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To learn more about Partners for Kids: United Hands Make the Best Families and Circle of Parents, or to sign up for this newsletter visit:

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

## Conscious Fathering: Baby Safety - Fathering the Future



By Bernie Dorsey

One of the changes new fatherhood can bring is a different view on the world. Now there are more reasons to worry about what things will be like 10, 20 even 30 years from now when our own children become adults. Keeping our children safe is something all dads want to make sure of, now and into the future. With your new baby, safety should be built into everything we do for them. When we look at meeting baby's five basic needs, to eat, burp, be clean and changed, rested and to cry, we simply make sure we are performing our role in a safe way.

While mom is breastfeeding make sure she and baby are in a safe place with everything mom may need at arm's length. If, or when, a bottle may come into play, make sure the temperature of the breast milk or formula is right for baby.

When burping your baby, make sure they are positioned so they have plenty of fresh air to breathe and that their head is properly supported.

At diaper changing time always have baby laying on a safe surface with all of the tools you need for the job at arm's length so you never have to leave baby there unattended.

Cont. on pg. 2

## Voices from DADS



**Devin Oliver**  
Rapid City, South Dakota

Hello my name is Devin A. Oliver and I'm a Fatherhood Specialist at Youth and Family Services which is located in Rapid City, South Dakota. Years ago my life wasn't so pleasant. I grew up in a small city in Georgia four hours outside of Atlanta. I didn't have much of a father figure in my life. My mom had I and my sister surrounded by drugs and violence, men in and out of the home. Sometimes bread and water were the only thing we ate because there was no food in the fridge or storage. I can recall the time we moved to a city in Georgia in which I attended middle school and high school.

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## Conscious Fathering: Baby Safety—Fathering the Future

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During baby's sleep times always have them on their backs and keep anything they may accidentally pull over their face, like an extra blanket or stuffed animal, out of their arm's reach.

When they cry, and we all know they do, make sure you have your checklist of possible reasons for them to be upset. Hungry, gassy, dirty diaper or tired? If all of those needs are met then be creative, and safe, in what you may try to soothe your precious baby. We all know of course that sometimes even the most skilled dads can't figure it out. That's why we always **have a plan** for when that happens. If you get frustrated just put your baby down in a safe spot and walk away. Let the frustration go away, and try again. Don't forget to call someone for some help if you need to, sometimes it's not a one man job.

It's also very important for us dads to make sure that we practice transporting baby in the car safely, not leave baby unattended, ever, in a public place. I've always been one to talk about scenarios with whoever I may be leaving my baby with for example

"okay, so if she cries and you can't figure out how to soothe her what's you plan?"

As our children get older the hazards increase. So training ourselves to always be on the lookout for potential danger is one thing we need to be good at in the beginning and get better at as time goes by. I suppose feeling like I am my baby's best protector is something all of us dads want to do naturally. I also know that keeping our children safe in their ever changing world means that sometimes I need to count on other fathers too. I believe that when all of us dads are watching and making sure our own kids are safe, then we can start counting on each other to keep ALL children safe.

For more information please contact:

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### Voices from DADS

**Harry Baker**  
Aurora, Colorado

Anyone can be a Father but, it takes someone special to be a DAD...

My experiences with my own sons have shown me that being there is what its all about. I have 5 boys and each one has their own individual character. Sharing these moments and how it effects each one of my sons is what has really enhanced my life as a person and being a DAD.

Wouldn't change it for anything.....

Harry is currently a new member of the Partner for Kids National Fatherhood Advisory Committee. Harry also trains Circle of Parents' group facilitators and parent leaders with Jennifer Richardson, Family Support Services Supervisor at Families First in Denver, Colorado. He is also a national trainer with Circle of Parents.

Fatherhood is more than a program or initiative. It is necessary.



