success on the canvass of his child's life. The paint he uses goes well beyond the traditional societal paint of financial provider.³

The "Importance of Father Love" research reviewed over 100 studies and found that father love is as important for a child's happiness, well being, and social and academic success as mother love.⁴ According to this research there were some cases that father love was more important than mother love. Research study after

research study confirms the significant and lasting benefits of father involvement in children's education—less discipline problems, better academic performance, and a higher graduation rate.⁵

How important is father involvement? Listen to what children have to say. Rose, a second grader says, "My Dad was my first date in the daddy daughter dance at school. My Dad took time off to be with me at this special event. My Dad is a very special person to me and no one can ruin that because I love him so much." Jarod, a first grader says, "My dad is a hero to me...I want to be like my dad when I grow up because then I'll be a hero, too."

Taylor a first grader says, "...My dad taught me how to read. Now I am the best reader in my class." Anthony a first grader says, "My dad might not have a lot ... I'm not afraid of what anyone may think of my father; all I need from him is to never take his love away from me."⁶

Heart Starting Dads

Despite the agreement of the research and the children, dads are relatively uninvolved in their children's education.⁷ Many of these fathers stand wanting and willing to help but there are barriers invisible to the human eye.

Men have lost their place in the educating of our Nation's children. This is reflected in a low number of male teachers and administrators particularly in the early education years. So at school fathers feel out of place because they have not place. The system has taken the responsibility and allowed parents to become irresponsible.

Many of fathers are repeating a generational cycle of uninvolved for their children. They did not have an involved father in education so they are not involved. How can you go another way unless you know another way? And how can you

know another way unless someone shows you another way?

Fathers hold hope for giving their children a head start in education and life. It is time to break the cycle of uninvolved and go another way. These fathers must be actively pursued.

We can all do our part in giving our children a head start by heart starting dads. So fathers know how important they are and how to show it through their involvement with their child's life and education. This is the whole purpose and mission of the ***Coach DADS*** program.

All Fathers Right Up Front

by George R. Williams

Introduction**Where are the Men?**

In today's American society a view of the landscape prompts questions. Where are all the men? Oh, they appear like the spots on a leopard here and there but where is the mass concentration of them? And in the places they appear are they making a positive social difference in the lives of children?

One of the places men appear in large numbers is in the military. They serve because of duty because of honor or because of the benefits. Indirectly the military does make a positive social difference in the lives of children. Unfortunately, while the military is critical to every citizen in our country, it sometimes takes men from children for extended periods of time and in some cases for an entire lifetime.

Another place that men appear in large numbers is around sports. The sport might be baseball, football, soccer or basketball and the place could be a living room, sports bar or stadium that large groups of men gather. They go to fill a need for thrill, excitement and fun. Some of these men include their children but for many more this is a private club with no children allowed.

Finally men appear in large numbers is in our system of incarceration. From federal to state to local jails we have over 2 million men in the system. Most men go because there is something broken in their lives and they break the law. They are torn from contact with their children and end up more broke when they come out.

Why are they missing?

Why don't men appear in large numbers around their children? Why is it that a large percentage of men do not even live in a home with their children? Why can America require men to serve their country but not their children? Why is it that there is a large percentage of men who are not involved in the lives of their children? Why is the attention of our men diverted from their children to such trifling amusing pastimes? Why are there more men in prison than men who visit their child's elementary school?

Those are a lot of questions and the answers are as diverse as they are complex. But many of the answers are uncovered as you take deeper look at the learning of a man's role in our society. At one time in this country it was the role of the father to teach his children. The industrial revolution harmed the family when it required the man to leave the home to make a living.

As it became more common for the father to be out of the home it became more the responsibility of the society to educate the children. And as the revolution grew it not only claimed the father but also the mother. Yet mothers still stayed involved. But most fathers hid behind the excuse that education was the responsibility of women for so long that they finally believed it.

It has come to the point that our whole society seems turned upside down. Men have lost their place in education. Men and women have something unique to offer their children and we men and women involved in every aspect of our children's lives. It is time to stop asking, "Where they have gone?" and start asking, "How do we get them back?"

Calling Men to Father Involvement

How do you get men involved? Through programs like Coach Dads we have seen how fathers can make a difference for their children. And children make a difference for fathers.

Since the industrial revolution fathers have steadily lost their place

in the role of educating our children. It has evolved to the point that the norm is for males not to be involved in the education of children. This is especially true in the early years of a child's education. Fortunately this trend is slowly turning around.

True progress will take the effort of teachers, administrators and mothers that can help create a place for the fathers to return. This section deals with how programs can facilitate the promotion of "coachable" dads.

There is no denial that the absence of fathers in education involvement is as diverse as it is complex. Yet it will require the whole system to make at least minor changes to reverse this trend. Some people in the system have to be open to seeing their blind spots of where they may be promoting father absence in education.

There are those who believe that opening the educational system to fathers will further it's demise. They believe the additional work required to get fathers involved will subtract from the overall system rather than add. They may consciously or unconsciously stand in the way of father involvement.

These thoughts that are said or unsaid are often acted on to prevent the need of involved fathers. There are those that come up with the legitimate excuses that hid their true thoughts and feelings. For example we don't want the children whose dads can't or won't come feel bad because the other children's dads are coming. Or working to try to get dads in the schools will take away from getting the real work of education. Or we can't bring abusive dads into the classrooms. Or what if the mom has a restraining order against him because of his history of abuse?

These are legitimate considerations that must be addressed but you cannot deprive children and make them all subject to loss for these reasons. You should not throw out the "daddy" with the bath water.

Teacher, administrators and mothers can help turn the hearts of

these fathers to their children's education. Following are eight tips they can use to heart start dads:

1. See dads as part of the solution and an additional social asset for a child's educational challenges.
2. Specifically target the fathers and ask them to partner with you for their child's education.
3. Create a place at the school that shares the dads interest and that he will feel competent.
4. Provide activities that strengthen the father-child relationship and use the fathering satisfaction of the relationship as the motivation for his involvement.
5. Show dads the power of his influence on this child's development and teach him practical skills that will increase his fathering confidence.
6. Encourage fathers to form fathering support small groups to talk about issues related to their children that never get discussed anywhere else.
7. Allow for flexibility in the dad's schedule and do not involve a large time commitment.
8. Take small attainable steps and celebrate the accomplishments of successful steps taken in the father-child relationship.

Fathering is Child's Play

by George R. Williams

Introduction

Imagine traveling to a foreign country where you cannot speak or understand the language of the people, and the flood of feelings from not being able to communicate with the people. How would you feel? Perhaps frustrated from not being able to understand others or be understood about your wants and needs. Maybe helpless, or disconnected, or alone and isolated from the people around you. You might even feel ignorant or less of a person compared to those around you.

As adults, fathers have a language that differs from their children. These two languages often separate the world of fathers from the world of children. When children cannot speak their father's adult language, they are prone to experience the flood of feelings described above. Fathers can prevent that experience and strengthen their bond with children if they learn their child's language.

That language spoken in the world of children is play. The focus of this chapter is primarily on the preschool and school age play of children. I will examine the purpose of their language of play and how dads can connect with their children through play to communicate, help them cope with life, and help them achieve success in their pursuits.

Child's Play

Jean Piaget sought to understand how children come to know the world and act effectively within it. In Piaget's view, knowledge is

acquired (in his words, “constructed”) through action. (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969) This constructivist perspective maintains that nature and nurture are equally necessary for development—the child’s environment of play and those whom the child engages in play both assist that child in his or her development.

Piaget, J., & Inhelder, B. (1969). *The psychology of the child*. New York: Basic Books.

Most children engage in play because it is fun, but play also has purpose. Play is powerful for a child. Through the power of play (action), children acquire (construct) knowledge to:

1. Communicate their thoughts and feelings.
2. Cope with life stresses and emotional distress.
3. Connect with those they play with.
4. Comprehend the world around them through pretend, exploration and learning.

Cohen, Lawrence J. (2001). *Playful Parenting*, New York, NY: Random House, Inc.

Communicate

Before the child learns the adult language from early infancy they learn the language of play. Think about your own early life experiences. Most likely, they are not remembered in the adult language but in this language of play. This language relies heavily on the feeling of pleasure (and sometimes pain) to produce a connection, a sense of relief, and learning.

