

SUPPORTING INVOLVED FATHERHOOD IN WORKPLACES



This guide was prepared by the Mother Child Education Foundation (AÇEV) as part of the project “The Private Sector Takes Action for Involved Fatherhood” with support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the participation of the YADA Foundation (Yaşama Dair Vakıf).



INTRODUCTION

Today, the idea of gender equality is being expressed and embraced by a wider audience, and many studies are being carried out on the full and equal participation of women in all spheres of life, economy and management. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by the United Nations (UN) member countries in 2015, consider gender equality as an important item on the global agenda. In other words, the view that social and economic development can only be achieved if we live in a world where the idea of equality for women, men, girls and boys in each and every field is accepted by all stakeholders from international organizations to governments, from NGOs to the business world. Despite important developments in the economic, social and legal spheres, there is still room for further progress in achieving gender equality.

Since 1993, AÇEV has been developing and implementing various educational programs for the healthy development of preschool children, support for parents' effective parenting roles and empowerment of illiterate women. As of 2010, we have adopted gender equality as one of the main objectives of all our training activities. We contribute to achieving gender equality through our work with ministries, school

administrators, teachers, various NGOs, networks and the private sector. Centering around healthy development of the child, we aim to influence all stakeholders that affect the child; parents, women, men, businesses, the media, and government agencies. We conduct our work in this field based on three main principles:

1. Ensuring equality between women and men is important in terms of the healthy development of children, as well as human rights and human development.
2. The roles that society finds suitable for men and women are formed by the teachings from the family and the environment. Therefore, these roles can be changed and transformed.
3. Both women and men have the responsibility and ability to achieve gender equality.

The most important activities we carry out in the field of gender equality are the programs and campaigns aimed at disseminating involved fatherhood. The Fatherhood in Turkey Study that we conducted for the first time in Turkey, emphasizes a series of problems fathers face in becoming involved fathers. According to the study, fathers' responsibility for the physical care and development of children is closely related to the meanings attributed to fatherhood,

sharing of household responsibilities, equitable attitude towards children, support from fathers' environment and social policies, such as paternity leave. Another result from this study is that even if fathers feel responsible for the development of their children, they do not know how to fulfill this responsibility. Therefore, we support fathers' skill development through the Father Support Program (FSP), aiming to support fathers to take responsibility in child development and care, to establish close relationships with their children and use effective methods in their relationships. The program aims to provide a change in fathers' attitudes and behaviors. In our 'Moments of Fatherhood' photography exhibition, we portrayed the daily life of fathers who took responsibility for their children's development, as we aimed to create a support network around this project with our slogan, 'Fatherhood First.'

Disseminating involved fatherhood is one of the important steps to be taken on the road to gender equality. We know that this is only possible if all stakeholders accept their responsibilities, as well as work on their own and develop collaborations to fulfill these responsibilities. We created this guide to provide ideas for one of the important

stakeholders, the private sector, on what can be done regarding the dissemination of involved fatherhood. We hope that it becomes a guide for all.

UNDERSTANDING INVOLVED FATHERHOOD

'Involved fatherhood' can be described as follows:

- The father taking responsibility of the care and development of the child,
- Providing an environment and opportunity for the child's development,
- Maintaining and forming a close relationship with the child,
- Spending time with the child,
- Listening to the child,
- It is the fatherhood model in which the father uses efficient methods in his relationship with the child and in supporting the child.

Accordingly, contrary to the "fatherhood" behaviors determined by masculinity stereotypes based on gender roles, 'involved fatherhood' allows fathers to embrace a participatory and democratic approach, support the development of the child, and have equal responsibility as the mother in the child's developmental fields.

The children of involved fathers are academically more successful at school, have higher school readiness, richer vocabulary and better cognitive development.

The effect of fathers on the development of their children is closely related to the characteristics of being an "involved father." Communicating with the child, participating in mutual activities, listening to the child, playing games with the child, being available psychologically/emotionally and physically when the child is in need of support, providing childcare and assuming responsibility to provide the necessary resources for the child are all aspects of an involved father.

Children of fathers who read books and play with their children, have higher language and reading skills . Involved fatherhood affects children's reading and math skills.

