

NFLG

NATIONAL FATHERHOOD LEADERS GROUP

in partnership with VH1



Discussion Guide



Why is NFLG teaming up with *Dad Camp*, VH1's original TV series about responsible fatherhood?

In response to President Barack Obama's challenge to fathers to become involved in the lives of their children, the National Fatherhood Leaders Group (NFLG) has teamed up with ***Dad Camp***, VH1's original series which focuses on encouraging responsible fatherhood, featuring licensed psychologist Dr. Jeff Gardere.

The VH1 *Dad Camp* series begins on Monday, May 31 at 10:30 PM ET/PT.

According to the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse, more than 1 million males ages 15-19 have a child. It is reported that teen fathers, faced with their own personal circumstances, have less involvement with their children.

In the series ***Dad Camp***, licensed psychologist and no-nonsense therapist Dr. Jeff Gardere works with six fathers-to-be, along with their pregnant girlfriends, to help prepare the young men for fatherhood -- a responsibility that they're just not ready for yet. Throughout the course of the series, the young fathers will face the inevitable truth: A baby is coming soon, whether they like it or not.

Ready or not, here I come

Through parenting classes, personal challenges around responsibility, and intense couples and group therapy sessions, each couple will learn the importance of selflessness and the commitment they must make to their unborn child.

Under the leadership of the NFLG, participating fatherhood groups are mobilizing their constituents and asking them to create and promote local viewing events, beginning with the Monday, May 31, 2010 premiere at 10:30 ET/PT, to spark discussion around the country about responsible fatherhood and the challenges that young men face today.

To facilitate those ***Dad Camp*** "watch parties" discussions, NFLG has produced this Discussion Guide to emphasize the importance of fathers in children's lives. In addition, you can continue the discussion about the ***Dad Camp*** series by posing your comments on www.nflgonline.org > My Dad Camp.

Watch Parties Tools & Tips

Overview and Disclaimer

The discussion guide is intended for a general audience and is not customized or intended to neither guide discussions nor focus discussion on any particular groupings of fathers. However, the discussion guide is meant to simulate dialogue related to fatherhood in a broad and universal way. This guide is not intended to support clinical group facilitation or any other clinical intervention.

The following guidelines may help you manage the group discussion process more effectively when discussing Dad Camp:

✦ Be prepared.

- Prepare for the Watch Party.
- Find a suitable location to have the Watch Party based on the projected size of the group.
- Promote your event by flier, email blast, phone contact etc. Review the trailer of the sample of the show on the VH1 and NFLG websites.
- Get the necessary equipment you will need for your Watch Party e.g. Big Screen TV, speakers, microphone etc.
- Arrive early, preferably one hour before viewing the show.

✦ Know who is coming to your Watch Party.

- Will your Watch Party Group be dads, moms, agency representatives, interested and/or concerned citizens, etc.?
- Knowing who is coming to your Watch Party will enable you to effectively plan for the various activities that will take place.

✦ Encourage group discussion.

- After the Watch Party Group has viewed Dad Camp, ask open-ended and/or provocative questions - questions that cannot be answered with "yes" or "no" and that will lead to energized discussion.
- Most facilitators know this principle in their heads, but don't always translate it into action.
- Sometimes the problem is in the questions rather than the content.
- Participants are less likely to respond to poorly worded or complicated questions. Encourage all group members to participate in their own unique way.
- Listen and respond to both content and feelings.

✦ Give clear instructions.

- This is a key part of advance planning.
- If you are not clear about how you plan to conduct your Watch Party event, you will not be able to explain to participants.

✦ Assist the group in understanding what has occurred.

- Point out similarities and unique differences in various group members' contributions to the discussion.
- Call the group's attention to comments that have been overlooked.
- Encourage participant to participant discussion rather than participant/facilitator discussion.
- Help participants label and evaluate their reasoning and logic.
- Elicit or contribute summarizing comments that capture the important concepts addressed during a specific activity or session.

✦ Attend to the group.

- Maintain eye contact with all group members.
- Be aware of their body language, facial expressions, involvement in the program, etc.

✦ Pace the group discussion appropriately.

- Move things along quickly enough to keep participants from being bored, but slowly enough to make sure they absorb what is being discussed.
- When the pace is too slow or directions are unclear, participants are likely to get distracted, begin side conversations and tune out.

