

FATHER'S FORWARD FACTOR

Father's Forward, a project of the Alabama Parent Education Center

Volume 1

Winter 2006

Fathers Forward Overview

All children deserve a loving father who is actively engaged in their life. The Alabama Parent Education Center's Fathers Forward program in partnership with, A Seed Inc., St. James Family Worship, Elmore County Department of Human Resources, Elmore County District Circuit Court Child Support Division provides programming to assist Elmore County Fathers to connect with their children legally, emotionally, and financially. Our program staff work individually with participants to create an individual development plan to assist participants in overcoming their barriers to education, gainful employment, and parenting skills. Classes are designed for Dads to increase their parenting skills. Sessions include the 24/7 Dad classes, Resource sessions to connect Dads to community resources and Skill sessions to develop employment skills, education preparation, and activities to assist Dads in planning activities with their children. Mentoring support is provided by Community Volunteers to help program participants connect with other dads. Program mentors help Fathers Forward participants with education attainment, employment preparation, and to develop positive parenting skills. Our program also has an information library including books, tip sheets, videos, and other materials free for checkout. Developing strong dads that are active in their child's life is paramount. The presence of the father in the home helps to balance the emotional and psychological needs of the child.

History has taught us that an active father in the home helps to shape the outcome of a child's life. Children from a home with a father systematically excel in life beyond those in single parent homes. Even children raised in poverty with both parents in the home are much more likely to succeed in later life than children raised in poverty by a mother alone. Several things has contributed to the decline of the father in the home. Character, unemployment and a lack of education; just to name a few. All of the hurdles can be overcome in time. One of the visions of the "Father's Forward" program is to deal with the whole father not just the monetary side. The monetary side of the father will become whole and child support payments will increase as the financial, educational and character issues are addressed and conquered. Father's Forward is committed to assisting needy fathers with skills and connecting them with resources to help them become productive in society. You may also visit our website at www.alabamaparentcenter.com for additional information or call our office 334.567.2252 to obtain additional information about program events and support.

FATHER'S FORWARD IS HERE TO HELP

If you are a father in Elmore County seeking skills and resources to become a better father allow us at **FATHER'S FORWARD** to serve you.



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Becoming A Better Dad

34% of all children live absent from their biological father. 60% of those have not seen their father in the last 12 months. Children who live absent from their biological fathers are, on the average, at least 2 –3 times more likely to be poor, use drugs, to experience educational, health, emotional and behavioral problems, to be victims of child abuse, and to engage in criminal behavioral than their peers who live with married, biological or adoptive parents. (National Fatherhood Initiative). Dads have got to step up to the plate and begin to do better. The family is on a rapid decline due to the absence of the father in the home. If our world is going to be a better place our fathers have got to become better dads. Here are a few tips on how to become a better dad.

1. Respect Your Child's Mother.

One of the greatest things you can do for your children is respect their mother. Your child can interpret your tone, your language and your actions as respect or disrespect. You can try to teach your child respect but some things are caught versus taught. Your child will mimic what he or she see you do.

2. Spend Quality Time With Your Child

In today's "get more" and "have more" society everyone is busy working to obtain things. Often times the father, whether custodial or non-custodial spends little time with the kids. Money is important but not the most important thing. Time is most important. When you get old and if

you are given the grace to share with your children in the last moments of your life, money becomes a small issue. You're less interested in how much money you made. You're focused on how much time you spent and what type of legacy and what type of character have you imparted into your children.

3. Show Affection To Your Children

Every child has a need for parental affection. A loving hug, a gentle touch or a kiss. Often times father's are not affectionate to their children. Men have this problem in feeling that they should not show emotions. Showing your loving emotions and affection to your children is a positive thing. It helps the child to learn the true language of love. Affection showed plus time spent equals love received.

4. Be Your Child's Role Model

Today's TV stars, singers and professional athletes are glamorized as role models to our children. However most are projecting the wrong image. A child should never have to look outside of the home for a role model. The father must be a role model for his children. However the position must be earned not freely given. How can the father earn the right? He earns the right by "Respecting his child's mother, spending quality time with his children, showing affection to his children and supporting his children. Fathering a child only take seconds. Becoming a good father takes time.



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