

STRONGER STARTS

FATHERS AND THEIR CRITICAL ROLE IN MATERNAL & INFANT HEALTH

Why Father Involvement Matters

Father involvement during the perinatal period is a powerful predictor of better outcomes for both mothers and babies. Research consistently shows that when fathers are engaged early, families experience healthier pregnancies, healthier infants, and stronger long-term connections.

“Fathering is not something perfect men do, but something that perfects the man. — Frank Pittman”

When Dads Get Involved, Mothers & Babies Thrive

Mothers are 1.5 times more likely to receive prenatal care in the first trimester.

1.5X

Mothers are more likely to avoid unhealthy behaviors, including alcohol and tobacco use.

During infancy, partner support is associated with longer duration of breastfeeding, lower risk of preterm birth and low birth weight.

Impact on Pregnancy Experience

A father's presence at the first prenatal ultrasound is linked to:

- Higher likelihood of full-term pregnancy
- Increased feelings of connection between father and baby
- Greater motivation for fathers to be engaged throughout the pregnancy

Father Involvement Predicts Future Engagement

Fathers who are engaged before birth are more likely to stay involved:

- Prenatal involvement predicts caregiving, shared meals, and time spent with infants at 14 months.
- Father's presence at birth predicts involvement at 24 months, including caregiving, financial support, decision-making, and family connections.

Why Strengthening Father Supports Matters



Supporting fathers doesn't just benefit men. It improves maternal health, strengthens pregnancies, and supports healthier children. Effective policies and programs that encourage father engagement lead to stronger family outcomes across the board.



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