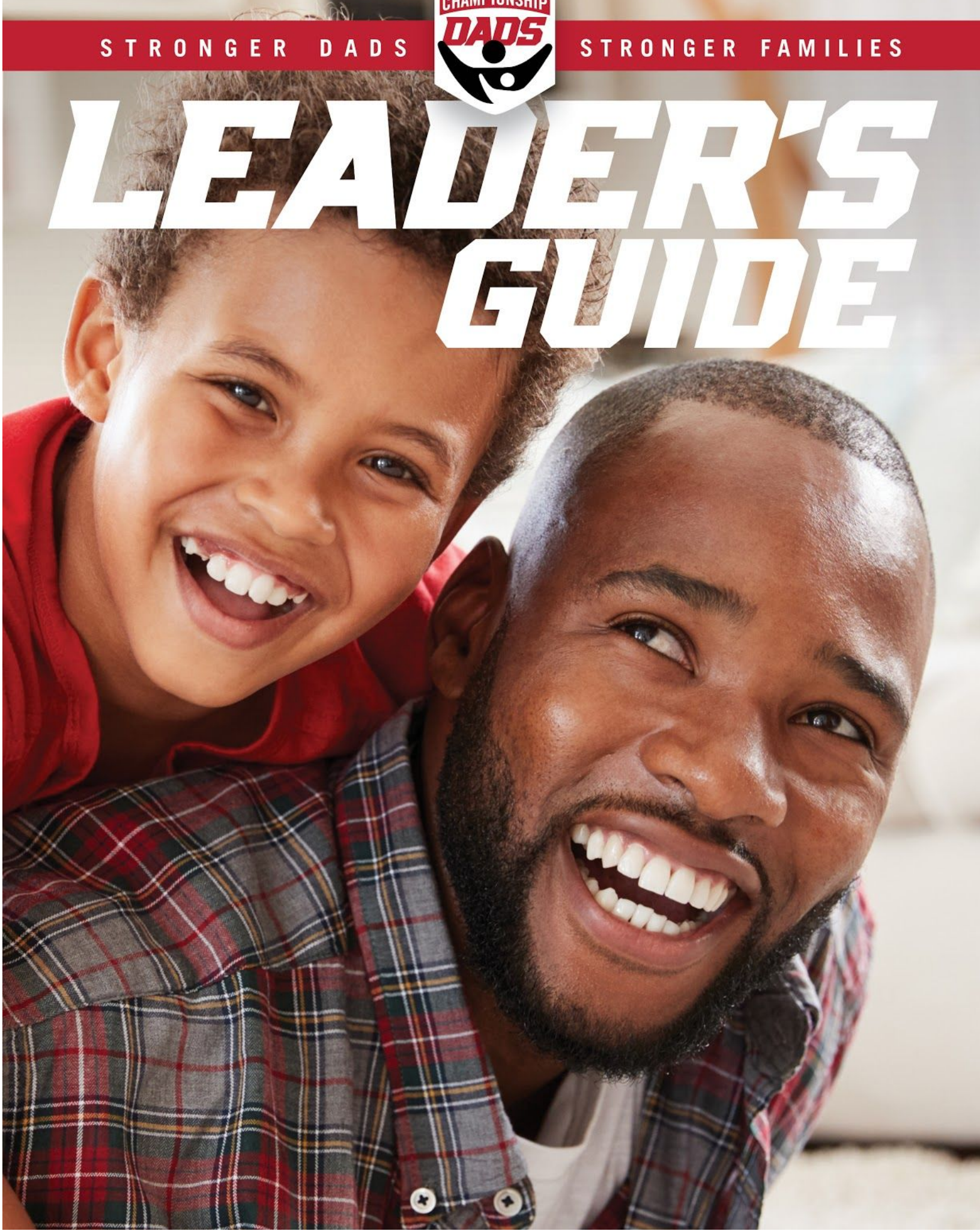


STRONGER DADS



STRONGER FAMILIES

LEADER'S GUIDE





Championship Dads

Leader's Guide

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in partnership through TANF funding.





Championship Dads

The Championship Dads Curriculum was created by Arkansas Better Dads to help men in Arkansas become better dads. Funding for Arkansas Better Dads and this program was provided by Arkansas Department of Workforce Services through the TANF program.

We at Arkansas Better Dads are grateful for leaders in the state of Arkansas who have worked hard to help Arkansans be, and have, better dads. Governor Asa Hutchinson, Secretary of Labor Daryl Bassett, ADWS Director Charisse Childers and TANF Director Phil Harris have been instrumental in making this project possible.

This curriculum was written and organized in large part by Dennis Jumper. Dennis is a father of three, grandfather to ten, and an inspiration to his church and community. Whether at home, on the basketball court or the local church, Dennis has proven himself to be a Championship Dad.

No father begins as an expert, and no father is perfect. Yet any father can be great. Any father can be significant. Dennis is both. I'm grateful for this Champion.

Randy Jumper

Arkansas Better Dads



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Introduction to Championship Dads

The course objective is to make Dads better Dads. No Dad is perfect, and every Dad can improve. This course is not focused on how Dads fail, but on how Dads can become better.

This course is split into four lessons, each representing a session you will lead with your group of Dads. In this guide, you'll find an introduction to each lesson, giving you an idea how to approach the material and prepare for teaching. Thoughtfully study the lesson introduction and material and consider how you will teach your Dads.

Each lesson has four 'Better Dads Tips', with content supporting each Tip. In addition, discussion questions will help reinforce the content and help engage the Dads in conversations. These discussions provide great opportunities for the Dads to learn from each other. Finally, a very important part of each Tip is a section called 'Get In the Game,' where Dads are challenged to come up with specific actions and strategies that they can take to be a better Dad.



Championship Dads Leaders Checklist

Before The Class Begins

- Make sure the room is comfortable for attendees.
- Arrange seating to encourage group discussion (4 to 6 people at a table works well).
- Set up and test any equipment that will be used.
- Know the location of restrooms, drinking fountains, exits, parking, etc.
- Bring extra copies of workbooks, forms, and handouts.
- Set up refreshments if available.
- Have pencils or pens available.
- Provide name tags or tent cards on tables.
- Study and become familiar with the Course Material, Participant Workbook, and Leaders Guide.

Beginning of Class

- Welcome and register participants as they arrive.
- Start on time.
- Familiarize participants with the location of facilities.
- Discuss the objectives of *Championship Dads*.
- Review the agenda, time frame, and format of class.
- Encourage participation.
- Discuss ground rules.
- Utilize some form of icebreaker so that people get to know one another.



Eight Things You Can Do To Be An Effective Class Leader

#1 Understand Your Role As A Leader

Championship Dads is discussion-based. However, as the leader, you must lead. While your teaching and experiences will drive the instruction, this course is not about you; it's about the Dads in the class. Your role is to guide these Dads through the material, helping them to understand how to be a better Dad and put into action what they are learning. You will find other Dads in the class will help you 'teach' as they share their experiences. What they learn from each other may be more valuable than the actual course material.

#2 Know The Material Before You Start

For the class to be effective, a leader must know the material. Prepare, prepare, and prepare some more. The better you know the material, the more successful you will be in presenting it. Try to avoid reading to the class as much as possible by putting things into your own words. Think about stories from your own experience to illustrate a particular point. Speak from your heart, not from your head. Don't be afraid to use visual aids, such as PowerPoint or marker boards. Again, prepare, prepare, prepare!

#3 Be Comfortable With Your Own Limitations and What You 'Don't Know'

The good news is that you don't have to know everything. None of us have been perfect Dads. We have all made mistakes. It is okay as the leader to admit you don't know the answer to a particular question. It is likely someone will ask you how to handle a situation and you will not have an exact reply. That's okay. You could respond with, "That's a great question. I'm not sure what the right answer is, but let me do some research and I will get back with you on this." Being transparent will help you better relate to everyone and earn their respect.

#4 Show Care & Concern For Each Dad

There is an old saying that goes like this: *'People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care... about them.'* Not everyone is easy to love. As the group leader, you set the atmosphere with how you treat those in the group. Make every effort to treat all the Dads with respect. If the study lasts several weeks, email the guys who come; call or text them outside of class. Try to be involved in their lives. This means you will need to *listen*, not just talk.