Through this play, children communicate what they think and what they feel with those they play with. The language of play is universal in the world of children. Children do not have to be taught to play, because play is not just what children do but an expression of their identity.

In the language of play there is a vocabulary that includes four different types of play. **Active** play is described by mostly the gross motor skills of running and jumping. **Object** play is exploration of the senses that may employ fine motor skills picking up, observing, smelling and shaking. **Social** play involves

an exchange with another person that may or may not include physical contact. **Pretend** play involves make believe in objects and acting. (Smith 1982, 1990)

Smith P. K (1982). Does play matter? Functional and evolutionary aspects of animal and human play. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 5, 129-184.

Smith, P. K. (1990). Rough-and tumble play, aggression and dominance: Perception and behavior in children's encounters. *Human Development*, 33, 271-282.

Cope

Through the course of a child's life, he experiences many injuries and insults. The child's healthy development requires that the child receives physical and emotional healing from these hurts. Play is a way that children can cope with the stresses of life and emotional distress. Play gives a child an outlet to explore emotions without shutting down emotionally and without the threat of being out of control.

When a child is hurt or insulted, it can be part of a domino effect within the hierarchy of the family. For example, the falling of the "dominoes" might follow this sequence: the dad yells at the mom, the mom yells at the child, the child yells at the dog and the dog whimpers in the corner. Rather than the child feeling powerless and out of control, without any outlet, the child can find resolve through play.

The sheer fun of play can help children forget minor issues that upset them. More serious issues can be resolved through play by giving children a place where they have the power and control to act out some of their hurts, questions and feelings through pretend play. Play can therapeutically create a new atmosphere where the child can open his suppressed experiences to be healed.

Connect

Who does a child feel close to? Why does he feel close to that

person? Shared, enjoyed experiences help him build close connections with others.

Attachment theory examines this topic of connection, starting at an early age and continuing through adulthood. When the primary caregiver (usually the mom but this can be the dad or include the dad) responds to an infant's needs, the child develops a trust, a sense of worth, and security in that relationship. This translates to being secure in relationships with others.

This concept is covered in the National Center for Fathering's urban curriculum, *Quenching the Father Thirst*. We compare children to a cup: when they are empty, they are lonely, bored, need to be heard, to be loved and to learn. The cup is refilled when significant others interact in a positive way, take time to listen and talk, affirm the child verbally and physically, teach the child a skill, etc. That is what play does for children. Play connects children with those they play with. During that connection time, parents can meet some of their children's needs, and we believe *fathers* are great candidates to fill that role.

Williams, George (2002). *Quenching the Father Thirst*. Kansas City, MO: National Center for Fathering.

Comprehend (Learning through Play)

During a child's preschool years, his brain and learning skills are forming. Although it is never too late to encourage learning, preschool is a key period of development. Most of this learning involves one or more of these three techniques: seeing (visual memory), hearing (auditory memory) and doing (kinesthetic memory). The interacting experiences of play make important neural connections in a child's brain. Children learn through play. Conklin, Winifred (2001) *Smart-Wiring Your Baby's Brain*, New York, NY: HarperCollins.

All children are unique, with different types of intelligence, but various kinds of play can help a child learn, no matter what his or her learning style may be. Following is a list of specific types of

intelligence and how play that can be used to develop that intelligence.

1. Linguistic intelligence is a love for words and language. Learning through play occurs by seeing, hearing and saying words.
2. Spatial intelligence is visual learning. Learning through play occurs by using pictures, diagrams and films.
3. Bodily-Kinesthetic is learning through movement. Appropriate play activities would be role-playing, drama, dance, and other action experiences.
4. Musical intelligence is learning with rhythm and melody. Learning through play occurs by singing, tapping the beat or using an instrument.
5. Logical-Mathematical intelligence is learning based on patterns and relationships, and play might involve puzzles and games of logic.
6. Interpersonal intelligence is strength in relating to and cooperating with others. Group play is a good learning strategy for these children.
7. Intrapersonal intelligence shows up in children who learn most effectively individually or in a solitary environment.

The different ways to play help develop the neural wiring of different parts of a child's brain. Conversely, the uniqueness of the child may be express through his play preferences. Whatever his unique intelligence may be, a child who is encouraged to play and develop his skills is much more likely to enjoy learning for a lifetime. A child's day is made by play.

Dads at Play

Someone has said, "Man is more childlike than woman," and it seems men of any maturity level are often more predisposed to enter the world of play. Perhaps the excuse to play again is one of the benefits of being a dad. One area of play in which fathers are

recognized as experts is rough-and-tumble play. The play of fathers is typically more physical and exciting than that of mothers. It is play with a turbo charger that is usually noisier, involves exaggerated movement, and is more likely to include the element of surprise. (Brazelton et al., 1979).

Brazelton, T. Berry, Yogman, Michael, Als, Heldelise, and Tronick, Edward. (1979). The infant as a focus for family reciprocity. In Michael Lewis and Lenard A. Rosenblum (Eds.), *The child and his family*. New York: Plenum.

This is evident even in the first months of a baby's life. Fathers are more likely to play by moving the baby's legs and arms in imitation of walking, or kicking, or climbing, or by lifting the baby through the air, or by tapping or tickling the baby's stomach. (Parke and Tinsley, 1981). The result is that these infants are more likely to laugh and cry in episodes of play with daddy.

Parke, Ross D., and Tinsley, Barbara R. (1981). The father's role in infancy: Determinants of involvement in caregiving and play. In Michael E. Lamb (Ed.), (Ed.), *The role of the father in child development* (2nd ed.). New York: Wiley.

Although many fathers care for their infants, many more are likely to play with their infants than to care for them. The vast majority of exchanges between fathers and their babies are brief play episodes that come at a specific period of the day (Lamb, 1987, Roopnarine, 1990). As the infants grow older, fathers generally increase the time they spend with them, and are more likely to engage in physical play. Fathers will swing their toddlers around, or "wrestle" with them on the floor, ride with them on their back or shoulders, or crawl after them in a "chase".

Roopnarine, J. L., Talukder, E., Jain, D., Joshi, P., & Srivastava, P. (1990). Characteristics of holding, patterns of play, and social behaviors between parents and infants. *Developmental Psychology*, 26, 667-673.

Lamb, M.E., Pleck, J. H., Charvov, E. L., & Levine, J.A. (1987). A biosocial perspective on paternal behavior and involvement. *Parenting across the lifespan: biosocial perspectives*. Hawthorne, NY; Aldine de Gruyter.

Fathers' unique approach to play can benefit their children in specific ways:

- Dads at play help their children further develop their physical abilities. Lev Vygotsk (1978) called this a “zone of proximal development.” where a father supports a child in an action that he or she will later learn to accomplish independently. An example is helping a small child learn to walk, climb, wave, bounce a ball, etc.
Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind in society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Dads at play can help a child cope with emotional issues. An important role of a father is to know or be aware of his children, to know what hurts, challenges or brings joy to them. Through play, a father can be made aware of their questions and concerns, or he may notice some danger sign that leads him to seek out appropriate help.
- Dads at play help their children develop social skills and moral character. Even in rough-and-tumble play, the dad teaches the child about limits; after all, dads can get hurt. As the child grows they begin to play rules-based games, which bring opportunities for the child to learn about fairness and make right or wrong choices in a safe environment.
- As detailed earlier, dads at play help their children to develop cognitively. As children develop intellectually, dads learn to adjust the play activities accordingly. Not only does this play help a child's ongoing development, but it's also a great way for dads to shape their children's long-term educational destiny.

Much of the above benefits of play happen unintentionally, and yet if fathers understood the significance of play for a child's well being and development, they would likely engage in play more frequently and for longer periods of time.

Fathers also gain benefits from spending time playing with their children. Whether you are engaged in activity, object, social or pretend plays of sports related games, board games, dolls or action figures you are connecting with your child, which can bring great satisfaction.

Why don't fathers play more frequently and for longer periods of time? Often, fathers' early experiences playing with their own dads can shed light on this question.

Entering the world of Child's Play

Take a trip down the memory lane of play. With whom did you play during childhood? You remember these people because they had a significant influence in your life. What were your favorite toys or games played? Whether your toys or games were wind-up, electric, battery-operated or electronic, the memories of these toys and games are etched in your mind. This reflection may bring up fond memories and smiles as you recalled the answer to these questions about your childhood play. Play is fun.

