

## A Father's Special Touch

Much has been written and said about the importance of Mother in a child's life, but Father plays a special role as well.

Many people recognize the importance of the father-son relationship. By watching and listening to his dad, a son learns how he will be expected to behave when he gets older. Role modeling has taken on a new importance in recent years as fathers take a larger part in the actual day-to-day rearing of their children – both girls and boys.

Yes, fathers influence daughters as well as sons. Studies show that a girl who grows up to become a successful woman typically has a close relationship with her father. A girl is more likely to achieve when she has the encouragement of her dad. Like her brother, she sees her father as a role model for adult male behavior.

A father is also important as a playmate. Many children turn to their mother for comfort, and seek out their dad for rough-and-tumble play. Father seems to take special delight in tossing a baby up in the air, making funny sounds, or juggling a toddler on the foot pretending to be a horse.

And a father does far more. He reinforces appropriate behavior with the wise dispensing of praise and privileges. Father also models the values he hopes his children will adopt. For example, when a father disciplines his children by discussing the situation instead of using physical punishment, he shows them a way of coping that will serve them well throughout their lives.

A father is especially important in providing support to the mother. By respecting and supporting Mom in her efforts, Father can provide the glue that enables a family to function as an effective unit, even if Mom and Dad do not live together.

Dad's are important, so finding a way for fathers to be in the child's life is key!