#5 Make The Class A 'Safe' Place

The class environment should encourage Dads to ask questions, share their feelings, and be transparent. It should inspire rather than discourage, building hope rather than despair. Your goal as the leader is that every Dad leaves the class believing that they can be a better Dad and knowing specific steps they can take to do so. This course covers most of the typical issues that Dads face. In this short time frame, you can only do so much. You may encounter a Dad with a very serious situation; don't try to solve a complex problem in the class. Know your limitations. Some things are better handled in private. Know when someone needs help that you can't provide and direct them to someone who can help them. Undoubtedly, the sessions will also bring up areas of weakness and hurt. Don't avoid tough subjects; be sensitive to people's needs as they process the class material.

#6 Set The Ground Rules Up Front

The ground rules will help the class get the most from this course. They should be covered at the beginning of the class, and you should ask for their agreement to abide by these rules. We suggest the following as good guidelines to follow:

- We will practice confidentiality.
- We will show respect to everyone, both personally and with their time.
- We will listen when someone else is talking, with no side conversations.
- When we talk, we will not be long winded.
- We will participate in all the activities.
- We will not try to 'fix' other people's problems.

- We will stay focused on the subject matter and not get sidetracked on other issues (politics, sports, agendas, etc).
- We will follow the leader's directions.

#7 Be Flexible, But Try To Stay On Track

Be sensitive to what is happening in the group. If a topic is striking a chord and generating some obvious excitement and interest, don't be bound to the clock. Our real goal is transformation and growth, not 'completion' of an assignment.

#8 Use Questions Effectively

Use open ended questions frequently. Asking *why* or *how* questions forces the Dads to be more thoughtful and detailed in their response. Questions break the monotony of your own voice; if you are doing all the talking, then it is very likely that the quality of communication may not be very good. Questions give you, as the leader, the opportunity to check and see if effective learning is taking place.



Lesson 1 Provide Leadership

Introduction to Teaching

This lesson strongly emphasizes the importance of fathers leading their families. Dads are necessary in their children’s lives as they work to be available and serve as a leader. Sadly, in our culture, many dads have given up their leadership spot. But all Dads can provide good leadership to their children if they do it with a plan and try their best. In this lesson, we will examine ways Dads can lead well!

Introduction for Dads

Dads have the duty and privilege of “being there” for their kids as leaders and examples. This lesson examines ways fathers can lead well and with a plan.

We suggest the following amounts of time per ‘Better Dads Tips’

Better Dad Tip #1	Better Dad Tip #2	Better Dad Tip #3	Better Dad Tip #4
Instruction Time			
15 minutes	15 minutes	10 minutes	15 minutes
Discussion & Get In The Game			
15 minutes	10 minutes	10 minutes	10 minutes



Be a Good Leader

Too often our homes are kid-centered in that everything is dictated by what the children want or like. If the kids don't feel like doing schoolwork or other responsibilities, they are allowed to neglect them. If they want to have a steady diet of less healthy foods, they are allowed to dictate the menus of the home. But nobody really sees that as ideal, and it can prove unhealthy. While it's important to consider the wishes of the children, homes need Dads who lead.

With parents leading, homes can follow a plan that provides guidelines, boundaries, or standards of what is considered acceptable, right, or wrong. This provides the security that every child needs. Children may protest rules and bedtimes and standards of behavior, but deep down, they appreciate them and find comfort in them. When they have children of their own, you may find that they parent just like you.

Whether a Dad feels like a good leader or not, he is already leading—by example. So Dads need to work to be good examples of healthy living, good choices, and faithfulness in everything. If you have a good work ethic, your children will see that as the way to work. If you avoid unhealthy lifestyle habits, they will more than likely do so as well.

In our relationships, when they see us being kind and forgiving and helpful to those who need our assistance, our kids will probably form and maintain relationships like they have seen us do. Consider, also, the friends whom you bring around your children and think about what the kids may be learning – good or bad – from them.



Time Out for Discussion

What might stop a Dad from leading and seeing himself as a leader?

What is an example of good leadership you admire?

What do you think will be the outcome if you lead your family with a plan and a purpose and put your best effort into leading them?

Dads who are positive role models:

Have a Healthy Mind

Keep a positive mind set
Get enough rest
Are always learning
Are approachable

Have a healthy lifestyle

Rest, exercise and eat healthy foods in right portions
Avoid unhealthy habits
Form accountable relationships
Develop positive friendships

Look for 'teachable moments'

Keep the lines of communication open with their family and children
Include the kids whenever there is something appropriate for them to learn
Model a healthy, positive attitude

Model unselfish service

Let the kids see you do someone else's work in the home
Include the children in community service efforts
Let them see you put them above your interests as priorities

Sadly, too many priority lists look something like this...

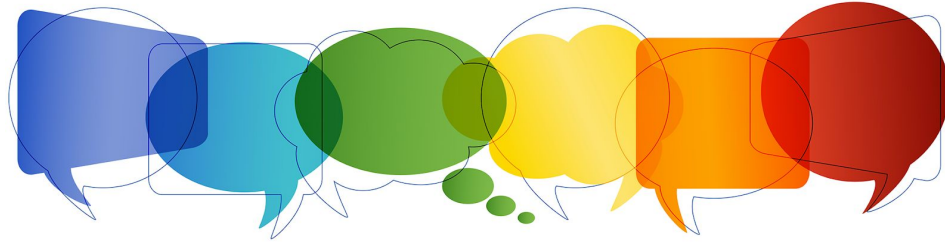
1.
Job/Money

2.
Recreation

3.
Things

4.
Friends

5.
Family/Kids



Time Out for Discussion

How can busy Dads prioritize their time?

What do you think will be the impact on a family whose Dad prioritizes his time well?



For me to be the best possible leader of my family, I need to (be specific):

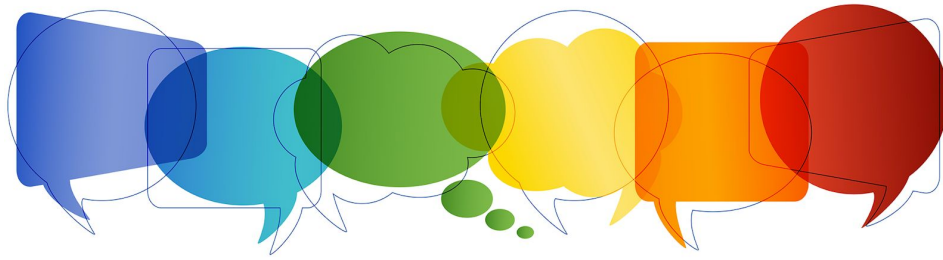
Live with Integrity

Integrity implies being “whole,” or actually being what we want others to think we are. It’s one of the most important things we will teach the next generation. Having integrity means forming a set of values and living by them faithfully. And, of course, our children don’t miss much; they are watching how we live our life and deciding for themselves what their standards of living should be. As an example, if we value honesty, we are careful to be truthful, and we will set that as the standard in the home and with the kids.

Having integrity means doing what we value and believe to be right, even when no one is looking. Teach this to your children and let them catch you DOING what is right. They will probably learn more by what they see us do than by what we tell them.

Sometimes it may be a matter of looking for teachable moments, like giving back extra change a cashier accidentally gave you or letting someone know they dropped something valuable. It can also mean following through with what you say you will do and letting your children see it happen. If you tell them you will be at their ball game or school program, make every effort to be there. If you tell them you will take them to dinner, do it. Be a person who can be counted on; you will see that your kids will follow your example.





Time Out for Discussion

Think of someone you respect for their integrity. What about them do you admire?

How do you know that they are a person of integrity? Make a list of the characteristics of such a person with the people in your group:



Where in your life do you need to work on your integrity?

What are some opportunities coming up in your life to model integrity?
Be Specific.

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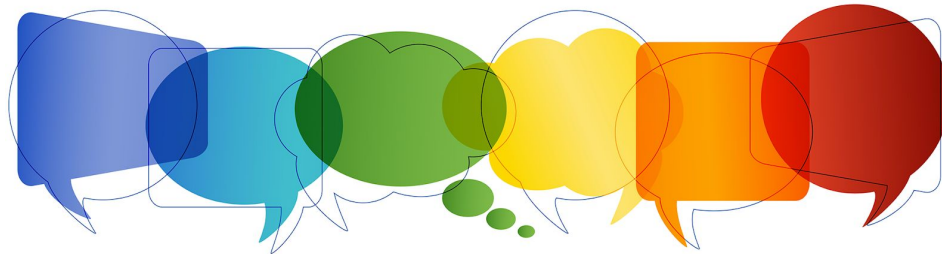
#3

Guide Your Family's Journey

Dads play an important role in the identity and character of their family, helping guide it through the stages of life. Championship Dads guide their families by taking the lead and setting a good example with good priorities and disciplines. Being on time to school and work, doing one's best at everything, and having a kind word for everyone (instead of complaining or gossiping) sets a good example for children, and encourages them to do the same.