Now let's relate this back to the role of the father. Did your dad ever play with you? Chances are if your dad ever played with you, you can remember that time even if the play was only brief. These periods are likely to be memorable partly because they are imbedded in our memory along with the enjoyment of the time together. Play with dad is forever.

Dads need to consistently set aside time to play with their children. During this playtime the dad is entering his child's world to connect in a deeper way and to exchange their thoughts and feelings. The dad and child help each other release the stresses of life and can get to the bottom of other emotional distress issues. Finally, through play a dad can help his child develop in the other domains of the child's life including, physically, emotionally,

socially, cognitively and morally.

Some dads relish the idea of playing with their children and others find it repulsive. Lawrence Cohen, author of *Playful Parenting* reminds us that the goal is to *visit* the world of children through play, not to “move into their world.” Dads are required to step down from their adult language and concrete thinking to speak the sometimes abstract language of play to their children.

How can we help dads re-enter the world that they were once so familiar with? How can they be re-taught the childhood language that they spoke so fluently? The answer lies in the parts of the language that they have retained over the years. Sports, hobbies and possessions are often a continuation of men’s playing, games and toys from childhood.

Here are more important points for dads to remember:

It isn’t about you. Entering your child’s world of play is about your child, not you. Children are not always looking for someone to tell them how to play but someone to play with them. Dads need to ask the children what they want to do and allow the children to lead. And if they want to play the same thing over and over again, do it!

Be childlike. The doorway to your child’s world of play is a small one. It requires the dad to become childlike and get on the child’s level (sometimes on hands and knees). There is no room for machismo or embarrassment. You may have to play with dolls or sing silly songs. It will mean the world to your child.

Make play a priority. The adult world is a busy place. We have important things to do, important people to see and little time to do it all. Unfortunately those that are most important to us (family) often get the least amount of our time. It is time to employ the sanity principle: Do things creatively and intentionally *different* if you want different results. Schedule playtime with your child(ren) and guard it with a pit-bull.

Play hard. You can con a con and you can fool a fool but you can't kid a kid. They know when you are not fully engaged in the play. They know when you are only half-hearted. You have to be completely, actively involved.

Have fun. Laughter is a good gauge for how well the play is going. Sometime a dad can initiate laughter through tickles. Remember it is not about how well you children do something in play, but the fact that you are playing together. Keep clear from the adult role unless there is danger in the play. Keep encouraging your child in play.

Williams, George (2004), *Coach Dads: Playbook*, Kansas City, MO: National Center for Fathering

Play speaks powerfully to a child. The giggles and shrieks of joy, along with the smiles, gestures and other non-verbal signals, convey contentment in ways that are much deeper than words and language. Playing with Dad confirms some very important truths to a child: that he is highly valued by a very important person in his life, that he is growing more competent in skills and wisdom, and that he belongs—he is home.

Appendix B:

Forms

- ☐ **Form A: Coach Dads Flyer**
- ☐ **Form B: Coach Dads Survey**
- ☐ **Form C: Coach Dads Sign-in**
- ☐ **Dad & Child Night Out Script**

A: Flyer



**For Dads & Father
Figures**

Dads & Kids Night Out

Date:

Time:

- Have a great time with your child!
- **FREE** PIZZA & POP and FUN!
- Coach your child to success.

Easy as 1-2-3

1. Fill out and tear at the line above and return to school office.
2. Put the top part of this flyer on your refrigerator as a reminder.
3. Come on out and have a great time!



fathers.com

Yes, We will be there...

Student's Name _____

Dad or Father-Figure's Name _____

Please return to office. Thank you.

B: Coach Dads Survey

FATHER ATTITUDES: Use the scale and circle the number to answer the statements (1 – 5).

1=True	2=Somewhat True	3=Undecided	4=Somewhat False	5=False	
1	2	3	4	5	RFP1 I could use some help to be a better father.
1	2	3	4	5	RFP2 I am aware of what is reasonable to expect from my child for their age.
1	2	3	4	5	RFP3 I have a good relationship with my child's mother.
1	2	3	4	5	RFP4 I discuss my child's development and issues with my child's mother.
1	2	3	4	5	RFP5 I want to be the kind of father my father was to me.

FATHER ACTIONS: Use the scale and circle the number to answer the statements (6 - 10).

1=Always	2=Often	3=Sometimes	4=Rarely	5=Never	
1	2	3	4	5	RFP6 I am involved at my child's school.
1	2	3	4	5	RFP7 I read with my child.
1	2	3	4	5	RFP8 I play with my child.
1	2	3	4	5	RFP9 I often tell and show my child I love him/her.
1	2	3	4	5	RFP10 I pay attention and give eye contact when my child speaks to me.

FATHERING BARRIERS: Answer "Yes" or "No" to the statements. (11-20).

Please circle Yes or No.					
Yes	No	RFP11	I live at home with my child.		
Yes	No	RFP12	I am married to my child's mother.		
Yes	No	RFP13	I watch what I eat and regularly exercise.		
Yes	No	RFP14	I have had problems with my physical health within this past 12 months.		
Yes	No	RFP15	I have moved within the past 12 months.		
Yes	No	RFP16	I have a valid driver license and a working car that is insured and registered.		
Yes	No	RFP17	I currently have a job that pays me enough to support my child.		
Yes	No	RFP18	I have an order to pay child support for this child.		
Yes	No	RFP19	I currently have legal problems.		

The Play Book

Yes No **RFP20** I have a close friend that I talk to about my problems.

FATHER OPINION: *Use the scale and circle the number to answer the statements (1 – 7).*

1=Very True	2=True	3=Undecided	4=False	5=Very False	
1	2	3	4	5	RFP21 I enjoy the Coach Dad program.
1	2	3	4	5	RFP22 I understand what a Coach Dad is.
1	2	3	4	5	RFP23 Fathers are just as important to a child's education as a mother is.
1	2	3	4	5	RFP24 I think that learning through play is important to my child.
1	2	3	4	5	RFP25 I know how to use the Play Book to play with my child.
1	2	3	4	5	RFP26 I can come to my child's school once a week for 5-10 minutes.
1	2	3	4	5	RFP27 I am committed to participate in the Coach Dad program.

CHILD OPINION: *Use the scale and circle the number to answer the statements (8 - 10).*

1=Extremely	2=Very	3=Somewhat	4=Does not care	5=Not at all	
1	2	3	4	5	RFP28 How much does your child enjoy play activities?
1	2	3	4	5	RFP29 How fun is it for your child to play with you?
1	2	3	4	5	RFP30 How much does your child want to be with you?
1	2	3	4	5	RFP31 How happy is your child when you visit their school?

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George R. Williams, MS, MFT


C: Coach Dads Sign in List

Father (Father Figures) Name	Child's Name	Father's Phone	Father's Email
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
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9.			
10.			
11.			
12.			
13.			
14.			
15.			
16.			
17.			
18.			
19.			
20.			

D: Dad & Child Night Out Script

Needed: Coach Dads Play Books for each of the Dads and Father Figures

Objective: The **Coach Draft** is a kick-off event held at the site to recruit and train the men as **Coach Dads**. It is also an enjoyable dad-child interaction fun time which is referred to as the **Dad & Child Night Out**.

Note: Welcome the dads as they come in shake their hands and say, "We're glad you're here." "You're in the right place." "It's good to see you."

State: **Tonight the focus is on the father and his child.**
We are going to have a great time. We begin by eating pizza and doing an exercise. Everyone should have received a handout sheet. (hold the sheet up)

Men, dads, grandfathers, uncles and father figures: welcome to a book that was written just for you and your preschool child. We hope that using this play book with your child, you will be helping to give them an educational edge by boosting their learning and school readiness. Get ready and throw yourself into the most fun father involvement experience you'll ever have, Coach Dads!

The spoken word is powerful, inspiring success. The power of the spoken word is multiplied by the person who speaks the words. Coach Dads can speak words that make a permanent positive impact for their child's education. Use the Coach Dads cheer at the beginning of every play as a way to use these words to shape the educational destiny of your child:

**Today is a new day to have fun
Try your best til the day is done
You are smart so listen and learn
Remember to share and take your turn**

**I love you, you're special, I'm glad
To play with you as Coach Dad!
Head Start and Heart Start**

The PLAYBOOK

The program is built around the *Coach DADS PlayBook* which contains different “plays” dads lead that help develop their child physically, socially, cognitively and representationally.