¹ Cabrera, Shannon ve Tamis-LeMonda, 2007; Coley, Lewin-Bizan and Carrano, 2011; Lamb, 1977; NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 2004; Tamis-LeMonda, Shannon, Cabrera ve Lamb, 2004

² Coley ve ark., 2011; Duursma, Pan ve Raikes, 2008

³ Coley ve ark., 2011



UNDERSTANDING INVOLVED FATHERHOOD

- Establishes a close and mutual relationship with their children,
- Feels and assumes responsibility in the care of children,
- Shares domestic chores equally,
- Spends quality time with his children, plays games, reads books, tells stories,
- Knows children's developmental areas and critical periods of development and displays the appropriate attitudes to support these developmental areas,
- Listens to his children effectively and expresses himself through appropriate methods,
- Uses effective methods to promote desired behaviors in his children and prevent unwanted behaviors: serves as a model, guides the child, makes precautionary explanations, does not use any kind of violence / coercion, appreciates the desirable behaviors and encourages the child,
- Follows and supports children's education,

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The time spent and relationship built by the father with his children affect both their mental and physical development and their social and emotional capacity. Therefore, as AÇEV, we argue that fatherhood is the most important role in a father's life.

- In case of separation from the spouse, maintains a close relationship and continues meeting the responsibilities related to their children.

SUPPORTING INVOLVED FATHERHOOD IN WORKPLACES*



There is a multitude of barriers facing a father in being a part of child development and care; such as gender roles; inadequate training, guidance and experience in child care in their upbringing as boys and men; long work hours; low female employment rates; mothers being regarded as more responsible for childcare by public officials, private sector, society and the academia. All of these barriers, cited or uncited, prevent fathers from participating in effective support for the child and from establishing a close relationship with

their children. Strengthening involved and responsible fatherhood is possible only if all stakeholders act together and affect each other and take responsibility.

The private sector, which is one of the most important stakeholders of this issue, can be the pioneer of a major change by involving fathers to take responsibility for their child's care and development by embracing the involved fatherhood agenda from human resources policies to products and services.

* This section uses the research findings and statistics from the results of "The Determinants of Involved Fatherhood in Turkey", ACEV's research study in 51 provinces with 3,235 fathers with children aged 0-10 in Turkey.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

SUPPORT

Support new fathers in your workplace.

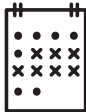
Are there any new fathers among your employees? Most fathers don't know what to do when they first become parents. You can support them with practical information while celebrating their first days.

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- Fifty-eight percent of fathers feel like they don't know what to do when they first become fathers.
- Forty-four percent state that they learned to be a father on their own, 38% say that they learned fatherhood from their own fathers.

SUPPORT

YOU CAN



Support new fathers in your organization.



Review the existing childcare support.



Review existing products and services catering to mothers and fathers.



Encourage the use of paternal leave.



Revise policies and procedures on working conditions.



Provide opportunities for fatherhood trainings.




Encourage "involved fatherhood" in your communications and marketing.

- You can prepare an information package on childcare and create awareness that fatherhood is a responsibility that requires skills.
- You can create experience sharing platforms, where new and prospective fathers can learn from other fathers in your workplace.
- You can organize special meetings / events for fathers (including prospective fathers) in your workplace, offer fathers productive time to spend with their children, and allow fathers to benefit from each other's experiences.

You can promote paternity leave.

Research has shown that using parental leave has a positive effect on involved fatherhood and development of children. Remember to encourage fathers, not only in the workplace but also in your social circles, to use paternity leave.



- The use of paternity leave by the father positively affects the involved fatherhood behaviors of fathers with 0-3-year-old children.
- Twenty-eight percent of fathers do not know they have a right to paternity leave, 21% cannot use paternity leave because the workplace does not allow it.
- Twenty-three percent of fathers do not need paternity leave because there is someone else helping their wives with child care.
- The percentage of fathers who do not ask for paternity leave because they think they cannot help their spouses is 5% and that of fathers who do not use paternity leave because fathers around them do not is 4%.

- You can inform prospective fathers about paternity leave.
- You can encourage fathers at work to take paternity leave. For example, you can make one-on-one interviews with fathers before the leave to understand their needs, expectations and concerns.
- You can extend the official paternity leave of your institution beyond legal obligations.



You can reorganize your working conditions, policies and procedures.

Fathers who have been exposed to long working hours cannot allocate time to their families and themselves and have difficulty in managing the demands of the workplace and home. You can support involved fathers by making arrangements on working hours to provide opportunities for involved fatherhood.

