Super Dads Super Kids
An Interactive Activity Program for Dads and The Children They Are Raising

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The Father Involvement Initiative – Ontario Network (FII-ON)

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Letter from the Author

I have a core belief that when dads are more involved, great things happen for kids, for families, and for our society. A unique role that fathers play is in the “activation” of their children. When mom walks up to her baby, that child’s physiological reaction is to relax and get ready to be cared for. When dad walks up to his baby, that child’s physiological reaction is to get excited and ready for action. Both are very important. And it is the child’s reaction to the father that Super Dads Super Kids is designed to build on. Fathers activate their children emotionally, physically, and cognitively. And fathers enjoy this; they enjoy being active with their children. They enjoy being part of decision making, of leading their children, and of interacting with them. So as you journey through Super Dads Super Kids, pay attention to how dads and kids interact with each other. Use this as an opportunity to allow fathers to be active with their kids and to support fathers in their desires to be more active with their children.

I am deeply indebted to the following for their unique contribution and steadfast commitment to fathers in our communities:

- The LAMP Community Health Centre/Ontario Early Years Centre (Etobicoke-Lakeshore)
- Child Development Resource Connection Peel – Ontario Early Years Centre (Brampton West – Mississauga Ontario)
- The Public Health Agency of Canada
- Henry Alves (www.alvesdesign.ca) and Magnus Hjerpe
- and especially the many dads and kids who gave ideas and feedback as this program developed

It is truly a privilege to be part of developing programs for fathers. May fathers and families be strengthened as we all work together to raise Super Kids.

Brian Russell

Toronto, ON, Canada
2009
Introduction

Super Kids . . . they come from Super Dads. Though it would be nice if children were able to grow on their own and develop into mature adults who contribute to this world, it takes a lot of sweat and effort for this to happen. Good kids don’t just happen . . . they are nurtured by caring, involved, and responsible adults. And for the 8 sessions of Super Dads Super Kids, the focus is on responsible fathers – men who make a conscious choice to be the solid role models kids are longing for and need today.

Responsible Father Involvement

But what do we mean by “responsible father involvement”? It means more than just having a male presence in the family. Responsible father involvement speaks to a man who chooses to show his child closeness, to share his ideas in parenting, to be part of making decisions, to attend activities, to show warmth and interaction, to use his humour graciously, to model purposeful problem solving, and to take part in rough and tumble play. These are the kinds of things that make the biggest difference for children. When a father makes the conscious effort to deepen his relationship with his children lots of amazing things happen. Research is showing that responsible father involvement gives children more hope in their lives, they are more likely to be confident leaders, their risk-taking and risk-management increases, they show more pro-social behaviour, and display a greater ability to regulate their emotions and behaviour (self-regulation). Further, these children tend to be more emotionally stable, experience depression and anxiety less, and to be more active.

Super Dads Super Kids (SDSK) takes a position that when dads and kids are put together, good things happen. And in the spirit of modeling good communication, interaction, and trust, SDSK was developed with continuous input from dads and kids. Through surveys, brainstorm, and discussions (in groups and through email) it was dads and kids who decided the topics that are in the program, the activities they would do together, and even the name. The main goal of SDSK is to deepen the connection and attachment between a father and his child(ren). The statement that summarizes what SDSK is about is: Deep connections come from enjoying your child, knowing your child, and paying attention to who s/he is. As the process evolves, some vital aspects are addressed. Communication, child development, and discipline were the clear first choices of the dads. Other topics, like health and safety, family balance, and understanding emotions were also deemed important for the dads to learn more about. This is a program we can say was designed by dads and kids for dads and kids. It doesn’t make sense to have it any other way.

Deep Connections come from enjoying your child, knowing your child, and paying attention to who they are.
Facilitation Tips

So as you facilitate dads and kids through these 8 sessions, here are some tips:

1) the basic flow of the program is as follows:
   - **arrival and settling in** - 15 minutes
   - **activity** - 30 minutes
   - **discussion** - 30 – 45 minutes
   - **reconnection** - 15 minutes

2) feel free to use different activities for dads and kids to do together. Be sensitive to the needs of your families and provide them with experiences that are meaningful. The goal of the activities is to get dad doing something with his child. Some of the activities have intentional teaching moments (like connecting the dots in session 1 and celery drawing up coloured water in session 6). Whenever possible, choose activities that can help connect with the intention of the session.

3) whenever possible, have the discussion component in a different room, away from the kids. Having the kids running around while the dads are trying to talk is very distracting.

4) let the dads speak. It may take a session or two (or more), but the more we allow the dads to talk and be seen as the experts, the more they will get out of this.

5) use the “take home discussions” carefully. Research is showing that the most effective parenting programs are ones which allow a parent to practice what is taught. The “take home discussions” are simple and should take no more that 5 minutes at some point between sessions. Encourage the dads to complete these exercises. It is one way to get the most out of the discussions.

6) having quality childcare is important. Dads will feel more free to open up if they know their children are well looked after. However, if there is a child who is really struggling with dad not being around, encourage the dad to go to his child when he thinks necessary. And if dad seems to be waiting too long, offer some guidance by suggesting the child has been upset for a long time and probably needs dad. Encourage dad that you can catch him up on the information at some other time.

7) have enough handouts to be able to give to dads who may be in the program but who choose not to come to the discussion time.

8) continue to remind the dads of the intention of the program: *Deep connections come from enjoying your child, knowing your child, and paying attention to who they are.*

And finally, have fun yourself. Enjoy this journey with the dads and the kids. Use this program with flexibility. Add your own ideas. Make it fit your families. You will find that supporting super dads as they raise super kids will be one of the most rewarding experiences for you.
1 – The Role of a Super Dad

Most dads don’t think of themselves as heroes. Most dads just go about their business of being a dad without looking for rewards or appreciation or affirmation that they are making a difference. Most dads are simply focused on their children – what is best for them, providing them with opportunities to grow and develop into the people they are meant to be. And what can often happen is that many dads don’t take the opportunity (or aren’t given the opportunity) to reflect on the job they are doing.

This session is designed to give dads a chance to reflect on the unique value of their roles. By helping the fathers become intentional in their fathering, men often gain new understanding of the importance of their influence in a child’s life. They can also be given new ways to influence their children more.

Super Thought: Super Kids come from Super Dads.

We begin with looking at the unique things a super dad brings to his children.

