

Important Phone Numbers

- **Infoline**, for child care, health and human services, dial 2-1-1 or log on to www.infoline.org
- **Care4Kids**, helps low to moderate income families pay for child care expenses. 1-888-214-5437.
- **CT Birth-to-Three**, for FREE evaluation, based on concerns, of your child's growth and development: 1-800-505-7000.
- **Connecticut Parent Power**, mobilizes parents on issues affecting children and families. www.ctparentpower.org, 203-630-3566
- **Danbury Public Schools Early Childhood Program** for children ages 3–5. If your child has difficulty listening, talking, playing, thinking, moving, understanding, or learning, there is help! Call Fran Tyluki at 203-797-4832.
- **Danbury School Readiness Programs**, offer accessible, affordable, and high-quality early childhood experiences. Open to all Danbury children, ages 3 to 5. Sliding fee scale. Call Education Connection, 203-791-1904, ext. 168.
- **Strengthening Families Program** is a prevention program for parents and youth. Call Consuelo Brown at 203-792-4515.

Parent Support

- **Community Action Committee of Danbury (CACD)**, offers energy assistance, tax preparation, a food pantry, eviction and foreclosure prevention programs, and homelessness prevention programs, as well as other programs for income-eligible families. Also administers the Fatherhood Initiative. Call 203-744-4700.
- **Danbury Regional Child Advocacy Center**, for free parenting classes and home visits, call 203-748-4542.
- **Danbury Youth Services, Inc.** has a youth and family counseling program and mentoring program for pregnant teens/teen moms. Also Youth Employment Services for the community. Call 203-748-2936.
- **Divorced Men's Association of Connecticut**, provides support to all non-custodial parents. Call John DiBiase at 860-643-8516.
- **Families Network of Western Connecticut**, home visitation and family support for new parents. Call Susan Giglio at 203-791-8773.
- **Greater Danbury Child and Family Network**, for families with children who have special needs. Call Heather Rivers at 300-6456. For Spanish, call Gloria Mora at 203-797-8088.
- **Hispanic Center of Greater Danbury**, provides services to Hispanic Families. Call 203-798-2855.
- **Lee y serás (Read and you will be)**, serves Latino parents of infants and toddlers to support early learning. Call 203-797-8088.
- **MOMS Club of Danbury**, support group for stay-at-home moms. For Danbury South, call Christine Foster at 203-791-0760 or email foster_christine@sbcglobal.net. For Danbury West, email momsclubdanburywest@yahoo.com
- **Parent Leadership Training Institute of Danbury**, 20-week course enables parents to become advocates for their children. Call Lauren Halpin at 203-797-8088.
- **ParentNet**, free parenting skills classes. Call Maria Vargas at 203-748-4542.
- **People Empowering People (PEP)** helps Spanish-speaking parents gain experiences and skills while taking greater control of their lives and connecting with the community. Call Gloria Mora at 203-797-8088.
- **WeCAHR** provides support to parents who have children with disabilities. Call 203-792-3540.



**Does Your Child
Have Health
Insurance?
If not, call toll-free:
2-1-1**

Playgroups and Storytimes

- **Danbury Public Library Storytime** for 2- to 5-year-old children. Call 203-797-4528.
- **Family Resource Center Playgroup**. Morris St. School, Fridays, 9 am to 10:30 am. Call Regina Lima at 203-790-2682.



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The Importance of Men in the Lives of Children and Teens

By Charlie Manos, LMFT, Coordinator of Pupil Services, Danbury Public Schools

Before discussing the critical importance of men in the lives of our children, it is important to understand that both mothers and fathers today are living in a culture that often undermines good parenting.

We live in a “feel-good” culture, with media images that promote consumerism and excess. Many feel that a sense of community, which provides a clear sense of morals and values, has been replaced by the mass media, the Internet, social networking, and gaming. Some mothers and fathers are afraid to exert parental authority for fear of damaging their children’s self-esteem. Some parents are so overwhelmed by anxiety that they are afraid to let their children take the kind of risks that can help their children develop life skills and coping strategies.

Add to this mix the other factors that make raising children difficult—such as both parents working or working two jobs, overextended parents, poverty, difficult economic times, single parenting, and the lack of extended family support—and one can see the serious challenges facing all parents (including men).