✦ Use effective language.

- Speak in a clear voice, using interesting inflections and avoiding monotones.
- Use language the people can understand and relate to.
- Avoid distracting gestures.

✦ Be yourself.

- Allow your own personality to emerge as you lead the group. The more you come across as an authentic human being with real emotions, a sense of humor, strengths and weaknesses, the more participants will relate to you.

✦ Summarize important ideas.

- Encourage participants to talk about what they have learned during an activity.
- Emphasize any key ideas that individuals might have missed and make statements that recap important knowledge or insights generated during the activity.

Experiential Learning Cycle Path

The open-ended questions below follow the experiential learning cycle path of Experiencing what was observed, Reporting out what was observed, Processing (discussing patterns through a systematic examination of what kinds of things happened and why) Generalizing (developing real world principles) Applying (planning effective use of what was learned)

- ✓ What did you think of the show?
- ✓ What realities did the show bring up regarding being a new father?
- ✓ What happens when fathers to be don't behave responsibly when expecting a child?
- ✓ What are the characteristics of a responsible father?
- ✓ When does responsible parenting begin?
- ✓ What things can an expectant father do to demonstrate to the expectant mother that he supports and wants his baby to be born healthy?
- ✓ What are some of the consequences when a couple has a child outside of marriage?
- ✓ Should all young fathers attend some type of program like Dad Camp? Why or Why Not?
- ✓ What role does and should extended family members have in the birth of a new child?
- ✓ What influence does a mother have over the father's ability to engage effectively with his child?
- ✓ What support should the mother and father receive in order to strengthen their parenting skills and strengthen their co-parenting efforts?
- ✓ What things can the community at large do to prevent premature pregnancy among young couples?
 - The school system
 - Faith Institutions
 - Parent Groups
 - Community Based Organizations
 - Family Serving Agencies and Programs

- ✓ Once a child is born what role can and/or should the following community stakeholders play in supporting positive outcomes for the child?
 - The School System
 - Faith Institutions
 - Parent Groups
 - Community Based Organizations
 - Family Serving Agencies and Programs