Goals of the Session

• to introduce the Super Dads Super Kids program
• for dads and kids to have fun together with a connect the dot activity
• for dads to connect with other fathers
• for dads to discuss the value of their role in their children’s lives

Agenda

• Arrival and settle in
• Activity
• Snack (optional)
• Fathers’ Discussion
• Reconnect activity

Materials Needed

• connect the dots activity sheet
• collection of items for discussion
• handouts
Description of Activity

- Castle Connect the Dots
  - print copies of the castle connect the dots page
  - have fathers complete these with their children
  - provide crayons, makers, stickers, and other materials to decorate the castle

Discussion content

1. introduction of the program - have the dads introduce each other
   - names
   - children
   - one thing that makes their child a “super kid”

2. give an outline of the 8 sessions – write this on a flipchart or go through the topics verbally
   1. The Unique Role of the Super Dad
   2. Watch Me Grow – child development
   3. Listen Up! – Communication
   4. Understanding our Child’s Emotions
   5. Discipline and Setting Limits
   6. Health & Safety 1 – Physical Exercise and Nutrition
   7. Health & Safety 2 – Injury Prevention
   8. Family & Life in Balance

3. welcome activity and warm up – 10 minutes
   - put objects on a table. Using tools and other everyday items, the idea is to get the dads thinking about their role and how they influence their children. Here are some ideas, but feel free to choose your own items:

   | screwdriver | compass | pencil |
   | stirring spoon | hat | telephone wire |
   | picture frame | liquid paper or eraser | dart |

   - have each dad pick one and talk about how it relates to being a dad
     - what does it symbolize
     - what does it make you think about
     - what does it say about the role of the dad

4. what my child needs - 20 minutes
   - this discussion is designed to give dads some ideas about one of the keys to successful fathering – building trust. Children need someone they can trust;
someone who is responsible, consistent, and caring.

b. using the handout the Building Blocks of trust
   • A dad who:
     • commits
     • provides
     • communicates
     • cares
     • guides
     • inspires

   i. review each building block by having a dad read each definition, one at a time
   ii. ask for other thoughts about the meaning of these building blocks
   iii. have the dads talk about how they do these things with their children
   iv. ask dads what other building blocks they would add to the wall

5. take home discussion – 5 minutes
   a. handout the “How am I Doing?” handout - ask them to complete these questions/statements before next session
      o on a scale of 1 – 10 – how would your child rate you on these?
   b. ask the dads:
      o choose one thing you will do this week that strengthens one of the blocks with your child – write it down, share it with the group (if comfortable doing so)

**Description of reconnect activity**

1. form a circle
2. choose a story for one of the dads to read to the whole group
3. take the *Super Dads Super Kids* pledge altogether:

   I am a father; you are my child.
   The things we do together can be really, really wild.
   We laugh, we hug, we fly . . . its true.
   We listen to each other as we say “I love you”.


2 – Watch Me Grow! - Child Development

Kids go through an number of stages and changes as they grow. Though we don’t necessarily know how this happens, we do know much about what a child needs in order for development to happen well. Dad influences his child’s development in many ways and it is valuable for him to explore the different aspects of development – cognitive, emotional, and physical development. By paying close attention, a dad can give better guidance, keep a child healthier, and offer opportunities to his child that are in line with the child’s preferences, strengths, and abilities.

Super Thought:
Super Dads pay attention to the development of their kids; they watch them grow.

Goals of the session
• For dads and children to have fun together making a bookmark
• For dads to learn about key elements of child development
• For dads to consider how their expectations impact their child(ren)

Agenda
• Arrival and settle in
• Activity
• Snack (optional)
• Fathers’ Discussion
• Reconnect activity

Materials Needed:
• materials to decorate a bookmark
• handouts
• evaluations
• activity sheets with ideas for each stage
• if possible, give each dad copy of Daddy, Come Play With Me!, available from FII-ON at www.cfii.ca (pdf version is available on the SKSD CD and online at www.cfii.ca)
**Description of activity:**

- Making a Bookmark
  
  o Have the dads and children work together to create their own unique bookmark. Encourage the dads to do this with their children. Some fathers will stand back
  
  o Provide different materials for them to use. For example:
    - construction paper
    - pieces of wool
    - stickers
    - quotes about reading (Reading is cool; Reading is Fun; I read everyday; etc.)
    - markers
    - foam shapes, etc.
    - also provide scissors and hole punch
  
  o Encourage dads and kids to be decorating the bookmark together

**Discussion content**

1. welcome activity and warm up – 5 minutes
   
   a. go around the room and have the dads introduce themselves, if there are new dads in the group
   
   b. check in on the building block each dad committed to at the end of last session

2. Initial exercise: *Is it appropriate, what we are expecting from our children?*
   
   o have 20 items on a tray
   
   o ask them to memorize what is on the tray them
   
   o take the tray away after 30 seconds
   
   o have them write down or recall everything they can remember

   *The Point:*
   
   it can be frustrating or embarrassing when we are expected to do something that is outside of our abilities children can feel this way when we expect too much from them

   So we want to look at how we can expect appropriate things from our children
   
   - have a general sense of child development - what can be expected at different ages
   
   - know your child - learn about them, their likes, dislikes, abilities, etc.

3. Overview of the 5 areas of Child Development – 20 minutes
   
   - the goal - to know what to expect from our children
   
   - the benefits - health, communication, discipline, getting help we need
for things our children are facing (special needs, etc.)

a. What is Child Development?
   Tell the fathers what child development is by summarizing or reading the following statement:
   Child development is a process every child goes through. It includes learning and mastering skills like sitting, walking, talking, skipping, and tying shoes. Children learn these skills (developmental milestones) during predictable time periods.

b. A quick overview of the 5 areas:
   • briefly define the following 5 areas:
     
     **Cognitive Development** is the child's ability to learn and solve problems. For example, this includes a two-month-old baby learning to explore the environment with hands or eyes or a five-year-old learning how to do simple math problems.

     **Social and Emotional Development** This is the child's ability to interact with others, including helping themselves and self-control. Examples of this type of development would include: a six-week-old baby smiling, a ten-month-old baby waving bye-bye, or a five-year-old boy knowing how to take turns in games at school.
     o learning to share
     o helping someone who is hurt
     o waiting patiently
     o following directions
     o dealing with conflict
     o enjoying other people
     o show anger in a healthy way
     o making friends

     **Speech and Language Development** This is the child's ability to both understand and use language. For example, this includes a 12-month-old baby saying his first words, a two-year-old naming parts of her body, or a five-year-old learning to say "feet" instead of "foots".

