



Radio Stations : **All Community Radio Stations**
Subject : **Early Childhood Development**
Audience : **Parents, caregivers and educators**
Program Topic : **Fathers are important too (LOVE)**

Guidelines to the presenter

- Presenter – please familiarize yourself with the brief and the use the facts effectively by referring to them from time to time during the show.
- You should be seen as a peer rather than an authority.
- Offer guidance or opinion rather than telling people what to do.
- Encourage people to seek further information
- Always keep the objectives and outcomes in mind and drive these.

Topic:

Fathers are important too!

Objectives:

- To inform fathers about the importance of their role in their baby and young children’s lives
- To encourage fathers to play that significant role in their young child’s development through spending quality time with them, playing and rich use of language.
- To enable fathers understand how much support the mother needs, both in pregnancy and when their children are young, and practical ideas as to how he can provide that support

- To stress the importance of a calm, loving home environment with caring, supportive relationships
- To inform absent fathers how they can best support their young children

Introduction

In the last three weeks we have looked at the developmental milestones for babies, toddlers and young children across the various developmental domains, physical, cognitive or intellectual, language, social, emotional and moral development. It has made us realise what an important period early childhood is and the incredible development that takes place at this time. Obviously mothers have a very important role, and sometimes people think that fathers are not so important in the early days when their wife or partner is pregnant or when their child is a baby. But this is not the case. Fathers have a very important role to play from the very time that their baby is conceived.

Join us today as we discuss the important role that fathers play in the lives of their babies (from the time they are conceived!), toddlers and young children

Questions	Facts/Information
<p>1. <i>Why is the father's role so important from the time that a baby is conceived?</i></p>	<p>Father and mother together create the miracle of a new life. While the mother may carry this new life in her womb for the nine months of pregnancy, the father's role to protect, love and nurture her while she does this is MOST important.</p> <p>We know, and scientific research has proved, that the development from the meeting of the father's sperm with the mother's egg to the development of the baby ready for birth, truly is incredible! Science has also shown us how important it is for the mother to be healthy, eat</p>

<p>2. <i>What else can a father do during his wife or partner's pregnancy?</i></p>	<p>proper nutritious food, keep calm and well rested during her pregnancy. This gives the baby's body and brain the best chance to develop properly.</p> <p>Fathers can support their wives to eat healthy nutritious food that includes lots of vegetables and fruit. Most importantly, fathers need to encourage the mum-to-be not to drink, smoke or take drugs, as these can seriously damage the unborn child. During pregnancy, mothers can be very emotional, and as her baby grows big and heavy, she can tire easily. Fathers need extra patience at this time and to support their partners in as many ways as they can, like taking over many of the household duties. Try to keep your home peaceful, happy and stress free! Very importantly fathers need to encourage and if possible accompany their wives or partners to the clinic for their ante-natal visits, for at least 5 visits before baby is born.</p> <p>If both of you don't already know your HIV status, both of you should have HIV tests so that if mum-to-be is HIV positive, the clinic can prepare for her (and the baby when she is born) to have anti-retroviral treatment to prevent passing the HIV virus to the baby.</p>
<p>3. <i>What about when the baby is born? Is this not 'woman's time' -a time when men should stay out of it and leave women to deal with birth and babies?</i></p>	<p>In many cultures this was and still is the belief. However, in many cultures this belief has changed and fathers are now encouraged to attend the birth of their baby and to hold their</p>

<p><i>Shouldn't the newly born baby be left alone with its mother?</i></p> <p>4. <i>Surely when the baby is very little and breastfeeding there isn't many fathers can do?</i></p>	<p>new born baby on the skin of their chests as soon as possible after he or she is born. This is a wonderful way to welcome your baby into this world and to bond or form a close relationship with your baby.</p> <p>The early days of bringing a baby home are often a very emotional time for mothers, especially if it's her first baby. She will be getting very little sleep and will need as much help as she can get from you to take care of all the other things like cooking, cleaning or looking after the older children. If you are at work most of the time, try and find someone who can come and help her.</p> <p>Do encourage your wife or partner to breastfeed for at least the first 6 months. Breast milk is the best possible food for baby. It is not only the correct nutrition, it also protects the baby from getting sick. It is also best to give only breast milk for the first 6 months – nothing else – no solid food and not even water. This is called Exclusive Breastfeeding. Doctors have proved that this is best for babies and even reduces the chances of baby's contracting the HIV virus.</p> <p>Science has proved that the more love, care, protection and support the mother gets from the father at this time, the better able she is to properly care for her baby at this time when they are both so vulnerable.</p> <p>And the more Daddy holds, cuddles, loves and</p>
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<p>5. <i>What about the documents the baby needs. Is this not a way dads can help?</i></p>	<p>plays with his baby, makes eye contact, sings and talks – the better will be his relationship with his child as he or she grows up.</p> <p>If certainly is. It's difficult for mums of new babies to travel and especially to wait in queues. Dads can be a great help in registering new baby's birth and getting her birth certificate. The birth of a baby must be registered within 30 days of the birth with the Department of Home Affairs. Often this can take place at the hospital, if your baby is born in a hospital. It is free and it is very important to get your baby's birth certificate. It's your baby's right and enables him or her to access government services like free health services, school or even the Child Support Grant if you qualify. You will need to take your ID and your wife or partner's ID. Once you have your baby's birth certificate keep it in a safe place. If you lose it, you have to pay for another one.</p>
<p>6. <i>And if father and mother qualify for the Child Support Grant, what can dad do to register for this?</i></p>	<p>If you qualify to apply for the Child Support Grant, you need to visit the closest SASSA office. You do not have to pay anything, but you do need to bring the following documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your IDs for both mum and dad • Proof of marital status (marriage certificate, divorce order, death certificate if your wife/partner has died) • Proof of income, and your wife/partner's income • If you do not have a bank account or are unemployed you need to make a sworn statement at your local police station • If the grant is for your child, you need your child's birth certificate

