



# Delta Head Start/Early Head Start



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## What Fathers Contribute to Child Development

Fathers who are active in their child's life will have a tremendous effect on their child's development— both cognitively and socially. Having the experience of *two involved parents* adds variety and dimension to the child's experience of the world. Researchers stress that parents must be actively and positively involved in their child's life to contribute to the healthy development of their child. Let's take a look at what scientists believe that fathers add to their child's development in a unique and important way.

**Fathers and social development.** Fathers who tended to hold their babies facing out reported that they did this because "it's easier for the baby to see the world." In over 20 years of studying fathers, Dr. Ross Parke states that men have a tendency to allow their infants more freedom to explore, which appears to support the development of independence in their children. Fathers who actively play with their children appear to reinforce the notion of emotional self-control in their children and help their children learn to recognize the emotional cues of others. Young children whose fathers were involved in their lives tended to make better, longer-lasting friendships across their lifespan. Children raised with responsible fathers tended to get along better with their peers, be academically successful, stay in school longer, use drugs and alcohol less frequently, and didn't become pregnant or get someone else pregnant.

**Fathers enjoy practical ways of playing.** Men tend to do more practical, educational activities with their children rather than talking about what they are doing with their children. Fathers like to expand their child's horizons by playing with toys in non-traditional ways. A father might take a cup and place it on his head or throw a block rather than stack it. Fathers are much more comfortable with physical play at any age but especially as their children grow older.

**Fathers and cognitive development.** Researchers have determined that active fathers have children who score higher on tests of verbal skills, in problem-solving tasks, and in social situations. Fathers who played peek-a-boo and tossed the ball with their children had children who scored higher on cognitive tests than did children whose fathers were non-active or absent. Some researchers believe that active father involvement has a positive effect on their child's math skills. Prepared by Linda D. Ladd, Ph.D., Family Development Specialist, Texas AgriLife Extension Service, October 2000.

## HOW CHILDREN DEVELOP LARGE MOTOR CONTROL

Infants develop large motor control starting from their heads, moving down their necks, to their chests and tummies, to their legs, knees, and feet (Morrison, 1997). First, infants start turning their heads to specific sounds or other stimuli. Then the infants start to hold their heads up for longer periods of time. Next, the infants, lying on their tummies, push up on their arms. Gradually the infants begin to use their arms and legs to turn over (first from front to back and then from back to front). After a while, the infants use their arms and legs to push and pull themselves forward to where they want to go. Then they rise up on their knees and start crawling. From their knees, they start to pull themselves up to standing positions. While holding on to objects, they move around taking tentative steps. Then, slowly, they begin to let go and start walking. Before you know it they are off and running! (Gale Research, 1998).

## Delta Early Head Start celebrated Fathers Day

Cornerstone center hosted "Breakfast Buddies". Fathers, grandfathers, uncles, and all positive male role models were invited to come to the center for this event. We had a great time!





## Summer Fun: MAKING MUD PIES

If it's been raining in your area, but the sun is starting to come out, there's no better time for making mudpies. Just grab some old plates or pie tins, some spoons or sticks for stirring and head for the nearest puddle of mud. Babies will enjoy squishing their toes in the mud while older children can put together pies decorated with leaves, flowers and pebbles. Just be sure not to eat 'em!

### For a mudpie that you can eat, try this recipe: You'll Need:

\*1 Prepared Chocolate Graham Cracker Crust \* An 8 ounce container of Cool Whip \*1 cup milk  
\*1- 4 ounce package instant chocolate pudding \*1 cup Chopped Oreos \*3/4 cup chocolate chips

### • Directions:

Mix the milk and pudding. Add Cool Whip, cookie crumbs and chocolate chips and mix thoroughly. Pour mix into crust and refrigerate.

## Keeping Baby Cool in the Summer

Although it feels like it took forever, summer is finally here and so is the hot weather. Adults and even little children can tell when you when they are hot or need some water but what about babies? Babies are sensitive to extreme temperatures too and have their own special summertime safety needs. This doesn't mean these tiny tots should remain indoors all summer, just that parents need to be extra mindful on hot summer days. Here are a few ways keep your baby cool in the summer heat:

### Sunshine

The delicate skin of infants makes them more prone to sunburn. Babies under 6 months of age should not use sun block thus it is important they remain in the shade. If you are heading for a day at the beach, be sure to bring an umbrella, a sun hat, and even a light blanket to protect baby's skin.

### Hydration

Just like grownups, babies sweat in the heat. However, since babies are so small they have a limited ability to retain extra fluids and lose fluids through perspiration at a much faster rate. For mothers who are breastfeeding, it is very important that *you* stay hydrated because baby is getting her fluids from you. Also, you can breastfeed more frequently on hot days to ensure adequate fluid intake. For formula fed babies, do not add additional liquids to the formula because this reduces the nutrient content which can lead to nutritional deficiencies. Instead, in between feedings, you can offer a small amount of cool, purified or distilled water. Be sure to consult your physician for additional information or if suspect your child is not getting adequate fluids. Remain diligent for signs of dehydration which include: Refusal to eat or drink, Fewer wet diapers, Crying, Hot and dry skin, elevated body temperature, vomiting or diarrhea, dry mouth, tired or lethargic

### Staying Cool

Fans can help circulate the air in the room, but should not be pointed directly at the child. Stick to fabrics like cotton both for their bodies and bedding as this helps absorb sweat to avoid a heat rash. Nap times can be tough if it is too warm for him to fall asleep so let him sleep in the coolest part of the house where there is a breeze. Also, **never ever leave a child or infant in the car alone during any type of weather.** Other cooling tips: A sponge bath or bath in lukewarm water, hang wet towels over chairs or windows to cool the air. June 17th, 2011 by Colleen Hurley, RD, Certified Kid's Nutrition Specialist

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### Delta Head Start/Early Head Start Mission

*Our mission is to teach and reach children and families by working together with families, communities, and creative partnerships through comprehensive high quality services, thus, empowering families to shape their future, one child at a time.*