Do we want our families to be known for kindness and generosity, for service in our community and a positive outlook or excellence? Or would anyone want their family name to be associated with laziness or with being undependable? Nobody wants their family to have the reputation of dishonesty or negativity.

Healthy and dependable practices and good disciplines when the kids are young will likely mean their futures will be brighter. A family who takes an interest in their children's school involvements will more likely see kids who graduate and go on to succeed in life. Families who are known to help others and show kindness will produce more families who do the same, benefiting everyone.



Time Out for Discussion

Do you have family meetings with your family? How has it benefited you? If not, how do you think it might benefit you?

What is one way you can lead your family better through the stages of life?



On a scale of **1** to **10**, circle how you rate your leadership of your family's identity and reputation:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How can you improve?

Serve With Humility

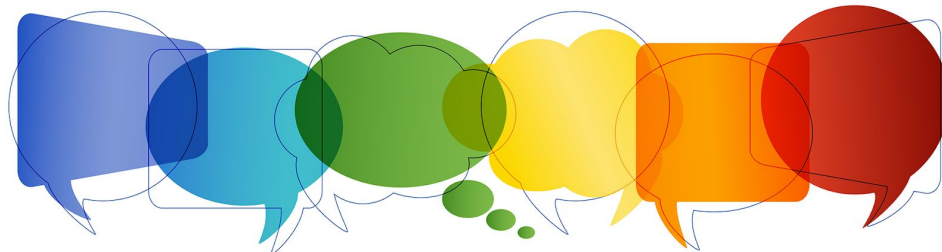
It has long been recognized that organizations tend to mirror the example of the leader or boss. In the family, this same imitation can be found. The culture of a family is a product of how parents lead. Leadership in a family should be servant leadership.

The key characteristic of a servant leader is humility. Championship Dads understand this important principle. A Dad who is a servant leader will focus on how best to serve his family. Dads who lead by this model instill important values of how to treat others and how to act as a family. These values of servanthood impact a child's entire life.

A Dad who embraces an authoritarian, dictator-like style of leadership and wants to be "the boss," will probably find that this approach will fail. If you do this, you may create deep resentments and anger, triggering family members to rebel. Children raised in this atmosphere often question the love that their Dad has for them or develop deep insecurities.

True humility is an attitude of the heart. It is having the desire to serve rather than be served. The famous writer Rick Warren defined humility this way...

“ Humility is not thinking less of yourself,
it's thinking of yourself less.



Time Out for Discussion

How have you seen servant leadership in action? What are specific examples?

What benefits are there in leading with a servant type humility?

What does humility look like for a Dad? Consider the following...





Which of the above 7 characteristics is easiest for you as a Dad to do with your family?

Which is the hardest to do consistently and why?



Lesson 2

Be a Loving Dad

Introduction to Teaching

Lesson Two gives very important information on the importance of expressing love. Dads often are weak in this area. Let your focus be on helping the Dads see, not just the importance of expressing their love, but also the need to express that love in different ways.

As you prepare for this lesson, take particular care with *'Better Dads Tip #7'*. This Tip is probably the hardest one to teach. As you begin, take a minute to explain the terms "custodial" and "non-custodial" Dads. Keep it simple by just explaining that custodial dads have their children living with them and non-custodial dads don't. The "non-custodial" Dads have special problems because of their limited time with their children. There are no discussion questions in this tip. The focus should be more on teaching. Tip #7 is a very sensitive area for some Dads; because of relationship problems, they may find it very difficult to accept what is being presented. Stay with the course material. Stress the reasons why it is important for Dads to love their child's mother, no matter how difficult the situation might be.

Introduction for Dads

For a Dad to be described as a "loving Dad" is the ultimate compliment. The power of love to impact another person's life is amazing. Dads, through their love, can have a positive impact on their families. This lesson will highlight a few ways a Dad can show his love for his family.

We suggest the following amounts of time per 'Better Dads Tips'

Better Dad Tip #5	Better Dad Tip #6	Better Dad Tip #7	Better Dad Tip #8
Instruction Time			
10 minutes	10 minutes	20 minutes	10 minutes
Discussion & Get In The Game			
10 minutes	10 minutes	5 minutes	10 minutes

Be a Loving Dad

Most parents feel love for their children naturally. But what about stepchildren or children who simply have difficult personalities? All children need to know they are loved—and have no hint that they are less loved than another child, or not loved at all. Here are a few important points about how to love your kids so that they are confident in it:

A. Know Your Children

When a Dad takes a clear and strong interest in all aspects of a child's life, it assures the child that they are both valuable as a person and loved by their Dad. Get to know your child's likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses. You may need to intentionally “study” your children. Don't assume they are all the same, or just like you. Learn what is unique about each one.

B. Provide For Your Children

Providing for our children's physical needs is important. However, being a provider is more than providing food and shelter. Dads are critical providers of the emotional needs of their children. Be present for your child. Too many dads assume providing for their child means making money to pay the bills; that is just part of what you need to do to provide for your child. Provide a shoulder to cry on. Provide a smile to brighten their day. Provide an encouraging text message to help them on a tough morning. Provide for all of your child's needs.

C. Be Accessible To Your Children

Studies show that the simple presence of a father in a home improves the chances that a child will grow up to have a healthy, productive life. Just having a father who is present means that they will be less likely to drop out of school, use illegal drugs, engage in risky behaviors, form unhealthy habits, or commit crimes. But, how much better to have a Dad who is not just there but actively engaged in the lives of his children? How available are you to your children? Do they feel like they can come to you with their questions? With their fears? With their hopes and dreams?



Time Out for Discussion

As Dads, how can we become more accessible and approachable to our children?

D. Have Your Children’s Best Interests At Heart

Dads who love their children are always looking out for their best interests. A lot of tension in the home occurs when that love is not expressed. Dads must understand that a child often does not have the maturity to see what is best for him or her. A child will focus on the moment, but a loving Dad will focus not just on the moment but on the future as well. He won’t give in when he knows that the child he loves will be harmed if a particular course of action is taken. This is particularly applicable to younger children. As a child matures and becomes of age, Dads – as loving parents – may give them more freedom to make decisions. They may make some wrong choices with this freedom and choose not to accept our guidance. However, learning from their mistakes is an important part of their growth process.

E. A Dad’s Love for His Children is Dependable

Love cannot be bought or earned. It is given freely. A Dad’s love should follow this example. There is great security in the Dad-child relationship when the child understands that they are loved because of who they are not because of what they might do. Do not misunderstand, this does not mean that if the child does wrong, a loving Dad will not discipline them. A Dad may strongly disapprove of certain behaviors and still love his child.



Complete the following statement:
I feel I need to love my children more by...

Creatively Communicate Your Love

D. Ross Campbell, in his book *How to Really Love Your Child*, tells us, "A child is the most needy person in our society, and the greatest need is love."

A Dad who does not show love to his children can harm them in many ways. Lack of love can lead to low self-esteem and feelings of isolation. Misbehavior is common among children who do not feel loved; many times their misbehavior is a cry for love. When Dads do not show their children love, they may turn to other people or things to satisfy their desire to be loved; this search for love often leads them to very detrimental relationships.

Dads cannot assume that their children know that they love them. Even if you are a good provider and do things for them, your children still need to hear three powerful little words:

"I Love You."

Those three spoken words will help your children to...

#1

Have A Healthy View Of Themselves

When a child hears "I love you" from their Dad and it is said often, even when they have been acting badly, it lets the child know that they are loved not because of what they do, but because of who they are.

#2

Have A Greater Sense Of Security

Children who are told they are loved are less likely to develop unhealthy fears and phobias. Their home is a 'safe' place.

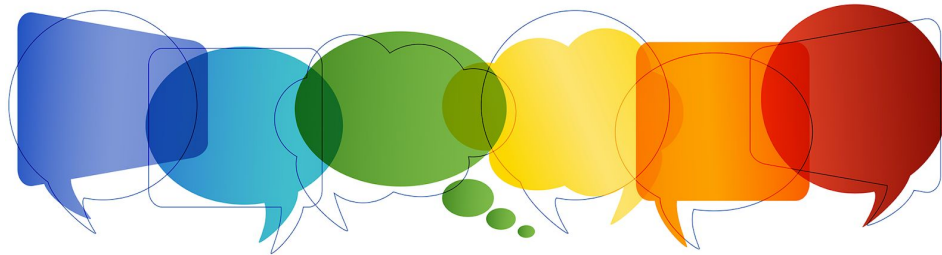
#3

Have A Better Understanding Of Emotions

Dads who say **“I love you”** with feeling and sincerity help their children learn about one of the most important emotions in life. Their future relationships will be patterned after their Dad’s expressions of love.