The *PlayBook* is organized around five types of plays; social, physical, cognitive, representational and free. For each of the five types of play there are five plays with an additional 6 more plays for a total of 31 plays for a month of **PlayDays**.

The **PlayDay** is the name for the day the dad or father-figure runs a play with their child from the *PlayBook*. In the back of the *PlayBook* the Dad's Journal is located with room for 52-weeks worth of one-line journal entries. At the end of a play the dads write in the journal a one-line comment about the **PlayDay** experience. He simply completes the sentence, “During my play with my child today I (noticed, learned, enjoyed or encouraged)...”

The *PlayBook* can be used at the preschool site or at home:

- ❑ Suggested site use is that dads or father figures come to the site a minimum of once a week for a **PlayDay** to spend 5 minutes at drop off or pick up to play. The dad can pick any of the 31 plays in the *PlayBook* for a **PlayDay**. After the play he writes a one sentence entry about the experience in the Dad's Journal.
- ❑ Suggested home use is that the dad or father figure would at least once a week take 5 minutes to have a **PlayDay** at home by running any of the 31 plays from the *PlayBook*. After the play he writes a one sentence entry about the experience in the Dad's Journal section of the book.

The Coach Role

A coach is one who personally involved in training, instructing or teaching. Fathers along with mothers are the main educators and nurturers of their children.⁹ Fathers have the power to coach their child's learning through play.

Like a coach it is important that fathers understand their responsibility and the power of their influence in their child's life. The sole purpose and duty of being a father is our children. So when it comes to their children fathers must be bold and actively involved in places their children go and what they do and this includes preschool sites and the education they receive.

While few fathers relate to the experience of being a teacher many more can relate to coaching. You are a coach dad. Your child or children are your team. Your investment of time in playing with your child can lead you to a championship in their life and education!

Child's Play

When becoming a man there are many aspects of childhood one should leave behind but play is not one of them. Not only is play needed in adult life but play is a link between the adult world and the world of children.

Play is the language of children. Through play adults can enter their child's world rather than expect their child to enter the adult world. Play is not what children do but it is also an expression of who they are.¹⁰

Purpose of Play

Most children engage in play because it is fun, but play also has a

purpose. Through play children:

1. **Communicate** their thoughts and feelings.¹¹
2. **Cope** with life stresses and emotional distress.
3. **Connect** with those they play with.¹²
4. **Comprehend** the world around them through pretend, exploration and learning.

This purpose of play creates a doorway to the adult world.

Children can venture in the adult world and adults can enter in the child's world.

The difference is that it requires the adult to stoop down from their adult language and concrete thinking to speak the play language of children.

Dads at Play

Someone has said, "... man is more childlike than woman" and so it seems men are predisposed to enter the world of play. Even today dads have a reputation as those who engage in rough-and-tumble play which is useful in child development.¹³ But other aspects of play seem foreign.

Since this world of play is something that once was known but now seems to be forgotten a review of a few points about re-entry is important:

1. **Make play a priority.** We are busy but remember most children spell love, T-I-M-E! Show your child their importance by scheduling time to play with them. At least once a week is a start.
2. **Be childlike.** Get down and do what they want. Don't be macho or embarrassed. Don't be afraid to play dolls or sing silly songs.
3. **It's about your child.** Ask children what they want to do. Allow them to lead. If they want to play the same thing again and again let them. Encourage them by your words.
4. **Play Hard.** Throw yourself into the play don't be half-hearted. Be completely actively involved. Remember you can fool a

fool but you can't kid a kid.

5. **Have fun.** Be loose. Laughter is a good gauge of how the play is going. You can jump start laughter by tickles. Enjoy the fact that you are playing together. Have fun and again I say have fun!

Learning through Play

During the preschool years of your child, their brain and learning foundation is forming. Although it is never too late to encourage learning there are key periods of development and preschool is one of them.

Most learning involves one of the three techniques-seeing (visual memory), hearing (auditory memory) and doing (kinesthetic memory). The experiences you have with your child through play promotes learning through making important neural connections in your child's brain.¹⁴ Children learn through play.

Each child is unique. They possess different types of intelligence and with each type a different learning through play is used to develop the intelligence.

1. Linguistic intelligence is a love for word and language. Learning through play occurs by seeing, hearing and saying words.
2. Spatial intelligence is a visual learning. Learning through play occurs by pictures, diagrams and films.
3. Bodily-Kinesthetic is a learning through
4. movement. Learning through play occurs by role-playing, drama, dance, and other action experiences.
5. Musical intelligence is learning with rhythm and melody. Learning through play occurs by singing, rhythmic actions or music.

6. Logical-Mathematical intelligence is a learning of patterns and relationships. Learning through play occurs by puzzles and games of logic.
7. Interpersonal intelligence is a learning of relating and cooperating with others. Learning through play occurs in a group of two or more.
8. Intrapersonal intelligence is a learning on their own. Learning through play occurs by independently by self.¹⁵

The different ways to play help develop the neural wiring of different parts of their brain. Playing with your child along with encouraging them to develop his or her skills can produce a love of learning and development that will last a lifetime. Go ahead and make your child's day by play!

End of Introduction

Beginning of Playbook Overview

People Playtime!

"To everyone else he is an ordinary man but to his child he's Super Dad." – Coach Dad

People plays are social plays. Social refers to relating to more than one person. The people plays are ways dads and father figures help their child to relate to others. Whether that is relating to parents, family, friends or preschool staff.

Some specific goals are:

1. Greeting Time! Encourages the respect for the feelings and rights of others.
2. Snack Time! Encourages the taking care of self and eating with others.

The Play Book

3. Reading Time! Encourages the social interaction of reading with dad.
4. Daddy Says Time! Encourages self-control and following instructions.
5. Look at Me Time! Supports the respect of the child's language, culture and family.

Active Playtime!

“One of the benefits of being a dad is the excuse to play again.” – Coach Dad

Active plays are ways dads and father figures help their child physically develop. In the active plays the father's goal is to help his child develop in what are called gross and fine motor skills.

Gross motor skills are the general or broad large muscle movements children make like running, jumping, throwing and catching.

Fine motor skills are more specific small muscle movements that are more difficult to master like working with tools, picking up small objects, writing and drawing tools.

Some specific goals of:

1. Ball Time! & Rope Time!: To develop the strength and skill needed for broad movements.
2. Puzzle Time! & Reading Time! & Building Time!: To develop the dexterity and control needed for specific movements.

Brain Playtime!

“One Coach Dad is more influential than 100 preschool teachers.” – Coach Dad

Brain plays are ways dads and father figures can help their child develop cognitive skills by supporting learning through organization, literacy, numeracy, reasoning, problem solving, decision-making. All these form the foundation for school readiness and future school success.

Some specific goals are:

1. ABC Time!: Support emerging literacy by recognizing the letters of the alphabet.
2. Counting Time!: Support emerging numeracy by learning to count and identify numbers.
3. Reading Time!: Support emerging literacy by reading to child.
4. Color Time!: Support learning colors through inquiry, observation and exploration.
5. Tic-Tac-Toe Time!: Support learning of concepts, reasoning, problem solving.

Show Playtime!

“The true measure of a man worth is not in his level of income but the loving outcome of his child.” – Coach Dad

Show plays are ways dads and father figures can help their child develop to ensure creative self-expression through activities such as art, music and dramatic play along with communication, literacy, and writing.

Some specific goals are:

1. Drama Time!: Encourage creative self-expression through dramatic play.
2. Writing Time!: Encourage early writing skills.
3. Reading Time!: Encourage early literacy through book and reading appreciation.

4. Drawing Time!: Encourage creative self-expression through art.
5. Music Time!: Encourage create self-expression through music.

Choice Playtime!

“Fathering can be a life time of joy; Fatherlessness can be a life sentence of sorrow.” – Coach Dad

Choice plays allow for the dads and father figures along with the children to choose their own plays from sections of the ***PlayBook*** or come up with their own plays.

Some specific goals are:

1. Select from the People Playtime!
2. Select from the Active Playtime!
3. Read to your child.
4. Select from the Brain Playtime!
5. Select from the Show Playtime!

More Playtime!

“Not every man deserves to be a Coach Dad but every child deserves a Coach Dad.” – Coach Dad

More plays allow dads and father figures to cover the whole month with plays for their child.