     **Fine Motor Skill Development** This is the child's ability to use small muscles, specifically their hands and fingers, to pick up small objects, hold a spoon, turn pages in a book, or use a crayon to draw.

     **Gross Motor Skill Development** This is the child's ability to use large muscles. For example, a six-month-old baby learns how to sit up with some support, a 12-month-old baby learns to pull up to a stand holding onto furniture, and a five-year-old learns to skip.
     o physical
     o coordination
c. Activity: 5 minutes

Using the above definitions, have the fathers identify which developmental task the following abilities fall under: (you don’t need to do all of these and you can add your own. The idea is to get the fathers to identify abilities in each category.) Fathers can fill in the sheet “Watch Me Grow” as these abilities are being called out.

- child can lift head and chest when lying on stomach – gross motor
- a child recognizes a bottle or breast – cognitive
- an infant imitates gestures – social/emotional
- a child looks in the direction of a person talking – language
- a child takes 2-3 steps without falling – gross motor
- a child holds a pencil – fine motor
- a child completes a puzzle – cognitive, fine motor
- a child pays attention to a conversation - language
- a child recognizes his/her reflection in a mirror – social/emotional
- a child uses a spoon without spilling – fine motor
- a child runs down the sidewalk – gross motor
- a child chooses between two activities – cognitive
- a child laughs at jokes – cognitive, emotional
- a child hums simple songs – language
- a child can tell you what day tomorrow is – cognitive
- a child expresses feelings verbally – emotional
- a child takes care of her toys – social/emotional
- a child reads signs to you – language
- a child walks along a balance beam – gross motor
- a child uses a knife for spreading butter
- a child uses words to express needs and feelings – language, emotional

d. Discussion:

how do we know our child may be trying something outside their abilities?

- look for ideas such as:
Teaching point – our children go through transitions into stages as they develop and grow. Often these transitions bring about some unrest in the child as they are trying to figure out the new thing. This can come with any of the 5 categories – children transition physically, intellectually, emotionally.

Children may be restless, sleep less, eat less, be a bit more irritable. And it often happens around every 6 months. Just a heads up!

- what my child can and cannot do –
- this is homework – think about it – fill in “This is my child”.
  - know your child – become their student – strengths, abilities, likes, dislikes

4. Value of play – 15 minutes
   (taken from Daddy, Come Play with Me!)

a. Brainstorm:
  - how does play benefit a child and a father?

Use these thoughts below to guide the discussion
  - explore and understand their environment - it is important for children to learn about the world around them
  - develop their brains - a child’s ability to think is developed by opportunities to make decisions, problem solve, use their senses, and see the results of their choices
  - learn what they can do with their bodies - they learn about hand-eye coordination, balance, strength, and agility
  - learn and practise new skills - play helps children develop skills such as paying attention and planning ahead.
  - develop social skills - children learn to get along with people by playing with siblings, parents, and other people
  - learn about life - through play children experience sharing, getting along with others, planning ahead, being creative, listening to other’s views. These are all skills that adults need to use every day, too.
  - have a good time - by being spontaneous and having fun, children learn how to enjoy life, even when some tasks can be tedious and tough

b. Discussion: - 5 minutes
  - How do we play well? – brainstorm ways we play well with children
✓ follow the child’s lead
✓ keep active
✓ enjoy being with them
✓ keep at their pace
✓ give your child time - to think, to plan ahead, to act
✓ use praise and encouragement
✓ play with them
✓ be a good audience
✓ give attention to quiet play

5. Take Home Discussion:
   • ask the fathers to complete “This is my child” handout
   • have dads commit to one thing they will intentionally do in play with their child

**Description of reconnect activity**

1. form a circle
2. choose a story for one of the dads to read to the whole group
3. take the *Super Dads Super Kids* pledge altogether:

   I am a father; you are my child.
   The things we do together can be really, really wild.
   We laugh, we hug, we fly... its true.
   We listen to each other as we say “I love you”.


3 – Communication

We’ve all been there – our child comes to tell us something and before we know it they are crying, frustrated, or looking at us like we have no idea about life. We stare back at them realizing that we have just missed what they have been trying to tell us. Too busy, too distracted, or too disinterested, we go about our own thing and have ignored their attempts at communication. Children are constantly communicating with us and us with them. Even when there is silence, we are communicating. Even when we ignore them, we are telling them something.

Break-downs in communication with children are one of the biggest stumbling blocks in our relationship with them. Misunderstandings, assumptions, and making hasty judgments get in the way of our ability to understand our children. But when we listen carefully, clarify what our children have said, and seek to understand before we make a judgment, our children learn to trust us – that we have their best interest at heart. And they learn to communicate because of the influence of their “super dad”.

Super Thought:
Super Dads communicate clearly, listen intently, and seek to understand their children.

Goals of the session

• for fathers to connect with their children through making paper airplanes, doing puzzles, and playing
• for fathers to connect with other fathers
• for fathers to learn about communication skills to use with their children

Agenda

• Arrival and settle in
• Activity
• Snack (optional)
• Fathers’ Discussion
• Reconnect activity

Materials needed

• handouts
• flipcharts
• blank paper for airplanes
• puzzles
• pictures of children
• handouts and pens
• FAQ sheets

**Description of activity**

• plans for paper airplanes -
  [http://www.funpaperairplanes.com/Plane%20Downloads.html](http://www.funpaperairplanes.com/Plane%20Downloads.html)
• instructions for different airplanes
• different coloured paper to make the airplanes
• markers, crayons, stickers to decorate airplanes
• puzzles

**Discussion content**

1. welcome activity and warm up – 5 minutes
   a. go around the room and have dads introduce themselves, if there are new dads in the room
   b. have dads share how they played with their child(ren) and what they learned

2. communication brainstorm – 5 minutes
   o ask: what are some barriers to communicating with children?
     • things like: time, where our attention goes, some distractions
   o ask: for some examples of distractions
   o highlight developmental issues, too – from previous session
     • age, language ability, etc.

