



The Importance of Fatherhood

A relationship with dad can change a child's life

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Fathers today are spending more time with their children compared to three decades ago, according to the Families and Work Institute, a leading nonprofit that studies workforce and family issues. They are also taking on more nurturing and caregiving roles. Research shows that the role a father plays in a young child's life is extremely important to a child's healthy development, and there are many positive outcomes for children whose fathers are more involved in their daily lives.

In recognition of Father's Day, First 5 San Joaquin offers the following tips to encourage dads to become more involved and supportive parents:

- **Get involved early.** Taking an active role in caring for a newborn helps dads and babies bond from the start. You might consider taking a few days off from work after the baby is born to spend quality time together. In California, new parents, including dads, are eligible for up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave to be with their newborn.
- **Be informed and connect with other dads.** Participate in community programs, take local parenting workshops, and talk with other fathers at daycare or preschool to build a network of support.
- **Put in the time.** Make it a priority to spend quality time with your child. This helps you build a strong relationship that includes regular communication. Find activities that you and your child enjoy doing to make your time together special, like reading or spending time playing outdoors.
- **Create a strong bond.** A great way to create and maintain a bond with young children is by being actively involved in their daily lives. Help your children take a bath, get ready for bed, or even do chores together to show that you are a consistent part of their lives.
- **Make it memorable.** Everyday activities can provide opportunities to learn and listen to your child. For example, when riding in the car or on the bus, ask your children to describe shapes and colors they see.
- **Be a role-model.** Practice appropriate discipline, considering your child's age and personality. Disciplining with respect and love allows you to interact in positive ways with your child.

For more information on parenting, contact First 5 San Joaquin at (209) 953-5437 or www.sjckids.org and www.first5california.com/parents.

About First 5 San Joaquin

Research shows that a child's brain develops most dramatically in the first five years and what parents and caregivers do during these years to support their child's growth will have a meaningful impact throughout life. Based on this research, California voters passed Proposition 10 in 1998, adding a 50 cents-per-pack tax on cigarettes to support programs for expectant parents and children ages 0 to 5. First 5 San Joaquin distributes approximately \$15 million in Prop. 10 revenues to programs and services that meet local needs.

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