Welcome to FAM101

The course begins with an examination of statistics and research findings related to family structure, parenting trends, and fatherhood in the United States today. Course participants will learn why fathers are important, including the potential benefits of “dad-style play.” Participants will also learn many strategies and practices for encouraging more father participation at home and in the early learning environment.

Course Objectives:

By taking notes on the handout and successfully answering assessment questions, participants will meet the following objectives as a result of taking this course:

- Identify relevant statistics concerning family structure and parenting trends in the United States, including key changes over the past 40 years
- Identify statistical risk factors for children who do not experience consistent father involvement
- Identify benefits of increased father involvement in children’s lives
- Identify characteristics of “dad-style play,” including big body play and common differences between dad-style and mom-style play
- Define highly involved in the context of parent involvement in the ECE program
- Identify recommended strategies and practices for promoting more father involvement in the ECE program

Note: At five points in this course, participants are expected to reflect and write about topics related to their own learning and teaching experiences in relation to course content.

References:


Course Notes:

**Reflection**

How much do you know about the family structures of children in your program or class? Take a few minutes to reflect and write about how family structure affects parent-child and parent-teacher relationships in your program.

**The Context: 21st Century Family Facts**

*Use the space provided to record important information from this section of the course.*

**Single-Parent Households**

*Use the space provided to record important information from this section of the course.*

**The Changing Face of Fatherhood**

*Use the space provided to record important information from this section of the course.*

**Reflection**

Why are fathers important? We address this question in the next section, but take some time now to write a brief answer of your own.
Why Are Fathers Important?
Use the space provided to record important information from this section of the course.

Benefits of Father Involvement in the ECE Program
Use the space provided to record important information from this section of the course.

Dad-Style Play
Use the space provided to record important information from this section of the course.

Reflection
Based on your own experiences, what differences do you think there are in the way moms and dads play with their children?

The Importance of Big Body Play
Use the space provided to record important information from this section of the course.

Define **Big body play**: 

Reflection
In your own words, write a paragraph explaining what *big body play* is and why it is beneficial for children. Pretend you are explaining it to a colleague or parent.

**What Else Do We Know about Dad-Style Play?**
*Use the space provided to record important information from this section of the course.*

**Reflection**
What do you think of the video? What message is it sending dads?

**Strategies for Increasing Father Engagement in the ECE Program**
*Use the space provided to record important information from this section of the course.*

A _highly involved father_ is defined as participating in ________________ of the following types of activities during a school year: attending a general school meeting, a regularly scheduled parent-teacher conference, participating in a general school or class event (e.g., a play or class party), or serving as a classroom volunteer or field trip chaperone.

**Be Welcoming (and Persistent)!**
*Use the space provided to record important information from this section of the course.*

**Additional Tips for Promoting Father Involvement**
At school and other childcare and child development programs, fathers can:
- Participate in efforts to keep their children’s schools or childcare centers clean and safe.
- Plan for the future by talking with their children and school counselors about future high school courses and postsecondary career options.
- Attend parent-teacher conferences and school or class events.
- Volunteer at school. Fathers are welcome at schools as tutors, as leaders of afternoon or evening clubs, as chaperons for field trips, social activities or athletic events, or as classroom speakers who share information about their work and the world of work and how education contributed to their expertise on the job.
- Visit their child’s school or center. Encourage fathers to come to the center for breakfast, snack, or lunchtime.
- Meet their child’s teachers and learn about school curriculum, and how to become involved in activities.
- Pitch in to help meet school and program needs, such as installing new playground equipment, cooking at a school picnic or painting and repairing school property.
- Join the Parent Teacher Association or other parent groups at their child’s school or childcare center. At meetings, they can make their voices heard regarding their concerns and ideas for school improvement.

Resources for Fatherless Children
For children with no father or other male role model in their lives, ECE professionals and mothers can work together to identify community resources such as Big Brothers Big Sisters or a local mentoring program to give younger children an extra chance to enjoy adult male companionship and guidance. Involvement on a sports team, club (like Boy Scouts or 4-H), or church activities can also help.

Tips for Working with Military Families
Extension.org offers a number of excellent resources for helping children and families cope with deployments and other facts of military life:

- Coping with Change: Young Children in Military Families Find Comfort in the Familiar
- Coping with Change: Practical Ways that Child Care Providers Can Support Young Children from Military Families
- How Child Care Providers Can Help Deployed Parents and Their Children Stay Connected
- Reflections of Military Life in Children’s Pretend Play
- Strategies Child Care Providers Can Use to Help Young Children in Military Families Relieve Stress
- What Child Care Providers Need to Understand about Stress in Military Children