3. how do children communicate
   a. refer to the Super Dads FAQs sheet – review some of the ways children communicate according to ages and stages – 5 minutes

4. activity: when they are . . . what are they trying to tell you? – 15 minutes
   a. use the “How Children Communicate” worksheet
   b. ask dads to identify different reasons a child may be doing the things listed on the handout. Remember there could be more than one reason for these. Try to encourage dads to come up 4-5 reasons for each. There are some ideas listed here:
     i. *ignoring dad* . . . (engrossed in a task, not respecting dad, can’t hear, dad says too much)
     ii. *hitting her sister* . . . (angry, thinks this is how she gets her way, controlling a situation, learned it from TV or friends, etc.)
     iii. *yelling* . . . (not getting enough attention, not getting his way)
iv. *laughing* . . . (something is funny, mocking someone)

v. *there is a blank line in the table to add other ways of communicating that the dads may come up with*

c. have the dads come up with helpful ways they can respond to their child’s communication

d. option: the dads can be split into smaller groups for this activity. Give each group one of the scenarios to discuss. Have each group report back.

5. abilities children need to learn to communicate – 5 minutes

a. brainstorm - what helps a child learn to communicate?
   i. literacy and reading
   ii. confidence and self-esteem

b. connect these to last session’s discussion about development and building self-esteem
   i. communicating well helps a child develop in many ways
      ✓ intellectually – they learn to speak, listen, etc.
      ✓ socially – they learn to read cues from other people

6. basic strategies – 5 minutes

a. ask dads for ideas about how we can help our children communicate
   o Listen carefully
   o Think before you speak
   o Save your raised voice for when you really need it
   o Speaking calmly
   o Speak clearly
   o Tell your child how you are feeling
   o Give clear directions and expectations
   o Read to your child
   o Have your child tell you a story – make it up
   o When reading, ask your child to finish the story or to imagine what might happen next
   o Ask your child to explain about a picture they have just drawn
   o Talk to your child about things they are looking at
   o Don’t’ jump to conclusions – find out what might be going on

7. take home discussion – 5 minutes

✓ choose a strategy and try it 3-4 times before next session

✓ words of encouragement list – Character Building Words – to use talking to children there is space for them to add their own words
Description of reconnect activity

- have a “contest” where everyone lines up and throws their airplanes
- if possible, have a prize for the farthest throw, best design, etc.
- take the Super Dads Super Kids pledge together:

  I am a father; you are my child.
  Things we do together can be really, really wild.
  We laugh, we hug, we fly . . . its true.
  We listen to each other as we say “I love you”.


4 – Emotions and Emotional Health

Bad days. Good days. We all have them. It is a normal part of being an adult to experience joy, sadness, anger, and other emotions. And our children go through these same ups and downs. Emotions are a normal part of their lives, too. A funny look from a friend, a heated argument with their teacher, a good joke with their sister, or a quiet moment with their dad – all of these can happen in a day and all of them stir up different emotions in them.

As children grow, it is key for them to learn to “regulate” their emotions. This means identifying and acting upon the emotion appropriately. A child who regulates his emotions well is less likely to go through anxiety and depression as he grows up.

Super dads are role models in their child’s emotional development. Children learn about their own emotions through a super dad who is aware of and is in control of his own emotions. A super dad also acknowledges his children’s emotions and teaches them to express them well.

Super Thought:
Super Dads help their children understand their emotions.

Goals of the session

• for dads and children to have fun together
• for children to play a game supporting literacy
• for fathers to discuss information about children’s emotions
• for fathers to discuss ways to build their child’s ability to control and express emotions

Agenda

• Arrival and settle in
• Activity
• Snack (optional)
• Fathers’ Discussion
• Reconnect activity
**Materials needed**

- A-Z activity sheet
- Handouts
  - the emotions I see in my child
  - I know how you feel
  - emotion faces
- Pictures of children’s faces showing different emotions

**Description of activity**

- A-Z Around the Room
  - Have dad/child teams find things around the room beginning with A and moving through the alphabet to Z

**Discussion content**

1. Check in – 5 minutes
   a. Go around the room and introduce each other, if there are new dads who have joined the group
   b. For those who were at last session, ask if they tried any new communication strategies and what communication strategy they tried

2. Hand out emotion faces sheet and ask the following questions: - 5 minutes
   a. Is there an emotion that your child shows most often? It may be on this sheet or it may be a different one
   b. Is there an emotion that characterizes you most often?
   c. Do you find it easy or hard to understand your child’s emotions?
      i. Why?

3. How children express emotions – 10 minutes
   a. Using “pictures of children” (slides you can use on PowerPoint or print for them to be able to see), have the dads look at the pictures
   b. Have the dads talk about what emotions the child may be showing
   c. Ask the dads what some reasons may be for different emotions –
      i. Anger shows . . .
      ii. Sadness shows . . .

4. Responding to children’s emotions – 5 minutes
   a. Brainstorm – What are some ways dads respond to their children’s emotions?
      i. Discipline/punish
      ii. Ignore
      iii. Listen
   b. Mistakes we can make
i. respond to anger with anger
ii. respond to enthusiasm and excitement with discipline (Calm down, its not appropriate to act excited)
iii. responding to fear by shaming
iv. responding to shy with “grow up”

5. tips on understanding our child’s emotions and how to respond to them – 5 minutes

a. refer to “I know how you feel” handout

b. ask: how does the following help you develop emotional health in your child (use the notes with each question to guide the discussion):

(i) pay attention to your child (this has been a common theme throughout Super Dads Super Kids do far)
   • it is hard to help what we don’t know much about – it is difficult to help our child if we really don’t know them too well
   • attention shows a child she is important and valued
   • attention encourages a child to communicate with you more
   • attention allows you to learn about your child

(ii) acknowledge your child’s emotions
   • shows emotions are valid and therefore the child feels validated
   • young children are unable to separate their emotion from how they view themselves. They are their emotion. This is why the behaviour that accompanies emotions is so often extreme.
   • when their emotion is validated (even if it is too extreme or even wrong), the child is validated and affirmed
   • dad’s role is to guide in healthy expression of the emotion and to teach the “right” emotion for the moment

(iii) name the emotion for them
   • this helps children learn about their feelings
   • this helps children learn to identify their feelings
      o to tell the difference between anger and sadness, between happy and excited, etc.
   • they learn to communicate their emotions better

(iv) redirect the emotion – if necessary
   • “I see you are really excited about being at Grandma’s house. Why don’t you go give her a big hug.”
   • “You must be really angry that Teddy broke your tower. You need to tell him you are angry instead of throwing the blocks back at him.”

(v) show emotion ourselves appropriately – gives something for a child to model
6. key thoughts:
   c. paying attention to our child helps us know our child’s emotions
   d. be comfortable with our own emotions
   e. responding to a child’s emotions well helps them be more emotionally healthy
      i. resource for emotional health – tips, impact
         1. depression
         2. anxiety
         3. self-esteem

7. take home discussion:
   a. emotion faces handout – put it up somewhere (fridge, bedroom, etc)
   b. use “The Emotions I See In My Child” to pay attention to emotions your child shows
      i. what your child show
      ii. what they might have been trying to tell you
      iii. how did you find out?