<p>7. <i>As baby gets older, why is the father's role so important?</i></p>	<p>Your application form will be completed in the presence of an officer from SASSA. When your application is completed you will be given a receipt that you need to keep as it is your only proof of application.</p> <p>As your baby starts to crawl around, stand and take his first steps, Dads love to encourage them in the adventure of discovering the world. This is a fun time, when dads can play with their little ones, while protecting them and making sure they are safe. This is a time when dads need to check that all the things that might harm their adventurous toddler are removed or put away – fires, candles, paraffin lamps, bar heaters – anything that could burn baby. She does not know not to touch and quickly pulls pots or kettles or even a mug of coffee or tea onto herself. All poisons, cleaning materials, paraffin and medicines should be put well out of reach, as should any knives. Check outside your house for sharp objects, broken glass or rusted corrugated iron or nails. And watch out for small objects that can be swallowed or cause choking.</p>
<p>8. <i>I've heard some people say that dads play with their children differently from mums. Is that true?</i></p>	<p>Yes. In many ways this is true. Research has shown that dads have unique ways of relating to their children and children benefit from happy relationships with both their mums and dads. Often dad's play is more boisterous and physical, and both boys and girls love the rough</p>

<p>9. <i>Doesn't rough and tumble play encourage children to fight and be aggressive?</i></p>	<p>and tumble of special time playing with dad. Fathers often encourage adventure, fun, independence and problem solving. They encourage their little ones to try out new things and test their physical skills.</p> <p>Reading and telling stories can be a special time for fathers and their children. Many dads are wonderful story tellers and the close relationship story time creates and the rich language it provides for the young child, are very important in your child's language and literacy development.</p> <p>Not if it's done in fun and dads make sure children don't get hurt or hurt anyone else. Aggression often comes when children are hit in punishment or observe violence in the home. No one should ever hit a child. In fact it is illegal to hit a child in South Africa, even in your own home. There are far better ways to teach your child how to behave. Young children will copy what you do and imitate how you treat other people, especially their mother. They will learn from you how to respect and form positive relationships.</p> <p>In fact it's been proved that domestic violence, loud arguments, swearing and shouting in the home is very stressful for a young child and can negatively affect their brain development, their self-confidence and their ability to learn. Young children need a safe, loving, caring and happy home environment in which to grow and</p>
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<p><i>10. What happens when fathers are not at home? What can absent fathers do to support their young children's development?</i></p>	<p>develop.</p> <p>It's a sad fact of life in our country that many of our dads are not at home with their wives/partners and children for many reasons, often work. This is very sad for our children who really need their fathers and positive men role models. Fathers should stay in as close touch as possible with as many phone calls and visits as you can possibly manage. Obviously providing your family with income is critically important to their wellbeing, but your wife and children also need your presence as often as you are able, and frequent contact with you when you are away. Perhaps you could arrange to tell you children stories over the phone, or record them to be played on a tape recorder?</p>
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<p>Conclusion</p>
<p>So today we've focussed on the very special place dads have in the lives and development of their little ones, as well as in supporting their wives or partners during pregnancy and motherhood. Research shows that when fathers are really involved in caring for their baby, toddler or young child, playing with them, talking to them and telling them stories, those young children have better self-esteem, self-confidence and do better in school and in life. AND the fathers have fun and really enjoy their time with their little ones. So dads, it's over to you. You have a really important role to play – ENJOY!</p>

Learning outcomes

After listening to this show the audience should:

- Understand that fathers have a critically important role to play even when their children are still in the womb, a baby or very little.
- Realise the important role fathers play in their young child's development and the responsibility they have to play that role fully.
- Be aware of the importance of loving, caring for and protecting the pregnant mum-to-be and their partner in her role as mother, as well as support in child-rearing chores.
- Be aware that the home environment has a strong influence on the baby or young child and his or her brain development.
- Gain some ideas on how to provide support to mother and child.
- Gain some ideas on how absent fathers can best support their young children