

Top Ten

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Top Ten Fathering Facts

("Fathering Facts, National Fathering Initiative" by Wade Horn)

1. 24 million children (34%) live absent from their biological father.
2. Nearly 20 million children (27%) live in single –parent homes.
3. 1.35 million births (33% of all births) in 2000 occurred out of wedlock.
4. 43% of first marriages dissolve within fifteen years; about 60% of divorcing couples have children; and approximately one million children each year experience the divorce of their parents.
5. Over 3.3 million children live with an unmarried parent and the parent's cohabiting partner. The number of cohabitating couples with children has nearly doubled since 1990, from 891,000 to 1.7 million today.
6. Fathers who live with their children are more likely to have a close, enduring relationship with their children than those who do not. The best predictor of father presences is martial status. Compared to children born within marriage, children born to cohabiting parents are three times as likely to experience father absence. Children born to unmarried, non-cohabiting parents are four times as likely to live in a father-absent home.
7. About 40% of children in father-absent homes have not seen their father at all during the past year; 26% of absent fathers live in a different state than their children; and 50% of children living absent from their father have never set foot in their father's home.

8. Children who live absent their biological fathers are, on average, at least two to three times more likely to be poor, to use drugs, to experience educational, health, emotional, and behavioral problems, to be victims of child abuse, and to engage in criminal behavior than those who live with their married, biological (or adopted) parents.

9. From 1960 to 1995, the proportion of children living in single-parent homes tripled, from 9% to 27%, and the proportion of children living with married parents declined. However, from 1995-2000, the proportion of children living in single-parent homes slightly declined, while the proportion of children living with two married parents remain stable.

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