20 Reasons Why A Child Needs An Active Father in their Life

- 1. Lets your child know that you love her.** Love involves more than saying the words, "I love you." Fathers who love their children demonstrate their love by spending quality and quantity time together. Children who feel loved are more likely to develop a strong emotional bond with their father and a healthy self-esteem.
- 2. Provides your child with greater financial resources.** Research clearly indicates that families with an active father are "better off" financially. This means that children with active fathers will be more likely to have access to resources that facilitate healthy development (e.g., food, clothing, shelter, quality medical care).
- 3. Provides your child with a positive male role model.** Children, regardless of gender, need positive male and female role models. Children tend to model behavior (positive and negative) that they witness on a consistent basis. Active fathers can promote positive behaviors by setting a proper example for their children.
- 4. Provides your child with emotional support.** In addition to financial support, children also need emotional support from their parents. Active fathers listen and support their children when they experience joy, sadness, anger, fear, and frustration. Fathers who support their children emotionally tend to raise children who are more in-tune with the needs of others.
- 5. Enhances your child's self-esteem.** Self-esteem refers to how a person feels about himself. Children with high self-esteem tend to be happier and more confident than children with low self-esteem. Active fathers promote their children's self-esteem by being fully involved in their lives and letting them know that they are highly valued.
- 6. Enhances your child's intellectual development.** Children who are raised with actively involved fathers tend to score higher on measures of verbal and mathematical ability, and also demonstrate greater problem-solving and social skills.
- 7. Provides your child with guidance and discipline.** From infancy, children need proper guidance and discipline. Active fathers play an important role in teaching their children proper behavior by setting and enforcing healthy limits.
- 8. Gives your child someone to play with.** One of the primary ways that fathers bond with their children is through play. According to researchers, there are qualitative differences in the ways fathers and mothers play with their children. Fathers tend to use a more physical style of play (e.g., wrestling) that offers a number of benefits to children, including enhanced cognitive ability.
- 9. Provides your child with someone to talk to when she has questions.** Young children are full of questions. This natural curiosity helps them learn about their environment. Active fathers can be a valuable source of information for children who are seeking answers to life's important questions.
- 10. Increases your child's chances for academic success.** Children whose fathers are actively involved in their lives are more likely to achieve academic success than children whose fathers are not actively involved. These academic benefits appear to extend into adulthood.
- 11. Provides your child with an alternative perspective on life.** Research indicates that men and women often differ in their parenting styles; however, one style is not necessarily better than the other. Instead, it can be healthy for children to be exposed to different perspectives on life, such as a father's.
- 12. Lowers your child's chances for early sexual activity.** Children with actively involved fathers are less likely to engage in early sexual activity, thus reducing their chances for teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.
- 13. Lowers your child's chances for school failure.** Children with actively involved fathers are less likely to drop out of school than children with uninvolved fathers.
- 14. Lowers your child's chances for youth suicide.** Children with actively involved fathers are less likely to commit suicide than children with uninvolved fathers.
- 15. Lowers your child's chances for juvenile delinquency.** The benefits of having an active father throughout a child's early years extend into the teen years as well. Children with active fathers are less likely to commit juvenile crimes than children with inactive fathers.
- 16. Lowers your child's chances for adult criminality.** The chances that a child will commit crimes as an adult also diminish when he grows up with an actively involved father.
- 17. Provides your child with a sense of physical and emotional security.** One of the major benefits that fathers can provide to their children by being actively involved is a sense of security (physical and emotional). By being actively involved in a child's life, a father promotes a trusting relationship. The child does not have to worry about being abandoned.
- 18. Facilitates your child's moral development.** Children need a moral compass to guide them when they face difficult moral choices. Fathers, like mothers, help children to develop a sense of right and wrong that serves as a foundation for establishing moral character.
- 19. Promotes a healthy gender identity in your child.** Boys and girls benefit from having healthy role models from both sexes. Research points to the fact that mothers and fathers socialize their children in different ways. Fathers can help their children, especially boys, to develop a healthy sense of what it means to be a male.
- 20. Helps your child learn important life skills.** Most of the essential life skills that children need to survive are learned within the home. Fathers have a unique opportunity to teach their children valuable skills that will enable them to grow up to be healthy and productive adults. Fathers, your children need you! Make a commitment to be an active father. Your children will greatly benefit from your involvement in their lives.

Reference:

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/For%20Parents/Everyday%20Parenting/Fatherhood/20ReasonsWhyYo.htm>

Annie E. Casey Foundation Publications on Fatherhood

<http://www.aecf.org/KnowledgeCenter/SpecialInterestAreas/ResponsibleFatherhoodMarriage.aspx>



Dads Camp Notes

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NFLG Member Organizations



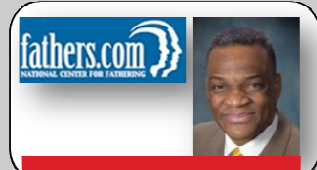
Joseph Jones, **Chair**



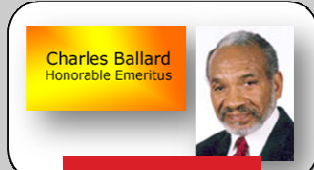
Dr. Jeffery Johnson, **Vice Chair**



Dr. Ronald Mincy, **Secretary**



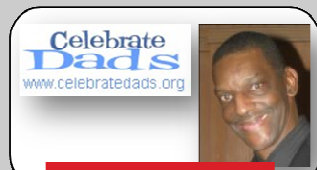
Carey Casey, **Treasurer**



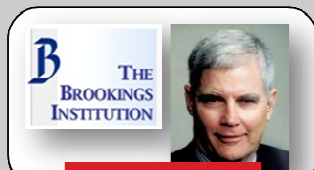
Charles Ballard



Roland C. Warren



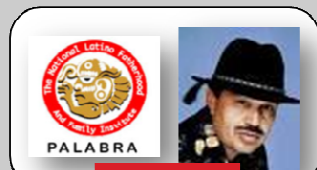
Robert D. Johnson



Dr. Ron Haskins



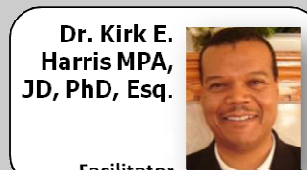
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Facilitator

“NFLG is about strengthening families by working with fathers along the continuum and moving them to be a full asset to their families”

www.dadcamp.vh1.com
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www.nflgonline.org