



# The Importance of Fathers for Children with Mental Health Challenges

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"Of all the rocks upon which we build our lives, we are reminded today that family is the most important. And we are called to recognize and honor how critical every father is to that foundation. They are teachers and coaches. They are mentors and role models. They are examples of success and the men who constantly push us toward it."

--President Barack Obama, Fathers Day, 2008.

## Growing up without a father puts youth at risk

- **63%** of youth who complete suicide are from homes without resident fathers
- **85%** of children that exhibit behavioral disorders come from homes without resident fathers
- **90%** of children who are homeless or who run away are from homes without resident fathers
- **71%** of youth who drop out of high school come from homes without resident fathers
- **75%** of youth in substance abuse treatment centers are from homes without resident fathers
- **70%** of juveniles in state-operated institutions come from homes without resident fathers
- **85%** of all youths sitting in prisons grew up in a home without a resident father<sup>1</sup>

## Fathers can be critical to ensuring the well-being of children

- Biological, adoptive, or any man in a father role can be critical to ensuring the well-being of the children he loves and supports
- Fathers and father figures can provide the close, loving and supportive relationships
- Fathers and father figures can help provide children with a sense of security
- Fathers and father figures can help children live, learn and play with clear, appropriate rules and consequences
- Fathers and father figures can help build communities that are safe, have affordable healthy housing, and provide living wages, adequate health insurance and residents that value children and youth
- Fathers and father figures can provide high expectations for children, supporting their resilience, growth and achievement
- Father and father figures can validate the importance of family in the lives of children and youth

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<sup>1</sup> Statistics from "Fatherhood at a Glance" [www.daretobeking.com/fatherhood.htm](http://www.daretobeking.com/fatherhood.htm)