Saying **“I love you”** does not always have to be verbalized. A very effective non-verbal way is to put it in writing. Seeing Dad take the time to write out his feelings for a child can make a big impact.

Saying **“I love you”** can be communicated in other creative ways. Some families have developed ‘code’ words or phrases for one another that mean ‘I love you.’ Others have come up with hand signals or other creative signals that send this important message. These do not take the place of the verbal expression, but are simple ways to add depth and significance to expressions of love.



Time Out for Discussion

Why do dads sometimes have problems saying, “I love you?”



Make a list of times when it would be good for you to tell your child, "I love you."

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#7

Love Your Child's Mother

A century ago, Theodore Hesburgh made this profound statement: "The most important thing a father can do for his children is to love their mother."

These words are still true today. Children need their Dad to love their mom. Relationships between parents are often filled with tension and fighting; these battles take place in both custodial and non-custodial settings. When parents do not treat each other with respect, it creates an environment that may be very harmful to a child.

This *'Better Dads Tip'* will be hard for some of you. In today's culture, the traditional family is no longer the norm. You can be a Championship Dad even if your kids are not living with you. According to the US Census Bureau, one in three children are growing up in homes without their biological father. Studies have shown that over half of all marriages end in divorce. Your child's mother may be difficult to love. She may have done things that cause her to be difficult to love. She may even be difficult for your children to love. Your child's mother might not be your current spouse – which means showing love to your ex-wife can be both difficult and dangerous!

For others, loving and honoring your child's mother is no problem. She is the love of your life. You might think you can't do any better in this area. But, just as every man can be a better father, you can also be a better husband.

Regardless of whether your child's mother is with you or not, how you treat your child's mother will make a lasting impression on your child. Part of being a Championship Dad is that you do what's right in any situation.

Why should a Dad love the mother of his children?

#1 It Develops a Sense of Security

When a Dad loves his child's mother, it fills a child's need for security. Children need a sense of security during their formative years. A child's world is constantly changing, and Dads and Moms who constantly fight create further instability. Children see their friends' families breaking apart and wonder if theirs will be next. Children of parents who divorce already have their security damaged, and when parents continue to fight it further erodes their sense of security. A Dad can overcome those very negative feelings and strive to be at peace with his child's mother.

#2 It Creates Healthy Views of Relationships

When a Dad loves his child's mother, the child forms a healthier view of relationships. Children replicate their parents' relationships. Dads shape their children's future relationships whether they realize it or not. Their children learn valuable life lessons that will affect future relationships with the opposite sex. Boys learn how to treat women and how to be a husband. Girls learn what true love really is and how they should be treated by men.

#3 It Improves the Quality of Relationship with the Child

"When a Dad loves his child's mother (or makes every effort to maintain an honoring and peaceable relationship with her), it fills the need a child has for security. A Dad who dishonors his child's mother makes it hard for his child to honor him. A child will be protective of a mother. Children resent someone mistreating or disrespecting their mother. Dads should realize that when they show love and respect to their child's mother, it makes it easy for the child to respect them and have a meaningful relationship.

Dads show love for a child's mother in a variety of ways. It is important that a child sees their Dad express love and respect towards their mother.

A. Custodial Dads

If you are married to your children's mother, make every effort to show love and kindness to her. The children are watching, seeing everything, and learning what a Dad is supposed to do by observing you.

At the heart of a Dad's love for his wife must be the understanding that she and he are one in purpose in forming a marriage, the family unit, and in raising responsible, kind children.

The relationship is unique and exclusive, and it benefits the children in so many ways when they see their parents serving one another in life and being patient, kind, and honoring in their behavior toward one another and in their words.

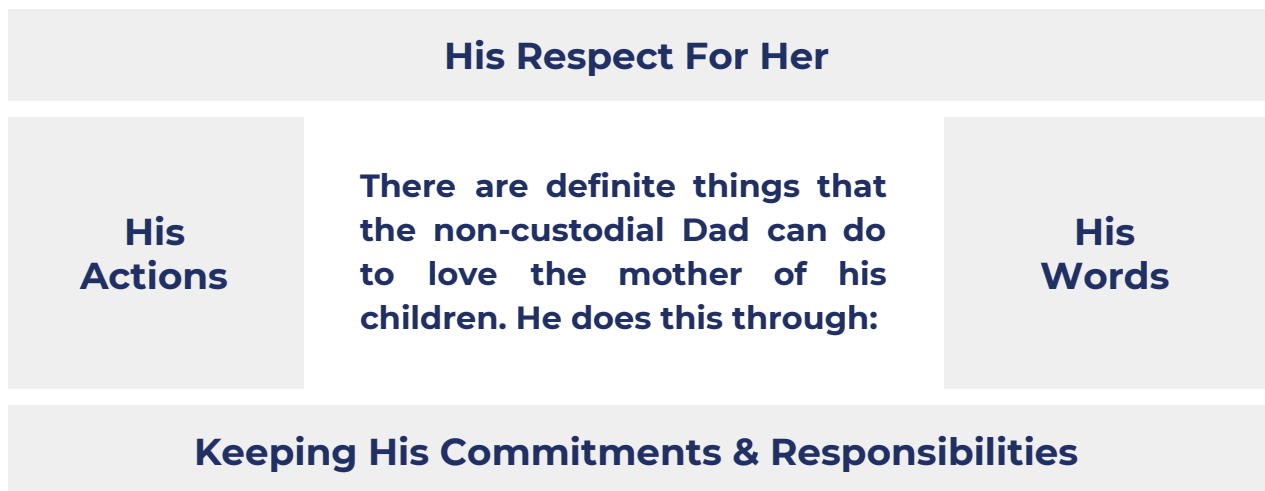
A Dad shows his love for his wife by his actions, his respect, by protecting her, using kind words, providing for her needs, being faithful to her, spending time with her, and in maintaining an intimate relationship with her.

Actions	Respect For Her	Protection
Words	A Dad shows his love for his wife by his...	Provision
Faithfulness To Her	Spending Time With Her	Intimacy With Her

B. Non-Custodial Dads

For the non-custodial Dad, his relationship with the mother of his children involves complexities not experienced by the custodial Dad. Chief among these is the fact that the non-custodial Dad's relationship with his child's mother has been strained, resulting in his current position as a non-custodial Dad. The blame for this disruption of a family's life is usually shared by both parents.

Dads, for the sake of their children, must be able to overcome any negative feelings toward their child's mother. Children have real difficulty dealing with these issues and Dads must be careful not to put their children in the position of having to take sides.



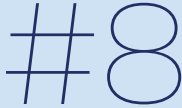
Honoring your child's mother can mean that you are forgiving. It means telling the truth about what has happened, while at the same time speaking with dignity and respect. You can tell the truth in love. It also means that at the appropriate time, and in the appropriate ways, you take responsibility for your actions that are wrong.

Even though it will take effort, no matter what the relationship you have with your child's mother, you can still respect and honor her and be civil in your interactions with her.



List at least **two** things you can do in the next two weeks to show your child you honor, respect, and love his or her mother.

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TIP



Make Time for Your Child

As a busy Dad, it may be hard to find time for your child. In fact, finding “time” may be almost impossible when you have a busy schedule. After all, there are only 24 hours in a day. This is why Championship Dads don’t *find* time, they *make* time to spend with their kids.

The time a Dad spends with his child can be very beneficial.



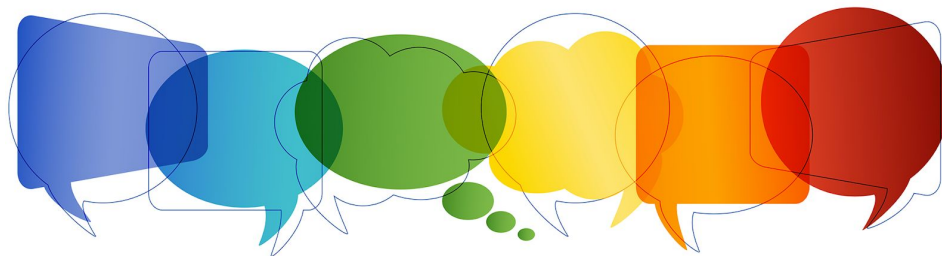
The amount of time a Dad can spend with a child can vary considerably. A custodial Dad will usually have much more time available than a non-custodial Dad. The question that often comes up as Dads deal with the ‘time for kids’ issue is... which is most important: quantity or quality of time?