Cont from pg. 1 Devin Oliver

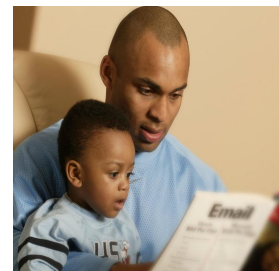
My mother had just divorced my step dad who until this day I call my favorite dad. This city is where I joined a gang, stole things, ran errands for bad people, and did almost everything in the book a criminal does when breaking the law. I had my first child when I was seventeen years old and I was a junior in high school.

I was paying child support in high school at the price of \$203.67 a month. Was mom ever mad! I got a whipping every Friday when child support was due because it came at the expense of my parents. At that defining moment when the mother of my daughter gave birth to her, I knew my life had to change for the better. I joined a Baptist church, found God in which I began to think positive and I knew I could do better as a young

dad in life. I began to join sports, read books, do homework and hang around positive male role models in the community in which I lived.

Those positive changes have brought upon positive aspects of my life. Today I'm now twenty-five years old, have three kids and a wonderful family. I am a published short story author, educated African American and, to top it off, a community activist. Being a dad is the greatest thing any man can go through but most importantly it changes you for the better.

**Devin A. Oliver**  
**Rapid City, South Dakota**



**William Shakespeare**  
It is a wise father that knows his own child.

**Voices from DADS**

**Bruce Bynum**  
**Wichita, Kansas**

Married for 28 years to Brenda Bynum. We are the proud parents of 4 adult daughters and 14 grandchildren and expecting our 15<sup>th</sup> grandchild very soon. We adopted four of our grandchildren. Some of my accomplishments to date include: Coordinator Parents Helping Parents, Kansas Fatherhood Coalition member, Board of Director and Sunday School Director at Eastside Church, and Partners for Kids National Fatherhood Advisory Committee.



My wisdom for Fathers:

“Expectation does not bring Realization it comes through Application”

If we do not work (Application) for what we want (Expectation) then it will never come to pass (Realization).

IN OTHER WORDS FATHER’S – JUST BE IT !!!

### Next Door Foundation, Milwaukee WI

The primary goal of the Conscious Fathering program is to provide basic infant care skills and encouragement to men on the eve of fatherhood. We want to assist fathers to become better parents and to be strong leaders in their community. The Conscious Fathering Workshop also provides valuable information on safety for your newborn, infant brain development, and parent to parent communication tips. Conscious Fathering classes are offered and facilitated in conjunction with the Partner for Kids Responsible Fatherhood grantees. Next Door Foundation is a 2009/2010 grantee.



**Conscious Fathering Graduation: Fathers Under Construction**

The men featured in the Fathers Under Construction shirts are graduates of the class, plus active participants in Man to Man Circle of Parents group. They volunteer at many of Next Door's family events; this event in particular was our annual Walk for Children event which featured Judge Mathis as keynote speaker! He gave them many accolades as being active in their children's lives.



## Fatherhood: A National Priority

The White House

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

June 21, 2010

**President Obama Launches Next Phase in Fatherhood Efforts with The President's Fatherhood and Mentoring Initiative**

President Obama spoke in Washington, D.C. to discuss the importance of responsible fatherhood and mentoring to build healthy families and communities. At the event, the President announced the next steps in his longstanding agenda on fatherhood and personal responsibility: The President's Fatherhood and Mentoring Initiative. The Initiative will continue the President's effort to impact father absence in America through partnerships with fatherhood and family-serving groups and role models around the country.

The Initiative is a national call to action to address fatherlessness in America and includes the following steps:

- The White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships and the Office of Public Engagement will continue to host community forums on fatherhood and personal responsibility around the country, in concert with local groups. The next forum is scheduled for New Mexico on August 10.
- Organizations supporting the Initiative will reach out to communities and individuals around the country. Individuals who sign up for the Fatherhood and Mentoring Initiative will receive e-newsletters featuring articles, tips and resources from prominent leaders in the fatherhood and family fields and information about model programs.
- Organizations supporting the Initiative will work in specific ways to have a cultural impact on responsible fatherhood, from local forums with the National Parent Teachers Association to community trainings by the National Fatherhood Leaders Group (NFLG). Partners from the National PTA to the head of the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities have signed up to advance the President's Fatherhood and Mentoring Initiative in communities around the country.