Some specific goals are:

1. Manner Time!: Encourage respect for the feelings and rights of others.
2. Letter & Number Time!: Support emerging literacy and numeracy.

3. Reading Time!: Encourage a shared time of interaction through reading.
4. I Spy Time!: Support shape and object learning through inquiry, observing and exploring.
5. Song Time!: Encourage the creative self-expression through song.
6. Reading Time!: Encourage a shared time of interaction through reading.

End of Playbook Overview

Coach Dads

How do you get dads off the bench of uninvolved and into the playing of involvement? The answer is Coach DADS. Coach DADS is an innovative, non-competitive Head Start father involvement program that attracts, prepares and involves dads/father figures at the site and at home to coach their child towards physical, social, emotional and cognitive development through play for success in school and life readiness.

The program is designed to operate within an individual site. It can be adapted agency wide. The program is strictly voluntary and intended to be a one-to-one relationship between the father or an approved father-figure and the child. Any modifications fall under the governance of the site or agency.

The program is designed around eight (8) principles of getting the fathers off the bench. They are:

1. Identify fathers as a solution-focused asset to the child and site.

2. Specifically target and invite the father (the other parent) to partner with the site.
3. Reinforce the shared responsibility of the father for his child's life long educational journey.
4. Strengthen the father-child relationship to increase fathering satisfaction and use it as the intrinsic motivation to participate in the program.
5. Create a place in the program that shares the fathers interest and that he will feel competent.
6. Empower the dad with the power of his influence on this child's development and teach him practical skills to increase his fathering confidence.
7. Allow for flexibility in the dad's schedule and do not involve a large time commitment.
8. Take small attainable steps and celebrate the accomplishments of successful steps taken with the father-child.

Week 1 - The Social Playing Field

“One coach dad is more influential than a hundred school teachers.” – C-Diddy

MAIN GOAL: The goal of this field is to help your child develop in his relationship with others (socially) and emotionally.

About this Field – The social and emotional playing fields encourages your child’s development by:

1. Building trust
2. Fostering independence;
3. Encouraging self-control by setting clear, consistent limits, and having realistic expectations.
4. Encouraging respect for the feelings and rights of others.
5. Supporting and respecting the home language, culture, and family composition of each child in ways that support the child’s health and well-being.

SOCIAL PLAYS:

1. SP1 – Greeting Time
2. SP2 – Snack Time
3. SP3 – Reading Time
4. SP4 – Daddy Says
5. SP5 – Look at Me!

Instructions: *Read or recite the coach dads cheer to your child like you mean it.*

COACH DADS CHEER

**Today is a new day for you to show,
how you can look, listen and learn to grow.
You are a special child to your mother and I,
We love and support you in everything you try,
Don't worry about problems we can work them out,
Be kind and helpful to others that is what life is about.
Remember we make a winning team and be glad,
So have a great day, today says, Coach Dad.**

SP1 – Greeting Time

This play will encourage respect for the feelings and rights of others and hygiene.

Directions:

Walk into the room

1. Look your child in the eyes.
2. Give them a warm smile.
3. Firmly shake his or her hand.
4. Say, "Good Morning!" if you are dropping them off and "Good Evening!" when you pick them up.
5. Next take you child with you to the teacher or another adult and model the same greeting with them.
6. Have your child greet the teacher or other adult.
7. Finally have your child go around to least two (2) other children and greet them. If you are dropping your child off you will want to:
 - Give them a hug.

The Play Book

- Tell them you love them.
- Say goodbye.

8. Ask your child, “What was fun about this play?”

9. Positively encourage your child in this activity.

10. Write a one-sentence entry on the journal page about your play today.

The Coach Dad Journal

“If it was worth doing it, it is worth doing it again.”

– C-Daddy

Date	Play	Comment
mmddyy	sp_, pp_, cp_, rp_, fp_	During my play with my child today I... noticed, learned, enjoyed, encouraged

The Play Book

Date mmddyy	Play sp_, pp_, cp_, rp_, fp_	Comment During my play with my child today I... noticed, learned, enjoyed, encouraged

THE PLAY BOOK

by George R. Williams, MS &

consulted by Mustafaa El-Scari, MA

Urban Father-Child Project
www.fathers.com

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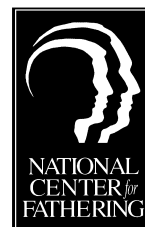


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Introduction

The Urban Father-Child Project

The mission of the Urban Father-Child Project is to improve the well being of disadvantaged children by training and supporting men to be the fathers their children need to lead them to success.

The strategy of the project is to create a replicable citywide outreach model to fathers and children that will make a significant and sustainable impact through educational, faith and community-based channels.

Head Start Programs

Head Start Programs are governed by the Administration of Children, Youth and Families in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. All Grantee and Delegate Agencies are held to the Head Start Program Performance Standards (Title 45 Code of Federal Regulations Part 1304).

Head Start and Early Head are comprehensive child development programs which serve children from birth to age 5, pregnant women, and their families. They are child-focused programs, and have the overall goal of increasing the social competence of young children in low-income families. By “social competence” is meant the child’s everyday effectiveness in dealing with both his or her present environment and later responsibilities in school and life. Social competence takes into account the interrelatedness of social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development.

Head Start services are also family-centered, following the tenets that children develop in the context of their family and culture and that parents are respected as the primary educators and nurturers of their children. Therefore, local Head Start programs mandated to work in close partnership with parents to assist them in developing and utilizing individual and family strengths in order to

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successfully meet personal and family objectives. Parents are encouraged to become involved in all aspects of the program, from participation in children's activities to direct involvement in policy and program decisions.

Author

George R. Williams, MS, MFT is the executive director for the Urban Father-Child Project at the National Center for Fathering. George is a recognized expert in working with culturally diverse fathers. George earned his Master of Science degree from Friends University in family therapy. He and his wife Trudy have three sons and a daughter.

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Head Start Children by Heart Starting Dads

By George R. Williams

Head Start Children

Few would argue that education is one of our children's supporting pillars of success. Research reinforces that a child's academic performance is related to how they will do economically later in life. The world we live in today requires that our children not only compete in America's technologically advanced economy but also the world economy. Globalization has resulted in stiffer competition as the playing field has expanded.

Head Start is a poverty prevention program for children. Giving disadvantaged children a head start to compete in the economic race of life side-by-side with their peers who do not face the same challenges. The head start that occurs at the starting line of this race is education.

The Head Start program is based on a philosophy of comprehensive child development services, parental involvement and community partnerships and community-based services to help lower-income children develop fully and achieve social competence. (Social competence is a child's everyday effectiveness in dealing with both his or her present environment and later responsibilities in school and life). Social competence alone with the interrelatedness of social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development will help give our children a Head Start in life!

Heart Starting Dads

According to the Head Start Standards parents are the primary educators and nurturers of their children. And that term parent

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includes the father. While the significance of the mother in every aspect of a child's life seems to be accepted as an immutable truth, the significance of the father in many aspects of a child's life including education is disputable. The mother and the father are the two most emotionally significant people to a child.

In 1997, the Department of Education found that when fathers are involved in education, children perform better. The problem is that even though fathers can positively influence a child's education, many are not. Our own 1999 study revealed that too many fathers were "benched" un-involved when it came to their child's education.

You only need to work, volunteer or visit Head Start sites to see this phenomenon for yourself. There are too many fathers who are "benched" for a variety of reasons. They are not to be criticized or faulted but need to understand that their children need them. That being a father is not a science but an art that involves the heart. A heart that is turned to their child to support them in every aspect of their life including their head start education.

...Off the Bench...into the Playing
--

It is time to turn the heart of the fathers to their children and get them involved. In doing so we are bringing another valuable resource to give that child a physical, social, emotional and cognitive boost in their development.

The goal of father involvement is to get fathers off the "bench" of uninvolved to partner with the site to develop their children by the "playing" of involvement. *Coach DADS* is an innovative, non-competative Head Start father involvement program that encourages dads to get off the bench and into the playing. Coach DADS attracts, prepares and involves dads/father figures to the pre-school site to coach their child toward development through play. This program involves fathers in preparing their children for success in their present environment, and in school and in life

Implementation and Facilitation Guide

readiness in the physical, social, emotional and cognitive domains of development.