Dr. James Dobson says about children:

“They need quality and quantity of time with loving, and committed parents.”

Common sense tells us that if we do not have much time to spend with our child, then that time should be highly valued and the quality of the time should be emphasized. A key part of making quality time is to schedule it. While it is true that some great quality times may just ‘happen,’ for most Dads, good quality time is planned and scheduled.

When Dads have more than one child, there is the possibility of Dads’ time being monopolized by one child over another. Some children by nature seem to get left out. We may not even realize that this is happening; Dads need to know their children so well that they can meet the individual needs of each. One of the ways to address this problem is having one-on-one time with each child. This special time alone can be very meaningful to your child. It sends them a very important message that they are important and valued by you. As a Dad and his child get to know each other better, the relationship strengthens. These times also give Dads the chance to address the unique needs that a particular child may have.



Time Out for Discussion

Discuss in your group different ways that a Dad can spend time with his child.
What are some creative options?



Write down how you can improve the time spent with your child.

What are some new places you can go with your child?

Make a plan to spend time with each of your children in the next month:



Lesson 3 Teach Healthy Behavior

Introduction to Teaching

Lesson Three has the most content, so you will have to spend more time teaching. Because of the nature of the topics, it will be easy to get sidetracked or spend too much time in one area. Remember that the objective is not to go in great detail, but just to focus on the main points.

In Lessons Three and Four there will be several references to how coaching and being a Dad are connected. Refer to the suggested timings, but you may have to shorten some discussion time to fit the needs of the lesson and cover these metaphors.

Introduction for Dads

Many Dads can relate to coaching. You probably had a coach at some point in your life. Good coaches like to win and, as a Dad, you want your child to be a 'winner' in life as well. There are three key things that winning coaches do that we should remember as we discuss how Dads like you can take on the responsibility of being a 'coach' to your child.

Teaching

Coaching is more about teaching than modeling.

Coaches are not on the field playing the game. Coaching is letting the players 'play' the game and coaching them from the sidelines.

Preparation

Coaching is about preparation.

It is primarily done before the actual game on the practice field. Coaches make their players better through repeated practice sessions.

Improvement

Coaching is about improvement.

Coaches analyze the players' actions and then give them ways to improve problem areas.

Good coaches help their players improve their performance, so that they have a better chance at winning. As a Dad, you want to 'coach' or teach your child so that they develop the skills necessary to come out a winner in the game of life. Children will engage in both healthy and unhealthy behaviors. Championship Dads coach for

healthy behavior; they recognize the negative impact that unhealthy behaviors can have on their child. This lesson will help Dads teach healthy behavior, identify the causes of unhealthy behavior, and provide constructive ways to handle the problem of unhealthy behavior.

We suggest the following amounts of time per 'Better Dads Tips'

Better Dad Tip #9	Better Dad Tip #10	Better Dad Tip #11	Better Dad Tip #12
Instruction Time			
15 minutes	15 minutes	15 minutes	15 minutes
Discussion & Get In The Game			
10 minutes	10 minutes	10 minutes	15 minutes

Help Your Child Develop in All Areas of Life

There are three main areas in which a child needs to have healthy growth and development. Dads should make sure that they are involved in each one of these other areas. Championship Dads help their children:

A. Develop Emotional Health

Emotional health is important for a child. A Dad can help shape this. Emotional health includes the thoughts, feelings, and accompanying behaviors of a person. A child is usually considered emotionally healthy when their behavior is appropriate for their age and has positive outcomes. In children, these thoughts and feelings are continually evolving.

Listen to your child. Listening is not just hearing, but it is also watching. Their behavior may be speaking volumes as to what they are feeling. It is natural for children to become angry and get upset from time to time. Many things happen to them that they feel they have no control over. For children, life is often very confusing. They need to let their feelings be known. Holding those feelings inside can lead to a number of serious problems. Dads, sometimes when you get upset, you need someone to talk to; it is your way of venting. Your children are the same way. Sometimes the best thing you can do is listen. After you give them the chance to 'vent,' most children will begin to calm down. As they calm down, you can talk about the emotions they are feeling and how best to deal with them.

These times when children become upset should be viewed as opportunities to help them become more aware of their feelings and to problem solve and teach them. Strong emotional feelings are normal for many circumstances. A Dad can show empathy for their child and acknowledge that they understand why they are upset. Real growth and maturity comes when Dad leads the child into problem solving. Problem solving is simply helping your child learn other ways to deal with being emotionally upset. This opportunity is all about your child learning self-control.

The role a Dad can play in shaping how his child thinks and feels cannot be overstated. There are two aspects of emotional health a Dad can focus on:

#1 Help Your Child Develop Their Unique Identity

Identity is defined as having a sense of who you are and why you are here. Dads can help their children find their identity. Children who do not have a strong sense of identity may be adversely impacted by the negative labels that others might place upon them.

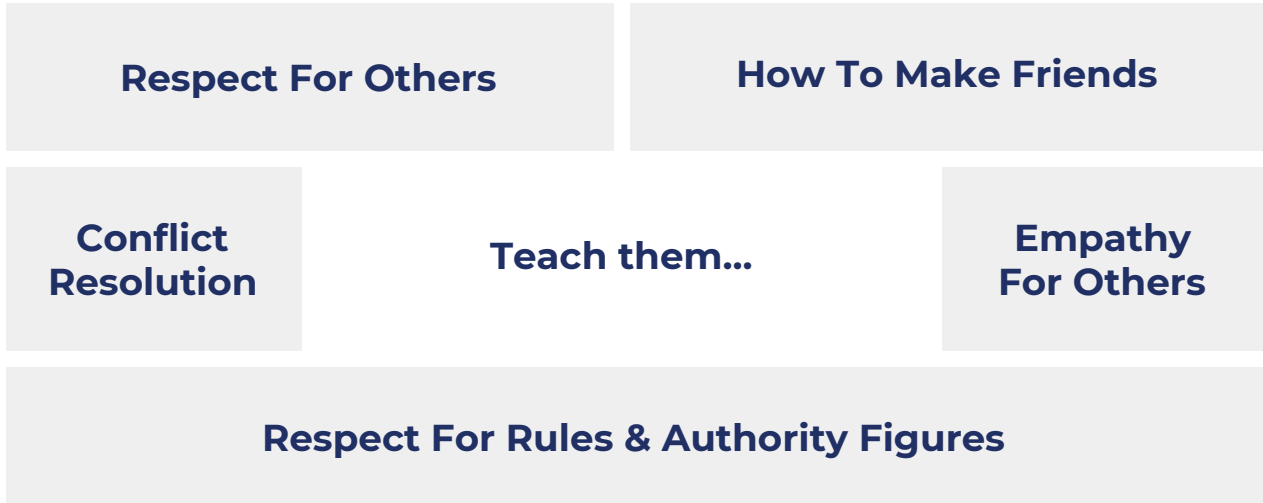
#2 Help Your Child Develop Healthy Self-esteem

Self-esteem is closely linked to identity/self-image and is centered upon the 'value' we place on ourselves. Healthy self-esteem is very important and Dads must help develop it in their child. Low self-esteem and insecurity are rampant in this generation. A good Dad makes sure he affirms his children and builds them up, while at the same time not letting them think more highly of themselves than is healthy. Dads should teach their kids to see themselves for who they are and teach them not to be consumed or shaped by how others might view them.

B. Develop Healthy Social Skills

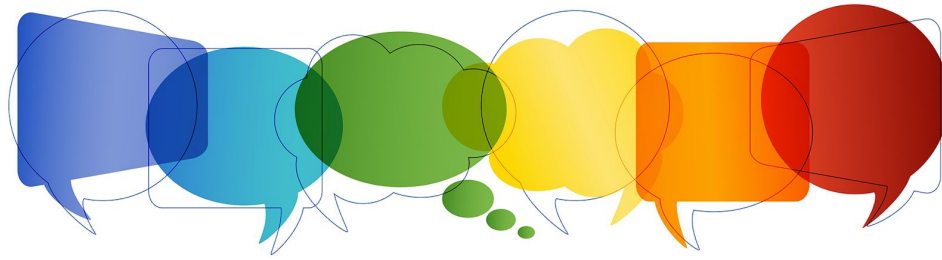
Social skills include talking to others, listening, getting along, having good manners, and having empathy for others. Social skills play a very important part in all of our lives. We interact with others daily, so our ability to interact socially will impact all areas of our life. This is why Dads must be concerned with how their child is interacting with others. Much of their future success in life will depend upon how well they develop social skills.

