Abstract


STUDENT: Gerald J. Novack

DEGREE: Doctor of Philosophy

COLLEGE: Teacher’s College

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This study examines recommendations regarding what children need from their fathers at various ages and what men can do to help their children with those needs. Data collected in this study do not support recommendations as they appear in the conceptual ethic of Generative Fathering (Dollahite & Hawkins, 1998). However, trends in the data suggest that, across the lifespan, children have a primary need for overt displays of love and nurturing. There is evidence that young children need their fathers to be physically present. Young children also seem to need support and acceptance from their fathers, though how exactly fathers demonstrate that support and acceptance might change as the child develops. The data suggest that as the child transitions out of childhood and into adolescence and adulthood, the need for physical presence diminishes and the needs for support and acceptance, and advice and guidance emerge as more primary.