Head Start is only the beginning of a life long journey of learning. Coach DADS goal is to get the fathers in the “game” early in the child’s development. To get him started and encouraged to continue through elementary, middle, high school and beyond. A later measure of success in the head start program is when a graduate of the program has children who do not qualify to attend because of his or her income level. Head Start is a great success in a family when another generation does not requires it.

Coach Dads

How do you get dads off the bench of uninvolved and into the playing of involvement? The answer is Coach DADS. Coach DADS is an innovative, non-competitive Head Start father involvement program that attracts, prepares and involves dads/father figures at the site and at home to coach their child towards physical, social, emotional and cognitive development through play for success in school and life readiness.

The program is designed to operate within an individual site. It can be adapted agency wide. The program is strictly voluntary and intended to be a one-to-one relationship between the father or an approved father-figure and the child. Any modifications fall under the governance of the site or agency.

The program is designed around eight (8) principles of getting the fathers off the bench. They are:

9. Identify fathers as a solution-focused asset to the child and site.
10. Specifically target and invite the father (the other parent) to partner with the site.
11. Reinforce the shared responsibility of the father for his child's life long educational journey.
12. Strengthen the father-child relationship to increase fathering satisfaction and use it as the intrinsic motivation to participate in the program.
13. Create a place in the program that shares the fathers interest and that he will feel competent.
14. Empower the dad with the power of his influence on this child's development and teach him practical skills to increase his fathering confidence.
15. Allow for flexibility in the dad's schedule and do not involve a large time commitment.

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16. Take small attainable steps and celebrate the accomplishments of successful steps taken with the father-child.

The program is built around six (6) components of fathers coaching their children through guided playing. Those components are:

1. The Coach Draft – is a kick-off event also known as the Dads and Child’s Night Out which is a recruitment of dads/father figures
2. The Play Book – a book of the “plays” in the social, physical, cognitive and representational “playing fields” that the dads can use to promote social competence
3. The Game Day – is the dads weekly visit at the site 5-10 minutes when he drops his child off or when he picks his child up and runs a play
4. The Coach Clinic – any special scheduled on-going fathering training for dads/coaches, the first coach’s clinic is held at the coach draft
5. The Learning Olympics – non-competitive showcase and celebration event for coaches-players
6. Game and Play Statistics – measurements using the practice journal

The Coach Draft

The Coach Draft is a kick-off event also known as the **Dads and Child’s Night Out**, which specifically targets and recruits the fathers (the other parent) to become a coach dad for their child. There are two goals for the event. The first is to have an enjoyable time interacting with their child. The second part is to recruit and train the Dads as Coaches.

Following are the steps to the Coach Draft:

5. Schedule a Dads & Kids Night Out.
6. Send out a flyer the week before the event to allow fathers and

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father-figures to sign up (relying on mothers to do a strong recruiting). These flyers give the initial count of participants. Also send out flyers the day before the event as a reminder.

7. On the event night the fathers, father-figures and children will experience the following:
 - a) Fathers, father figures and children eat pizza together.
 - b) Fathers, father figures and children are led through fun interactive relationships strengthening activities.
 - c) Fathers and father figures are taken aside to sign up as a coach, receive and review the playbook.

The Play Book

Each *Coach Dad* receives a playbook during the initial Coach Draft Coach Clinic or a later clinic. The dad uses the book for the weekly 5-10 minute playtime with his child on the Game Day. The playbook is broken down into four “playing fields” that represent developmental domains of social, physical, cognitive and representational.

The playing field is switched from week to week (e.g. the first week using the social playing field and the next week using the physical playing field, etc.) Under each playing field are five different plays to allow a different play used for up to each day of the week (although we are asking the dads pick only one day a week).

Also contained in the playbook is a 52-week one-line journal. At the end of the Game Day the dads are requested to fill out a one-line comment on the experience for that day.

The Game Day

The Game Day is the dad's weekly visit at the site for 5-10 minutes when he drops his child off or when he picks his child up and runs a play. Following is an example of how the Game Day is outline for a coaching visit:

1. The father/father-figure will meet once a week with his child. The meeting time is one day at the time he drops off his child or at the time he is picking up the child for 5-10 minutes.
2. They begin the practice time with the Coach Dads cheer.

COACH DADS CHEER

*Today is a new day for you to show,
how you can look, listen and learn to grow.
You are a special child to your mother and I,
We love and support you in everything you try,
Don't worry about problems we can work them out,
Be kind and helpful to others that are what life is about.
Remember we make a winning team and be glad,
So have a great day, today says, Coach Dad.*

3. In the playbook he turns to one of the four playing field (social, physical, cognitive and representational) each field can be focused on for that week. Within the playing field the Coach Dad selects a play to go over.
4. The playbook describes why the playing field and why the play is important to his child. The Coach Dad spends 5-10 minutes in a fun interaction of "coaching" his child on that play. **Dads positively encourage their child no matter what the outcome.**
5. Once the time is over the Coach Dad will turn to the back of the play book to the Coaches Journal and write a one sentence entry of what he noticed or enjoyed about the time together.
6. Plays are also provided for at home practice with the

children.

The Coaches Clinic

To encourage the fathers and the coaching experience the coaches clinic is a scheduled meeting that the fathers attend to get additional training, to train new recruits and to support one another.

The first coach's clinic is held at the coach draft. The purpose of the first clinic is to train the dads how to be a coach dad using the playbook.

The Learning Olympics

The Learning Olympics occurs at least once a year as a non-competitive event that showcases and celebrates the coach-player/father-child team. This event can be done in combination with other regularly scheduled site events.

Following is how the *Learning Olympics* function:

10. The *Learning Olympics* is an event to encourage the Coaches and children on their involvement together. Those invited to the *Learning Olympics* are the Coaches, Children, Staff and the community.
11. Snacks would be provided for everyone. Each child will be assigned a Coach for this event.
12. The site would be set up so fathers can spend up to 30 minutes *Learning Olympics*, which is playing with their children without the playbook. The goal is just to highlight the skills they have acquired in knowing what to do with their children.
13. During that time the others attendees can mingle encouraging the Coaches and children without interfering with the play or drawing unwanted attention to the child.
14. At the end of the Learning Olympics each Coach and Child(ren) will be recognized in an award ceremony with a

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certificate of thanks and a ribbon. The Men receive a blue ribbon and Women Coaches receive a red ribbon and the all the children receive a yellow ribbon.

Game and Play Statistics

The Coaches Journals and a specific survey will be created for developing measurements for the program.

Week 1 - The Social Playing Field

“One coach dad is more influential than a hundred school teachers.” – C-Diddy

MAIN GOAL: The goal of this field is to help your child develop in his relationship with others (socially) and emotionally.

About this Field – The social and emotional playing fields encourages your child’s development by:

6. Building trust
7. Fostering independence;
8. Encouraging self-control by setting clear, consistent limits, and having realistic expectations.
9. Encouraging respect for the feelings and rights of others.
10. Supporting and respecting the home language, culture, and family composition of each child in ways that support the child’s health and well-being.

SOCIAL PLAYS:

6. SP1 – Greeting Time
7. SP2 – Snack Time
8. SP3 – Reading Time
9. SP4 – Daddy Says
10. SP5 – Look at Me!

Instructions: *Read or recite the coach dads cheer to your child*

like you mean it.

COACH DADS CHEER

**Today is a new day for you to show,
how you can look, listen and learn to grow.
You are a special child to your mother and I,
We love and support you in everything you try,
Don't worry about problems we can work them out,
Be kind and helpful to others that is what life is about.
Remember we make a winning team and be glad,
So have a great day, today says, Coach Dad.**

SP1 – Greeting Time

This play will encourage respect for the feelings and rights of others and hygiene.

Directions:

Walk into the room

11. Look your child in the eyes.
12. Give them a warm smile.
13. Firmly shake his or her hand.
14. Say, "Good Morning!" if you are dropping them off and "Good Evening!" when you pick them up.
15. Next take you child with you to the teacher or another adult and model the same greeting with them.
16. Have your child greet the teacher or other adult.
17. Finally have your child go around to least two (2) other children and greet them. If you are dropping your child off you will want to:
 - Give them a hug.
 - Tell them you love them.
 - Say goodbye.