- On average, fathers spend 9 hours and 20 minutes at work, 2 hours and 20 minutes with their children, and 1 hour and 20 minutes with their friends per day.
- Especially for fathers from lower socioeconomic status, as the time they spend in the workplace increases, their involved fatherhood behaviors decrease. Twenty-one percent of fathers want their working hours to be rearranged so that they can spend more time with their children.

- You can offer flexible working hours, part-time work, job sharing, and encourage the continuous and full use of annual leave.

- You can create a corporate culture that takes into account the responsibilities of fathers in cases that require additional work, such as business trips and business lunches.
- For exceptional cases with children (illness, school meetings, etc.), you can create a corporate culture in which fathers can easily request permission, as well as special permission opportunities for such special cases.

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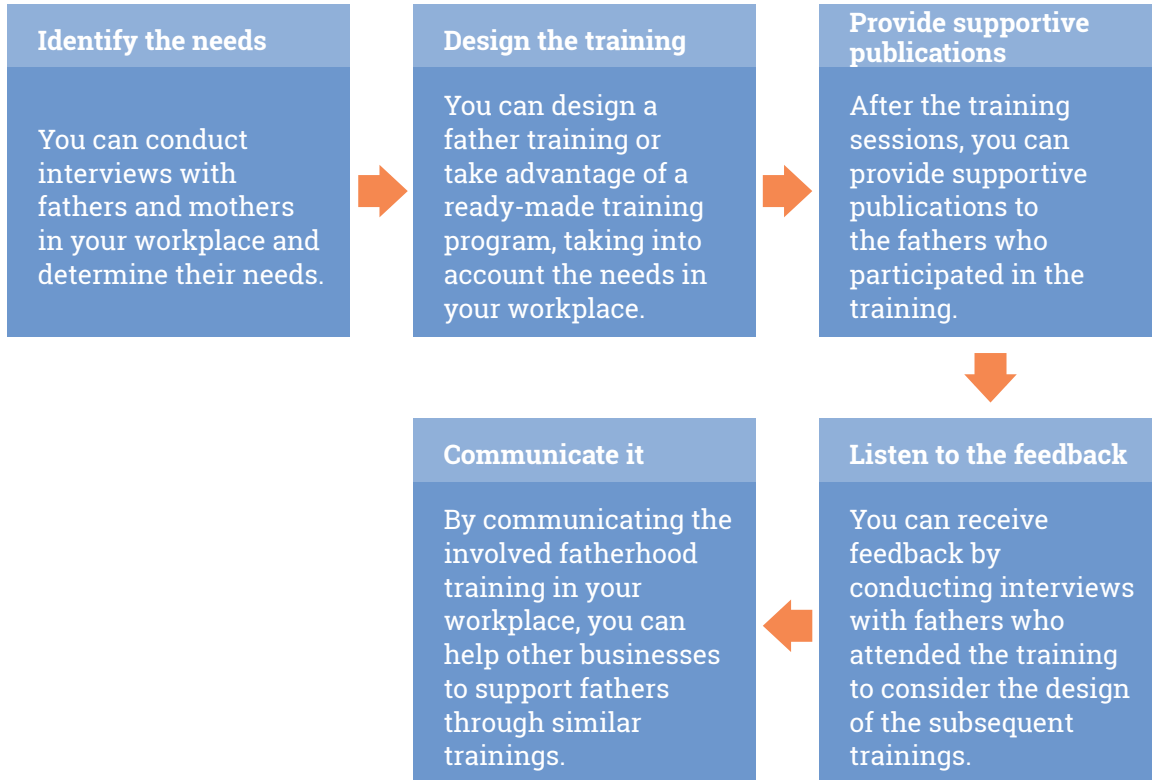
You can offer opportunities to participate father training programs to your employees.

A significant number of fathers state that they want to be supported through father trainings, but cannot find the time for it. You can support your employees with brief seminars on fatherhood in the workplace.

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- While 38% of fathers want to receive father training, 43% cannot find the time for it.
- The most challenging issues for fathers are “children’s mental development” (34%), “children’s health” (34%) and “the social-emotional development of children” (34%). Child care (32%) is also among the issues that fathers find challenging.

- Through meeting face-to-face with a group of mothers and fathers in the workplace, you can identify their needs and plan trainings in accordance with these needs.
- You can help your employees benefit from the trainings provided by various institutions such as AÇEV's Father Support Program and / or Gender Equality Trainings.
- You can offer these training opportunities not only to the fathers but also to the spouses of the mothers in your workplace.



