



Indiana Association for Infant & Toddler Mental Health

Since the 1990's, research has demonstrated that father involvement is important to child development outcomes. Fathers contribute to child development directly through their relationship with the child and indirectly by supporting mothers. In addition, fathers derive personal satisfaction from being engaged and involved in their children's lives. Fathers interact with children in ways that are different from, yet complementary to, the ways that mothers interact with children. Because the majority of early intervention and early care providers are women, it can be easy to unintentionally fall into habits of failing to actively include or even excluding fathers from full participation in these services. In recognition of the importance of their involvement, child care, schools, and even federal programs such as Head Start have made specific efforts to support fathers. **First Steps mental health professionals encourage father involvement in early care and intervention services.**



Encouraging Father Involvement in Early Care and Intervention

- * **Consider fathers' schedules when planning meetings and intervention times.**
- * **When developing home programs, include activities that build on the strengths in father-child interactions.**
- * **Provide a second set of handouts specifically for fathers who do not live with the child.**
- * **Be aware that fathers may show their feelings about their child's delays in ways that are different from mothers and less obvious to providers.**
- * **Help fathers find appropriate supports and information.**

Learn More :

<http://childcareresearch.org/discover/keytopics/FatherInvolvement.pdf>

<http://fatherhood.hhs.gov/Parenting/hs.shtml>

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