Putting Men in the Middle of Family Life. Before men can genuinely connect with and effectively parent their children, they should understand that historical and cultural factors have often placed men at the edges of family life. At the same time, women should partner with men to raise their children. What does this mean for day-to-day parenting?

Women should ask for help and support and try not to criticize men when they do help. Men should explore their feelings about sometimes living “on the sidelines” of

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These teen boys are sharing a meal together at Escape to the Arts as part of the “Wise Guys” program. It’s just one of the programs offered by of the Fatherhood Initiative sponsored by the Community Action Committee of Danbury. To find out more, turn to page 3.

Why Be An Involved Father?

Children who have involved fathers have:

- Less chance of developmental delays in infancy
- Fewer problem behaviors in childhood and adolescence
- Enhanced social development and maturity
- Better school performance
- Less legal trouble in adolescence
- Protection from negative influences, such as financial hardship and maternal depression
- Better adult mental health
- Better jobs and adult careers
- Better relationships with others

Children with involved, loving fathers are more likely to do well in school, have healthy self-esteem, exhibit empathy and pro-social behavior and avoid high-risk behaviors such as drug use, truancy, and criminal activity.

Invest in your children by improving your parenting skills! Enroll in CACD’s Fatherhood Initiative Programs and improve your children’s future!

Call Jennifer Miller at 203-744-4700 or call the phone numbers for the specific Fatherhood Initiative Program you are interested in, listed on page 3.

Danbury Children First

The mission of Danbury Children First is to involve, empower and support parents to improve the lives of children.



Se voce gostaria de receber uma copia de “Parent to Parent” en Portuguese chame 797-8088.

Si usted desea obtener una copia de la revista “Parent to Parent” (“De Padres a Padres”) en Español, por favor llame al 203-797-8088.

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family life, rather than squarely in the middle. Historically, men have often been more “helpers” than genuine partners in parenting, devoting their energies to making a living for the family and fulfilling cultural expectations of what is considered “being a man.”

Both fathers and children have paid a high price for the lack of full participation of men in family life. Research shows that fathers are more likely to be anxious and depressed when they are not connected to their children. Children suffer from lower self-esteem and self acceptance when they do not have close and nurturing relationships with significant men in their lives.

Fathers can connect with their children in three ways:

Compassion. First, fathers need to show compassion and understanding toward their children. This involves understanding their children’s feelings, temperament, and behavior. Men need to “get” their children beyond their surface behaviors, which includes changes in behavior associated with life-cycle transitions, such as adolescence.

Communication. Second, fathers have to communicate with their children, stay connected to their interests, understand the unique communication style of each of their children, remain a predictable and consistent presence in their lives, and spend time with them on a regular basis.

Consequences. Finally, fathers should identify what they expect of their children, communicate those expectations clearly, and promote consistent consequences for misbehavior in a firm yet loving manner. Fathers model masculine strength, problem-solving skills, and stress management for their children. Men who behave aggressively with their children either do not feel at the center of family life, do not understand their children’s behavior, or have poor coping or problem-solving capabilities. Programs such as the Fatherhood Initiative described on page 3 of this newsletter are designed to help fathers build those skills.

Compassion, communication, and consequences will help men develop close connections with their children. But this often challenges the traditional definitions of what it means to be masculine in our culture. The role of the father needs to expand beyond “disciplinarian” to include “nurturer,” and communicator of feelings. Men need to take time to understand the complexity of children’s lives today and the impact of peers on youngsters today.

For Fathers Who Do Not Live With Their Children.

Fathers are faced with special challenges when they do not live with their children. How men handle this situation can be a powerful model for their children. Above all, a father needs to demonstrate respect and calm behavior towards the mother of his children. Parental disagreements should never be shared with children, since this creates

huge loyalty conflicts and stress on children. Fathers should see children on a regular schedule. Even though fathers may not have daily contact with their children, all three aspects of connection are important. In addition, non-stop fun activities during visits only lead to more stress on the primary custodial parent.

Men may be faced with additional challenges if their own fathers were not positive role models. Their fathers may have been absent, unavailable, violent or addicted to substances. They may be struggling with similar issues or have learned to struggle on without any assistance, so they may underestimate the importance of a father in their own children’s lives. Men should form connections with many different types men, seek support and guidance from other like-minded men, and actively search out male mentors who can help them with child-rearing issues.

Being a man and father is far more complex in today’s world. With the women’s movement, roles have been expanded, creating a more enriched definition of masculinity—all of which has opened up new opportunities for men to be closer with the next generation.

