



# EXCHANGE

BREAKFAST EXCHANGE CLUB OF BILLINGS, MT

## April—Child Abuse Prevention Month

### Why Fatherhood Engagement Matters

When it comes to the growth and development of young children, fatherhood engagement is an incredibly important influencer. In fact, research has shown that children benefit directly from the involvement of a father figure in their lives, especially an engaged father.

An “engaged father” is defined as one who “feels responsible for and behaves responsibly toward his child, is emotionally engaged and physically accessible, provides material support to sustain the child’s needs, is involved in childcare, and exerts influence in child rearing decisions “([CalSWEC-Berkely.edu](http://CalSWEC-Berkely.edu)).

But especially in today’s world, the absence of fatherhood engagement, or of a father at all, has become a growing problem. According to the [Department of Education](#), one out of every three children in America live in a home without their biological father present. Furthermore, according to [Fathers for Good](#), research into the family continues to confirm the importance of two parents as the best basis for bringing up children, but one common problem in the last few decades is the absence of fathers, and the corresponding rise of families headed by single mothers.

So why is it so important for father figures to be present in children’s lives, and why does fatherhood engagement matter so much? Here are the top reasons.

#### Impact on early development

Findings from the rapidly growing science of early childhood and early brain development show the positive, lifelong impact fathers can have by being positively engaged early in their children’s lives (The Fatherhood Project).

The relationship between child and father can be equally as important as the child’s relationship with the mother in early stages of development; father involvement is related to positive health outcomes in infants, such as improved weight gain in preterm infants and improved breastfeeding rates.

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*April Quote: “Life is a gift, and it offers us the privilege, opportunity, and responsibility to give something back by becoming more.” – Tony Robbins*

Club

President:

Dina Harmon



# BEC April NEWSLETTER

The Breakfast Exchange Club of Billings

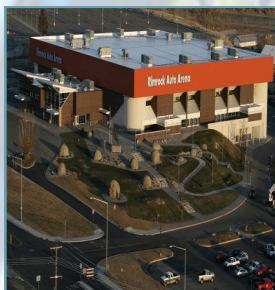


**April Volunteer Opportunities:**

**Bites of Billings Ambassadors**

**Future Volunteer Opportunities:**

**June—Brewery Tour Helpers**



Come weekly at 7:00 a.m. on Friday to the Metra Café and get to know your fellow Exchangites!



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What's worse is that the absence of fatherhood engagement in the early years of a child's life has lasting effects – the absence of an involved father figure hinders development from early infancy throughout childhood and into adulthood. The truth is there are psychological effects of the absence of a father figure for children that will persist throughout the rest of their lives.

### Gender-specific benefits

When it comes to the topic of fatherhood engagement, it is natural to assume that this role has more of an impact on the development of boys versus girls, but that isn't the case. The involvement of a father figure has unique, but nevertheless proven, impacts on both sexes.

For example, for young boys, father engagement reduces the frequency of behavioral problems, while also decreasing delinquency and economic disadvantage in low-income families. For girls and young women, father engagement reduces psychological problems and likelihood of depression.

In the same way, having both a mother and father figure assists a child in obtaining a more balanced and well-rounded development – whether they are male or female. According to the Department of Health & Human Services, studies consistently show mothers and fathers have different styles of playing and communicating, which both play unique but vital roles in child development. For example:

- Fathers promote more exploratory, independent behavior on the part of their young children and also engage them in more physical and stimulating play than most mothers do.
- When speaking to young children, mothers are more likely to simplify their words and speak on the child's level. Fathers speak in ways that stretch and challenge the child's language competency.
- When it comes to discipline, mothers are more likely to exhibit warmth and reasoning with their preschoolers and fathers tend to be more strict and demanding.

In summary, exposure to different, yet complimentary styles of parenting helps prepare a child for a variety of experiences outside the home, including future relationships.

### Improved relationships later on in life

People with actively involved father figures during childhood are more likely to have a strong, lasting marriage. Whereas, children who have underdeveloped relationships within the confines of their own home are susceptible to having difficulty developing productive, healthy relationships for the rest of their lives.

Research shows that high levels of father involvement are correlated with "higher levels of sociability, confidence, and self-control in children. Children with involved fathers are less likely to act out in school or engage in risky behaviors in adolescence" (The Fatherhood Project).

In turn, fatherhood engagement impacts professional and career-based relationships, as well as personal ones.

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**810 BEST OF CLUB BULLETIN**

Exchange Club  
75 or more members





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## **Better chances for success**

The learning in the early years of a child's life, up through elementary school, middle school, and high school, are vastly impacted by the engagement they have with their father. In fact, studies have shown that children with actively involved fathers are: 43% more likely to earn A's in school and 33% less likely to repeat a grade than those without engaged dads.