_Description of reconnect activity_

   o have a dad read a story to the whole group
   o take the Super Dads Super Kids pledge together:

         I am a father; you are my child.
         Things we do together can be really, really wild.
         We laugh, we hug, we fly . . . its true.
         We listen to each other as we say “I love you”.


5 – Discipline and Setting Limits

Now we come the topic that is most troublesome for most parents – discipline. We have spent time discussing child development, strategies to communicate with your children, and some ideas for helping children understand and express their emotions. Each of these is key in disciplining well. We need to know what we can reasonably expect from our children (development), how to communicate our thoughts with them, and how emotions can so easily control our child’s behaviour.

Discipline done in a caring, loving manner is more likely to get the desired response. Therefore, discipline needs to be done in the context of the larger relationship. The stronger dad’s attachment and bond is with his child, the more his child will respect his decisions and wishes. Discipline must therefore always be done with a respectful attitude. This respect will deepen a child’s trust in his father’s words and expectations.

Super Thought:
Super Dads set clear limits and discipline carefully.

Goals of the session

• for dads and children to have fun together making and playing with playdough
• for dads to connect with each other
• for dads to discuss discipline strategies

Agenda

• Arrival and settle in
• Activity
• Snack (optional)
• Fathers’ Discussion
• Reconnect activity

Materials needed

• playdough recipe (make copies of the recipe on the next page for each dad)
• handouts
Super Playdough

You will need:

- a big bowl
- salt
- cream of tarter
- oil
- different flavours of Koolaid crystals
- boiling water
- a flat surface (table or cutting board)
- Ziploc bags

Directions:

In a big bowl, first put in
- ¼ cup salt
- 2 teaspoons of tartar
- 2 teaspoons of oil

In a measuring cup,
dissolve 1 pack of Koolaid crystals into
- 1 cup of boiling water

Add:
dissolve crystals to the big bowl and stir

Gradually add
- 1-2 cups of flour
Mix until there is a dough mixture
Knead the dough on the table to right consistency

Keep
- in an airtight bag and in the fridge when not using

Have fun!!
**Description of activity**

- (making playdough is an optional idea – if making playdough is not possible in your setting, put out playdough with cutters, shapes, etc. for dads and kids to play with)
- provide all ingredients for making playdough
- playdough recipe:

  • encourage dads to talk with their kids about texture, smell, colour, etc. of the playdough
  • provide shapes, cutters, etc. for dads and kids to use while playing with playdough
  • provide Ziploc bags or other baggies for dads to take the playdough home in

**Discussion content**

1. checking in – 5 minutes
   a. if there are new dads in the discussion group, have everyone introduce themselves
   b. for the dads who were in the last session, ask:
      i. what emotions did you notice in your children since the last session?

2. setting limits – 10 minutes
   a. brainstorm:
      i. what are the benefits to children when we set limits with them?
         - learn patience
         - safety, etc.
   b. outline the following mistakes we make when setting limits:
      ii. **too much structure** – reduces space for creativity
          • sometimes structure is necessary – like when making playdough, or playing soccer, or when a ball bounces into the street
          • but we get too much structure when we tell them how to play with the Lego blocks, or
      iii. **rapid-fire commands** – too many strung together
          • young children can’t remember too many commands at once
          • leads them to give up, not listen to dad’s commands
          • “Take your clothes upstairs, get your pjs on, brush your teeth, and find a book for me to read to you.”
      iv. **in too much of a rush**
          • puts stress on children
          • less likely to comply out of choice – it will require some kind of verbal or physical force
      v. **being vague or unclear**
          • discussion – make a list of clear and unclear commands
vi. using criticism to motivate
- Don’t be lazy, don’t be careless, etc.

vii. using questions
- always open up to a response we may not want to hear
- “Don’t you want to get your shoes on so we can go to Grandma’s house?” – this leaves it open for a child to respond yes or no

c. using the handout “Setting Limits”, discuss the following strategies for setting limits:
- keep your commands/limits to one thing at a time
- keep commands and expectation age-appropriate
- be as specific as possible
- focus on what you want – not what you don’t want
- use “when . . . then . . .”
- praise obedience
- use enforceable statements

3. discipline strategies – when the limit is crossed – 15 minutes
   a. discuss these points:
      i. before dad does anything in response to his child crossing the line, ask yourself:
         - what is happening here?
         - why is it happening?
         - what can I do about it?
         - logical consequences
            i. giving a child a consequence that fits the situation
            ii. children learn best when the opportunity to learn is as closely related as possible to the situation
                - cleaning up spilled milk, not losing TV because of the spilled milk
            iii. ask for other examples from the dads
         - natural consequences
            i. allowing the situation to run its course so that a child learns through experience
            ii. this often allows for deeper learning for a child because they experience the consequence without someone telling them about it
                - not finishing homework, the teacher will give a low mark
not coming when called the first time means you missed out on the popsicles everyone else received

iii. ask for other examples from the dads

✓ **ignoring behaviour**
  i. some behaviours will go away if they are ignored
  ii. careful to mention that not everything can be or should be ignored
  iii. brainstorm – what behaviours can be ignored?
      • yelling, whining, temper tantrums, etc.
  iv. remind dads – they still need to keep their child safe – we cannot ignore our child if their behaviour is putting their safety at risk

✓ **broken record**
  i. repeating the command, limit, expectation
  ii. holding to the boundary despite whining, anger, calling you names, etc.
      • You may not go outside until your piano practise is complete.

4. activity:
  a. using the 2 scenarios on the “Discipline” handout, discuss these questions for each: (you can come up with your own scenarios, too, that fit your group of dads better)
     i. ask “what might be happening here?”
     ii. ask “why might it be happening?”
     iii. ask “what can I do about it?”

5. take home discussion – 5 minutes
  o before next session, try one or two of the discipline strategies discussed in the session

**Description of reconnect activity**

  o have a dad read a story to the whole group
  o take the Super Dads Super Kids pledge together:

    I am a father; you are my child.
    Things we do together can be really, really wild.
    We laugh, we hug, we fly . . . its true.
    We listen to each other as we say “I love you”.