Can You Help Support This Newsletter and Our Other Programs?

Danbury Children First is donor dependent and needs your help to continue its programs and services.

Can you send a donation?

All donations are tax-deductible.

Checks should be made payable to Danbury Children First and mailed to us at 83 West Street, Danbury, CT 06810. Or log on to www.danburychildrenfirst.org to donate. Questions? Call Linda Kosko at 203-797-8088. Thank you!

Support for this newsletter is provided by the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund, and core support is provided by the Perrin Family Foundation. This issue is also supported by The Community Action Committee of Danbury.

Community Action Committee of Danbury (CACD) Announces New Fatherhood Initiative

In January of 2010, the Community Action Committee of Danbury (CACD) announced a new community Fatherhood Initiative to promote the positive involvement and interactions of fathers with their children. The Initiative is conducted in partnership with the Families Network of Western Connecticut and YMCA's Escape to the Arts program.

The program is designed to:

- Help fathers improve their parenting skills.
- Strengthen bonds between the father and the child.
- Encourage and enhance responsible and skillful parenting so that fathers are better able to meet the financial and medical needs of their children.

The goals are to:

- Promote public education concerning financial and emotional responsibilities of fatherhood.
- Assist men in preparing for the legal, financial and emotional responsibilities of fatherhood.
- Promote the establishment of paternity at childbirth.
- Encourage fathers, regardless of marital status, to foster their emotional connection to their children and financially support them.
- Establish support mechanisms for fathers in their relationship with their children, regardless of their marital and financial status.
- Integrate state and local services available for families.

For more information about the Fatherhood Initiative, contact Jennifer Miller at CACD at 203-744-4700.



CACD's Jennifer Miller, Executive Director Bobby Poole, and Barbara West have helped to bring the Fatherhood Initiative programs to Danbury.

What Else Does CACD Do?

The Community Action Committee of Danbury (CACD) is a non-profit organization serving 19 towns within Northwestern Fairfield and Litchfield Counties. Its mission is to help low-income families and individuals achieve self-sufficiency and eradicate poverty. CACD offers the following:

Energy Assistance to low-income families and individuals, to help them stay warm in the winter.

Food Pantry provides free food to people who are struggling. They also offer free diapers to people in need.

Action Early Learning Center provides early care and learning experiences to children up to six years of age.

Eviction, Foreclosure and Prevention Program (EFPP) helps to stabilize housing issues between landlords and tenants to keep people in their homes.

Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) helps people achieve housing stability.

VITA Income Tax Service provides free state and federal tax preparation, including the option of electronic filing and electronic deposits.

To learn more about CACD's services, call 203-744-4700.

The Fatherhood Initiative includes the following programs:

Wise Guys helps prepare boys ages 11 to 17 to make good choices on topics such as health, relationships, and peer pressure. The course has a positive effect on pre-teen and teen boys' attitudes and knowledge about how their choices affect their lives. 6 one-hour sessions. Free movie passes and a day out at the Great Hollow Wilderness Camp are provided to those who complete the program. Contact Bill McNamara at 203-794-1413 for more information.

Moms as Gatekeepers helps to break down barriers between Mothers and Fathers and facilitate helpful discussions and efforts toward co-parenting. Children benefit greatly when their parents effectively co-parent. For information on bringing this program to your group or club, contact Sue Giglio at Families Network of Western Connecticut at 203-791-8773.

Doctor Dad covers well children, sick children, safe children, and injured children with relevant information on how to fix scrapes and cope with minor injuries. Children and dads gain relevant knowledge and have a great bonding experience while dads gain the ability to respond to the immediate needs of children. Targeted to fathers of young children. Participants receive an Emergency Kit worth over \$50 and a First Aid Guide. For more information contact Sue Giglio at 203-791-8773.

24/7 Dad focuses on key fathering characteristics—masculinity, discipline, and balancing work and family. It helps men evaluate their own parenting skills as well as their fathering role models. Contact Sue Giglio at 203-791-8773.

Nurturing Fathers is offered as a Spanish-speaking program to teach parenting and nurturing skills to men. It focuses on effective skills for healthy family relationships and child development. Program runs for 12 weeks. Participants receive a Dad's Day at the YMCA and discounts on YMCA classes. Contact Kim English at Families Network of Western Connecticut at 203-791-8773