You can review childcare support services.

One of the most challenging aspects of being a working parent is the child's care and development during the early years. Many women withdraw from employment because they do not have access to childcare services, such as kindergartens. For fathers to share parental responsibilities and to support women's participation in the workforce, you can rethink supportive practices for child care and development, taking into account not only the mothers at work, but also the fathers.

- Fathers do not assume enough responsibility for the physical care of children. The types of care that fathers perform the least are taking children to the bathroom, changing diapers and trimming nails.
- Thirty-five percent of fathers never or rarely participate in their children's school activities.
- Twenty-eight percent of fathers want their workplaces to support them with kindergarten allowance or opportunities.

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You can encourage “involved fatherhood” in your communication and marketing activities, including those within the workplace.

In the world of communication that affects our social perceptions, fatherhood roles are very important. Increasing number of visuals where fathers assume responsibility for child care and development and establish close relationships with their children may be a part of this change. In all kinds of communication materials that you produce from packaging visuals of your products, in-store informational brochures, advertising or promotional films to be published on social media or television, and printed materials, such as

- You can open kindergartens, provide kindergarten support, and make various childcare facilities accessible to both mothers and fathers.
- Regardless of the number of employees, you can design and implement an early care support that is available to all parents in your workplace.
- You can support the role of fathers in child development by encouraging fathers to take leave at times, such as the first day of school or report card day.
- Through parent-child days at work, you can make positive fatherhood role models visible.

brochures and posters with your company's logo, make sure that you do not exhibit an attitude against gender equality or reinforce traditional motherhood and fatherhood roles.

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- The majority of fathers (91%) think that their spouses have the primary responsibility regarding the care of their children.
- The higher the fathers' traditional perception of masculinity, the less they show involved fatherhood behaviors to their children.
- The perception of being the head of the family affects fatherhood behaviors. The more fathers consider themselves as head of the family, the less they are involved in their child's physical care in infancy.
- More than half of the fathers never clean the house or cook. However, the father's attitude towards gender-based division of labor is the most important factor in determining their participation in the child's physical care and their involved fatherhood behaviors.

- Regardless of your products and services, you can set up feedback mechanisms to ensure that the communication materials produced are not against gender equality and do not reproduce traditional parenting roles. For example, by meeting with a group of internal and external stakeholders from different disciplines, you can create a set of criteria that reflect this perspective and make these criteria an integral part of your approval procedures.
- You can assume a role in spreading the involved fatherhood model throughout the community by addressing fathers and ensuring a wider coverage for good role models for fathers in childcare and development products. For example, in an infant formula ad, you can star a father who feeds the child or in a diaper ad you can show a father who takes care of the infant.
- From informational package texts in your products to the text you use in your communication materials, make sure that your entire rhetoric doesn't address mothers only. For example, in the text of a baby clothing brand ad, instead of saying "let's go moms," use a language that includes and invites fathers. In the directions for how to use of a wet wipe for children, use genderless language and visuals.

- You can foster change with your social responsibility projects by being sensitive towards issues of gender equality and involved fatherhood.
- You can get together with your stakeholders in communications (PR, advertising, communication departments, digital agency, etc.) to share your sensitivity and knowledge on gender equality, as well as involved fatherhood, and guide them in their activities within this framework.
- You can create a corporate culture that will prevent the use of a language that is against gender equality and involved fatherhood in your internal communications and promote supportive messages.

You can review your products and services for parents.

Remember that fathers have equal responsibility with mothers in child care and development. When developing products and services for parents, the first step should be not only mothers but also fathers.

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- Fathers often spend time with their children, going for walks (76%), visiting family (73%) or going to shopping malls (62%).
- Thirty percent of fathers want to have more space outside the home where they can go and spend time with their children.
- Within facilities, you can promote child care rooms not only for mothers, but also fathers.
- When children participate in sports and art activities, you can arrange spaces so that fathers are able to take on the care of their children.

OWN IT AND SPREAD IT

You can share “involved fatherhood” messages in your workplace:

By sharing our messages in your workplace, you can create awareness in your employees and customers about involved fatherhood.

