

My general topic: Fatherhood

My specific focus: The importance of the father figure in a child's development

My rough thesis: Fathers play a vital role in a child's physical, emotional, and social development. With so many children growing up in homes without fathers, it is essential these children have a father figure in their lives. The father-figure role must be assumed by another relative, a friend of the family, someone in the educational system, or via social programs like Big Brothers and Big Sisters.

My research questions:

1. What exactly IS fatherhood, and why is it so important in today's society? (Intro)
 - a. Brief definition
 - b. Brief highlights of important role fathers play (background)
 - c. Statistics about how many kids in the U.S. are without a father figure. (background)
 - d. Imbed my thesis
2. The importance of fathers (body)
 - a. Physical well-being
 - i. What fathers bring to the table
 - ii. What having no father means
 - b. Emotional well-being
 - i. What fathers bring to the table
 - ii. What having no father means
 - c. Social well-being
 - i. What fathers bring to the table
 - ii. What having no father means
 - d. Modeling male role?
 - i. Importance for male children
 1. What fathers bring to the table
 2. What having no father means
 - ii. Importance for female children
 1. What fathers bring to the table
 2. What having no father means
3. How can children without a father in the home still reap the benefits of the father figure? (body/pro)
 - a. Relative or family friend takes on role of father-figure
 - b. Community father figures
 - i. Educators
 - ii. Church community
 - iii. Social programs
 - c. The mother as father figure
4. What are the dangers of seeking father figures outside the normal structure?
 - a. Non-consistency

b. Sexual abuse

5. How can these dangers be mitigated?
6. Based on my research, why do I conclude that fathers are crucial, that father-figures are an acceptable substitute in situations where birth-father isn't present, and that there are many options that will provide a child with a stable father figure.