Furthermore, when dads are involved at school, either through engaging with students in the classroom, or interacting with teachers, faculty, or other parents, their children learn more and perform better in school, exhibit healthier behavior, are more likely to participate in extracurricular activities, have fewer discipline problems, and overall, enjoy school more (Michigan.gov).

And this trend only continues as the child moves further into adulthood and towards their independent future: children who experience feelings of closeness with their father "are twice as likely as those who do not to enter college or find stable employment after high school, 75% less likely to have a teen birth, 80% less likely to spend time in jail, and half as likely to experience multiple depression symptoms" (The Fatherhood Project). It is truly a ripple effect. Other research indicates that fatherhood engagement promotes problem-solving skills, which can translate to school and career settings.

Part of this trend stems from the authoritative influence that the child experiences by having a father figure. In an ideal scenario, the father figure is able to use an authoritative parenting style, including love in combination with clear boundaries and expectations, to motivate a child to success and instill in them successful habits and desires. Overall, father involvement usually leads to better emotional, academic, social, and behavioral outcomes for children.

## **General happiness and positive outlook**

There are long-term benefits for children when their fathers are engaged parents. Analysis of more than 100 studies on parent-child relationships found that "having a loving and nurturing father was as important for a child's happiness, well-being, and social and academic success as having a loving and nurturing mother" (Department of Health & Human Services).

For example, in a study mentioned in the same report, a father's presence in the family promoted significant cognitive outcomes. In the study, toddlers with involved fathers were more secure and more likely to explore the world with enthusiasm and a positive outlook. This contributes to a lifelong inclination towards independence.

## **Better stress management**

The emotional effects of having an active, engaged father figure are significant (and they are not limited to childhood). People with actively involved father figures during childhood are more likely to have an improved ability to handle stress.

Related findings indicate that fathers' emotional absence (meaning psychologically disconnected, instead of physically) has long lasting negative effects on child development. When the father isn't emotionally invested in a relationship with their child, it in turn becomes difficult for the child to develop appropriate emotional reactions, such as stress management.

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## Other benefits of fatherhood engagement

Fathers can have a positive impact on child welfare outcomes as well. One study found that children whose fathers are in the picture spend “less time in foster care, are more likely to achieve reunification, and have a lower likelihood of subsequent maltreatment allegations” (TrainingMatters-nc.org).

If you are a father, and you commit yourself to having a relationship with your child, the benefits are far from one-sided. By creating a positive relationship with your child, your own life will change for the better as well – you will experience positive gains in your own development and life decisions.

At the end of the day, it isn't the number of hours spent together for father and child, but rather, the quality and strength of that time. That's why it's incredibly proven and possible for non-resident fathers to have positive effects on children's social and emotional well-being, as well as achievement and development later on in life. It's shown that more engaged fathers — whether living with or apart from their children — can help foster a child's healthy physical, emotional, and social development.

<https://www.all4kids.org/news/blog/why-fatherhood-engagement-matters/>





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## Looking for something to do and support community organizations at the same time?

April 3rd—Adult Easter Egg Hunt (Bar MT @ 12:30 pm)

April 11th—Downtown Litter Pick Up (meet at Liberty & Vine by 8:00 a.m.)

April 14th & 28th—Slapstick Improv @ Nova

April 22nd —Bites of Billings

April 22nd—Pinwheel Ceremony on Courthouse Lawn

1st & 3rd Thursday of month—Yoga @ Billings First Church; w/ Lisa Harmon; 10:00 a.m.

Mondays—Community Monday @ Hooligans (each week benefits different organization)

Tuesdays—Pint night at Last Chance Cider House (each week benefits different organization)

Wednesdays—Trivia @ Thirsty Street At The Garage; 6:00 p.m. (every other week, the game will benefit Tumbleweed)

Fridays—Fish Fry @ Columbia Club

**\*\*Special Days/Holidays**

4th —Easter

22nd—Earth Day





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THE BREAKFAST  
EXCHANGE CLUB OF  
BILLINGS, MT

PO Box 2224  
Billings, MT

[www.breakfastexchangeclub.org](http://www.breakfastexchangeclub.org)

*Exchange, America's Service Club, is a group of men and women working together to make our communities better places to live through programs of service*

## CAP Center Corner

**What's happening for Child Abuse Prevention Month:**



### **Committee Happenings:**

#### **BECON Committee**—

**Cory Hasiak has April editor duties.**

#### **Invocation Committee**—

**Cory Hasiak has April prayer.**

#### **Fundraising Com-**

**mittee—Bites of Billings on April 22nd! Brewery Crawl also coming soon!**

#### **Social Committee**—

**Working on something fun!**

#### **Freedom Shrine** —

**Freedom Shrine rededication at McKinley School on hold.**

### **GET INVOLVED!**

*\*\*Committee Chairs— Please email your upcoming events to [dinaharmon1212@gmail.com](mailto:dinaharmon1212@gmail.com) to be included in next months newsletter!\*\**