The learning of social skills starts in the home when children are very young. Dads must always remember that they are being watched. Much of what they learn in social skills will come not from what you tell them, but from what they see you do.



It has often been said that the best way to learn is by doing. Dads should always be looking for opportunities for their child to use the skills they have been taught. Encouraging friendships, joining groups, and participating in sports activities are all ways for children to become socially involved. Dads should closely observe how their child is interacting with others. Problem areas should be addressed at the appropriate time. Remember, children don't always 'get it' the first time. It is normal that your child may require you to explain to her multiple times how to deal with certain issues.

Technology is great, but it can have a detrimental impact on the development of social skills in children. A number of studies show children spend 5 to 8 hours or more using some form of digital screen (phone, TV, computer, gaming device). Today's children are missing person to person interaction. The result is children having fewer friends and limited social interaction. They are not getting the physical activity they need for good health due to spending so much time in front of screens.



Time Out for Discussion

What can you do to make sure “screen time” is not taking over a child’s life?

How much is “too much”?

C. Encourage Intellectual Growth

Intellectual growth – or, as it is often called, ‘cognitive development’ – begins soon after birth. We often refer to it as just ‘learning.’ Sadly, the desire to learn seems to decline in the early teens for many children.

Encouraging a child’s intellectual growth and motivating them to want to learn is not always easy. There are no precise ways to accomplish this goal. A big problem for a Dad is that what motivates one child doesn’t motivate another. Children are different in many ways and finding out their passion or interest can sometimes be difficult. Dads must also be careful not to project their own interests onto their children. When a child’s ‘interest area’ is found, then Dads should encourage and support that interest if it is an appropriate one.

This topic is very broad and is sometimes difficult to address, because learning starts at such an early age and continues throughout life. The following are some ways that a Dad might help encourage the intellectual development of their child:





As your child's life coach, analyze their strengths and weaknesses in each of these three areas. **What steps can you take to coach them in their area of weakness?**

A. Develop Emotional Health:

B. Develop Healthy Social Skills:

C. Encourage Intellectual Growth:

Know Why Your Child Misbehaves

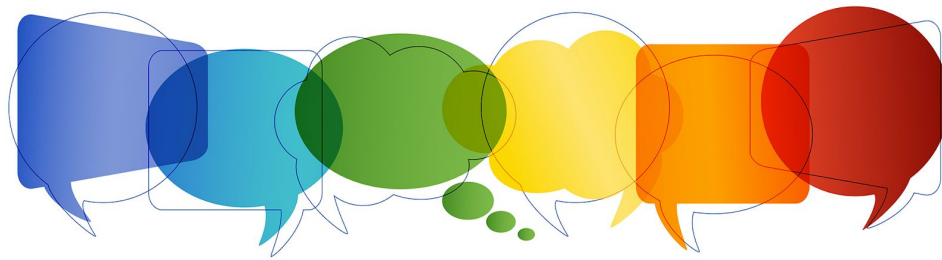
When bad behavior occurs, Dads should try to determine what might have caused the bad behavior. Many times, bad behavior is just a symptom of something else that is going on with the child. Treating only the symptoms usually doesn't solve the problem. **There are many reasons why children misbehave. Some of the more common reasons are...**

Sickness	Learning and/or Behavioral Impairments: ADD, ADHD, etc.	Tiredness
Not Understanding The Rules	Common Reasons Children Misbehave	Hunger
Desire To Test The Rules	Disbelief That You Really Mean What You Say	A Desire For Attention

Anytime you see an unusual change in your child's behavior, it usually means that something or someone has influenced them. They may be simply copying someone else's behavior. Dads should know who their children are spending time with.

Bad behavior can also be a result of some bad experience the child has gone through or is currently experiencing. The value of communication is extremely important in these situations. You want your child to feel that they can talk to you about anything that is going on in their life.

Some bad behavior is preventable. A good first step is to always make sure the rules and expectations are clearly understood. Dads who take an active interest in their child and provide a safe physical and emotional environment for them will have fewer behavioral problems to deal with. Modeling and rewarding good behavior also helps reduce inappropriate behavior.



Time Out for Discussion

Why is it important for a Dad to know what's causing misbehavior?



Communication between a dad and child is critical. **What steps can you take to build trust with your children so that they can feel “safe” talking to you?**

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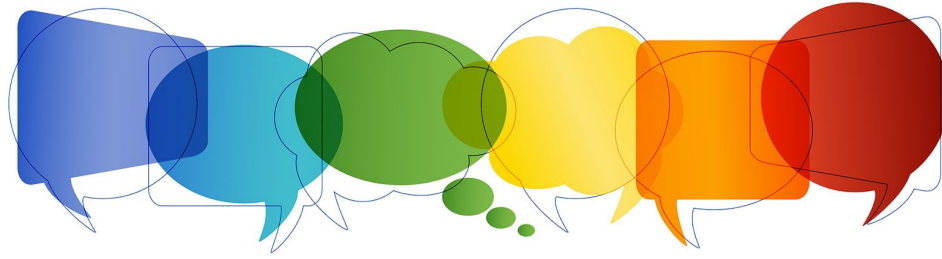
Help Your Child to Learn Self-Control

Self-control is largely a learned behavior. The earlier a child learns self-control, the more likely the child will grow up to be a productive and mature adult. As a child ages, their ability to control behavior increases. The ability to regulate one's behavior varies from child to child. Some children have severe problems with controlling their behavior and the ability to control their impulses is impaired.

For Dads with children who suffer from ADD and ADHD and other learning or behavioral impairments, teaching self-control can seem overwhelming. There are community assistance programs, and sometimes medication, which can make it possible to make it through these trying years and help your child learn self-control.

Dads play a major role in helping their children learn self-control. It begins with Dad staying in control. When you lose control, it sends the message that it is okay to be out of control.

Dads can help create an atmosphere where self-control is rewarded. Children have a desire to please and often respond well to the smallest gestures of love and approval that parents can give. For instance, play games or do activities that require self-control. These are great teaching tools.



Time Out for Discussion

With your group, name some games or activities that teach self-control.

A great quote about self-control comes from Eleanor Roosevelt:

**“To handle yourself, use your head;
to handle others, use your heart.”**

Dads have a responsibility to help their children develop self-control.

One of the dangers that Dads must avoid is the natural tendency to use discipline just for the sake of controlling behavior. The primary purpose of discipline should always be to *change* behavior, not just to punish or control it.

Dads that use only threats, intimidation, and the fear of punishment to try to control behavior will only temporarily control behavior at surface level. Self-control development is internal, and unless Dads focus on shaping the internal values of the child, he will have minimal success at developing self-control in his child. Patience is required because the development of self-control continues throughout life.

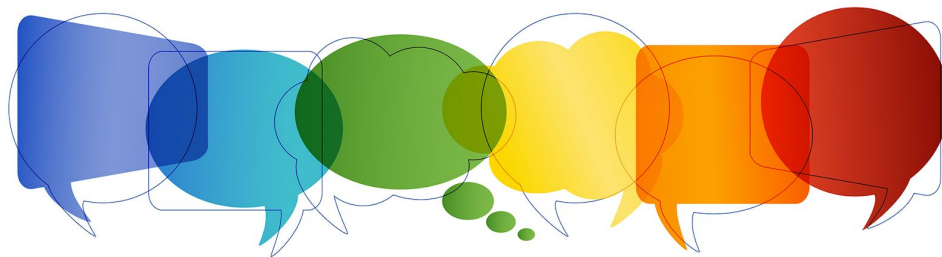


Identify a self control problem area in your child's life and think about ways you might help them exercise more self-control.

Balance Discipline with Grace

Many Dads struggle when it comes to disciplining children. Too many times they find themselves either being too lenient or too hard with their children. To complicate matters, each child is different, and their response to different forms of discipline varies. What works well with one child may have no effect on another. To complicate matters more, when a child engages in bad behavior it often triggers an emotional response from you. You may begin to lose control and take your disappointment and anger out on the child in an inappropriate way.

Discipline isn't easy. Dads must realize that, although it is hard, the benefits of bringing discipline into a child's life can be the most loving thing you can do for your child.