6 – Physical Health -- Activity & Nutrition

How many times did we hear this growing up – “get outside, get some fresh air, move your muscles!” Our parents had the right idea. The body is like a machine. the parts need to be kept active in order to keep functioning. And we need to add the right elements in order to keep it working properly. Part of a healthy lifestyle is keeping a body active (exercise) and watching what we put into it (nutrition).

A Super Dad teaches his child to look after his/her body by staying active and eating well. This session is designed to give dads some ideas about how to do this.

Super Thought:
Super Dads teach their children to look after their bodies by staying active and eating well.

Goals of the session
• for dads and children to have fun together with a simple science experiment
• for dads to connect with each other
• for dads to discuss the value of physical education & nutrition
• for dads to discover a simple way to teach their children to be active and healthy

Agenda
• Arrival and settle in
• Activity
• Snack (optional)
• Fathers’ Discussion
• Reconnect activity
**Materials needed**

- stalks of celery
- food colouring
- cups and water
- handouts (one per dad):
  - physical activity booklet from the Public Health Agency of Canada
    - The Public Health Agency of Canada has set up a toll-free telephone service at 1-888-334-9769 for people to order the Guides free of charge. As well, the Guides can be ordered at [www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/pau-uap/fitness/order.html](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/pau-uap/fitness/order.html).

**Description of activity**

- a simple science experiment: turn the celery blue or red
- you may want to start one of your own the night before, because it may take more time than you have for your program for the experiment to work
  - separate the celery into individual stalks and cut them short (about 20 cm long). You will be using the end with the leaves – it looks the best
  - put water in cups
  - have kids add their choice of food colouring – red or blue work best
  - put each stalk in its own cup of coloured water
  - at the end of the program, check to see what has happened to the colour of the celery – it will (hopefully) have absorbed the colour of the water
  - the point – what goes into the celery affects what it looks like
    - what goes into our bodies affects our body – put good stuff in and we get more energy and feel better; put bad stuff in and we lose energy and feel worse

**Discussion content**

1. checking in – 5 minutes
   a. if there are new dads in the discussion group, have everyone introduce themselves
   b. for the dads who were in the last session, ask:
      - what discipline strategies did you try since the last session?
      - how did things work out?
2. Some Facts – 5 minutes
   a. share some facts about children’s health with the dads. Here are some, but you can add or use your own:
      - about 1/3 of boys and ¼ of girls are overweight. This is a significant increase in the past 30 years
      - 45% of children don’t get enough calcium for their bones to develop properly
      - children spend an average of 6 hours per day in front of a computer, TV, or video game

3. Barriers to children’s activity – 5 minutes
   a. brainstorm: ask the dads “What are some things that keep children from being as active as they need to be?”
   b. here are some ideas
      - video games, computer time
      - amount of homework and school requirements
      - influence of friends
      - role modeling of parents
      - self-esteem
      - obesity
      - lack of opportunity or encouragement to get active
      - snacks and meals (quality and quantity)
   
   • The most highly rated barriers to children’s activity as reported by their parents are:
     - high costs, accessibility, peer influence, skill, too much homework, video games and computers

4. Cause or Effect – 10 minutes
   a. this activity is designed to give dads a chance to discover the things that lead to poor and healthy physical health (causes) and the things that are the result of poor and healthy physical health (effects)
   b. divide a flipchart paper into 4 quadrants with the following headings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>causes of poor health</th>
<th>causes of super health</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>effects of poor health</td>
<td>effects of super health</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   c. put the following statements on 3x5 cards or slips of paper

   | portions too big | 60-90 minutes of physical activity/day | possibility of diabetes |
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sugary snacks</th>
<th>processed food</th>
<th>eating in front of the TV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>more than 1 hour of “screen time” per day</td>
<td>whole grain cereals and breads</td>
<td>lots of fruits and vegetable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reduce non-active time</td>
<td>walking to school</td>
<td>drinking 3-4 classes of water per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>children involved in grocery shopping</td>
<td>balanced healthy breakfast</td>
<td>feeling lazy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>isolation</td>
<td>more tense and uptight</td>
<td>less energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>obesity</td>
<td>more likely to have an injury</td>
<td>strong bones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>less stress</td>
<td>more flexibility</td>
<td>higher endurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>better concentration and focus</td>
<td>meets new friends</td>
<td>strengthens heart</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- feel free to add your own ideas to this list – especially ones that may fit your dads who you are working with

- have dads pick them one at a time (either have them upside down on a table, in a bowl or hat, or some other way for these to be chosen)
  - have some tape prepared to use to stick each on the flipchart
- for each card, ask the dad who chooses it to attach it to the appropriate quadrant of the table
- as dads are doing this, have them write in the statements in their handout titled: “A Super Kid is a Healthy Kid”

5. Helping Children Lead Healthier Lifestyles – 10 minutes

a. the key step is to help children be aware of the issues. Then they will be more likely to choose to be healthy themselves. Following are 5 ways dads can encourage a healthy lifestyle.

b. Activity:
  - divide the group into 5 small groups (if the group is small, you can go through each of these “ideas” together).
  - give each group one of the following ways to encourage a healthy lifestyle
    1. Involve children in the process of deciding how to live healthily
2. Set goals with your child  
3. Give feedback and praise  
4. Get children to agree to the plan  
5. Reward and recognize change

- have each group discuss  
  1) how this idea can help  
  2) one or two ways they can apply this with their child(ren)

- have each group report back what they discusses

- dads can write down thoughts and ideas on the handout “Building a Super Healthy Lifestyle”

- 5 Ideas to discuss:
  1. Involve children in the process.  
     - Thoughts to guide the large group discussion: They will be far more motivated if they play a part in the decision-making process. Help them become aware of how much activity they do now and how inactive they may be. This is essential to the next step.

2. Set goals with your child.  
   - Thoughts to guide the discussion: Goal-setting helps children check their own progress. If you have more than one child, it might be helpful to set a goal to which they all can contribute. Encourage small steps. Strive for the goal, check the results to find out what is working and what is not working, revise the goal and try again.

   - Thoughts to guide the discussion: Talk about what the child did to be active everyday and praise and reward small steps.

4. Get children to agree to the plan:  
   - Thoughts to guide the discussion: Talk often
about physical activity goals with the whole family to encourage the children to do what they said they would do.