- You can hang our posters that encourage “involved fatherhood” in your workplace and share informational brochures with your employees. You can download our brochure and posters from the address <http://ilkisbabalik.acev.org> or visit our YouTube page Mother Child Education Foundation, where a short, informational

video of our Fatherhood in Turkey Study is available.

- You can carry out a communication workshop with fathers in your workplace and share their fatherhood messages with all your employees.
- At events where you meet other private sector organizations, such as sectoral meetings, conferences and workshops, you can share your work on involved fatherhood to encourage other companies.
- In all communications activities (reports, press releases, speeches, presentations, etc.) that address gender equality, you can talk about involved fatherhood and encourage listeners / readers.

OWN IT AND SPREAD IT



You can be an “Involved Fatherhood sensitive” company.



You can support “Involved Fatherhood” on social media.



You can messages of “Involved Fatherhood” in your workplace.



You can advocate for “Involved Fatherhood.”



You can advocate for gender equality.

You can be an “Involved Fatherhood-sensitive” company:

You can share our informational resources and raise awareness for good practices, so that your customers, dealers, suppliers can learn about involved fatherhood.

- You can compile and share with your stakeholders the practices you have implemented to support involved fatherhood in your workplace.
- You can encourage and direct other companies in your ecosystem to support involved fatherhood.
- You can increase the impact of your work by developing collaborations with non-governmental organizations and professional organizations in the projects you will carry out to encourage involved fatherhood in your workplace.

You can be an advocate for “Involved Fatherhood:”

You can help us raise our voice on social media by sharing the 8 main messages of our campaign below with the hashtag #fatherhoodfirst on your Facebook, Instagram and Twitter pages or in your internal communications:

- If the father spends time and plays with the child, the child develops. When the father takes care of the child, the child learns.

- If the father assumes responsibility for the care of his child, he establishes a close relationship with them. If the father is involved, the child is happy.
- If the father talks and chats with the child, the child develops mentally, socially and emotionally. If the father communicates, the child develops.
- If the father provides the necessary environment for the child, the child can experience and try. If the father provides opportunities, the child discovers life.
- If the father constitutes a role model for his child, the child learns from him. What the father does, the child repeats.
- If the father doesn't hurt his child, the child trusts the father. If the father shows compassion, the child becomes confident.
- If the father and mother share the responsibilities, there is equality in the home. If the father shares, the child becomes happy.
- If the father becomes loved and not feared, there will be trust at home. When the father displays love and affection, the child has self-confidence.

You can support “Involved Fatherhood” on social media:

You can follow AÇEV on social media and share the contents of involved fatherhood in your own corporate accounts.

- Our campaign’s website: <https://ilkisbabalik.acev.org>
- AÇEV’s Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/annecocukegitimvakfi/
- AÇEV’s Twitter Page: twitter.com/ACEVCorporate
- AÇEV’s Instagram Page: www.instagram.com/acevkurumsal/

You can advocate for gender equality:

One of the most important determinants of involved fatherhood is behaviors and practices sensitive to gender equality. You can support and be a pioneer of gender equality and involved fatherhood for your employees who have the authority to make decisions in your company and guide your corporate strategy and communications language in order to make gender equality a part of the corporate culture.



ROADMAP

1. UNDERSTAND INVOLVED FATHERHOOD

Before starting to work on involved fatherhood trainings, examine the main principles of involved fatherhood, Turkey's current status, and practices available in Turkey and the world.

2. LISTEN TO THE FATHERS

You can conduct face-to-face interviews with a group of your employees who are fathers; question how they define fatherhood, their relationship with the concept of fatherhood, and how the company impacts their fatherhood performance.

3. ANALYZE THE CURRENT SITUATION

You can review how your organization's current policies and procedures support involved fatherhood, what data you do and do not keep about fathers in the workplace, and the work you have done so far on fatherhood.

4. DETERMINE YOUR GOALS AND INDICATORS

You can identify your objectives; the impact of existing policies, programs and practices on your targets; areas for change and development, and indicators based on problem areas.

5. CREATE YOUR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

You can create an implementation plan in line with your goals. You can share the plan with your employees and receive comments and suggestions.

6. RECEIVE FEEDBACK

You can receive feedback from your employees, especially fathers, at every stage of your plan. You can develop mechanisms in which your stakeholders and employees can give feedback to your work.

7. EXPRESS AND PROMOTE

You can monitor your development areas, changes in the company, compile successful examples and share them with your employees, suppliers and all other stakeholders.

Notes