Time Out for Discussion

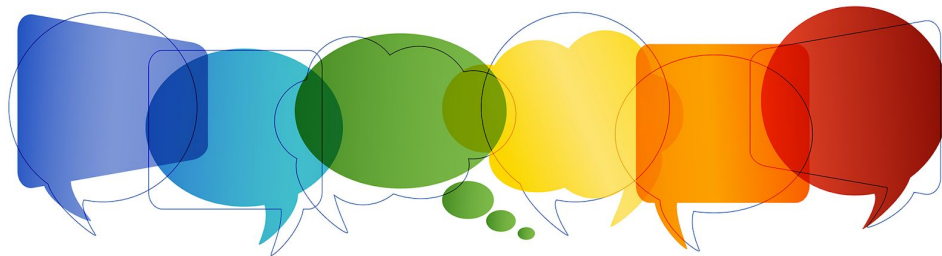
How can the lack of discipline in a child's life affect them?
How can discipline help a child? Discuss in your group.

Discipline has already been defined for us earlier in this lesson. What about grace? How is it defined? A classic definition of grace is 'unmerited favor.' In the context of discipline, grace can be best understood as 'unconditional love;' after all, that is what grace is.

Don't misunderstand the meaning of grace when it comes to child discipline. Some think that showing grace means we do not punish children—that the children do not have to face the consequences of their actions because we have removed the punishment for their behavior. In the context of child discipline, the definition of grace as undeserved favor or leniency helps us understand the relationship between grace and discipline.

The following example should clarify the relationship:

Joe Jr. is playing with his new bat inside the house. His Dad told him not to swing the bat in the house because he might break something. Joe Jr. begins to swing his new bat and hits his Dad's favorite picture that hangs on the wall in the hall, the one of him holding up that 8 lb. bass he caught last year. Dad shows grace (unconditional love) as he explains to Joe Jr. that even though he broke something very important to his Dad, this act did not affect his love for Joe Jr. His Dad loves him unconditionally. However, because he disobeyed he must be punished.



Time Out for Discussion

Can you give other examples of how grace and discipline work together?
Why is grace difficult to give when a child misbehaves?

How to Discipline with Grace

Dads must remember that the purpose of discipline is not to punish but to *change* behavior. Discipline is training a child to do what is right. It works best when it incorporates love, grace, and punishment. Punishment by itself may do nothing but put a 'pause' on bad behavior. Discipline's objective is not just to alter the child's behavior on the outside; for the desired change to have lasting impact, it must be internalized. Discipline is most effective when it creates a desire in the child to adopt the right behavior.

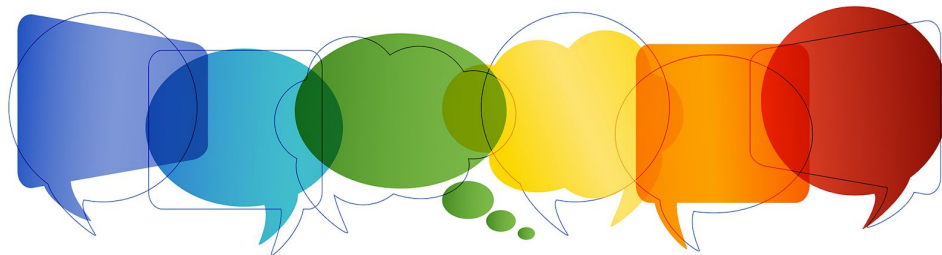
The disciplinary process for children can be broken down into three parts:

#1 Define Your Expectations

You cannot hold your child accountable for things they do not know they are supposed to do or not do. Often we do not clearly communicate to our children what we expect of them. The younger and more inexperienced the child, the more clear and concrete the explanation of desired behavior needs to be.

#2 Reinforce Desired Behavior

Discipline is not just punishment; it is also the rewarding of good behavior. Good Dads use creative methods to foster desired outcomes in their child's behavior. This is not 'buying' good behavior, but showing the proper response or preferred outcome.



Time Out for Discussion

Share with the group some good ways to define expectations of behavior.
Talk through positive ways to reinforce desired behavior.

#3

Administer Appropriate Punishment for Bad Behavior

Children may behave inappropriately even after we have encouraged the desired behavior. Even though we have warned them of the consequences, they still misbehave. Some form of corrective action or punishment is needed in these situations.

Before taking action at this point, it may be helpful to analyze the misbehavior that has occurred. Answering these questions may help clarify the problem and lead to the best form of discipline or corrective action:

- **Did the child know that their behavior was wrong?**
- **Are your expectations consistent with what the child is truly capable of doing?**
- **Is the misbehavior serious or are you overreacting due to your own tiredness or lack of patience?**
- **Was this an accident or something that the child could not control?**

Depending on the answers to these questions, Dads can know how to proceed in the discipline process. The effectiveness of discipline is going to largely depend upon the punishment or corrective action that is used. Before deciding on which form of discipline to use, you should consider the age, mental capacity, and uniqueness of the child.

Finally, the seriousness and frequency of the offense should be considered. Additionally, you should ask yourself:

- **Does the punishment fit the offense?**
- **Is it fair to punish the child?**
- **Are my emotions under control?**

Many times, Dads will need to be creative. Special circumstances may call for special treatment. The following are a few of the more commonly utilized forms of punishment/corrective actions:

Assigning Work

Assigning additional work or some form of activity that the child will view as burdensome, but which produces something of value.

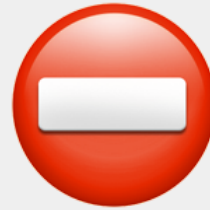
Taking Away Privileges



Grounding



Time-Out and/or Isolation Periods



Physical Punishment

It is important a Dad never strike a child in anger or when emotions are not under control. In today's environment, forms of corporal punishment are often viewed as mistreatment of children. Regardless of your personal beliefs on this subject, the use of corporal punishment carries with it the risk of legal action being taken against you. If you choose to do this, do so understanding the realities of our current world views.

Sometimes, the best discipline decision you can make is to not take action, but allow the natural actions of a child's decisions to play out. While you would never put your child in danger by inaction, sometimes the lesson is best learned by reaping the consequences of actions. Sometimes, parents create patterns of misbehavior when they stop natural consequences by rescuing their child.

When administering punishment or corrective action, Dads need to understand the power of words. Be careful of what you say and how you say it. Avoid shaming your child. Public humiliation can do severe harm to the psyche of a child.



As you reflect back on times you have disciplined your child, what, if anything, would you do differently after hearing this information?



Lesson 4 Inspire Your Child's Future

Introduction to Teaching

This final lesson is shorter than the other lessons, however, it is just as important. The goal is for these last four '*Better Dads Tips*' to be presented in an upbeat and positive way. The material lends itself to this end. Make it inspirational. For your class to be successful, Dads need to understand the importance of inspiring their children to great things in life. These Dads also need to be inspired themselves. Help them see the tremendous potential in their children. These Tips will address some things that a Dad can do to bring out the best in their child and make a huge difference in their child's life both today and in the future.

Introduction for Dads

The word 'inspire' has its roots in the Latin word '*inspirare*', meaning 'to fill or breathe into something'. *Championship Dads* can inspire their children by filling their lives with hope, expectation, and excitement regarding the future. They can continually offer positive encouragement to the possibilities that the future holds for their children. Dads can 'breathe' into their children a strong sense of self-confidence and motivate them to want to do great things. This lesson will help you inspire your children in some very positive ways.

We suggest the following amounts of time per 'Better Dads Tips'

Better Dad Tip #13	Better Dad Tip #14	Better Dad Tip #15	Better Dad Tip #16
Instruction Time			
15 minutes	10 minutes	10 minutes	10 minutes
Discussion & Get In The Game			
10 minutes	5 minutes	5 minutes	5 minutes

Challenge Your Child to Dream BIG!

Dreaming comes naturally to children; their imagination can be very active. Their minds are not full of all the realities of life, and thus their dreams can be really big. For adults, this unbridled optimism may seem to be just foolishness. However, dreams are very important for children. Their dreams give them hope and something to work for. There is a strong correlation between children who have big dreams and successful adults. Our greatest achievements and inventions have come from those who continued to dream big after childhood and to be passionate about the future. Sadly, adults sometimes kill the dreams and passions of a child. What could those children have become if their dreams and passions had been nurtured and encouraged?

One of the greatest things a Dad can do for his family is to be a dreamer. Not the kind who just dreams, but one who dreams and then takes action to make those dreams come true. Children are watching, and they know when Dad has given up hope and stopped dreaming. A Dad who has a passion for life and hope for the future will see those same attributes in his child. Former President John Quincy Adams said this about leaders and dreams:

“If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.”