5. Reward and Recognize Change.

   • Thoughts to guide the discussion: Reinforce new behaviour and celebrate successes through rewards and recognition.

   c. wrap up
   o review the “tips” at the bottom of the “Building a Super Healthy Lifestyle” handout

6. take home discussion
   a. before next session, try one or two of the physical activities listed in the booklet

**Description of Reconnect Activity**

   o check out the progress of the water in the celery
   o take the opportunity to remind kids that what we put in our bodies changes how we feel and what we can do (energy)
   o take the Super Dads Super Kids pledge together:

     I am a father; you are my child.
     Things we do together can be really, really wild.
     We laugh, we hug, we fly . . . it’s true.
     We listen to each other as we say “I love you”.


7 – Physical Health – Injury Prevention

Unintentional accidents and injuries are the primary reason for children to visit a hospital emergency room. These accidents include automobile accidents, pedestrian accidents, falls, burns, and more. All children are prone to hurting themselves. Though many accidents are preventable through careful attention to the environment and to the child’s behaviour.

The thing about dads and injuries is that dads tend to be more risky in their play with and attention to children. This has tremendous benefits: increased coordination and confidence, a different level of fun and enjoyment, opportunity to test their limits, to name a few. However, more risk also opens the door to the potential for more injury. It is very important that a father allows his child to take risks, but also be attentive, careful, and aware of the environment his child lives in.

Super Thought:
A Super Dad teaches his child to be safe in play and to pay attention to the environment.

This session is designed to give dads some ideas about the risks around home and the environments that children live in and how to prevent injury through prevention and supervision.

Goals of the session

• for dads and children to have fun together making up a story and/or reading together
• for dads to connect with each other
• for dads to discuss the possible injuries that can happen to children
• for dads to learn about prevention and supervision as key elements that can help avert accidents

Agenda

• Arrival and settle in
• Activity
• Snack (optional)
• Fathers’ Discussion
• Reconnect activity
Materials needed

- questions to guide story telling
- handouts
- pictures of potential hazards

Description of activity

- using the “Let’s Make a Super Story” handout, have dads sit with their children and make up a story together. Encourage dads to let the child guide the story. They can use the questions and ideas on the handout for some ideas.
- For dads with younger children (babies and toddlers), you can have them read a story to their child. Encourage them to be animated and use their imaginations, too, as they are reading.
  - animate characters
  - change your voice tone
  - ask you child what they think will happen next

Discussion content

1. checking in – 5 minutes
   a. if there are new dads in the discussion group, have everyone introduce themselves
   b. for the dads who were in the last session, ask:
      - what activities or nutrition ideas did you try since the last session?
      - how did things work out?

2. Injury Quiz – 5 minutes
   a. ask the following questions to get dads thinking about children and injuries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children are rarely injured from home products.</td>
<td>False</td>
<td>On average of 18,000 emergency room visits are as a result of injuries to children related to home products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>True or False</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What type of furniture causes the greatest number of injuries when it tips over?</td>
<td>Televisions</td>
<td>The answer is Televisions. Television sets are heavy and hard and if they fall on children it can result in head injuries, broken bones, crushed nerves, and internal injuries. Anchors, angle- braces or furniture straps can be used to secure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
television to the wall. When mounting a flat screen television to the wall, ensure that you follow the manufacturer’s instructions and use the brackets recommended by the manufacturer. Many televisions fall as a result of using the wrong bracket.

| Bath seats keep children safe in the bathtub. True or False | False | Bath seats and bath rings are dangerous. They give parents and caregivers a false sense of security. Parents are often more comfortable leaving their baby alone in the bathtub for a few moments if the baby was in a bath seat. If your baby slips under the bath ring, the bath ring can trap your baby under the water. No child under five should be left alone in the bath, not even with a sibling. |
| How old should a child be before she can sleep on the top bunk? A. 5 years old B. 6 years old C. 7 years old D. 8 years old | 6 years old | The majorities of injuries related to bunk bed use are as a result of a fall from the top bunk. Children five and under are at greatest risk of being injured while on the top bunk. |
| The only way to find out about a product recall is if you happen to hear about it on the news. True or false | False | Health Canada website has all the information about recalled items. That is the most reliable place for this information. |
| Which type of window coverings have been linked with childhood strangulation? A. Roman shades B. Window blinds C. Curtains D. All of the above | All of the above | Children have been injured by becoming entangled in window covering cords. Different window coverings, such as drapes without cords or roller blinds, are safer for children. |
3. Some Facts – 2 minutes
   a. share some facts about children’s injuries with the dads. Here are some, but you can add or use your own:
      i. most common injuries:
         i. unintentional injuries
         ii. car accidents
         iii. falls
         iv. burns and cuts
         v. as pedestrians
         vi. drowning

4. Identifying Possible Injuries – 10 minutes
   a. this activity is designed to give dads a chance to discover and discuss some of the things that can lead to injury in children
   b. using the pictures on the PowerPoint slides, facilitate a discussion of the potential injuries that can come from each.
      i. you can use PowerPoint OR print the pictures
      ii. ask the dads to brainstorm how kids can hurt themselves. Encourage them to be as specific as possible with their examples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Possible Injuries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bike</td>
<td>falls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>head injuries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>scrapes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fireplace</td>
<td>burns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>falls off mantle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>window</td>
<td>falls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>curtains/blinds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>electrical plug</td>
<td>electric shock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bathtub</td>
<td>drowning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>burns from hot water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bleach</td>
<td>poisoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>door</td>
<td>pinched fingers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>trip on threshold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>playground</td>
<td>falls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iron</td>
<td>burns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stairs</td>
<td>falls</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Keeping Kids Safe – 3 minutes
   • there are many ways to keep children safe from injury.
   • two key things for dads to keep in mind:
     o prevention
     o supervision
   • though not fool-proof, children are less likely to get injured when a parent:
     o is proactive in looking around the environment for unsafe items, situations, etc
     o is paying close attention to what they are doing and where they are doing it

6. homework - 5 minutes
   a. before next session, complete the “Home Safety Checklist”
   b. ask dads to walk around their home/apartment and look for safety issues they see. Encourage them to get down on their hands and knees and crawl around a “kid level” (especially if they have infants or toddlers).

Description of Reconnect Activity
   o take the Super Dads Super Kids pledge together:

     I am a father; you are my child.
     Things we do together can be really, really wild.
     We laugh, we hug, we fly . . . its true.
     We listen to each other as we say “I love you”.

8 – Family/Life/Work Balance

Does all this fathering stuff sound tough? Well, that’s because it is. Being a dad is the toughest, though the best, job on the planet. The rewards are many, though the sweat is real. As we have discussed discipline, the physical care of our children, how they develop, how to communicate with them, and how they develop, one thing is clear – it takes a lot of time, commitment, and wisdom.