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- 18. Ask your child, “What was fun about this play?”**
- 19. Positively encourage your child in this activity.**
- 20. Write a one-sentence entry on the journal page about your play today.**

SP2 – Snack time

This play encourages the child to be independent. This play can be a pretend if washroom and snacks are not available.

Directions:**Wash Hands**

1. Run water at the right temperature to get hands wet.
2. Put soap on hands and rub together for twenty seconds (You can count or sing a verse of Mary had a little lamb.)
3. Rinse off hands.
4. Dry hands.
5. And throw away paper towels.

Serve and Eat Snack

1. Get the snack and milk and sit down at the table.
2. Eat the food.
3. Dad tells yours child what you think about the real or pretend food and then ask his child
4. “How do you like the snack?”
5. Clean up the area. Repeat WASH HANDS Steps.
- 6. Ask your child, “What was fun about this play?”**
- 7. Positively encourage your child in this activity.**
- 8. Write a one-sentence entry on your journal page**

SP3 – Reading Time

This play encourages a shared time of interaction between the dad and the child.

Directions:

1. Select a book or have your child select a book.
2. Make the reading time fun.
3. Reading is a contact sport so sits together with your child. You may let them sit in your lap because reading is a contact sport.
4. Read to your child.
5. Ask them questions while you read and allow them to ask you questions.
6. ***Ask your child, “What was fun about this play?”***
7. ***Positively encourage your child in this activity.***
8. ***Write a one-sentence entry on your journal page about your play today.***

SP4 – Daddy Says

The play encourages self-control by setting clear, consistent limits, and having realistic expectations.

This play is similar to the game "Simon Says."

Directions:

Daddy Says

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1. Explain the rules to your child.
 - Dad will tell you something he wants you to do.
 - But you only do it if Dad first says, "Daddy Says,"
 - If Daddy does not say, "Daddy Says," first then you do not have to do it.
2. Play Daddy Says (Here are some suggestions)
 - Close your eyes-open your eyes.
 - Stand up-sit down.
 - Say daddy-stop saying daddy.
 - Raise your hand-put your hand down.
 - Say thank you-stop saying thank you.
 - Clap your hand-stop clapping your hands.
3. Optionally as your child gets better at the game you can switch roles and let your child give the orders.
4. ***Ask your child, "What was fun about this play?"***
5. ***Positively encourage your child in this activity.***
6. ***Write a one-sentence entry on your journal page about your play today.***

SP5 – Look at Me!

This play supports and respects the home language, culture, and family composition of each child in ways that support the child's health and well being.

Directions:

1. Say to your child; "You are going to repeat after me. Say, "Look at me! What do you see?"
2. Child says, "Look at me! What do you see?"
3. Dad responds by saying, "When I look at you I see..."

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Then say something positive relating to their language, culture, family, physical features, intelligence, dress, etc.

- When I look at you I see my son.
- When I look at you I see someone I love.
- When I look at you I see me.
- When I look at you I see a handsome boy/pretty girl.
- When I look at you I see someone smart.
- When I look at you I see beautiful color.

4. Optionally the dads ask your child, “Look at me! What do you see?”

5. Ask your child, “What was fun about this play?”

6. Positively encourage your child in this activity.

7. Write a one-sentence entry on your journal page about your play today.

Week 2 - The Physical Playing Field

“One of the benefits of being a dad is the excuse to play again.” – C-Diddy

MAIN GOAL: The goal of this field is to help your child develop physically.

About this Field – The physical playing field encourages your child’s development by:

1. Dad guiding them through active play and movement that supports the development of gross motor.
2. Dad guiding them through the development of fine motor skills according to each child’s developmental level.

PHYSICAL PLAYS:

1. PP1 – Ball Time
2. PP2 – Puzzle Time
3. PP3 – Reading Time
4. PP4 – Build It
5. PP5 – Jump rope

Instructions: *Read or recite the coach dads cheer to your child like you mean it.*

COACH DADS CHEER

**Today is a new day for you to show,
how you can look, listen and learn to grow.
You are a special child to your mother and I,**

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**We love and support you in everything you try,
Don't worry about problems we can work them out,
Be kind and helpful to others that is what life is about.
Remember we make a winning team and be glad,
So have a great day, today says, Coach Dad.**

PP1 – Ball Time

This active play supports the development of gross motor skills.

Directions:

1. Choose a ball of any size.
2. Find an open area to play.
3. Based on your child's ability select one of the following ball plays:
 - Rolling the ball back and forth between you.
 - Bouncing the ball back and forth between you.
 - Playing catch with the ball back and forth between you.
4. Exchange the ball between you at least 10 times.
5. Optionally you could count aloud as you play ball.
6. ***Positively encourage your child in this activity.***
7. ***Ask your child, "What was fun about this play?"***
8. ***Write a one-sentence entry on your journal page about your play today.***

PP2 – Puzzle Time

This play helps in the development of fine motor skills for your child.

Directions:

1. Choose a puzzle.
2. Optionally you choose a puzzle and then allow you child to choose one.
3. Find an open spot to sit.
4. Take the puzzle apart.
5. Watch your child put the puzzle pieces together. Assist them if they need help.
6. Optionally you can put it together and take them apart as many times, as you like.
7. *Positively encourage your child in this activity.*
8. *Ask your child, “What was fun about this play?”*
9. *Write a one-sentence entry on your journal page about your play today.*

PP3 – Reading Time

This play encourages a shared time of interaction between the dad and the child.

Directions:

1. Select a book or have your child select a book.

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2. Make the reading time fun.
3. Reading is a contact sport so sit together with your child. You may let them sit in your lap because reading is a contact sport.
4. Read to your child.
5. Ask them questions while you read and allow them to ask you questions.
6. ***Positively encourage your child in this activity.***
7. ***Ask your child, "What was fun about this play?"***
8. ***Write a one-sentence entry on your journal page about your play today.***

PP4 – Build it

This play helps in the development of fine motor skills for your child.

Directions:

1. Select any type of building blocks. You may select them or have your child select them.
2. Find a spot to play on the floor or on the table.
3. Ask your child to build anything they want. Assist them if they need help.
4. Optionally you may want to build something and have them try to build the same thing matching blocks and colors.
5. ***Positively encourage your child in this activity.***
6. ***Ask your child, "What was fun about this play?"***
7. ***Write a one-sentence entry on your journal page about your play today.***

PP5 – Jump Rope

This active play supports the development of gross motor skills.

Directions:

1. Select a jump rope.
2. Find an open area to play.
3. Select from the following based on your child's development:
 - Lay the rope on the ground and take turns jumping over the rope.
 - Model by jumping-rope yourself and have them try to learn to jump rope. Practice going through the motions without the rope.
 - Have your child jump rope while you count for them.
4. Ask them questions while you read and allow them to ask you questions.
5. ***Positively encourage your child in this activity.***
6. ***Ask your child, "What was fun about this play?"***
7. ***Write a one-sentence entry on your journal page about your play today.***

Week 3 - The Cognitive Playing Field

“To others an ordinary man but to his child an extraordinary dad.” – C-Diddy

MAIN GOAL: The goal of this field is to help your child develop cognitive and language skills.

About this Field – The cognitive playing field encourages the development of cognitive skills by encouraging each child to organize his or her experiences, to understand concepts, and to develop age appropriate literacy, numeracy, reasoning, problem solving and decision-making skills which form a foundation for school readiness and later school success:

- Supporting each child’s learning, using various strategies including experimentation, inquiry, observation, play and exploration.
- Promoting interaction and language use between child and adults.
- Supporting emerging literacy and numeracy development through materials and activities according to developmental level of each child.

COGNITIVE PLAYS:

1. CP1 – The ABC Song
2. CP2 – Counting Time
3. CP3 – Reading Time
4. CP4 – Color Hunt
5. CP5 – Shape Hunt

Instructions: *Read or recite the coach dads cheer to your child like you mean it.*

COACH DADS CHEER

**Today is a new day for you to show,
how you can look, listen and learn to grow.
You are a special child to your mother and I,
We love and support you in everything you try,
Don't worry about problems we can work them out,
Be kind and helpful to others that is what life is about.
Remember we make a winning team and be glad,
So have a great day, today says, Coach Dad.**

CP1 – ABC Song

This play supports emerging literacy.