There are many things a Dad can do to help coach their children to dream big. The following are some examples of things that can be done:

5 Ways You Can Coach Your Child To Dream BIG!

#1 Expose your children to big dreamers

History is full of people like Amelia Earhart, Martin Luther King Jr, and Thomas Edison, just to name a few. Don't be limited to historical figures. Let them meet or have an opportunity to be around someone who has big dreams.

#2 Do something new with your child

Going to a new place or meeting someone new and different may plant a seed from which a big dream will grow. Perhaps a museum might encourage your children in their own dreams or inspire new ones. You could also look around for classes and hobbies your children might enjoy.

#3 Encourage curiosity and creativity

Don't ignore questions. Play with toys and games that require creativity. Encourage building and repairing things. This could take the form of Legos and building blocks, puzzles, role-playing games, arts and crafts, costumes – the possibilities are endless! Play with your child and encourage them to see the big picture by looking to the future.

#4 Be there for support when a dream seems to fall apart

Help them see that sometimes success comes through failures, from big life-changing things to small and simple games and tasks. These times are great 'teachable moments'. Help them see the value in being persistent and patient, even when the task is difficult or long. Focus on the process more than the outcome.

#5 Help your child set goals that are part of their dream

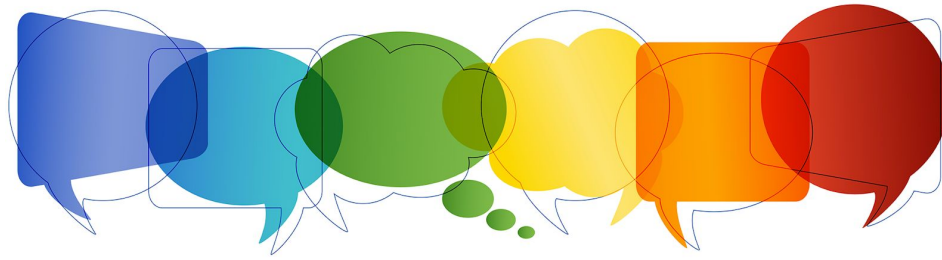
Remember, it is their dream, not yours! Make the goals realistic and let them be achievable in a short period of time. Small successful steps toward their dream will build confidence and give hope that will keep their passion alive.

**Tommy Barnett, the founder of the *Dream Center*,
wrote this about dreams:**

“ Dreams are not merely the nightly thoughts you experience as the brain sorts out the day's events. They are the goals and visions that fire your heart and saturate your soul with joy at the very thought of them. They are those continuing visions of what you want your life to be at its highest level of fulfillment – what you want to do, how you want to do it, what kind of person you want to become in the process.”

“ Your destiny and reason for living are wrapped up tightly in your dreams and desires, like the genetic information inside a seed. That dream in your heart contains your spiritual ‘DNA,’ the very blueprint for who you are. Your dream is that idea, that vision for your life that burns inside of you – something you can't ignore for long. It keeps coming back to your mind because it is part of who you are; it will never leave you alone.”

“ A dream doesn't drive you; it draws you. It is like a big magnet that pulls you toward itself. Without a dream, a person will be frustrated in the present and will miss his or her future.”



Time Out for Discussion

What stands out to you about what Tommy Barnett said about our dreams?

There are some key points that Dads should always keep in mind as they help their children dream:

#1 Our Abilities are Uniquely Ours

Dads can help children know and understand their natural abilities, talents, and gifts and help them develop them—while strengthening any clear weaknesses if possible. For example: some have natural athletic ability and enjoy sports, but if they do not, they can still learn things that they do enjoy and do well to keep active.

In the educational arena, one child may excel at everything, or maybe in language but not math, or vice versa. The important thing is to spend time with them, walk through daily life with them, help them with their weaker subjects, and praise them for their accomplishments.

#2 Our Dreams Can Guide Who We Become

Because they are young, children may not have realistic dreams, but a caring Dad need not crush or make fun of the dreams they express. Instead, he can help guide them toward things they can do that will have life-long benefits.

Because children see everything as possible and are normally very creative and imaginative, it's great for Dads, not just moms, to read to and with children. You might also take them to places like museums, libraries, state parks, and on community service projects. These can be both memory making opportunities and teaching moments.

Even negative things like being sick and in the hospital, or visiting a friend who has had surgery can help shape a child's dreams and goals. We have all seen children who have overcome health challenges go on to become healthcare professionals. So often a dream can guide someone's life.



Do you have dreams for your family?

Can you name your children's individual dreams?

Be Your Child's Biggest Cheerleader

We have discussed how Dads coach their children, but there is another role that a Dad needs to play in their child's life: Dad needs to be their biggest cheerleader. Cheerleaders do many things, but the most important thing they do is 'cheer.' The word 'cheer' means to shout for joy, to encourage, and to praise. As a Dad, your child should see you as being the one who is always there to:



**Shout with joy over
their accomplishments**



**Praise them for
their efforts**



**Encourage them to
always do their best**

Notice that there is no mention of winning or losing. That means that as a Championship Dad, we 'cheer' for our kids regardless of the outcome. We cheer when our child wins, and we cheer when they lose. We praise effort as much as we praise a win. Dads send a powerful message of love to their children when they are there supporting them regardless of the outcome of some game or activity. Just seeing you there cheering them on speaks volumes of how you feel about them.

One of the primary concerns of cheerleaders is the team's spirit. Spirit is very important, as it reflects the team's willingness to work together as a team and to succeed as a team. Championship Dads understand that their child needs to be encouraged and inspired. The game of life is not always easy; it can be very discouraging and even overwhelming at times for a child. Dads can play a huge role in determining the 'spirit' of their child. Those encouraging words when things are not going well will always be remembered and treasured by your child.

Another important thing that cheerleaders do is to console their team when they lose. A Championship Dad is going to be there for his child when they don't succeed. Cheerleaders don't take off from next week's game just because their team lost. They are right back out there the following week cheering them on. This is what a good Dad does. He helps his child come back from defeat and continue pressing on.



Do you have a child who needs to be cheered on right now?

How can you be a better cheerleader for them?

Help Your Child See Beyond Themselves

One of the most important things a Dad can do for his children is to teach them to look beyond themselves and consider the feelings, interests, and well-being of others. When we consider that much of our interaction with others is outside of the family circle, the importance of having healthy social skills cannot be overemphasized. We encounter friends, co-workers, neighbors, and strangers on a daily basis. Dads can have a great impact on the future relationships of their children by teaching and modeling healthy relationships with others.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the famous minister, writer, brilliant speaker, humanitarian, and champion for civil rights, taught sacrificial giving of one's time and efforts for the things that matter. Dr. King was a husband and father to four children, ages 6 to 12, when he died. He served and worked tirelessly for what he believed in and knew was right .

“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, ‘What are you doing for others?’” Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The “Golden Rule,” which many children have been taught, is often expressed like this: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” We could look at many other popular sayings concerning our relationships with others. Many can be summed up like this: “Be KIND to one another.”

Dads are being watched by their children. One of the most valuable lessons you can teach your child is how to get along with others. Not only does the home need to be a place of peace, but we must strive to live peacefully with others around us. If a Dad is continually having altercations and disputes with people outside of the family, a child will think that not getting along with others is acceptable. As a Dad, do you really want your child to grow up always fighting with others?

There will be times when someone hurts us. When this happens, you have an opportunity to model the power of forgiveness. Someone who cannot learn to ‘let things go’ and who refuses to forgive will live a very unhappy and bitter life.



How can you help your child become more aware of the needs of others?

What could you and your child do to show love for someone else?

BETTER
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TIP

#16

Make a Lifetime Commitment to Your Child

Most people remember the good coaches that they had in their life. Out of respect and appreciation, we may still call those coaches 'coach', even though they haven't been our coach for years. For Dads, the coaching never stops. You know you have been a good coach when your child still values your 'coaching' even when they are out on their own. You never get too old to be a Dad.

Dads should always be aware of the lifetime responsibilities of being a Dad. It is very important that your child knows that you will be there for them, not just today, but also in the future. Dads should often speak of the future and remind their children that they will always be there for them.

When a Dad is there for life, his child feels great security. This security is so important, both to young children and as they grow older. Your child's need for you being their 'rock,' the one that they can always depend on, doesn't change just because they become adults. You can still be that 'rock' in their life, no matter their age.

Make a lifetime commitment to your children. Let them know that you will always be there for them and that you will never stop loving them. No matter how old your children become, they can always benefit from your experience, wisdom, and knowledge.



Plan some specific times to communicate to your child that you will always be there for them.



You will
always be
their Dad.