This session, our final one in the Super Dads Super Kids program, is designed to discuss some ways of managing the stress that can come with being a dad. We are all trying to balance the responsibilities of our lives, regardless of family structure, employment status, and age of our children. So join in as we discuss some ways to manage our priorities, values, and time. Super dads don’t have everything together in their lives, but they are open about their situations and do what they can to be there as a credible influence in their children’s lives.

Super Thought:
A Super Dad realizes its not the amount of time he has with his family, but rather what he does with the time he is given.

Goals of the session
• for dads and kids to have fun together building a bird feeder
• for dads to discuss the importance of balancing their priorities between their family, their work, and the rest of their lives
• for fathers to connect with each other
• to wrap up the Super Kids/Super Dads program

Agenda
• Arrival and settle in
• Activity
• Snack (optional)
• Fathers’ Discussion
• Reconnect activity

Materials needed
• plastic water bottles with lids, sticks, bird seed, wire
• rocks, pebbles, sand, large glass jar
• handouts
Description of activity

• you will need to collect empty water bottles for this activity
• have dads and kids work together to build bird feeders from plastic water bottles
• poke holes in the bottle to hold the sticks
• attach a wire to through the top of the bottle lid

Discussion content

1. checking in – 5 minutes
   a. if there are new dads in the discussion group, have everyone introduce themselves
   b. for the dads who were in the last session, ask:
      ▪ what safety issues did you find when you did the safety check up?

2. Some Facts – 2 minutes
   a. share some facts about how stress and busyness impacts families
      o stress costs $1.7 billion in lost work time in Canada

3. What adds stress to a dad’s life – 5 minutes
   a. brainstorm sources of stress with the dads
      o lack of time
      o getting chores done
      o demands from children
      o relationship with mom/partner
      o work, etc.

In order to deal with stress, two things need to happen:

☑ an assessment of a dad’s values – what is important to him. Stress can come from putting energy into things that really don’t matter.

☑ an assessment of a dad’s priorities – how he chooses what to do with his time and resources. Stress can come from doing things that conflict with what is important.

4. Values – discussion – 5 minutes

This discussion is intended to guide a dad in determining what is most important to him. By taking his child’s perspective, dad can think about how others may be perceiving what is important to him. There may be a difference between what is important to him and what other people (his child) would say are important to him.
Ask the dads the following (use the handout “What’s One Word” to guide this, too):

a. *what is one word our phrase you want your child to use to describe you?* – have the dads put this word in the box underneath the funnel

b. *what will you do to show this word or phrase to your child?* how will you prove to your child you are and will be this way? – have the dads think of things they may do or attitudes they will show their child
   
o for example, if you want your child to describe you as a dad who is compassionate, how will you show compassion? If you want your child to describe you as a dad who has integrity, what will show your child that you have integrity?

5. Priorities – 10 minutes

a. Rocks, Pebbles, Sand in the jar

b. You will need:
   o a large glass canning jar
   o 3-4 rocks that will fit in the jar
   o a handful of pebbles
   o some sand

c. talk with the dads about priorities
   o ask a dad to do this with you as you talk
   o *pour in the sand* – our life is often filled first with the small stuff – those things we think we can get done quickly or are urgent
   o *pour in the pebbles* – then we try to get the things done that we think we can check off our list again quickly
   o *try to put in the rocks* – the biggest, more important things are then often left undone or ignored
   o dump out everything and start again
   o put in the rocks first, then the pebbles, then the sand – when we start with the things that are most important, we often find the other things fit in much easier
   o the principle – keep the main thing the main thing
   o *what is your main thing?*

An important part of this discussion is to remember that for most dads, spending time with their children is the priority. However, the reality is that non-custodial fathers will have limited choice in terms of amount of time with their children; over-employed dads (needing to work 2-3 jobs OR long hours at one job) will not have much choice in terms of amount of time with their family; dads with busy kids may not feel they have much to say about the amount of time they spend together. The
point is to help dads think about ways to be creative with the time and how to make the time they have worthwhile.  

**It's not the amount of time we have, but what we do with the time we are given.**

6. Planning to Bring Balance – refer to the “Family & Life: In Balance” handout

   a. set your priorities
      
      o you can have the dads do this on the handout
      o look at the different things that fill your time – family, work, free time, etc.
      o rank these in order of priority

   b. plan your family time – make time for your children
      
      o proclaim it – tell your family about it
      o protect it – do your best to not let other priorities sneak in
      o preserve it – keep it going – make it a habit

   c. say “no” to the non-essential things
      
      o these are different for everyone, but it's important that dads consider what are some of their unique non-essential things that take up their time

   d. take regular breaks – we work better when we break regularly

   e. limit distractions – especially when doing the things that are most important to you
      
      o **brainstorm** with the dads some distractions they have

   f. be creative with down time –
      
      o **brainstorm** with the dads some ideas for using “down time”
         • commute home from work to get ready for the kids at home; get enough sleep; get up a bit earlier in the morning, etc.

   g. let your family know you are thinking about them
      
      o **brainstorm** with the dads some ways to increase their “family focus”
         • book in time to think about your family
         • call them once a day
         • write them letters or emails
• put pictures in the places you spend most of your time (car, office, desk, etc.)

7. *Super Dads Super Kids* program wrap up
   a. with the dads – do a check in about the things they appreciated, learned, or would like to see different in the SKSD program,
   b. hand out certificates
   c. with the dads and kids – have a special cake or snack to celebrate the special relationship kids and dads have

**Description of Reconnect Activity**
   o take the *Super Dads Super Kids* pledge together:

   I am a father; you are my child.
   Things we do together can be really, really wild.
   We laugh, we hug, we fly . . . its true.
   We listen to each other as we say “I love you”.
Resources

*Super Dads Super Kids* is always looking for new ideas for activities and resources that can enhance this program. If you have:

- ideas for activities
- resources related to the topics
- comments about the flow and use of the program
- suggestions and feedback as a facilitator or from the dads and kids

please pass them along to:

*Brian Russell*
*brrian.russell@strongfathers.ca*

Here are some ideas of resources for some of the topics:

**Communication:**
http://www.partnershipforchildren.org.uk/resources/children-s-communication.html

**Physical Activity**
http://www.region.peel.on.ca/health/baew/resources/

**Injury and Safety –**
http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/wellbeings/index.htm
http://www.safekidscanada.ca/safekidsCanada/

**Helpful Sites**
www.cfii.ca
www.fira.ca
http://raisingchildren.net.au/
Handouts