



## Father Involvement in Early Childcare: review of the literature

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**Abstract.** In general, fathers are the main breadwinners in the family. Fathers busy at work has an impact on the reduced time that fathers can spend with their children. It also makes more fathers have to surrender childcare to mothers. Whereas previous studies have revealed that the involvement of fathers in early child care provides benefits for father-child relationships, and in the growth and development aspects of children. This paper will describe how the involvement of fathers in childcare. This article also aims to provide an understanding of the role of fathers in childcare, what factors influence the involvement of fathers in parenting, and the benefits that can be derived from the process of father involvement in early childcare.

**Keywords:** father involvement, early childhood, fatherhood

**INTRODUCTION** ~ There are some basic needs that are needed by children in order to grow optimally. Researchers believe some of the needs that children need, including biological, physical, emotional, psychological, and social welfare needs (O'Brien & Sehemilt, 2008; Walker & McGraw, 2000).

Father, in general, is the main breadwinner figure in the family. With the industrial revolution, the role of fathers as breadwinners is getting stronger (Williams, 2008). Fathers must be responsible for providing financial support for their families and themselves. But the rush of work makes fathers lose a lot of time to be with their children (Milkie, Kendig, Nomaguchi, & Denny, 2010; Milkie, Mattingly, Nomaguchi, Bianchi, & Robinson, 2004).

In the family structure the father has an important role in the growth and development of early childhood. The presence of a father becomes a figure who is able to set an example of leadership, able to shape a child's

personality into an individual who is disciplined and independent, teaches children to have the ability to socialize and teach children to think logically (Parmanti & Purnamasari, 2019). Therefore, the involvement of fathers, becomes something important in parenting, especially in early childhood care. Remembering early childhood is in the golden age period, the most important period in human life.

### **METHOD**

The method used in this article is literature review. Where we collected several journals about the involvement of fathers in early childhood care. An analysis will be conducted to explain the importance of fathers' involvement in early childcare.

### **RESULT**

#### **The role of fathers in parenting**

Brooks (2001), define care as a process that refers to a series of actions and interactions that parents take to support a child's development. Hart (2002), revealed



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if the father has the role of fathers in childcare, including:

- ✓ *economic provider* (financial support and be protective of the family),
- ✓ *friend and playmate* (someone who is fun to be a playmate with when compared to mom),
- ✓ *caregiver* (provide comfort to children and build relationships that are full of warmth),
- ✓ *teacher and role model* (fathers have the same roles and responsibilities in providing good teaching and model to children),
- ✓ *monitor and disciplinary* (father oversees the behavior of children, where the child shows something wrong, father straightening or disciplining children)
- ✓ *protector* (the father controls and organizes the child's environment so that the child is free from difficulties or dangers)
- ✓ *resource* (fathers become child supporters in achieving child success).

The concept of father involvement in childcare is spelled out in five components (Lamb & Tamis-LeMonda, 2004), among them:

- ✓ *Positive activity engagement*  
Includes direct interaction between father and son through daily care and activities carried out together with the child.
- ✓ *Warmth-responsiveness*  
This component has a relationship with positive activity engagement. This point

reinforces if in positive activities will form warmth and responsive behavior.

- ✓ *Control*  
The involvement of fathers in making rules, monitoring or supervising the implementation of rules, and making decisions related to these rules.
- ✓ *Indirect care*  
Defined as a variety of activities carried out by fathers to meet the welfare of children, but without involving direct interaction with children.
- ✓ *Process responsibility*  
This last component explains that in household management and child care with a partner, fathers have the sensitivity to see the needs and take the initiative to meet those needs.

### **Factors affecting father involvement in childcare**

Fathers will be more involved in various parenting activities when mothers spend more time outside the home to work (Raley, Bianchi, & Wang, 2012). Research in America revealed that there were four significant changes in the era of the industrial revolution, women's increased labor force participation, increased absence of nonresidential fathers in the lives of their children, increased involvement of fathers in intact families, and increased cultural diversity in USA (Cabrera, 2000). The increase in fathers in childcare is indicated to be closely related to the increase in mothers who are active in the world of work.

But this reality is inversely proportional to families with mothers who do not work.



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Doherty (Walker & McGraw, 2000) explains if fathers have greater involvement in childcare while the wife is working, but father's involvement is decreased when the wife is not working.

The role of mothers as "gatekeepers" is one of the factors that support fathers in the process of early childhood care (de Luccie, 1995; Schoppe-Sullivan, Brown, Cannon, Mangelsdorf, & Sokolowski, 2008). Maternal gatekeeping is typically defined as a collection of beliefs and behaviors that may inhibit a collaborative effort between men and women in family work (Allen & Hawkins, 1999). The mother is considered capable of being a mediator between child and father. Even the higher the beliefs of parents (especially, mothers) about the importance of the role of fathers makes higher involvement of fathers in childcare. Mother's care as a complex unit between parents, where the mother influences father's involvement in care and interaction with children regularly and consistently (Puhlman & Pasley, 2013).

Many studies have found a relationship between family harmony with father involvement in childcare. Coltrane (1989), in his research found that fathers involved in child care, on average, have a good relationship with their wives. Whereas research on divorced families leaves fathers with limited time with their children. Fathers who live apart from their children rarely see their children (Furstenberg, Nord, Peterson, & Zill, 1983). Father's absence in the life of the father automatically affects the involvement of the father in childcare.

Another factor determining the involvement of fathers in parenting is education (King, 1994; Cooney, 1993). Fathers who are highly educated use high standards compared to fathers who have lower education. And higher education encourages fathers to become more responsive fathers to child development programs.

### **The benefits of father involvement in early childcare**

Based on studies that have been disclosed previously, the involvement of fathers in early childhood care has a positive impact on child development. The involvement of fathers in parenting has a positive impact on language development (Im-Bolter, Yaghoub Zadeh, & Ling, 2013), cognitive development (Roggman, Boyce, & Cook, 2009), gross-motor development (Bretherton, 2010), children's social-emotional development and children's learning readiness (Freeman, Newland, & Coyl, 2010) (Fagan & Iglesias, 1999). In a comparison group study, fathers spent 1-4 hours while the observed group spent 5 to 21.5 hours. From the results of the analyzed data show, the involvement of fathers is able to provide a good effect on children's learning readiness and improve children's social abilities.

### **CONCLUSION**

Early childhood care is any activity undertaken to support child growth and development. Parents (father and mother) have the same responsibilities in the childcare process.



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Some factors that influence the involvement of fathers in care include: the level of busyness of mothers who work outside the home, the role of mothers as "gatekeepers", success in household relationships, and the level of father's education that affects responsive fathers. The involvement of fathers in early childhood care also has a positive impact on all aspects of child development. So that the involvement of fathers in childcare becomes something important and influences the child's growth and development, as well as responsive relationships between fathers and children.

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