Directions:

1. Sing to your child the ABC song.
 - A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z Now I said my ABC's next time won't you sing with me.
2. Have your child sing the song.
3. If they do not know the alphabet song teach them part of it even if it is only ABC.
4. ***Positively encourage your child in this activity.***
5. ***Ask your child, "What was fun about this play?"***
6. ***Write a one-sentence entry on your journal page about your play today.***

CP2 – Counting Time

This play support emerging numerical development.

Directions:

1. Count for your child to ten.
2. Have your child count to ten for you.
3. Select from this list things that your child can count:
 - Count ten of your classmates.
 - Count ten pieces of furniture.
 - Count ten fingers on your dad's hands.
4. *Positively encourage your child in this activity.*
5. *Ask your child, "What was fun about this play?"*
6. *Write a one-sentence entry on your journal page about your play today.*

CP3 – Reading Time

This play encourages a shared time of interaction between the dad and the child.

Directions:

1. Select a book or have your child select a book.
2. Make the reading time fun.
3. Reading is a contact sport so sit together with your child. You may let them sit in your lap because reading is a contact sport.

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4. Read to your child.
5. Ask them questions while you read and allow them to ask you questions.
6. ***Positively encourage your child in this activity.***
7. ***Ask your child, “What was fun about this play?”***
8. ***Write a one-sentence entry on your journal page about your play today.***

CP4 – Color Hunt

This play supports a child’s learning, using various strategies including experimentation, inquiry, observation, play and exploration.

Directions:

1. Have your child go on the hunt around the room for objects that contain a certain color. You can select from:
 - Red
 - Yellow
 - Black
 - Brown
 - White
 - Green
 - Blue
2. When they find an object you can keep count for them. You can include people and ethnicity.
3. Have them find up to ten (10) objects.
4. ***Positively encourage your child in this activity.***
5. ***Ask your child, “What was fun about this play?”***
6. ***Write a one-sentence entry on your journal page about your play today.***

CP5 – Shape Hunt

This play supports a child's learning, using various strategies including experimentation, inquiry, observation, play and exploration.

Directions:

1. Have your child go on the hunt around the room for objects that contain a certain color. You can select from:
 - Circle
 - Square
 - Triangle
 - Rectangle
2. When they find an object you can keep count for them. You can include people and ethnicity.
3. Have them find up to ten (10) objects.
4. ***Positively encourage your child in this activity.***
5. ***Ask your child, "What was fun about this play?"***
6. ***Write a one-sentence entry on your journal page about your play today.***

Week 4 - The Representational Playing Field

“The true worth of a man is not in his income but the outcome of his children.” – C-Diddy

MAIN GOAL: The goal of this field is to help develop your child in those things that represent knowledge, ideas and feelings.

About this Field – The represental playing field help development by:

- Ensuring opportunities for creative self-expression through activities such as art, music, movement, and dialogue.
- Use language to communicate effectively, and to facilitate thinking and learning.
- Possess early literacy knowledge and skills, including: phonological awareness, book knowledge and appreciation, print awareness and concepts, early writing, and alphabet knowledge.
- Feel the power and pleasure of reading and writing.

REPRESENTATIONAL PLAYS:

1. RP1 – Dramatic Play
2. RP2 – Write Your Name
3. RP3 – Reading Time
4. RP4 – Draw a Picture
5. RP5 – The Daddy Song

Instructions: *Read or recite the coach dads cheer to your child like you mean it.*

COACH DADS CHEER

**Today is a new day for you to show,
how you can look, listen and learn to grow.
You are a special child to your mother and I,
We love and support you in everything you try,
Don't worry about problems we can work them out,
Be kind and helpful to others that is what life is about.
Remember we make a winning team and be glad,
So have a great day, today says, Coach Dad.**

RP1 – Dramatic Play

This play ensures the opportunities for creative self-expression through dramatic play.

Directions:

1. Dramatic play is pretend play where you act out real life.
2. Act out one of the following situations through dramatic play where the child is the adult and the adult is the child:
 - Dad visits the doctor because you do not feel well.
 - Dad visits the dentist because your tooth hurts.
 - Play house with the dad being the child.
 - Let your child pick out their own situation
3. Optionally you can reverse the roles.
- 4. Positively encourage your child in this activity.**
- 5. Ask your child, “What was fun about this play?”**
- 6. Write a one-sentence entry on your journal page about your play today.**

RP2 – Write Your Name

This play promotes early literacy knowledge and skills of early writing.

Directions:

1. Find two pencils and two sheets of lined paper.
2. Find a place to sit and write next to each other.
3. Give the child a pencil and paper.
4. Print your first name on the paper.
5. Show your child your name.
6. Assist your child in writing their name. Based on where they are developmentally you may not be able to recognize their name so give them time.
7. *Positively encourage your child in this activity.*
8. *Ask your child, “What was fun about this play?”*
9. *Write a one-sentence entry on your journal page about your play today.*

RP3 – Reading Time

This play encourages a shared time of interaction between the dad and the child.

Directions:

1. Select a book or have your child select a book.

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2. Make the reading time fun.
3. Reading is a contact sport so sit together with your child. You may let them sit in your lap because reading is a contact sport.
4. Read to your child.
5. Ask them questions while you read and allow them to ask you questions.
6. ***Positively encourage your child in this activity.***
7. ***Ask your child, "What was fun about this play?"***
8. ***Write a one-sentence entry on your journal page about your play today.***

RP4 – Draw a Picture

This play ensures the opportunities for creative self-expression through drawing.

Directions:

Your player may find this plays easy or difficult. Remember to be patient with them.

1. Find two pencils and two sheets of lined paper.
2. Find a place to sit and draw next to each other.
3. Give the child a pencil and paper.
4. Draw a picture and show it to your child.
5. Have them draw a picture. Some suggested things to draw are:
 - The place where they live.
 - A picture of dad and child.
 - A picture of the outdoors.
6. ***Positively encourage your child in this activity.***

7. Ask your child, “What was fun about this play?”

8. Write a one-sentence entry on your journal page about your play today.

RP5 – The Daddy Song

This play ensures the opportunities for creative self-expression through music.

Directions:

1. Sing the Daddy Song in the tune of “Bingo”.

2. When the dad gets to the part of spelling the child joins in.

There was a child who had a dad,
and daddy was his name oh,
D-A-D-D-Y,
D-A-D-D-Y,
D-A-D-D-Y
and Daddy was his name oh.

3. Optionally you can sing the song about a child who had a dog and Bingo was his name, B-I-N-G-O also there was a child who had a cat and Kitty was his name, K-I-T-T-Y.

4. Positively encourage your child in this activity.

5. Ask your child, “What was fun about this play?”

6. Write a one-sentence entry on your journal page about your play today.

Week 5 - The Free Play Field

“One of the benefits of being a daddy is the excuse to play again.” – C-Diddy

MAIN GOAL: The goal of this field is to select any type of play or come up with your own.

About this Field – Reinforces all the other types of playing fields:

FREE PLAYS:

- FP1 – Free Play
- FP2 – Free Play
- FP3 – Reading Time
- FP4 – Free Play
- FP5 – Free Play

FP1, FP2, FP4 & FP5 – Free Play

This play encourages a shared time of interaction between the dad and the child.

Directions:

1. Select a play from the anywhere in the playbook or one of your own.
2. You can select it or have your child select it.
3. Run the play.
4. Have fun.
5. ***Positively encourage your child in this activity.***
6. ***Ask your child, “What was fun about this play?”***
7. ***Write a one-sentence entry on your journal page about your play today.***

FP3 – Reading Time

This play encourages a shared time of interaction between the dad and the child.

Directions:

1. Select a book or have your child select a book.
2. Make the reading time fun.
3. Reading is a contact sport so sit together with your child. You may let them sit in your lap because reading is a contact sport.
4. Read to your child.
5. Ask them questions while you read and allow them to ask

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you questions.

- 6. *Positively encourage your child in this activity.***
- 7. *Ask your child, “What was fun about this play?”***
- 8. *Write a one-sentence entry on your journal page about your play today.***

The Coach Dad Journal

“If it was worth doing it, it is worth doing it again.”

– C-Daddy

Date	Play	Comment
mmddyy	sp_, pp_, cp_, rp_, fp_	During my play with my child today I... noticed, learned, enjoyed, encouraged

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Date	Play	Comment
mmddyy	sp_, pp_, cp_, rp_, fp_	During my play with my child today I... noticed, learned, enjoyed, encouraged

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