In addition, as the President has said, while no government program can remedy the problem of father absence in America, government must do its part to help fathers facing challenges. President Obama has proposed a new Fatherhood, Marriage and Families Innovation Fund that will scale up effective fatherhood and family-strengthening programs across the country. And recognizing that the best leg up for any family is a good job, the President has also provided funding through the Department of Labor for transitional jobs programs for non-custodial parents facing barriers to employment.

Last year, the President launched a national conversation on fatherhood and personal responsibility, and members of his Administration reached out across the country to hear from fathers and their families about the challenges they face. Over the last year, Administration officials held events across the country including a discussion with Secretary Duncan in New Hampshire about the link between fatherhood and educational achievement; Secretary Locke talked to fathers in California about balancing the needs of their families with the demands of their jobs; Secretary Shinseki held a town hall for military and veteran dads in North Carolina; and Attorney General Holder traveled to Georgia for a forum about fathers in our criminal justice system.



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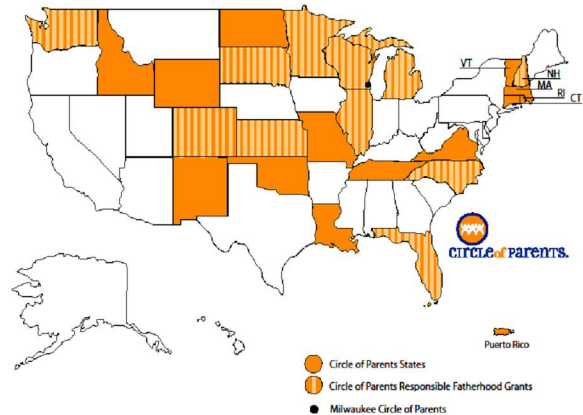
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Circle of Parents® is a national network of statewide non-profit organizations and parent leaders that are dedicated to using the mutual self-help support group model as a means of preventing child abuse and neglect and strengthening families. Circle of Parents offers anyone in a parenting role the opportunity to participate in weekly group meetings with other parents to exchange ideas, share information, develop and practice new parenting skills, learn about community resources, and give and receive support. Groups are parent-led with the support of a trained group facilitator, are conducted in a confidential and non-judgmental manner, are free of charge and provide developmentally-appropriate children's programs or child care concurrent with the parent group meetings. Developing leadership on the individual, family, community and societal levels, as desired by parent participants, is a central theme of the Circle of Parents model.

In 2007 Circle of Parents received a grant from the Office of Family Assistance to implement a comprehensive training, technical assistance and community access project to aid local home visiting programs in the provision of support and

**CIRCLE OF PARENTS**



education to new and expectant fathers. The mission of Partners for Kids: United Hands Make the Best Families emphasizes the importance of healthy father-child relationships, parental balance among mothers and fathers, and family support services that are both mother and father-friendly. The project is being implemented in partnership with the National Fatherhood Initiative, the Conscious Fathering Program™ of Parent Trust for Washington Children, Prevent Child Abuse America and Dr. Dave Matthews, a domestic violence expert. Initially targeting Healthy Families America and Parents as Teachers programs, Partners for Kids expanded to other home visiting programs, such as Nurse Family Partnership, Healthy Start, and Early Head Start in Year 3 of the project.



Partners for Kids: United Hands Make the Best Families Responsible Fatherhood Community Access Program, funded by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance - Grant No. 90FR0098, CFDA#93.086. These services are available to all eligible persons regardless of race, gender, age, disability or religion. This grant was awarded to Circle of Parents, 2100 So. Marshall Blvd., Unit 305, Chicago, IL 60623. Any opinions, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the United States Department of Health & Human Services, Administration of Children & Families and/or Office of Family Assistance.